

The Board Report

Monday, March 6, 2023



Disclaimer: The Board Report is a synopsis of the Hampton Township School Board meetings and is not intended as a replacement for any official Board minutes.

~ A Tradition of Excellence ~

The Hampton Township Board of School Directors

Mrs. Jill Hamlin	Board President
Mr. Matt Jarrell*	Board Vice President/Student Affairs Chair
Ms. Denise Balason*	Board Secretary/Facilities Chair
Mrs. Joy Midgley	Personnel Chair
Mr. Robert Shages	Treasurer/Policy & Legislative Affairs Chair
Mr. Greg Stein**	Technology Chair
Mr. Larry Vasko	Finance Chair
Mrs. Trisha Webb	Educational Programs Chair
Mr. Bryant Wesley II, Esq.	Transportation Chair

This Hampton Township School Board Meeting was held at the A. W. Beattie Career Center. The meeting was held in person and audio/video recorded so that community members could view it after the meeting concluded.

Members of Administration in Attendance

Dr. Michael Loughhead	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Rebecca Cunningham	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Ed McKaveney	Director of Technology
Mr. Josh Kellogg	Manager of Network and Cybersecurity
Dr. Jackie Removcik	Assistant to the Superintendent
Dr. Marguerite Imbarlina	Hampton High School Principal
Dr. John Thornton	Director of Student Services

** absent*

*** attended remotely*

March 6, 2023

Work Session

A video recording of the meeting can be viewed [here](#). The time within the video that each section begins is indicated below.

Call to Order & Public Comment

(4:55)

Mrs. Hamlin called the meeting to order and opened the meeting to public comment.

Community Member

5:48

A community member with two children at HTSD, including one in high school, said that although Hampton is an incredible school, she has noticed a lack of a diversity, equity, and inclusion plan at the school. She said they experienced a traumatic incident at the high school, which made them feel that the school was not following a specific plan in handling such situations. The community member believes that if HTSD had a DEI plan with specific steps, it would reduce the burden on parents to give feedback during such events. She also inquired about the District's effort to implement a DEI plan.

Dr. Loughead thanked her for commenting and expressed concern that her family went through this experience. He said the District wants everyone to feel welcomed at Hampton and treated with dignity and respect. Over the summer, the District developed a new Strategic Plan that includes the pillar "Talbots Together," which states:

We celebrate our unique and collective experiences. We welcome learners, staff, and families from different backgrounds, experiences, and cultures. We treat all with dignity and respect by practicing empathy and using inclusive language and practices. Everyone belongs in our schools.

Dr. Loughead said the District would continue its efforts to uphold this pillar. The community member asked if there is a plan in place for higher-level intervention if a child no longer feels safe due to something said or done. Dr. Loughead explained that while there is no specific plan for every incident, the building principals are trained to handle situations fairly and appropriately, and there is an awareness of how to react and support all students. Dr. Loughead acknowledged that there is always room for improvement, and he would be glad to meet with her to discuss this further.

Mrs. Hamlin expressed gratitude to the community member for sharing personal experiences and apologized on behalf of the Board for what happened. She emphasized the Board's commitment to continue working towards creating a welcoming environment for all students.

Community Member

11:20

A community member asked if the District's Strategic Plan is public record and if the plan has infiltrated into board policy.

Dr. Loughhead said the Strategic Plan was publicly vetted this past fall prior to Board approval, including multiple presentations. He told the community member to reach out to him directly for more information. Additionally, since the Strategic Plan was approved, all new policy updates are made to align with the plan.

Student Affairs

(12:51)

Mrs. Webb introduced students Andrew Kaehly and Ellie Myros to provide a Student Council Representative Report.

Andrew, junior class vice president, announced that the Student Council is working hard to organize Talbot Thon, a fundraiser event on March 31 in partnership with Pitt Dance Marathon to support pediatric cancer patients at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. The event includes various activities such as a dance party, tournaments, contests, game shows, food trucks, and Zumba. Over 300 students have registered and donated, and the student body is excited about the event for an opportunity to come together for a cause bigger than themselves. He said the community is very important at the high school, and they want to promote participation in Talbot Thon to all schools and grade levels. The community may join for community hours on March 31 from 5-8 p.m. He commented that spring sports are starting soon and that the high school spring musical "Something Rotten" is approaching. He said the musical is going extremely well, with amazing actors, crew, singers, dancers, and more. Shows are on April 21, 22, 28, and 29 at 7:30 p.m. in the HHS auditorium.

Ellie, special education student liaison, said the annual Sadie Hawkins Dance will be held Saturday, March 11, in the high school auxiliary gym from 8-10 p.m. Tickets are \$15. She also announced that Prom will be held on May 5 at the Omni William Penn Hotel. The Hollywood Premiere theme will feature a red carpet and lights, including a photo booth. She said a new website will allow students to access prom information in one place. In addition, the high school is bringing back a "prom walk" in the auditorium which is open to the community.

In response to Board questions, the students said information will be made available on the website (www.ht-sd.org) for Talbot Thon donations and registration. T-shirts are being sold for \$10.

