



## Board of School Directors Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, March 10, 2021

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**Members present:** Nicholas Braccio, William Brong, Janet Flisak, Matt Holliday, Ken Keith, Thomas Kwiatkowski, Stephen Nelson, Donna Scheuren, Courtney Barbieri

**Others present:** Elisa Ball, Frank Ball, Brigitte Bagocius, Henry Franz, Frank Gallagher, Christopher Hey, Jim Meitzler (KCBA), Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Damion Spahr (SitelogIQ), Brian Pawling, and Megan Zweiback

### 1. Operations Committee

Mr. Brong called the meeting to order at 6:49 P.M.

Mr. Brong stated that this meeting would be an update on the proposals received for the facilities projects at Franconia Elementary, and Indian Valley and Indian Crest Middle Schools.

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Pawling stated that the final GESA Amendment Agreement and accompanied documents had been shared to the Board and after careful vetting, the following recommendations are being made on subcontractors as follows:

- BSI Electrical - Indian Valley MS electric project - \$1,098,073
- Pro Com Roofing - Indian Crest MS Roof - \$2,595,446
- Myco Mechanical - Franconia ES Boiler room - \$698,744

All the vendors included in the process are being recommended either by the District, SitelogIQ, KCBA, or Snyder Hoffman. Supervisor of Operations, Mr. Ball stated that he had performed reference checks and all three vendors have excellent track records of work on other projects. He cited several local school districts who had recommended the vendors and their expertise on various projects.

Mr. Spahr of construction manager firm, SitelogIQ, discussed the specifics of the proposed projects and the details of each of the recommended contractors.

Mr. Braccio asked about the start date of the project and whether there would be any interference with student instruction. Mr. Spahr indicated that preliminary drawing and layout work could begin immediately upon approval, and some other tasks that could be performed when students are not in the building. He noted that some switch gear work could be performed in an effort to have completion on time. He also noted that the deadline for completion is forefront of this project.

Mrs. Scheuren inquired on the SitelogIQ cost, noting an increase from the original January estimate. Mr. Spahr acknowledged the increase in cost and alluded to evolving project details as the proposal was being created. Mr. Spahr also noted that the cost could be reduced by decreasing the amount of time that a project manager would be required to be on-site on each of the projects.

Mr. Nelson also reiterated concern for the price increase of construction management. Mr. Brong asked if the scope of work changed, creating an increase and Mr. Spahr responded that it did not. A brief discussion occurred regarding the cost and Dr Gallagher indicated that the necessary work would be done to get the price back to \$175K.

Mr. Keith expressed concern of potential change orders on the project and Mr. Spahr responded that should any issues arise, they would be addressed to the district for decision. Mr. Keith also asked about prioritizing of each of the projects and Mr. Spahr noted that the switchgear is of utmost importance as it powers the building, however the scope of the Indian Crest roof project is larger and encompasses the safety of the entire building.

Mr. Brong commended the team for its receipt of competitive proposals and indicated his approval to move forward for Board action.

Mr. Pawling noted that the prices as indicated this evening were Not to Exceed and that there would not be an increase in construction costs. Mr. Pawling also indicated that the Finance Committee would have its discussions for potential borrowing for the projects, at the April meeting. Mr. Pawling stated that all documents are currently under legal review by the district solicitor.

The Operations Committee agreed to move forward for Board Action.

Mr. Pawling introduced Souderton Area High School student, Tyler Kratz, who will be interning with the school district Business Office.

Mr. Brong adjourned the Operations Committee meeting at 7:08 P.M.

## 2. Education-Personnel Committee

### 2.1 Curriculum Update

Mr. Kwiatkowski called the Education-Personnel Meeting to order at 7:18 P.M.

The Administration will present an update on Curriculum including Assessment Data, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Data Use and Mapping Growth.

Dr. Gallagher announced that it was one year ago that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania made the decision to close schools for two weeks in an effort to stop the spread of the Coronavirus. Dr. Gallagher praised the districts teachers, students and Board for the ability to persevere through the pandemic. He acknowledged the challenges that were faced and the expressed pride of being able to offer in-person instruction and virtual learning to the students of our community.

Dr. Gallagher indicated that the information that was being reported this evening is a culmination of data from the school-year and some of this data had been previously reported to the Board. Dr. Gallagher introduced Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment, Dr. Kennedy-Reilly.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly shared a presentation that began with the school district mission statement and the commitment to meet the needs of the whole child. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly acknowledged the challenging educational environment, however she praised and highlighted the resiliency of our students and staff.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed the presentation which included the Importance of Assessment Data to measure our academic recovery efforts, identify inequities in classrooms and schools, advocating for equity and inclusion and promoting better outcomes for all of our students. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly was intentional in expressing the need to exercise caution when interpreting data and understanding learning loss. She stated that loss is most commonly due to extended gaps or discontinuities in education. She also stated that while learning loss may show up differently across different grades and subjects, supportive school environments and strong teacher-student relationships can speed recovery from learning loss.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly explained the purpose of MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) in the Souderton Area School District as a collaborative and systematic approach to empower, challenge and support one another through shared ownership in the growth of the whole child. The tiers include supporting student achievement and behavior, support decision-making, social competences and academic achievement.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly cited several examples of the tools used to support students; diagnostically, and formatively, including adaptive protocols and educational applications that provide immediate analytics. These analytics serve the district and individual schools, in addition to assisting teachers at grade level and in their individual classrooms.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reviewed the PALS (Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening) assessment which reports a young student's knowledge of literacy fundamentals. This assessment identifies students in need of additional instruction. PALS data was reviewed for kindergarten, first and second grade indicating students who were below benchmark and those at benchmark.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly also reviewed the MAP (Measurement of Academic Progress) Growth for grades 2 through 8, which reflected the SASD students scores in Reading and Math, against the national norm.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly closed the presentation outlining The Pennsylvania Department of Education's decision to administer PSSA's and Keystone in the 2020-2021 school year. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly noted that PDE feels a moral imperative to assess students, however it has also been acknowledged that the administration of assessments should not serve to aggravate or confound the issue.

