

SOUTH MIDDLETON SCHOOL DISTRICT
4 Academy Street, Boiling Springs, PA 17007

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
August 17, 2020

The South Middleton Board of School Directors met on August 17, 2020. The South Middleton Board of School Directors met via Zoom and in-person. Some members of the Board and administration were present in the Board Room of the District Office on August 17, 2020. Members of the public were able to view the meeting via Zoom. Due to technical problems, the meeting was not livestreamed via YouTube. The President, Mrs. Knouse, called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m., after attempting to resolve the technical issues with the livestreaming.

ROLL CALL

The Secretary called the roll with all members present except as designated:

School Directors

Mr. John Greenbaum - Absent
Mr. William Hartman
Mrs. Stacey Knavel
Mrs. Elizabeth Knouse
Mrs. Elizabeth Meikrantz

Mrs. Denise MacIvor
Mrs. Edith Rob
Mrs. Bethanne Sellers
Mr. Jonathan Still

Administrative Staff

Dr. Matthew Strine, Superintendent
Mrs. Melanie Shaver-Durham, Director of Curriculum/Instruction
Dr. Jesse White, Principal, YBMS
Mrs. Kimberly Spisak, Director of Student Services

Student Representatives

Gibran Varahrami - Absent

Visitors

Board Secretary

Nicole Weber

Solicitor

Gareth Pahowka - Absent

INTRODUCTIONS AND RECOGNITION - None

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION – None

Mrs. Knouse announced that the public comments already submitted would be read and reviewed at the second citizens participation portion of the agenda. Members of the public can continue to submit comments via email or if they are joining the zoom meeting, they can indicate with an emoji that they wish to comment during the second citizens participation portion of the meeting.

ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Mrs. Knavel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Meikrantz, that the Board approves the minutes of the following meeting: 8/3/20 – Planning/Regular Board Meeting. **The motion passed unanimously.**

FINANCIAL REPORT – June 2020

Mrs. Knavel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Meikrantz, that the Board approves the following financials:

The Board approved payment of General Fund bills represented by check 60332 to check 60371 in the amount of \$271,768.75. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mrs. Knavel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Meikrantz that the Board approve the following financials:

No checks disbursed from Activity Fund bills during this time period.

The Board approved payment of Athletic Fund bills represented by check 22101 to check 22116 in the amount of \$8,633.67.

No checks disbursed from Cafeteria Fund bills during this time period.

No checks disbursed from Construction fund bills during this time period.

No checks disbursed from Capital Reserve (PSDLAF) Fund bills during this time period.

No checks disbursed from Trust Fund bills during this time period.

The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS/OPERATIONS, DIRECTOR OF STUDENTS SERVICES AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Dr. Strine reported that currently there are 311 students enrolled in out-of-district cyber schools or the Bubbler Cyber Academy. Dr. Strine commented that SMSD can safely reopen schools for K-5 students attending in-person, five days per week. He is recommending a change in the schedule for secondary students (6-12) from an ABABA schedule to an ABABC schedule. SMEA is in support of this change, and that this would be the best model to deliver instruction and keep everyone safe. Please visit the SMSD website to receive further updates on the re-opening plan. He also reported that 14% of the population is enrolled in cyber with 86% staying in the district.

A question was posed to how much does out-of-district cyber school cost? \$12,622 for a regular education student, and the cost for a special education student costs \$25,129.

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Mrs. Knavel and Mrs. Meikrantz commented that they were surprised by the change in the schedule at the secondary level, based on the curriculum committee meeting. Mrs. Sellers commented that adding a remote day helped make transition easier and allowed for all cohorts to work together, and provided a more stable and routine schedule.

Mrs. Rob commented about the district considering a fully remote model. Out-of-district cyber schools' placements will be costly for the district. If the district starts fully remote, the HVAC (air conditioning) can be avoided for the first several months, the PPEs can be fully stocked, and would like to see the costs go to our teachers, rather than an out of district placement.

Mrs. Knouse commented that we need to be flexible, but parents/students need to know now what the final re-opening plan is so that everyone can plan accordingly.

Mrs. Meikrantz inquired if teachers were permitted to return to their classrooms? Yes, they are able to return to their classrooms and set up.

