

The Board Report

June 1, 2020



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.*

The Hampton Township Board of School Directors

Bryant Wesley II, Esq.
Mrs. Jill Hamlin
Ms. Denise Balason
Mr. Matt Jarrell
Mrs. Joy Midgley
Mr. Robert Shages
Mr. Larry Vasko
Mr. Greg Stein
Mrs. Trisha Webb

Board President
Board Vice President
Board Secretary/Facilities Chair
Transportation Chair
Personnel Chair
Board Treasurer/Policy & Legislative Affairs Chair
Finance Chair
Technology Chair
Student Affairs Chair

This Hampton Township Board of School Directors meeting was held by video conference, a step taken to maintain the social distancing required due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members of Administration in Attendance

Dr. Michael Loughead
Dr. Rebecca Cunningham
Mr. Jeff Kline
Dr. Jacquelyn Removcik
Dr. Ed McKaveney

Superintendent of Schools
Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Director of Administrative Services
Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction
Director of Technology

Student Affairs Agenda

Student Representatives Comments

Mrs. Webb introduced student representatives Lindsey Fortes, Emily Berkebile, Rosy Oh, and Juliana Oliveira.

Miss Oliveira said she was happy to hear about the updated graduation plans in which graduates will be divided into three groups. Miss Oh concurred, saying while it is not the same as a typical graduation, it is closer to it.

Dr. Loughead was pleased that the students liked the changes, which could be made because Allegheny County has moved into the Green Phase of COVID-19 recovery.

Miss Oliveira asked if there was any chance that the movement to the Green Phase would enable Prom to take place. Dr. Loughead said the large group gatherings allowed in the Green Phase must take place outdoors, so the originally slated Westin William Penn venue would not work. He said that with every update from the state and Department of Education, new things are possible, so the District will continue to monitor the situation, not only for Prom, but also in case a traditional graduation could yet be held. Students would be happy to have a different type of Prom, Miss Oliveira said. Ms. Hamlin said everyone would like to offer students some type of Prom, even if just for the seniors, provided it could be done safely.

Miss Berkebile thanked the Board and administration for everything they have done for the senior class, particularly in such difficult times. The other student representatives affirmed their appreciation.

Approval of 2020-2021 Student Handbooks

Mrs. Webb introduced the discussion of amendments to the Hampton High School and Hampton Middle School Student Handbooks and Codes of Conduct.

Dr. Cunningham said proposed changes from last year include the following:

- Updated job titles as well as the District's non-discrimination and Title IX statement.
- Revised language on students' freedom of expression, following Board Policy #220.
- The inclusion of the Student Device User Agreement in the handbooks so that the sign-off process is more streamlined for families.

Mr. Stein and Ms. Balason suggested several grammatical and other minor edits.

Ms. Hamlin noted that considering the COVID-19 virus, families will need special guidance regarding when students should stay home from school, how many days can be missed, and how students can continue to complete assignments from home if they cannot come to school. She asked if this information should be included in the handbooks, or perhaps in a supplemental document. Such guidance is necessary, she said, so that students stay home when they are ill.

Dr. Cunningham agreed that such guidance is necessary, and understands that these questions are on the minds of all students and parents. The administration has begun working on clear guidelines and procedures, she said. The information will likely be contained in a separate document.

Educational Programs Agenda

Ms. Hamlin introduced two action items for approval at the June 8 Voting Meeting.

Approval of Part 2 of the Comprehensive Plan

- Dr. Removcik presented Part 2 of the Comprehensive Plan. The first phase of the Comprehensive Plan was introduced to the Board in November. After that time, the Pennsylvania Department of Education switched requirements and planning tools. This second phase is designed under the new tools.
- With Part 2, data analysis and goals must be aligned to the Future Ready Index and Future Ready 2030 targets. The reports must include information on sub-groups of students, which in Hampton include English language learners, economically disadvantaged students, and students who have Individualized Education Plans.
- The District's Comprehensive Plan must be approved by the Board and submitted to the State Department of Education by June 30, 2020.
- The Planning Process:
 - In January 2020, a committee of administrators, teachers, school board members, parents and community members convened to analyze the Future Ready data for District-based strengths and challenges, and to identify priorities. The team proposed the following goals:

Goal #1 - College & Career Benchmarks



Each student in grades 9-11 will complete a five hour job shadowing requirement during their HS experience.

