

# The Board Report

*March 12, 2018*



**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*

Bryant Wesley II, Esq.	Board President
Mrs. Mary Alice Hennessey**	Board Vice President/Student Affairs Chair
Ms. Denise Balason	Board Secretary/Facilities Chair
Mrs. Jill Hamlin	Transportation Chair
Mrs. Pamela Lamagna**	Personnel Chair
Mrs. Gail Litwiler*	Educational Programs Chair
Mr. Robert Shages**	Board Treasurer/Policy & Legislative Affairs Chair
Mr. Greg Stein**	Technology Chair
Mr. Lawrence Vasko*	Finance Chair

\*\* Denotes members participating via teleconference call/video.

\*Denotes members not in attendance.

## *Members of Administration in Attendance*

Dr. Michael Loughead	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Rebecca Cunningham	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Shari Berg	Public Relations Consultant
Mr. Eric Coffield	Manager of Technology Operations
Mrs. Colleen Hannagan	Poff Elementary School Principal

# Special Presentation - Poff Elementary School

Poff First Grade teacher, Lisa Milsom, and Poff Library Media Specialist, Erin Prosser, shared the coding and computational thinking lessons that they developed for every elementary grade level to use during Computer Science Education Week, which takes place annually in December. Mrs. Hannagan explained the purpose of National Hour of Code and Coding Week, indicating that Poff was interested in taking these kinds of experiences and bringing them into the regular classroom. Mrs. Milsom said through STEM grants, Poff has been able to provide its students with a number of coding and computational thinking opportunities. She provided an overview of how the school incorporated coding into each grade level. Mrs. Prosser said she received training from Code.org a few years ago and used that training to help develop some of the activities for coding week and in the classrooms. Logical thinking, collaboration and communication are among the skills the students improve upon through coding exercises. Another one of the outcomes of this week was that a group of fifth grade students created their own morning Coders Club. Fifth grader Zach W. explained how he and another student came up with the idea for the club, and Caitlyn G. said Star Wars games, music games and others are among the games the club has created. The students then explained their games to the Board, and Board members had an opportunity to play the games themselves. At the end of the presentation, Dr. Loughhead thanked the parents of the students for their support and guidance.

## Student Awards

- We are proud to announce the accomplishments of Jonathan F. Jon, along with other students from Beattie, attended the Pennsylvania Automotive Dealer Association skill competition in Hershey and captured a fourth place team finish. Congratulations!
- We are also proud to recognize the following members of the Girls' Varsity Basketball Team. Alison C., for being selected to the WPIAL All-Section First Team; Laryn E., who was also selected to the WPIAL All-Section First Team; and to Brooke F., who was selected to the WPIAL All-Section Second Team.
- From the Boys' Varsity Basketball Team, we offer congratulations to Isaac D., who was selected to the WPIAL First Team All-Section Team.

## Public Comment

The Board provides the opportunity for members of the public to address the Board about issues appearing on the agenda, as well as issues affecting the District. In accordance with Policy No. 903, individuals wishing to address the Board will be asked to state their name, address and group affiliation, if applicable.

- Julie Mikus introduced herself as a Hampton Middle School mom and said that a post she made on social media a few weeks ago garnered a lot of attention. Out of that discussion, a group of 20 parents got together to discuss safety and security. She commended the District for what it already is doing, but said she would like to see a very strong “see something, say something” campaign practiced in the District. She mentioned the Sandy Hook Promise as a program that could be enacted here. She noted the program is free. Mrs. Mikus went over the four steps of the program and provided the Board members with an informational sheet about the Sandy Hook Promise program.
- John Marinack said he has a daughter in the High School who learned about a fellow student who was talking about suicide, and she and her friends were fearful if they reported it and it was not a real threat, that they would be ostracized. He said he talked his daughter into sharing the information and commended the police for intervening. He also said that in regard to the school shootings, people in Hampton may think they are safe and that it could never happen here, but that would be a mistake to think that way and he encouraged others to take it seriously.

