

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
REGULAR MEETING  
JUNE 21, 2023**

The Regular Meeting of the Portage Area Board of School Directors was called to order. Kathy Hough, board president, led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. Members and others present were: Susan Berardinelli; Jason Corte; Matthew Decort; Kathy Hough; John Jubina; Tina Latoche; Christian Smith; Dennis Squillario; Pete Noel, Superintendent of Schools; Troy Eppley, Director of Special Education; Jeff Vasilko, Business Manager; Jeremy Burkett, Junior Senior High School Principal; Jennifer Pisarski, Elementary School Principal; Dennis McGlynn, Esquire and Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary.

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

There were no visitors who wished to speak.

**NOTICE TO PERSONNEL**

There may be reductions and/or reassignments of personnel due to fiscal circumstances.

**PUBLIC READING OF PROPOSED POLICIES**

- Second Reading – 137.2 Participation in Cocurricular Activities and Academic Courses by Home Education Students
- Second Reading – 137.3 Participation in Career and Technical Education Programs by Home Education Students
- Second Reading – 830.1 Data Governance – Storage/Security
- Second Reading – 201 Admission of Students
- Second Reading – 202 Eligibility of Nonresident Students
- Second Reading – 203.1 HIV Infection
- Second Reading – 205 Postgraduate Students
- Second Reading – 207 Confidential Communications of Students
- Second Reading – 208 Withdrawal from School
- Second Reading – 214 Class Rank
- Second Reading – 214 Promotion and Retention
- Second Reading – 235.1 Surveys

**NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Board held executive sessions on May 10 and May 25, 2023 for personnel matters.

**ROUTINE MATTERS**

**NEXT REGULAR MEETING**

The next Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held **Wednesday, August 16, 2023**, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the elementary school auditorium, 84 Mountain Avenue, Portage, PA with the Regular Meeting immediately following.

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**APPROVING THE MINUTES**

Motion Decort Second Corte Vote 7-0

The Administration recommends approving the May meeting minutes. A copy of the minutes was distributed with the advance agenda. *Mr. Squillario stepped out of the meeting briefly (8:23 p.m. – 8:24 p.m.) and was not present for this vote.*

**ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Motion Decort Second Corte Vote 7-0

The Board moves to approve the written agenda with any noted additions, deletions or corrections as discussed. *Mr. Squillario stepped out of the meeting briefly (8:23 p.m. – 8:24 p.m.) and was not present for this vote.*

Personnel Items, Line Item 9, Remove Korie Crum

**REPORTS**

IU 08 Operating Committee representative **Mrs. Kathy Hough** reported that the last meeting consisted of routine matters. Further, this meeting was Mrs. Hough's last meeting as a representative for the district as a member of Penn Cambria's board will be taking over.

Vo-Tech Operating Committee representative **Mr. Jason Corte** reported that Gallikers Dairy donated a truck for the diesel program. The vo tech is looking to expand this type of relationship into other programs.

Superintendent **Mr. Pete Noel** reported that the end of the school year went very well; it was a whirlwind and he appreciated the staff's exceptional efforts. Graduation was well attended and was a very good ceremony. He and the administrators are working with Mr. Fatula on the emergency operation plan and the threat assessment plans. The district will be applying the Run, Hide, Fight program for applicable scenarios. There were some issues with the comprehensive plan when it was initially filed last year but he is working with the PDE to solve them. In August, Mr. Noel hopes to present to the board a five-year plan for buildings and grounds. Mr. Noel concluded by noting that PSSA's scores were in for grades 3-8 which the administration will study and use as the data to drive professional development.

Director of Special Education **Mr. Troy Eppley** reported that the district has been approved for a life skills classroom in the elementary school. We are currently advertising for a special education teacher and we have received some quality applicants. Extended School Year will run in July.

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High School Principal **Mr. Jeremy Burkett** both the softball and baseball teams went to playoffs this season; members of the track team went to states but did not place. He thanked AD Crum for the great job she's doing handling seasons and post-seasons. The Challenge Program is back at Portage Area, which will reward students for making strides in areas such as grades, attendance, etc. Mrs. Williams and the art students idea for an outside mural is a great idea which he and Mrs. Smith support. He also supports the therapy dog concept as he's seen the students be more open and willing to communicate when the dog visits. Currently, a therapy dog is utilized at times through the Reach/Rise program. Mr. Burkett noted that this was an extraordinary year and he thanked Mrs. Smith and the staff for doing an outstanding job.

