

**Regular Meeting**  
**Steel Valley School District Board of Directors**  
**Steel Valley High School Library and via High School Facebook Live**  
**September 24, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Bulger, President, at 7:27 PM

Roll call as follows:

In attendance: Ms. Adams, Mr. Blick, Mr. Bulger, Mr. Colasante, Mrs. Fitzgerald, Ms. Youngblood, Mrs. Ligeros and Mrs. Yuhas (arrived at 7:37)

Video Conferencing:

Absent: Mr. Rojtas

Also attending: Mr. Wehrer, Mr. Fetzko, Mr. Colebank, Mr. Keesecker,  
Mr. McCallister, Mr. Macuga, Mr. Walsh,

**Acknowledgements**

Moment of Silence

The School Board acknowledged the passing of Sandra L. Mehalik, mother-in-law of Lori Mehalik, Park kindergarten teacher; John “Bo” Merichko, brother-in-law of Diana Merichko, high school cook, and uncle of Jennifer Perhac, middle school paraprofessional; Hazel Hunt, retired Title I math teacher, Barrett Elementary School; Natalie Wrzesinski, cousin of Lori Mehalik, Park kindergarten teacher; and Vickie Walker, niece of Diana Borges, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services.

**Mrs. Fitzgerald moved and Mrs. Ligeros seconded the motion to approve the purchase of memorial books to be placed into the District libraries in memory of the above departed.**

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively: Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Youngblood, and Bulger. Negative: None. Motion carried.

## **President's Report**

Mr. Bulger:

- Reported that Mr. McCallister, Athletic Director, high school gifted teacher, and SVEA President, is a special guest on our Zoom meeting. The Board passed a Health & Safety Plan that offered hybrid learning, remote learning or Steel Valley Cyber Academy. The hybrid model would allow one (1) student group to receive in-person learning on Monday/Tuesday and the second group would attend in-person on Thursday/Friday. Everyone would be remote on Wednesday. The teachers, administrators and School Board thought it was a good plan. However, the facilities were not ready due to items not delivered on time. The District is now using a plan for synchronous learning. Students were given new iPads, following their schedule and logging in from home. The synchronous learning has been going well. This model of synchronous learning is superior to what we were going to do. If we start on October 5 with the asynchronous model, the students would not be receiving live instruction four (4) days a week. It would be a step back. We need to be ready for the next step.
- The Board met with the teachers and administrators to see how the district could continue with synchronous learning and in-person learning. It was determined to finish the first grading period with the synchronous remote learning model. The second nine-week period would begin with a hybrid synchronous learning model. This gives the staff time to come up with the best possible plan, and it will give the District an opportunity to test the interactions between students at home and students in the classroom. We will resurvey parents about coming back into the buildings.
- Mr. Bulger reported there have been concerns about attendance at sporting events. The first week we provided two (2) parent passes for outdoor sports and no spectator passes for indoor sports. Starting today, we added four (4) family passes for outdoor sports and offered two (2) parent passes for indoor sports. We are continuing with live streaming of the games.
- Starting next month, the School Board meetings are going to return to meeting on two different nights. Since Allegheny County changed the indoor limit, we will hold the worksession and executive session on Monday, and Thursday will be the regular voting meeting. We will be streaming the meetings on YouTube live.

## **Student Representatives to the School Board Reports**

Mr. Bulger welcomed Senior Representative Ms. Kristen Craycraft and the new Junior Representative Ben Novotny back to the School Board meetings.

