

**WYOMING VALLEY WEST SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR DECEMBER BOARD MINUTES
DECEMBER 13, 2023
In Person and Zoom**

The Regular December Meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Wyoming Valley West School District was held at the Middle School and on Zoom on the above date. Meeting was called to order at 7:16 pm by President Kamus. The following Board Members answered present to roll call: Wilson, Hardwick, Keating, McGinley, Perfetto, Kobusky, Cussatt, and Kamus. Mr. Dubaskas was absent. Superintendent Tosh, Finance Manager Witiak, Attorney Messinger and Board Secretary Bullock were present. Student representatives Lilian Mahoney and Simona Debru were also present. President Kamus announced that an executive session was held prior to this meeting to discuss personnel items.

Mr. Tosh asked members in the audience, as well as on stage, to please keep in your thoughts and prayers the family of Mr. Michael Hudacek, who served faithfully as the District Solicitor for a number of years, who recently passed away.

Moment of Silence was followed by a salute to the flag.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BOARD - Lilian Mahoney and Simona Debru

SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

Mr. Tosh welcomed Mr. McGinley, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Kobusky to the Wyoming Valley West School Board, we look forward to working with you. On a High School level, Junior, Lola Wojciechowski has been selected as the only female Division I, Wyoming Valley Conference, All-State Soccer player by the Pennsylvania Soccer Coaches Association. She will be honored on January 27th for the All-State Team at Penn Harris Hotel in Harrisburg. Congratulations to Lola, her coaches and teammates. On a Middle School level, Holocaust Symposium Grant. On November 27th, the Wyoming Valley West Middle School Social Studies Department was notified that they were the recipients of a \$750 grant to further Holocaust education. The grant was awarded by the Mark Schonwetter Holocaust Education Foundation and the grant will be used to take 75 students to the Holocaust Symposium in Scranton, which will be held in May of 2024.

At State Street, on Thursday, December 7th State Street held the Merry Math Title I Parent Workshop at the school. The event featured estimation stations, interactive activities for students and their families, basket raffles, treats, and a special visit from Santa Claus. The ARMOR Team, which is the State Street positive behavior support team, sponsored a Mitten Tree which provided hats, scarves, and gloves to those in need. Faculty and staff partnered with the Kingston Rotary to donate these items to State Street families. The Kingston Rotary donated over 100 coats to State Street families in need. Thank you to the Rotary for this very generous donation.

At Dana Street, the students at Dana Street Elementary Center sponsored "Give Change to Make a Change" during the month of October in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness month. Each student was asked to bring in change to support the Cancer Wellness Center (formerly Candy's Place) in Forty Fort. Through the students' efforts at Dana Elementary, the school was able to raise \$490 to donate to this worthy cause. Congratulations to the students and staff at Dana Street.

Chester Street, Thank you to the Chester Street PTO for having the AG Agricultural and STEM Lab at school. The Lab was here for a week and all the classes got to experience going in the Lab and performing different types of experiments. Chester Street is looking forward to the Holiday Program this Friday at 9:30 a.m. in the Middle School auditorium.

Third Ave. Elementary Holiday Programs will take place Wednesday, December 20th in the Third Ave. Elementary cafeteria at 9:30 Mrs. Lispi's, Mrs. Milius' and Miss Baur's class, at 10:45

Mrs. Karassik's and Mrs. Herron's class, and at 1:00 p.m Mrs. Watchulis' and Mrs. Modrow's class. Next week, Friday, December 22nd is an early dismissal for the Year-End Holiday Recess.

STATEMENTS FROM INTERESTED CITIZENS

Citizens addressing the Board are asked to state their name and town of residence in accordance with Board Policy #903 (copy available). Statements are limited to three minutes.

Marcella Kester, *Swoyersville*, said her daughter is a fifth grader at Dana Street Elementary. On December 6th she was notified by the school nurse that her daughter was standing in line in her class, and when she turned her body to look at the clock on the wall, she accidentally burnt herself on the hot water pipe that leads to the radiator. She took her to urgent care. It is a pretty nasty burn, second degree as documented. This is not the first burn on these pipes that they have had this year. Her daughter said the person standing in front of her in line today burned the palm of their hands on the same pipe. She understands that Dana St. is an older building and there are parts of the pipes that are wrapped or covered to prevent this from happening. She asked that these hot water pipes that lead to the radiators be evaluated and repaired or re-covered from pieces that have fallen off or have been torn off over the years.

