

SHALER AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Voting Meeting

August 11, 2021 – Hybrid

Minutes

The Board of School Directors of the Shaler Area School District held a Voting Meeting on Wednesday, August 11, 2021, in a hybrid format, in person at the Shaler Area Administration Building, Glenshaw, PA, and on Zoom, a virtual meeting platform, with Dr. April Kwiatkowski, School Board Vice President, presiding. This meeting began at 7:23 p.m.

Board Members Present: Mrs. Suzanna Donahue
Mr. James Fisher
Mr. Tim Gapsky
Dr. April Kwiatkowski
Mr. Jason Machajewski
Mrs. Jeanne Petrovich
Mrs. Eileen Phillips
Mr. Steve Romac

Not Present: Mr. James Tunstall

Others Present: Dr. Sean Aiken, Superintendent
Dr. Bryan O'Black, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Kathleen Graczyk, Director of Student Services
Ms. Sherri Ludwig, Director of Business Affairs
Mr. Matt Hoffman, Solicitor
Catherine Clark, Student Representative

Notice of this meeting was posted as required.

- Dr. Kwiatkowski opened the meeting at 7:23 p.m.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski then recognized Mr. Matt Franz, with HHSDR, to provide an update to the school board. Mr. Franz explained that in replacing the asphalt paving around Marzolf Primary, crews encountered soft areas. Protocols dictate that they were to remove these areas and reinforce them. In the process, they discovered a waterline ruptured. While making repairs, crews found pinholes in the cast iron line so they proposed replacing the line to the boiler room during the paving process. Mr. Franz said he recommends they move forward with replacement. Mr. Romac confirmed that it would be a complete replacement from the road to the school. Mr. Franz added that the water company would also replace the main valve on their dime while everything was exposed. He said that the paving will commence next week and the concrete replacement and line striping would occur immediately following with total completion on August 20 or 21. Mr. Gapsky clarified the scope of the work.
- Ms. Ludwig also asked Mr. Franz to speak to the UV light bid rejection. Mr. Franz said the district received bids in June and tabled them. The district has a 60-day window to act on bids, so the board needs to either accept or reject the bids and rebid at a later time and risk additional costs. They also opened bids for the high school gym air conditioning project in which First American is also the low bidder. Mr. Fisher asked about the maintenance required for UV light. Mr. Franz said it does require frequent maintenance. The life span of the light bulb is 12-18 months. The bid includes every air handler in the district. Mrs. Petrovich asked why they would reject the bids. Ms. Ludwig said there is an issue of the timeline. It also is only one piece of the puzzle and doesn't solve the issue through the entire district. The district is looking for a solution districtwide.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski then recognized the Public to Speak on Agenda Items.
 - Dr. Aiken shared that the recommendation of the administration is that the school district transition to universal masking, districtwide, and regardless of vaccination status starting August 16. This would be the

amendment to the ARP ESSER Health and Safety Plan for the board to consider under Item A.1 of the agenda.

