**McKEESPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Regular Board Meeting**

**February 24, 2021**

**Presiding** Joe Lopretto, President

**Date, Time, Place** Wednesday, February 24, 2021, 7:30 PM, Board Room, Administration Building, McKeesport Area School District, 3590 O’Neil Boulevard, McKeesport, PA 15132.

**Opening Exercises** Mr. Lopretto called the meeting to order at 7:45 PM followed by the Pledge to the Flag. We met in Executive Session prior to tonight’s meeting to discuss personnel and potential litigation items and issues.

**Present** James Brown

David Donato

Diane Elias

Ivan Hampton

Steve Kondrosky

Joe Lopretto

James Poston

Mindy Sturgess – by phone

Excused. Thomas Filotei

**Others Present** Dr. Mark Holtzman, Superintendent

Dr. Tia Wanzo, Assistant Superintendent

Joan Wehner, Business Manager/Board Secretary

Charles Kiss, Treasurer  
Krisha DiMascio, Solicitor

**Board President’s Remarks** –   I really don’t have anything. I did forget something. I would like to just recognize Dr. Holtzman, Dr. Wanzo and his team for keeping this district going strong and couldn’t ask for better leaders. Thank you.

**Superintendent’s Report** – Good evening. Just want to take the opportunity to continue to not only encourage, but show support for our teaching staff, our administration, for the efforts they are making to continue to educate our children in schools. It has been a challenging school year, but we have made it beyond 100 days. We are extremely proud of that effort. We are working on other ways to continue to improve, looking closely at our online learning platform in ways to

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improve that particular process but also want to encourage more children to be back in our schools in front of instructors. The national data, the support that we felt from a lot of the literature that is currently being published, proves that schools are a safe place for children and we look forward to having more and more of those children back in our schools. Like I said, I just want to continue to thank our teaching staff, our School Board, our Administration for everyone’s sacrifice and cooperation. We have done something that not any school that I am aware of has done this year and took a calculated risk with a lot of conversation, it took some disagreements, but we did what was best for children and it turns out we were doing the right thing all along. I just want to reiterate that and say thank you to everybody that may be watching or listening.

**Treasurer’s Report** – Mr. Kondrosky moved to acknowledge receipt of the Treasurer’s Report

for the month of January 2021. Seconded by Mr. Poston.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**Hearing of Citizens** –

Ken Thompson, 708 Evans Avenue, McKeesport, PA 15132

Mr. Thompson addressed the Board on multiple issues.

Kenya Davis, 708 Evans Avenue, McKeesport, PA 15132

Ms. Davis addressed the Board on multiple issues.

Tiffany Wampler, 3418 Stockholm Street, McKeesport, PA 15132

Ms. Wampler addressed the Board regarding online students.

**Minutes** – Mr. Brown moved to approve the minutes of the Open Agenda Meeting of January 20, 2021 and Regular Meeting of January 27, 2021. Seconded by Mr. Kondrosky.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**Bills** – Mr. Brown moved to approve the list of bills. Seconded by Mrs. Elias.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

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Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**Refunds** – Mr. Kondrosky moved to approve property tax refunds as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Sturgess.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**MOU** – Mr. Poston moved to approve the AIU Transition Memorandum of Understanding. Seconded by Mrs. Elias. Discussion followed.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**Transfers** – Mr. Kondrosky moved to approve the 2019/2020 budgetary transfers as per the auditor. Seconded by Mr. Poston. Discussion followed.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**AIU** – Mrs. Elias moved to approve the 2021/2022 AIU Program of Services Budget. Seconded by Mr. Poston.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**Policies** – first reading of the following Board policies:

#103 – Programs – Nondiscrimination in School and Classroom Practices

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#104 – Programs – Nondiscrimination in Employment and Contract Practices

#248.1 – Pupils – Unlawful Sexual Harassment

#348.1 – Employees – Unlawful Sexual Harassment

#626 – Finances – Federal Fiscal Compliance

**Recommendations** – Mrs. Elias moved to approve the 2020/2021 McKeesport Area Technology Center Occupational Advisory Committee Recommendations. Seconded by Mr. Kondrosky.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**Resolutions** – Mr. Poston moved to approve Resolutions #1252, #1253 and #1254 – student discipline. Seconded by Mr. Kondrosky.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**Transfer** – Mr. Kondrosky moved to approve budgetary transfer as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Elias.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**Tri-COG** – Mrs. Elias moved to approve the Annual Contribution total payment of $20,054.27 to Tri-COG Land Bank for 2021. Seconded by Mr. Kondrosky. Discussion followed.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Poston, Mrs.

