



# South Fayette Township School District

## Committee Meeting of the Whole

Tuesday, February 18, 2025  
7:30 PM

### MINUTES

The Committee Meeting of the South Fayette Township Board of School Directors was called to order at 7:44 p.m. in the Studio in the High School by President Joe Welch with the Pledge of Allegiance. President Welch apologized for the late start announcing the Board held an Executive Session prior to the start of the meeting to discuss personnel and/or legal issues.

**Present:** Esther Cardillo, Teresa Burroughs, William Gray, Len Fornella, Joe Welch, Tom Iagnemma, Prajakta Patankar

**Absent:** Rebecca Bruce, Jen Iriti

**Others:** Chris Voltz, Tucker Arensberg, P.C., Superintendent Dr. Michelle Miller, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler, Director of Finance Ryan Neely, Director of Human Resources Mike Radage, Director of Communications Jennifer Donovan, High School Principal Dr. Natasha Dirda, High School Assistant Principal TJ Salopek, Director of Technology Rob Warfield, Superintendent's Assistant/Board Secretary Susan Vasalani, Jaclyn Berthney, Caroline Praveen, Praveen Jacob, Nimisha Praveen

Dr. Natasha Dirda and High School Assistant Principal TJ Salopek recognized Nandana Manoj Manon and Caroline Praveen for being named as two Junior Achievement's 18 under 18.

Dr. Dirda highlight Ms. Manoj Menon's achievements including:

- Leading the Autism Unity Initiative, a nonprofit that is providing vital resources and support to individuals with autism and their caregivers. Autism Unity Initiative features over 100 credited articles and workshops that have reached more than 2,000 caregivers.
- Leading the Spark app in the CGI Autism Development Project which is a partnership with the University of Pittsburgh and the University of Pennsylvania's graduate school of education.
- Developing a sensory, modified program at our Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium, through a Bank of America internship, that has benefited 200,000 neurodiverse children annually.
- Co-creating the Blue Envelope Program with Representative Chris Deluzio and Senator Bob Casey to improve autism law enforcement interactions
- Co-Authoring articles with the University of Pittsburgh, McGee's Research Institute, and presenting at various conferences.
- Currently serving as the President of the National Honor Society, a member of the Technology Student Association, the Student School Board representative, is a certified EMT, and a previous member of the Disney dreamers class of 2024, and was selected for the Bank of America student leaders program from over 7,000 applicants

Mr. Salopek highlighted Ms. Praveen's achievements including:

- Being the Founder and CEO of the Fluency Forward Foundation. Caroline supports Pittsburgh refugee and immigrant children by teaching conversational English and aiding in cultural assimilation, building deep personal connections with her students.
- Co-organizing a charity event celebrating Indian culture which raised more than \$4,000 for rural education in India, and collaborates with local immigrant organizations to teach language skills while fostering cultural pride.
- Serves as President of HOSA, the Captain of the Debate Team, has been named a Presidential Scholar, a Candidate for her sat score, wrote Colorful Garden, a children's book celebrating diversity, which she then donated to refugee children through her nonprofit.
- Is a Certified EMT, and is an accomplished biomedical researcher, presenting presented on dry eye disease and global neurodegeneration at national Conferences and for Johns Hopkins University, and was named the Junior Achievement's 2025 Cribs for Kids

Nandana and Caroline expressed their gratitude toward for School Board for the opportunities presented to them and for the experience of being honored.