- Mr. Ben Novotny, Junior Representative to the School Board, reported on the elementary schools. At Barrett Elementary School, teachers are doing a great job adjusting to the instruction on Google classrooms, and the majority of the students are focused on their academics at this time. Parent training is taking place this evening from 5:30-7:30 PM to accommodate the needs and concerns related to the current use of technology.
- Lunch and dinners are being distributed daily to students, and the lunch ladies are doing a fantastic job. Families can pick up lunch between 10:30 and 12:30 on Monday through Friday, and dinner is distributed between 5:00 and 7:00 PM on Tuesday and Thursday at all three schools.
- Barrett has two student teachers for the fall session. Ms. Kady Paczkoskie is working with Sue Wilder in fourth grade, and she is from Duquesne University. Ms. Abbie Bauer is working with Alyson Fisher to be a school counselor, and she is enrolled at California University. Please check out her Bitmoji related to careers on the Barrett office Google classroom in the student career resource section.
- The school year is off to a great start at Park Elementary! Students have been working hard in their virtual classrooms, and they are learning a lot. Park staff would like to thank parents and guardians for their patience and flexibility during this difficult time. Thank you for staying positive and for working with us to get the year off to a good start! Let's continue to work together to do the best job we can for the kids.
- Ms. Kristen Craycraft, Senior Student Representative to the School Board, announced that the middle school sports season started with soccer, cross country, and volleyball. She welcomed the new staff members to the middle school: Ms. Vasy, math teacher; Ms. Lucas 5<sup>th</sup> grade social studies teacher; and Ms. Olack, substitute secretary. Dr. Johnson would like all of the students to keep up the good work during remote learning and remind all parents to sign up for their child's Sapphire account.
- In the high school, students are off to a good start with remote learning. Virtual college visits have been scheduled, and students should refer to Mr. Novak's guidance page for details. The last day for schedule changes will be Friday, September 25. Teacher office hours are from 2:10-2:50 PM daily. Evening office hours are also available, and Kristen referred students to the guidance page for dates and times as well as Zoom links. The SV Tech Support team is available to help with any technology concerns by calling 412-464-3600 ext. 1551.
- Fall athletics have begun. Thanks to all of our subscribers, all home sporting events will be broadcast on our YouTube channel.
- Student Council had a blood drive scheduled for September 21, but it had to be canceled due to COVID-19. They are hoping to hold blood drives in January and April. Hosting these blood drives not only helps save lives, it is a way for students to earn community service hours. Blood

drives also provide scholarship money that our Student Council awards to some of our seniors each year.

- Steel Valley Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) had a busy school year. Since Pennsylvania SADD had to cancel their conference this year, they have been hosting virtual sessions each week that many of our SADD members have participated. Steel Valley SADD President and PA SADD student leadership member, Sophia Thompson, co-hosted one of the sessions. SV SADD also organized a social media campaign that encouraged everyone not to drink and drive.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Wehrer:

- Announced that teachers are working evening hours to support students. If students have questions, they should take advantage of those evening hours. Parents and students can find the links to Zoom meetings on Google Classroom in the School Office.
- Girls Varsity Soccer team is undefeated, and Mr. Wehrer is very proud of them. He is expecting them to have a fantastic season.
- Meal distribution is available during lunchtime Monday through Friday. All the schools are offering these meals, and we would like students to take advantage of them. We want children to have good nutrition. The District is also providing meals on Tuesday and Thursday evening from 5:00 to 7:00 PM.
- Middle School sports have started this week.

On behalf of the Wehrer family, I would like to express our thanks for the prayers and support.

### **Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services' Report**

No report.

### **Director of Academics, Information & Technology's Report**

Mr. Colebank:

- Asked parents to sign up on the Sapphire Student Management system. The District will use the information in Sapphire as communication tools via phone calls, emails and texts. Each student can have four (4) family member accounts. Parents can add phone numbers to receive a phone call, phone number for a text and an email address. He suggested parents check their child's attendance on Sapphire. If you have any questions, please utilize the [svtechsupport@steelvalleysd.org](mailto:svtechsupport@steelvalleysd.org) or phone line 412-464-3600 ext. 1551.

- Mr. Colebank discussed recommendations for iPad use. Twice per week, it is appropriate to wipe down iPads with a sanitary cloth and then wipe with a dry cloth. He noted to keep the protective case on the iPads. He advised students to shut off iPads before charging them by using the power button or “shut down” for a full charge.