- Sandy Stritzinger said she has been a Hampton resident for 15 years and her son graduated from Hampton. She has three younger children currently in the District. She said that she wants her children to know that if they are going to change the world, they need to start now, embracing the idea that diversity is reality and each child is unique. She encouraged the District to provide lessons to the younger students about diversity and uniqueness and being more accepting of those who are different. She said children learn through repetition and in addition to these values being taught at home, they should also be reinforced in the schools. She provided the Board with a handout with resources.
- Nadine Smith said she is a seven-year resident with a daughter in the High School and another daughter in the elementary schools. She stated that she is among the parents who have been working together to come up with solutions to share with the Board. She discussed a few technology options, including an anonymous alert app, that would allow the school community to provide alerts that falls in line with the “see something, say something” concept. She presented additional ideas such as police alert key fobs that call the police with the push of a button and apps for phones that would do the same thing. She noted that communication is the most important piece of keeping students safe and if the school community feels safe in reporting concerns, that will help tremendously.
- Diane Dixon said she has a son currently in High School and another child who already graduated. She said she has talked to her son, who told her for the most part, he feels safe in school. He told her that metal detectors might make him feel safer, but she noted that she was 50/50 on whether she thought they would make a difference. He also shared with her that bullying is an issue and that communication is very important. She said that while starting compassion and diversity lessons are important for young children, that high school students should also be reminded of these lessons. She read a portion of a speech her daughter, who was involved with sports, wrote for a banquet. The letter noted that even as a captain on the team, she felt bullied by others, including parents of other players. She said her daughter was in a group, and still felt lonely, so that awareness of these issues needs to happen at not only school but at home. She said that kids need to be aware of other kids and feelings, and that would go a long way toward solving some of these issues.
- Jessica Dixon said she has two children in the District and has been a part of the parent group mentioned earlier. She said one of the things the group has discussed is the addition of another guidance counselor at the elementary school level. She thanked the Board for approving the hiring of additional teachers for this year, noting that the smaller class sizes have helped.
- Michelle Ulrich said she is a part of the parent group mentioned earlier. She inquired about lock-down drills and said the parents would like to know more about them, specifically how often they are held, whether there is any consistency among buildings as to how they are offered and how much direction students are given during the drills.

## Committee Reports

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES/TREASURER’S REPORT

The minutes and Treasurer’s Report were approved at the March 5, 2018 Board meeting.

### BOARD PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Mr. Wesley announced there was one executive session since the last meeting for legal and personnel matters.

### BOARD SECRETARY’S REPORT

Ms. Balason reminded the members that their ethics forms are due and PSBA information on the October conference is available if anyone is interested.

## **SOLICITOR'S REPORT**

There was no report this evening.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Academics: Dr. Loughead noted that coding and computational thinking skills are happening more in the classrooms and the District plans to be more intentional moving forward about this kind of instruction. He also noted that students are wrapping up the third quarter, and some students are now hearing about college opportunities.

Arts: Dr. Loughead highlighted the Hues & Harmony event, which starts Tuesday evening. The two-day event includes a spaghetti dinner this year and features visual and performing arts demonstrations from students.

Athletics: Lacrosse begins this week. One of our divers is competing in the state meet this week and the hockey team is in the championships.

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES REPORT**

There was no report this evening.

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

There was no report this evening.

## **PERSONNEL**

There was no report this evening.

## **FINANCE**

There was no report this evening.

## **POLICY/LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS**

There was no report this evening.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

There was no report this evening.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

There was no report this evening.

## **A.W. BEATTIE REPORT**

Mr. Stein reported there is a meeting on Wednesday evening for committees, and the regular voting meeting is the following Thursday.

## **HAEE REPORT**

Mrs. Hamlin said two grants were recently approved; one grant was for Mr. Stickney at the High School to turn some classroom space into a computational thinking area. Another grant was approved for Poff to implement a Garden Tower. Early planning is also underway for the HAEE 5K race in the fall.

## FACILITIES REPORT

### Special Presentation - Safety

Ms. Balason said security is always on the minds of District Administration, and noted that the Board was discussing the idea of a safety presentation some months ago. Dr. Loughead said that the working relationship between the District and the Township is a crucial component in Hampton's ability to provide a safe and secure environment for its students and staff and called the relationship between the entities both valuable and uncommon.

Dr. Cunningham, in conjunction with Hampton Township Police Chief Tom Vulakovich and Hampton Township Police Officer Aaron Zola, provided a comprehensive safety and security presentation.

Chief Vulakovich said he has been in the Township for a long time, starting his career as the school resource officer for the School District in 1999 for ten years before being promoted to Sargent. He said when he was promoted, he had great reservations about leaving the school resource position because it is so valuable, but said that now as police chief, he is able to devote his entire staff to the schools if necessary at any time.

Chief Vulakovich provided an overview of the first responders in Hampton Township. The Police Department includes 22 officers, and two civilian clerks. The Shaler-Hampton EMS includes three advanced life support ambulances stationed right in the police garage. He said there are volunteer firemen from the North Hampton Volunteer Fire Department who can be called into action if needed during an emergency. He noted the very close proximity to the schools of these resources.