#### Human Resources Update - Michael Radage

- Focusing on two keys areas: building efficiencies through technology and enhancing the employee experience
- Programs will be in place for applicant tracking, absence and substitute management
- Initiated an employee onboarding orientation for all new hires.
- Formalizing a wellness committee
- Implemented a formal exit interview

#### Business Office Budget - Ryan Neely

- Timeline overview: department and schools presenting their budgets to the School Board over the next several meetings, the final proposed budget will be presented to the Board in May, allowing time for the State's budget deadline.
- Proposed addition of an absence management system and the utilization of a system to assist with employee recruitment

#### Communications Budget

- Plan to update public facing spaces

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. The Board considered the approval of the Minutes from the following Board Meetings:

Committee Meeting  
Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 21, 2025  
Tuesday, January 28, 2025

2. The Board considered the approval of the following Financial Reports which have been reviewed by the Superintendent and Secondary Administration:

Athletic Fund  
High School Activity Fund  
Middle School Activity Fund

Mark Keener  
Ryan Neely  
Ryan Neely

3. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Director of Finance Brian Tony, and Tax Collector Kevin Biber for Board approval of the provided list of Real Estate Refunds due to reduction in assessment and/or overpayment.
4. Expenditures were submitted for Board review to be approved at the Regular Board Meeting.

### **SUSPENSION OF BUSINESS TO HEAR FROM RESIDENTS AND/OR TAXPAYERS**

There were no comments.

#### **Old Business**

There was no old business discussed.

#### **New Business**

There was no new business discussed.

#### **Superintendent's Monthly Report – Dr. Michelle Miller**

Dr. Miller highlighted recent athletic accomplishments including:

- Bocce team competing in the playoffs
- Girls Competitive Cheerleaders earned 3rd place of more than 100 squads at Nationals in Orlando, Florida
- Two female students participating in wrestling co-op with Fort Cherry
- Ella Trahan won her weight class at the WPIAL Girls Individual Championships and qualifies for the PIAA West Regional Championship
- Several wrestlers advanced to the WPIAL Individual Championship. They include: Luke Dunlap, Peter Leventis, Talan Mizenko, and Brock Dennison.
- Girls and Boys Basketball teams are in the playoffs with the Girls Basketball Team winning the first round on Friday as they defeated Greensburg Salem. Quarterfinals will be held again Baldwin at Mt. Lebanon High School on Wednesday. The Boys Basketball Team started their playoff run tonight against Mars.
- Coach Bryan Bennett received the honors of being named Coach of the Year for the Big 56 Basketball All-Section Teams and junior Ryan Oldaker earned the title of Player of the Year. Making the All -Section teams were Juliette Leroux, Ryan Oldaker, Haylie Lamonde, Lailah Wright, and Gavin Orosz.
- Multiple swimmers are moving to WPIAL individuals: Lindsay Anderson, Alex Lou, Macy Koerner, Sydney Retivo, DJ Poe, Daniel Grimenstein, Cloey Barnes, Alex Lou, Grant Logan, Carrie Fisher, Abby Poe, and Josh Grimenstein

Dr. Miller mentioned the following points of interest.

- The district has implemented an onboarding procedure for new employees which includes leading new hires through a series of introductory activities in preparation for their first day of employment.
- Dr. Miller thanked Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for leading the Third Annual South Fayette Winter Movement Challenge which had 75 teams in the competition.
- New Director of Student Services Dr. Kellee Oliver began on February 14. On March 19, the district will host two separate "Meet and Greet" opportunities for parents to meet Dr. Oliver.

- The middle school's production of Willy Wonka Junior will be held on February 27, 28 and March 1. The high school musical department will perform Mama Mia on March 14, 15, and 16.
- Governor Shapiro named Dr. Carrie Rowe as acting Pennsylvania Secretary of Education. Dr. Rowe, who is from western Pennsylvania and has been a superintendent in this area, currently serves as deputy secretary of elementary and secondary education at PDE.

## BUSINESS OFFICE

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Director of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships Dr. Matt Callison, and Director of Curriculum Cristine Wagner-Deitch for Board approval for the District to seek funding and sponsorships for the District's Future-Focused Learning Summit on October 13, 2025.
2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval of an affiliation agreement with University of Pittsburgh for its students to serve as student teachers or interns, effective for a five-year period beginning February 2025.
3. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Director of Finance Ryan Neely, and Director of Transportation Brandon Soubie for Board approval of the proposal to purchase five new vehicles through Blue Bird of Pittsburgh, a Sourcewell Vendor, at a total cost not to exceed \$671,078.10. The total costs will be included in the 2025-2026 budget.