### **Solicitor’s Report**

**Mr. Blick moved and Mr. Colasante seconded the motion to approve the following:**

Motion to exonerate the unpaid realty taxes on the following unseated lands owned by the Borough of West Homestead and identified as Block and Lots: 131-A-62, 131-A-64, and 131-A-67.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

Mr. Blick asked Mr. McCallister for the teacher perspective on the best learning model. Mr. McCallister stated that the teachers feel that the four (4) days of synchronous learning has been successful. We are looking for good ideas from the staff to bring to the District. There are differences between elementary and secondary students, and this needs to be considered.

### **Citizen Comments**

- Mr. McCallister appreciates the patience of the parents during the fall sporting events.
- Ms. Dreshman inquired about the list of bills and asked if the HVAC project will be completed before students come into the building. Mr. Bulger answered that the HVAC project will be completed. She asked if there is any update on the pool. Mr. Keesecker noted we are not using the pool and not losing water. Ms. Dreshman asked if there were any new guidelines for facility rentals with COVID-19. Mr. Bulger reported that the request on the agenda will be tabled. Any requests will need to live by the current guidelines. She asked how many fundraisers were listed on Item 3.1 and what are they. Mr. Bulger noted there are nine (9) fundraisers. They are MS Government selling suckers for Fast Pitch for the Cure, MS Government collecting socks for homeless shelters, Park School selling SV apparel for makerspace, Concert Choir selling red roses for choir activities, Barrett Special Events Committee selling carnations for Veterans Day, Barrett collecting donations for Black History program, Golf team holding online clothing sale to raise funds for banquet, Barrett Special Events Committee, Barrett 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade, HS Choir and Park School selling celebration grams. Ms. Dreshman asked what is being amended in Item 5.4 Health and Safety Plan. Mr. Bulger

noted that the Board is changing language to “FDA approved” hand sanitizer, and District is changing the start date to September 8 and changing the model of learning. Health and Safety Plan is a living document and will be changing. Ms. Dreshman asked if anyone on the Board or administration is related to those being hired in 7.0 Personnel. It was stated that no one is related to the new hires.

- Jim Deutsch had questions regarding the following:

5.1 - Explain this.

Mr. Bulger noted that this is a literacy program to do literacy coaching in the school.

5.2 - What is the program?

Mr. Bulger stated the MOU allows for a nutrition and education program to come into the school for us.

5.6 - Explain changes to Health and Safety Plan.

Mr. Bulger already answered that question.

7.1 - Who is being hired? Anyone on the Board related to new hires? Any friend being hired?

Mr. Bulger stated that it is not unethical to hire someone you know.

## **Board Meeting Minutes**

No report.

### **1.0 Financial Management**

**Mr. Blick moved and Mrs. Fitzgerald seconded motion to approve the following:**

- 1.1 Motion to approve the list of bills:
  - 1.1.01 General Fund invoices for September 2020 in the amount of \$521,163.45
  - 1.1.02 General Fund invoices for 2019-2020 paid in 2020-2021 in the amount of \$13,536.47
  - 1.1.03 General Fund hand checks for August 2020 in the amount of \$1,094,045.89
  - 1.1.04 General Fund hand checks for 2019-2020 paid in 2020-2021 in the amount of \$801,328.54
  - 1.1.05 General Fund Revenue Report for August 2020
  - 1.1.06 General Fund Expenditure Report for August 2020
  - 1.1.07 General Fund Balance Sheet for August 2020
  - 1.1.08 Food Service invoices in the amount of \$3,493.72
  - 1.1.09 Food Service Revenue Report for August 2020
  - 1.1.10 Food Service Expenditure Report for August 2020
  - 1.1.11 Food Service Balance Sheet for August 2020

- 1.1.12 Payroll Funding Transfers for August 2020
- 1.1.13 High School Student Activities Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for August 2020
- 1.1.14 External Groups Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for August 2020
- 1.1.15 Middle School Activities Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for August 2020
- 1.1.16 Athletics Fund Balance Sheet and Disbursement Report for August 2020

