PALMERTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Palmerton, PA
Tuesday, October 20, 2026

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Executive sessions were held on October 6, 2026, before the workshop and after the workshop for personnel matters.

The regular board meeting of the Palmerton Area School District Board of School Directors was held in the High School Library, 3525 Fireline Road, Palmerton, PA, on Tuesday, October 20, 2026, and called to order at 5:31 p.m. President Haas presided. The meeting was viewable via livestream.

Pledge of Allegiance

ROLL CALL

Present: Directors Connell, Haas, King, Mazepa (arrived at 5:37 p.m.), Moyzan (arrived at 5:35 p.m.), Danielle Paules, Earl Paules, Schaible, and Snyder

OTHER ATTENDANCE

Ryan Kish – Substitute Superintendent, Daniel Heaney – Assistant Superintendent, Jacqueline McCandless – Board Secretary, and David Conn – Solicitor

STUDENT REPORTS:

Elementary – select students recognized for their leadership skills in the Leader in Me program with certificate from the Substitute Superintendent and Principal: Scarlet Mertz, Leah Levendusky, Londyn Goss, Emma Cox, Skyla Saas, Joseph Yannone, Lucy Brown, and Jasmine Rankin at Parkside Education Center/S. S. Palmer Elementary

Junior High School – Avery Risley, grade 8

- Student Council – hosted annual Walk-a-Thon yesterday for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, proceeds go to the school store
- Music – groups preparing for winter concert on December 16
- STEM – now started during enrichment, working on long-term robotics projects
- Cross Country – championships held October 15; Ryan Meixell place fifth, Nate Wininger, sixth place, and Megan Anthony placed 20th
- Aevidum – created posters for Unity Day; members encourage peers against bullying

High School – Addison Buck, grade 12

- Scholastic Scrimmage – preparing for league matches
- NHS – new member applications distributed; assisting with blood drive on November 10
- PYEA – exploring opportunities for shadowing teachers
- Golf – finished season 8-4; Joey Solt, Tucker DeSousa, Colton Becker, and Mary Jane O'Brien competed in league championships on September 22; Solt and DeSousa advanced to district qualifying round on September 29, where Solt won and advanced to district championship; Solt competed in state playoffs, finishing top 20 among 72
- PAAC – annual pet photo contest this month
- Drama Club – preparing for production of *Puffs: Two Acts for Young Wizards*; tickets now available; Mr. McElhinny, advisor, led a puppet workshop
- Class of 2029 – had a successful Krispy Kreme fundraiser
- Environmental Club – purchased fall decorations for courtyard; annual pumpkin decorating contest underway
- Social Studies Department – hosting its Veterans Day assembly on November 11 with several veterans will share their experiences
- Chief Science Officer Program (CSO) – in second year of program coordinated by Mr. Bill Zeky; goal is to develop plan to bring peers and community leaders together to create new STEM opportunities and innovation; attended leadership training at Camp Fowler
- Student Council – Homecoming festivities successful; powder puff game held, glow party; and pep rally during the week, Shirt Off My Back presentation at football game

SUBSTITUTE SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

- PDE announced adjusted Act 1 index for 2027–2028 school year - this is the maximum amount the state allows the district to raise taxes to - district's index set at 4.9%, a slight increase from last year's 4.7%; if the Board decides to approve a tax increase up to the index limit, it represents a potential revenue increase of over $1 million; will present figures/options during budget meetings in the new year
- Minor increase of approximately $2,000 for property and casualty insurance, driven by updated total replacement values for buildings and personal property
- Capital projects interfund transfer from the Capital Projects Fund to the General Fund; reimburses the General Fund using bond proceeds, in accordance with the reimbursement resolution previously authorized
- Food Service Fund Support transfer from the General Fund to cover expenses in the Food Service Fund which is currently operating at a deficit
- Next week local auditors will perform their annual financial audit while we wait for state officials for their onsite Food Service Administrative Review, which is the state's version of a food service financial and operational audit

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

- Towamensing Elementary had its Pre-K Counts Fall Program Review on Monday; included review of student eligibility and income documentation, enrollment and waitlist information, staff qualifications, and classroom observation to ensure program requirements are being met; official results not in yet, but program appears in compliance with requirements; few openings available in both Pre-K Counts programs, anyone interested in enrolling their child is encouraged to contact district for additional information
- Athletic & Activities Director position posted, received a strong response with 13 applicants; expect to complete initial application screening within the next day or two and hope to begin interviews next Thursday

BOARD MEMBER REPORTS:

- Director Snyder – *CCTI*: hosted well-attended, well-received, Open House last Wednesday; second round of Director interviews completed last Thursday, thank you, Mr. Kish, for help in that decision; special meeting scheduled Thursday to vote on hiring new Director
- Director Schaible – *PSBA:* DOJ put out guidance on ADA's Olmstead decision, which mandates community integration and prohibits unnecessary segregation; could impact IDEA requirements for students with IEPs and transition planning and support services
- Director Earl Paules – *Buildings & Grounds:* construction project on schedule with ground preparation complete, no new change orders, getting a contractor rebate, and steel installation to begin in November
- Director Haas – *IU*: reviewed specialized programs and adaptive devices for visually and hearing-impaired students, including magnifiers, monocular lenses, and Braille training; Special Needs Foundation has provided over 10,000 adaptive items to students, recently giving out eight adaptive bikes and strollers; currently raising funds with basket raffle and student-designed holiday card packs. *Library:* offering community programs including a Beyond Sound Drum Circle, dementia caregiver support group, and monthly Dollar Store Bingo; provides free online learning tools for kids; STEAM kits available for teachers

