

June 7, 2022

**HANOVER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING**

MINUTES

June 7, 2022

**Hanover Area Junior/Senior High School
Hanover Township, Pennsylvania
June 7, 2022**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of School Directors of the Hanover Area School District was held on Tuesday, June 7, at 6:20 PM. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, John J Mahle.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO OUR FLAG

ROLL CALL OF BOARD MEMBERS:

PRESENT: John J. Mahle, Jr., President; Dr. Vic Kopko, Vice President; Joyce Potsko, Treasurer; Rick Stevens, Secretary, Stacey Bleich, Paul Holmgren, Michael Mazur, Rick Oravic and Matthew Redick.

ABSENT: NONE

Rick Stevens, Secretary, stated a Quorum was established for the meeting.

OTHER PEOPLE PRESENT: Mr. Nathan Barrett, Superintendent; Mrs. Lisa Kitchen, Administrative Assistant; several District Administrators; members of the HAEA Teacher's Union, and several citizens.

John J. Mahle, Jr, Board President, provided the following Executive Session Report: "Pursuant to the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act, the Board President wishes to announce that at its Regular Meeting on Tuesday June 7, 2022, the board of education of the Hanover Area School District held an Executive Session to discuss matters of employee relations, labor negotiations, threats of or actual litigation and went into a closed executive session at 5:00PM and began the public meeting at 6:20PM. The subjects discussed in executive session related solely to matters of employee relations, labor negotiations and threats of or actual litigation. Is there any public input on the Agenda Items Only?"

Mike Potsko, Hanover Township, addressed the Board. Items addressed included:

- Questioned Dr. Kopko's Vote of NO regarding last month's approval of the district's partnership in the South Valley Regional Athletic Authority, as well as what was discussed and what joining the Authority entails.
 - Mr. Barrett explained that the Authority represents a joint financial venture for a recreational park at site 7A in the Industrial Park. It is a joint operating effort with Earth Conservancy, Hanover Township, possibly Luzerne County. With help from a state senator and the

June 7, 2022

district itself for a financial venture to put a recreational area up in that site, 7A. The purpose of the Authority was to create by-laws and be able to legally segregate everyone's financial obligation to this project.

- Dr. Kopko explained his reasoning for his NO vote. He stated that he was uncomfortable committing to something of that magnitude with no by-laws. He further explained that the Hanover Area School District in the not-too-distant future will need another consolidated building to house district student. He expressed his desire to invest that money into our own campus.
- Mr. Potsko expressed a desire for public discussion on these issues prior to placing the item on the agenda for a vote.

APPROVAL AND ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES/REPORTS:

It was moved by Stacey Bleich and seconded by Paul Holmgren: To approve the following minutes and accept the following reports:

- Regular Board Meeting minutes of May 3, 2022.
- Wilkes-Barre Area Career and Technical Center Board of Education-Joint Operating Committee meeting minutes of May 16, 2022.
- Luzerne Intermediate Unit Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes of April 27, 2022.

BOARD VOTE: YES: Bleich, Holmgren, Kopko, Mahle, Mazur, Oravic, Potsko, Redick, and Stevens

NO: NONE

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

Chair declared the motion carried.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Mr. Nathan Barrett, Superintendent, offered the following report: "Thanks, Mr. Chairman. First, I'd like to start off by congratulating the graduating Class of 2022. We conducted the ceremony last night. There were 164 graduates who walked across the stage and got their diplomas, so I'd like to congratulate them and their families. In addition to that all academic and athletic award winners, I'd like to commend them as well for all their hard work and dedication, either on or off the field or in the classroom. Two students of the month I'd like to recognize, the May Student of the Month was Alexandra Sheridan. Congratulations to her

June 7, 2022

and her family for her academic achievements. And, another Alexandra is the June Student of the Month, Alexandra Richards. Congratulations to her and her family as well. The summer camps have been offered. We have shared that on both our website and all our social medial accounts. I would encourage families to check those out. They are free of charge from the district. They are 'camouflaged" learning for learning loss, based on pandemic learning loss over the past several years. We have camouflaged learning into some fun camps for our students within our community. Everybody in the district is eligible for these programs. You need to register by the 26th of this month to be eligible to participate. Finally, this evening, I would like to thank a citizen, Rick Swoboda, who donated a piano to Hanover Green Elementary School. I appreciate his efforts. He did have a musical instrument and knows that we are moving our performing arts down into the elementary level and as a result donated that piano to the elementary school. So, I'd like to publicly thank him and that is my report, Mr. Chairman and members of the Board."

