



**POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
November 16, 2023**

The Regular Board Meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Pottstown School District was held on Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 6:33 PM in the Conference Room of the Administration Building including virtual platform with President, Ms. Katina Bearden, presiding. Upon roll call, the following members attended: Mr. John Armato, Mrs. Katina Bearden, Mr. Kurt Heidel, Mr. Thomas Hylton (Late), Mrs. Phoebe Kancianic, Mrs. Laura Johnson, Mr. Steve Kline, Mrs. Susan Lawrence and Ms. Deborah Spence. Also present were; Superintendent, Mr. Stephen Rodriguez, Business Administrator, Mrs. Maureen Oakley; Director of Human Resources, Mr. Matthew Boyer; Solicitor, Mr. Kalis.

EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF LITIGATION

PRESENTATIONS

- Video; Superintendent Award – Layla Bearden

MINUTES

Mrs. Oakley presented the minutes from the Regular Board meeting held on October 19, 2023 for Board approval.

LIST OF BILLS

Mrs. Johnson presented the list of bills paid from the various funds for the period of October 2023 to be approved as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2023-2024-032**

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mrs. Oakley presented the Treasurer's Report for October 2023 to be approved as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2023-2024-033**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

POLICY/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – MR. KLINE

Policy/Personnel Committee met on November 2nd. Committee report is attached to the Board minutes.

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – MRS. LAWRENCE

Curriculum Committee met on November 2nd. Committee report is attached to the Board minutes.

FACILITIES/FINANCE COMMITTEE – MR. HYLTON

Facilities/Finance Committee met on November 9th. Committee report is attached to the Board minutes

PUBLIC RELATIONS/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – MRS. JOHNSON

Public Relations/Community Engagement met on November 9th. Committee report is attached to the Board minutes.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY LEGISLATIVE – MRS. JOHNSON

Didn't have meeting this month right now meetings are every other month. Working through one to one phone calls with other committee members to find out what is going on within in their school districts.

PSBA REPRESENTATIVE – MRS. KANCIANIC

Reminder to everyone to take their required classes on line and in person.

MCIU REPRESENTATIVE – MRS. LAWRENCE

Looking into starting up a start up medical clinic for school staff. Spoke about multiple grants for different areas.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE – MS. ADEDEJI, MS. GALLOWAY, MS. PHILLIPS

High School Football team made the playoffs first time in five years and students breaking records. Winter sports are starting. All Schools participated in a coat drive and received a lot to be able to donate to the Salvation Army. Elementary doing multiple events for the month.

PERSONNEL

RESIGNATIONS/TERMINATIONS

ADMINISTRATIVE

JOHN CONNOR, SUPERVISOR OF BUILDING AND GROUNDS, ADMINISTRATION, RESIGNATION EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 17, 2023; HIRE DATE OCTOBER 8, 2018.

PROFESSIONAL

RATIFY MAXWELL QUINN, GRADE LEVEL LTS, HIGH SCHOOL, RESIGNATION EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 1, 2023; HIRE DATE AUGUST 15, 2023

RATIFY NICOLE SELLMAN, SE TEACHER, HIGH SCHOOL, RESIGNATION EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 3, 2023; HIRE DATE NOVEMBER 17, 2021.

HEATHER MALIK, TEACHER, FRANKLIN, RESIGNATION EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 30, 2023; HIRE DATE JANUARY 11, 2019.

MIRANDA CESMEGI, SE TEACHER, EDGEWOOD, RESIGNATION EFFECTIVE JANUARY 5, 2024; HIRE DATE AUGUST 15, 2023.

EXEMPT

KINSEY EDGAR-NIELSEN, SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST, MIDDLE SCHOOL, RESIGNATION EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 22, 2023; HIRE DATE JUNE 15, 2020.

LEAVES

PROFESSIONAL

AMANDA KENNEY, ELEMENTARY TEACHER, BARTH, REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE, FMLA-CHILDREARING, EFFECTIVE MAY 16, 2024; END DATE TBD.

CLASSIFIED

RATIFY SHERRY SHANK, PARAPROFESSIONAL, ADMIN-SPECIAL EDUCATION, REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE, FMLA-INTERMITTENT, EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 10, 2023; END DATE TBD.

