

The Board Report

Monday April 12, 2021



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

** absent*

This Hampton Township Board Meeting was held in the Hampton Middle School Auditorium. The meeting was audio/video simulcast so that community members could watch remotely, and was also audio/video recorded.

Members of Administration in Attendance

Dr. Michael Loughead	Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Rebecca Cunningham	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Jeff Kline	Director of Administrative Services
Dr. Ed McKaveney	Director of Technology
Mr. Rick Farino	Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds
Mr. Josh Kellogg	Technology Services Network Administrator

Student Representatives

Matt Huskey	Student Council President
Greg Scolieri	Student Council Treasurer
Alex Broderick	Junior Class Secretary
Paul Oliveira	Sophomore Class Secretary

April 12, 2021

Work Session

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

Opening

00:04

Mr. Wesley announced that the Board meeting had been moved to an earlier time tonight because there was an important Township meeting that Dr. Loughead and several Board Members also needed to attend later that evening. He then asked for Mrs. Webb to present the student award winners.

Student Awards

00:25

Mrs. Webb introduced students who received recognition:

- Mia V., for a winning submission to a design contest sponsored by the nonprofit Venture Outdoors.
- Brennan F., Paul O., and Megan K. for participation in the Pennsylvania High School Speech League State Tournament
- Sarah L. and Rin S. for competing in the Pittsburgh Regional Science and Engineering Fair through the Carnegie Science Center

Student Affairs

5:03

Mrs. Webb introduced Alex Broderick from Student Council.

Mr. Broderick and several other Student Council members including Matt Huskey, Greg Scolieri, and Paul Oliveira spoke to the Board about the use of the desk shields at the high school. All requested that the students be allowed to stop using the shields as they can get damaged and impede the students' view of the board from the back of the classroom. The students also asked for clarification regarding quarantine rules following vaccination.

Dr. Loughead told the students that he appreciated their comments and that he knew there were some challenges with shields. The District is replacing damaged shields, he said, but the District will continue to use them, especially as it considers returning secondary students to full-time, in-person instruction, as the shields are a valuable safety measure. He reminded the students that high school

students may opt to wear both a face mask and a face shield instead of using a desk shield, an alternative arrangement has been in place for several weeks.

Board Members asked if students have to pay to replace shields if they become damaged or go from transparent to translucent, and what the Allegheny County Health Department thinks about the use of shields especially in regard to the need to quarantine students.

Dr. Loughead said that students do not necessarily have to pay to replace shields but may be asked to contribute if they have lost, damaged or defaced the shield. He added that the Health Department considers the shields to be a valuable and positive mitigation measure to have in place if there is an outbreak, and the District considers them to be worth using.

Dr. Loughead said that students who are completely vaccinated would not have to quarantine if they were exposed to COVID. He said the District has considered several angles regarding the reopening issue and the schools are proving themselves to be safe places for students. The classrooms have also been rearranged and some classes have been moved to new spaces to enable more social distancing with the potential for additional students in the building. However, with the understanding that the risk of quarantine continues, a two-day a week and a 5-day a week return plan are being provided for high school students. He also offered to speak with the members of the Student Council and address their questions at an upcoming high school meeting.

A Board Member added that unless students take the one-shot Johnson & Johnson vaccine, the entire vaccination process likely would take about 6 weeks, which would be almost the end of the school year.

Facilities

21:53

Mr. Wesley suggested that because several Board members needed to attend a Township meeting later that evening, the update on the high school renovation project would take place now, and Mr. Farino's presentation on the Five Year Facilities Improvement Plan and Budget would be postponed until the April 19th Voting Meeting.

Ms. Balason then introduced Ms. Cassandra Renninger and Mr. Chris Brown from VEBH along with Mr. John Taormina from PJ Dick to give an update on the high school renovation project.

Ms. Renninger told the Board:

- The high school roof replacement project has been put out to bid. The entire roof is being replaced including an alternate bid coating on the newer wings. Bids are expected to be in by the end of April.
- The timing for the other elements of the first phase of the renovation project are yet to be determined, as approvals from other entities are needed before they can go forward; however, it is expected that the Township meeting later this evening would help determine the timeline for additional bids. The hope is to have the rest of the project be put out for bid in June.

Mr. Taormina updated the Board on expenses related to the project, including the following:

- Prices for the Phase 1 projects included in the renovation process have increased from initial estimates, which were made using the best information on hand at the time. He stated that it can be challenging to make initial price predictions as necessary information was not yet available. However, some situations have changed as more information has been gathered.
- The total price is now estimated to be about \$19 million, while the limited version of the project is about \$17.5 million.
- This amount includes about \$5 million for the full roof replacement.
- Some pieces from the second phase of the project also have been moved to the first phase, based on when it made more sense to address these items. These pieces include work on lighting and utilities.
- Additional emergency generator needs have increased the price by about \$90,000.
- New information regarding storm water management needs have raised the price by about \$700,000 from previous estimates.
- It is a good time to have projects out to bid as contracting firms are anxious for new projects.

