



**POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
December 21, 2023**

The Regular Board Meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Pottstown School District was held on Thursday, December 21, 2023 at 6:34 PM in the Conference Room of the Administration Building 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, Mrs. Phoebe Kancianic, Mrs. Laura Johnson (absent), Mr. Steve Kline, Mrs. Susan Lawrence and Ms. Deborah Spence. Eight members present. Also attending were; Superintendent, Mr. Stephen Rodriguez, Business Administrator, Mrs. Maureen Oakley; Director of Human Resources, Mr. Matthew Boyer; Solicitor, Mr. Kalis.

**PRESENTATIONS**

- Superintendent Award – Jaxon Guest student at Franklin Elementary received this award for his outstanding action with getting help for a resident who had an accident on her Electric bike.
- Strive Initiative – David Charles (Co-Founder and CEO of the Strive Initiative). Mr. Charles spoke about the program where it is today and the continued support of everyone involved is how it makes the program succeed. Employee’s and Parents and student’s spoke about their experience and the impact this program has with the children. Mr. Charles shared a video of the program and students talking about the impact the program has on them.

**MINUTES**

Mrs. Oakley presented the minutes from the Reorganization Board meeting held on December 7, 2023 for Board approval.

**LIST OF BILLS**

Mrs. Oakley presented the list of bills paid from the various funds for the period of November 2023 to be approved as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2023-2024-045**

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Mrs. Oakley presented the Treasurer’s Report for November 2023 to be approved as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2023-2024-046**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

POLICY/PERSONNEL COMMITTEE – MR. KLINE

Policy/Personnel Committee met on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Committee report is attached to the Board minutes.

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – MRS. LAWRENCE

Curriculum Committee met on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Committee report is attached to the Board minutes.

FACILITIES/FINANCE COMMITTEE – MR. HYLTON

Facilities/Finance Committee met on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Committee report is attached to the Board minutes

PUBLIC RELATIONS/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT – MRS. JOHNSON

Public Relations/Community Engagement met on December 12th. Committee report is attached to the Board minutes.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY LEGISLATIVE – MRS. JOHNSON

No Meeting

PSBA REPRESENTATIVE – MRS. KANCIANIC

January is School Director Recognition Month. PSBA would like to remind us that we can submit school success stories to greatpaschools.com. PSBA revised some materials you can review. Reelected school Director members need to do there required trainings that can be done in person or virtual.

MCIU REPRESENTATIVE – MRS. LAWRENCE

No Meeting

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE – MR. BROUGHTON, MS. PHILLIPS

High School Band & Choir concert on December 13<sup>th</sup> was phenomenal. Fundraisers for the Italy trip and PSMA all went well and made money. Winter sports are in full bloom with Bowling team up and running new this year. Wrestling team thriving. Junior Varsity boys and girls and Varsity brought in a win against our rivalry Pottsgrove School District team. Decision day was on the 13<sup>th</sup> for all seniors/juniors. There were 50 Seniors that were excepted at colleges and 7 Seniors who were given full scholarships. Keystone & finals coming up after Holidays. High School had there first ever Dinner/Murder Mystery event and it was a success. All elementary had their Conferences, concerts, assemblies and Holiday movie/dance parties. All District Musical 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary show of Beauty and the Beast will perform on March 1,2,3,8,9,10.

**PERSONNEL**

**RESIGNATIONS/TERMINATIONS**

PROFESSIONAL

RACHEL O'DAY, TEACHER, MIDDLE SCHOOL, RESIGNATION EFFECTIVE JANUARY 12, 2024; HIRE DATE AUGUST 15, 2022.

CLASSIFIED

RATIFY ANNE VOYNAR, INTERVENTION ASSISTANT, LINCOLN, RESIGNATION EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 1, 2023; HIRE DATE SEPTEMBER 21, 2020.

**LEAVES**

PROFESSIONAL

RATIFY LEE JAIME-MERCADO, LONG TERM SUBSTITUTE, RUPERT, REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE, FMLA, EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 20, 2023; END DATE TBD.

KELSEY BURKE, SPECIAL ED TEACHER, FRANKLIN, REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE, FMLA-CHILDREARING, EFFECTIVE MARCH 23, 2024; END DATE TBD.

