

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 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; Christian Smith; Dennis Squillario; Pete Noel, Superintendent of Schools; Jeff Vasilko, Business Manager; Jeremy Burkett, Junior Senior High School Principal; Jennifer Pisarski, Elementary School Principal; Dennis McGlynn, Esquire and Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary. Absent was Tina Latoche.

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

Third Reading - 006.1 Attendance at Meetings Via Electronic Communications

Third Reading - 011 Principals for Governance and Leadership

First Reading – 104 Discrimination Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Staff

First Reading – 105 Curriculum

First Reading – 113 Special Education

First Reading – 140 Charter Schools

First Reading – 140.1 Extracurricular Participation by Charter/Cyber Charter Students

First Reading – 142 Migrant Students

First Reading – 143 Standards for Persistently Dangerous Schools

First Reading – 144 Standards for Victims of Violent Crimes

First Reading – 146 Student Services

ROUTINE MATTERS

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The next Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held **Wednesday, April 12, 2023**, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the elementary school auditorium, 84 Mountain Avenue, Portage, PA with the Regular Meeting immediately following.

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 2023**

APPROVING THE MINUTES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends approving the February meeting minutes. A copy of the minutes was distributed with the advance agenda.

ADDITIONS, DELETIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0

The Board moves to approve the written agenda with any noted additions, deletions or corrections as discussed.

Personnel, Line Item 1, change the start date to on or before May 8, 2023

REPORTS

IU 08 Operating Committee representative **Mrs. Kathy Hough** reported that the last meeting consisted of routine matters and the 2023-2024 general operating budget which is on tonight's agenda for consideration.

Vo-Tech Operating Committee representative **Mr. Jason Corte** reported that 23 students are working through a co-op at the vo tech. There are positions that need to be filled yet. Enrollment is at 775 currently. And for the first time, there will be a Senior Ceremony at the vo tech on May 3 @ 7:00 p.m.

Superintendent **Mr. Pete Noel** noted that this has been a busy first month and that his nervousness has decreased and his excitement for the position has increased. He thanked the school board for being understanding and he appreciate the relationship they have built and will continue to build together. He reported that at the February 20 in service, Bubba Fatula talked with the teachers about the Run, Hide, Fight concept for active intruders and he will continue to work with out staff. At the last PAC (vo tech) meeting, he watched a presentation on human trafficking which was very sobering in that this is not overtaking drug use in youth. He added that he'd like to get this information out to the community to ensure the safety of our youth. He also advised the board that they will consider the hire of a special education director at tonight's meeting. If approved they will work with Mr. Eppley's current district to make a smooth transition for everyone. He noted that the renovation/rehabilitation work on the stadium is also on the agenda in two separate line items: to approve work on the design of the locker rooms and to approve EADs proposal for the bleacher rehabilitation. Mr. Noel also noted that the board will see on the regular agenda a motion to approve the Fatula Group to serve as the district safety and security consultant. Curriculum review and update is continuing with the IU. There will be a homeless student monitor in the district in a few weeks. The district will be ready to assist the monitors. On March 21, Mr. Noel and Mr. Vasilko will view a webinar on the governor's proposed budget.

High School Principal **Mr. Jeremy Burkett** reported that the high school students attended a career fair which included vo tech students presenting information on the programs they are in. The district blood drive collected 30 units and thank you to Mrs. George for organizing the drive. Students will be

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 2023**

participating in Heritage Conference academic competitions in March. The forensics team is doing very well this season and will be moving on to regional and state competitions. Several staff and students have shown interest in being CPR certified and many thanks to Mrs. Dividock and Mrs. Glass for conducting the training. National Honor Society induction will be March 20 at 7:00 p.m. in the high school auditorium. Students will take a trip to the courthouse and the prison on March 21. He is watching the weather for Friday concerning the boy's basketball playoff game. It could be pushed back to Saturday. For the first time in many years, springs sports teams were able to practice outside the first week. Many thanks to Tony and the maintenance crew for getting the fields ready. He advised the board that Siarra Crum is doing a great job as the AT/AD. Mr. Burkett concluded by saying that Mr. Noel is doing a great job and thanked him for his support.

Elementary School Principal **Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski** reported that so much of good happenings in the elementary school are making their way to Facebook with good feedback. To date, 40 children have been registered for kindergarten for the upcoming school district. Thanks to Mrs. Glass for spearheading this event. Read Across America was celebrated with a lot of great guest readers. The teachers are preparing for upcoming PSSAs. The end of the third marking period incentive for good behavior will be the jumpies and a movie.

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire** observed that Mr. Noel had no time to ease into the position as he had a lot to contend with from day one. He said that he handled each situation extremely well and it's a pleasure to work with him.

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko** reported that the governor's budget was released today and it provides increased in the basic education funding and special education funding. It also provides an increase for mental health services. For the first time in 25 years, PSERS rates have decreased. He thanked the staff for submitting their budget information on time. He noted that he and the administrators are working on mental health and safety grants the funds of which would be for a school police officer and social worker, guest speakers, etc. He is also working on a dual enrollment grant. The letters to residents concerning delinquent per capita taxes went out. The district is owed about \$21,000 in back taxes, which equates to approximately a half mil. He and Ms. Migongna have recently finished up Title monitoring.

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

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0
(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

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 2023**

K. Capital Projects Fund Page 10.2
L. Investments/Pledged Collateral Report Page 11

B.	
General Fund Invoices	\$1,104,771.91
Cafeteria Fund Invoices	\$71,909.14
Athletic Fund Invoices	\$55,476.01
Capital Reserve Fund Invoices	\$0.00
Capital Projects Fund Invoices	\$
Total Invoices paid	\$1,232,157.06

C.	
Mrs. Chappell - Cassandra Boro – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$0.00
Mr. Layo - Portage Boro – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$0.00
Mrs. Chappell Portage Township – Property, Per Capita, Occupation	\$0.00
Berkheimer Tax Administrators PASD – EIT (Current)	\$76,873.16
Total Taxes	\$76,873.16

APPROVING IU08 GENERAL BUDGET FOR 2023-2024

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Appalachia Intermediate Unit 8 General Budget for the 2023-2024 school year in the amount of \$5,836,875.40. The district's Projected Market Value Aid Ratio is \$1,773.71.

APPROVING CONCEPTUAL DESIGN FOR LOCKER ROOM PROJECT

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the EADs Group to begin work on the conceptual design for the locker room project at the football stadium for a cost not to exceed \$25,000.

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 2023**

APPROVING PROPOSAL FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES AND ADVERTISE FOR BIDS

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the EADs Group's Proposal to provide engineering services associated with the bleacher rehabilitation project for a fee of \$40,000. The Administration further requests permission to advertise for bids once the bid documents are completed by EADs.

REQUESTING PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE FOR A SCHOOL POLICE OFFICER

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration requests permission to advertise for a school police officer.

APPROVING CONTRACT FOR A SAFETY AND SECURITY CONSULTANT

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving The Fatula Group to serve as the district's safety and security consultant in accordance with the Proposal for Threat Preparedness. The fee will be \$15,000.

APPROVING EFD, LLC FOR CONSULTING SERVICES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving EFD, LLC to provide consulting services to the administration at a rate of \$50 per hour and not to exceed \$5,000.

ADDING A BUS TO THE VEHICLE LIST

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends adding Bus 217, VIN 4DRBUAAN69A670524, as a spare bus to the Portage fleet.

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 2023**

APPROVING REVISIONS TO DISTRICT POLICIES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends approving the revisions to the following district policies:

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| 100 – Comprehensive Planning | 101 – Mission Statement/Vision Statement |
| 102 – Academic Standards | 103.1 – Nondiscrimination – Qualified Students
With Disabilities |
| 105.1 – Review of Instructional Materials by Parent/Guardians and Students | |
| 105.2 – Exemption from Instruction | 106 – Guides for Planned Instruction |
| 107 – Adoption of Planned Instruction | 108 – Adoption of Planned Instruction |
| 109 – Resource Materials | 110 – Instructional Supplies |
| 111 – Lesson Plans | 112 – Guidance Counseling |
| 115 – Career and Technical Education | 117 – Homebound Instruction |
| 118 – Independent Study | 119 – Current Events |
| 121 – Field Trips | 124 – Alternative Instruction Courses |
| 125 – Adult Education | 126 – Class Size |
| 130 – Homework | |

RETIRING DISTRICT POLICIES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Board moves to retire the following district policies based on the recommendation of the PSBA as they review and update policies.

- 141 – English as a Second Language Program (now incorporated into Policy 138)
- 248 – Student Harassment (now incorporated into Policy 103)
- 348 – Unlawful Harassment (now incorporated into Policy 104)

PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE FOR BIDS

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0

The Administration requests permission to advertise for coal, milk and bread bids.

APPROVING STUDENT TEACHER ASSIGNMENTS

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends approving the following student teaching assignments:

Mercedes Sickles (Mount Aloysius College)	Kayla Fisher	2023-2024 SY
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**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 2023**

PERSONNEL MATTERS

HIRING A DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Troy M. Eppley as the director of special education beginning on or before May 8, 2023. Salary will be \$83,500, with benefits per an Act 93 compensation plan.

HIRING A 10-MONTH SECRETARY

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends hiring Rebecca Chobany as a 10-month guidance/athletics secretary beginning July 1, 2023. Salary will be based on the current secretary salary scale, with single benefits.

HIRING AN ASSISTANT FOOTBALL COACH

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 4-1-1
Voting Yes: Corte, Jubina, Berardinelli and Hough
Voting No: Squillario
Abstain: Smith

The Administration recommends hiring Matt Bilchak as an assistant football coach beginning with the 2023-2024 season. Mr. Bilchak has provided clearances and all necessary documents to participate in practices.

ACCEPTING RESIGNATION OF HEAD JUNIOR HIGH VOLLEYBALL COACH

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0

The Board moves to accept, with regret, the resignation of Tyler Johnson as the junior high head volleyball coach effective immediately. The Administration further requests permission to advertise this position.

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 2023**

ADDING VOLUNTEER COACHES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0

The administration recommends adding the following individuals as volunteer coaches for the 2022-2023 season.

Caleb Hunt
Mindi Hodge
Tyler Spaid*

Forensics
Forensics
Track

*Will provide clearances prior to attending practices.

APPROVING DAYS OFF WITHOUT PAY

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0

The Administration recommends approving the following staff members requests for days off without pay:

Staff member request for February 13, 2023 (one day)

Staff member request for March 6 and April 26, 27 and 28, 2023 (four days)

Staff member request for May 26, 30 and 31 and June 1 and 2, 2023 (five days)

BOARD REQUESTS / USE OF FACILITIES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0
(Roll Call Vote)

Request for Approved Field Trip:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Dennis Link	Take SADD Club members Tru Youth Conference, a tobacco resistance conference, in Irwin, PA	March 17, 2023	\$0.00 (paid by Tru)	N/A
Kathleen Bodenschatz, Reading Competition Advisor	Reading Competition Forest Hills HS	March 28, 2023	\$184.80	Yes
Denise Moschgat	Take theater students to St. Francis University to see a performance of Grease	March 29, 2023	\$0.00 (paid by Theater)	N/A
Fifth Grade Teachers	Take fifth grade to the Portage Railroad Museum	April 11, 2023	\$0.00 (paid by Rotary)	N/A
Jennifer Szpala	Take students to Hiram G. Andrews Autism Walk	April 18, 2023	\$0.00 (use of vehicle)	N/A

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 8, 2023**

Abigail Chobany	Take students to the Carnegie Museum of Natural History	April 20, 2023	\$440.58	Yes
Abigail Chobany	Take the Senior physics class to Kennywood Physics Day	May 19, 2023	\$335.58	Yes
Fifth Grade Teachers	Field trip to Fort Ligonier	May 22, 2023	\$0.00 (paid by PTO)	N/A
Grade 3-6 Discipline Committee	Attend Curve Game	May 24, 2023	\$0.00 (Paid by Zero Demerit)	N/A

Requests for Use of Facilities:

Requester	Purpose	Facility	Date(s)	Rental Fee/ Amount
Tobi Burkett on behalf of the Girls Basketball Boosters	Spring Fling Dance	Elementary School Gymnasium	April 22, 2023	No Charge
Portage Area Sewer Authority/EADs Group	Public Meeting on Sewer Project	Elementary School Auditorium	April 24, 2023	\$10/hour
Junior Class Prom Committee	Prom Photos and Promenade	HS Auditorium and Cafeteria	May 11-12, 2023	No Charge
Rotary Club	Pancake and Sausage Breakfast	HS Kitchen & Cafeteria	May 7, 2023	No Charge
Hannah Shaffer, Cheer Coach	Junior Cheer Camp	Elementary Gymnasium	March 25, 2023 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.	No Charge

MOTION TO MAKE THE AGENDA PART OF THE MINUTES

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0

MOTION SHOULD BE MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion Squillario Second Corte Vote 6-0

Time: 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew R. Decort, Board Secretary

Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary