

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

REORGANIZATION MEETING

DECEMBER 7, 2020

The Board of Directors of the Hopewell Area School District met virtually on Monday, December 7, 2020 for the purpose of effecting a permanent organization of the Board in compliance with Section 404 of the Public School Code of 1949, as amended, and any other business which may come before the Board of Directors.

Mrs. Dobo, President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Prayer and flag salute was led by Ms. McKittrick. Roll call by the secretary followed. Those Directors in attendance were:

Daniel Caton
Lesia Dobo
Lori McKittrick
Darren Newberry
Kathryn Oblak
Daniel Santia
Jeffrey Winkle
Lindsay Zupsic

Members Absent
Matthew Erickson

Also in attendance were: Dr. Michelle Miller, Superintendent; Dr. Jacie Maslyk, Assistant Superintendent; John Salopek, Solicitor; Jennifer Conrad, Business Administrator; Nancy Barber, Secretary; and visitors.

An Executive Session was held on December 1, 2020 and prior to the start of this meeting to discuss personnel. This announcement is being made to be in compliance with Act 84 of 1986, Pennsylvania's Sunshine Law, as amended

For purposes of reorganization, Motion by Darren Newberry, seconded by Dan Caton, to nominate John Salopek as Temporary President. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

Mr. Salopek called for nominations for President. Motion by Lesia Dobo to nominate Jeff Winkle as President of the Board. There being no other nominations for President, Motion by Kathryn Oblak, second by Lori McKittrick, nominations for President closed.

Roll Call vote for Jeff Winkle as President of the Board of Directors. Motion carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors present.

Mr. Salopek called for nominations for Vice President. Motion by Lori McKittrick to nominate Darren Newberry as Vice President of the Board. There being no other nominations for Vice President, Motion by Kathryn Oblak, seconded by Lesia Dobo, nominations for Vice President closed.

Roll call vote for Darren Newberry as Vice President of the Board of Directors. Motion carried unanimously by an affirmative vote of all Directors present.

Mr. Winkle introduced Carlos Correa, the new Director of Technology. Mr. Correa is a contractor from Questeq and started on October 26, 2020. Since his arrival, he has met with administrators and teachers trying to ascertain what is currently in place with respect to technology and what is needed to support students and staff moving forward. Current projects include expanding the wireless network in all buildings; potentially looking to replace our existing phone system; and replacing outdated PA systems.

At this time Dr. Miller reviewed the agenda in its entirety, including items that would be voted on at this meeting.

Athletics: Mr. Caton, Chair; Dr. Erickson, Co-Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Allow/Suspend the 2020-2021 winter athletics program through _____.

Legislative: Mrs. Oblak, Chair

Recommendation to approve the following:

1. Work and Business meeting dates schedule for 2021. (**Attachment**)

The following items will be voted on at the December 14, 2020 Board meeting.

Education/Curriculum/Instruction: Mr. Winkle, Chair; Ms. McKittrick, Co-Chair

1. Revisions to the District's Health and Safety Plan.
2. Service Agreement with The Children's Institute.
3. Agreement with Geneva College to provide practicum experience to students in the Communication Disorders Program.
4. Nicole Marrs, a student at Geneva College, to complete a clinical placement in Speech Pathology with Emily Collins during the spring of 2021.
5. Shannon Staver, a student at Geneva College, to complete her student teaching in the spring of 2021, under the guidance of Jason Winters.

6. Zach Almy, a student at Geneva College, to complete his student teaching in the spring of 2021, under the guidance of Michael Shuleski.
7. Senior High School clubs and sponsors. (Attachment)

Finance and Budget: Lori McKittrick, Chair

1. Appointment of Diane Palsa as Delinquent Real Estate Tax Collector for Hopewell Township for 2020 school taxes for period December 31, 2020 through April 15, 2021.
2. Appointment of Mary Ellen Oros as Delinquent Real Estate Tax Collector for Independence Township for 2020 school taxes for period December 31, 2020 through April 15, 2021.
3. Appointment of Sandra Cain as Delinquent Real Estate Tax Collector for Raccoon Township for 2020 school taxes for period December 31, 2020 through April 15, 2021.
4. Contract with BerkOne to process the District's Act 80 records at an approximate cost of \$827.00.

