



## BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS MONTHLY ACTION MEETING MINUTES

**April 30, 2020**

Generated by Renai Cardillo on Wednesday, May 6, 2020

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

**Others present:** Frank Gallagher, Christopher Hey, Katie Kennedy-Reilly, Brian Pawling, Dennis Stanton, Sam Varano, and Megan Zweiback

### 1. Welcome

#### 1.1 Call to Order - Board President

Mr. Keith called the meeting to order at 7:02 P.M.

Mr. Keith noted that this was a virtual meeting.

#### 1.2 Meeting Protocol

Mr. Keith noted that there was a link on the school district website which allowed residents to submit questions for agenda and non agenda items. Mr. Keith also indicated that the meeting was being recorded and would be available for viewing on Comcast and Verizon channels

#### 1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Keith led The Pledge of Allegiance.

#### 1.4 Roll Call - Board Secretary

Mr. Keith asked that in a virtual environment that the Board members state their names when making comments

Mr. Pawling took roll call and noted that all nine Board members were present.

Mr. Keith commented on the historical period of time and the challenges that are being experienced by the community and the school district. Mr. Keith asked Superintendent Gallagher to add his comments.

Dr. Gallagher noted that this crisis was the biggest challenge that the school district has faced. He thanked the community for their patience and support.

Dr. Gallagher said that the district recognizes that for some families the student work load is too much and for others, it is not enough. He mentioned that the school district was given four hours notice of the impending school closure and had to "flip" from traditional education as a bricks and mortar model to a virtual learning environment. He noted that while the secondary students were already equipped and using their 1:1 devices, none of the elementary school students had devices. Distribution and implementation of these devices, in and of itself required timing and district-wide collaboration. Dr. Gallagher commented on the learning management system; Schoology, which is the platform that would be supporting virtual learning. Dr. Gallagher indicated that in addition to teaching some staff members how to utilize it, many students and families also had to be introduced to its functionality. Dr. Gallagher also noted that the Schoology and Microsoft Teams platforms had proven to be a safe and secure environments for synchronous learning.

Dr. Gallagher mentioned that he meets regularly with other Montgomery County Superintendents and all the school districts are in similar circumstances with device distribution and virtual learning start up.

Dr. Gallagher acknowledged the economic challenges that impacts both local and school district budgets. He noted the fiscal responsibility of the school district in the past which has allowed programs to continue without cuts. He acknowledged it is a very delicate balance to protect and serve the taxpayers while meeting the needs of students and maintaining programs. Dr. Gallagher also stated that the Board and administration would be working very hard on the budget. The preliminary budget approval appearing on tonight's agenda is not the final budget.

Dr. Gallagher briefly mentioned the loss of the end of year traditions for the graduating class, as well as the ceremonies and activities for 5th and 8th graders. He commented that there are several virtual celebrations being planned and while nothing will replace a live graduation, the high school is planning a Farewell Tour for its senior class. The tour will include a parade on campus with a stage where the students will receive their diplomas. There is still hope for a live graduation to be held in late Summer, pending health guidelines.

Dr. Gallagher noted that next school year will be different and that planning and preparation is already being discussed with Montgomery County.

Dr. Gallagher acknowledged the frustration that many are experiencing as well as the appreciation and support from the community.

Mr. Keith reinforced to everyone to communicate questions and concerns to Board of School Directors and Administration.

Mr. Keith also noted that the approval of the Proposed Preliminary Budget on this evening's agenda is a State requirement and does not mean we are approving it, as it currently appears.

## **2. Student Recognition**

### **2.1 Recognition of Souderton Area HS Cheerleaders - National Placement**

Dr. Gallagher announced the recognition of SAHS cheerleaders and introduced high school principal Dr. Varano.

Dr. Varano noted his appreciation to Board and administration for support throughout this academic challenge, noting compromises by all, upheld by thoughtful guidance.