CORINA WORRALL, ELEMENTARY TEACHER, LINCOLN, REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE, FMLA-CHILDREARING, EFFECTIVE MAY 27, 2024; END DATE TBD.

AMANDA FIGUEROA, TEACHER, MIDDLE SCHOOL, REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE, FMLA-CHILDREARING, EFFECTIVE MAY 21, 2024; END DATE TBD.

CLASSIFIED

RATIFY AMY ORMSTON, SECRETARY, ADMIN.SPEC.ED./RUPERT, REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE, FMLA, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 11, 2023; END DATE TBD.

**CHANGE IN POSITION/SALARY**

PROFESSIONAL

RATIFY REILLY OWENS PARAPROFESSIONAL TO SPECIAL ED LONG TERM SUBSTITUTE, FRANKLIN, \$251/DAY, EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 11, 2023; RETURN TO PARAPROFESSIONAL WHEN TEMP ASSIGNMENT CONCLUDES.

CLASSIFIED

RATIFY CALISTA GUY PARAPROFESSIONAL, RUPERT, PART-TIME TO FULL TIME, \$17.50/HR., EFFECTIVE DECEMBER 12, 2023.

**ELECTIONS**

Professional

Scott Mader, HE/PE Teacher, High School, \$80,909/yr, effective January 15, 2024; replacing J.Martinez. Master+30/Step13

Juliet Krouse, Elementary Teacher, Franklin, \$49,724/yr, effective January 3, 2024; replacing H.Malik., Bach/Step2

Devon Craner, ES Teacher, Admin/Edgewood, \$74,552/yr, effective January 3, 2024; replacing M.Cesmegi., Master/Step13.

Exempt

Georgia Brasco, School Psych., Lincoln, \$84,748/yr, effective February 22, 2024; rehire/no replacement.

Classified

Ratify Erin E. Schwenk, Paraprofessional, Franklin, \$15.50/hr., effective November 17, 2023.

Ratify Dairryce McDonald, Substitute Support Staff, Administration, hourly rate per schedule, effective November 16, 2023.

Ratify Genevieve Robinson, Paraprofessional, Franklin, \$15.50/hr., effective December 4, 2023.

Ratify Florantz Pardieu, Substitute Support Staff, Administration, hourly rate per schedule, effective December 6, 2023.

Ratify Claudia Pena De Sanchez, Part-time Cleaner, Rupert, \$13.65/hr., effective December 4, 2023.

Ratify Virginia McCoy-Swinehart, Library Assistant, Rupert/Lincoln, \$15.50/hr., effective December 11, 2023.

Ratify Preference Watts-Thomas, Cafeteria, High School, \$14.25/hr., effective December 19, 2023.

**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 #2023-2024-046**

**PROFESSIONAL LEAVES**

Building	Name	Conference Title	Conference Location	Dates to Attend	Expenses	Cost
Admin	Stephen Rodriguez	2024 League of Urban Schools/PASA Leadership Conference	Hershey, PA	03/13/24-03/15/24	Dept Budget	\$1,028.37
HS	Kelly Reilly	PDE Conference	Hershey, PA	2/28/24-3/1/24	Dept Budget	\$852.00

**FIELD TRIP**

# students	Conference	Location	Date of Trip	Cost to Student	District Cost (Substitutes)	Chaperone(s)
20	Upper Daughin HS Boys Wrestling Tournament	Elizabethville, PA	02/02/2024-02/03/2024	\$0.00	n/a	Mike Hewitt, John Armato, Tom Daniels, Nate Parson, Rob Fitzpatrick
19	DECA 2024 State Career Development Conference	Hershey, PA	02/21/2024-02/23/2024	TBD	TBD	TBD

**POLICY**

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve the Policy 819 as presented and copies be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2023-2024-047**

- Policy 819 – Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response

**CONTRACTS**

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the contracts as presented and copies be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2023-2024-048**

- The Camphill School
- Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health
- The Berks County Intermediate Unit
- MCIU - Psychologists
- MCIU - Shared Student Services
- The Chester County Intermediate Unit

**RESOLUTION TO LIMIT PROPERTY TAX INCREASE 2024-2025 (update) (CONSENT)**

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the Resolution to Limit Property Tax Increase 2024-2025 as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2023-2024-049**

