



**POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 15, 2020**

The Regular Board Meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Pottstown School District was held on Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 7:00 PM via virtual communication with President, Mrs. Amy Francis presiding. Upon roll call, the following members attended via virtual communication: Mr. John Armato, Ms. Katina Bearden, Mrs. Bonita Barnhill., Mr. Thomas Hylton, Mrs. Laura Johnson, Mr. Steve Kline, Mrs. Susan Lawrence, and Mr. Raymond Rose. Also present were Superintendent, Mr. Stephen Rodriguez; Director of Human Resources, Dr. Deena Cellini; Solicitor, Mr. Stephen Kalis; Student Board Representative, Kishan Patel. Joining the meeting was Federation Second Vice-President, Mrs. Kelly Leibold.

PRESENTATION

PSBA: School Board Service Recognition

Ms. Karen Devine, Director of Member Services, recognized Mrs. Amy Francis for eight years of service as a School Board Director. She presented a certificate of service to Mrs. Francis and thanked all School Board Directors for their dedication to public service.

October District Pandemic Update

Mr. Rodriguez reviewed the successes and challenges of the phased re-entry plan for the re-opening of the 20/21 school year. Some successes include iPad distribution to Kindergarten students, increased internet bandwidth in all buildings, increased in-person Special Education offerings and CTE & BSLS in-person/hybrid models; challenges seen include a decline in attendance, participation/engagement, assignment completion, student mental health. Food distribution serves an average of 10,000 meals per week. Sports and Co-Curricular activities have started with safety precautions in place. The District cleaning system is consistently testing for efficiency. The District will be conducting a parent survey consisting of six categories that will provide significant information to determine which models for the future are possible. Survey results will be presented to the Board at the committee level for discussion and a recommendation to the full Board is anticipated to be presented at the November Board meeting.

MINUTES

Dr. Cellini presented the minutes from the Board meeting held on September 17, 2020.

LIST OF BILLS

Mr. Kline presented the list of bills paid from the various funds for the period of September 2020 to be approved as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2020-2021-028**.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Kline presented the Treasurer's Reports for September 2020 to be approved as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2020-2021-029**.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

POLICY/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – MRS. BARNHILL

The Committee met virtually on October 1. The committee reviewed and recommends Policy 815: Electronic Records/Signatures for Board approval as presented on tonight's agenda. Policy 170: Non-discrimination based on sex is changed to Policy #102.1 as recommended by PSBA.

CURRICULUM /CO-CURRICULAR COMMITTEE– MRS. LAWRENCE

The Committee met virtually on October 1. The committee heard comments from the public supporting the return of Fall sports. The general consensus of the Board was to re-open Fall sports in accordance with safety guidelines. Mrs. Kolka reviewed the TSI School Improvement Plan for the High School and is presented on tonight’s agenda for Board approval.

FACILITIES / FINANCE COMMITTEE - MR. HYLTON

The Committee met virtually on October 8. Flags have been placed at the designated areas for the planting of meadows at the elementary buildings. Mr. Connor provided the committee with testing data on the cleaning equipment and air quality preparations for the opening of the buildings. The District received a \$1.7 million CARES grant for needed improvements created by the COVID requirements. Electrical and HVAC upgrades to the Edgewood building are applicable improvements. The Committee supports the Administration’s recommendation to move forward with advertising for a bid award under the Reynolds Guaranteed Energy Savings Agreement. The bid notice is anticipated to be presented at the October 15 Board meeting or at the November 5 Policy/Personnel Committee for board action. The deadline for spending the grant funds is December 30, 2020.

PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – MR. ROSE

The Committee met virtually on October 8. The committee heard a presentation from Mr. Rusiewicz, Executive Director of the Foundation for Pottstown Education and from Dr. Myra Forrest, Education Advocate for the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation. Mr. Rodriguez provided the topics to be included in the upcoming parent survey for the reopening of school. Board Members were invited to participate in the interviews for Student Board Representatives. The Committee continues to pursue ways to engage others in advocating for education (fair funding, education equity, etc.).

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE – KISHAN PATEL

The student response to the opening of Co-Curricular Activities and athletics has been positive. Students are glad to be back.