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

- Nick Masington – against proposed reduction of public comment speaking time limit at board meetings
- Mary Farquhar – opposed to reducing time allotted for public comment during board meetings, citizens need time to present points

MEETING MINUTES

Director Connell moved, seconded by Director Moyzan, to approve the board meeting minutes from September 1, 2026 and September 15, 2026.

Aye Votes: All Directors Present.
Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Director Moyzan moved, seconded by Director Mazepa, to approve the consent agenda.

Aye Votes: All Directors Present.
Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried.

CONSENT AGENDA:

FISCAL REPORTS

Approved accounts payable reports

Approved treasurer's reports

BUDGET TRANSFERS

Approved budget transfers

INTERFUND TRANSFERS

Approved an interfund transfer in the amount of $150,000.00 from the General Fund to the Food Service Fund to support cafeteria operations, pursuant to Section 504 and Section 609 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code

Approved the interfund transfer/reimbursement in the amount of $1,095,189.31 from the Capital Projects Fund to the General Fund for previously paid capital expenses related to the high school/administration building construction, pursuant to the Reimbursement Resolution adopted May 21, 2025

UGI ROW REIMBURSEMENT

Approved the reimbursement agreement and release with UGI Utilities, Inc., effective October 21, 2026

INSURANCE REN EWALS

Approved the following insurance renewals effective November 12, 2026:

Coverage	Carrier	Expiring Term Premium	Proposed Term Premium
Property	CM Regent Ins. Co.	$86,157.00	$86,297.00
General Liability & Law Enforcement	CM Regent Ins. Co.	$33,586.00	$34,094.00
Crime	CM Regent Ins. Co.	$ 1,127.00	$ 1,244.00
Automobile	CM Regent Ins. Co.	$ 7,342.00	$ 7,360.00
Equipment Breakdown	CM Regent Ins. Co.	$ 5,530.00	$ 5,866.00
Umbrella	CM Regent Ins. Co.	$ 11,867.00	$ 11,987.00
School Leaders' Liability	CM Regent Ins. Co.	$ 28,114.00	$ 28,915.00
Cyber Liability	Houston Casualty Co.	$ 15,621.00	$ 15,601.00
	Total:	**$189,344.00**	**$191,364.00**

TUITION REIMBURSEMENTS

Approved tuition reimbursements

SPEC. ED. TEACHER

Approved Katherine Eckhart as Special Education Teacher at the High School at an annual salary of $66,640 prorated at Master's +45, Step 9, start date to be determined

TENURE

Approve Tenure status for the following Teachers:

Alyssa Miller	Has attained three (3) years of satisfactory performance ratings in District
Sage Nalesnik	Has attained three (3) years of satisfactory performance ratings in District
Karissa Nenscel	Recognition of previously satisfied the statutory requirements for Professional Employee under Section 1108 of PA School Code

FMLA

Approved the following for Family & Medical Leave:

Employee #531	Effective on or about February 23, 2027, not to exceed twelve (12) weeks

HORIZONTAL MOVEMENTS

Acknowledged the following horizontal movements effective the first semester of the 2026-2027 school year:

Lisa Heffernan	Bachelor's to Bachelor's +24
Tammy-Lynn Muniz	Master's +30 to Master's +60
Kayla Sander	Master's to Master's +15
Joseph Trimmel	Master's to Master's +15

ADD'L MENTOR 2026-2027

Approved retroactively the following additional Mentor for the remainder of the 2026-2027 school year effective October 9, 2026:

Holly Sell	*for Savana Serfass*	$1,535.00 prorated

Add'l PAMPA CHAPERONE 2026-2027

Approved retroactively the following additional Palmerton Area Music Parents' Association (PAMPA) Volunteer Chaperone for the 2026-2027 school year effective September 15, 2026:

Brian Cwiertniewicz

ADD'L COACHES 2026-2027

Approved the following additional Coaches for the remainder of the 2026-2027 school year:

Richard Petersen	Boys' Wrestling Assistant Coach	$4,327.00	Effective October 21, 2026
Kimberly Seiler	Field Hockey Assistant Coach (1/2)	$1,427.00 prorated	Retroactively effective September 19, 2026
Zoe Hathaway	Field Hockey Assistant Coach (1/2)	$1,427.00 prorated	Retroactively effective September 19, 2026

SUBS

Approved the following Substitutes at prevailing substitute rates effective October 21, 2026:

Molly Conklin	Substitute Teacher
Konstantine Georgiades	Substitute Teacher
Adam Reichard	Substitute Teacher
Antoinette Gravell	Substitute Food Service