It was motioned by Rick Oravic, seconded by Mike Masur: To accept the Report of the Superintendent.

BOARD VOTE: YES: Bleich, Holmgren, Kopko, Mahle, Masur, Oravic, Potkso, Redick, and Stevens

NO: NONE
ABSENT: NONE
ABSTAIN: NONE

Chair declared the motion carried.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

GENERAL:

There are no General Items this month.

FINANCIAL:

It was moved by Paul Holmgren, seconded by Rick Oravic: To approve the following motions 1 through 13:

1. Ratify the following PNC check register(s):
April 27, 2022 to May 31, 2022 Exhibit F-1
2. Approve the PNC check register(s):
June 2, 2022 Exhibit F-2

June 7, 2022

3. Elliott, Greenleaf & Dean

April 2022
Invoice #161878

\$3,705.53

4. Approve the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement between the Hanover Area School District and Sugar Notch Borough for compensation of crossing guards. (Exhibit P-4)

5. Send notification of the Hanover Area School District's Notice of its intent to withdraw from the Northeast Pennsylvania District Health Trust, effective June 30, 2023.

6. Approve the Intergovernmental Agreement for Contracted Professional Services between the Hanover Area School District and the Luzerne Intermediate Unite for the 2022-2023 school year as per exhibit F-6.

7. Approve the Agreement between the Hanover Area School District and Children's Service Center for Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) and Therapeutic Educational Program (TEP) and the HIPPA Confidentiality Document as per Exhibit F-7.

8. Approve the Wilkes-Barre Area Career & Technical Center Joint Operating Committee 2022-2023 Operating Budget as per exhibit F-8.

9. Approve the 2022-2023 Membership Agreement between the Pennsylvania School Boards Association and the Hanover Area School District in the amount of \$11,069.84, as per Exhibit F-9.

10. Accept the proposal of .29 per tax bill processed from RBA Professional Data Systems to prepare the 2022 School Real Estate Tax Bills and Interim Real Estate Tax Bills and the 2022 Per Capita Tax Bills.

NOTE: This is the eighth year we are contracting with RBA.

11. Accept the proposal from Infocon Corporation to print and mail the 2022 School Real Estate and Per Capita Tax Bills.

NOTE: This is the eighth year we are contracting with Infocon.

12. Approve the Repository sale of parcel no 25-19NW3-017-001-000 in Hanover Township, PA 18706 as per Exhibit F-12.

13. Approve the 2022-2023 Hanover Area School District Final General Fud Budget. Projected Revenues amount to \$38,235,423 and Projected Expenditures amount to \$38,235,423. Exhibit F-13

June 7, 2022

The stated millage rate is 18.7743. No tax increase. A copy of our Final General Fund Budget will be on display for inspection by the general public in the District Offices and posted on the district website on June 8, 2022.

BOARD VOTE: (ON MOTIONS #1 TO AND INCLUDING #13 ABOVE):

YES: Bleich, Holmgren, Kopko, Mahle, Masur, Oravic, Potsko, Stevens and Redick.

NO: Kopko on #2; Masur on #2

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

Chair declared the motions carried.

PERSONNEL:

It was moved by Stacey Bleich seconded by Joyce Potsko: To approve the following **Motions 1 through 21, with item #14 being TABLED:**

1. Approve the final 2022 Graduation List as per Exhibit P-1.
2. Accept the resignation of Paul Wazenski as cleaner position #1 at Memorial Elementary School, effective May 23, 2022, as per Exhibit P-2.
3. Accept the resignation of Peter M. Roach as cleaner #5 at the Hanover Area Jr./Sr. High School, effective May 3, 2022, as per Exhibit P-3.
4. Accept the resignation of Kenneth Warman as Boys Varsity Head Soccer Coach, effective May 19, 2022, as per Exhibit P-4.
5. Ratify the request of Employee #32247 to take May 27th (1/2 day), May 31st, June 1st, June 2nd, and June 3rd, 2022 off as Unpaid days, with the understanding that this will not set a precedent or establish a past practice. Exhibit P-5
6. Approve the FMLA Leave of Employee #30128, effective May 3, 2022.
7. Approve the application for Sabbatical Leave for Restoration of Health for Employee #30829, effective August 23, 2022 to June 6, 2023.
8. Appoint Scott Audia Jr. to cleaner position #5, at the Hanover Area Jr./Sr. High School at a rate of \$15.00/hour. This is a 4-hour position, no benefits, as per the HAESPA contract.