**FACILITY CHANGE ORDER (CONSENT)**

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the Facility Change Order as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2023-2024-050**

**2024 SUMMER PROJECT BUILDING ENVELOPE O&S (CONSENT)**

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the 2024 Summer Project Building Envelope O&S as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2023-2024-051**

**ACKNOWLEDGE CMD SERVICES TRANSPORTATION DRIVERS (CONSENT)**

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the Acknowledge CMD Services Transportation Drivers as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2023-2024-052**

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

**In-Person - None**

**Virtual - None**

**BOARD COMMENTS:** Mrs. Spence had a question about the upcoming discussion for tax rebate for home owners/renters. Mrs. Oakley will resend paperwork to board members to look over. Mr. Armato commented that we could piggy back off of state or make our own percentage of the rate.

**BOARD ACTION: Minutes, List of Bills & Treasure’s Report**

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

**BOARD ACTION: CONSENT #8 thru #19**

It was moved by Mr. Armato and seconded by Mr. Heidel that the following consent items #8 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: Mrs. Spence; aye, Mrs. Kancianic; aye, Mr. Armato; aye, Mrs. Bearden; aye, Mr. Heidel; aye, Mr. Hylton; aye, Mrs. Johnson; Absent, Mrs. Lawrence; aye. Mr. Kline. Ayes: Eight. Nay: Zero. Absent: One. Motion carried.

**NON-CONSENT: PERSONNEL: ELECTIONS #23**

Administrative

Daniel Willauer, Supervisor Building & Grounds, Administration Building, \$105,783/yr., effective January 8, 2024; replacing J.Connor.

**NON-CONSENT: MCIU MEMBERSHIP SERVICES BUDGET 2024-2025 #24**

Pottstown School District’s contribution to the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit for the 2024-2025 fiscal year shall be as follows:

Office of Professional Learning	= \$ 809.00
Office of Community & Government Relations	= \$ 3,421.00
Office of Technical Services	= <u>\$15,416.00</u>
Total	= \$19,820.00

This would be a decrease/increase in the Pottstown School District's contribution over the amount contributed for the 2023/2024 school year of which represents a .88% increase.

The Board Secretary recommends the Board approve/ratify the MCIU Membership Services Budget 2024-2025 as presented and a copy be filed in the Secretary’s office as **Addendum #2023-2024-053**

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

In-Person – None  
Virtual - None

**BOARD ACTION-NON-CONSENT: PERSONNEL: ELECTIONS #23**

It was moved by Mr. Heidel and seconded by Mrs. Lawrence that the Board approve the Personnel Elections as presented.

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

**BOARD ACTION-NON-CONSENT: MCIU MEMBERSHIP SERVICES BUDGET 2024-2025 #24**

It was moved by Mr. Heidel and seconded by Mrs. Lawrence that the Board approve the Personnel Elections as presented.

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

**INFORMATION**

- Board Workshop Meeting – Thursday, January 11<sup>th</sup> – Admin Building at 6:30pm - In-person
- Monthly Meeting Notice: February
- Act 55: School Board Director Training – Mrs. Oakley

## **FEDERATION REMARKS – Jane Hospador**

Federation would like to wish all a great Holiday, relax and have a great time with your family. Looking forward to 2024 and all it has to bring to our District.

## **ROUND TABLE**

Mrs. Spence – Would like the Board to consider establishing an African American committee to mimic Kwanzaa.

Mrs. Kancianic – No remarks

Mr. Armato – High School Seniors had a presentation for PA Youth Votes. The Presentation is designed to enhance students voice and share the importance the role they play for their vote for Federal, State, Local government. Also, wishing everyone Happy Holidays. Have a great time but remember to take care of yourself & family.

Mr. Heidel – Have a good Holiday to everyone. Can't wait to see you all in the new year.

Mr. Hylton – No remarks

Mrs. Lawrence – Would like to wish everyone a nice Holiday.

Mr. Kline – Thanked Mr. Rodriguez for doing the Superintendent Award.

Mr. Rodriguez – District is ramping down for the Holidays. School hallways and decorated and looks great. Keep in mind mental health and difficult circumstances. Happy Holidays to everyone and Thank You.