RATIFY EDNA TAYLOR, PART-TIME PROCTOR, FRANKLIN, REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE, UNPAID PERSONAL LEAVE, END DATE TBD.

CHANGE IN POSITION/SALARY

CLASSIFIED

ERIN EMBERGER FROM CAFETERIA WORKER TO PARAPROFESSIONAL, HIGH SCHOOL, EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 20, 2023, \$15.50/HR.

NICOLE FRISCO FROM PART-TIME TO FULL-TIME CAFETERIA WORKER, HIGH SCHOOL, EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 20, 2023.

ELECTIONS

Professional

Ratify Jeremy Lanza, Building Substitute, Edgewood, \$251/day, effective November 13, 2023.

Ratify Elizabeth Sandt, Building Substitute, High School, \$251/day, effective November 13, 2023, replacing M.Quinn Susan Basecker, Teacher, High School, \$94,304/yr, effective January 17, 2024, replacing N.Sellman.

Exempt

Ratify Liesel Johantgen, Social Worker, Middle School, \$63,000/yr., effective November 15, 2023, Replacing S.Drennen.

Classified

Ratify Terry Phillips, Paraprofessional, Edgewood, \$15.50/hr., effective October 19, 2023, replaced H.Quiles

Ratify Korban Robinson, Paraprofessional, Middle School, \$15.50/hr., effective October 25, 2023

Ratify Edith Pineda, Cafeteria Worker, Middle School, \$14.25/hr., effective November 13, 2023.

Emma Heverly, Library Assistant, Barth/Franklin, \$15.50/hr., effective November 20, 2023, replacing C.Derer.

CO-CURRICULAR ASSIGNMENTS UPDATE

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the co-curricular as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2023-2024-034**

HORIZONTAL SALARY MOVEMENTS UPDATE

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the Horizontal Salary Movements as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2023-2024-035**

PROFESSIONAL LEAVES

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the Professional Leaves as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2023-2024-036**

POLICY

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve the Policy 006.1 and Policy 625 as presented and copies be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2023-2024-037**

- Policy 249 – Bullying/Cyberbullying - Update

CONTRACTS

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the contracts as presented and copies be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2023-2024-038**

- PA School for the Deaf
- MCIU Psychologist 23/24yr

RESOLUTION TO LIMIT PROPERTY TAX 2024-2025 (CONSENT)

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the Resolution to Limit Property Tax 2024-2025 as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2023-2024-039**

SUBSTITUTE TAX COLLECTOR APPOINTMENT 2024 (CONSENT)

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the Substitute Tax Collector Appointment 2024 as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2023-2024-040**

BID AWARD-ART THERAPIST (CONSENT)

The Superintendent recommends the Board approve a contract awarded to the following company indicated, the award being made to the lowest bidder meeting the required specifications and copies be filed in the Secretary's office as **Addendum #2023-2024-041**

- The Lincoln Center \$43,750

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

In-Person

Inez Bell - parent of a 9th and 12th grader and a member of FAC. I really enjoy and am proud to be apart of this program. Calendar formatting changed to every other month to be able to bring in events for the other months. Appreciates the board for working with getting everything with events going.

Mercedes Jackson – Congratulated Layla Bearden for her Superintendent Award. Spoke about needing more parent’s involvement with investing their time in child’s activities and volunteer to help out at events.

K. Meade – Spoke about family engagement and for families to please take the time to be involved and see what really goes on in school. Wants to help see students become successful.

Doug Slick – Surprised to hear no music program at Middle School. Spoke about studies he researched about music instruction does help with many factors of growing students and would like to see it brought back into the Middle School.

Virtual

Tamera Charles – Believes a lot of the great leaders came out of the Value of community engagement program. Keep seeking out grants to keep the program going and to make it bigger.

BOARD COMMENTS:

John Armato – Question trying to understand the Resolution to limit property tax. This will allow us to not go above the index and will be able to delay presentation of our budget. Which will give the Business Administrator a better look at the money that will be coming from the state.

BOARD ACTION: Minutes, List of Bills

It was moved by Mrs. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Heidel that the Board approve the minutes from October 2023 the list of Bills for October 2023 and the Treasurer’s Report for October 2023. All were in favor. Motion carried.

