

DOWNINGTOWN AREA BOARD OF EDUCATION
Administrative Office James E. Watson Staff Development Room
Wednesday, October 13, 2021
6:30 p.m.

BOARD MEETING NOTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

President Bertone called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. in the James E. Watson Staff Development Room.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

C. ROLL CALL

President Bertone
Director Blust
Vice President Britton
Director Ghrayeb
Director Gibson
Director Houghton
Director Kring
Dr. MacNeal
Director Wisdom

D. PUBLIC INPUT ON ACTION ITEMS – The Downingtown Board of Directors encourages public comment from its citizens. Each community member may speak for a period of no longer than 2 minutes (per BP# 903). Please understand that this is not a time for dialogue with the board; rather the board will listen to all comments and consider them in further deliberations. Our individual e-mail addresses are on the website if you'd like to contact your individual board representative. We ask that you please direct complaints of a personnel nature regarding an individual employee directly to the superintendent.

E. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. Applause!! Applause!!

- a. On October 1, 2021, Giant partnered with DASD to do the unimaginable in support of DASD Hurricane Ida victims. Working with local Giant food stores, Giant hosted a “stuff the bus” event, which resulted in an entire school-bus-full of donations for the Lord’s Pantry! Further, Giant donated \$12,500 in gift cards and an additional \$5,000 to the support school district. The gift cards will be distributed to DASD students experiencing homelessness, and the additional funds will support DASD student programs. Thank you, Giant, and thank you to our community for your incredible generosity!

We also want to thank our district and building staff for their quick response to our students and their families during the latest emergency. Whenever DASD students experience a crisis, the district has a variety of supports in place. 24/7, the crisis support team is available to gather information, identify impacted staff and students and develop a crisis

response plan. That plan includes communication, resource gathering, identification of barriers and the creation of a short and long-term plan for response. Following the crisis plan implementation, the team then evaluates each step of the response and puts steps in place for improvement in the future. While we can never tell what the future holds, know that DASD has staff in place to support our school community in the face of crisis. “We got you.”

- b. You may remember pre-pandemic, that DASD’s Blue and Gold Marching Band earned the honor to march in the 132nd Rose Parade® presented by Honda. Well, the pandemic had other plans. DASD is now proud to be scheduled to march on January 1, 2022 in the 133rd parade as one of less than 20 bands that have been selected to perform from across the globe. The parade boasts more than 1 million attendees, 38 million average viewers in the US and 15-20 million internationally. We are incredibly proud of our students and staff for earning this honor, and we can’t wait to see them marching down the streets of Pasadena!

DASD’s Blue and Gold Marching Band is made up of students from all three DASD high schools and is directed by Mr. Otto and Mr. German. In order to attend, the band requires students to participate in community service leading up to the event, and together they have performed more than 4,000 hours so far! With the help and support of the Music Parents Association, the band will continue to fundraise for their trip this winter, and more information about the trip and ways that you can help get them to Pasadena can be found at www.dasd.org/DASDGoesRose.

- c. Springton Manor has its own local champion in fourth-grader Claire Wesolowski. The nine-year-old began studying Taekwondo when she was just four years old. This August, after years of dedicated and committed practice, Claire took home the National Championship during the USA TKD Championships in San Antonio Texas! Congratulations, Claire, on this phenomenal achievement!
- d. Ajay Macherla is a rising senior at Downingtown STEM Academy who has written a self-help book on mindset and personal development called “From High Schooler to High Schooler.” It was independently self-published on July 27, 2021 and is available on international Amazon marketplaces.

Through observing his failures and successes, Ajay explains his story from an unmotivated middle schooler into a proactive and goal-oriented high schooler. His book shares a four-pillared framework for achieving high performance and is specifically tailored to high schoolers. The book covers key strategies, including having the right mindset, learning to effectively manage your time, and staying healthy. Congratulations, Ajay, on this outstanding accomplishment!

To learn more and to order the book, please visit:

https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B09B4P6L6D/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_asin_title_o00_s00?ie=UTF8&psc=1

- e. GirlPlex, a non-profit organization created by Downingtown East students Siri Dandu and Mahitha Penmetsa, teaches girls to code in an effort to encourage their pursuit of computer science in higher education.