Mrs. Melanie Shaver-Durham provided a report on her recent activities in support of the re-opening plan. There were gaps in the curriculum from the learning in the spring of 2020. We are monitoring to overcome these challenges. She reported on scheduled department chair meetings, revising student handbooks, and preparing for in-service days and new teacher induction. Also, the diversity task force moving along with interviewing a consultant to provide diversity/racial updates with curriculum. Mrs. MacIvor inquired as to whether the curriculum committee vetted the diversity curriculum? Mrs. Knouse commented that the consultant was not just for curriculum, but to review all operations within the district, including policies, procedures, and human resources.

There was an inquiry about student attendance for the 2020-2021 school year - Whether the district provides in-person instruction or needs to switch to virtual learning, attendance is required and will be taken.

Mrs. Rob commented that a fully remote opening solves a lot of problems. Everyone is comfortable with zoom, and students would be with SMSD teachers, not cyber teachers. Start out fully remote through September. Mr. Still inquired whether she wanted the teachers to be fully remote and in-person at the same time. Mrs. Rob indicated "yes." Mr. Still commented that this would require a lot of technology support and money.

Mrs. Sellers commented that need to establish a common language – difference between fully remote learning and livestreaming learning.

Mrs. Weber reported that transportation schedules for non-public schools are being prepared. The local auditors started the fieldwork for the audit. They were supposed to be there for several days, but only had to stay one day. Business office staff was well prepared and ready to go. Auditors will return in October 2020. Mrs. Weber met with administration to further refine arrival and dismissal procedures. She had a meeting with LifeTouch regarding the taking of class pictures. Additional training on the business software was completed, and lastly, a \$2,500 donation was made by the Bubbler Foundation to off-set negative student lunch balances. The district is very thankful and proud to partner with the foundation.

Mrs. Spisak reported the PA Department of Health and PDE updated the mask wearing guidelines, and students will wear masks all the time. An infographic that provides information to parents regarding when students should stay home is being developed. The Bubbler Cyber Academy deadline for registering students to enroll is August 21. Attendance policies and

procedures are being updated regarding attendance. Professional development for staff will be provided during in-service days. Bubblers Connection Camp will be held at the end of August.

NOTICES AND COMMUNICATIONS – None

BOARD REPORTS

Safety/Security Committee Meeting – Mr. Still

Mr. Still reported that the committee met on August 10th.

Funding sources: CARES/ESSERS/PD Safety Grant

Mr. Still reported on a Safety/Security/Communication Specialist position for \$110,000 – grant money would be used and shared with the township – emergency planning, grants and communication assists and helps the entire community. The \$110,000 is the cost for the position, and would be a key role in bringing safety, security and communications together. Technology needs are met through the CARES Act. Regarding Act 44 funding – the district is still awaiting guidance.

The re-opening plan was discussed at the committee meeting and various guidelines from CDC, PDE are not always providing the same information for guiding districts. Dr. Jumper, school physician, and Mr. Still's wife (a pediatrician) agreed that it is for the good that children return to school – for emotional and psychological wellbeing. There are those on the other side that feels students should not attend in-person school- and there is a silent middle – need to balance all of these factors.

Mrs. Rob proposed the Supervisor of Safety, Security and Communications position be approved this evening. Mrs. Knouse stated that did not necessarily be approved but could advertise as an anticipated vacancy. Dr. Strine commented that will be bringing a briefing form and job description for the position to the next board meeting.

Mrs. Knouse commented that this position would expand beyond the district and would work with the township to develop the position beyond the grant – and it would be a shared position between the District and the Township. Mrs. MacIvor inquired whether this should be considered during the budget process. Yes, it was discussed, and we now have a funding source. Mrs. Rob inquired whether there were other items that the grant funding could be used for? Yes, there are specific guidelines for the grant funding, and we already have PPE, so this would be the best use of funds.

Mr. Hartman made a motion, seconded by Mr. Still, that the Board establish a Supervisor of Safety, Security, and Communications position in partnership with the Township, with a total expenditure of up to \$110,000.