Since 1999, the Chief said that proactive planning for emergencies has been ongoing. What that means is the responses and tactics for dealing with emergencies changes based on current needs. In addition to Officer Zola, who is assigned as the School Resource Officer in the District and stationed at the High School, there is also a Juvenile Probation Officer (Officer Jim Miller) from Allegheny County stationed at the High School, since 2001. He also noted that first responders receive SIMTAC training every year with West Deer to prepare them for active shooter situations. The SIMTAC training is not the only training officers receive for these kinds of situations. Officers also receive training in legal updates, CPR, First Aid, AEDs, Fire Arms, and ALICE. He said there has been a huge commitment of time and money toward ensuring the police and other first responders are prepared to handle any crisis.

Chief Vulakovich said as police officers, there are legal constraints to what they can and cannot do with students, including being able to search bags or cars without probable cause. The School District does not have those same constraints, so being able to work together has made a huge difference in how quickly some issues can be resolved.

Officer Zola provided an overview of his role as School Resource Officer. He said having a visible presence in all five buildings is an important part of his job. Shift officers also will visit schools throughout the day to provide an additional presence. Officer Zola highlighted his work in being a participant in lock down and safety drills across the District to ensure consistency of practice and to give feedback to the crisis teams, as well as his facilitation of yearly ALICE training for all staff in the District.

Chief Vulakovich explained ALICE training and said he agrees 100% with what this training teaches. He said the days of Code Red lockdowns are over, and this is the new way of thinking. The steps of ALICE are:

A - Alert

L - Lockdown

I - Inform (this includes informing staff and students in clear language so they are aware of how to react)

C - Counter (moves and procedures staff and students can use to counter an active shooter situation)

E - Evacuate

The program has been in the schools since 2015 and he, Officer Zola and Dr. Cunningham are all certified trainers in ALICE. Dr. Cunningham noted that ALICE is a non-linear response, meaning that the best course of action may change with the scenario. Sometimes it is better to lock down in place, and sometimes the best response is to evacuate the building.

The Township is going to host a Community ALICE Training day on July 22, noon to 4 p.m. at the Hampton Community Center. The free training is available to those who register. Chief Vulakovich said the ALICE training can be used in any public place, including office buildings and movie theaters. A means of registering for this free training will be available in the coming months.

There is also a student training component to ALICE. Dr. Cunningham said one of the things the District is looking at for this spring is to provide more extensive training for the students which is developmentally appropriate and research-based. Because the program is non-linear, everyone in the building needs to be trained, including staff and students, so they know whether the situation calls for sheltering in place, or fleeing the scene. She said the developmentally-appropriate approach for children is the difficult part of this program, especially for the youngest of students. Dr. Cunningham said the Township Police and the administration are working together to find the most appropriate way to provide these lessons. Students have already practiced emergency drills, but the last component is to bring all of the emergency preparedness together in a more cohesive plan.

Dr. Cunningham highlighted the different types of drills in the school system, including fire drills, all-weather drills, transportation and bus safety drills, lockdowns, and evacuations. She indicated that last January the first responders (including Fire, Police, and EMS) conducted a walkthrough with the building administration and District personnel at the High School and at the Middle School. We learned valuable information in those walkthroughs which have helped shape plans going forward. Additional walkthroughs with the first responders are planned for March 26 and March 27 in each of the three elementary schools. Dr. Cunningham also noted that all of our schools have interdisciplinary building-based crisis teams which meet during the school year to address safety and security issues in the building.

Dr. Cunningham continued the presentation by indicating that while the team would be sharing many things tonight, there are some components the District is unable to make public in order to ensure the safety of the students and staff. She started by explaining that the District casts a wide net when they think about different types of plans for safety and security; such planning includes fire, hazardous materials, earthquakes, missing persons, flooding, transportation incident, or different types of chemical, biological, or radiological incidents. She relayed that these plans are shared with faculty and administration as well as the Police Department, Fire Department, and the Shaler-Hampton EMS.

Dr. Cunningham also outlined proactive approaches with communication such as classroom telephones, cell phones, a walkie-talkie system, and bull horns in order to help facilitate communications. The District has also, over the years, installed a security camera system which includes 218 cameras around the schools. Classroom teachers, principals, and secretaries have “go-bags” in the event that they need to evacuate the building, and the nurses are receiving updated and expanded mobile carts to store first aid and medications for the students. Dr.

Cunningham further elaborated on the AEDs which are in all the buildings, and highlighted both the UPMC “Stop the Bleed” training at the high school last year as well as Dr. Brophy’s work on the science of addition with our students. She referenced and encouraged the audience to attend the next Community Opioid Summit on April 12 at 7:00 pm at the Hampton Community Center.