Dr. Varano congratulated the high school cheerleaders and coaches and introduced High School Athletic Director Dennis Stanton. Mr. Stanton thanked the School Board and the administration for educating the whole child and their understanding that sports is an inter-woven fabric within the school district. He thanked the coaches for their positive chemistry and emphasis on the genuine spirit of competition. Mr. Stanton also thanked the Booster Club and parents for their continued support.

Mr. Stanton spoke about the embodiment of commitment to cheerleading and how the sport actually encompasses two full sports seasons. He also commented on the skill set for the young ladies participating in this sport. Mr. Stanton congratulated the team for their placement of 10th in the country, at the national championship. The following students were recognized:

Mia Bennett  
Isabella Campisi  
Madison Dorsey  
Ella Fisher  
Peyton Gara  
Georgia Gardner  
Emily Keith  
Daniela Loreto  
Bryn Lynch  
Emily Quinn  
Chloe Sinn  
Kaiya Smith  
Gina Tate  
Mary-Jean Wicher  
Mackenzie Wilson

Head Coach: Rachael Renner  
Assistant Coach: Jillian Moyer  
Assistant Coach: Nicole Baumgartner

Mr. Keith congratulated the team and thanked them for making the entire community proud.

**MOTION TO RECOGNIZE THE SOUDERTON AREA HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADERS FOR THEIR ATHLETIC ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT EXCELLENCE.**

Motion by Donna Scheuren, second by Stephen Nelson.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

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

## **3. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

### **3.1 Public Comment**

Mr. Keith deferred the public comment to the on non-agenda items which will occur later in the meeting.

## **4. Report of the President**

### **4.1 Report on Executive Session Meeting(s) held by the Board**

Mr. Keith reported that Executive Sessions were held:

- On March 11, 2020 to discuss the COVID 19 situation and lasted for approximately one hour.
- Virtually on March 24, March 26, April 2, and April 13, 2020 to discuss school operations during the COVID 19 closure. Each session lasted approximately one hour.

- Virtually on April 29, 2020 to discuss items on the action meeting agenda including personnel, two student settlement agreements, and vendor contracts. Also discussed were updates on school operations during the COVID 19 closure.

## **5. Consent/Action Agenda**

### 5.1 Consent/Action Agenda Protocol

The Superintendent made a recommendation to the Board to approve the Consent/Action agenda items as listed. Board members were invited to remove items from the Consent/Action agenda if further discussion is needed.

### 5.2 Approve School Board Meeting Minutes from February 12, February 27, and March 11, 2020

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 12, FEBRUARY 27, AND MARCH 11, 2020 SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED.

### 5.3 Approve Financial Statements and Check Listings

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND CHECK LISTINGS FOR FEBRUARY 29 AND MARCH 31, 2020

### 5.4 Ratify Conference Attendance

Geri Wilkocz  
Supervisor of Curriculum  
*Foundations* Training (Wilson Language)  
Montgomery County Intermediate Unit  
Norristown, PA  
March 3, 2020  
March 13, 2020  
\$596.00  
Funding: Curriculum Budget

Betsy Irish  
Oak Ridge ES Teacher  
Teacher Toolbox Series; The 21st Century Educator  
Bucks County Intermediate Unit  
On-line coursework  
April 21 - May 21, 2020  
\$450.00  
Funding: Curriculum Budget

Resolution: MOTION TO RATIFY CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

### 5.5 Approve Mentors and Peer Coaches

Cassondra Hendricks	Peer Coach for Christen Young (pro-rated)	\$84
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Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE MENTORS AND PEER COACHES FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR

### 5.6 Ratify Mentors and Peer Coaches

Thomas Overberger	Mentor to Timothy Brown	\$600
Alison Kircher	Mentor to Claudia LaMarca (second semester)	\$300

and peer coaches:

Brendan Stanton	Peer Coach to Kelly O'Shura	\$150
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Resolution: MOTION TO RATIFY MENTORS AND PEER COACHES

