

**WYOMING VALLEY WEST SCHOOL DISTRICT
REGULAR MARCH BOARD MINUTES
MARCH 13, 2024
In Person and Zoom**

The Regular March 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 7:07 pm by President Kamus. The following Board Members answered present to roll call: Wilson, Dubaskas, Hardwick, Keating, McGinley, Perfetto, Kobusky, Cussatt, and Kamus. Superintendent Tosh, Finance Manager Kachurak, Attorney Messinger and Board Secretary Bullock were present. Moment of Silence was followed by a salute to the flag.

Mr. Dubaskas congratulated Coach Vassello and the Wrestling Team and presented a plaque to Coach Vassello. Coach introduced his team members on stage.

President Kamus announced that an executive session was held prior to this meeting to discuss contracts and personnel items.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BOARD – Lilian Mahoney

SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS

Mr. Tosh said Friday is a District In-Service Day and there will be no classes for students. Mr. Cunningham, one of our high school teachers, contacted me to let me know one of his students, Tessa Kopetchny, organized and collected, entirely on her own, donations for the Sleep in Heavenly Peace Organization in Luzerne County. Tessa collected 22 sets of sheets, 6 comforters with sheets, 3 comforter sets, 2 blankets, 10 pillows and a \$740 monetary donation to Heavenly Peace Organization of Luzerne County. Congratulations to Tessa Kopetchny. Experience the magic of Anastasia, the Wyoming Valley West School District All School Musical production for 2024, will be performed in the auditorium at the high school, March 14th, 15th and 16th at 7:00 pm. If you have never been up to the high school to see the All School Musical, the children and the staff do a really terrific job. I would highly recommend to get out and see that performance. It certainly is worth it. I would like to announce tonight, that yesterday the district received approval from the Pennsylvania Department of Education for the construction of our first STEM Lab in the high school library. This renovation project is being paid for under ESSER III funding and a short presentation will be made to the Board and the public at the next official School Board meeting on April 10th. This is a very exciting initiative that the district, over the last year or two has talked about, but now it is coming to fruition. A lot of people put in a lot of hard work. I would like to congratulate our high school principal in the back, Mrs. Carey, for being at the forefront with it. I will be updating the Board and the public on other district initiatives for this school year also at the April 10th School Board meeting. Very exciting for us. Kim Walck, our consultant with Debbie Troy, Dave Novrocki, and our newest member, Robert Kachurak, our Business Manager have all teamed up to plan this STEM Lab, which I think is going to be a great academic addition for Wyoming Valley West School District. Then we will make further plans at other levels of the district. Finally, the one last thing I would like to say Coach Vassello, I congratulate him, he congratulated district employee, Nick Gill. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge Nick Gill, who is our Athletic Director. He is a one-man band running the Athletic Program. If your children have ever been involved in athletics, you have probably seen him there. I do not know if the guy really sleeps, morning, noon, and night, he has been very dedicated and committed to the Wyoming Valley West School District Sports' Program.

He does a great job with the students, and I know he works very well with the high school administration. I would like to thank Nick Gill, in addition, for all his contributions.

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.

(None)

MINUTES APPROVED

Moved by McGinley, seconded by Cussatt, that the Board of School Directors approve the minutes of the Regular **February 14, 2024** Board Meeting and the Special Meeting **February 23, 2024** for General Purposes.

Voice vote. **Motion Carried.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Dubaskas, Athletics, we received a request from our Girls Basketball Booster Club to hang signs on the walls by the baskets. Currently, they put them near the upstairs gym rail. Our Athletic Director, Mr. Gill, who never sleeps, did the research and it is perfectly legal to put the signs there. We received a request from Swoyersville American Legion to use our State Street field during the summer for practice. They also wanted to know if they could have their games at our field. As a committee, we talked about allowing them to use State Street for practice but not using our stadium for games. We have never allowed the baseball field since I have been on the Board. We have allowed schools to use our football field for certain things but never the baseball field. The Athletic Director also recommended, currently our prices for sporting events for football and basketball is \$4.00 and \$2.00. With the cost of everything going up and a lot of security of course, the AD's request would follow 90% of the other districts to go up to \$5.00 and \$3.00 for the cost of entrance into our athletic events. If anybody thinks we make money on any sports, we do not. Our costs far exceed with referees, officials, security, lights and everything else. We will put it on the agenda for the next meeting.