In response to questions from the Board, Ms. Renninger added the following information:

- The emergency generator is intended to run for as long as it is needed. However, it will not power the entire school. Instead, it is intended to power specific areas and equipment such as freezers. The price increase is because the generator needs to be larger than initially thought.
- The change in price for the storm water management system was informed by a series of tests done earlier in the academic year. This process determined that rainwater drains far more slowly than anticipated, which means larger underground storage containers are needed.
- Conversations with the District regarding underground or above-ground water retention and green space informed the decision to use an underground retention system.
- There will be more information later this week regarding how many firms have expressed an interest in the roof replacement project.

Ms. Balason said that in the interest of time, discussion of other facility projects would be postponed so the Board could discuss the new reopening plan.

Convening a Voting Meeting

37:02

Mr. Wesley said the Board was opening a Voting Meeting to vote on the reopening plan, and that there would be time for public comment following the presentation.

Educational Programs

37:53

Mrs. Hamlin asked Dr. Loughead to give an update on current plans to return secondary school students for full-time, in-person instruction, as previously established conditions for the reopening have not been met.

Dr. Loughead said that the increasing amount of disease spread in the community is a concerning trend. There has been an increasing number of cases and the county has returned to having “substantial” spread based on the Pennsylvania Department of Education labels. However, based on the lack of cases at the secondary level, the District is interested in moving forward with a plan to return all secondary students to full-time, in-person instruction.

Elements and considerations of the reopening plan for secondary schools include the following:

- Having more students in the buildings at the same time raises concerns regarding the need to quarantine larger numbers of students based on the 6-feet of social distancing rule from the Allegheny County Health Department. Students within 6 feet of a COVID-positive student for more than 15 minutes would have to quarantine.
- Additionally, there was a need to have at least 6-feet of social distance when students remove face masks during lunch, which was previously impossible when the entire student body was present for students in middle and high school.
- However, the CDC recently said that 3 feet of distance could be safe when other precautions are taken. This reduction has allowed for new arrangements of desks and classrooms to maintain more space between students.
- *Nicer weather has allowed physical education classes to go outside or to other spaces, allowing for gyms and outdoor spaces to be used as lunchrooms, providing additional areas for social distancing during meals.
- Reorganization of the classrooms means that even with all secondary students present, fewer students would need to be quarantined should a positive case occur, limiting the risk of large-scale quarantines.

Student Options:

- Middle school students are proposed to return to school Wednesday, April 14. There are two options for middle school students:
 - Full-time, in-person instruction.
 - Enrolling in the Hampton Online Academy for the rest of the year.

April 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
					Remote Learning (Asynchronous) Day for MS & HS	
4	5	B 6	A 7	A 8	9	10
			All students return and 5-Day In-Person Model begins			
11	A 12	B 13	14	15	16	17

- High school students have three options:
 - Enrolling in the Hampton Online Academy for the rest of the year.
 - Returning to full-time, in-person instruction starting April 21
 - Remaining in a two-day in-person, three-day online schedule through the end of the year. The two in-person days would be Tuesday and Thursday.
- High school students have until April 19 to decide on an option, and the selected option will be in place through the end of the school year.

In response to questions from Board Members, Dr. Loughead responded:

- IEP exemptions will continue for qualifying students.
- Middle school students are not being provided the two-day in-person option because teachers feel the students need additional support. Students have been struggling with the hybrid system. It is not encouraged for high school students to take the two-day option either, especially if they have been struggling with online learning.
- Students taking AP classes can switch to taking AP courses through the Hampton Online Academy. However, there are some AP courses offered by Hampton that are not available through the HOA. Students in those courses not wishing to return to full-time, in-person classes can either take the two-day option or transfer to the HOA and just take the exam as they do not have to be in the class to take the test. Tests are given in early May.
- Middle school students opting to move to the HOA will still have support from the Hampton teacher hired to provide that interaction.
- The newly arranged classrooms have prioritized keeping the 6 feet of separation when possible. However, 3 feet is used between rows so students may be 6 feet from another student to the right or left, but 3 feet behind another student or row of students depending on space. Some classes also have been moved to larger spaces such as the library or auxiliary gym. Should a positive COVID-19 case occur, there would still be more quarantining than what has happened previously, but not as much as was initially thought.
- So far, the Allegheny County Health Department has been supportive of the work Hampton is doing to reopen.
- Students at the middle school are not in traditional cohorts, but they do spend more time throughout the day with the same group of students than high school students may experience. However, there is also some mixing of those middle school groups.

Public Comment

1:10:04

Mr. Wesley opened the floor for public comment.

A community member asked what it meant for high school students opting for the two-day in-person schedule to have a “birds-eye view” of zoom classes when on remote days. She inquired as to the

process for labs or hands-on activities. She also asked if it was worth it to change the system so close to the end of the year and thanked the Board for its time.