Mental wellness is a vital component in the equation of school security and safety. Dr. Cunningham discussed the various resources which the District has in place, including Dr. Jay Thornton (School District Psychologist); the school counselors at all building levels; the Student Assistance Team (SAP) which provides an extra layer of support for students who are having difficulty with attendance, grades, or at-risk behaviors; and the Maximizing Adolescent Potential (MAPs) University of Pittsburgh representatives who are our SAP liaisons this year. Dr. Cunningham relayed that the buildings have Child Study Teams which provide an extra layer of support for struggling students, and how the buildings have partnered with the Highmark Caring Place for students who are grieving. Emily Born is our school-based liaison from the Allegheny County Department of Human Services, Office of Behavioral Health, and can be a great resource for parents who are working through complicated issues at home or with their child. The District and parents also have the ability to use CACTIS and re:solve for mobile crisis situations both at school and at home, and they can both access Children, Youth, and Families (CYF) as well as Childline for more serious issues. Last year, our middle school and high school teachers all received mandated teacher training on suicide awareness and prevention in order to help them recognize signs and symptoms of suicide. Finally, Dr. Cunningham noted that the District also has Lytle EAP which is a employee assistance program for any faculty and staff who may need these additional services.

During the next part of the presentation Dr. Cunningham highlighted the High School’s School Counseling website which has resources for such issues as drug and alcohol, addiction, suicide prevention, and mental health. The website also has a bullying form which can be downloaded and completed, faxed, scanned, or emailed to a building principal, guidance counselor, or trusted adult in the schools. Additional forms are also available in the School Counseling Office and the Main Office.

From a facilities standpoint, Dr. Cunningham described the captured vestibules and the visitor procedures for all buildings. SchoolGate Guardian is now being used in the Middle and High schools, and will be on-line at the elementary schools in April. It is used to screen and check in visitors to the buildings and requires visitors to present a valid photo ID to be scanned prior to admittance to any District building.

Dr. Cunningham also explained the District’s stance on determining whether something is a valid threat. She said every threat is taken seriously unless and until it has been ruled a non-threat. The first step in the process is to ensure the accuracy of information and details. District personnel and law enforcement work together to evaluate the situation and fully investigate the facts. Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the safety of students, including searches and lockdowns, which are conducted by school staff. Parents will be notified if and as appropriate. Dr. Cunningham said student safety will always come first, so parents may not be notified immediately of a situation until students are secured. She also said that information that is provided to the parents may be limited due to the fact that open cases are protected under the criminal code, so some information cannot be disclosed or it will jeopardize the investigation and possibly infringe on a student’s legal rights.

If there ever is a situation where buildings need to be evacuated and reunification is necessary, that information will be shared with parents as soon as plans are in place. Dr. Cunningham said oftentimes the safest thing for students is for them to be transported by their school buses to their home. In the event of an emergency, the campus may be locked down and additional cars would not be permitted to arrive on campus so that we would have space for emergency vehicles, police, fire trucks, etc. to arrive and get to their destinations. In those types of situations,

the students would be secured, the District would call transportation, and the District would relay plans of reunification to the parents.

As far as future actions, Dr. Cunningham said that there is a continual review and updating of plans and communication protocols based on best practices and real-time information. First responder walkthroughs are planned on March 26 and March 27 for our elementary buildings, and we are anticipating that we will receive additional information from those events which will help shape procedures. Additionally, we are looking at the evaluation and implementation of research-based, developmentally appropriate K-12 student training with respect to ALICE and will be looking at resources which enable that training to be done in a manner consistent with student needs. The northern area superintendents will continue to plan and coordinate best practices in school safety and security. Additionally, the Hampton Police Department is planning an active scenario for their department in summer 2018. Dr. Cunningham also encouraged all parents to register for and attend the community ALICE training on July 22, 2018 at the Hampton Community Center in order to develop skills to keep themselves safe whether they are in schools, the mall, the grocery store, the movie theater, or the post office. She encouraged parents to communicate with their children, report any unusual activities to the police or administration, to be vigilant, and to be proactive, especially with mental wellness.

In closing, Dr. Cunningham thanked the Township and the Hampton Police Department for all of their hard work and on-going collaboration and noted how vital these relationships are.

Following the presentation, several questions were posed by the audience and answered by Chief Vulakovich, Officer Zola, Dr. Cunningham, and Dr. Loughead.

A complete copy of the PowerPoint Presentation from this evening is available [here](#). This presentation will be repeated at the Township Building on Wednesday, March 14 at 7:30 pm.

*The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 p.m. The next regularly-scheduled meeting will be at 7 p.m. on Monday, April 2, 2018 in the Dr. Harold Sarver Memorial Library, HMS.*







