**McKEESPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Regular Board Meeting**

**March 24, 2021**

**Presiding** Joe Lopretto, President

**Date, Time, Place** Wednesday, March 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 8:00 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

Thomas Filotei

Ivan Hampton

Steve Kondrosky

Joe Lopretto

James Poston

Mindy Sturgess

**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** –   Before I get started, some sad news to pass on. Our solicitor Gary Matta, his wife, Rona Matta, passed away so I would like to ask for a moment of silence please. Thank you. I just want to let Mr. Matta know that our hearts are with him. Also, spring is sprung. Hopefully, there is no more snow. It is here, we have our prom already scheduled. Let’s hope graduation can go on. Let’s just get rid of this corona, that’s all I’ve got to say.

**Superintendent’s Report** – Yes, thank you. I want to touch on a few things as Mr. Lopretto mentioned obviously we’re moving into warmer weather. That means the end of the school year is near. It has been a challenging year, but it’s been a positive one for the McKeesport Area School District students and families for the most part. We have done our very best to provide

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quality in-person instruction and continue to manage and adjust and learn from our online virtual learning experiences. I will say that many of our students have already been notified that the prom at this current time is available to them as it historically has. The Omni is the venue as it always has been for many years. So, we’re very excited that they are able to accommodate. Unfortunately, the virus is continuing to tick up slowly, so we are keeping an eye on those particular positive cases. We are hopeful that things will steady and we’ll continue to move forward with the prom. Graduation is also very important to the functionality ending our school year on a positive note. At this point our graduation is scheduled to be on time, to be outside in our stadium. I will tell you that we don’t have rain make-up day, so if we do have some rain on graduation day I recommend you try to stay dry, because it’s not going to be feasible to move it indoors considering the mitigation strategies. We are excited to try something a little different this year by possibly repositioning the stage in the stadium on the turf and allowing both sides to be able to view their children receiving their diplomas and continue to have what we put on as an outstanding commencement ceremony. I am extremely excited by that. Also, we are in the process of working with some community outside partners. They are interested maybe investing in the future of our children, can’t share a lot of details about that, but we had an exciting visit on Friday to Twin Rivers Elementary School and we’re hoping to continue to think about the depth of a great partnership that can bring some much-needed resources to our community. Those of you that have had the opportunity to utilize the Dell computers, the 1:1 devices in classrooms, outside of classrooms, that initiative and project will continue in our school district. We are in the process of preparing for the fall and how that will roll out and look for the future of our students being planned at the moment. We are excited about what we have accomplished to this point. I am proud of what we have accomplished, I’m thankful to have a great working relationship and partnership with our Board of Directors, our teachers’ union, support staff and our administration. We are going to continue to move forward with approximately 50 days left and provide the best possible and safe instructional environment as possible. Thank you.

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

for the month of February 2021. Seconded by Mr. Filotei.

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

Lopretto, Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

**Hearing of Citizens** – none

**Minutes** – Mr. Hampton moved to approve the minutes of the Open Agenda Meeting of February 17, 2021 and Regular Meeting of February 24, 2021. Seconded by Mr. Poston.

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

Lopretto, Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

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

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

Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

Voting no. Mr. Donato

**Refunds** – Mr. Brown moved to approve property tax refunds as presented. Seconded by Mr. Poston.

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

Lopretto, Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

**Calendar** – Mr. Poston moved to approve calendar B for the 2021/2022 school year. Seconded by Mr. Filotei.

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

Lopretto, Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

**Prom** – Mr. Hampton moved to approve funding in the amount of $4,000 for chaperones and security for the 2021 prom. Seconded by Mr. Filotei.

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

Lopretto, Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

**Report** – Mr. Poston moved to approve the Audit Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. Seconded by Mr. Filotei.

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

Lopretto, Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

**Resolution** – Mr. Poston moved to approve Resolution #1255 – Tax Amnesty Program. Seconded by Mr. Filotei.

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

Lopretto, Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

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**Software** – Mr. Filotei moved to approve Vector Solutions K-12 Education Software as a Service Client Agreement. Seconded by Mr. Poston. Dr. Holtzman explained.

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

Lopretto, Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

**MOU** – Mr. Filotei moved to approve the One Tree Per Child Memorandum of Understanding. Seconded by Mr. Poston. Dr. Holtzman explained.

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

Lopretto, Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

**Policies** – First reading of the following Board Policies:

#807 – Operations – Opening Exercises/Flag Displays

#910 – Operations – Community Engagement

#913 – Community – Non-school Organizations/Groups/Individuals

**Policies** – Mr. Poston moved to approve the second reading and adoption of the following Board policies:

#103 – Programs – Nondiscrimination in School and Classroom Practices

#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

Seconded by Mr. Filotei.

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

Lopretto, Mr. Poston, Mrs. Sturgess

**Green Sheets** – Mr. Filotei moved to approve the personnel recommendations (green sheets). Seconded by Mr. Brown.

PROFESSIONAL:

BOARD ACTION TO CREATE THE FOLLOWING TEMPORARY PROFESSIONAL POSITION EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY THROUGH THE REMAINDER OF THE 2020/2021 SCHOOL YEAR:

1. ESL Teacher (Districtwide)

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BOARD ACTION TO CREATE THE FOLLOWING TEMPORARY PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS EFFECTIVE FOR THE 2021/2022 SCHOOL YEAR:

1. Elementary Online Teachers

2 Secondary Online Teachers

LEAVE OF ABSENCE:

Ryan McKinney Special Education Teacher, Twin Rivers Elementary School,

leave of absence effective 4/5/21 to an undetermined date.