BOARD ACTION: CONSENT

It was moved by Mr. Heidel and seconded by Mrs. Lawrence that the following consent items #9 to #19 be approved in accordance with Policy 005, as recommended by the Board Treasurer:

Upon roll call vote, all present members voted aye for the above consent items: Mr. Armato; aye, Mr. Heidel; aye, Mr. Hylton; aye, Mrs. Kancianic; aye, Mr. Kline; aye, Mrs. Lawrence; aye, Mrs. Spence; aye, Mrs. Bearden; aye, Mrs. Johnson. Ayes: Nine. Nay: Zero. Motion carried.

NON-CONSENT: SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT #23

HEARINGS FROM PATRONS OF THE SCHOOLS (limited to the non-consent items):

None

BOARD ACTION-NON-CONSENT: SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Motion to approve Special Education award settlement as presented to the Board, 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 to be filed in the Secretary office as **Addendum #2023-2024-042**

It was moved by Mr. Armato and seconded by Mrs. Kancianic that the Board approve the settlement agreement as presented.

Upon roll call vote, the vote was recorded as follows: Mrs. Lawrence; aye, Mrs. Spence; aye, Mr. Kline; aye, Mr. Armato; aye, Mrs. Bearden; aye, Mr. Heidel; aye, Mr. Hylton; aye, Mrs. Johnson; aye, Mrs. Kancianic; aye. Ayes: Nine. Nay: Zero. Motion carried.

INFORMATION

- Board Reorganization Meeting – December 7th – Admin Building at 6:30pm - In-person
- Monthly Meeting Notice: December (correction to the December 7th Policy/Personnel Committee Meeting and Curriculum Committee Meeting. Both are In-Person not virtual for this date.

FEDERATION REMARKS – Sara Miller

Congratulated Layla Bearden for her Superintendent Award. Also, happy to announce the Trojan of the quarter celebration happened which is part of the PBIS Plan, awarding students for excellence. 1st quarter went well and hoping 2nd quarter does as well.

ROUND TABLE

Mrs. Johnson – Reflect for a moment on the team we have here in our district playing in different rolls how important it is to have this in our Community and is grateful for the big picture teams.

Mrs. Johnson – Reflected for a moment about the team and how important it is to have this in our community. Recognizes the rolls that everyone in our community plays and is well rounded. Is grateful for that in our District.

Mr. Heidel – Congratulated Layla Bearden for her award and the Board members who are re-elected for the new year. Spoke highly about our Board Members on how committed they are for the District and our Students.

Mrs. Spence – Reflected on the word Impossible and possible with Change. Sometime creates a tail spin but is possible to bring in radical changes and make things happen.

Mr. Kancianic – Pottstown Schools Music Association first ever Vender Craft Event. Please come out and Support. It is Saturday, November 18, 2023 from 9am to 3pm.

Mrs. Lawrence – Congratulations to Layla Bearden on her award. Agrees with the support of the Music for Middle School. Today is Children’s Greif Awareness Day and trying to make it more known about grief in children has packets to give out to anyone.

Mr. Armato – PBIS Program (Positive Behavior Intervention System). Students are selected by teacher for positive behavior and influenced by their academic and school citizenship. Students selected are awarded with a breakfast at the school with parents. Pottstown Chapter NWACP will be bringing books to our students 1st through 4th grade. NWACP was given a donation that will allow them to give us to hand out thousands of books.

Mr. Rodriguez – Thank you to students and staff for making our District run every day. PSSA time is approaching, looking at the data and will be working on getting scores up.

Mrs. Beardon – Proud of diversity we have. We show our differences and similarities and we continue to grow. Thanks to the FAC members for helping share information about our school and your involvement in the classroom. Thankful of our Board and Executive Team.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Heidel and seconded by Mrs. Lawrence that the Board adjourn. All in favor. Motion Carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:56pm.