SUB REMOVALS

Removed the following from the current Substitute list effective October 21, 2026:

Marjorie Beahm	Substitute Teacher
Stacia Gouger	Substitute Teacher
Dalton Hoffman	Substitute Teacher
Stephanie Miller	Substitute Teacher
Amber Reese	Substitute Teacher
Patricia Woginrich	Substitute Teacher

RESIGNATIONS

Accepted the following resignations:

Jennifer Strohl	Mentor *for Savana Serfass*	Effective October 8, 2026
Zoe Hathaway	Field Hockey Assistant Coach	Effective September 18, 2026
Tyzahnae Klotz	Field Hockey Assistant Coach	Effective September 23, 2026
Christine Fruit	Food Service Worker	Effective October 13, 2026

NCC AFFILIATION

Approved the agreement of affiliation with Northampton Community College from October 21, 2026 through October 20, 2029

CONNECTED NATION

Approved the program agreement with Connected Nation for Teen Teach Tech Program to be used as a fundraiser for the FBLA Club at the high school

BUS DRIVERS

Approved the following additional George's Transportation bus drivers:

Joseph Smith, Sr.	Effective October 21, 2026 through August 18, 2027
Amanda Spitzer	Effective October 21, 2026 through August 18, 2027
Lawrence Falk	Retroactively effective September 22, 2026 through August 18, 2027

PUBLIC PERFORMANCES

Approved the following public performances, per policy 230:

Band-HS	Palmerton parade	October 18, 2026 (retroactive)
Cheer Team-HS & JHS	Palmerton parade	October 18, 2026 (retroactive)
Band-HS	Carbon County Veteran's Day parade	November 8, 2026
Select Elementary Band 5 & 6	Lehighton Middle School	January 15, 2027

CONFERENCES

Approved the following conferences:

Miranda Allen	TEEAP Connected By Design STEM Conference, Millersville	October 22-23, 2026	Estimated cost of $480.84
Kelly Beblavy	2026 SAS Institute, Hershey	December 6-9, 2026	Estimated cost of $699.58
Caitlin Goldberg	PA Music Educators Association Annual In-Service Conference, Erie	April 14-17, 2027	Estimated cost of $1,154.00
Ryan Kish	CLIU #21 Superintendents Advisory Council Leadership Conference, Hershey	November 11-13, 2026	Estimated cost of $117.00
Jodi Kocher	PA School Counselors Association Annual State Conference	December 2-4, 2026	Estimated cost of $904.50
Audrey Pinczok	PA Music Educators Association Annual In-Service Conference, Erie	April 14-17, 2027	Estimated cost of $1,692.08

PSBA ELECTION

Authorized the Board Secretary to cast votes in the election for the following 2027 Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA) officer candidates:

Matthew Vannoy	President-Elect (one-year term)
Kristy Bolte	Vice President (one-year term)
David Hein	Treasurer (three-year term)
Timothy Kearney	E-2 Sectional Advisor (two-year term)
Marianne Neel	Insurance Trustee (three-year term)
Michael Faccinetto	Insurance Trustee (three-year term)

1st READINGS 105-209-704-803-805-805.2-822-903

Approved the first reading of the following policies:

1) Policy #105 Curriculum
2) Policy #209 Health Examinations/Screenings
3) Policy #704 Maintenance
4) Policy #803 School Calendar
5) Policy #805.2 School Security Personnel
6) Policy #822 Automated External Defibrillator (AED)/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)
7) Policy #903 Public Comment in Board Meetings

2nd READINGS 102-204.2-246-249	Approved the second reading and adoption of the following policies: 1) Policy #102 Academic Standards 2) Policy #204.2 Virtual Attendance & Wellness Checks 3) Policy #246 School Wellness 4) Policy #249 Bullying/Cyberbullying **END OF CONSENT AGENDA**
SEPARATION & RELEASE AGREEMENT	Director Moyzan moved, seconded by Director Danielle Paules, to approve the separation agreement and general release for employee #426 effective September 30, 2026. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** • Danielle Jones – asked Board members to speak at upcoming public hearing in opposition of proposed data center • Richard Banko – township may request the use of auditorium for December 14th meeting on proposed data center due to expected high turnout; spoke about 10-year agreement with Blue Mountain Resort in lieu of amusement tax; doesn't agree with need of security at meetings; and requested help on property taxes • Nick Masington – stated he is a potential candidate for school board director next year; dedicated to anti-bullying efforts • Mary Farquhar – concerned that IEPs allow students to avoid accountability for bullying; asked for support at upcoming township meeting to address data center **FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER:** • Director Danielle Paules thanked the Banko's for securing the $50,000, 10-year grant for the township; also thanked administration for including directos on emails of SMORE digital newsletter • Director Haas thanked principals for conducting school tours for her; emphasized strong sense of community with teachers, administration, and students demonstrated to her across buildings
ADJOURNMENT	Director Schaible moved, seconded by Director Danielle Paules, to adjourn the meeting at 6:18 p.m. Aye Votes: All Directors Present. Nay Votes: None. Motion Carried. Respectfully submitted, Jacqueline McCandless Board Secretary