Currently, only 20 percent of computer science professionals are women. Siri and Mahitha created this organization to help decrease the gender gap in computer science. They offer both female-only and co-ed courses for students in elementary and middle school, for free. They have taken their classes online and held a variety of camps for young learners. To date, more than 1,000 students have participated in the GirlPlex classes and camps, and the duo plans to continue their work in the future. Any donations they receive are given to local organizations, such as Cradles to Crayons. Thank you, Siri and Mahitha, for recognizing and filling a need in our community!

- 2. Superintendent Update
Dr. Lonardi provided a PowerPoint update. Items highlighted included the current Chester County Metrics and the percent of cases in the total school population.
- 3. Presentation: DCA Long Term Plan
Dr. Reed, Ms. Nesmith, and Ms. Burk presented a PowerPoint regarding the DCA program. Highlights included history, organizational structure, program structure, enrollment, staffing, courses, instructional model, and costs.

F. REPORTS

- 1. Student Representatives
Carly Etter
Jesslyn Geevarghese
Aerin Yoder
- 2. Student Life Report
Director Blust
Meeting held September 23rd. Items discussed included recent floods, response to crisis including what is a crisis, how do we respond, and communication. Home and School Visitor Dr. Nunnery was a guest speaker. Next meeting November 18, 2021.
- 3. Cultural Equity Report
Director Wisdom
Meeting held September 27th. Nine sub-committees continue their work in addition to the building equity teams. Hispanic Heritage, LGBTQ+ and Anti-bullying celebrated this month. Next meeting October 26, 2021.
- 4. DARC
No report.
Director Kring
- 5. Intermediate Unit
Director Kring

Total Cost: NTE \$13,624
Funding Source: Curriculum Capital
Budget Year: 2021 – 2022

- b. Approval of a renewal agreement with the CCIU for MA Billing Services
Total Cost: \$1.91 per MA Billing transaction, \$31.56 per MA medical authorization
Contract Dates/Length: 10/14/21 – 6/30/22
Funding Source: Special Education
Budget Year: 2021 – 2022
- c. Approval of a settlement agreement with the parents of a DASD student (#6723371852)
Total Cost: \$4,500
Contract Dates/Length: 10/14/21 – 6/30/22
Funding Source: Special Education
Budget Year: 2021 – 2022
- d. Approval of a waiver agreement with the parents of a DASD student (PA ID #6394797855)
Total Cost: \$12,000
Contract Dates/Length: 10/14/21 – 6/30/22
Funding Source: Special Education
Budget Year: 2021 – 2022
- e. Approval of the following one-time field trips
 1. STEM, (DHSE, DHSW) – Grades 9-12, Model UN – ILMUNC (Ivy League Model UN Conference), Philadelphia, PA – Jan. 27 to Jan. 30, 2022 - 1 day missed
 2. LMS, (DMS) – Grade 7, History – National Constitution Center and Historic Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA – Nov. 12, 2021 – 1 day missed
 3. STEM, (DHSE, DHSW) – Grades 11-12 – Tour of Paris, The Riviera, and Rome, France and Italy – June or July 2022 – No days missed

6. Policy

- a. Approval of the following policies:
 1. 218.1 Weapons
 2. 218.2 Terroristic Threats
 3. 247 Hazing
 4. 249 Bullying/Cyberbullying

7. Finance

- a. Approval for the disposal, sale or donation of items on the attached list
- b. Approval for exoneration of the 2021/2022 school taxes for parcels 30-03-0222.0000, 30-03-0306.0000 and 30-03-0305.0000 in the amount of

\$9,822.77. The East Brandywine Township Municipal Authority acquired the three parcels as part of the sewer facilities serving The Estates at Dowlin Forge Station. The Chester County Assessment Office has granted exemption on these parcels effective the 2022 tax year

8. Facilities

- a. Approval of an Eagle Scout project to create an outdoor learning space at Bradford Heights Elementary School - no cost to DASD