Vendor	Size	Qty	Price Per	Total
Blue Bird of Pittsburgh	72-Passenger	2	\$141,655.50	\$283,311.00
Blue Bird of Pittsburgh	84-Passenger	1	\$167,378.40	\$167,378.40
Blue Bird of Pittsburgh	21-Passenger	2	\$110,194.35	\$220,388.70
				\$671,078.10

4. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval to partner with Merlyn Mind in order to receive classroom remotes and professional development. The equipment, professional development, and support is at no cost to the district and will be funded and supported for five years through a PDE grant to Merlyn Mind.

Gray seconded Fornella on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Ryan Neely for Board approval to purchase a truck for the facilities department from COSTARS vendor Jim Shorkey of White Oak, for \$29,980 plus \$387.65 in title, transfer, and registration fees, retroactive to January 31, 2025. This purchase was budgeted in the 2024-25 budget.

Voice Vote - All Yes

## PERSONNEL

Cardillo seconded Patankar the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the following retirements.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Elementary School Principal Tyler Geist for Board approval to hire Chloe Lusk as a Building Substitute Teacher, at the rate of \$150 per day, effective date to be determined, pending receipt of required documents.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval to hire the following Paraeducators, at the rate of \$16.09 per hour, then \$20.11 per hour after the successful completion of the probationary period, effective February 19, 2025, pending receipt of required documents.

- Julie Nangle - This is a new position based on student needs.
- Elena Turner - This position is available due to a resignation.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators recommend Board approval of the following resignations.

- Long-Term Substitute Teacher Camryn Whipple, effective date to be determined
- Boys Tennis Coach Brian Garlick, retroactive to January 28, 2025
- Assistant Track and Field Coach Victoria Chagnon, effective February 11, 2025
- Assistant Track and Field Coach Alexis Podgorski, effective February 11, 2025

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the following leave of absences requests.

- High School Teacher Alycia Dorsey, sabbatical leave, retroactive to February 14, 2025, concluding on or about the end of the first semester of the 2025-2026 school year
- Middle School Paraeducator Donna Glass, intermittent FMLA, effective February 19, 2025
- School Psychologist Katelyn Romain, on or about March 28, 2025, through on or about July 1, 2025
- High School Teacher Tomasina Crapis Breth, on or about May 21, 2025 through on or about August 14, 2025
- Elementary School Teacher Jennafer Teta, at the start of the 2025-2026 school year through on or about January 13, 2026
- Elementary School Teacher Julia McMonagle, at the start of the 2025-2026 school year through on or about November 17, 2025

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Human Resources Michael Radage for Board approval to hire Elizabeth Zupancic as a (call as needed) Substitute Teacher, effective for the 2024-2025 school year at the rate of \$125 per day, effective date to be determined, pending receipt of required documents.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval for Point Park University Student Sophia Lee-Hauser to be a Student Teacher with Middle School Teacher Renee Goedert from August 25, 2025, to December 5, 2025.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the following EPRs for the 2024-2025 school year.

Head Coach, Middle School Unified Indoor Bocce, 2024-2025 season	Nicole Canofari
Paraeducator - Middle School Unified Bocce	Deekota Yadav
Middle School Yearbook Club, second semester of the 2024-2025 school year	Sara Cremonese
High School Spring Musical Light Manager	Taiylor Baumgardner
High School Spring Musical Stage Crew	Taiylor Baumgardner

High School Spring Musical Sound Manager	Taiylor Baumgardner
Intermediate School Special Education Lead	Chelsea Martini