Maureen Oakley-Board Secretary



**Pottstown School District
Personnel/Policy Committee
REPORT
November 2, 2023**

Committee Members: Steve Kline, Chair; John Armato, Susan Lawrence (absent), Deborah Spence, Katina Bearden

POLICY

Policy 103 – Non-Discrimination/Discriminatory Harassment in School and Classroom

Policy 103.2 - Non-Discrimination Based on Sex

Policy 249 - Bullying/Cyberbullying

A regular review of the above shows no policy change at this time with the exception of a compliance recommendation to add complaint process and form links to Title IX Sexual Harassment and Discriminatory section under Authority Policies.

Committee in agreement for this to be moved to the Meeting as a whole.

PERSONNEL – *no Personnel items at this time*

Informational Items

Proposal: Recruitment and Retention of Black Educators at Pottstown School District (D. Spence with W. Jeffreys and M. Boyer)

Mr. Boyer presented the first 7 steps of the proposal and the following updates were provided:

1. **Establish “Be the Change” Ambassadorships** - 2021 PSD Teacher Parity Project, recruiting at Annual Diversity Job Fairs hosted by MCIU, HBCU visits and hosting HBCU at Pottstown High School students (Instant Decision Day).
2. **Afro-Centric Curriculum Development** – African American History (Gr. 9-12), Gr. 10 U.S. History (Civil Rights), Black Nationalism and diversity literature distribution.
3. **“Back to Our Roots’ Cultural Exchange Programs** – Exploring an African Student Exchange program, Interactive Zoom with African classrooms (funding needed).
4. **The Center for Black Educator Development** – Preliminary collaboration with The Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship, Admin and Teaching Staff attending Cultural Proficiency (a 2-year program with Dr. Barbara Williams).
5. **Digital Elevations** – None in place at this time (NAACP/Black History Month, Staff recognition).
6. **“Our Future, Our Voice” Initiative** – Exploring ways to highlight and showcase African American Staff (e.g. creating videos for social media).
7. **Mentorship Beyond Borders** – No current engagement, under review.

Note: Step 8, 9 and 10 of the above proposal will be presented at the next meeting.

Next Meeting Date: December 7, 2023



Pottstown School District

**CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
REPORT**

November 2, 2023

(immediately following Policy/Personnel Committee meeting)

Committee Members: Susan Lawrence (absent) - Chairperson; Steve Kline, Phoebe Kancianic, Thomas Hylton, Katina Bearden

Informational Items

Gifted Screener - Mr. Rodriguez gave an update on the need to address Grade/State equity levels that are below target. A new School Psychologist is being sought, causing an unexpected delay in testing.

College and Career Readiness – Dr. White-Springfield spoke extensively on the 3-3-9, also referred to as the Comprehensive Career and Guidance Service Plan in place for students from K-12 students to be exposed to career exploration and college readiness. Students in Grade 5 and 8 are able to complete six pieces of Career and College readiness, and by Grade 11, eight more through the use of Naviance in building their career portfolio. A newly appointed Administrative Staff Overseer has been commissioned to monitor registrants, student accountability and ensure that measures are in place for eligible students to maintain and achieve their goals to be Career and College ready by graduation.

Gear-Up Program (Middle School/High School) – Gear-Up’s District Program Manager, Mr. Horn presented a brief overview of the programs counselors, mentors and tutors work with students through career counseling, exposure and awareness using both virtual and non-virtual programs and supports (e.g. college visits, guest speakers and workshops).

Curriculum Department Fall Calendar Review – Mr. Oxenford presented a recap of the school year and current placement with the Benchmark Assessments and Professional Development Staff Workshops (4 times during the school year, K-8). On November 6th, First Term Report Cards will be available to parents and students. November 17th will be designated for teaching staff to perform data review on the newly acquired Link-It Benchmark as well as Instructional Planning. The newly acquired Link-It Benchmark provides standard alliance and diagnostic both formative and summative data. Shortly following this, parent conferences will be held. Teachers will then be equipped to review student’s progression with Parents and Caregivers, as well as share suggestions and provide necessary support strategies for identified areas of need. Regular and ongoing updates to parents on progressive standards will remain a focus for teaching staff well into the early Winter 2023 and Spring 2024.