Sturgess

Voting no. Mr. Lopretto

Excused. Mr. Filotei

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**Exam** – Mr. Poston moved to grant permission to the Director of Technology Center to submit for a waiver of the NOCTI exam. Seconded by Mrs. Elias. Discussion followed.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**Green Sheets** – Mr. Hampton moved to approve the personnel recommendations (green sheets). Seconded by Mrs. Elias.

PROFESSIONAL:

TO BE HIRED: Extra Curricular Athletics for the 2020/2021 school year:

\*Victoria Blosser Head Softball Coach $4,608.81

\*Jamie Stumme Assistant Softball Coach $2,304.40

\*Kasey Smith JV Softball Coach $1,912.43

\*April Yeager 7/8 Grade Softball Coach $1,912.43

\*Ronald Bishop Head Baseball Coach $4,608.81

Sam Ligeros Assistant Baseball Coach $2,304.40

\*Dana Brown Sr. JV Baseball Coach $1,912.43

\*Jeff Winowitch 7/8 Grade Softball Coach $1,912.43

Mark Bacco Head Track Coach $4,608.81

\*Ron Kalup Assistant Track Coach $2,204.21

Alex Jenkins Assistant Track Coach $2,204.21

\*Mike Kisan Assistant Track Coach $2,204.21

Gerald McGrew 7/8 Grade Track Coach $1,274.95

Chris Gillies 7/8 Grade Track Coach $1,274.95

Theresa Lea 7/8 Grade Track Coach $1,274.95

Vladimir Kovalchuk Boys Tennis Coach $2,805.36

Jazzmine Boyd 7/8 Grade Volleyball Coach $1,912.43

Matt Miller Off-Season Conditioning Coach $2,758.40

John Harper Off-Season Conditioning Assistant Coach $1,986.50

Kevin Johnson Off-Season Conditioning Assistant Coach $1,986.50

Dana Brown Jr. Off-Season Conditioning Assistant Coach $1,986.50

\*Jared Miller Off-Season Conditioning Assistant Coach $1,986.50

Nick LoNigro Off-Season Conditioning Assistant Coach $1,986.50

Derek Pavlovic Off-Season Conditioning Assistant Coach $1,986.50

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VOLUNTEERS: Extra-Curricular Athletics for the 2020/2021 school year:

\*Ron Harris Assistant Baseball Coach

TO BE HIRED: Extra-Curricular Athletics for the 2021/2022 school year:

Matt Miller Football Coach $8,516.28

John Harper Assistant Football Coach $3,606.89

Kevin Johnson Assistant Football Coach $3,606.89

Dana Brown Jr. Assistant Football Coach $3,606.89

Jared Miller Assistant Football Coach $3,606.89

Nick LoNigro Assistant Football Coach $3,606.89

\*Jamie Eckels Assistant Football Coach $3,606.89

\*Dana Brown Sr. 9th Grade Football Coach $2,781.73

\*John Moninger 9th Grade Football Coach $2,781.73

Juan Butler 7/8 Grade Football Coach $2,781.73

\*John Grabowsky 7/8 Grade Football Coach $2,781.73

\*Tim Sweeney 7/8 Grade Football Coach $2,781.73

\*Ryan Smith 7/8 Grade Football Coach (shared) $2,781.73

\*Troy Brown 7/8 Grade Football Coach (shared) $2,781.73

Jazzmine Boyd Volleyball Coach $3,005.74

\*Brian Fegley Boys Soccer Coach $3,807.27

\*Anthony Jacobs Girls Soccer Coach $3,807.27

Molly Peddicord Assistant Girls Soccer Coach $2,003.82

Mark Bacco Cross Country Coach $2,204.21

Vladimir Kovalchuk Girls Tennis Coach $2,805.36

Joe Bower Golf Coach $2,604.98

VOLUNTEERS: Extra-Curricular Athletics for the 2021/2022 school year:

Troy Blackwell Assistant Football Coach

\*Jason Pavlecic Assistant Football Coach

\*Jared Panek Assistant Football Coach

\*John Pry Assistant Football Coach

\*Garey Christian Assistant Football Coach

\*Derek Pavlovic Assistant Football Coach

\*Josh Reist Assistant Football Coach

\*Joe Smith Assistant Football Coach

\*Habeeb Abdul-Raab Assistant Football Coach

\*Ed Mantich Assistant Football Coach

\*Ron Kalup Assistant Football Coach

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CHANGES TO THE SUBSTITUTE LIST:

ADDITIONS:

\*Tiara Young Emergency Certification

SUPPORT STAFF:

TO BE HIRED:

Timothy Sweeney Head Groundskeeper, effective immediately

(K. Piotrowski) Yearly salary will be $54,334.00 (pro-rated)

\*Steve Dumic Groundskeeper, effective immediately

(Poston) Yearly salary will be $35,335.00 (pro-rated)

\*Matthew Madjerich Technology Support Technician, effective immediately

(P. Maurizio) Yearly salary will be $40,002.00 (pro-rated)

CHANGE OF STATUS: Effective 2/22/21:

Brandon Poston From: Groundskeeper

To: Carpenter/Painter-Plasterer/Maintenance Helper

Salary: Step 2 $40,207.00 (pro-rated)

(per MESPA Contract Agreement)

RETIREMENT:

Michael Skibinski Electrician, effective 3/23/2021

Sherry Johnson Category 5 Secretary, Twin Rivers Elementary School,

Effective 3/26/2021

CHANGES TO THE SUBTITUTE LISTS:

ADDITIONS:

\*Ben Ramirez Instructional Assistant

\*Pending receipt of Act 24, 34, 114 and 151 clearances, Act 168 Disclosure Release, TB Tine and Drug Test results.

\*\*Step placement pending employer verification

Voting aye. Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, \*Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Voting no. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato

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\*Mr. Poston abstaining on Brandon Poston position.

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**Termination** – Mr. Poston moved to terminate employee number XXX-XX-5905 effective immediately. Seconded by Mr. Kondrosky.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**Payment** – Mr. Poston moved to authorize payment of $15,543.68 to PA Coach Lines pending execution of release agreement. Seconded by Mr. Brown.

Voting no. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

MOTION FAILED.

**Resignation** – Mr. Poston moved to approve the resignation of Mhalla Sanders as ELECT/EFI Case Manager effective March 3, 2021. Seconded by Mr. Kondrosky.

Voting aye. Mr. Brown, Mr. Donato, Mrs. Elias, Mr. Hampton, Mr. Kondrosky, Mr. Lopretto, Mr.

Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Excused. Mr. Filotei

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Athletic** – James Brown/Ivan Hampton – Mr. Hampton reported. No report.

**Buildings & Grounds** – Steve Kondrosky/Mindy Sturgess – Mr. Kondrosky reported. Mr. Balogh and myself met on the 17th and discussed a few minor items. It was pertaining to the Founders Hall fire alarm programming issue that we were having a problem with. It is already back in service. The grease traps were cleaned out at Founders Hall, McClure and the High School by

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Dalton Company. Hot water tank was changed at the maintenance garage. New geothermal circulating pumps were installed at McClure in rooms 78 and 79. The elevators were tested every three years like they are supposed to be. Everything is fine there. They did a nice job on snow removal and salting even though it was a horrible year for the snow. I compliment those guys on doing a nice job. That concludes my report.