Mrs. Webb, on behalf of Mr. Jarrell, presented the following action items to be considered for approval at the March 13th meeting:

- Hampton High School Forensics Field Trip to the PA High School Speech League State Tournament at Bloomsburg University, Bloomsburg, PA, March 16-18, 2023, at a cost to the District not to exceed \$1,500.00.

Dr. Cunningham said the students have qualified and been invited to compete at the state level, which is an honor. Students would miss half a day of school to participate. The coach requests \$1,500 from the academic competition fund to help cover families' costs. The Board has \$2,000 in the fund and agreed to grant preliminary approval.

- Hampton High School Boys Lacrosse Team is playing WPIAL/PIAA scheduled games against West Chester Area School District - B. Reed Henderson High School and Owen J. Roberts High School on April 21 and 22. In conjunction with these away games, a Field Trip in the West Chester area has been scheduled at no cost to the District.

Students would also miss half a day of instruction for this trip.

Facilities

(26:53)

There were no action items this evening.

Educational Programs

(27:06)

There were no action items this evening, but there were two presentations:

Personal Finance Study Update

Dr. Imbarlina and Dr. Removcik presented an update on the study to make Personal Finance a graduation requirement. Dr. Removcik said the District is looking at two guiding questions for the study:

1. Is it beneficial to require Personal Finance as a graduation requirement for our students?
2. What factors must be considered before this requirement can be enacted?

Dr. Removcik presented data on the percentage of students enrolled in Personal Finance over the past seven years. Over the past four graduation classes, roughly 40-50% of students have taken Personal Finance on average.

Over the past few years, the District made several changes relating to Personal Finance:

- 2018 — integrated Personal Finance topics into the HHS economics course (required for all 12th-grade students).
- 2018-2019 — offered a math credit for students enrolled in Personal Finance courses at HHS.
- Summer 2022 — redesigned HMS career awareness course to include financial literacy topics (required for all 8th-grade students).
- 2022-2023 - Inclusion of Reality Fair into Career Awareness course at HMS (required for all 8th-grade students).
- 2023-2024 - Creation of online Personal Finance course; renaming of Career Awareness course to Career and Financial Awareness.

Dr. Imbarlina presented the District's plan for collecting data and trying to identify if Personal Finance should be a graduation requirement. The District met with the high school Economics and Personal Finance teachers to begin to create a survey of students who have taken Economics, Personal Finance, both courses, or neither course. That survey will be aligned to the topics of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Personal Finance curriculum framework to provide data on student knowledge of these topics. The goal is to create that survey in April, including money management, earning income, borrowing money, financial services, risk management, and saving & investing. The survey would be administered in June to determine the current level of financial literacy on those topics. Over the summer, the District would use survey data to determine if it is beneficial to require Personal Finance as a graduation requirement. If yes, the District would identify and consider factors such as staffing, textbooks, and student schedules before this requirement can be enacted.

Mr. Vasko said he supports making Personal Finance a graduation requirement for all students, noting that Florida in 2023 became the 25th state to require Personal Finance for graduation.

Dr. Removcik said the Pennsylvania Department of Education provides instructional curriculum frameworks containing key Personal Finance concepts. The middle school also reviewed these curriculum frameworks when designing the Career and Financial Awareness course.

Therapy Dog Pilot Update

Dr. Thornton presented on the therapy dog pilot program, which supports whole-child learning. He presented data on the number of student contacts (1,580) and hours the therapy dog, Archie, has spent with students (116 hours). Archie spends four days each week at Hampton High School, making study hall and hallway visits, counseling office visits, and individual visits in the counselor's offices. Dr. Imbarlina noted that Archie is helpful with emotional regulation and helping students calm down. At the middle school, Archie has visits scheduled during tutorial periods and provides Wellness Studio support.

Dr. Thornton said that research shows therapy dogs help reduce anxiety, promote social skills, and prepare students for learning. He added that Archie has been a great resource in the District's mental health support efforts. He discussed how Archie works with students at the elementary level, offering teachable moments and learning opportunities.

Dr. Thornton said the program has been highly successful and that the District is working to finalize administrative regulations related to the therapy dog policy.

Finance

(44:40)

Mr. Vasko presented the following action items to be considered for approval at the March 13th meeting:

- District initiated appeals for 2023 real estate tax assessments based on property transactions in 2022 where the difference between the adjusted purchase price and the 2023 assessment reflects a lost revenue to the District in the amount of \$1,000 or more at the 2021-2022 millage rate of 20.30 mills.

2022 – 79 of 276 will meet the criteria

2021 – 211 of 369 met the criteria

2020 – 104 of 285 met the criteria

2019 – 93 of 323 met the criteria

2018 – 92 of 295 met the criteria

2017 – 71 of 291 met the criteria

2016 – 71 of 332 met the criteria

Mr. Kline stated that the appeals criteria is in the same format as the District has used previously, recommending appeals for “lost revenue” exceeding \$1,000. The calculation for 2022 sales uses the updated “Common Level Ratio” (CLR) of 63.6% from Allegheny County, which results in fewer sales meeting the \$1,000 threshold.