June 7, 2022

9. Appoint Francis Litchkowski, Sr. to cleaner position #2A, at the Hanover Area Jr./Sr. High School at a rate of \$15.00/hour. This is a 4-hour position, no benefits, as per the HAESPA contract.

10. Appoint William C Sistrunk to cleaner position #7, at the Hanover Area Jr./Sr. High School at a rate of \$15.00/hour. This is a 4-hour position, no benefits, as per the HAESPA contract.

11. Appoint Hunter Pearson as part-time Technology Assistant at a rate of \$25.00/hour, not to exceed 30 hours per week, no benefits.

12. Accept, with regret, the Intent to Retire along with the 2022 VESP for the following professional employees:

Jennifer Bendowski

Amy Cody

Leann Simasek

13. Accept, with regret, the Intent to Retire along with the 2022 VESP for the following Hanover Area Educational Support Professional Association Employees:

Patricia Culver

14. (TABLED) Accept, with regret, the Intent to Retire pursuant to a separation agreement, to be reviewed and approved by the district solicitor, for Jerri Clemmons, Confidential Secretary.

16. Approve the addendum to the separation agreement for Lisa Kitchen.

17. Approve the renewal of the contract for MLB Information Services, LLC for PIMS Data Services, in the amount of \$18,000 for the 2022-2023 school year, as per Exhibit P-17.

18. Accept, the resignation of Ethan J. Hoolick, English Teacher, effective June 6, 2022, as per Exhibit P-18.

19. Appoint Rick Stevens as Board Treasurer for the term July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

20. Appoint Rick Stevens as Luzerne Intermediate Unit 18 Representative, Effective July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2025.

June 7, 2022

21. Appoint the following Extra-Curricular Personnel, for the 2022-2023 school year:

Carl Daubert	Head Cross Country	\$2,848
Stephanie Grover	Head Girls' Soccer	\$3,904
Jocelyn Holodick-Reed	Head Field Hockey	\$3,904
Maria Majiros	Head Girls Tennis	\$3,361
Elbros Samkough	Head Girls Volleyball	\$3,904
Robert Shoemaker	Head Golf	\$2,925
Maria Skrepenak	Head Girls' Basketball	\$6,419

BOARD VOTE: (ON MOTIONS #1 - 21)

YES: Bleich, Holmgren, Kopko, Mahle, Masur, Oravic, Potsko, Stevens and Redick

NO: Kopko on #21 Yes for everone, except the last entry

ABSENT: NONE

ABSTAIN: NONE

Chair declared the motions carried.

NEW BUSINESS

None

OLD BUSINESS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Terry Dravage, President of the HAEA, addressed the Board in person. Ms. Dravage presented the following:
"I'm Terry Dravage. I'm the President of the Hanover Area Teachers' Association and I've gone through the Hanover Area School District, and I have taught here for 32 years. I'd like to thank the Board for giving the Association the opportunity to speak this evening. We're here tonight as a result of an internal survey on the learning environment at Hanover Area. We had hoped the school board would have reached out to the association in April or May after they received the results of our survey. We had anticipated a face-to-face meeting with the board to begin building a foundation to effectuate change. We have always had good relations with the board. We are a small community, the board knows a lot of our members, the board

June 7, 2022

knows me. Personally, I've been involved with the union for 20 years. This is the first time I've felt the collective voice of this association needs to be heard. Let me start by saying this has been a difficult few years for all of us, including our students. Sadly, the association is hearing that 'lazy teachers are the problem'. I've told my members not to believe these rumors. No one in this Administration and on this Board would refer to their staff as 'lazy'. Over the course of our careers our teachers have taught virtually, bought (out of their own pockets) materials to help them teach virtually; taught virtually and in person at the same time; chaperoned dances; acted as club advisors; coached; attended graduation, including Kindergarten, Preschool, and 6th grade; written letters of recommendation; sat on scholarship committees; donated money to scholarships for our students; fundraised for our students in need, including clothing and food drives. We have donated to the Student of the Month every single month since I have been here. We bought supplies and decorations for our classrooms to make it a welcoming environment. Clearly, we are committed to this community, to Hanover, and certainly not lazy. It is short sided to say that we are the problem. But, we are in the classrooms. We know the problems and we experience the problems. First and foremost, we must address the problems of safety. It's sad that we are talking about this in the wake of the tragic shooting in Texas, but there cannot be a nurturing learning environment if children and staff do not feel safe. We need the board's assistance. We need the Administration's intervention. We need clear and concise disciplinary policies. We need the students to know that actions have consequences. It's important for all students to know that they will be protected from outside threats, as well as those threats from their peers. Respect is the key. We need the students to understand who is in control. Policies in place must be consistently enforced. We realize that the school environment has changed. And we are willing to change and adapt but we cannot do this alone. This is what we would like from the board and the administration: Protocols, which include swift and consistent consequences for things like fights with peers, weapons, threats of weapons, assaulting teachers, drugs and vapes, profanity and vandalism. We recognize that Hanover has started to move toward these changes. Mr. Barrett has instituted a School Climate Committee. The committee is open to