### 5.7 Approve Personnel Items - Professional Staff

<b><u>RETIREMENTS</u></b>	
ALDERFER, SHARON	Reading Specialist, Vernfield Elementary School Effective: End of 2019-2020 School Year
CAHILL, MICHAEL	Social Studies Teacher, Souderton Area High School Effective: End of 2019-2020 School Year
CLANCY, GRACE	English Teacher, Souderton Area High School Effective: End of 2019-2020 School Year
GUENGERICH, GALEN	Fourth Grade Teacher, Vernfield Elementary School Effective: End of 2019-2020 School Year
RICHART, LAURA	Social Studies Teacher, Indian Valley Middle School Effective: End of 2019-2020 School Year
<b><u>NEW HIRE</u></b>	

SINGLETARY, CAITLIN New Position	.10 ESL Teacher, Indian Crest Middle School TEMPORARY PROFESSIONAL Effective: March 3, 2020 Education: Indian Univ. of Pennsylvania (BA) 2010 St. Leo Univ. (MEd) 2019 Experience: Aug. 2019-present - Souderton Area School District, .6 Spanish Teacher, Indian Crest & Indian Valley Middle Schools; 2013-Aug. 2019 - Leon County Schools, Florida, Teacher; 2010-2013 - Baltimore City Public School System, Maryland, Teacher Recommended Salary: \$5,579.20 (pro-rated) - M (1)
<b>REQUEST FOR CHILDREARING LEAVE</b>	
BARANEK, LAURA	School Counselor, Souderton Area High School Request for Childrearing Leave, following 12-weeks leave under FMLA, through the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Mrs. Baranek plans to return for the start of the 2021-2022 school year.
CIPOLONE, PAIGE	Music Teacher, Oak Ridge Elementary School Request for Childrearing Leave, following 12-weeks leave under FMLA, through the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Mrs. Cipolone plans to return for the start of the 2021-2022 school year.
JONES, KELLY	Music Teacher, Salford Hills Elementary School Request for Childrearing Leave, following 12-weeks leave under FMLA, through the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Mrs. Jones plans to return for the start of the 2021-2022 school year.
TARSITANO, LAUREN	Second Grade Teacher, Vernfield Elementary School Request for Childrearing Leave, following 12-weeks leave under FMLA, through the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year. Mrs. Tarsitano plans to return for the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year.
<b>REQUEST FOR COMPENSATED PROFESSIONAL LEAVE</b>	
CARBONE, KATELYN	Fourth Grade Teacher, E. Merton Crouthamel Elementary School Request for Compensated Professional Leave for the entire 2020-2021 school year.
COLUCCI, TESSA	Elementary Instructional Coach Request for Compensated Professional Leave for the first semester of the 2020-2021 school year.
<b>REQUEST FOR MEDICAL LEAVE</b>	
FREDA, RICHARD	Music Teacher, Vernfield Elementary School Request for Medical Leave beginning March 23, 2020 and extending through the end of the 2019-2020 school year or until released by physician.

## Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE PERSONNEL ITEMS - PROFESSIONAL STAFF

## 5.8 Approve Personnel Items - Support Staff

<b>RETIREMENT DATE CHANGE</b>	
JENKINS, EVELYN	Food Service Assistant, Vernfield Elementary School Change retirement date from June 30, 2020 to April 6, 2020.
<b>RETIREMENT</b>	
LEWANDOWSKI, GLEN	General Maintenance, Souderton Area High School Effective: April 3, 2020
<b>RESIGNATION</b>	
CRESSMAN, CLAUDIA	Part-Time Custodian, Oak Ridge Elementary School Effective: March 6, 2020
LONG, MEGAN	ESL Intervention Teaching Assistant, Vernfield Elementary School Effective: March 11, 2020
MOYER, SAMUEL	Part-Time Custodian, Salford Hills Elementary School Effective: March 2, 2020
<b>NEW HIRES</b>	
DRUMMOND, EMILY Replacement for Herself (Resigned)	ESL Intervention Teaching Assistant, Indian Crest Middle School Effective: March 11, 2020 Wage: \$16.15 per hour - Hours: 5.75 per day
GINANNI, JOY	Substitute Cafeteria/Playground Aide, Vernfield Elementary School Effective: March 3, 2020 Wage: \$10.59 per hour - Hours: As Needed
LEVERING, GRACE Replacement for Ashley Nelson (Transfer)	Special Education Instructional Assistant, Indian Crest Middle School Effective: TBD Wage: \$14.15 per hour - Hours: 5.5 per day
NELSON, ERIC	Part-Time Custodial Substitute Effective: February 24, 2020 Wage: \$12.65 per hour - Hours: 4 per day, as needed
ONIPEDE, RUTH Replacement for	Special Education Instructional Assistant, Souderton Area High School Effective: March 2, 2020