BOROUGH LIAISON - MR. ROSE

Mr. Rose attended October Borough Council COW meeting. P.A.I.D. stated several new businesses are opening downtown. The Borough Manager and Finance Director made a preliminary budget presentation that included a proposed 3.5% tax increase. The Mayor announced the Halloween Parade will take on October 31st at 6:00 pm.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT - MRS. BARNHILL

Some staff are back in the building on a limited schedule. The IU Board discussed House Bills #2788 and 2789.

MCSDLC / PSBA REPRESENTATIVE – MRS. JOHNSON

School leaders met with Senator Mensch on October 8th as part of Advocacy Day. The group discussed several reform topics including mandate relief, charter reform, and the prudent use of CARES act money.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Rodriguez presented the consent items for Board discussion and approval. Administrators reviewed the consent items presented for Board approval.

HEARINGS FROM PATRONS OF THE SCHOOLS (general and consent items)

Residents Rachel Bruno, Lewis Mazzerle and Patricia Smith shared the struggles and challenges they face with virtual learning. The residents spoke in support of in-person learning.

BOARD ACTION: Minutes, List of Bills, Treasurer's Report

It was moved by Mrs. Barnhill and seconded by Mr. Hylton that the Board approve the minutes from the Regular Board meeting held on September 17, 2020, the List of Bills from the period of September 2020 and the Treasurer's Report for September 2020. Ayes: Nine. Nays: None. Motion carried.

BOARD ACTION: CONSENT

It was moved Mr. Armato and seconded by Mrs. Barnhill that the following consent items be approved in accordance with Policy 005, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools:

PERSONNEL

RESIGNATIONS/TERMINATIONS

Professional

Ratify Stephanie Konnick, Secondary Teacher, High School, resignation effective September 30, 2020; hire date April 23, 2019.

Classified

Ratify Kristen (Pursell) Walker, Paraprofessional, Rupert Elementary, resignation effective October 6, 2020; hire date January 2, 2019.

Diane Martz, Secondary Cafeteria Manager, High School, resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective December 2, 2020; hire date August 26, 1996.

LEAVES

Professional

Ratify Lisa-Kay Rossi, Elementary Teacher, Lincoln Elementary, request for leave of absence covered by Family Medical Leave Act, effective September 21, 2020; end date tbd.

Charity Heimbach, Elementary Teacher, Barth Elementary, request for leave of absence covered by Family Medical Leave Act, anticipated effective date April 2, 2020; end date tbd.

Classified

Ratify Jodi Finnegan, Kindergarten Classroom Assistant, Lincoln Elementary, request for leave of absence effective September 25, 2020; end date tbd.

Sarah Bennett, Intervention Assistant, Franklin Elementary, request for leave of absence covered by Family Medical Leave Act, anticipated effective date April 10, 2021; end date tbd.

Maria Henzes, Special Education Classroom Assistant, Middle School, request for leave of absence covered by Family Medical Leave Act, effective November 6, 2020; end date tbd.

ELECTIONS

Professional

Rachel Gonzales, Secondary Teacher, High School, effective upon emergency certification, \$49,500/yr, Step 1- Mast. (contract of S. Konnick).

Classified

Ratify Britney Oxenford, Intervention Assistant, Rupert Elementary, anticipated effective October 6, 2020, \$13.65/hr (replacing K. Walker).

21st Century After School Tutoring Program (funded by 21st Century Grant)

All PSD Teacher-Certified staff members are approved as 21st Century Tutors, \$30/hr on an as-needed basis and as 21st Century Classroom Assistants, \$13.65/hr on an as-needed basis.

All PSD Classroom Assistants are approved as 21st Century Classroom Assistants, \$13.65/hr on an as-needed basis.

CO-CURRICULAR ASSIGNMENTS

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve/ratify the following Co-Curricular Assignments:

2020-2021 Co-Curricular Fall Sports- additions/corrections ***Addendum #2020-2021-030**

2020-2021 Co-Curricular Non-Athletics ***Addendum #2020-2021-031**

Administration recommends approval of the co-curricular assignment schedule for the 2020-2021 school year. Payments of co-curricular stipends shall be contingent upon the reopening of schools and the ability as determined by the Administration to provide such co-curricular offerings to students consistent with CDC guidelines and guidelines from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The District reserves the right to prorate or not pay stipends in the event of a school closure, school modification, and/or discontinuation of the activity due to pandemic or other events surrounding the pandemic.

HORIZONTAL SALARY MOVEMENTS

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve/ratify the Horizontal Salary Movements as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2020-2021-032**.