I. ACTION AGENDA

Personnel Report – Director Ghrayeb

1. On a motion by Director Ghrayeb, seconded by Vice President Britton, the Board, on a roll call vote, approved the salary increase to \$130,000 for Jennifer Shealy, Director of Communications, to be effective October 14, 2021, prorated based on the number of days remaining in the 2021-2022 fiscal year by a vote of 5-4, with Director Gibson, Director Kring, Dr. MacNeal and President Bertone voting no.
2. On a motion by Director Ghrayeb, seconded by Vice President Britton, the Board, on a roll call vote, approved a contract with Chester County Intermediate Unit for a communications audit by a vote of 8-1, with Dr. MacNeal voting no.
Total Cost: \$6,300
Contract Dates/Length: 7/1/21 – 3/31/22
Funding Source: Superintendent Budget
Budget Year: 2021 – 2022
3. On a motion by Director Ghrayeb, seconded by Director Wisdom, the Board, on a roll call vote, approved an additional Communication Department position beginning July 1, 2022 by a vote of 5-4, with Director Gibson, Director Kring, Dr. MacNeal and President Bertone voting no.
Funding Source: Personnel Budget
Budget Year: 2022 – 2023

Curriculum Report – Director Blust

1. On a motion by Director Blust, seconded by Vice President Britton, the Board, on a roll call vote, unanimously approved the purchase of replacement equipment for Tech Ed courses at DEHS and DWHS
Total Cost: \$80,818
Funding Source: Curriculum Capital
Budget Year: 2021 – 2022
2. On a motion by Director Blust, seconded by Vice President Britton, the Board, on a roll call vote, unanimously approved a waiver agreement and release with the parents of a DASD student (#5078163107)
Total Cost: \$33,000
Contract Dates/Length: 10/14/21 – 6/30/22

Funding Source: Special Education
Budget Year: 2021 – 2022

Finance Report – Dr. MacNeal

1. On a motion by Dr. MacNeal, seconded by Director Kring, the Board, on a roll call vote, unanimously approved Berkshire Hathaway Home Services - Fox & Roach, REALTORS – PA Lic # RB061717C as broker to represent district real estate on Lionville Station Road, Uwchlan Township
Total Expense: 3.25% to 4% of sale price
Funding Source: Capital Fund
Budget Year: 2021 – 2022

J. ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT REQUIRE THE ATTENTION OF THE BOARD

- K. VISITORS** – The Downingtown Board of Directors encourages public comment from its citizens. Each community member may speak for a period of no longer than 2 minutes (per BP# 903). Please understand that this is not a time for dialogue with the board; rather the board will listen to all comments and consider them in further deliberations. Our individual e-mail addresses are on the website if you'd like to contact your individual board representative. We ask that you please direct complaints of a personnel nature regarding an individual employee directly to the superintendent.

Kathy Sotak (Uwchlan) – supports choice for parents in regard to vaccines and masks.

Jess Rosenzweig (West Bradford) – has lost trust in the district. Supports parent choice. Discussed religion and education. Should teach the precepts of religion.

Alicia Thresher (West Bradford) – discussed lack of dyslexia programs in the district. Discussed district not identifying dyslexia properly.

Greg Robino (West Bradford) – discussed traffic and lighting concerns with proposed 5/6 center on Bradford Heights property.

Rachel Kramer (West Pikeland) – expressed support for the DEI program and Mr. Brown.

Tara Haarlander (Upper Uwchlan) – expressed support for the DEI program and Mr. Brown.

Mindy Ross (West Bradford) – expressed support for the DEI program and an equitable and inclusive workplace for our staff and students.

Jeremy Kramer (West Pikeland) – expressed support for the DEI program and thanked the board.

Kate Thomas (West Bradford) – expressed support for 5/6 center and full day kindergarten.

Brandyn Campbell (Uwchlan) – expressed support for DEI program and teaching all children that they matter.

David McDonald (East Brandywine) – expressed dismay at the lack of support for the DASD Blue & Gold Band. Communications in the last few weeks has gotten better. Asked for continued support from the district.