Elementary School Principal **Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski** reported that kindergarten graduation went well and that the seating concerns she had were taken care of through tickets. She thanked the staff for all their efforts.

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire** noted that it was a very busy month for HR matters, which are now on the agenda.

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko** had provided the board with a budget update during the Committee of the Whole meeting. He had nothing further to add to the agenda.

**REPORTS: A. FINANCIAL, B. INVOICES (GENERAL FUND, CAFETERIA FUND AND ATHLETIC FUND), C. TAX COLLECTORS**

Motion Decort Second Squillario Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

**A. Treasurers' Reports**

A. General Fund	Page 2
B. Cafeteria Report	Page 3
D. Elementary School Activity Fund	Page 5
E. Junior / Senior High School Activity Fund	Page 6
H. Athletics	Page 9
I. General Fund	Page 10
J. Capital Reserve Fund	Page 10.1
K. Capital Projects Fund	Page 10.2
L. Investments/Pledged Collateral Report	Page 11

**B.**

<b>General Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$1,131,602.74</b>
<b>Cafeteria Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$55,090.07</b>
<b>Athletic Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$54,024.35</b>
<b>Capital Reserve Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Capital Projects Fund Invoices</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

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Total Invoices paid	\$1,240,717.16
<b>C.</b>	
Mrs. Molnar - Cassandra Boro – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$0.00
Mr. Layo - Portage Boro – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$0.00
Mrs. Molnar Portage Township – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$0.00
Berkheimer Tax Administrators PASD – EIT (Current)	\$99,807.15
<b>Total Taxes</b>	<b>\$99,807.15</b>

**FINAL BUDGET FOR 2023-2024**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

General Fund

The budget in the amount of **\$15,180,395.38** has been advertised according to Section 687 of the Public School Code and should now be considered for final adoption. School real estate tax will be 53.79 mills. The budget has been prepared in accordance with the mandates set forth by the PA Department of Education.

The amount of expenditures is **\$15,180,395.38**. This is an anticipated increase in spending of **\$496,356.30 over** last year’s budget. The proposed budget is built on the governor’s proposed budget.

Cafeteria Fund

The Cafeteria Fund Budget anticipates **\$716,331.36** in expenses. Budgeted revenues and fund transfers cover these expenses include Operating Revenues and Non-Operating Revenues – Federal and State Reimbursements in the amount of **\$666,331.36** and Fund Transfers from the General Fund **\$50,000**. Student meal prices for the 2023-2024 school year are:

High School Lunch	\$2.70
High School Breakfast	\$2.20
Elementary Lunch	\$2.55
Elementary Breakfast	\$2.15

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**ADOPTING RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE HOMESTEAD AND FARMSTEAD EXCLUSION**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends adopting the Resolution to accept the Homestead and Farmstead Exclusion. Adoption will result in no additional money to the school district; it will result in real estate tax exclusions to homestead owners who applied and received approval through the county. The amount to be allocated is \$422,773.24.

**EXONERATION OF TAX COLLECTORS**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

Elected tax collectors should be exonerated from uncollected taxes so they may receive new duplicates and begin collecting 2023-2024 taxes on July 1, 2023. This action does not exonerate the taxable.

**GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR 2023-2024; WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION COVERAGE FOR 2023-2024 AND SCHOOL ACCIDENT INSURANCE FOR 2023-2024**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

Carl DeYulis, Agent of Record, recommends the following coverage:

PSBA Trust (Workmen's Coverage	\$36,705
Utica (Package)	\$64,968
• Property	
• Crime	
• General Liability	
• Government Crime	
• Automobile	
• Boiler & Machinery	
• School Leaders' Legal Liability	
• Excess Liability	
• Data Security (Attack & Extortion)	
• Network Security Liability	
Goodwin & Gruber (Student Coverage)	\$17,296

Note: The premium amount for the workers compensation is an estimate.