1.2 Motion to approve payments to:

A-1 Electric, Inc.	Pay Application #3	\$ 50,658.75
Canova Electric	Invoice #41430	\$ 19,240.00
Lugaila Mechanical, Inc.	Pay Application #4	\$ 564,819.88
P2 Contracting LLC	Invoice #AIA 3	\$ 114,191.26
Sunray Electric Supply Co.	Invoice 1339669-1	\$ 591.22
Sunray Electric Supply Co.	Invoice 1339979-1	\$ 406.67
Sunray Electric Supply Co.	Invoice 1339320-1	\$ 630.71
Sunray Electric Supply Co.	Invoice 1339152-1	\$ 476.87

The funds will be paid out of the 2019 Capital Project Fund

1.3 Motion to approve the P2 Contracting LLC Change Order to furnish and install 2 hr. rated access panel in music room plaster ceiling for Electrician for \$446.47.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

## **2.0 Operations**

**Ms. Youngblood moved and Mr. Blick seconded motion to approve the following:**

2.1 Motion to approve facility rentals as presented.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion tabled.

## **3.0 Co-Curricular Leadership**

**Mr. Colasante moved and Ms. Youngblood seconded motion to approve the following:**

3.1 Motion to approve fundraising requests as presented

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively to table:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

#### **4.0 Co-Curricular Leadership**

Mrs. Ligeros reported that Steel Center is using hybrid and remote learning models. Hybrid is face-to-face instruction and remote learning occurs on Wednesday via Canvas, a state approved curriculum. One (1) group of students attend in-person on Monday & Tuesday and the second group attends Thursday & Friday. Southeastern School also has students in the building and learning remotely. They have had no cases of COVID-19.

#### **5.0 Educational Leadership**

**Ms. Adams moved and Mr. Colasante seconded the motion to approve the following:**

- 5.1 Motion to approve the 3Rs School Service Agreement with the Barrett Elementary School for the 2020-2021 school year.
- 5.2 Motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Adagio Health and the District for the purpose of implementing the Power Up Eat Right Nutrition Education Program effective October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2022.
- 5.3 Motion to accept a grant of \$20,000 from the Department of Education for Dyslexia Screening and Early Literacy Intervention Pilot Program Expansion for the 2020-2021 school year.
- 5.4 Motion to approve disposal of surplus laptop equipment that is damaged or outdated from the attached list and approve the professional staff, who have requested their device that specifically stores their documents and files, to purchase at the cost of \$120.00.
- 5.5 Motion to approve the disposal of damaged and retired IT wireless equipment from the list as presented.
- 5.6 Motion to approve the amended Health and Safety Plan as presented.

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

#### **6.0 Communication & Technology**

Mrs. Fitzgerald asked if the ninth graders received their Sapphire logins. Mr. Colebank needs to check to see if they went out in a formal fashion. The last batch of Otter boxes was delivered late. The ninth



graders have been keeping their iPads until the Otter boxes came in. The old iPads will be swapped out for new iPads on the transition day.

Mrs. Fitzgerald reported that attendance is not showing up on Sapphire, and the middle school attendance is not showing up on Wednesdays. Mr. Colebank will be looking into this. Mr. Macuga will look into the email about remote Wednesdays and no attendance for Middle School. Mr. Colebank added that it is important that parents sign up for Sapphire.