Dr. Kennedy-Reilly reiterated that despite the pandemic, our students are not behind, having learned critical skills and becoming resilient citizens.

Mr. Kwiatkowski thanked Dr. Kennedy-Reilly for the presentation and conveyed his gratitude to everyone for the success of this school year. He praised Dr. Kennedy-Reilly for her compassion and commitment to our students reinforcing a strong foundation. Mr. Kwiatkowski encouraged celebrating the success and focus on areas of improvement.

Mrs. Barbieri thanked Dr. Kennedy-Reilly and indicated that a record of student growth should be made to showcase the success of the school year. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that the creation of a video highlighting our students is in the making.

Mr. Holliday asked if local or county data was available to measure where SASD students line up with their peers. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly said that information could be obtained. Mr. Holliday also asked if data was available for in-person vs. virtual instruction. Dr. Kennedy-Reilly stated that our preference is to focus on student learning at grade level as all learning styles differ from school to school.

Mrs. Flisak asked about the timing of state testing and Dr. Kennedy-Reilly responded that kindergarten and first grade are assessed in April.

Mr. Nelson thanked Dr. Kennedy-Reilly for the presentation and commented on the importance of data but also reinforced other skill sets learning through the pandemic.

Mr. Keith commented on the data reporting of kindergarten through grade 2 and the importance of those years. He also inquired about how the achievement gap that is expected to occur from the pandemic and a time frame of recovery.

Mr. Kwiatkowski adjourned the Education-Personnel Meeting at 8:23 P.M.

### 3. Finance Committee

#### 3.1 2021-22 Budget Update

Mrs. Scheuren called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 8:30 P.M.

Director of Business Affairs, Mr. Pawling gave an update on the preparation of the 2021-2022 budget. He stated that the perviously reported deficit had been reduced to \$5.6 million dollars through revenue and expenditure adjustments. Those adjustments included a percentage increase in real estate tax collection, an estimated increase in the Earned Income Tax and in the Real Estate Transfer Tax. There were reductions to the North Montco Technical Career Center final tuition, Pupil Services budget and the Operations Department budget.

Director of Pupil Services, Mrs. Zweiback reviewed the budget work that is occurring within the Pupil Services and Special Education Budgets. Those budgets include costs associated with social services for students, and security, nursing, guidance, homebound and gifted services.

Mrs. Zweiback also reviewed costs associated for special education that include student tuition costs for non-public placements and special ed services including speech, language, occupational therapy, and behavioral support. In addition, the special services provided by the intermediate unit were also included.

Mr. Pawling stated that additional work is occurring to refine the budget. That additional work includes the inclusion of staff retirements, staffing changes, building and department budget adjustments, healthcare costs, and continued review of local revenue sources. Mr. Pawling also indicated that the district is waiting on the final 2021-2022 state subsidy allocations and the possibility of additional federal ESSER funds.

Dr. Gallagher stated that the advocacy group, L.E.A.R.N. (Leaders for Educational Accountability and Reform Network) is continuing their efforts to pursue a change to the existing charter school funding formula. Dr. Gallagher indicated that the current momentum within the state legislature has been very favorable. A change to the formula could result in a savings to the district budget.

Mrs. Scheuren made a public announcement of the P.S.B.A. (PA School Boards Association) Advocacy Day being held on March 22nd, noting its purpose to connect to legislators to advocate for issues affecting public education. Mrs. Scheuren also commented on the positive bipartisan activity surrounding the reform of charter school funding.

Mrs. Scheuren questioned the proposed ESSER funding and how those funds would be used to combat learning loss. A brief discussion occurred about summer programs and remediation. Mrs. Scheuren noted the leap of faith that the district took when implementing in-person instruction during the pandemic, without any assurances of new funding.

Mr. Kwiatkowski asked about the increase to the Pupil Services Budget and Mrs. Zweiback said that the majority was due to special transportation and special education instruction. Mr. Kwiatkowski inquired about health care costs and expressed concerns of an increase as the pandemic ends. Mr. Pawling said that we have added an increase to the existing health care budget line item and hoping it will sustain and allow for a factor of returning to normal health care costs. He also added that the district has \$2M in its medical fund reserves account.

Dr. Gallagher stated that training for COVID antigen testing, has been accomplished in the district and COVID vaccine appointments for SASD teachers and staff have been scheduled.

Mrs. Scheuren adjourned the Finance Committee Meeting at 9:04 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Pawling", with a stylized, cursive script.

Brian R. Pawling  
Board Secretary / Director of Business Affairs