Mr. Keating, Contracts and Finance, congratulated Coach Vassello, his team, and the females for their great accomplishments this year in Hershey. We are going to vote on this evening, item number 16 under staff recommended actions, our compensation proposal for our principals. The Personnel Committee tried to take whatever data was available to them with surrounding school districts. There is no one-size-fits-all when it comes to things like this. Taking into consideration the financial condition of our school, which is still an evolving process. We still have a lot of work to do before we put together the 2024-2025 budget. With some of the emails that have been exchanged, there are some of our administrators that are really pleased, others question the rationale that went into doing this. I speak for the Board, it is long overdue with what we put together, specifically for the principals and the problems that the district faces with retaining and attracting quality, talent, and personnel. We did our best. It is about the position and not the person and there are lots of different nuances that we could have applied, such as buildings, seniority or whatever else we want to put on the table, that some may think should be factored in. In the end, it is a monumental step in recognizing the efforts that the principals put in and the value that they bring to our school. Although, what we did might not be the cure all in the final plan, it is definitely a step in the right direction and now makes us competitive with the schools that are around us. It is well deserved and thank you for being patient with the Board and the committee for this long overdue process.

Mr. McGinley, Education/Policy, we had a meeting on Monday and Mr. Hardwick was there as a member of the committee. We met with the English Department Chair and went through the curriculum K through 12, very nice job. There is a program used in the elementary, Foundations, and from the information that was mentioned on Monday and after talking to one of the people the next day, the kids are really doing a great job. This is certainly a positive step for the district. Below, we have list of policies, most of them are state mandated and legal liability, very few that we can make any adjustments to. At our second reading, we will finalize these policies presented this evening, but will have more policies that will be moving forward.

Mr. Hardwick, Special Education/ESSERS, the Special Education Committee met on Monday the 11th. We used the opportunity to create a Board education segment. Presenters were Marya Baratta, Director of Special Education and Attorney Christopher Bambach, a specialized attorney from the firm Sweet, Stevens, Katz and Williams, who handles the legal parameters for the Special Education Department. Several Board members attended and some staff. Topics range from simply the department personnel, schools and buildings related to the programs in each. Marya gave an excellent overview of the special education system and program within the district. Attorney Bambach addressed some of the legal parts and nuances regarding the Special Education Department.

Two of the items that are on the agenda tonight, item number 25, the purchase of 300 laptops from IntegraONE, will come from ESSER III funding, as well as item number 26, LinkIt, a big database that takes little daily databases and puts all the information together.

Anthony Waskevich gave a brief description of LinkIt, a data warehouse.

ESSER III, the total funding allotted to us was \$14,955,000. It is required by the grant that 20% of that go toward lost learning, about \$2.9 million. That funding will be used for LinkIt, the STEM Lab, and other lost learning efforts. The funding is covered by ESSER dollars for the first two years, after that there are contractual agreements, but nothing like the startup cost.

Anthony Waskevich briefly explained how ESSER funding will be used to construct the STEM Lab at the high school.

The balance of the funding is buildings, grounds, air handling and so forth. Those projects are moving forward in the high school and starting in the Middle School.

Also included in the lost learning 20% funding, summer school tutoring and after school tutoring will continue to be offered.

Mr. Kamus Buildings and Grounds. Mr. Dicton is not here this evening but there was an e-mail sent about the cameras on the buses to discuss at our next meeting.

We had a Buildings and Grounds meeting two weeks ago, a great discussion. We are looking at filling a maintenance utility and custodian position. They are vacant, they are not new positions, empty positions that we are going to try to fill. I will be calling a special meeting next Friday at 12:00 to hire this utility position for the stadium that is vacant, an English teacher, and the other item on the agenda will be Mr. Kachurak's contract.

GENERAL RECOMMENDED ACTION

Moved by McGinley, seconded by Kobusky 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:
 - ❖ Jennifer L Barrett
2. Adopted **Policy 201**, Admission of Students. (Second Reading)

3. Adopted **Policy 203**, Immunizations and Communicable Diseases. (Second Reading)
4. Adopted **Policy 203.1**, HIV Infections. (Second Reading)
5. Adopted **Policy 204**, Attendance. (Second Reading)
6. Adopted **Policy 205**, Postgraduate Students. (Second Reading)
7. Adopted **Policy 206**, Assignment Within District. (Second Reading)
8. Adopted **Policy 207**, Confidential Communication of Students. (Second Reading)
9. Adopted **Policy 208**, Withdrawal From School. (Second Reading)
10. Adopted **Policy 209**, Health Examinations/Screenings. (Second Reading)
11. Adopted **Policy 209.1**, Food Allergy Management. (Second Reading)
12. Adopted **Policy 209.2**, Diabetes Management. (Second Reading)
13. Adopted **Policy 212**, Reporting Student Progress. (Second Reading)
14. Adopted **Policy 214**, Class Rank. (Second Reading)
15. Adopted **Policy 215**, Promotion and Retention. (Second Reading)
16. Adopted **Policy 216**, Student Records. (Second Reading)
17. Adopted **Policy 216.1**, Supplemental Discipline Records. (Second Reading)
18. Adopted **Policy 218**, Student Discipline. (Second Reading)
19. Adopted **Policy 218.1**, Weapons. (Second Reading)
20. Adopted **Policy 218.2**, Terroristic Threats. (Second Reading)
21. Adopted **Policy 218.3**, Discipline of Student Convicted/Adjudicated of Sexual Assault. (Second Reading)
22. Adopted **Policy 219**, Student Complaint Process. (Second Reading)
23. Approved **Invoice No. 4182-02** for the Guaranteed Energy Savings Project, from SitelogIQ, \$866,104.
24. Accepted Agreement with **Superior Pools & Spas** for temporary pool services.
25. Approved purchase of 300 laptops from **IntegraONE**, \$334,538. (ESSER III funding)
26. Approved purchase of Data Warehouse Software from **LinkIt**, \$98,922. (ESSER III funding)