June 7, 2022

all the teachers who are interested in participating and a large number of our teachers have joined. A Special Ed Committee has been put in place and they are beginning to make progress. Mr. Barrett and I meet monthly to try to troubleshoot issues. Security has been hired. Although their role needs to be more defined, their presence is appreciated. Mr. Barrett has put an administrative presence in place at Lyndwood. We see ourselves as part of the solution, not the problem. The teachers are willing to and able to meet with this board and the administration to put these policies into place. The association is willing and able to work through the summer to ensure that the 2022-2023 school year begins with these changes in place. We want a voice in these changes and we want our voices to have an impact. Simply put: we want to help. Again, to be clear, the reason that we are here is that we need swift and consistent consequences for: fights, weapons, threats, assaulting teachers, drugs and vapes, profanity and vandalism. Our work has just begun. We're not done. We're available to meet with this board as early as tomorrow, June 8th, 9th, during the day, June 20th, 21st, 22nd, 24th, anytime. We ask you to pick some of these dates to start this important work. Thank you."

Mike Potsko, Hanover Township, addressed the Board in person. Mr. Potsko addressed the following:

- Asked for clarification on the Therapeutic Education program.
 - Mr. Barrett clarified that therapeutic educational programs would be part of our Social Work services for students who may be victims of traumatic events and the services may also include Special Education services like Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Vision and Mobility Therapy.
- Asked for clarification on the Partial Hospitalization Program at Children's Service Center.
 - Mr. Barrett clarified that these services exist for children who suffer from severe emotional disturbances.
 - Mr. Potsko asked where these services were provided and if they were provided daily. Mr. Barrett replied that there are levels of treatment ranging from partial hospitalization to residential treatment.

June 7, 2022

- Mr. Potsko question if parents were in agreement with these services and Mr. Barrett replied, “always”.

Sarah Miscavage addressed the Board in person. Topics addressed included:

- Referenced her questions to the board from two months ago regarding security and asked if the board could update with answers.
 - Mr. Michael McCree, Safety and Security Administrator, replied: We have a committee put together. There is faculty representation. We have plans to rectify what we are doing. Metal detectors are not going to stop a fight. I go to safety meetings throughout the area. Fights throughout Luzerne County are “crazily up”. Our job is to stop them. The last situation that we had with the violence, those kids are no longer here. They’re gone. You do not see them. With the last fight, we had 2 kids leave in cuffs. They’re not coming back to Hanover Area. Our job is to make it as safe as possible.
 - Miscavage asked if the teachers were trained to handle those situations. McCree replied that there were no teachers involved in those situations. Miscavage asked for clarification on teacher training so that if teachers were involved in breaking up a fight, they would know how to handle the students and protect themselves. McCree responded that Safety Care training has been offered, though, not all staff members are trained in Safety Care. I am a parent of a young child myself. It is a different world out there. We are doing everything we can to keep intruders out. Protocols to get law enforcement here. We are living in a different world and I think the teachers will agree that the last two years changed the kids. Being out of school hurt us and when we come back in September, we are going to have a plan. We are hammering things out already: No bookbags, changes in dress codes, that stuff is coming. Cell phones are another problem and we’re going to get back in control. I

June 7, 2022

mean the last three months, I was on cafeteria duty with two other admin the whole time. There were no teachers in there, it was us and guidance and we had to reestablish some things. And those kids that did not comply, they are not going to be here. I am in conversation with everyone of these teachers here and we are in agreement. I'm not going to tolerate the behavior and they are not going to tolerate it. I will say it right now: we can't have division. It can't be union against the admin against the board. If we are going to change and get this culture back to where it should be, it's got to be everybody working together. I think everybody can agree on that. It was a super tough year on everybody. I am here to support you guys. We have been meeting with you and making changes as we identify the problems, we are meeting with you, with the township, with the local police, with a security expert over the last several weeks. We are going to make changes and it is not always going to be easy. I am always available to meet and discuss and we will address as things come up.