Voice Vote - All Yes

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and High School Principal Dr. Natasha Dirda for Board approval of a placeholder for a Long-Term Substitute High School Mathematics Teacher, at the rate of \$160 per day, effective date to be determined, pending receipt of required documents.
2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for Board approval of placeholder for a Middle School Building Substitute, at the rate of \$150 per day, effective date to be determined, pending receipt of required documents.
3. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Athletic Director Mark Keener for Board approval of the following coaches for the 2024-2025 season.
  - Head Boys Tennis Coach Victoria Chagnon
  - Assistant Boys Tennis Coach Alexis Podgorski
  - Volunteer Assistant Boys Tennis Coach Marla Zielinski
  - Volunteer Assistant Baseball Coach Mike Reilly
  - Assistant Middle School Track and Field Coach Morgan Marmarelli
4. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Athletic Director Mark Keener, and the winter sport season Head Coaches for Board approval of compensations for the winter 2024-2025 season:

**Boys Basketball**

Dave Mislan	Head Coach	\$10,895.00
Frank Halloran	Assistant Coach	\$ 6,250.00
Josh Patterson	Assistant Coach	\$ 7,000.00
Jared Knox	Assistant Coach	\$ 3,000.00
Brandon Orosz	Assistant Coach	\$ 4,000.00
Glenn Gutierrez	Head 8th Grade Coach	\$ 4,000.00
Ryan Kacsur	Head 7th Grade Coach	\$ 3,345.00

**Girls Basketball**

Bryan Bennett	Head Coach	\$10,895.00
Olet Stasko	Assistant Coach	\$ 6,598.00
Sara McMurtry	Assistant Coach	\$ 6,599.00
Garrett Del Re	Assistant Coach	\$ 6,598.00

**Winter Indoor Track**

Scott Litwinovich	Head Coach	\$3,855.00
Joe Winans	Assistant Coach	\$1,925.00
William Finnerty	Assistant Coach	\$1,285.00
Elizabeth Kline	Assistant Coach	\$ 645.00

**Varsity Swimming**

Todd Clark	Head Coach	\$10,895.00
Melanie Miller	Assistant Coach	\$ 3,500.00
Anthony Mannarino	Assistant Coach & Diving	\$ 5,700.00
Gianna Boburka	Assistant Coach	\$ 3,500.00

### **Wrestling**

Rick Chaussard	Head Coach	\$9,165.00
Jarod Walker	Assistant Coach	\$2,900.00
Josh Mollica	Assistant Coach	\$2,900.00
Jett Pattison	Assistant Coach	\$2,760.00
Trevor McIntyre	Head Jr. High Coach	\$4,000.00
Jason Santavicca	Assistant Coach (Jr. High)	\$1,000.00
Keith Lau	Assistant Coach (Jr. High)	\$2,000.00

### **EDUCATION**

Cardillo seconded Iagnemma on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Solicitor for Board approval of a Stipulated Adjudication Agreement pertaining to a High School student.

Voice Vote - All Yes

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Director of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships Dr. Matt Callison, and Director of Curriculum Cristine Wagner-Deitch for Board approval for the District to host the second annual Future-Focused Learning Summit on October 13, 2025. There will be no cost to the District.
2. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval to run a trial year of the proposed EPR of Competitive Mathematics and Programming Club.
3. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler, and Elementary School Principal Tyler Geist for Board approval of the AIU Transition Memorandum of Understanding to support best practices in transition to kindergarten in the South Fayette Township School District, effective through December 31, 2025. This MOU also fulfills the Hi5! and state and federal requirements for kindergarten transition under the Every Student Succeeds Act/Title I.

### **TRANSPORTATION (data in green)**

There are no items to discuss.

### **ATHLETICS**

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Athletic Director Mark Keener for Board approval to permit members of the Indoor Track and Field team to travel to Boston, Massachusetts, to participate in the New Balance Indoor National Nationals from March 13, 2025, through March 16, 2025.

### **CONSTRUCTION**

1. The Board considered the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Ryan Neely for the submission of construction permits for National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) (#PAC021169) and General NPDES Permit for Discharges of Stormwater (PAG-02).

### **MISCELLANEOUS (data in yellow)**

There are no items to discuss.

## **SUSPENSION OF BUSINESS TO HEAR FROM RESIDENTS AND/OR TAXPAYERS**

There were no comments.

Patakhar seconded Fornella to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m.