Dr. Loughead responded that currently, students at home during a hybrid class have online classes that have been designed for interaction. Going forward, for the two-day option, students would still be able to interact with teachers and get support, but on a limited basis. Classes would not be designed for the regular interaction that was available in the Enhanced Hybrid Model. The 2-day option is primarily observational. Adjustments are still being made to address the hands-on element in some classes.

A Board Member said that there have been many facets to consider during the discussions of returning the secondary schools to full-time, in-person instruction. However, some of the changes made are positive safety steps. He thanked the administration and teachers who have been passionate in the work they do and for everything they do. Board Members also reminded community members to remain vigilant and to not relax safety practices.

The motion to adopt the reopening plan presented by Dr. Loughead passed 8-0.

Adjournment of Voting Meeting

1:20:00

The Voting Meeting was adjourned. Mr. Wesley apologized for the momentary pause with the video streaming and asked Mrs. Midgely to present the Personnel Agenda.

Personnel

(1:20:28)

Mrs. Midgely introduced the following items, which are set to be voted upon at the Board's next meeting:

RESIGNATION:

1. Accept the resignation of Ms. Jessica Githens effective April 9, 2021. (Ms. Githens was a Long-Term Health Office Nurse for the District.)

PARAPROFESSIONAL/PARAEDUCATOR/ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:

2. Approve the following Hampton Education Support Professionals job descriptions, effective April 19, 2021:

- Class I – Clerical Paraprofessional
- Class II - Clerical Paraprofessional
- Class III – Paraeducator
- Class V – Administrative Assistant to the School Counselors

- Class V – Administrative Assistant to the Middle School Assistant Principal
- Class VI – Administrative Assistant to the Middle School Principal
- Class VI – Administrative Assistant to the Elementary Principals

OTHER:

3. Approve Ms. Jessica Thompson as a part-time Long-Term Substitute Health Office Nurse for the District effective April 12, 2021 at a rate of \$21.80 per hour to support the District’s Health and Safety Reopening Plan as needed. (Ms. Thompson is replacing Ms. Jessica Githens.)

SUPPLEMENTALS:

4. The Administration recommends approval of the following conditional appointments for 2020-2021, each at a rate of \$139 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 2020-2021 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 2020-2021:

NAME	POSITION	BUILDING	POINTS RANGE	TOTAL	STIPEND
John McAwley	Assistant JV Softball Coach	HS	26	24/32	\$3,614
Jed Cordisco	Volunteer MS Boys’ Baseball Coach	MS			
Chase Takacs	Volunteer Boys’ Lacrosse Coach	HS			
Rob Voinchet	Volunteer Boys’ Lacrosse Coach	HS			
Conner Hagins	Volunteer Girls’ Lacrosse Coach	HS			

FOR BOARD DISCUSSION:

- Custodial Association Collective Bargaining Agreement

Mr. Kline said that the agreement has been discussed during the Executive Session and any additional questions should be addressed in another Executive Session before the vote next week.

Finance

1:22:50

Mr. Kline introduced the following action items:

1. Approve the Budget Transfers totaling \$4,000 for the following: Special Education General Supplies, \$4,000
2. Approve the Food Service Management contract with Metz Culinary Management for the 2021-2022 School Year.

Mr. Kline noted that the food service company contract is a renewal and that Metz Culinary has been a great partner during COVID, which has brought many challenges to both the management company and the District. He also added that there also will be no change in meal prices for the 2021-22 year.

He also shared an update on local tax revenue and responded to Board questions:

- The District continues to have solid real estate tax collection and rates have improved by 3.42% this year, which is better than anticipated. Providing a way for residents to have a four-part installment payment has worked well.
- The earned income tax collection has improved but is still down about 7% and delinquent real estate tax continues to be an area of concern.
- The District's S&P rating continues to be "AA-". The rating improved to "AA-" from "A" in 2009 and has been consistent since then.

Looking at health insurance rates, Mr. Kline reported that premiums are set to increase by 5%. The recent trend had been 2% to 3%. Mr. Kline noted that the increase will affect the District's budget.

Technology

1:28:00

There was no report this evening.

Transportation

1:28:10

There was no report this evening.

Policy and Legislative Affairs

1:28:14

Mr. Shages asked Dr. Cunningham to present the first reading of the new policies. Dr. Cunningham shared the following information:

Policy #150: Title I Comparability of Services is a new policy based on a template created by the Pennsylvania School Boards Association. The purpose of the policy is to ensure that all elementary schools in the District provide comparable curriculum materials, supplies, teachers, administrators, and staff with the goal of making sure students get a quality education regardless of whether they attend a Title 1 school or not.

Mr. Shages added that the policy is consistent with District work on equivalency among schools.

Policy 239: Foreign Exchange Students: This policy is being refreshed to include some new language regarding the admittance of foreign exchange students, deadlines, and procedures. Mr. Shages recommended some additional language to the policy regarding expected proficiency in English for written and verbal communication for all foreign exchange students.

He added that it would be great to have more exchange students.

Public Comment

1:30:40

Mr. Wesley opened the floor for Public Comment. There was no comment this evening.

Closing and Adjournment

1:32:15

Mr. Wesley closed the meeting.