**Community Relations/Cultural Diversity** – Mindy Sturgess/Ivan Hampton – Mrs. Sturgess reported. This month we did things a little different so the public is aware. We tried to do our committee meetings in more of a large group. So our Cultural Diversity committee met last week during our Executive Session on February 17th. We had some really good conversation. There are some exciting things happening in McKeesport Area School District. We are reviewing our collaboration with Penn State looking at strengthening our cultural diversity and support for students and staff within the district. As part of that support, on February 3rd the project name which is giving adolescent meaningful experiences met with several administrators from our district as well as teachers who identify staff for participation in the program and to get them overview and information because in order for this program to work as staff participation is really vital, on February 18th we took that a little further and the project and presentation was presented and I believe that was the high school staff. To give them an overview of what that will look like in the school setting. Then last Friday a student group met and I was able to meet with Dr. Holtzman, Dr. Wanzo and I believe Ms. Robinson, I’m not sure, so I apologize if I misidentify any staff from the high school. We really had a good opportunity because cultural diversity to really work and become rooted within McKeesport Area School District, it really needs to start with the students. So we wanted to have an opportunity to see what our student experience was like so Dr. Wanzo and Dr. Holtzman and Ms. Robinson gathered a group of diverse students together and I cannot tell you how impressed I was with their abilities. It was like adults weren’t even in the room. They took over, they had an agenda, they had speakers. They were well prepared. Even though I am an educator, but I am not in McKeesport Area School District and I can tell you every school is just a little bit different. It was really nice to hear about their experiences in McKeesport and to see what their life is like and their perception within our schools, especially at the high school. I think that one of the comments that came out of that meeting is perception is reality so it was really important for us as Board members to really look at from our students; perspective and to hear although we may not think some things aren’t as viewed because of based on our bias or our perception of things in the world, but to be able to hear the students and to honor and reflect on the problem solving group. There were some concerns, but it was not (inaudible). The students are really engaged at looking at ways to improve the district for all students. There were a lot of positive things going on. Students talked about positive connection they have with adults. They were also very real and vulnerable to talk about experiences that may not have been as comfortable for them or their perception of how

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they feel. So it was very enlightening and I’m very excited for the work that we have working with Penn State and moving this initiative forward. A lot of the training that takes place this year and we will really start to get into the work next year. That concludes my report.

**Education/Legislation/Policy** – Diane Elias/Mindy Sturgess – Mrs. Sturgess reported. We also met with the Education committee last week and we did get some updates from Dr. Holtzman. He did give the Board some updates about the technology plan and even though we had that very nice and generous donation from Comcast, we are still going to have updates to it hasn’t solved all of our technology issues for the district. Those were personal computers for the students so as an LEA it is our responsibility if students break them and we replace those. He did provide us with an update on that. He had also mentioned the meetings that he has been having with Outside Angle and Dick’s Sporting Goods Foundation to really look at some exciting and pivotal opportunities for McKeesport Area School District and looking at community-based schools with tremendous opportunities for our district, our community, McKeesport in general and the surrounding community. I am really excited about that. For right now, that are my updates and that concludes my report. Thank you.

**Finance/Grants/Outside Funding** – Diane Elias/James Poston – Mr. Poston reported. We met as a group last Wednesday here and went over the back-tax collection, how much we received this year and we got back that we haven’t got back in years prior. Some of the grants that we have received through Federal and State and the CARES act money. That concludes my report.

**Personnel** – Mindy Sturgess/Steve Kondrosky – Mrs. Sturgess reported. The personnel committee also met last week on the 17th to discuss those personnel items that were approve on this evening’s green sheets and that concludes my personnel report.

**Safe Schools** – James Poston/David Donato/Thomas Filotei – Mr. Poston reported. We met last Wednesday as a group also and got a report back that some of the doors at Francis McClure needed fixed and that is taken care of.

**Solicitor’s Report** – Thank you Mr. President, I just want to comment on earlier. It is very frustrating because everybody here wants to help and talk to people when they bring issues before the Board. Unfortunately, we can’t speak on personnel and student matters we are precluded to do that by confidentiality and State law. We would actually be fined by the State if we would do that. Additionally, they sought out legal counsel. We are on notice from legal counsel so I can’t even speak to that. I just want the public to know if you have concerns you can call and come here like the other lady did. Unfortunately, sometimes we just can’t address the concerns here. It doesn’t mean we’re not willing to address them, this just isn’t the forum to do

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that. I would just like to tell Mr. Thompson and Ms. Davis that if they would like to reach out to us through their legal counsel, we would be sure to have those conversations and maybe answer some of their questions. We just can’t do that on the floor.

**Correspondence** – None

**New Business** – Discussion regarding the elimination of the crossing guard at Francis McClure.

**Adjournment** – 9:00 PM – Mr. Poston moved for adjournment. Seconded by Mr. Kondrosky.

Voting aye. All Members present.

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Joan Wehner, Business Manager/Board Secretary