Mrs. Bearden – Thank you to staff for making the year so far pleasurable and possible for our students and families being a supporter with students, it takes special people to be able to do that on a fulltime basis. Like to thank the Board for continuing to keep an open mind and continuing to challenge to look for better ways and more efficiency wherever possible. Executive Team is a great extension to have. Thankful to have Mrs. Oakley here to help guide us with our communication and conversation in what best options are to what we can support and not support. Happy Holidays, and please take time for yourself and be grateful for what you have.

## **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 7:40pm.

  
Maureen Oakley-Board Secretary



**Pottstown School District  
Personnel/Policy Committee  
Report  
December 7, 2023**

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

**POLICY**

**Policy 819 - Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response**

- PSBA recently reviewed Policy 819 to address the correlation between threat assessment teams and crisis response/intervention teams when addressing suicide prevention and response. The policy was also updated to reflect current terminology and resources, including expanding the Definitions section, adding a Delegation of Responsibility section addressing responsibility for the development of administrative regulations and incorporating school safety and security training and the Safe2Say Something program (reference of Policy 805 Emergency Preparedness and Response).

A recommendation was made to move Policy 819 revisions forward to the meeting as a whole.

**PERSONNEL** – None

**Informational Items**

Proposal: Recruitment and Retention of Black Educators at Pottstown School District (#8-#16)

**#8. Community Mentorship and Training Hubs** – Currently several community organizations function with and in Pottstown Schools (e.g. ACLAMO, Strive, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Pottstown Public Library (adult education resources).

**#9. “Celebrating Black Excellence in Education”** – Middle School Strive Podcast series, Network development/mentorship with Black educators, providing mentorship.

**#10. Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Education** – Exploring partnerships with Black owned local businesses and providing workshops with staff to expand income and starting a business.

**#11. Tailoring Benefits with Cultural Relevance** – YWCA – Black Lives Matter (Art Department), College Visits, Juneteenth Festival, Hispanic Heritage and Black History activities

**#12. Artistic Expressions in Education** – Currently various Black artists are studied in K-12 (Kehinde Wiley, Basquiat, Faith Ringgold) Art Department: art programs highlighting Black diversity and history.

**#13. Gamified Recruitment Process** – Engineering Department (Esports team, virtual storytelling – day in the life of a Black educator).

**#14. Teacher Innovation Hub** – Pottstown Education Foundation Award System – innovative idea to recruit Black educators.

**#15. Micro-credentialing and Badge System** – Black Educators highlighted yearly by the district.

**#16. Talent Pipeline Program** – MONTCO Para Pathway program, ECE, The Black Teacher Pipeline Fellowship.

**Next Meeting Date: February 1, 2024**



Pottstown School District  
**CURRICULUM COMMITTEE**  
**Report**  
**December 7, 2023**

*(immediately following Policy/Personnel Committee meeting)*

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

### **Informational Items**

#### **PMS House Model Update - H. Wangia / J. Tupper / D. Davis / W. Lawless / J. Dargan**

Dr. Wangia, Principal of the Middle School spoke on the House Model that has been in place for a little over a year. The four House Principals also spoke on each of their respective grade levels and the current academic-social support programs (i.e. WEB) that are in place. Each House Principal focuses on being physically present daily to both students and families. Integrating foundational core subjects while creating fun learning experiences is the main drive for students to reach the District's goal of knowing every student by name and for each student to reach their best success at every level. Two new research-based programs, Edmentum Exact Path and LinkedIn, are used to implement this. Principal Lawless shared that recent data reveals negative behavior levels amongst Middle Schoolers has significantly decreased. This may be attributed to the increase of Administrative presence at the Middle School with use of the House Model. Field trips are a wonderful resource and learning experience for students, teachers and caregivers alike (North Bay Excursion, Spirit of Philadelphia, Valley Forge, Dutch Apple Theater). PBIS (Positive Behavior Interactive Supports) promotes teacher team-building and creating a positive student culture in the Middle School (e.g. school mantra). The next stage of the PBIS plan will look to build stronger ties with the Pottstown Community.

