



# South Fayette Township School District

## Regular Meeting

### *Minutes*

Tuesday, March 22, 2022  
7:30 PM

The Regular Meeting of the South Fayette Township Board of School Directors was called to order at 7:46 PM in the Studio, in the High School by President Jen Iriti with the Pledge of Allegiance. President Iriti 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:** Lena Hannah, Bill Ainsworth, Tom Iagnemma, Prajakta Patankar, Jen Iriti

**Present Virtually:** Paul Brinsky

**Absent:** Teresa Burroughs, Len Fornella, Joe Welch

**Others:** Chris Voltz, Tucker Arensberg, P.C.; Dr. Michelle Miller, Superintendent; Assistant to the Superintendent for Secondary Education Dr. Kristin Deichler; Director of Finance/Human Resources Brian Tony; Assistant Director of Finance Chris Juzwick; Facilities Director Steve Timmins; Athletic Director Mark Keener; Custodial Shift Supervisor Zach Simpson; Teachers Sarah Sweet and Amber Greenwood; Steve Goldstein, Wendy Williams, Jackie Rose, Chaunte Rose, Kristen Salamone, William Price, Eric Newhouse; Network Systems Administrator Rob Warfield; Cynthia Geisler, Superintendent's Assistant/Board Secretary, and attached list of attendees

Steve Niedenberger, Senior Auditor from Hosack, Specht, Muetzel and Wood, LLP, provided the Board with the Audit Report for the period ending June 30, 2020, for the 2020-2021 school year. He added the opinion letter is an unqualified opinion, which is the highest level opinion that can be rendered on a school district's financial statements; it is also known as a clean audit of the financial statements. Mr. Niedenberger reviewed the following financial statements:

- Governmental Funds Balance Sheet for general fund
- Revenues/Expenditures, new capital leases, capital projects, and refunding bonds
- Proprietary Fund – food service had negative net changes directly impacted by the pandemic
- Fiduciary Funds – student activities balance
- Commitments in fund balance
- Long term debt

Mr. Niedenberger added the District met the threshold that required a single audit to be performed, which he indicated was also an unqualified opinion, which is the highest level opinion that can be rendered; also known as a clean audit. Mr. Niedenberger concluded that during the audit, they were made aware of the Tax Collector not submitting timely reports and remittances of collections to the District.

The following 2022-2023 Budgets were presented:

- Business Office / Human Resources – Brian Tony
- Superintendent / School Board – Brian Tony
- Public Relations – Brian Tony
- Maintenance – Steve Timmins
- Custodial – Steve Timmins, Zach Simpson

- Grounds – Steve Timmins
- Athletics – Mark Keener

Dr. Deichler provided a brief summary regarding piloting the Rhithm App including additional information regarding storage and deletion of data:

- Designed to build and strengthen relationships between staff and students
- Students respond to a 5 question check in using emoji-based responses asking how they feel about being ready to learn that day; describe mood, energy level, how they are physically feeling, and interactions with classmates; similar questions currently asked by the teachers
- Not a diagnostic and does not replace human interactions services; may alert staff when students have a greater need
- Tested intervention already used in thousands of schools across the nation, including eastern PA
- Pilot is for the District to decide if it the right fit
- Questions take approximately 60-90 seconds on average to complete
- Free to the District and implemented with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter
- Piloting with 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade student during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, three times a week
- Parents/guardians may op their child/ren out of the pilot
- Parents/guardians may view their child/ren historical responses at any time
- Provides simple, low level strategies, in video format, ex. a student feeling anxious about a test, they could receive a 90 second video giving a tool to take deep breaths
- Data stored on a dedicated FERPA and HIPPA compliant servers inside the US; using industry standard encryption practices including SSL (Secure Socket Layer)/TLS(Transparent Layer Security) and more
- Complies with all FERPA regulations; student records are the property of and under control of the educational institution
- District selects leaders who have a legitimate educational need-to-know and granted access to your child’s data along with teachers working directly with your child
- Background checks are done on employees that have access to student data; regular privacy/data security training and education provided; personal information protected with technical, contractual, administrative, and physical security safeguards to protect against unauthorized access, release or use
- Other than previously mentioned, no additional sources have access or can trace responses back to individual students and/or staff
- Rhithm does not sell, trade, lease or loan personal information collected/maintained to a third part for any reason, including direct marketers, advertisers, or data brokers
- Data is kept by Rhithm as long as they are working with the District; if the District wants data deleted for any reason during the contract term, the information will be deleted; when requested or when the contract ends, all information is deleted and destroyed by Rhithm