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**APPROVING NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND USE OF FUNDS**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends approving the Notice of Adoption of Approved LEA Policies, Procedures and Use of Funds by School District. The IU-adopted policies and procedures are implemented to fulfill the requirements of 22 PA Code Chapter 14 and the regulatory requirements under IDEA, Part B.

**APPROVING EXTENDED CAMPUS AGREEMENT**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

The administration recommends approving the 2023-2024 Partnership Understanding of Learning Opportunities with Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 to provide online, cyber options for students. The district would incur a cost only if a student participates in the program.

**APPROVING AGREEMENT FOR DRUG AND ALCOHOL INTERVENTION SERVICES**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends approving a Referral, Communication and Transfer Agreement with Impact Counseling Services, LLC to provide drug and alcohol intervention services for eligible students. The district would only incur costs if a student receives services.

**RENEWING AGREEMENT FOR ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION SERVICES**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends renewing its agreement with Ignite Education Solutions to manage the Highway to Success classroom for the 2023-2024 school year. The cost will be \$110,058.24.

**APPROVING GASB 75 VALUATION AND RELATED SERVICES AGREEMENT**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving a Services Agreement with Pennsylvania Trust for GASBE 75 valuation services as state mandated. The fee for these services is not to exceed \$6,400 as the district is listed as a small group.

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**APPROVING PARTICIPATION IN ELECT CONSORTIUM**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends authorizing the Altoona Area School District, as administrator of consortium, to file application on the District's behalf in the implementation of the Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT) which provides services to eligible students.

**APPROVING ESL CONSORTIUM WITH APPALACHIA INTERMEDIATE UNIT 8**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the district's participation in the ESL Consortium with Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 for English as a Second Language services for the 2023-2024 school year. The cost to the district is \$4,600.

**APPROVING AGREEMENT WITH PRESSLEY RIDGE**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends renewing Addendum #6 to its contract with Pressley Ridge. If a student is enrolled in the program, the semester rate is \$16,750. The rate for Extended School Year is \$135 per day.

**ADOPTING DISTRICT POLICIES**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends adopting the following polices:

- 104 Discrimination Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Staff
- 105 Curriculum
- 113 Special Education
- 140 Charter Schools
- 140.1 Extracurricular Participation by Charter/Cyber Charter Students
- 142 Migrant Students
- 143 Standards for Persistently Dangerous Schools
- 144 Standards for Victims of Violent Crimes
- 146 Student Services

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**PERSONNEL MATTERS**

**APPROVING CONTRACT WITH THE PORTAGE AREA EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

Motion Corte Second Decort Vote 6-2

VOTING YES: Corte, Decort, Berardinelli, Jubina, Smith and Hough

VOTING NO: Squillario and Latoche

The Administration recommends approving the contract with the Portage Area Education Association for the five-year period July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2028 as presented to the board.

**APPROVING ACT 93 COMPENSATION PLAN**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 7-0-1

Mr. Corte abstained.

The Administration recommends approving the Act 93 Plan as presented to the board.

**APPROVING MIDDLE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Middle Management Plan as presented to the board.

**APPROVING BUSINESS MANAGER'S COMPENSATION PLAN**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Business Manager's Compensation Plan as presented to the board.

**APPROVING SECRETARIAL SALARY SCALE**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the secretarial salary scale as presented to the board.



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**REVISING ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES FOR PARAPROFESSIONALS**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends revising the Administrative Guidelines for Paraprofessionals to provide 11 sick days and 3 personal days to district-employed aides.

**HIRING A SCHOOL POLICE OFFICER**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring William Sheehan as a school police officer beginning with the 2023-2024 school year. Salary will be \$40,000, with benefits.

**HIRING A SECONDARY SCIENCE TEACHER**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Sierra Crum as a permanent secondary science teacher beginning with the 2023-2024 school year. Salary will be Step 1, with benefits based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA.

**HIRING PARAPROFESSIONALS**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring the following individuals as paraprofessionals beginning with the 2023-2024 school year.