Margie Miller (Uwchlan) – sited recent rankings of the district and poor and declining performance of the district.

Ashley Foley (Downingtown Borough) – discussed children being asked about their pronouns. Not every child is comfortable identifying their pronouns. Finds this along with BLM and rainbow flags in classrooms politically divisive.

Lisa Sayre (West Bradford) – does not support the 5/6 center on the Bradford Heights property. Sited traffic, blind curves and noise levels.

Boyd Peart (West Bradford) – asked the board to reconsider a 5/6 center on the Bradford Heights property. Not an appropriate site.

Peggy Boehme (Upper Uwchlan) – discussed dyslexia awareness. District need to identify, have programs and remediate.

Ryan Gorman (Uwchlan) – discussed issues with mirrors/window in the LMS girl’s locker room. Lights are supposed to remain on and have been off on occasion. Girls getting undressed for sports are uncomfortable.

Sharon Siggelkow (West Bradford) – opposed to a 5/6 center on Bradford Heights property. Sited traffic, Romig Road, and wild life.

Shannon Grody (West Pikeland) – opposed to masking.

L. INFORMATION

1. The following policies are submitted for public review and scheduled for approval on November 10, 2021:

- a. 800 Records Retention
- b. AG Administrative Guideline: 800 Records Retention
- c. 832 Educational Equity

2. School Board Meetings

In accordance with Act 93 of 1998 (Sunshine Law), the Board of School Directors met on the following dates in executive session to discuss items in one or more of the following areas: personnel, litigation, legal matters confidential information, labor relations, school security, real estate or land acquisition.

October 6, 2021

October 11, 2021

October 13, 2021

The next Committee of the Whole meeting is scheduled for November 3, 2021 starting at 6:30 p.m. in the James E. Watson Staff Development Room of the Administrative Office.

A Special Board Meeting is scheduled for November 8, 2021 starting at 6:00 p.m. in the James E. Watson Staff Development Room of the Administrative Office.

The next regular School Board Meeting is scheduled for November 10, 2021 starting at 6:30 p.m. in the James E. Watson Staff Development Room of the Administrative Office.

3. Enrollment Report

The attached enrollment report has been submitted from the district database as of October 1, 2021.

M. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Director Kring, the Board agreed to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia B. Warihay
School Board Secretary

October 13, 2021 Board Meeting - Dr. MacNeal Comments - Personnel Action Items

I (Dr. Linda MacNeal) would like to preface my statements by saying that I have the utmost respect for administration and my fellow board members. In the event that anyone might take offense to what I am about to say, I would also like to add that my comments are not intended to be personal. The people from EBT, who elected me, and the residents in the entire district, whom I now serve, expect me to do two things: ensure that every student has the best education possible and treat residents' money - taxpayer money- as if it were my own.

Last spring, the Board heard from administration that the district desperately needed to do something about the lack of help in the communications department. A Chester County Intermediate Unit audit of the department was recommended. At the same time, we discussed an audit of the Pupil Services Department. However, administration recommended the Board first approve an audit of the Communications Department. For a majority of the Board, it seemed more prudent to approve the audit in the fall, as the results needed to include stakeholder input, which didn't seem feasible in the midst of a pandemic situation.

I'm confused, and expect our public might be as well, at the backward process we seem to be employing. Why is the board being asked to approve these expenses for the communications department without any substantive data to support these requests? As I see it, the audit should have happened first, followed by an analysis of the audit by the school board (SB), and, finally, a determination by the SB as to which recommendations to accept and which to reject. Afterward, these items might have been placed on a SB agenda along with a plan of action that included how we would pay for any recommendations that included an impact on the district's budget.

The points I've made are intended to emphasize the critical importance of #1) fiscal responsibility and #2) following a process and using data to make decisions.

My charge as a SB Director is to be as fiscally prudent with district money as I am with my own. In my opinion, it is not fiscally responsible to approve these expenses for the communications department without the substantive data that support the need. As for the audit by the Chester County Intermediate Unit, it seems an internal evaluation has already been conducted and a decision made as to what is necessary; therefore, I will be voting "NO" on each of these three action items.