Mr. Tosh said they will be there tomorrow at 7:30.

President Kamus apologized to the family on behalf of the Board and said this will be addressed tomorrow.

James Baldwin, *West Wyoming*, congratulated the new Board members, Mr. McGinley, Mr. Kobusky, and Mr. Wilson. He asked if there was a reason why the Board has so many policies put through at once. At the last Board meeting there was a handful, but this was quite excessive with over 120 pages of policies.

President Kamus explained this is one of Mr. Tosh's goals to try to update all our policies because our policies are very old.

Mr. Tosh said it is imperative as far as our policy manual. A lot of what we do is geared around what our policies and procedures are. Our policy and procedure manual is something that has been neglected in the past. It is something that we want to be proactive, aggressive, and very progressive with. We were told by PSBA that it could take approximately 2 years to get through the entire manual, our goal is to get through it in a year. Some of the policies are mandated, some of them are legally required, some are recommended by PSBA and some of them are district recommendations. It is something that we feel very strongly for the smooth, orderly and efficient effective running of the district and we need to attack it very aggressively and very quickly.

Mr. Baldwin asked if the Board is open to public opinion with any possible alteration to any of the policies that are put out or are they set in stone?

President Kamus responded that the first reading is to address comments and concerns. Due to time constraints, Mr. Baldwin was asked to address them through e-mail or address them with Mr. Tosh and we could try to correct them and go forward.

Mr. Baldwin asked about the exemption from instruction policy. It reads that it shall not be the responsibility of the district or any of its employees to ensure that the student exercise his or her right to be excused in accordance with a parental request. He asked if an addendum could be added so the teachers would make an effort to exclude a child if some type of instruction would be against their religious belief. He said under the review of instructional materials, parents have a right to review the instructional materials that the school has, but he questioned why it states parents are not allowed to make photocopies of the contents of the files. He asked if it is written that way for legal reasons with copyright. Mr. Tosh answered copyright.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Keating, Finance and Personnel, said we are interviewing two candidates that submitted application resumes for the business manager position tomorrow. He welcomed the new Board members Mr. McGinley, Mr. Kobusky and Mr. Wilson. This evening on our agenda is to award the investment banking to Fidelity. We solicited RFP's for both investment banking and borrowing. We learned last week that our fund balance is significantly higher than we thought through the school year ending 2022-2023. There does not appear at this time, to be any reason to borrow money. On the banking side of the three RFP's, Fidelity offers the best banking services to the school district at a fixed interest rate of 4.5%. Peoples Bank was 3.75% and Wayne was 3.5%. That rate is 155% higher than what the district is receiving today and with the funds that are on hand you are looking at about \$82,000 a month just by changing our banking rate from 1.76 to 4.5. Fidelity will make that effective immediately upon approval of the Board. After the holiday break, we are meeting with our auditor to ask questions on the fund balance and the flexibility. Moving forward for the Finance Committee, if we have solved our budget problems, it is time to start looking more broad brush as opposed to putting a lot of band aids on things, to start putting some formal capital plans in place for the next couple of years and to manage our money wisely and put this money to good use for the students.

MINUTES APPROVED

Moved by Cussatt, seconded by Hardwick, that the Board of School Directors approve the minutes of the **Regular November 8, 2023 Board Meeting** and the **Special Meeting for General Purposes, December 6, 2023, (meeting was tabled)**

Roll Call: Wilson, Hardwick, Keating, Perfetto, Cussatt, and Kamus voting yes.

McGinley and Kobusky abstained.

Motion Carried. Mr. Dubaskas was absent.