- Tammy Venezia, of Shawmut Drive, asked if masks would be required during athletics. Dr. Aiken said it would be the same as last year.
- Eugene Cawley, of Redstone Drive, asked what the standard would be for masks. Dr. Aiken said it would be the same as last year. Mr. Cawley asked about mesh masks. He also argued that the school board members weren't currently following CDC guidelines regarding social distancing. Dr. Aiken said the district would review the recommendations.
- Anna Richards, of Redstone Drive, said last year her son's mask was saturated by the time he got home and had an upper respiratory illness. Her high school daughter had systemic acne. She asked if there would be an option for students to be homeschooled. Dr. Aiken said the district launched Shaler Area Virtual Institute (SAVI) for this school year.
- Sherry Kai, of Anderson Road, said there is no statistic regarding vaccination and asked if parents want their child to be masked if the district can accommodate separate masked and unmasked classrooms. Alternatively, she asked if parents could sign a waiver if they don't want their child masked. Mrs. Petrovich pointed out that more kids have been diagnosed in the first 11 days of August in Allegheny County. Mr. Cawley argued that the cases are based on PCR test, and not made for diagnostics.
- Crystal Corfield, of Seavey Road, asked if accommodations would be made for students with a doctor's note. Dr. Aiken said families should work with their school principal and school counselor. Ms. Corfield said her daughter has chronic pain and has a note that she can't wear a mask. Dr. Aiken said the school nurse will reach out to her. Dr. Graczyk said she would be on that call for support. Ms. Corfield argued that she feels the district is making her choose between her child's health and education.
- Gerald and Chrissie Karle, of Pictwood Drive, thanked the school board and staff for keeping the students safe last year and also recognized the pressure the district is under. They requested the school board amend the Health and Safety Plan as recommended by the district administration to require masks. They argued that children make up 20 percent of new COVID cases and the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, World Health Organization, and Allegheny County Health Department recommend masks and there are no organizations that do not recommend masks. They said that they recognize that one group will be upset no matter what decision is made, so they requested the board make the decision that protects children.
- Crystal Lehmeier, of Hillwood Road, said she believes it should be the parent's choice. She argued that many of the district buildings are not appropriate for masking conditions because of the heat and nausea, nosebleeds and headaches intensified last year with masks.
- Alecia Fischer, of North Spruce Drive, asked if there would be religious or medical exemptions available. Dr. Aiken and Mr. Hoffman confirmed that there would be exemptions available. Dr. Aiken said he would specifically look into religious exemptions. Ms. Fischer argued that with as many schools as the district has that are not air-conditioned that masking is child abuse.
- Melanie Groves, of Dewey Street, said her family is in support of universal masking and thanked the district for its consideration.
- Jody Alexander, of Richard Drive, asked for clarification on masking and contact tracing. She asked if kids wear a mask and there is a positive case, if the students would have to quarantine. Dr. Aiken said the universal masking would eliminate the need to quarantine students in the event of a positive case. He said that was one of the factors in the administration's rationale for its recommendation. Fewer students will have to quarantine. Ms. Alexander said the most important thing is to keep kids in school 5 days per week. She also argued that the religious exemption only pertained to the vaccine and not mask wearing.
- Mandy Coligan, of Limestone Drive, thanked the board for its consideration. She said the safety of students is what everyone is rooting for.
- Ashley Trozzo, of Lindenwood Drive, said it made her feel better to know that the children would be wearing masks. She said she doesn't want students to be in virtual instruction. She also said she feels there should be an additional bus stop at Lindenwood because it's a safer location. Dr. Aiken said the transportation department would contact her the following day to follow up.
- Sarah Ammer, of Greenfield Road, thanked the board for the planned change. She said masks work, and her kids were the healthiest they've been last year with masks. She said the goal is to have kids in schools 5 days per week and if that means wearing a mask, then that's what they have to do.