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve/ratify the Tuition Reimbursements as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2020-2021-033**.

POLICIES

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the following policies and copies be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2020-2021-034**:

- Policy 815.1: Electronic Records/Signatures

CONTRACTS

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve/ratify the contracts as presented and copies be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2020-2021-035**.

MOU: Art Fusion (21 st Century)	MOU: Greater Pottstown Tennis & Learning (21 st Century)
MOU: Red Cloud (21 st Century)	MOU: Public Health Management Corp. (21 st Century)
MOU: YWCA (21 st Century)	MCIU: Title 1 Addendum
MOU: Unfinished Athletics (21 st Century)	CCIU: Title 1
Deverux Foundation (21 st Century)	MCIU: Montg.County CARES Act Funding

TSI PLAN: HIGH SCHOOL

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve the High School TSI Plan as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2020-2021-036**.

SPECIAL EDUCATION SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Motion to approve the Special Education award settlement pursuant to the terms and conditions outlined in the confidential settlement release agreement. The Board Secretary is further authorized to sign the settlement agreement on behalf of the Board and a copy be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2020-2021-037**.

Upon roll call, all members present voted aye for the above consent items. Ayes: Nine. Nays: None. Motion carried.

NON-CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Rodriguez presented the Non-Consent item for Board discussion and Board action.

HEARINGS FROM PATRONS (limited to Non-Consent Items):

None.

ATHLETIC & CO-CURRICULAR HEALTH AND SAFETY PLAN

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve/ratify the Athletic & Co-Curricular Health & Safety Plan. The previous Athletic Health & Safety Plan has been updated and adjusted to reflect Co-Curricular Activities.

It was moved by Ms. Bearden and seconded by Mr. Hylton that the Board approve the Athletic & Co-Curricular Health and Safety Plan as presented to include Co-Curricular Activities and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2020-2021-038**.

Upon roll call vote, the vote for the Athletic & Co-Curricular Health and Safety Plan was recorded as follows: Bearden: aye, Francis: aye, Hylton: aye, Johnson: aye, Kline: aye, Lawrence: nay, Rose: aye, Barnhill: nay, Armato: aye. Ayes: Seven. Nays: Two. Motion carried.

INFORMATION

- Tenure Recognition of Eligible Professional Staff 2020/2021
- Monthly Meeting Notice: November 2020

FEDERATION REMARKS

Mrs. Leibold voiced the Federation's concerns on the re-opening of the schools, the effects to students, families, and staff. She expressed concerns for people with compromising conditions and the struggles parents are having with virtual learning. The Pandemic Task Force is working diligently to planning the next steps. The Federation appreciates all the work that the Board and Administration are doing. She noted that no decision is a good decision.

ROUND TABLE

Ms. Bearden stated that the Board's decision on the re-opening of the schools is based on what is best for the students. There is no political agenda. The Board considers lots of logistics. She appreciates what the teachers are doing.

Mrs. Barnhill stated that no decision is made lightly and she looks forward to safe options.

Mrs. Johnson thanked everyone for sharing their concerns. She looks to make the best decision with the least negative consequences. She encouraged everyone to participate in the survey and to vote at the November election.

Mr. Kline stated that as a retired educator, he recognizes and appreciates the great job the teachers are doing during these challenging times.

Mrs. Lawrence stated that her "no" vote was because of her concerns for the health and safety of the students, families and staff. It is not an easy decision.

Mr. Armato was pleased to see the positive response to voter registration that took place at Smith Plaza and the mindfulness of this community. He stated he is not a fan of virtual learning and supports moving quickly for a safe return to in-person education.

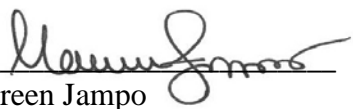
Mr. Rose thanked the patrons for voicing their concerns. All comments are appreciated. He encouraged everyone to vote at the November elections.

Mr. Rodriguez recognized that all are experience COVID stress and fatigue. He is grateful for the patrons comments. The administration will do its best for what is safe for students and staff. He thanked everyone for the work being done.

Mrs. Francis stated the Board takes into consideration a lot with every decision to be made. The Board Members support each other and decisions are not political. Every decision is made for the best community it can be. She is honored to be a part of this Board.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Ms. Bearden and seconded by Mrs. Johnson that the meeting adjourns. All in favor. None opposed. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:01 pm.



Maureen Jampo
Board Secretary