GENERAL RECOMMENDED ACTION

Moved by Keating, seconded by Cussatt that the Board of School Directors act on the following General Recommended Items:

1. Approved **Real Estate Property Tax Exemption** through the Pennsylvania State Veterans' Commission to the following, as presented:
 - ❖ Josefina A. Glenn
 - ❖ Zackary Nearhoff
2. Approved **Agreement** pursuant to File ODR 28271-22-23 KE.
3. Accepted and awarded the proposal for **Investment Banking** to Fidelity.
4. Adopted **Policy 100**, Comprehensive Planning. (First Reading)
5. Adopted **Policy 101**, Mission Statement. (First Reading)
6. Adopted **Policy 102**, Academic Standards. (First Reading)
7. Adopted **Policy 103**, Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Students. (First Reading)
8. Adopted **Policy 103.1**, Nondiscrimination - Qualified Students with Disabilities. (First Reading)
9. Adopted **Policy 104**, Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Staff. (First Reading)
10. Adopted **Policy 105**, Curriculum. (First Reading)

11. Adopted **Policy 105.1**, Review of Instructional Materials by Parents/Guardians and Students. (First Reading)
12. Adopted **Policy 105.2**, Exemption From Instruction. (First Reading)
13. Adopted **Policy 106**, Guides for Planned Instruction. (First Reading)
14. Adopted **Policy 107**, Adoption of Planned Instruction. (First Reading)
15. Adopted **Policy 108**, Adoption of Textbooks. (First Reading)
16. Adopted **Policy 109**, Resource Materials. (First Reading)
17. Adopted **Policy 110**, Instructional Supplies. (First Reading)
18. Adopted **Policy 111**, Lesson Plans. (First Reading)
19. Adopted **Policy 112**, Guidance Counseling. (First Reading)
20. Adopted **Policy 113**, Special Education. (First Reading)
21. Adopted **Policy 113.1**, Discipline of Students With Disabilities. (First Reading)
22. Adopted **Policy 113.2**, Behavior Support. (First Reading)
23. Adopted **Policy 113.3**, Screening and Evaluations for Students With Disabilities. (First Reading)
24. Adopted **Policy 113.4**, Confidentiality of Special Education Student Information. (First Reading)
25. Adopted **Policy 114**, Gifted Education. (First Reading)
26. Adopted **Policy 115**, Career and Technical Education. (First Reading)
27. Adopted **Policy 116**, Tutoring. (First Reading)
28. Adopted **Policy 117**, Homebound Instruction. (First Reading)
29. Adopted **Policy 118**, Independent Instruction. (First Reading)
30. Adopted **Policy 119**, Current Events. (First Reading)
31. Approved recommendation to retire **Policy 120**, Human Development Program.
32. Adopted **Policy 121**, Field Trips. (First Reading)
33. Approved recommendation to retire **Policy 121.A**, Field Trip Medication Policy.
34. Adopted **Policy 123.1**, Concussion Management. (First Reading)
35. Adopted **Policy 123.2**, Sudden Cardiac Arrest. (First Reading)
36. Adopted **Policy 124**, Alternative Instruction. (First Reading)
37. Adopted **Policy 127**, Assessment System. (First Reading)
38. Approved recommendation to retire **Policy 129**, Music Program.
39. Adopted **Policy 130**, Homework. (First Reading)
40. Adopted **Policy 137**, Home Education Programs. (First Reading)
41. Adopted **Policy 137.1**, Extracurricular Participation by Home Education Students. (First Reading)
42. Adopted **Policy 137.2**, Participation in Cocurricular Activities and Academic Course by Home Education Students. (First Reading)
43. Adopted **Policy 137.3**, Participation in Career and Technical Education Programs by Home Education Students. (First Reading)
44. Adopted **Policy 138**, Language Instruction Educational Program for English Learners (First Reading)
45. Approved recommendation to retire **Policy 139**, Dual Enrollment/Young Scholars.
46. Approved recommendation to retire **Policy 140**, Online Education Policy.
47. Adopted **Policy 140**, Charter Schools. (First Reading)
48. Adopted **Policy 140.1**, Extracurricular Participation by Charter/Cyber Charter Students. (First Reading)
49. Adopted **Policy 142**, Migrant Students. (First Reading)
50. Adopted **Policy 143**, Standards for Persistently Dangerous Schools. (First Reading)