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- Jodi Poniewaz, of Iola Street, said she agreed with masking for everyone because she doesn't believe the teachers should be responsible for keeping track of who should wear one. She argued that JAMA recently had to retract its statement on CO2 levels and exemptions also have repercussions such as with chickenpox. She believes if kids are to be masked they should be given more time outside.
 - Jeanine Arrigo, of Gerard Drive, asked if children will get a mask break when outside. Dr. Aiken said the buildings and teachers would be arranging mask breaks because they feel it's important. Ms. Arrigo commended the middle school for providing ample mask breaks last year.
 - Gwen Milliken, of Evergreen Avenue, asked if there would be virtual learning in the case of a quarantine. Dr. Aiken said there is no hybrid option available this school year. The teacher would work with the family to get work to the family for the student to do at home.
 - Holly Pasquarelli, of Louann Street, said she feels parents should have the choice to mask or not. She said at UPMC, employees only have to mask when in the hospital so to do that to children is wrong.
 - Heather Schneider, of Wimar Circle, thanked the district for taking health information into account. She acknowledged the process is constantly in motion. She said she has a senior and hopes to have minimal disruption to the school year. She said that masks seem like a small inconvenience. She asked how illness affects absences and participating activities. Dr. Aiken said the district would put out information to parents.
 - Amanda France, of Vilsack Road, asked why parents choosing whether or not to mask was given as an option. Dr. Aiken said parent input is just one piece of the decision-making process. The district's goal is to have students in person 5 days per week 180 days of the school year. He said the district will scale back if it can. The mask mandate is proposed for the beginning of the school year but not necessarily for the duration.
 - Tracy Clarke, of Rosewood Drive, asked about a disabled child who is unable to be vaccinated. She wanted to know if Waterfront Learning is available and if cases get high again if Waterfront is the only option. She said she wants her kids to have a Shaler Area teacher. Dr. Aiken said as of now, there is no plan to use the hybrid instruction model this school year. Ms. Clarke asked why the district can't put 2 to 4 kids in each grade in a hybrid class. She doesn't believe it's safe to send her child to school but she also doesn't feel it's her responsibility to teach her child. She believes there should be a hybrid option.
 - Matt Urban, of Horizon Drive, said he disagrees with the decision and believes it should be a parent decision. He said he feels all the different standards are absurd and encouraged the school board to include what standard would allow the district to remove masks. He asked for a metric and goal. He also said it would have been helpful to have the school doctor at the meeting to help answer questions.
 - Kimberly Dickson, of Limestone Drive, said masks aren't perfect but that her son wasn't sick until the state mask standards were relaxed. Additionally, her son got COVID last year when nothing was being reported in the school and their family hadn't been anywhere. She asked if the virtual option would be reopened to parents. She also asked if the deep cleaning done last year would continue. Dr. Aiken said the district would continue to use the electrostatic sprayers. Mr. Gapsky added that buses also would be sprayed between runs.
 - Justin Corfield, of Seavey Road, asked what protocol would be in place to ensure every student receives the same education as another student whether in person or virtual. He asked if the curriculum is the same. Dr. Aiken explained the virtual instruction option through Waterfront.
 - Leah Kurz, of Zeuger Street, thanked the board and everyone for all of the different opinions. She acknowledged that it is a difficult decision. She said she believes masking should be a choice. She said she works in a large medical center and there is no science that COVID is dangerous for children. She said she believes masks undermine the immune system. She also said she speaks for freedom.
 - Gina Dayieb, of De Angelo Drive, said she wanted to know what expectation the district would be looking for to unmask.
 - Dr. Katie Stahler, of Herron Lane, said she supports masking. She said everyone wants what is best for the children and the inconsistency of last year was harder than wearing a mask.
 - Bethany McClean, of Joyce Drive, expressed gratitude for the decision and having the conversation. She saw a decline in mental wellbeing last year and feels wearing a mask is a small thing to ask to keep teachers and students safe. She encouraged enforcing more mask breaks especially at the primary level.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski then called the meeting to order at 8:49 p.m. and invited all in attendance to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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- On a motion by Mr. Fisher and a second by Mrs. Petrovich, the following motion was approved by all in attendance:
 - Motion to suspend any applicable Shaler Area School District policies in order to authorize the conduct of this special voting meeting of the Board of School Directors via telephone conference in consideration of the public health concerns and governmental directives arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Notice of such action, along with information as to how members of the public may access the telephone conference meeting, previously was posted at the District Administration office and to the District website.
- Dr. Kwiatkowski then announced items tabled or removed from the agenda:
 - There were none.
- On a motion by Mr. Romac and a second by Mr. Gapsky, the agenda was approved by all Board members in attendance.

Dr. O’Black then presented the following Education Items for approval:

<u>ITEM</u> #	<u>EDUCATION ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL</u>	<u>SUP</u> #	<u>ACTION</u> <u>TAKEN</u>
A.1	Approve the amended ARP ESSER Health & Safety Plan as required by the PA Department of Education and the ARP Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund.		<u>Amend the ARP</u> <u>ESSER Health &</u> <u>Safety Plan</u>

Note: The Board of School Directors will be discussing universal masking options for the beginning of the 2021-22 school year. If final recommendations alter the current Health & Safety Plan, appropriate action will be taken.

- Mr. Gapsky suggested that the district make it clear to the public what they should do if their child has an underlying condition. Dr. Aiken said families should work with the school principal and school nurse. Mrs. Donahue confirmed that masks would be made available to students if they forget.

A motion was made by Mr. Romac with a second by Mrs. Petrovich, to approve Item A.1-

After no further discussion, this item was then approved by a roll call vote.

