



South Fayette Township School District

Regular Meeting

Minutes

Tuesday, August 22, 2023
7:30 PM

The Regular Meeting of the South Fayette Township Board of School Directors was called to order at 7:35 PM in the Studio, in the High School by President Len Fornella with the Pledge of Allegiance. President Fornella 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: Teresa Burroughs, Lenna Hannah, Jen Iriti, Joe Welch, Tom Iagnemma, Prajakta Patankar, Alan Vezzi, Len Fornella

Absent: Paul Brinsky

Others: Chris Voltz, Tucker Arensberg, P.C.; Dr. Michelle Miller, Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler; Director of Finance/Human Resources Brian Tony; Student Representative Alekhya Buragadda; High School Interim Principal Dr. Patricia Smith; Communications Director Jennifer Donovan; Director of Technology Rob Warfield; and Cynthia Geisler, Superintendent's Assistant/Board Secretary.

President Fornella announced the meeting is being recorded.

President Fornella welcomed back newly appointed Board Member Alan Vezzi, who was sworn in by District Magistrate Maureen McGraw-Desmet by administering the Oath of Office.

Dr. Miller introduced Dr. Patricia Smith as the interim High School Principal with 35 years of public education experience; the majority of her career as a Special Education teacher at the AIU, Assistant Principal at West Jefferson High School, and a High School principal for 12 years at South Park; and may have been a physical education teacher at one point in her career. She attended Pitt, Duquesne, Cal State and Point Park for her many degrees and certification. Married to Herman and have two sons; three grandchildren, and soon to have 2 additional grandchildren with the marriage of one of her sons. Dr. Smith and Herman live in Mt. Lebanon with their dog Marley, who is a wonder pup, beating the odds and living her best life. Dr. Smith shared that her favorite quote is "*Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take but by the moments that take our breath away.*"

Dr. Smith thanked Dr. Miller and the Board for the opportunity to feel useful again; everyone has been friendly and helpful.

President Fornella thanked Dr. Smith for taking the interim position during the hectic start of a new school year.

Dr. Deichler provided the following information regarding awarding credit for content mastered at Parkway CTC:

- All 16 programs analyzed and cross referenced with state academic standards
- Each course's scope and sequence, PA standard for math, science, English and social studies and Parkway's program of studies documents were cross referenced to determine which standards are being mastered in each course, how many hours of direct instructions students receive in the core academic standards

- Must completed at least 2 years of a course at Parkway; example: an automotive tech student in their senior will have earned that math credit at Parkway, not needing to fulfill that fourth math course at South Fayette, can expand their schedule/interests

AGENDA APPROVAL:

Iagnemma seconded Welch on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Solicitor for Board approval of the August 22, 2023, **revised** Regular Meeting agenda. **The following new motion was received and added today:**

- a. **The Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services recommend Board approval to a Personal Care Paraeducator in the Elementary School, pending receipt of required documents, effective for the 2023-2024 school year.**

Voice Vote – All Yes

CONSENT AGENDA

Patankar seconded Burroughs on approval of the Minutes from the following Board Meetings:

Committee Meeting of the Whole	Tuesday, July 18, 2023
Regular Board Meeting	Tuesday, July 25, 2023

And on approval of the following Financial Reports which have been reviewed by the Superintendent and Secondary Administration:

Athletic Fund	Mark Keener
High School Activity Fund	Sharon Aprea
Middle School Activity Fund	Sharon Aprea

And for authorization for payment of monthly invoices from the General Fund for the amount \$1,520,987.54 beginning with check number 75450 through check number 75623 and the Cafeteria Fund for the amount of \$6,368.49 beginning with check number 8565 through check number 8579.

Voice Vote – All Yes

SUSPENSION OF BUSINESS TO HEAR FROM RESIDENTS AND/OR TAXPAYERS

There were no comments at this time.

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 reported:

- August 17 welcomed back educators and paraprofessionals, custodians, transportation and Leadership Team joined for the opening with the theme “There’s no place like home.” From the Wizard of Oz. The Little Green Machine, cheerleaders, and the mascot started with several selections including the alma mater and fight song. Third grader Gia Crimone, dressed as

Dorothy, wearing green sequined shoes, with a morning welcome, joining her onstage were several second graders who led the Pledge of Allegiance and the Elementary School Song.