- Revised HS graduation requirements in Program of Studies and Board Policy
- Developing specific job shadowing procedures
- Communicating of job shadowing criteria to students and parents
- Developing job shadowing artifacts

Goal #2 – State Assessment Measures



Increase the percentage of students with disabilities scoring proficient on the mathematics state assessments by enhancing instructional strategies through targeted professional development

- Use assessment data to determine professional development priorities for teachers
- Provide multiple sessions of professional development on strategies to increase proficiency when solving word problems
- Provide multiple sessions of professional development on strategies to increase evidence-based practices that will enhance students' algebraic reasoning

Next Steps



- Board approval of plan and PDE submission
- Duration of plan is 3 years
- Plan can continue to be revised and changed
- Continue working toward these goals



Comprehensive Plan Discussion

- Mr. Stein asked that the District look for ways to encourage career shadowing beyond the minimum requirement of five hours. Dr. Removcik said that encouragement is present, and in fact, students are already permitted to miss up to ten hours of school for such activities.
- Mr. Shages asked if current juniors and seniors have participated in career shadowing opportunities. Dr. Removcik said some students have had internships and externships, but this experience has occurred on a much smaller scale than what is proposed. Mr. Stein pointed out that the Beattie Career Center offers career shadowing now.
- Board members and Dr. Loughead thanked Dr. Removcik and others who worked on the plan for their hard work, especially considering the dual challenges of changing state requirements midstream and the school closure.

Textbooks for 2020-2021

Dr. Removcik highlighted that the textbooks up for approval are the same texts which were described at the April Board Meeting.

The proposed books, which were posted online for a 30-day virtual public review, are for Elementary Music, Elementary Science in Grade 1 and Grade 2, Reading in Grades 6 and 7, Honors Geography, AP Statistics, and AP U.S. History. All texts have a strong online component.

Considering school finances due to COVID-19 and based on a Board request, Dr. Removcik and Mr. Kline contacted the publisher and reworked the contract to finance a seven-year subscription for the Reading courses over three years.

Additional Curriculum Discussion

Mr. Vasko asked that the District consider making the Personal Finance course a graduation requirement, based in part on the feedback he received from scholarship candidates he and Dr. Cunningham interviewed recently. Dr. Removcik said students and parents both deem personal finance to be a worthy topic, and indicated that the District's economics curriculum also includes some personal finance topics now, although not to the extent as the separate course.

Mr. Vasko asked that the District consider offering American Sign Language as one of its World Languages. Dr. Removcik said his request was a timely one, since she is now meeting with the language department to discuss changes.

Facilities Agenda

High School Renovation Project

Ms. Cassandra Renninger of VEBH Architects gave an update to the Board:

- Members of her firm have met with the District Administration and Board Facilities committee. They will be meeting with teachers next.
- Some steps that had been stalled due to COVID-19 have moved forward. For example, the land survey has been completed, which will help VEBH complete the design.
- The Township is requiring an inspection of underground stormwater storage tanks at the high school. Quotes for the work have been forwarded to the District.
- Additional asbestos testing of the current high school roof materials shows that no special removal or disposal techniques will be required. Interior testing was expected to start June 2 and take two days to complete.
- The Board will soon receive a recommendation to hire a contractor to video-scope the underslab sanitary lines and roof drains.

Potential Air Quality Improvements to Help Combat COVID-19

- Based on discussions with the committee, the scheduled replacement of two air handlers at the middle school was paused to consider switching to air handlers that use bipolar ionization. Ms. Renninger said her firm would have the revised drawings by the end of the week so that the revised project could go out to bid next week, if the Board wishes.
- Mr. Jarrell asked if there was research behind using bipolar ionization to clean the air of the virus. Ms. Renninger said that the technology which cleans the air of viruses and mold is not new. Her firm's engineers had done the research, and concluded that the ionization would work better in a school than another common approach – UV light – because the air passing through the UV light air handlers would not be exposed to light long enough to be effective.
- Mr. Stein said if the Board is going to provide this air quality improvement at one school, it needs to do so at all of them. Ms. Renninger said her company's initial recommendation was to add this air purification system whenever air handlers are replaced, or when a building is renovated. In response to a question from Dr. Loughead, she said existing air handlers can be retrofitted, generally speaking, but individual air handlers might involve different solutions, due to extenuating circumstances such as available power supply.
- Mr. Kline interjected that he had just received word that the state will fund resources for COVID-19 purposes, and a project to add air purification throughout District buildings could fall into the funding categories.
- The Board asked that Ms. Renninger gather information about the number of air handlers and the approximate cost to retrofit those that would not be replaced. Mr. Kline suggested the Board could vote on a project with a not-to-exceed price at an upcoming meeting. With fall less than three months away, a significant lead time may be needed to manufacture some components, and with the understanding that many school districts will be seeking the same solutions, the Board and administrators agreed time was of the essence.

Other Steps to Protect from COVID-19 are Under Review

Dr. Loughead said the Administration is also looking at individual schools' specific needs for COVID-19 safety. For example, at Poff Elementary, the school administrative assistant can currently speak to visitors only after entering the office, so a protective enclosure that facilitates safe communication is needed.