On a roll call vote, the motion passed as follows:

Mr. Greenbaum - Absent

Mr. Hartman - Yes

Mrs. Stacey Knavel - No

Mrs. Elizabeth Knouse - Yes

Mrs. Elizabeth Meikrantz – Yes

Mrs. MacIvor - No

Mrs. Rob - Yes

Mrs. Sellers - No

Mr. Still - Yes

Yes – 5, No – 3, Abstention – 0 Absent – 1

Curriculum and Instruction Committee – Mrs. Sellers

Mrs. Sellers reported that the committee met on August 12th and discussed a variety of topics surrounding the re-opening of schools. Vo-tech students – there are 60 students, and 2 professional staff members will do remote learning. Students out on sick days will receive virtual homebound instruction. Livestreaming option was discussed. Survey was conducted by SMEA regarding staff safety concerns. The secondary schedule and options for remote learning were discussed.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Hartman made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Meikrantz, that the Board approves the agenda of August 17, 2020, with the agenda amended to include Mr. Hartman's motion to include the creation of the Supervisor of Safety/Security and Communications position. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mrs. Meikrantz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. MacIvor, that the Board appoints Elizabeth Knouse and Jonathan Still as PSBA Voting Delegates for the PSBA Legislative Platform, scheduled for November 7, 2020, at the Mountain View Middle School in Cumberland Valley School District or via Zoom. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mrs. Knavel made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Meikrantz, that the Board approves the following items in a block motion:

Student Representative to the Board for 2020-2021 and 2021-2022

The Board appointed Ajla Salkic as Student Representative to the Board of School Directors for the years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Diakon Youth Services - For 2020-2021

The Board approved the agreement between Diakon Youth Services and South Middleton School District for the 2020-2021 school year.

Operation and Maintenance Agreement for District Classroom Space - 2020-2021

The Board approved the Operation and Maintenance Agreement for district classroom space between the South Middleton School District and the Capital Area Intermediate Unit. This is for the usage of space at Yellow Breeches Middle School for a CAIU-operated classroom.

Personnel - Employment - Bubbler Connection Camp

That the Board approves the employment of the following employees for Bubbler Connection Camp at \$40.00/hr.:

Bubbler Connection Camp

Monday, August 31-Thursdays, September 3

Elementary (K-5) 9:00am-11:30am

"Camp Counselors"/Teachers

Erin Rech- lead teacher

Marisa Elliot

Aron Kunkel

Stacy Sanders

Hannah Coath

Ellen Schin

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Secondary (6-12) 12:30pm-3:00pm

"Camp Counselors"/Teachers

Sue Reutter-lead teacher

Elmer Barrick

Danae Klock

Carrie Miller

Brian Rohm

Megan Capuano

Personnel - Employment - Extra Duty - Co-Curricular - 2020-2021

The Board employed the extra duty, co-curricular employees for the 2020-2021 school year.

Personnel - Employment - Classified

The Board approved the employment of the following classified personnel:

Name: DJ (Dean) Rossman

Position: IT Technician (replacing William Stahl)

Starting Date: 8/18/20

Salary: \$20.35/hr. - 251/days, 7.5 hrs/day

Personnel - Two (2) Part-Time District Custodial Positions

The Board authorized the Administration to advertise and employ two (2) part-time custodians.

Each position will be 5.5 hrs/day - 260 days/yr at a minimum of \$13.25/hr.

The block motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Meikrantz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Sellers, that the Board accepts the resignation of Kimberly Spisak, from the position of Director of Student Services, effective on or around January 13, 2021. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Personnel - South Middleton Education Association Agreement

Mrs. Meikrantz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Sellers, that the Board approves the agreement between the South Middleton School District and the South Middleton Education Association, for years beginning July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024.

Prior to the vote, the following was discussed.

Mrs. Knavel commented that she could not vote in favor of the agreement until she saw updated budget figures based on the tentative contract and the impact of COVID figures. She would either have to vote no or suggested that the vote is tabled until updated figures are presented. Mr. Still also expressed concern. He wants to support the contract, but would like to know financially where we sit with this contract.

Mrs. Rob commented that the team worked very hard to come up with a health care plan that was less expensive than the current one. Nothing has changed since the discussion at the last executive session. Mrs. Knavel would also like to see contract language changes. Mrs. Sellers commented that there were very few contract language changes, and the district solicitor has

worked with the contract for months and thoroughly vetted the language. There have been no questions from board members regarding the contract since the executive sessions.

On a roll call vote, the motion passed as follows:

Mr. Greenbaum - Absent
Mr. Hartman - Yes
Mrs. Stacey Knavel - No
Mrs. Elizabeth Knouse - Yes
Mrs. Elizabeth Meikrantz – Yes

Mrs. MacIvor - Yes
Mrs. Rob - Yes
Mrs. Sellers - Yes
Mr. Still - No

Yes – 6, No – 2, Abstention – 0 Absent – 1

CITIZENS PARTICIPATION

Mr. and Mrs. Olsen commented about the recent article in the newspaper regarding hiring a consultant for changes in curriculum about diversity and racial relations. Shouldn't the school district concentrate on the re-opening of schools right now and getting students back to in-person instruction? The district started to explore the diversity/racial relations item prior to the pandemic and will continue to handle and address this issue as well as the reopening of schools.