Dr. Deichler provided the following additional information provided:

- Teachers raising concerns regarding a student, current protocols include the tiers (discussed at last week’s meeting), counselors and/or administrators are notified on a need-to-know capacity
- Rhithm is providing multiple trainings prior to the launch depending on the user layer
- Multiple criteria for full launch, data regarding references to tier 2 and 3/counselor needs; teacher feedback, interactions with students; student feedback regarding the app; utilization of videos
- Not diagnostic and is not to replace services; not level/tier 2 services; build capacity between student/teacher/classroom; notifies teacher if students internalizing an issue
- Parents can demo the app and have access to their child/ren data
- Student training will be provided by principals/counselors as a group

**AGENDA APPROVAL:**

Hannah seconded Ainsworth on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Solicitor for Board approval of the March 22, 2022, revised Regular Meeting agenda. New and revised motions, which were received and added today, are listed below:

- The Superintendent and Assistant to the Superintendent for Secondary Education Dr. Kristin Deichler recommend Board approval to enter into an agreement with EduLink to purchase COMPLY, a compliance software tool, effective July 1, 2022, and to continue for a period of one year, at a cost of \$9,858, which includes a 5% PA-EETEP client discount. The funds to cover the cost will be included in the 2022-2023 budget. The Solicitor reviewed and approved a revised agreement. *(revised information provided)*

Voice Vote – All Yes

**Consent Agenda**

Ainsworth seconded Hannah on approval of Minutes from the following Board Meetings:

Committee Meeting of the Board	Tuesday, February 15, 2022
Regular Board Meeting	Tuesday, February 22, 2022

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	Rebecca Bruce
Middle School Activity Fund	Rebecca Bruce
Tax Collector Reports (December 2021 – February 2022)	Kevin Biber
Board Summary Report (February 2022)	Chris Juzwick

And to authorize payment of monthly invoices from the General Fund for the amount of \$851,071.78 beginning with check number 71873 through check number 72071, and the Cafeteria Fund for the amount of \$55,607.99 beginning with check number 8358 through check number 8366.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Administrators for Board approval to accept the provided list of gifts/donations.

Voice Vote – All Yes

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

Eric Newhouse, Newbury Highland – Project Manager of Newbury Market project; thanked the Board for the LERTA incentive, making South Fayette competitive, bringing in Top Golf and BJ’s Wholesale; on behalf of BJ’s Wholesale Club; Exhibit A, abatement schedule from the County Office of Property Assessment, outlines assessed value from the county and abatement schedule for the township and school district as understood by the county per the ordinances; abatement schedule different from the exemption schedule on the agenda; schedule from the county derived by assessed value; the agenda exemption derived by construction costs; typically commercial properties, the value of the property exceeds the cost, otherwise no reason to proceed. Exhibit B Township LERTA Ordinance, identifies abatement schedule to be based on.....

President Iriti stopped Mr. Newhouse indicating his three minutes have expired. William Price, Celebration Circle – LERTA tied to limited acreage in the township; have to be within an area that needs to be revitalized; BJ’s location is on a fully remediated chemical plant that took

millions of dollars to remediate; unfortunately, economics didn't work for the initial development; party that owns the vast majority of the Newbury Market is an enforcing lender, took \$25 million dollar judgement at the end of 2020; finally seeing turnaround and self-developing; LERTA is critical in sealing tenants; uniformity to the process and implementation in accordance with the ordinance; inform potential tenants of the LERTA available at the county, township and district level; understand application process, how numbers determined and who has the powers, need to have any form of litigation go through the process to firm it up; any future development needs predictability. Another application shortly, within the next 45 days. Appreciate the LERTA; looking for uniformity in the process.

There were no additional public 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 reviewed the Strategic Plan vs the Comprehensive Plan:

- Strategic Plan – a document telling the community what the district wants to achieve in the future; will be posted on the website
  - Why our schools exist (our mission and vision)
  - How staff/students are expected to behave (values and Portrait of a Lion Learner)
  - What is difference or special about our school (the context)
  - What we are focusing on over the next three year to improve students' experience at school (goals)
  - What actions we will undertake to implement the key improvement strategies and milestones used to identify progress in their implementation
- Comprehensive Plan – required by PDE every six years, with a 3-year midpoint review; a required document guiding districts through reflective practices focused on professional development, career and college readiness, student services, and curriculum development; a reflective document
- District will complete and submit the required Comprehensive Plan, summarizing a current snapshot of what has already been accomplished; presented after the Strategic Plan
- Our Strategic Plan will be used to guide development and alignment of annual goals and action plans; help the District align our time, effort and resources to support continued growth of the district and students; will be presented to the Board in coming months