Review of Timeline for Summer Capital Projects

Mr. Kline said the District had been scheduled to put several projects out to bid in April, but because of social distancing, contractors could not come on site to investigate and bid. Now that Allegheny County is in the Green Phase, those bids can once again move forward. Because bids must be advertised for three consecutive weeks, bids which would be advertised next Monday could be opened in late June and awarded in early July.

Finance Agenda

The Board reviewed and discussed the following items, and is expected to vote on approval in June:

2020-21 Allegheny Intermediate Unit Service Agreement

This annual agreement outlines the list of services provided to the District by the Allegheny Intermediate Unit.

2020-21 Workers' Compensation Insurance

This agreement secures workers' compensation insurance coverage with UPMC through Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, Inc. at an estimated cost of \$110,354.

2020-21 District Insurance Coverage

This agreement secures District insurance coverage through Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services for the following:

- Package (includes Auto & Boiler), \$111,928
- Educators (Legal Liability), \$32,953
- Umbrella, \$6,723
- Cyber, \$8,974
- Environmental Liability, \$11,915

The Board asked Mr. Kline to investigate removing the business income coverage component for the Environmental Liability insurance, which would save \$703.

2020-21 Student Accident Insurance

This agreement secures student accident coverage with Bollinger Specialty Group through Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services Inc. at a cost of \$13,845.

Non-Resident Tuition Rates

Non-resident student attendees, generally students whose families are building a home in the District that is not yet completed, would pay the following rates:

	2020-2021 Yearly	2020-2021 Quarterly	2019-2020 Yearly (information only)
Kindergarten	\$6,546	\$1,636.50	\$6,161
Elementary (Gr 1-6)	\$13,091	\$3,272.75	\$12,321
Secondary (Gr 7-12)	\$13,633	\$3,408.25	\$12,953

Payment of June and July 2020 Invoices

Since there is no July Board meeting, both sets of payments will be ratified at the August 10 Voting Meeting.

2020-21 Substitute Services Agreement with North Allegheny School District

Under this proposal, the District would pay North Allegheny School District \$16,625.53 to manage a list of substitute teachers and handle intake, recruiting, clearances, and other issues relating to substitutes. Mr. Kline explained this new arrangement would replace the previous consortium through A.W. Beattie. Most of the districts that were in that consortium have switched to using a temporary staffing agency for substitutes, he said, but North Allegheny and Hampton have decided to form this new partnership.

Updated General Fund Committed Fund Balance, or Stabilization Fund

This fund was previously known as the PSERS Stabilization Fund. The updated appropriations and draw schedule are as follows:

YEAR	Current	Updated
2020-2021	505,000	625,000
2021-2022	430,000	575,000
2022-2023	352,000	525,000
2023-2024	265,000	400,000
2024-2025	172,000	300,000
2025-2026	172,000	200,000
2026-2027	70,000	94,000
Total	1,794,000	2,719,000

A total of \$925,000 would be added, including \$425,000 in savings from the school closure and approximately half of the existing Debt Stabilization Fund, \$500,000.

2020-2021 Homestead/Farmstead Resolution for the distribution of state gaming funds

Mr. Kline and Mr. Vasko shared that the State will fully fund the Homestead/Farmstead Tax Exemptions. In response to feedback from across the state, Pennsylvania will use \$300 million of federal CARES money to make up the shortfall in casino revenues that are used to fund this property relief. In Hampton, a total of 5,503 approved homesteads and farmsteads will each receive a \$156.10 reduction in property tax.

Adjusted 2020-21 Real Estate Tax Collection Due Dates

Because many households have experienced financial distress due to COVID-19, the District proposes adjusting tax deadlines by 30 days, as follows:

- The 2% discount payment deadline moves from August 31 to September 30.
- The 10% penalty start date moves from November 1 to January 1
- The Installment Payment Plan would move from three equal installments due on August 31, October 31, and December 31 to four equal installments due on August 31, October 31, December 31, and February 28.

Local Tax Revenues

Mr. Kline reported that receipts are still as planned, but are expected to decline later in the calendar year due to impacts of the COVID-19 economic slowdown.

- Nearly all of the real estate taxes were collected by last October, prior to COVID-19.
- There has not yet been a significant impact in earned-income tax receipts, but one is expected to occur when the next payments are due in late July. He is projecting a 6% decrease, but is being conservative and hopes the decrease will be smaller.

Mr. Stein asked Mr. Kline if his thinking was in part because Hampton workers tend to be salaried rather than hourly. Mr. Kline said he does believe this is the case, but cautioned that a significant portion of earned income from some salaried workers, such as attorneys and accountants, comes in the form of year-end bonuses, and those bonuses could be significantly smaller this year, which would push later-year earned-income receipts downward.

Estimated Fund Balance and Closure Savings

Mr. Kline offered more details about the \$425,000 in savings stemming from the school closure. Most savings were the result of not having to transport students to school or athletics or activities this spring. Other savings stemmed from overtime that did not have to be paid.