Vincella Pinkney (Resigned)	Wage: \$14.15 per hour - Hours: 6.75 per day
SANFRATELLO, GINA	Extended Day Kindergarten Teacher, E. Merton Crouthamel Elementary School Effective: November 19, 2019 Wage: \$15.65 per hour - Hours: 1 per day
SLABODA, MICHAEL	Part-Time Custodial Substitute Effective: March 2, 2020 Wage: \$12.65 per hour - Hours: 4 per day, as needed
SMITH, COVINGTON Replacement for Mary E. Moyer (Retired)	Special Education Instructional Assistant, West Broad Street Elementary School Effective: March 30, 2020 Wage: \$15.35 per hour - Hours: 6.5 per day
WOMER, AMANDA	Substitute Cafeteria/Playground Aide, West Broad Street Elementary School Effective: March 9, 2020 Wage: \$10.59 per hour - Hours: As Needed
<b>TRANSFERS</b>	
COUGHLIN, THOMAS Replacement for Raymond Rambo (Retired)	From: Custodian, Souderton Area High School To: Building Facilities Manager, Souderton Area High School Effective: March 16, 2020 Wage: \$29.36 per hour - Hours: 8 per day

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE PERSONNEL ITEMS - SUPPORT STAFF

#### 5.9 Approve Personnel Items - Additions to Substitute Teachers

Sandra Curry  
Colin Moyer  
Nicole Wheeler

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE PERSONNEL ITEMS - ADDITIONS TO SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

#### 5.10 Approve First Reading of Revised Policy No. 233 - Suspension and Expulsion

Administration is seeking a First Reading to revise Policy No. 233 which modifies current policy with recommendations from Pennsylvania School Board Association.

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE FIRST READING OF REVISED POLICY NO. 233 - SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

#### 5.11 Approve Second Reading of Revised Policy No. 208 - Withdrawal From School

The Administration is recommending that the Board approve a second reading for Policy No. 208 - Withdrawal from School. The recommendation from Pennsylvania School Board Association is to revise the policy from noting a specific age limit to the wording, "compulsory school age".

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE A SECOND READING OF REVISED POLICY NO. 805 - WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

#### 5.12 Approve Second Reading of Revised Policy No. 805 - Emergency Preparedness and Response

The Administration is recommending that the Board approve a second reading of revised Policy No. 805. These change will update the policy to the recommendations from Pennsylvania School Board Association.

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE A SECOND READING OF REVISED POLICY NO. 805 - EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

#### 5.13 Approve Second Reading of New Policy No. 805.1 - Relations with Law Enforcement Agencies

The Administration is recommending a second reading of Policy 805.1 Relations With Law Enforcement Agencies as per recommendations from the Pennsylvania School Board Association.

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE SECOND READING OF NEW POLICY NO 805.1 - RELATIONS WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

#### 5.14 Approve Second Reading of New Policy 805.2 - School Security Personnel

The Administration is recommending that the Board approve the second reading of new Policy No 805.2 - School Security Personnel as recommended by Pennsylvania School Board Administrators.

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE THE SECOND READING OF NEW POLICY NO. 805.2 - SCHOOL SECURITY PERSONNEL

#### 5.15 Approve Fox Rothschild as District Solicitor for 2020-2021

The Administration recommends approval of Fox Rothschild to serve as the District's solicitor for 2020-2021.