- Summer pictures received as part of the Goldfish contest were shared; staff was asked to send Goldfish pictures, where they were “in the moment”, experiencing the joy of summer; chosen winners were sent an Amazon gift card, courtesy of Dr. Miller and Dr. Deichler.
- New faculty and staff were welcomed with a surprise video of their families wishing them good luck and congratulations.
- Honored staff with 10, 15, 20, and 30 years of service to the District.
- Shared an overview of World of Work and the District’s next steps; showed the video Beacons of Hope, produced by the Grable Foundation and highlights Duquesne and South Fayette Intermediate School; three Intermediate students were “stars” of the video, speaking on the impact of World of Work on them, their learning and peers.
- Ben Laughton and Adam Wazzenagger, along with 8th grader Violet George, played the ukulele while Violet sang Somewhere Over the Rainbow, to a standing ovation.
- AASA Lighthouse Award was presented to SFEA President David Taylor, along with the support staff president.
- David Taylor honored Melissa Unger for being a 2023 Teacher of the Year Finalist.
- The Mini-Thon chairs were presented with a plaque for their incredible work and fundraising efforts that have contributed to the success of the Mini-Thon; raising over \$1.4 million since the beginning.
- Dr. Deichler shared an overview of the Medallions and recognized the last year’s medallion recipients; they were given two more medallions to identify employees who are Future-focused, Student-centered and Innovation-driven; new medallion recipients will be recognized at a Gala in May.
- New Dance Team had a spectacular performance to Ease on Down the Road; coach Kristina Kay thanked the Board for the new dance space in the High School.
- Closing remarks challenging staff to individually & collectively “Defy Gravity”; second grade teacher Caroline Downey wowed the crowd with a vocal performance of Wicked’s Defying Gravity.
- August 18 – two speakers from Pitt, Dr. Joseph Yun addressed the staff on generative AI and Dr. Najeeb Shafiq provided an overview of Indian culture to promote greater understanding and support for our students and families
- Thanked the principals, staff, and custodians for preparing for the 2023-2024 school year, best start of a school year in all my years in education

Student Representative’s Monthly Report

Ms. Buragadda introduced herself and reported:

- A rising senior and aspiring to be a physician specifically in neuroscience; also want to advocate for students and schools as well. Hence, being here.
- A big shout out to eighth grader, Violet George, who gave an outstanding musical performance during welcome back activities
- Thank you to all eighth graders that helped guide the incoming fifth graders.
- Girls golf hosted Peters Township today and Boys golf traveled to Quicksilver today to take on West Allegheny
- August 21 – teachers at the Intermediate and Elementary schools had meet the teachers
- August 23 – students in K-12 will officially start school

BUSINESS OFFICE

Welch seconded Vezzi on the recommendation of the Superintendent for Board approval of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Agreement with Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium (MAEC), effective retroactive to August 18, 2023, for services providing technical assistance and training to support the District’s work in creating culturally responsive and equitable family engagement

opportunities. MAEC will use grant sources to provide \$40,000 worth of services, with the District paying a maximum of \$2,560 to offset presenter travel costs.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval to enter into a Contract of Service with the PA-Educator.net Clearinghouse. The term of the agreement is from September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2024, at a cost of \$1,950.00. This price has remained the same since the 2014-2015 school year.

Voice Vote – All Yes

PERSONNEL

New motions from the August 22, 2023 Executive Session agenda.

Welch seconded Iriti on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the retirement/resignation of Dotty Jones as a Paraeducator in the Intermediate School. Ms. Jones' last day worked will be October 6, 2023. Ms. Jones has been employed by the District since February 2017.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the resignation of Poonam Bhundiya as a Food Service employee in the High School, effective for the 2023-2024 school year.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the resignation of Melinda Pillar as a Personal Care Paraeducator in the Elementary School, effective retroactive to August 17, 2023.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval to hire Kim Hartnett for the 2023-2024 school year, as an assistant in the Business Office effective on or about September 14, 2023, as needed, at the rate of \$50.00 per hour.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the attached list of (call as needed) substitute teachers and support personnel for the 2023-2024 school year.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval to hire the following as a one building substitute teacher position in the Middle School effective for the 2023-2024 school year; each employee will be paid half of the rate of \$150.00 per day:

- Lauren Beck (AM only)
- Cloe Hall (PM only)

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval to hire the following as building substitute teachers effective for the 2023-2024 school year at the rate of \$150.00 per day:

- Tracy Sipos, Elementary School
- Maura Pendergast, Elementary School, pending receipt of required documents
- Amat Alshabani, Intermediate School
- Maria Rowe, Intermediate School
- Kristin Fagan, Middle School
- Sean McCreary, Middle School
- Alphonsa Amalanayagam, High School
- Angie Defelice, High School

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Food Services Tricia Wood for Board approval of the following students in the Dietetic Department at Seton Hill University, to complete their 90 hours of clinical training with Tricia Wood, Director of Food Service, pending receipt of required documents, from September 2023 through November 2023. There will be no cost to the District.

- Joe Lauer
- Lily Roby

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Student Support Services Dr. Rachel Andler for Board approval to hire Teresa Jones as a Personal Care Paraeducator in the Elementary School, pending receipt of required documents, effective for the 2023-2024 school year, at the probationary rate of \$17.57 per hour. After completion of a successful probationary period, the rate will be \$21.96 per hour.

Voice Vote – All Yes

EDUCATION

Iriti seconded Burroughs on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Elementary School Principal Tyler Geist for Board approval of the 2023-2024 Elementary School Faculty Handbook.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval of the High School Dance Club as a proposed club in the High School effective for the 2023-2024 school year.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent, Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone, and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval to dispose of the attached list of Middle School books as per Board Policy 706.1. The District will attempt to resell the textbooks; if not, they will be donated.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler for approval to run an asynchronous day, in the High School only, for the administration of the PSATs on October 31, 2023. Only the students being tested will report to school at the regular start time and the remainder of the high school students will be on an asynchronous day.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent for Board approval for Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kristin Deichler to attend the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) Conference in Montgomery, Alabama from Wednesday, November 15, 2023 through Sunday, November 19, 2023. This is a requirement of a PDE grant (Prep to Practice) in which the District serves as a partner to Robert Morris University, the grant recipient. There is no cost to the District for travel; any additional fees are covered by the Prep to Practice Grant.

Voice Vote – All Yes

President Fornella announced the motions under Transportation and Athletics will be voted on together.

TRANSPORTATION

Welch seconded Iagnemma on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Transportation Brandon Soubie for Board approval of the changes to the 2023-2024 Transportation Employee's Handbook.

ATHLETICS

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent, Athletic Director Mark Keener, and Head Varsity Cross Country Coach Joe Winans for Board approval for the Boys and Girls Varsity Cross Country

Teams to travel to Hershey, PA, to compete in the 2023 PIAA Foundation Invitational. The team would depart South Fayette on Friday, September 22, 2023, and return on Saturday, September 23, 2023. The tentative itinerary is attached.

Voice Vote – All Yes

CONSTRUCTION

There were no items discussed.

MISCELLANEOUS

Iriti seconded Vezzi on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval of the updated Health and Safety Plan for the 2023-2024 school year.

Voice Vote – All Yes

SUSPENSION OF BUSINESS TO HEAR FROM RESIDENTS AND/OR TAXPAYERS

There were no comments at this time.

Solicitor's Report

Mr. Voltz had nothing to report.

Board Comments

President Fornella commented it is exciting to welcome the students tomorrow for the start of another school year.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee Report

President Fornella had nothing to report.

President Len Fornella

South Fayette Foundation

Mr. Brinsky was absent, Dr. Miller reported Maureen Pedzwater, President of the Foundation presented teachers with mini-grants at the Opening Day for staff; total amount given in mini-grants over the years is \$120,000; thanked Ms. Pedzwater and everyone who volunteers and participants at all of the fundraising events.

Paul Brinsky

PSBA/Legislative Committee Report

Mrs. Hannah had nothing additional to report; shared an email earlier.

Lena Hannah

Parkway West

Mr. Iagnemma reported the first day was August 22; enrollment is up.

Tom Iagnemma

SHASDA

Mr. Welch had nothing to report.

Joe Welch

Vezzi seconded Welch to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 PM.

Voice Vote – All Yes

Cynthia Geisler, Board Secretary