The Board will not use all of the savings in the 2020-21 budget because revenues are expected to be negatively impacted by COVID-19 through 2021-22 and possibly beyond.

Updated Medical, Dental, and Vision Rates for 2020-21

The District was anticipating an increase of 3.5%, but in light of the economic downturn that all Allegheny County school districts are experiencing, ASIC re-certified its rates and dropped the increase to 2.5%, yielding roughly \$30,000 in savings.

2020-21 District Budget

The Board discussed the following motion in anticipation of a June 8 vote:

It is recommended and I move that the Board approves the 2020-2021 Final Budget, with revenues of \$53,756,443, expenditures of \$54,881,443 and the utilization of \$625,000 from the Stabilization Fund and \$500,000 from the unassigned fund balance. The real estate tax rate will increase from 19.38 mills to 19.74 mills, which represents an increase of 0.36 mills or 1.86%.

Mr. Kline gave a review of the Final Budget and the changes made between May's Proposed Final Budget and the current document. The Board must pass the budget by the end of June, and Mr. Kline will draw up a new document that includes revenue and expenditure adjustments for the previously mentioned school safety and security grant funds.

- Between the May 4 Proposed Final Budget and the current Proposed Budget, the Administration and department heads examined the budget and identified \$325,756 spending reductions and deferrals, while following the Board directive to protect educational programs.
- Significant reductions include the following:
 - \$141,000 in deferred purchases and projects from facilities, buildings, and grounds.
 - A reduction in technology purchases, not including the new devices for fourth grade.
 - Deferring the cost of the middle school curriculum resources via a three-year payment plan.
 - Reducing athletics spending by \$54,550, primarily by deferring uniform replacement and using supplies from spring sports that were not used this year.
 - Identifying \$39,000 in savings from school building spending budgets, largely possible because paper purchased for the end of the recent school year was not used.
 - The medical insurance savings detailed earlier in the meeting.
 - A non-targeted reduction of \$34,000 in special education spending on private schools because two students are no longer attending those schools.
 - \$30,000 for plexiglass and cleaning supplies that will now be covered by a state grant.

More About the School Safety & Security Grant

Mr. Kline said Hampton will receive about \$308,000 in state grant funds to help defray the cost of mitigating the spread of COVID-19 so that schools can educate students in the fall.

He and Dr. Loughead said they are comfortable using \$40,000 of that money to fund COVID-19 related items that the District had already placed in its budget, but the District cannot rely on using the grant for anything else already included in the budget. The anticipation is that the state will soon release a list of reopening guidelines that will require a portion of the \$308,000 grant, and the air purification systems the District is now considering would amount to a significant portion of the grant. Mr. Kline stated that he will adjust the budget for the June 8th voting meeting to include the grant funds and he expects that it will change the millage rate from 19.74 to 19.71.

The District will also be considering the state’s guidelines, which may necessitate the purchase of thermometers and additional staffing.

Ms. Balason asked if parent volunteers could take temperatures, if needed. Dr. Loughead said he expects the state will require the temperatures to be taken by District employees.

Mr. Vasko wondered if temperatures should be taken before students get on the bus, so that any student who has a fever does not enter the building.

Mr. Kline said he expects the state will release some guidelines related to transportation soon.

Mr. Wesley thanked Dr. Loughead, Mr. Kline, Mr. Vasko, and other staff and building leadership for the careful adjustments made to the budget while continuing to protect academics.

Personnel Agenda

Mrs. Midgley introduced the following proposed action items, which are expected to be voted on at the June 8 meeting:

RESIGNATIONS:

- 1. Accept the resignation of Mrs. Jansen Jamison, who is resigning effective July 1, 2020.
(Mrs. Jamison is a Class III Paraeducator at Hampton Middle School.)

TEACHERS:

- 2. Approve the following professional employees, who have attained tenure status, effective June 8, 2020:
 - Claire Leventis, Poff Elementary Teacher
 - Sarah Rassau, High School Teacher
 - Dejana Smajic, Middle School Teacher
 - Rachel Zang, Wyland Elementary Teacher

Ms. Hamlin asked if there could be a year-end ceremony for retiring teachers. Dr. Loughead said the buildings have been celebrating individual retirements. The District could not collectively celebrate this year due to COVID-19 restrictions, but will next year.

Transportation Agenda

There were no action items this evening.

Technology Agenda

There were no action items this evening.

A.W. Beattie Budget

Mr. Vasko reported that the A.W. Beattie Career Center Budget was approved.

Public Comment

Mr. Farabaugh asked when the approved minutes of the April Board Meeting would be posted. Dr. Loughead assured him they would be posted soon, and asked for his patience during this exceptional time.

Adjournment and Executive Session

Mr. Wesley adjourned the meeting and announced the Board would hold a brief executive session to discuss legal and personnel matters.