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE FOX ROTHSCHILD AS DISTRICT SOLICITOR FOR 2020-2021

### 5.16 Approve the HIPAA Business Associate Agreement with Fox Rothschild for 2020-2021

The Administration recommends approval of the HIPAA Business Associate Agreement with Fox Rothschild, in conjunction with the approval of Fox Rothschild as District solicitor.

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE HIPAA BUSINESS ASSOCIATE AGREEMENT WITH FOX ROTHSCILD FOR 2020-2021

### 5.17 Approve Sweet Stevens Katz & Williams as District Special Education Counsel for 2020-2021

The Administration recommends approval of Sweet Stevens Katz & Williams to serve as the District's special education counsel for 2020-2021.

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE SWEET STEVENS KATZ & WILLIAMS AS SPECIAL EDUCATION COUNSEL FOR 2020-2021

### 5.18 Approve the 2020-2021 North Montco Technical Career Center Budget

The Administration recommends approval of the 2020-2021 North Montco Technical Career Center Budget.

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2020-2021 NORTH MONTCO TECHNICAL CAREER CENTER BUDGET

### 5.19 Approve Mandate Waiver Application through Act 13 of 2020

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE MANDATE WAIVER APPLICATION THROUGH ACT 13 OF 2020

### 5.20 Approve the Revised Settlement Agreement with Rampart Construction and North American Specialty Insurance Co. for the EMC Elementary School Project

Approve the Revised Settlement Agreement with Rampart Construction and North American Specialty Insurance Co. for the EMC Elementary School Project

Resolution: APPROVE THE REVISED SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT WITH RAMPART CONSTRUCTION AND NORTH AMERICAN SPECIALTY INSURANCE CO. FOR THE E.M.C. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROJECT

### 5.21 Ratify E-Rate Category 1 Form 471 Proposal with Velocity Fiber

Resolution: RATIFY E-RATE CATEGORY 1 FORM 471 PROPOSAL WITH VELOCITY FIBER

### 5.22 Ratify E-Rate Category 2 Form 471 Proposals with Dauphin Datacom

Resolution: RATIFY E-RATE CATEGORY 2 FORM 471 PROPOSALS WITH DAUPHIN DATACOM

### 5.23 Ratify Real Estate Tax Appeal Settlement Agreement with Thumper Properties Too

Resolution: RATIFY REAL ESTATE TAX APPEAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT WITH THUMPER PROPERTIES TOO

### 5.24 Approve Huntingdon Valley Bank as an Approved Depository for Investment of District Funds

Resolution: APPROVE HUNTINGDON VALLEY BANK AS AN APPROVED DEPOSITORY FOR INVESTMENT OF DISTRICT FUNDS

### 5.25 Approve Act 80 Days

The Administration recommends approval of the following Act 80 days for the 2019-2020 school year:

<b>All Grades (1-11)</b>	<b>KA, KF, Gr 12</b>	<b>KP</b>
October 23, 2019	October 23, 2019	October 23, 2019
November 5, 2019	November 5, 2019	November 5, 2019
	November 27, 2019	November 27, 2019
March 13, 2020	March 13, 2020	March 13, 2020

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE THE ACT 80 DAYS FOR THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

### 5.26 Approve Confidential Release and Settlement Agreement

The Administration is seeking approval for a Confidential Release and Settlement Agreement for (1) Souderton Area School District student.

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE CONFIDENTIAL RELEASE AND SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

### 5.27 Approve Confidential Release and Settlement Agreement

The Administration is seeking approval for a Confidential Release and Settlement Agreement for (1) Souderton Area School District student.

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE CONFIDENTIAL RELEASE AND SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

**5.28 APPROVE ALL CONSENT/ACTION AGENDA ITEMS AS PRESENTED**

Resolution: MOTION TO APPROVE ALL CONSENT/ACTION AGENDA ITEMS AS PRESENTED.