Personnel: Dr. Erickson Chair; Mrs. Oblak, Co-Chair

1. Resignation of Tonya O'Brien, elementary cyber teacher, effective on or about January 15, 2021.
2. Request of Christina Signorelli for a medical sabbatical, effective the second semester of the 2020-2021 school year.
3. Reaffirm the appointment of Kellee Oliver, Coordinator of Pupil Personnel Services, as the District's Title VI and Title IX, Section 504 Compliance Officer.

Visitors

David and Peggy McCowin, 460 School Road, Clinton, 15026

Hope this finds you all well and ready for the holiday season ahead. We are writing to voice support for the reinstatement of winter sports at HASD. We believe all winter sports should continue to practice and be able to compete in their respective divisions/sections through the season.

In an article dated 11/18/2020 - <https://www.inquirer.com/high-school-sports/pennsylvania/piaa-winter-sports-move-forward-high-school-basketball-pennsylvania-20201118.html> - it was noted the PIAA was moving forward with the scheduled start of winter sports, practices starting 11/20/2020. At its upcoming meeting on 12/9/2020, there will be further discussion around the

timing of the season. We owe our athletes the time and encouragement to practice and participate in their sport. Earlier this year, the PIAA also published "return to competition" guidelines - http://www.piaa.org/assets/web/documents/Return_to_Competition_Winter.pdf - to allow for the safest possible experience for each sport.

A quick internet search for the benefits of sports for students will provide you infinite studies and stories showing the positive impact these activities have for students. Sports in school show a positive effect on grades, discipline, and mental wellbeing. We owe it to our athletes to give them the chance to compete!

While we don't live our lives "doing what everyone else does", it should be noted that other school districts in our section and county (Quaker Valley, Beaver, Blackhawk, Avonworth, and West Alleghany - to name a few) have continued to allow student athletes to practice, even while attending school virtually. Our Superintendent has constantly stressed the fact that the Beaver County Schools have been collaborating on educational instructional guidelines to present a "united front". Doesn't it make sense to do the same for sports? While HASD has been following the Pennsylvania Department of Education recommendations for educational instruction, doesn't it make sense to follow the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association when it comes to sports? Anecdotally, it's rumored that children athletes of some board members are participating in sports organizations out of the district. A vote against the return to practice/play for Hopewell student athletes by these members seems hypocritical.

When considering winter sports participation for other schools in our section for competition, please provide what each school district is doing with respect to the season. Which schools are delaying, which schools are cancelling, which schools are waiting on further guidance.

All of our winter sports are important and we believe all athletes deserve to make their own decision about participation in the season.

District response: Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the continuation of athletics.

The following information was gathered from Beaver County schools as of December 3, 2020.

<i>District</i>	<i>Are Schools continuing Athletics?</i>	<i>Return Athletic Start Date or Details</i>
<i>Blackhawk</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
<i>Western Beaver</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
<i>Freedom</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Practice is on-going but competition will begin 12/29/2020</i>
<i>Aliquippa</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
<i>Midland</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>We only have Middle School Athletics but we will discuss at January meeting. Canceled for now.</i>
<i>RBCSD</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>All activities are canceled until our Dec 7 School Board Meeting.</i>
<i>New Brighton</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
<i>Ambridge Area</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>The Board will revisit on board meetings on 12/9 and/or 12/16</i>
<i>Hopewell</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>The Board will revisit at 12/7 board meeting</i>
<i>Central Valley</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
<i>Beaver Falls</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Revisiting with Board on December 10th</i>
<i>Rochester</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
<i>Beaver Area</i>	<i>Yes</i>	
<i>Southside</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Currently permitting practice but will be discussing athletics at board meeting on 12-9</i>

Brandon and Melissa Karpy, 4303 Beverly Drive, Aliquippa, PA 10510

I was wondering what the plan is for Mrs. O’Brien’s cyber class once she is gone in January. Will another teacher be hired for her position? Will you use a permanent sub for the remainder of the year? Will the students be put into other cyber classes? Is there even enough room to place her 32ish students with other cyber teachers?

District Response: The District is taking necessary steps to replace Mrs. O’Brien so that consistency can be maintained for 28 students on her current roster. As soon as a plan is

finalized, Dr. Maslyk will notify Mrs. O'Brien's families of the expected changes beginning January 4.

Bethany Pistorius, 2008 S. Trillium Drive, Aliquippa, PA 15010

1. Another big thank you to the teachers for everything they've done to assist students and parents during this transition. Also, thank you to ALL of the support staff!
2. Thank you so much to the wonderful food service department! Meal pick up has been seamless and food provided has been great for all of our learners!