ACTION:
Approved
Item A.1

Motion Carried: 8 aye; 0 nay

Donahue	Fisher	Gapsky	Kwiatkowski	Machajewski	Petrovich	Phillips	Romac	Tunstall
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Absent

Information Items:

1. Student Representative – Catherine Clark provided the school board with an update from the student body. First, she thanked the district for working to get students back in the safest way possible and also for figuring out options to limit the number who would have to quarantine, which was a concern for the students. She asked for consideration of what the different enrollment options would be. Dr. Aiken said the district asks families to commit to a semester of virtual instruction if they choose that option. He said if the district has to make an adjustment to that it would be on a case by case basis. Ms. Clark said last year there were many counseling services and opportunities advertised and hopes that the district can continue this. She said the high school recently had several students recognized as AP Scholars. With the expense of AP tests, she asked the school board to consider a program to support students who take the AP test and do well. Dr. O’Black added that the district added an additional social worker at the high school and a total of 16 current seniors were recognized as AP Scholars. Dr. Aiken said he would like to introduce some of the AP Scholars to the school board over the course of the coming year.

Dr. O’Black then presented the following Personnel items for approval:

<u>ITEM</u> #	<u>PERSONNEL ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL</u>	<u>SUP</u> #	<u>ACTION</u> <u>TAKEN</u>
B.1	Approve the following Retirement:		<u>Retirement</u>
a.	June Buzzelli, Guidance Secretary, Middle School, effective at the end of the workday August 6, 2021.		
B.2	Approve the following Leave of Absence (LOA):		<u>LOA</u>
a.	Lauren Way, for a leave of absence, effective December 8, 2021 to January 3, 2022 (the non-FMLA portion of her leave (9/12/21 to 1/3/22).		
B.3	Approve the following FT 1.0 Temporary Professional Employees (TPE’s):		<u>TPEs</u>
a.	Marissa Kealey, a graduate of Clarion University, as a FT 1.0 TPE Special Education teacher, replacing A. DiCriscio, High School, effective August 17, 2021, at a Master’s Step 2 salary level.	B.3a.	
b.	Sydney Widdersheim, a graduate of Grove City College, as a FT 1.0 TPE Special Education teacher, replacing M. O’Keefe, Middle School, effective August 17, 2021, at a Bachelor’s Step 2 salary level.	B.3b.	
B.4	Approve the following FT 1.0 Long-Term Substitute (LTS) Teacher:		<u>LTS</u>
a.	Thomas Cooper, a graduate of Duquesne University, as a FT 1.0 LTS Social Studies teacher, High School, for N. Haberman, High School, effective August 17, 2021 to on or about June 6, 2022 (the 2021-22 school year) at 85% of the Master’s Step 2 salary level (prorated).	B.4a.	

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B.5 Approve the following Supplemental Contract for **Coaches** for the Fall Season of the 2021-22 School year:

Supplemental
Contract – Coaches

Soccer (Fall)

a. Boys Volunteer Assistant Dan Monahan

B.6 Rescind the following supplemental contracts for **Sponsors** for the 2021-22 school year:

Rescind
Supplemental
Contract – Coaches

High School

a. Mu Alpha Theta (Math Honor Soc) Paul Stadelman (100%)

Elementary School

b. Ukulele Club (new-replacing Cooking Club) Amy Quatman (50%)
c. Stephanie Giordano (50%)

- Mr. Romac asked for an explanation for the dates in Item B.2. Dr. O’Black explained that the school board does not approve FMLA leave but only the unpaid portion of the leave.
- Mr. Gapsky asked to be informed when the ukulele club would be performing. Dr. Aiken said the ukuleles were purchased with a grant from the Shaler Area Education Foundation and the hope is that they can be incorporated into the curriculum.

A motion was made by Mrs. Petrovich with a second by Mr. Romac, to approve Items B.1-10.

After no further discussion, these items were then approved by a roll call vote.