MOTION TO APPROVE ALL CONSENT/ACTION AGENDA ITEMS AS PRESENTED.

Motion by Donna Scheuren, second by Stephen Nelson.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

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

**6. Discussion/Action Agenda****6.1 Approve 2020-2021 Proposed Final Budget**

The Administration recommends approval of the 2020-2021 Proposed Final General Fund Budget in accordance with Special Session Act 1 of 2006. The Board further directs the Administration to make the Proposed Final Budget document available on its website in the form required by the Department of Education.

Dr. Gallagher noted that the Proposed Final Budget is not the final budget. This is a part of State law requirement.

Mr. Pawling noted as per Act 1 in Pennsylvania, it is a requirement to pass the Proposed Final Budget 30 days prior to the passing of the actual budget. There is a 2.6% proposed tax increase, however the administration will be working toward reducing that rate in its final budget. There is a lot of work to do and these are not final numbers. There is opportunity to amend between proposed and final budget.

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2020-2021 PROPOSED GENERAL FUND BUDGET**

Motion by Donna Scheuren, second by Stephen Nelson.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

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

**7. Future Meetings****7.1 Future Meetings**

DATE	ORGANIZATION	TIME	LOCATION
Wednesday, May 13, 2020	Souderton Area School District Board Committee Meetings	6:30 PM	Virtual Meeting Link to be posted on website
Thursday, May 28, 2020	Souderton Area School District Board Action Meeting	7:00 PM	Virtual Meeting Link to be posted on website
Wednesday, June 3, 2020	Souderton Area School District Board Committee Meetings	6:30 PM	Virtual Meeting Link to be posted on website
Thursday, June 18, 2020	Souderton Area School District Board Action Meeting	7:00 PM	Virtual Meeting Link to be posted on website

**8. Report of the Solicitor****8.1 Report of the Solicitor**

There was no report.

**9. Unfinished/New Business of the Board****9.1 Unfinished/New Business from the Board**

There was no unfinished or new business from the Board.

## 10. Public Comments

### 10.1 Public Comments

Assistant Superintendent and Director of Human Resources, Dr. Hey read the following submitted comments:

*From Mr. Dan DeMeno of Telford:* I am a parent of a daughter who attends Souderton schools, and I want to preface this comment that I fully support fair school funding.

However, the plan you have to raise school taxes in the midst of a global pandemic is both morally and ethically bankrupt, especially as public comment is limited. You will be directly responsible for district residents losing their homes if you raise property taxes this year.

I urge you to be reasonable, empathic people in this matter. Please think beyond the teachers union. If you move forward with this plan, I know you will face significant opposition in the next election.

*From: Ms. Erin Tynebor of Harleysville:* I believe that it is in the students' best interests to have live interaction with their teachers and classmates as quickly as possible. Despite the fact that teachers are available for questions, students in elementary/middle school are unlikely to reach out for help unless pushed to do so by their parents. I also fear that my children are becoming disengaged from the community environment that they know at school which affects both their learning and their social development.

I have the following questions to pose to the Board.

1. I understand that the administration had little warning that Governor Wolf would close schools on March 13. But it is an action that we all knew was coming. What did the district do prior to the Governor's announcement to prepare for virtual learning? Please specify the top 3-5 actions you took.
2. I have a son in 7th grade at Indian Valley Middle School. Last week he started having synchronous learning opportunities with his science and social studies teachers. But the ELA and math teachers tell me that they aren't doing so because they won't be trained on Teams until April 28. It has been 7 weeks. Why are we only now, training all of the middle school teachers?
3. I have a son in 5th grade at Oak Ridge. Starting this week he will have 30 minutes of synchronous instruction per week with his teacher and the full class. And, according to his teacher, she is aware of no efforts to increase that time. Does the district truly feel that 30 minutes of synchronous instruction per week is enough for 5th grade? This gives each child less than 1.5 minutes to speak on that call.
4. For both of my children, I want to know what steady state looks like. What is the district striving to achieve? Are my kids really only getting 30 minutes of synchronous learning with their core teachers each week? Is this as good as it's going to get? I certainly hope not but there has been no communication as of today Apr 28.