51. Adopted **Policy 144**, Standards for Victims of Violent Crimes. (First Reading)
52. Adopted **Policy 146**, Student Services. (First Reading)
53. Adopted **Policy 146.1**, Trauma-Informed Approach. (First Reading)
54. Adopted **Policy 150**, Title I - Comparability of Services. (First Reading)
55. Approved extending agreement with **Plymouth Borough for a School Resource Officer (SRO)**, at the High School, effective January 1, 2024–December 31, 2025.
56. Approved **Resolution** that the Wyoming Valley West School District will not raise 2024-2025 taxes above its Act 1 index of 7.7%.

Roll Call: Wilson, Hardwick, Keating, Perfetto, Cussatt, and Kamus voting yes.
McGinley and Kobusky abstained.

Motion Carried. Mr. Dubaskas was absent.

STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Moved by Hardwick, seconded by Cussatt, that the Board of School Directors act on the following Staff Recommended Items:

- A. RESOLUTIONS PRESENTED TO THE BOARD FOR ACTION:
 1. Approved **excused absences** November 1, 2023 - November 30, 2023.
 2. Medical Leave, **Emp. #828415**, effective November 28, 2023; returning TBD.
 3. Medical Leave, FMLA, **Emp. #288666**, effective January 26, 2024; returning TBD.
 4. Child Bearing Leave, **Emp. #955617**, effective January 16, 2024; returning March 11, 2024.
 5. Accepted resignation, with regret, due retirement, **Ann Mari Butz**, 2nd Grade Elementary Teacher, State Street, effective last day of the 2023/2024 school year.
 6. Accepted resignation, with regret, due retirement, **Barbara Fender**, School Nurse, Chester Street, effective last day of the 2023/2024 school year.
 7. Accepted resignation, with regret, due retirement, **Jay Bozinko**, Custodian, State Street, last day February 2, 2024.
 8. Appointed the following **new hires**:
 - ❖ **Jada Guthrie** – Life Skills Support Aide/State St., \$13.00/hr. effective November 28, 2023.
 - ❖ **Alora Lee** – Life Skills Support Aide/State St., \$13.00/hr. effective November 16, 2023.
 - ❖ **Sharon Lewis** – Emotional Support Aide/State St., \$13.00/hr. effective November 20, 2023.
 9. Accepted the following **resignations**:
 - ❖ **Kristine Matello** – PCA/State St., last day December 8, 2023.
 - ❖ **Cierra Meeker** – substitute aide, effective November 10, 2023.
 - ❖ **Tiara Ransome** – Nurse Assistant (Floater), last day December 22, 2023; to substitute Nurse Assistant.
 - ❖ **Kimberly Miller** – cleaner, Middle School, last day, November 2, 2023.
 - ❖ **Jayson Farris** – cleaner, State Street, last day October 26, 2023.
 10. Approved the following **terminations**:
 - ❖ **Emp. #289682** – effective November 1, 2023.
 - ❖ **Emp. #947216** – effective November 7, 2023.
 - ❖ **Emp. #643551** – effective November 22, 2023.

11. Appointed recommended candidate, **Jennifer Gosciwski**, Social Worker, effective TBD, \$51,000.
12. Appointed the following **Teacher Mentors** at Chester St. Elementary for 2023/2024:

<u><i>New Teacher</i></u>	<u><i>Mentor</i></u>
Sarah Boyle	Kristen Rossi
Shannon Danko	Karen Sebolka
13. Appointed the following **Teacher Mentor** at Dana St. Elementary for 2023/2024:

<u><i>New Teacher</i></u>	<u><i>Mentor</i></u>
Ashley Nicholson	Jennifer Williams
14. Appointed recommended candidate, **Ashley Grevera**, Occupational Therapist, effective TBD, \$51,000.
15. Appointed **Matthew Engel**, full time Security Guard, Middle School, effective TBD.
16. Appointed recommended candidate, **Hayley Sassaman**, Guidance Counselor, State Street, effective TBD, \$51,000.