Mr. Vasko believes that the current \$1,000 lost revenue base for 2023 is too low and does not consider inflation. He suggests raising the threshold to adjust for inflation and the increased millage rate. Mr. Vasko said that the difference should remain the same each year, while Mr. Kline pointed out that the common level ratio also accounts for inflation. Mr. Kline also noted that the PA Supreme Court recently ruled that School District appeals do not violate the Uniformity Clause of the PA Constitution and that the appeal practice may continue. Dr. Loughead said it would be helpful at the next meeting to look at a comparison between a \$1,000 and \$1,500 threshold before making a recommendation.

Local Tax Revenue Update

Mr. Kline referenced the Local Tax Revenue Update as of February 28, 2023, and noted the following:

- Real estate taxes are ahead of the budgeted amount as the District has collected 101.03% of the budgeted amount.
- Earned income taxes are up 5.27% over last year.
- Real estate transfer taxes are lagging due to the higher mortgage rates, resulting in fewer real estate transactions.
- Delinquent real estate taxes are still lagging.

Personnel

(58:26)

Mrs. Midgley presented the following personnel action items to be considered for approval at the March 13th meeting:

Resignation

- Lauren Casselberry who is resigning effective March 10, 2023. Mrs. Casselberry is a Paraeducator (Class III) at Poff Elementary.

Teacher

- Ms. Jillian Traynor as a Building Substitute at Hampton Middle School, effective February 13, 2023 through the end of the 2022-2023 School Year. Salary is \$26,500, prorated. Ms. Traynor is replacing Ms. Kayla Freehling.
- Change in status for Ms. Miranda Prosser, moving from a Long-Term Substitute for Grade 1 at Poff Elementary School to a Long-Term Substitute for Grade 2 at Central Elementary School, effective March 6, 2023, through the remainder of the 2022-2023 School Year. Salary remains at \$35,500. Ms. Prosser is substituting for Mrs. Leah Wilson.
- Jennifer Lavella and Julia Kritiotis as mentors for the 2022-2023 school year.
- Kaitlin McGuire and Amy Hardman as Guest Substitute Teachers for the Hampton Township School District, effective March 1, 2023. Salary is \$100 per day for days 1-30 and then \$120 per day thereafter. These substitutes will be utilized on an as-needed basis.
- Ms. Xiaojing Zhang as the Club Sponsor for the Chinese Language and Culture Club at Hampton Middle School for the remainder of the 2022-2023 School Year. Ms. Zhang is replacing Ms. Jun Angelini.

Paraprofessional, Paraeducator, and Administrative Assistant

- Danielle Ciple, Monica Nielsen, Chuck Premick, and Eva Shaltes as Substitute Paraeducators/Paraprofessionals/Administrative Assistants, effective February 1, 2023. Salary is \$13.00 per hour for days 1-20 and \$13.50 per hour thereafter.

Other

- Mrs. Rebecca Harter as the Transportation and Data Entry Specialist (Class VII), effective approximately June 1, 2023. Salary is \$25.92 per hour for 30 days in June and then \$26.68 per hour for an additional 30 days to complete the 60-day Probation period, and then \$26.93 per hour thereafter. Mrs. Harter is replacing Mrs. Diane Balint.

Supplementals

The following conditional appointments for 2022-2023, each at a rate of \$146 per point, with each such appointment being conditioned on the District making a subsequent determination that the

supplementary position and work associated with such position is needed and approved and will continue during the coronavirus pandemic following future guidance from the Commonwealth. Each appointment shall be effective only where the position is approved and operational and where the work associated with such position is actually being performed. This conditional appointment does not obligate the District to approve some, all or any of the supplementary positions for 2022-2023 and does not guarantee any of the persons listed below that his or her supplementary position will be needed and in place, or that it will continue uninterrupted, in 2022-2023:

Name	Position	Building	Points	Total Stipend
Brandon Picket	Assistant Coach Tennis	HS	22	\$3212

Technology

(1:01:38)

There were no action items this evening. Mr. Stein reported that he was named to the Pennsylvania School Board Association (PSBA) Finance Committee again.

Policy and Legislative Affairs

(1:02:15)

Mr. Shages presented three items to be considered for approval the March 13th meeting:

- First Reading of Policy #137: Home Education Programs
- Second Reading of Policy #200: Enrollment of Students
- Second Reading of Policy #221: Dress and Grooming

Regarding Policy #137, Dr. Cunningham said that Act 55 of 2022 was signed into law providing additional guidance for school districts regarding students involved in home education programs. A section of Policy #137 would be removed regarding participation in interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities since the District will be developing a brand new policy over the next few months devoted to providing more guidance on interscholastic athletics and extracurricular activities.

Transportation

(1:04:50)

There were no action items this evening.

Public Comment & Adjournment

(1:04:58)

There were no public comments and the meeting was adjourned. The Board held a brief executive session to discuss legal and personnel matters.