### **Student Representative Report**

Ms. Stahl reported:

- Congratulated the following track athletes who competed at the New Balance Nationals:
  - Girls 4x200m Relay team of Amanda Marquis, Grace Howard, Olivia Renk, Melana Schumaker, placed 8th, and set a new school record
  - Boys Distance Medley Relay team of Roman Galimoto, Jadon Petersson, Zack Warchol, Jake Borgesi placed 17<sup>th</sup> and set a new school record
  - Jake Borgesi also set a new school record for his 4:17 mile
- Congratulated 8<sup>th</sup> grader on winning the National History Day for junior website
- High School scheduling process has begun

**Business Office**

Ainsworth seconded lagnemma on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval of the 2020-2021 School District Audit as prepared by Hosack, Specht, Muetzel & Wood, LLP.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval of the proposed 2022-2023 Allegheny Intermediate Unit Program of Services Budget in the amount of \$2,243,173.00. The Allegheny County (AIU3) school districts’ total contribution to the budget is \$1,809,390.00. The South Fayette Township School District contribution to the Program of Services Budget is estimated to be \$41,209.00 and will be determined by PDE according to District Aid Ratio and Weighted Average Daily Membership (WADM).

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval of the decision on the Application for LERTA Tax Abatement submitted by BJ's Wholesale Club Holdings, Inc., on December 30, 2021, for construction or reconstruction of the improvements at Block/Lot 256-L-30, resulting in a reduction in the assessed value of the improvements as follows:

TAX YEAR	PERCENT EXEMPTION	AMOUNT OF EXEMPTION
1st Tax Year (2022-2023)	100%	\$ 5,701,886
2nd Tax Year (2023-2024)	80%	\$ 4,561,508
3rd Tax Year (2024-2025)	60%	\$ 3,421,132
4th Tax Year (2025-2026)	40%	\$ 2,280,754
5th Tax Year (2026-2027)	20%	\$ 1,140,377

Beginning with tax year 2027-2028, the assessed value of the improvements at Block/Lot 256-L-30 shall be fully taxable at 100% of their assessed value.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval of the decision on the Application for LERTA Tax Abatement submitted by Tropical Smoothie, on July 29, 2021, for construction or reconstruction of the improvements at Block/Lot 256-S-6, resulting in a reduction in the assessed value of the improvements as follows:

TAX YEAR	PERCENT EXEMPTION	AMOUNT OF EXEMPTION
1st Tax Year (2022-2023)	80%	\$ 420,320
2nd Tax Year (2023-2024)	60%	\$ 315,240
3rd Tax Year (2024-2025)	40%	\$ 210,160
4th Tax Year (2025-2026)	20%	\$ 105,080
5th Tax Year (2026-2027)	10%	\$ 52,540

Beginning with tax year 2027-2028, the assessed value of the improvements at Block/Lot 256-S-6 shall be fully taxable at 100% of their assessed value.

Voice Vote – All Yes

**Personnel**

Patankar seconded Hannah on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for Board approval of the following EPRs for the 2021-2022 school year:

Spanish Club	Laura Wagner
--------------	--------------

Grade 6 Camping Trip Nurse - Trip 1	Jonene Suskiewicz
--	-------------------

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and High School Principal Dr. Laura Hartzell for Board approval of the following EPR for the 2021-2022 school year:

High School Percussion	Camilo Jauregui
------------------------	-----------------

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and High School Principal Dr. Laura Hartzell for Board approval of Sarah Posti, a Carlow University student, to complete her principal internship with Dr. Hartzell from April 1, 2022 through May 2022, pending receipt of required documents.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Transportation Brandon Soubie for Board approval to hire Michelle Dyer as a Substitute Bus Driver, pending receipt of required documents, at the rate of \$20.00 per hour, effective for the 2021-2022 school year.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent, Assistant to the Superintendent for Secondary Education Dr. Kristin Deichler, and Director of Finance/HR Brian Tony for Board approval of revised job description for the Elementary School Principal position, effective for the 2022-2023 school year.

Voice Vote – All Yes

Patankar seconded Hannah on the recommendation of the Superintendent, Director of Finance/HR Brian Tony, and Assistant to the Superintendent for Secondary Education Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval of the revision (as shown below) to the Administrator Recruitment and Selection Reference Manual effective March 24, 2022.