Roll Call: Wilson, Hardwick, Keating, McGinley, Perfetto, Kobusky, Cussatt, and Kamus voting yes.
Motion Carried. Mr. Dubaskas was absent.

FINANCE RECOMMENDED ACTION

Moved by McGinley, seconded by Hardwick, that the Board of School Directors approve the following:

1. Accepted and approved the following as presented: **Bills for Payment, Finance Manager's Reports and Treasurer's Report.**

Roll Call: Wilson, Hardwick, Keating, McGinley, Perfetto, Kobusky, Cussatt, and Kamus voting yes.
Motion Carried. Mr. Dubaskas was absent.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Hardwick thanked the outgoing members for all their years of service. He thanked Brian for his 16 years of service and his continuing service. He welcomed Mr. Wilson, Mr. Kobusky, and Mr. McGinley and looks forward to working with everybody. He thanked the Board for confidence in approving him as Vice Chair.

Mr. Wilson said he is very excited, proud and honored to be a member of this Board. As a parent of two young children and alumni of the school district, he is excited and confident that this Board will continue to push the district in the right direction.

Mr. Perfetto welcomed the new members of the Board and hopes to work with everyone.

Mr. McGinley said thank you to everyone. This is quite an honor to be elected for this Board. He has been a resident of the district for a very long time and thinks this district has great potential. It is going to require leadership and guidance and he looks forward to trying to help with that leadership and guidance. He thanked the previous Board members for all the work they did and all the efforts and time they put in. He is very happy to be serving with Mr. Kobusky and Mr. Wilson as new members.

Mr. Keating congratulated Lola Wojciechowski. What an athlete she is and that is a great accomplishment for her. His daughter plays soccer and Lola is really exciting to watch. He wished her nothing but the best.

Mrs. Cussatt welcomed and congratulated the new Board members. She thanked the outgoing members for all their service. Congratulations, President Kamus and Vice President Hardwick.

Mr. Kobusky said it is an honor to be on this Board. He is excited to start his new venture. He said he has some things to learn and hopes to make a big difference in this school district.

Mr. Tosh said he felt young and spry, Mr. McGinley was his Chemistry teacher when he was in high school at Myers, until he looked down the other end, Mr. Wilson was a student when he was the principal at the Middle School. He congratulated Mr. Kamus. It has been a pleasure working with him and Mr. Keating, when he was the vice president, and now Mr. Hardwick.

Mr. Tosh spoke about a legislative update, House Bill 1032, Solar for Schools Grant Program. It was introduced by Representative Elizabeth Fiedler, a Democrat from Philadelphia. She has bipartisan support for incentives for schools to use solar, and the grant covers the cost of projects among “any other costs approved by the department”. There are 500 school districts in the state of Pennsylvania and only 38 public schools right now utilize solar, which amounts to about 8% of the schools in Pennsylvania. Pottsville, Schuylkill Haven and Tamaqua use solar power. The article in the paper stated that Pottsville showed an energy savings of \$151,333 over a period of one year by going solar. Tamaqua avoided an unexpected rise in utility rates going solar with the power service agreement. They also reported an expected 40-year savings increase from \$8.5 million to \$10 million after the rate increase. We will continue to monitor the bill and the potential of the grant.

President Kamus welcomed the new members. He is looking forward to working with everyone. It is pretty exciting what goes on at this table and we make a lot of great decisions. Some are hard and some are easy, but at the end of the day, we all do our best. Looking forward to it.

Mr. Hardwick said good luck to Mr. Witiak in his new endeavors. This is his last meeting with us. I hope he does well as he moves forward.

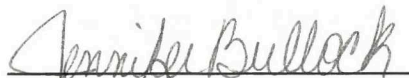
President Kamus announced the next scheduled meeting will be the January Work Session, Wednesday, January 3rd at 7:00 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Wilson, seconded by Cussatt, that the Board of School Directors adjourn this meeting.

Motion Carried.

Adjourned: 7:54 pm



Jennifer Bullock, Board Secretary

A tape of this meeting will be maintained at the District Office until the minutes are accepted at the next scheduled Board Meeting.