*From: Mr. Pennycuick of Harleysville:* I have been a resident of Harleysville for 15 years. I know we have a great school district and my wife and I were very happy with the education of our four kids received. Each year when tax hikes get posted in the paper, I compare Souderton's tax increase to all other school districts in Montgomery County. I know Souderton does a good job of keeping taxes low, because our increases are always lower than the neighboring school districts. I want to thank you for being fair to all the residents. I worry however, that this approach is about to change.

My wife and I support all the extra-curricular activities, sports and music programs, but I also know this pandemic is wreaking havoc on available dollars from the state. Businesses are closed, folks are out of work and that means no sales or income tax has been sent into the state for months. We all know what that means, cuts are coming. I don't want to see Souderton hit up the residents to make up the difference. If there ever was a year that a 0% tax increase is warranted, it's now. I don't want to see an end to fiscal responsibility in this community. I want to see the board and the administration dig deeper to stretch dollars further. I want to read in the paper that you went back and renegotiated contracts to our benefit. If we're all in this together, that means everyone's got to give, not just the taxpayer!

It makes no sense to get a reprieve from Harrisburg and the Federal government, only to see our school district change its ways and start hitting up the residents for higher taxes.

Dr. Gallagher thanked the residents for submitting comments and questions. He responded to the budget questions as posed by Mr. DeMeno and Mr. Pennycuick noting that up to and until this time, the school district has always operated in a fiscally responsible manner, balancing the needs of students and programs while being mindful of its taxpayers. Dr. Gallagher noted that the district has a solid fund balance as well as money in its capital account and will do everything possible to mitigate the economic damages caused by the pandemic.

Dr. Gallagher noted that he will continue to seek assistance from legislators in Harrisburg and welcomes the support from the community to assist in voicing their concerns to their representatives.

In response to the inquiry from Ms. Tyborn, Dr. Gallagher indicated that he spoke directly to Ms. Tyborn and did address some of her concerns. He acknowledged that this pandemic has been a challenge not only to the Souderton Area School District, but also to surrounding schools districts. Dr. Gallagher commented that we had an equity issue with student devices and that establishing a safe and private learning platform was crucial to implementing synchronous learning. He indicated that moving forward with synchronous learning is a district priority.

Mr. Keith thanked the community for their comments, noting that several were economic in subject matter. Mr. Keith commented that the school district is a very diverse community and that the school board is very aware that each and every action they take, impacts every family differently. He reiterated that the board is always sensitive to its taxpayers and a lot of work will be done on the budget over the course of the next 60 days.



Mr. Keith also asked the community to contact him and other board members with questions and concerns.

Board Vice President Mrs. Scheuren thanked Dr. Gallagher and Mr. Keith for their responses to public comments. Mrs. Scheuren also thanked Mr. Stanton for his statements regarding the high school cheerleaders, during the recognition portion of the meeting. She also noted that importance of community feedback during budget preparation.

Dr. Gallagher thanked the community for its generosity, citing the faith-based leaders for continuing to lead their food bank programs, the Bean Bag program, and its volunteers. Dr. Gallagher thanked several local businesses; Souderton Pizza & Pasta, Franconia Café, The Rising Sun Inn, and The Energy Station for providing free meals to the community and the Franconia Police Department for their assistance in coordinating some of these efforts. Dr. Gallagher also thanked the Indian Valley Education Foundation for their donation that will allow the purchase of iPads for virtual learning.

## **11. Adjournment**

### 11.1 Adjournment of the Meeting

Mr. Keith adjourned the meeting at 7:44 P.M.

MOTION TO ADJOURN THE BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS' MEETING.

Motion by Donna Scheuren, second by Stephen Nelson.

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

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

Respectfully Submitted,



Brian R. Pawling  
Board Secretary/Director of Business Affairs