- Danielle DiPietro, Teacher, pointed out that the faculty does not feel supported when they enforce the rules of the school and asked for assurances of "back up". Mr. McCree noted that when we have massive call offs, we have difficulty managing mass amounts of students in hallways and the auditorium. He noted that there will be changes and things addressed for the new school year. Mr. Barrett also thanked the union leadership for their open dialog on a monthly basis. He noted that there were 5 different categories of concerns brought to him by the union on Valentine's Day, three of them with recommendations. Of those three, with bare bones recommendations were 70% complete prior to your exodus yesterday, one was 75% complete and the other was 90% complete. So of those three categories, we are going to continue to close that gap and get them all to 100%. Off of that we are going to build safety protocols to

June 7, 2022

help close more gaps. Additionally, I want to let you know that this board this evening has agreed to take on a consultant that if anyone watched Good Morning America last week, it showed the safest school in America in a school in Indiana. That man, that designed that school in Indiana, has been in each one of your schools. This board said, "get him. Go out and get him and do what you need to do to make this buildings air tight". So, he is here now, Mason Woolridge, big tall man, maybe some of you have met him. So, he is here now. That is the level of seriousness and commitment we have to making things better. From an infrastructure standpoint, we are going to do everything we can to make this a better place to work and learn. I promise you, I have taken this so seriously from the time of that meeting on Valentine's Day. We will continue to build on this open dialog and any concerns you have I will take to these monthly meetings with myself, Mr. McCree, the central administrative and school climate teams. How you feel coming to work has a direct impact on our kids. So, I want this coming back regularly how you feel coming into your buildings on a regular basis, to our central administrators.

- Sarah Miscavage asked if the parents could get a look at the surveys sent out so they could get a better feel for what the teachers are experiencing. Mr. Barrett replied that he did not have access to the surveys sent out to the parents and that the survey he was referring to was a survey that he sent out to the teachers to get an idea of where most of their time was spent so that these areas might be looked into over the summer months. My focus is to look at all of these things, create policy, create procedure to make lives better for all of you around here. My purpose is to take these burdens off the teachers and make life better for all of them.
- Virginia Crowley, Uniserve Representative for HAEA, addressed the Board of Education. Ms. Crowley thanked the board for the monthly meetings and open

June 7, 2022

communication and for the creation of the school climate committees. She emphasized that participation in these committees required active participation and open dialog and wanted to ensure that her membership understood that they were safe to express their concerns in these climate meetings, that this would be a safe communication space to express themselves, in order to raise awareness and bring to light issues that might be uncomfortable to discuss with administration. Mr. Barrett responded that he would meet with each building team and communicate objectives and protocols within each building level team. Dr. Kopko observed that communication will be the key. He noted that several members of the membership had reached out to him in the last several weeks with some very legitimate concerns and wanting some input, noting fears of retaliation—not from the Superintendent—but from other places and let me tell you, I picked up the phone and within 30 seconds, he rectified that situation. I come from the communications business, and I can tell you that this is only going to be resolved if there is open and honest communication among all of us.

- Terry Dravage, President HAEA, interjected asking the board directly why not a single member of the board had contacted her to meet and discuss these issues that were presented to the board in February. Dr. Kopko replied that the board was copied on the communication that was sent to the Superintendent of Schools, and believed that it was incumbent upon him to respond on their behalf. From a board member's stand point, Mr. Barrett was responding to that communication on behalf of the board of education. He stated that following a Zoom meeting with the school board on this topic, he was directed by the board of education to act on their behalf. Ms. Dravage stated that she believes that the board of education should take the time to hear from the membership about things that are happening in our

June 7, 2022

- schools from their perspective. Dravage noted that this was nothing against Mr. Barrett, but he was “one voice”.
- Michele Zapotoski, Resident Hanover Township addressed the board in person. She spoke to the following topics: concern over the mental well-being and safety of our students in district buildings; the toxicity of the work environments within HASD buildings; the care and concern with which administration and teachers have for HASD students; the generosity of HA teachers toward Hanover Area’s neediest students; the board of education and administration need to “stop viewing the faculty in opposition of them and the teachers need to let go of the level of distrust they have toward their employer”; allow teachers to openly dialog and be a part of the solution to the problems under discussion.

June 7, 2022


FUTURE MEETINGS:

August Work Session: Monday, August 15, 2022
August Regular Meeting: Monday, August 15, 2022

President Mahle then called for Adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT:

It was moved by Stacey Bleich, seconded by Paul Holmgren: To adjourn the Regular School Board Meeting at 7:07PM.

ATTEST:  _____, Secretary
Rick Stevens
Hanover Area School Board