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

STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION

Moved by Keating, seconded by Wilson, 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** February 1, 2024 – February 29, 2024.
 2. Appointed the following **new hires**:
 - ❖ **Sarah Ferrer-Arroyo** – Cleaner/High School, \$13.00/hr. effective January 15, 2024.
 - ❖ **Jessica Lewis** – Cleaner/High School, \$13.00/hr. effective February 26, 2024.
 - ❖ **Vanessa Cintron** – Autistic Support Aide/State Street, \$13.00/hr. effective February 26, 2024.
 - ❖ **Amanda Ruggiero** – Autistic Support Aide/State Street, \$13.00/hr. effective February 28, 2024.
 - ❖ **Andrea Weiskopff** – Computer Aide/State Street, \$11.50/hr. effective February 14, 2024.

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

FINANCE RECOMMENDED ACTION

Moved by Cussatt, seconded by Perfetto, 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, Dubaskas, Hardwick, Keating, McGinley, Perfetto, Kobusky, Cussatt, and Kamus voting yes. **Motion Carried.**

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. McGinley congratulated the wrestling program and is looking forward to the additional of the girls wrestling. That will be a nice addition and the girls should have that opportunity. He congratulated the Board, particularly Mr. Keating, for the salary adjustments that were made with Act 93. It is time, it allows us to be competitive in the local market so we can maintain people we have in those positions. He thanked everybody for their work and for their approval so we can continue to move in a forward direction.

Mr. Kobusky congratulated the wrestling team and said he is thrilled to be able to vote on the adjustment for the principals and the vice principals.

Mr. Perfetto congratulated the wrestling team and the addition of the young ladies to that team, and the adjustments that we are going to be making.

Mr. Wilson said that last week he attended Literacy Night at State Street Elementary and it was a packed house. It was amazing to see how many families showed up and participated. The entire staff at State Street did an amazing job, kudos to them.

Mr. Hardwick congratulated Coach Vassello and said he wanted the Board to keep in the back of their minds that Coach Vassello has reached out and asked us to give consideration in the future to a women's wrestling program. Mr. Dubaskas will keep that on the burner for future discussions.

Mr. Keating said looking at the agenda and everything going on, it is not any one committee in particular, it is this Board as a whole, that has really been working well and doing a lot of positive things for our school and it is enlightening.

Mrs. Cussatt congratulated the wrestling team and Coach. She welcomed Rob and thanked everyone for their great work.

Mr. Dubaskas said if anybody has great things going on in the district, let us know. Coach Ed Zawatski has been named to the Luzerne County Hall of Fame recently, and as our student representative said how many medals that are the direct result of his dedication. He graduated with my son in 2006 and he is now a teacher with us and does an amazing job with that program. He is rebuilding the program back up. Best of luck to Ed in everything he does, congratulations.

Mr. Kamus said there is so much positive going on inside our district. Not always about sports but if there is anything going on please bring it forward so this Board knows. There are so many moving parts here on a daily basis that we lose track of some of that. It will be good to hear more positives.

Mr. Tosh congratulated the girls and the Act 93 Contract, can't thank the Board enough, a long time coming. We have some really hard working administrators. It is nice to see that the Board has

recognized that, compliments to the Board. It was a great Title Literacy Night over at State Street. Chester Street will be having one coming up in April, we will get that information out. Mr. Kamus said Andrew Zwally from SitelogIQ reached out. There is a public schools facility improvement grant going on that closes May 31, 2024 and it is expected to be awarded by the end of 2024. It is for \$5 million, no less than \$500,000 but up to \$5 million. It includes roofs, siding, windows, doors, thermal envelope of the building, any sort of safety issue that is inside. It does have a 25% match. SitelogIQ offered to reach out and write the grant and administer the grant for us at no charge.

There will be a Special meeting next Friday.

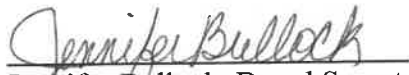
President Kamus announced the next Work Session, Wednesday, April 3, 2024 and the Regular Monthly Meeting, Wednesday, April 10, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion Carried.

Adjourned: 7:50 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.