- At the time of the administration recommending candidate(s) for the third/final round of interviews with the Board of School Directors, administration will provide all resumes for the candidates from the second round of interviews. Additionally, only the administrative team members who are part of the Executive Sessions will be present for the Third/Final interview. Upon request of an individual board member and with approval from the majority of the Board of School Directors through Board directive, additional resumes of all candidates who applied will be provided to the Board of School Directors.

Roll Call – Paul Brinsky, Lena Hannah, Bill Ainsworth, Tom Iagnemma, Prajakta Patankar, Jen Iriti – All Yes

Iagnemma seconded Ainsworth on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Intermediate School Principal Tom Kaminski for Board approval to hire Taylor Coyne as a Building Substitute teacher in the Intermediate School, at the rate of \$150.00 per day, effective March 28, 2022.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for Board approval to hire Rachel Losego as a Building Substitute teacher in the Middle School, at the rate of \$150.00 per day, effective March 28, 2022.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Middle School Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for Board approval of the following EPR for the 2021-2022 school year:

Mentor Teacher for Kristin Fagan	Scott Philipp
-------------------------------------	---------------

Voice Vote – All Yes

## **Education**

Patankar seconded Ainsworth on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Assistant to the Superintendent for Secondary Education Dr. Kristin Deichler for Board approval to enter into an agreement with EduLink to purchase COMPLY, a compliance software tool, effective July 1, 2022, and to continue for a period of one year, at a cost of \$9,858, which includes a 5% PA-EETEP client discount. The funds to cover the cost will be included in the 2022-2023 budget. The Solicitor reviewed and approved a revised agreement.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent, Assistant to the Superintendent for Secondary Education Dr. Kristin Deichler, Elementary School Principal Laurie Gray, and Intermediate School Assistant Principal Kristen Johnson for Board approval to adopt and purchase the new reading series Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Into Reading, for the Elementary and Intermediate Schools.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent, Assistant to the Superintendent for Secondary Education Kristin Deichler, and Middle Principal Dr. Erin Crimone for Board approval of the changes to the 2022-2023 Middle School Program of Studies.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent, Assistant to the Superintendent for Secondary Education, and High School Principals for Board approval of the following changes to the 2022-2023 High School Program of Studies:

- Honors Python III change name to Honors Advanced Python
- Option 1 - Prerequisite Pathway for Honors Advanced Python
- Option 2 – Prerequisite Pathway for Honors Advanced Python

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent, High School Principal Dr. Laura Hartzell, and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval to dispose of the attached list of textbooks in the High School 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 High School Principals for Board approval to permit Brian Garlick, Jeff Sgro, and an additional female chaperone to be determined, to accompany the High School Underwater Robotics Club (approximately 20 students) to participate in the 2022 MATE (Marine Advanced Technology Education) Mid-Atlantic Regional UROV Competition, at East Tennessee State University, in Johnson City, Tennessee from Friday, May 13, 2022 through Sunday, May 15, 2022. Students would be responsible for making up all school work during their absence. Appropriate adult to student ratios for supervision will be assured by the administration. The cost of the trip will be paid for through fundraising efforts.

And on the recommendation of the Superintendent, Network Systems Administrator Rob Warfield, and Director of Innovation, Strategic Partnerships, and Instructional Technology Dr. Matt Callison for Board approval to permit Tyler Hudak, Technology Integration Specialist and AJ Mannarino, Middle School Technology Teacher, to attend the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, from Sunday, June 26, 2022, through Wednesday, June 29, 2022. The cost of the conference includes registration, travel, lodging, and meals, and is included in the 2021-2022 budget.

Voice Vote – All Yes

## **Transportation**

There were no items discussed.

### **Athletics**

There were no items discussed.

### **Construction**

There were no items discussed.

### **Miscellaneous**

Patankar seconded Iagnemma on the recommendation of the Superintendent and Director of Finance Brian Tony for Board approval of the final reading of the following revised policies and attachment:

- Policy 610 Purchases Subject to Bid/Quotation
- Policy 611 Purchases Budgeted
- Attachment 626 Procurement – Federal Programs

And for Board approval of the first reading of the revisions to the policies in Section 000 – Local Board Procedures, as reviewed by PSBA, the Superintendent, Solicitor, and Board Members.