ACTION:
Approved
Items B.1-10

Motion Carried: 8 aye; 0 nay

Donahue	Fisher	Gapsky	Kwiatkowski	Machajewski	Petrovich	Phillips	Romac	Tunstall
Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Absent

Ms. Ludwig then presented the following Finance items for approval:

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>SUP.</u>	<u>ACTION</u>
#	#	TAKEN
<u>FINANCE & OPERATION ITEMS RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL</u>		
C.1		<u>Fund Profiles</u>
A	C.1A	
Approve Fund Profiles: General Fund – Schedule of Bills		

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<p>C.2 Acknowledgement and formal approval of the contract amount adjustment to replace the water main to the building at Marzolf Primary School in the amount of \$65,583 to Shields Asphalt Paving, Inc.</p>	<p>C.2 <u>Contract Amount Adjustment</u></p>
<p>C.3 Approve the Gas Pipeline Easement Grant, and associated letter agreement for a temporary construction easement, with Peoples Natural Gas for installation of a gas pipeline, in replacement of line to be abandoned, at the Shaler Area Middle School property, pending solicitor approval.</p>	<p>C.3 <u>Temporary Construction Easement</u></p>
<p>C.4 Reject the bids for district wide HVAC UV Light Installation.</p>	<p><u>Reject Bids</u></p>

➤ Mr. Romac asked where the easement was located. Ms. Ludwig said it is the back part of the parking lot.

A motion was made by Mr. Romac with a second by Mrs. Petrovich, to approve Items C.1-4.

After no further discussion, these items were then approved by a roll call vote.

ACTION:
Approved
Items C.1-4

Motion Carried: 7 aye; 0 nay

Donahue	Fisher	Gapsky	Kwiatkowski	Machajewski	Petrovich	Phillips	Romac	Tunstall
Y	Absent	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Absent

- Dr. Kwiatkowski then asked if there was any other business to come before the board.
- Mrs. Donahue said she has seen on social media concern about the district’s physical education requirements for graduation being on the high side. She asked if the education committee could get together to discuss.
 - Dr. Kwiatkowski asked to share the good news related to Mr. Haberman. Dr. O’Black said with a joint proposal by the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh and Mr. Haberman, he started the LIGHT program to expose students to different cultures and human rights. This partnership will increase to the Holocaust Center funding 90 percent for Mr. Haberman to continue his work at Shaler Area and regionally.

After no further items were presented, on a motion by Mrs. Petrovich and second by Mr. Machajewski, the Business Meeting was adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Dr. Kwiatkowski then recognized the public to speak on any non-agenda item:

- Lisa Pierce, of Morewood Road, said given the universal masking decision, what would be in place to give masking breaks and recess at the elementary school. She argued that the students need to have time. Dr. Aiken

thanked her for her comments. He said while he doesn't have the elementary school's plan with him tonight, he knows that it is a continual discussion at the elementary school. He said even the physical education course at the elementary school provides more unstructured time for free play. He said he recognizes the desire for more recess at the elementary school and he will work with Mr. Miller and the administrative team. Mrs. Donahue asked what the obstacle is at that building because it seems to be a constant discussion item. Dr. Aiken said it is a complex situation that requires more staff. The challenge has been from where to steal more time. Mrs. Donahue said the test scores haven't changed significantly at that building so nothing that the district has done has made an impact on testing and maybe trying unstructured time instead of scheduling more academic time should be an option.

- Heather Schneider, of Wimar Circle, thanked Mrs. Donahue for talking about P.E requirements. She feels the requirements are excessive and by not allowing accommodations, the district is impacting students' GPA and adding stress. Dr. Aiken said the district looked at adjustments at the high school level prior to COVID. Mr. Romac asked about an opt out for student athletes. He said student athletes are already active daily.
- Crystal Lehmeier, of Hillwood Road, said when the district created the primary school model, it forgot that 4th and 5th graders are still young and need recess. She appreciates the school board talking about the issue.
- Jodi Poniewaz, of Iola Street, said her oldest is in his second year at A.W. Beattie and it has been the best thing for him. She feels students are getting short-changed by the district not making it available until 11th grade. Dr. Aiken said there are some programs in which students can start in their sophomore year. He said the district has the highest population of students from any of the sending districts and that A.W. Beattie is currently maxed out in enrollment and having to wait list students. He is unsure if the school could accommodate Shaler Area opening it to all 10th graders.

When no one else approached to speak, the meeting's Final Adjournment occurred at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bethany Baker
Assistant Board Secretary