#### **HS Career and Technical Education (CTE) Highlights**

Ms. Baller, Director of the CTE (Career and Technology Education) at the High School presented the different State created task lists that students use. A main focus is given to completers (PIMS) and concentrators (Perkin System – grant funded) students that have been through and completed 2 CTE courses (480 hours), leading to post-secondary education or internship at the senior year level. A slide presentation was used to showcase senior year completer graduates (2021-2022, 37, 2022-2023, 45, and 2023-2024, 52) Theory, lab learning and field trips are in place to maximize student's learning experience. Local employers (Occupational Advisor Committee) and post-secondary institutions are met with, to allow students exposure to different trades, new and update skills, JumpStart program and available employment to them after graduation. Building a bridge and pathway between the Middle School and High School to encourage student's early exposure to various career fields and employment that may capture their personal talent and interests is a current CTE focus.

Next Meeting: February 1, 2024





POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT  
**Facilities/Finance Committee**  
**REPORT**

Thursday December 14, 2023  
6:30 PM virtual

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

**FACILITIES** – Mrs. Oakley

Facility Update

- Reduce Contract by Allowances not performed – (\$37,391.60)
- 2024 Proposal Envelope O&S. – Mechanical, electrical and plumbing: High School Sanitary Replacement, HS fire alarm panel & devices and Middle School fire alarm devices. Building Envelope: North End Learning Center stone wall reconstruction, Barth wall construction and manholes, Admin building concrete sidewalk, Rupert repointing and localized leak remediation, High School Loose railing, shelf angle window soffit repair and Roof repair section 18,20,21 & 22. Design work for High School Classroom Ventilators (22) and Middle School replacement of (2) 200-ton Air cooled chillers will be included in the total \$1,366,385.
- The alternate work being designed has an estimated construction budget of \$1,970,000, due to the lead time of these projects it was recommended to begin design and planning for the replacement air ventilators and chillers and fund these projects through the capital reserve fund.

**FINANCE** – Mrs. Oakley

Board Approval Items:

- Update - CMD Transportation Drivers (Bi-annual acknowledgement of our drivers).
- Update - Resolution to limit property Tax 24/25 yr – Typo when approved at 7.99%, actual corrected adjusted index is 7.9%.
- Contracts: Berks County Intermediate Unit, Chester County Intermediate Unit, MCIU Student Services Shared Service Plan, MCIU Psychological Evaluations, The Camphill School, Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health
- PA Property Tax Rebate Program – some districts already have in place. This program piggybacks off of the state program and the District will be able to rebate and set it to our budget. Program is for homeowners and renters with income qualifications.

Information

Act 55: School Board Director Training

Next meeting: February 8, 2024



**POTTSTOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Public Relations & Community Engagement Committee**  
**Report**

December 14, 2023

Immediately following the Facilities/Finance Committee

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

### **Updates**

Mrs. Bearden shared that the annual non-profit Father-Daughter Dance was a success. With the assistance of many (administrators, board members, staff, alumni and parents and community members), students and their fathers were able to enjoy an evening of fun, acclimation and building a socio-emotional experience. A Mother-Son Dance is scheduled to take place on Friday, April 19<sup>th</sup> 2024.

### **Celebrating Students**

- Growth Awards – Starting from the First Grade and including Virtual Students a certificate is presented that recognizes and celebrates a student's academic growth. The Growth Award instills the message ‘what matters most is how far you’ve grown’ and encourages students to keep working on their goals.
- Holiday Concerts – establishing events that create a positive student culture by highlighting student’s vocal and instrumental talents.

### **Legislative/Advocacy Update**

Mrs. Johnson shared that the Education State Budget was finished and passed. Two highlights: both Vouchers and Level Up were not on the budget. Items that were passed were finalizing block grants, School Construction (possibly not recurring, 175M), Private Schools tax credits (EITC) and enhancing student teaching programs (stipends).

### **Webpage and New Videos**

Mr. Rodriguez presented a new webpage on the district site that provides a user-friendly tool making it more accessible for public engagement with Board Meetings. Viewers can watch a short tutorial video on virtual/remote engagement, resolving problems section and instruction on making public written comments.

### **Discussion**

Mr. Rodriguez provided an update on PowerSchool implementation and broke down re-evaluating traditional Grading Systems (assessing, skill-based report cards, academic awards, portrait of a graduate).

Next Meeting: February 8, 2024