Sandy Pisarski  
Brandi Kephart  
Emma Duttry

Tessa Washko  
Jody Hale

**HIRING AN ASSISTANT BASKETBALL COACH**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 7-1

VOTING YES: Squillario, Decort, Corte, Jubina, Latoche, Smith and Hough

VOTING NO: Berardinelli

The Administration recommends hiring Makena Baumgardner as the varsity girls' assistant basketball coach beginning with the 2023-2024 school year. Salary will be based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA for extra-curricular activities.

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**HIRING AN ASSISTANT JUNIOR HIGH VOLLEYBALL COACH**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 6-2

VOTING YES: Squillario, Decort, Corte, Jubina, Smith and Hough

VOTING NO: Berardinelli and Latoche

The Administration recommends hiring Nicole Hunt as the varsity girls' assistant junior high volleyball coach beginning with the 2023-2024 school year. Salary will be based on the current contract between the district and the PAEA for extra-curricular activities.

**APPROVING STARTING RATE FOR IGNITE PARAPROFESSIONALS**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the starting rate of \$10 per hour for Ignite employed paraprofessionals.

**APPROVING IGNITE PARAPROFESSIONAL INCENTIVE OPTION**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving Option 2 to provide an end of year bonus based on attendance to Ignite paraprofessionals beginning with the 2023-2024 school year as previously presented to the board.

**ADVERTISING FOR A LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTE TEACHER**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration requests permission to advertise for a long-term substitute elementary school teacher for the 2023-2024 school year.

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**ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret the following resignations:

Emily Facci	Secondary Math
Tina Lutz	Scholastic Quiz
Abigail Chobany	Assistant Track Coach

The Administration further requests permission to advertise these positions.

**TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

Motion to terminate for cause the employment of John Nicholson effective June 21, 2023. The board further authorizes the superintendent to carry out termination of employment procedures.

**NON-RENEWAL OF EMPLOYMENT**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

Motion for the non-renewal of employment of Kathleen Chappell effective June 21, 2023 for cause. The board further authorizes the superintendent of carry out termination of employment procedure.

**APPROVING DAYS OFF WITHOUT PAY**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends approving the following staff member's request for days off without pay:

Staff member request for May 22 through 24, 2023 (three days)

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**ADDING VOLUNTEER COACHES**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

The Administration recommends adding the following volunteer coaches. They have or will have provided current clearances prior to attending practices with students.

Marla Nesbella	Varsity Volleyball Coach
Trenton Gentile	Marching Band
Louis Kordish	Junior High Football
Scott Berardinelli	Junior High Football
Caleb Hunt	Junior High Volleyball
Caleb Hunt	Forensics

**BOARD REQUESTS / USE OF FACILITIES**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0  
(Roll Call Vote)

Request for Approved Travel:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Krystal Smith and Kelly Mignogna	LinkIt! DFSI 2023	July 18-19, 2023	\$500	Yes
Troy Eppley	Transition Conference Our Voice, Our Plan, Our Future	August 9-10, 2023	\$241.87	Yes

Request for Approved Field Trip:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Addison Holyfield	Two students to attend IUP Drum Major Camp	June 26-30, 2023	\$0.00 (Friends of the Band)	N/A
Mary Ann George	Take students to the Cambria County College Fair, Penn Highlands CC	September 19, 2023 9:00 – 10:45 a.m.	\$205.24 (Transportation)	Yes

Requests for Use of Facilities:

Requester	Purpose	Facility	Date(s)	Rental Fee/ Amount
Johnstown Oldtimers	National AAABA Tournament	Haschak Field	July 31, August 1-2, 2023	No Charge
Portage Rotary Club	Summerfest/Rotary 5k Race	Football Stadium, restrooms and parking lot	August 12, 2023	No Charge
Portage Area Ambulance Association, Inc.	Active Shooter Community Program	High School Auditorium	July 20, 2023	No Charge

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Portage Area Summerfest, Inc.	Summerfest entertainment	High School Auditorium in case of inclement weather	August 10-14, 2023	No Charge
Portage Area Summerfest, Inc.	Summerfest entertainment	Stage risers	August 10-14, 2023	No Charge

**MOTION TO MAKE THE AGENDA PART OF THE MINUTES**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

**MOTION SHOULD BE MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING**

Motion Squillario Second Decort Vote 8-0

Time: 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew R. Decort, Board Secretary

Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary