

**PORTAGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
DECEMBER 1, 2021**

The Regular Meeting of the Portage Area Board of School Directors was called to order. Erik Thrower, 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; Erik Thrower; Eric A. Zelanko, Superintendent of Schools; Ralph J. Cecere, Jr., Junior Senior High School Principal; Jeff Vasilko, Business Manager; Dennis M. McGlynn, Esquire, Solicitor and Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary. Absent was Pete Noel.

RECOGNITION OF VISITORS

Todd Learn, parent and Portage Borough resident, addressed the board to state that he has reviewed the past board meeting minutes and found no mention or discussion or vote on vaccine clinics.

Joel Valentine and Cara Ferrante from Wesel and Company presented the audit reporting package for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021. The audit report opinion is clean, meaning that there were no adverse findings. It is a clean report. The auditors thanked the staff for their assistance and commended the district and board for their excellent work and cooperation.

NOTICE TO PERSONNEL

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

THIRD READING OF BOARD POLICIES

004-BOG-7 Oath of Office Certificate
006-BOG-0 Publish, Post and Notify – Board Meetings/Agendas
137.1 Extracurricular Participation by Home Education Students
146.1 Trauma-Informed Approach
150 Title 1 - Comparability of Services
218.3 Discipline of Student Convicted/Adjudicated of Sexual Assault
236-AR-0 Student Assistance Program
236.1-AR-0 Threat Assessment Intake Form
236.1 Threat Assessment
252 Dating Violence
800.1 Electronic Signatures/Records
805.2 School Security Personnel

ROUTINE MATTERS

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The Committee of the Whole Meeting will be held **Wednesday, January 18, 2022**, beginning at 6:30 p.m. in the elementary school auditorium, 84 Mountain Avenue, Portage, PA with the Regular Meeting immediately following.

APPROVING THE MINUTES

Motion Thrower Second Squillario Vote 9-0

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

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REPORTS

IU 08 Operating Committee representative **Mrs. Kathy Hough** reported that the December IU meeting has not yet been held. She will report on it at the January meeting.

Vo-Tech Operating Committee representative **Mr. Jason Corte** nothing that at the last meeting, no major items has been discussed. The new classes are doing well and he is looking forward to the new programs going into the new school year.

Superintendent **Mr. Eric A. Zelanko** reported to the board that in regard to the Health and Safety Plan, he is awaiting the PA Supreme Court's decision on Governor Wolfe's face covering mandate. The district is tentatively planning to hold a clinic for 5 to 11 year olds and about 40 parents expressed an interest in having their child vaccinated. The first dose will be December 20 and the second on January 10. The district will no long contract trace outside school cases of Covid. It will continue to do inside school tracing. The Commonwealth has approved testing to avoid quarantine and will provide guidance to schools shortly. If a student tests negative, they can stay in school. Mr. Zelanko recommended that the board considered tabling the purchase of a grand piano until January. The high school auditorium upgrades are mostly completed. The curtains are installed and look great. The sound is partially installed and already there is improvement. In staffing matters, Mr. Zelanko reported that Lisa Civis and Michael Duffy will both be retiring at the end of the school year and that they will be missed. They have been outstanding educators. The district will add a sixth grade teacher as the class size for sixth grade for the 2022-2023 has increased to average numbers. Mr. Zelanko also reported that he would like the board to consider adding a half time music teacher to expand the music department and introduce the elementary students to marching band and chorus in a kind of feeder program for the junior and senior high school. There has been more and more student interest in the music programs and he would like to see it succeed. He further noted that it appears that schools will not close due to the pandemic and so it would be feasible to add the part-time position. Mr. Zelanko discussed with the board the potential serious issue with the concrete over the locker rooms at the football stadium. He discussed options with the board and asked if they wished him to talk to an engineer and hopefully find a solution.

Mr. Zelanko further noted to the board that using ESSR moneys is the only opportunity the district has to use federal money and save its own.

High School Principal **Mr. Ralph Cecere** reported that he and other administrators from area school district have been talking with teaching students from UPJ in a type of mentor situation. He noted that it was refreshing that they all were very eager to get into classrooms. Currently three UPJ students are doing teaching assignments in the district. Participation in parent-teacher conferences was mostly 7th and 8th grade families. Curriculum specialist from the IU have begun working with the teachers on curriculum development. They are beginning with math and English language arts and should be done by the end of the school year. Mr. Cecere stated that it was nice to finally get back to education related issues. He also noted that he has spoken with Mr. Holyfield and would suggest spending less on a grand piano citing storage issues and possible maintenance and care concerns. He also noted that the holiday music and choir concert and drama club's winter performance are upcoming and encouraged the board to attend.

Elementary School Assistant Principal **Mrs. Jennifer Pisarski** reported that parent-teacher conference turnout was poor even though conferences were offered in person and via TEAMS. The elementary school teachers are also working with the IU specialists to update curriculum. Elementary SAP training will be happening in the future and meetings with the SAP team members are beginning. The Healing

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Patch has been offering grief counseling to students and their services seems to be of benefit to those students participating in the sessions. Mr. and Mrs. Clause will be making a visit to the students soon.

School Solicitor **Dennis McGlynn, Esquire** had nothing to add to the agenda.

Business Administrator **Mr. Jeff Vasilko** reported that the district received a clean audit report and that working with the staff from Wessel and Company is great. He further mentioned that he will create another designated fund for possible repairs to the football stadium. The new budget season is beginning and he has begun the preliminary work on it.

Athletic Director **Mr. Jeremy Burkett** reported that fall sports were all very successful with all teams heading into playoffs and several cross-country participants placing at states. He further mentioned that because of these successes, we are quickly running out of room in the gymnasium for banners. Some banners have been temporarily taken down and will be replaced. Winter season practices are underway and the men's and women's basketball teams will be acknowledged at a Meet the Mustangs next week.

APPROVING PROPOSAL FOR K-12 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN MATH AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends approving the Proposal, Option #3 from the IU8 for K-12 curriculum development in math and English language arts (Phase 1). The cost for this service is \$30,400.

APPROVING PURCHASE OF GRAND PIANO

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0
THIS ACTION WAS TABLED

The Administration requests permission to purchase a digital grand piano from _____ in the amount of \$_____. The quotes are listed below:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------|
| 1. The Piano Guys | \$15,599.99 |
| 2. Sweetwater | \$16,505.83 |
| 3. Kraft Music | \$16,244.99 |

PERSONNEL MATTERS

ADDING TO THE SUBSTITUTE LIST

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

The Administration recommends adding Sean Kelly as a substitute custodian.

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ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION DUE TO RETIREMENT

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Lisa Civis's letter of resignation due to retirement effective at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. The district further requests permission to advertise this position.

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION DUE TO RETIREMENT

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Michael Duffy's letter of resignation due to retirement effective at the end of the 2021-2022 school year. The district further requests permission to advertise this position.

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION DUE TO RETIREMENT

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Elena Bandzuh's letter of resignation due to retirement effective April 1, 2022.

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Olivia Kudlawiec's letter of resignation as the school psychologist/special education coordinator effective December 23, 2021. The administration requests permission to advertise this position.

ACCEPTING LETTER OF RESIGNATION

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends accepting, with regret, Joel Holsopple's letter of resignation as an assistant varsity football coach.

REQUESTING PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE FOR POSITIONS

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0

The Administration requests permission to advertise for a high school ski club adviser for the 2021-2022 school year. The Administration further requests permission to advertise for a half time music teacher and a full time sixth grade teacher for the 2022-2023 school year.

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APPROVING REQUEST FOR FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends a staff member's request for a Family Medical Leave of Absence for the eight week period of December 14, 2021 to February 8, 2022. All necessary documentation has been submitted.

APPROVING REQUEST FOR DAYS OFF WITHOUT PAY

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0

The Administration recommends approving a staff member's request for the following days off without pay: November 9, 10 and 24, 2021

BOARD REQUESTS / USE OF FACILITIES

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0
(Roll Call Vote)

Request for Approved Field Trip:

Requester	Destination	Date(s)	Approximate Cost	Budgeted Y/N
Addison Holyfield	Take band students to the Chatterbox to play at Winterfest	December 10, 2021 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.	No Charge	N/A
Addison Holyfield	Take the marching band to play at Winterfest	December 11, 2021 2:20 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.	\$186.24	Yes
Mary Ann George	Take the 10 th grade class to Admiral Peary Vo Tech	January 27, 2022 11:40 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.	\$134.70	Yes
Nicole Hunt	Take the Forensics Team to a competition	December 15, 2021 1:30 – 9:30 p.m.	No Charge	N/A

Prior to adjournment, Attorney McGlynn advised that the board would be having an executive session and no voting items would be considered.

MOTION TO MAKE THE AGENDA PART OF THE MINUTES

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0

MOTION SHOULD BE MADE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING

Motion Squillario Second Thrower Vote 9-0

Time: 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew R. Decort, Board Secretary

Denise Moschgat, Recording Secretary