District Response: *Thank you for the positive comments to our teachers and staff.*

3. Over the past few meetings parents have spoken in person, submitted concerns in writing and written on the zoom chat their frustrations and issues with our learning models. However, we have heard board members whisper that those coming forward are just one or two, indicating their opinion that there are not issues. In one instance a parent attended all the meetings that were in person and also submitted comments for each meeting discussing the same concerns. Each time that parent received no to little response or even acknowledgement from the administration and board. Each time she spoke board members were heard whispering that she was the only parent coming forward with concerns. That is simply not true. This sort of action, or more accurately - inaction, not only fails to address the problems, it sends the message that any parent who does take the time to contact the board will be received just as poorly. A simple read of the zoom chat would show the many parents who have contacted the administration and/or board members without response or resolution. We have been told at each board meeting that the zoom chat will be made public but I have been unable to locate any record. How can the public access that record or transcript and when will questions from the chat be formally included? It is unreasonable to think that visitors will be able to predict all pertinent questions 7 hours prior to the meeting's start. As each meeting progresses questions obviously arise for visitors and with the current style of meeting being used there must be a way for the audience to address the agenda discussion.

District Response: *The questions asked during the November 23 Board meeting's Zoom chat are included in the District responses to visitor questions and comments. This was posted on the website on November 25, 2020. The questions from the last board meeting's chat are at the end of the document. The chat portion of the meeting is part of the public record. If requested, a transcript of the chat comments can be provided.*

4. When will the board accept live questions via Zoom during the meetings? To reiterate, it is unreasonable to think that questions will not arise during the course of the meeting.

District Response: *The Board of School Directors is contemplating how this can best be implemented. Further information will be forthcoming.*

5. How will the district assess or evaluate standers or benchmarks being met by students while in remote learning? How will the district reach those students not capable of learning from this current model?

District Response: *The District will continue to monitor student progress through multiple means: academic grades and participation in learning, benchmarks and progress monitoring tools, and formative/summative assessments. Teachers and building leaders will continue to conduct ongoing MTSS and SAP meetings to ensure that students who are not performing as expected will be discussed and interventions put in place to meet their needs.*

For students receiving special education supports and services, the District will continue to monitor their progress on goals from their Individualized Education Program (IEP). Instruction and services will continue to be addressed on an individual basis for students receiving special education supports and services that are not succeeding during virtual learning.

Vivian M. Lumbard, 2867 Brodhead Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001

Regarding the Snapshot of Student Progress presented at the November 23, 2020 School Board Meeting, it was unclear whether or not the percentages shown were all district students (including cyber) or just those in hybrid learning. Could you clarify? If cyber students were not included, why not?

In my opinion, the aggregate of information does not appear to tell the full story and should be more in-depth to better analyze and best benefit our students.

1. Hybrid vs. cyber should be separate information to best determine where and what types of improvements can be made.

District Response: *The HS and JH data did include all students for grades and assessments, etc. The elementary assessment data did include cyber. The first quarter grade comparison for elementary is the only component that did not include the cyber population. Over the coming weeks, we will disaggregate the data to analyze cyber and hybrid more in depth.*

2. The information would be more meaningful if there was a better comparison between last year and this year by student rather than overall grade performance. While in some instances, the percentages for a grade might be comparable between years, it is more useful to know if Student 1, who may have had As in subjects last year has had grades dropping to Bs and Cs this year and Student 2 who may have had Cs last year is obtaining As and Bs in subjects.

District Response: *The data that was presented at the November 23rd school board meeting provided a fall snapshot only, comparing overall student achievement and data from November 2019 to November 2020. When student data is analyzed at the individual or classroom level, the individualized analysis that you referred to does occur.*

By analyzing the information by student performance in the options (hybrid and cyber), the district can:

- a. better identify which students are adapting well to the different ways of learning and may be thriving. The district can begin investigating what is working well and incorporate some of that into future instruction this year (is there a commonality between teachers/practices with students that are seeing improvement and can be shared with other teachers to aid more students, learning style differences that are better served with a practice not normally utilized in classroom instruction, social interactions - good or bad - that might be a cause, etc.) and when the pandemic is behind us; and
- b. better identify which students are now experiencing lower grades and frustrations *before* they reach the point of targeted intervention. For those students, is the manner of instruction, the home environment (i.e. 3 children in the home in different grades and limited devices, etc.), limited or no teacher/classmate interaction, etc. that is contributing to the issues. Frustrated students now can lose their enthusiasm for learning in the future, especially if steps aren't taken to address the causes for their frustration sooner rather than later. If we lose those students now, it will continue to negatively impact their future learning even when full-time instruction eventually resumes.