Voice Vote – All Yes

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

Steve Goldstein, Walnut Ridge Circle, Rhythm pilot program approved; just go rid of masks and the hysteria; district determines emotional problems in school, can't breathe or see someone smile; only been a month; took a while to get rid of the masks; now jumping into this app, and have determined there are emotional problems, let's not talk to the students, let's ask 5 questions, the computer will ask the questions; get smiley faces and try to determine what they are thinking; why don't teachers do their jobs and talk to students; when will they get the emoji face, before the test; when my daughter has a problem she talks to me, I'm in her life; parents like it that way; what's wrong with the old fashioned way; why farm it out to a machine; taking the parental job away; everyone has bad days, pick yourself up and get back in the game; concern is confusing kids, masks gone, now asking questions if they are in a mood; opted everyone in, and they have to opt out; should have had parents opt in; why forcing it on people; sneaky; talk to them and talk to parents, parents don't know about it, too busy living their lives; a disservice to the community, a lot of people feel this way; get back to basics, let parents talk to kids and let teachers teach the kids.

Mrs. Geisler read the following email comments:

Hello,

I hope you're doing well.

I'm reaching out again to the school board to request a change for the schedule in the new 2023 calendar. My request is to consider all working parents that have meetings and busy days on Monday and to switch all Monday 2 Hour Delay days to a Friday Early release days.

I consulted with the school calendars for schools in the Mt. Lebanon and Upper St. Clair districts.

None of these schools have school days starting with a 2 Hour Delay. They have Friday early release.

I have spoken with many parents in the SF school district and we all feel that the monthly 2 Hour Delay days are a huge burden on our families and careers.

Personally in my family, the 2 hour delay days have created a lot of tension between my husband and I.

Both of us have demanding careers and both of us have regularly scheduled Monday meetings. On the days when the kids start school 2 hours later, one of us have to make the sacrifice and miss an important meeting.

Is there a reason why you can't do the training on any other day in the afternoon?

How can we allow the teachers their important time for training without causing so much distress for the working families?

Please advise on how we can make this happen!

Thank you very much

Best regards

Tammy Czar

---

Dr. Miller and South Fayette School Board members,

I applaud and support the South Fayette School district for acknowledging, addressing, and having an open conversation about mental health in our district.

Mental health issues are real.

Mental health issues in children are rising.

Poor mental health, experienced chronically or in short durations, impacts our children's' ability to be mentally available & actively learn & grow.

One of the most unfortunate phrases we, as a community, could ever say is "We wish we would have known. We could have done something more".

Thank you for wanting to do something more to address this growing need within our community.

For the past 2 years, I have worked and collaborated in a school district with a CHILL room in grades K-6. The project is an amazing resource for students and staff. I am thrilled to know that SF is considering a CHILL room and other supportive mental health resources.

Please vote "yes" to approve the implementation of the CHILL project and Rhithm app.

Danielle Puhatch

1202 Newbury Highland Drive

---

There were no additional comments at this time.

### **Solicitor's Report**

Mr. Voltz submitted a written report to the Board.

### **Board Comments**

There were no comments at this time.

## **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Executive Committee Report

President Jen Iriti

President Iriti reported her and Vice President Burroughs meet with Dr. Miller at the beginning of each month to review agendas moving forward.

South Fayette Foundation

Paul Brinsky

Mr. Brinsky reported planning for the July 18 Annual Golf Outing continues; Dr. Miller reported and upcoming fundraiser for K-5 students, more details to follow.

PSBA/Legislative Committee Report

Lena Hannah

Mrs. Hannah reported past regulations just happened through the independent regulatory review commission regarding charter school law, only change since its inception in 1997 is allowing cyber charter schools in 2002; approved portions regard charter school application requirements, nondiscriminatory enrollment policies, boards of trustee ethics

standards, financial and auditing standards, redirection process clarification, charter school employee health care benefits; 416 schools asking the General Assembly to make changes to the charter school law; locally 91 districts.

Parkway West

Tom Iagnemma

Mr. Iagnemma reported the power sport program discussions continue.

SHASDA

Lena Hannah

Dr. Miller reported the breakfast honoring students from each of the districts on April 23.

Iagnemma seconded Hannah to suspend the meeting at 9:05 PM and enter into another brief Executive Session to discuss legal and/or personnel matters.

President Iriti announced there will not be any votes taken after Executive Session.

Executive Session convened at 9:11 PM.

Patankar seconded Ainsworth to adjourn Executive Session at 9:30 PM.

Voice Vote – All Yes

Patankar seconded Ainsworth to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 PM.

Voice Vote – All Yes

---

Cynthia Geisler, Board Secretary