## **7.0 Personnel Management**

**Mr. Blick moved and Mr. Colasante seconded the motion to approve the following:**

- 7.1 Motion to approve a Family Medical Leave of Absence not to exceed 60 days in duration for Employee No. 1272 retroactive to August 31, 2020
- 7.2 Motion to appoint Alexis Lucas to a long-term substitute teaching position with an assignment of 5th grade in the Middle School for the 2020-2021 school year at a prorated salary of \$41,687 Bachelor's 2<sup>nd</sup> year non-tenured status and according to Policy No. 328.1 plus prorated benefits as outlined in the SVEA collective bargaining agreement retroactive to September 2, 2020
- 7.3 Motion to appoint Hanna Brandebura to a long-term substitute teaching position with an assignment of History teacher in the Senior High School until the end of the approved leave of absence for Employee No. 505 or for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, whichever comes first, at a prorated salary of \$41,687 Bachelor's 2<sup>nd</sup> year non-tenured status and according to Policy No. 328.1 plus prorated benefits as outlined in the SVEA collective bargaining agreement retroactive to September 2, 2020
- 7.4 Motion to accept, with regret, the retirement of Leslie Hairston, districtwide paraprofessional, effective September 28, 2020
- 7.5 Motion to accept, with regret, the retirement of Joan Tezbir, food service worker, effective November 2, 2020
- 7.6 Motion to approve a leave without pay through the duration of illness, retroactive to June 8, 2020, as found in Article XI, Section B.1 of the Steel Valley Secretarial/Aide Education Support Professional collective bargaining agreement for Employee No. 576. Employee will be able to continue individual hospitalization once the FMLA eligibility period has expired as outlined in the collective bargaining agreement.
- 7.7 Motion to promote Traci Riley to a full-time cafeteria cook position at Park Elementary School retroactive to September 14, 2020
- 7.8 Motion to transfer Keith Caito to the position of cafeteria general worker assigned to Park

Elementary School retroactive to September 8, 2020. He will be placed at the bottom of the seniority list for the Steel Valley Support Personnel Association collective bargaining agreement.

- 7.9 Motion to hire Gregory Wimbs to the position of cafeteria monitor at Barrett Elementary School and hire Judy Van Hyning to the position of cafeteria monitor at Park Elementary School, contingent upon receipt of current clearances and passing the District's pre-employment screenings
- 7.10 Motion to approve the list of applicants as presented to the substitute call list for custodial and food service staff when needed, contingent upon receipt of current clearances and passing the District's pre-employment screenings
- 7.11 Motion to accept, with regret, the resignation of Carolyn Whewell from the supplemental position of Varsity Cheerleading Coach retroactive to September 15, 2020.
- 7.12 Motion to approve the Fall supplemental appointments as presented for the 2020-2021 school year

Upon roll call the following members voted affirmatively:

Adams, Blick, Colasante, Fitzgerald, Ligeros, Youngblood, Yuhas and Bulger.

Negative: None. Motion carried.

### **Audience Concerns**

- Mr. McCallister thanked the families and the Board.
- Jamie Blick commended the teachers and staff. Now that we have synchronous learning, we need to give out weekly and biweekly packets to complete worksheets at home. It will also give students time away from the screen. We need to maintain consistency and continue with synchronous learning. This is taking a toll on everyone. Let's be sure our staff is okay. We need to keep our kids' education at the top level.
- Laura Fonzi-Rodenthanel stated that we had a safety plan approved and then just a few days before we were to begin in-person school, a walk through of the buildings happened and determined that we are not ready. Is this correct? Mr. Bulger noted that was correct. Other comments included: Transparency and information sharing is important. Communications to the parents should have been done sooner than two days before we were to start school. This is an injustice to parents who need child care. We need to find a way to get our kids back in school five (5) days per week. Get creative, find a way and be more transparent.
- Krystal Gibbs commented on the current spectator policy. We are a family of six (6), and this policy did not take into account families who may not have child care. We should be able to wear face masks and social distance to be safe in the stands. Why can't another person use an

unused ticket/pass? I'm advocating for my children and other children and asking that you reconsider the policy.

- Kristie Ruston commented that it is time to discuss how we can loosen some of these restrictions at sporting events. Parents, grandparents, and peers need to be permitted in the stands. How can we experience powder puff, homecoming, etc. Let's think outside of the box. We are all in this together and together we can make this work.
- Cara Karstetter is thankful for the opportunity for the children to play fall sports. I feel we have followed restrictions to the utmost caution. I feel we can accommodate fans home and away. Can we allow away spectators? When can siblings and grandparents watch their student athletes?

Mr. Bulger was happy to report that the rules have been loosened for attending sporting events.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting ended at 8:53 PM