District Response: *We continue to monitor student progress and successes in their courses in multiple ways, with hybrid/remote students and cyber students. All buildings have a system to monitor students and intervene, as needed. This also exists for students in K-6 cyber where there is an ongoing discussion about student performance and needs. The counselors, principals, and teachers connect regularly to discuss the academic, social and emotional well-being of our students. We are working with our instructional teams to identify best practices, provide additional training when needed, and create the best educational opportunities that we can considering the current circumstances. We will continue to keep this at the forefront, no matter which instructional model a family chooses to utilize for learning or whether hybrid or virtual learning is being implemented.*

I urge the Board to instruct the administration to provide more in-depth data and look for ways to incorporate the best, improve the average and eliminate the worst practices so we can best aid as many students as possible.

Jess Taylor, 155 Swiontek Road, Apt. E, Aliquippa, PA

I'm wondering what will happen for students that qualify for services?

1. On a normal year my daughter has Title 1 instruction basically daily at school and it really has helped her. Virtual it's about once a week. Is this what will it look like in virtual learning? Only help once a week.

District Response: *Title teachers are either providing live lessons or are posting videos to the Foundations lesson for each level. This is the program used for our K-1 students. Students in*

grades 2-4 also have the opportunity to engage in Title I content either through SeeSaw or Google Classroom. If there are specific questions regarding the programs for those who qualify for Title services, they may contact Dr. Maslyk directly maslykj@hopewellarea.org

In a personal communication with this parent, the student has engaged in live Title services today and will again on Wednesday.

2. Speech, the same daughter qualifies for speech therapy once a week. She had only gotten it in school. No talk of how that will happen with virtual?

District Response: All speech teachers have reached out to the families of students with and IEP who are receiving speech services. The services will continue to be provided as noted in the IEP, just in a virtual setting.

For those students who are receiving speech support, but did not qualify for an IEP, speech services will continue when the District returns to in-person learning.

Randy Heranic, 805 Lexington Drive, Aliquippa

I am reaching out to you once again regarding the scholastic sports programs at Hopewell. I can appreciate your decision to suspend sports, at the meeting in November. However I want to express new data supporting the argument to maintain the scholastic sports programs at Hopewell while maintaining Covid – 19 protection protocols.

The CDC has recently released data indicating mental health-related emergency room visits from March 2020 to October 2020 have increased by 31% for children age 12-17 when compared to the same time from in 2019 (pre-covid).

This speaks to my previous point in my November email. The students have had little to no “normalcy” in their worlds for nearly 10 months now. Scholastic sports is a small measure that can go a long way in assisting in the mental well-being of the child. Sports help control anxiety, and serves as a major cure for the general depression the children are experiencing.

So I once again ask you to please reinstate the winter sports programs within the district. Thank you very much for everything all of you do to make our district great!

District response: Thank you for sharing your concerns regarding the continuation of athletics.

At this time, Mr. Winkle returned to Athletics.

Athletics by Dan Caton, Chair

MOTION #1

By Dan Caton, seconded by Lesia Dobo, to suspend the 2020-2021 winter athletics program through December 14, 2020. MOTION carried by a vote of six to two, with Messrs. Santia and Winkle, voting No.

Mr. Caton asked for patience so that the District can wait until the PIAA and WPIAL meet this week to discuss winter sports. Mr. Newberry felt that if students cannot attend school in person, the District should suspend athletics. He said that he understands the attributes of participating in sports, but felt the risk of getting Covid-19 was too high. Mr. Santia and Mr. Winkle felt that it should be a family decision whether a student participates in sports and felt that the physical and emotional benefits should be considered.

Legislative by Mrs. Oblak, Chair

MOTION #2

By Kathryn Oblak, seconded by Lori McKittrick, to approve the Hopewell Area School Board Work and Business meeting dates for 2021. MOTION carried by a unanimous vote of all Directors in attendance.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion or recommendations to come before the Board of Directors, Mr. Winkle asked for a motion for adjournment.

Motion by Darren Newberry, seconded by Kathryn Oblak, that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried. Mr. Winkle adjourned the meeting at 7:54 p.m.

HOPEWELL AREA SCHOOL BOARD

Jeff Winkle, Board President

Nancy M. Barber, Secretary