Mrs. Bennett commented:

With the last minute guidance provided by PDE, our county is recommended to hold school via hybrid or remote. Will the reopening plan for k-5 be modified to following the guidelines? Our recommendation is to have K-5 return to school, five days per week, and have a hybrid schedule for grades 6-12. Having volunteered in multiple different classrooms at Rice, I am having a hard time understanding how possibly 18-19 desks will be spaced 6 feet apart, from one edge of a desk to the next edge of a desk. Can you please explain how that this will be done? Measurement is from the center of the desk and looking at number of students attending to keep class size down. What about HVAC? We are working with TRANE to see what can be done to mitigate the spread.

Why are we using grant money for a paid job position to assist with COVID updates when this district needs a technology department of individuals that can set up web cams to live stream lessons, assist with presenting new and updated technology to teachers and take care of technology that needs repaired? The grant money has certain guidelines/restrictions for how it can be used.

Mrs. Carvell commented:

With regard to 6-12, I have concerns about continuity if you are switching back and forth between “brick and mortar” and remote as your COVID numbers change. This plan has us leaning to cyber school. The total remote plan seems to have more teaching time.

What happens to a student who is forced to quarantine but is well enough to participate in class? Do they only get education on Day C? If they are offered remote learning, then why can't we just do remote learning, so we have more actual teaching days? Students who are forced to quarantine would have remote learning staff and use of homebound teachers.

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Mrs. McMahon commented:

I am a teacher in a neighboring district. We can barely fit 12 desks in the room six feet apart with average sized classrooms. Do you have a picture or a mock room in which parents can view what six feet looks like for 17-19 kids showing the actual six feet between students? Yes, will have video. Is your staff inservice days in person? Or are they required to attend virtually? It is a mix.

Why can't this grant money be spent for protection for teachers, plexiglass for middle school teachers desks etc.? The grant money could be spent for such items, but the district has already these items.

Mr. Draper commented:

He thanked everyone for their work, professionalism and planning for the re-opening of the school district. He is concerned that we are still planning and suggested that we make a decision, publish and announce the decision and inform the community. He commented on the consultant for diversity training and felt that some items already fell under the responsibilities of those working for the district such as human resources and the solicitor. He felt they should be trained – “train the trainer.” He also expressed concerns about hiring a supervisor of security, safety and communications without a job description – some of those responsibilities fall under duties already assigned to staff members. Concerned that costs are unknown.

Mrs. Allyson Fulton commented:

She commented that she has students in the district and with the change from ABAB schedule with 3 days in-person and now it is two days – she would like to know what does “c” look like? Also commented that she would like to know if the Bubbler Cyber Academy deadline could be extended and if not, publish the plan with information immediately regarding the change from ABAB to ABABC.

Doug:

He commented that we need to move forward, not backwards with a fully remote model. Camps, sports, childcare have been proceeding all summer with no huge spikes in COVID-19. The rate of COVID-19 infection is low – should move forward with what is planned – less than a 5% rate, so hybrid and in-person instruction are appropriate. He is looking of certainly in what is being planned.

Jamie Berrier

Mrs. Berrier commented that she agrees with Doug. Please proceed and announce the plan.

Mr. MacIvor – His comments are attached to the minutes. His comments and suggestions will be taken into consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/INFORMATION ITEMS

Board Calendar: August/September 2020

Facilities Committee Meeting - August 24, 2020 - 6:00 p.m.

Curriculum & Instruction Committee Meeting - August 31, 2020 - 6:00 p.m.

Community Relations Committee Meeting - September 2, 2020 - 6:00 p.m.

Planning/Regular Board Meeting - September 8, 2020 - 7:00 p.m.

Athletic Committee Meeting - September 14, 2020 - 6:00 p.m.

Regular Board Meeting - September 21, 2020 - 7:00 p.m.

DIRECTORS' DISCUSSION

Mr. Hartman commented he would like to see updated information about the ABABC schedule quickly announced. He also commented that the district may be able to partner with war college for diversity training. Fireworks are scheduled for September 6th – the school district will be closed for this event – will there be security? Security provided by township.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Meikrantz made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Sellers, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 10:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicole Weber
Board Secretary