Next Meeting: December 7, 2023



POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Facilities/Finance Committee
REPORT

Thursday November 9, 2023
6:30 PM virtual

Members: Thomas Hylton- Chair; John Armato, Steve Kline, Kurt Heidel, Laura Johnson, Katina Bearden

FACILITIES – Mrs. Oakley

Facility Update

- MS Heating system - all three pumps simultaneously began leaking. Fortunately, the weather wasn't bad and the inside temperature in school was okay. Maintenance crew HVAC and Plumber on site immediately and started working on problem. Pipes had seals that failed. By midafternoon two pumps were fixed and running. By the end of the day all were up and running.
- Peco Shutdown – PECO is working on outside lines around the area each school will have times that will be shut down. HS was already shutdown and completed on October 22nd. Next school is Edgewood Learning they will be Shut down during holiday break.
- HS Sewer Line – actually a different area clog in pipe not just fixed area down the other end of school. Had to cut a section of pipe to remove clog now retro fitting and repairing this pipe. Working on getting all electric hand dryers in the school bathrooms ASAP.
- Rupert – circulation pump failed. Replaced with new pump and having old pump repaired to be able to use in another area if needed.
- Admin – heating hot water leak. Were able to shut down and get contained.
- Facility plan - waiting on O & S to provide us with full range facility plans should be in front of us in the next coming of weeks.
- Tree Grant – Mr. Hylton will meet with us next week to review the RFP which is our request for proposal of our landscape architect.

FINANCE – Mrs. Oakley

Board Approval Items:

- **Annual:**
 1. Resolution to limit property Tax 24/25yr – by passing this resolution we are saying going into our 24/25 budget we would not exceed tax increase at 7.9%. Base index for next year is 5.3% this number comes to us from state.
 2. Resolution to substitute tax collector appointment. Board of directors need to appoint tax collector for each year per school code. We use the Borough Tax Office to collect taxes but we still need a tax collector responsible for the school by naming Board Secretary.
- **Contracts:** PA School for the Deaf, MCIU Psychologist 23/24yr

Business Office Update:

- Working on our cost settlement Medical Access Program where we can bill back the state for Medical Access claiming. 21st Century Grant and BCSA Grant are being written. With grants looking to complete a lot of upgrades throughout district. Completing our 2nd round of Esser Monitoring. Audit and AFR due end of year getting that finalized.
- We are looking at project for scanning records that are in basement to limit paper sitting around. Also looking into digitizing current records as we receive records. Upgrading phone system over holidays.

Information

Next meeting: December 14, 2023



POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT
Public Relations & Community Engagement Committee
Report

November 9, 2023

Immediately following the Facilities/Finance Committee

Committee Members: Laura Johnson, (Chair); Katina Bearden, Kurt Heidel, Phoebe Kancianic

Guest Presentations

Mr. Evan Horn, Director of Gear Up (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness) continued his presentation from the last Committee Meeting. Currently Gear Up has ten staff members (including two Career Counselors) dispersed between the Middle School and High School. Providing students with one-on-one tutoring (Math and English), guidance counseling and post-secondary workshops, the Gear Up program continues to assist students in finding their strengths and interests and taking accountability to invest in their future after graduation. Gear Up recently organized a trip for students to visit Montgomery College and hosted a Military Day for high school students. A CTU program tour for 8th Grade students is scheduled in late November.

Discussion

Ms. Johnson gave an online tour demonstrating where to find Pottstown District Schools and Administration on social media. Social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, as well as the Pottstown School District website were explored. Social media platforms are a way for parents, students and staff to stay connected to current district events and school activities. Ms. Johnson highlighted the PSD website section for Public Participation in Board and Committee Meetings, a great public tool for parents and community members to utilize in voicing their opinions, comments and support.

Community Updates

Ms. Bearden announced the 4th Annual Father Daughter Dance to be held on November 17th at the Middle School for K to Gr. 6 students and their father/father figures. This is a non-profit, fully independent funded event that provides a structured, safe environment for families to experience a social emotional learning experience. The evening provides food, dancing, an onsite photographer, goodie bags and raffled community donated gift baskets.

Advocacy

Ms. Johnson shared an advocacy update on the BEFC (Basic Education Funding Commission) , a group led by state lawmakers. A BEFC link added to the Facebook comment section provides Community and Board Members an opportunity to submit a public comment to support fair funding thereby closing the gap disparity between wealthy and underfunded School Districts across Pennsylvania.

Next Meeting Date: December 13, 2023