TO BE HIRED: Long Term Substitute

Tayna Paterson ESL Teacher, District, effective 3/17/21. Rate of pay will be

(Vacant Position) $100/day + benefits and increase to $125 on the 61st day.

Kayla Vanyo-Beatty Math Teacher, effective 3/22/21. Rate of pay will be $100/day

(Skraitz/Maddigan) + benefits and increase to $125 on the 61st day.

Jessica Gerber Special Education Teacher, Twin Rivers Elementary School,

(R. McKinney) effective 4/5/21. Rate of pay will be $125/day + benefits.

RESIGNATION: Extra-Curricular Athletics effective immediately:

Kevin Kovach Boys Basketball Coach

Ron Kalup Assistant Track Coach

Tayla Rouse Assistant Cheerleading Coach

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

Jackie Gobbel Assistant Track Coach $2,204.21

Sade Banks Assistant Cheerleading Coach (shared) $162.81 (pro-rated)

Beth Gumbert Assistant Cheerleading Coach (shared) $162.81 (pro-rated)

CHANGE IN STATUS: Extra-Curricular Athletics for the 2020/2021 school year:

Kasey Smith From: JV Softball Coach

To: Assistant Softball Coach

Salary $2,304.40

Dana Brown, Sr. From: JV Baseball Coach

To: Assistant Softball Coach

Salary: $2,304.40

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

\*Thomas Yeager 7/8 Grade Softball Coach

CHANGES TO THE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER LIST:

ADDITIONS:

\*Jaycee Revo English

\*Jesse Johns English

\*Sheri Halfhill Social Studies

\*Danasia Summers Emergency Certification

SUPPORT STAFF:

TERMINATE: Effective Immediately:

Matthew Madjerich Technology Support Technician

TO BE HIRED: Effective Immediately:

\*Matthew Gula Technology Support Technician

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

Andrea Sonick Category 5 Secretary, Twin Rivers Elementary School

(S. Johnson) Yearly salary will be $20,300.00 (pro-rated)

RETIREMENT:

Robert Harper Truck Driver/Maintenance Helper, effective 6/4/21

Sharon Harrison General Worker, McClure Elementary School, effective 6/3/21

Mary Elizabeth Jones General Worker, McClure Elementary School, effective 6/2/21

Joan Kowalski Team Leader, McClure Elementary School, effective 6/3/21

Paulette Morris Tax Clerk, District, effective 6/30/21

Darlene Scott Head Cook, Founders Hall Middle School, effective 6/2/21

CHANGES TO THE SUBSTITUTE LISTS:

Additions:

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\*Danasia Summers Special Education Assistant

\*Shayla Davenport Secretary

TO BE HIRED: Summer laborers in the maintenance department effective 5/1/21. Hourly rate of pay will be $7.25:

Casey Carreiro

Rachell Marshall

Robert Cooper

\*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

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Athletic** – James Brown/Ivan Hampton – Mr. Hampton reported. We had a meeting on March 11th and primarily we talked about winter sports personnel. Since then we have the resignation of the boys’ head basketball coach. Applications will be accepted until April 7th and after that we will be making a decision.

**Buildings & Grounds** – Steve Kondrosky/Mindy Sturgess – Mr. Kondrosky reported. We met on the 17th Mr. President and I have a list of items that Mr. Balogh gave to me that we went over and there is many that just pertain to some repairs and replacement, but the most important thing is the mechanical controls training at the high school with the new ABM projects going on there. They came down here and they are teaching our individuals how to use these devices and I think it’s very important. I think it went very well the first meeting that I have been aware of. That field for the sports, they are taking care of that right now. Twin Rivers was repaired as Dr. Holtzman said for the Dick’s Sporting Goods demonstration to show off our school. He said they did a magnificent job which I thought they would do anyway. That’s good to hear that. The Allegheny County triangle inspection of the high school was completed for the students, teachers and staff and that went very well too. That concludes my report. Dr. Holtzman – I also want to mention, we have had a number of new staff members join the buildings & grounds, maintenance staff, a lot of excitement with that group. They did a fantastic job preparing Twin Rivers for our visit. They are really an excited group that seem to be moving things in the right direction. We’re looking for more big things from them.

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**Community Relations/Cultural Diversity** – Mindy Sturgess/Ivan Hampton – Mrs. Sturgess reported. Yes, we met on March 9th, the Cultural Diversity Community Relations committee. At that time, we had discussed some of the updates with a few of the projects we have moving forward. Our student group at the high school have continued to meet and have really taken their role as student leaders seriously. I really appreciate the work they are doing. I had the opportunity to talk to some kids outside in the community and I know that they appreciate to have the Board and Administration have that commitment to them. They are currently in the process of coming up with a goals statement for our district as a whole.as it relates to diversity and inclusion and cultural relations. So that information will be coming to the Board. It is important that we hear the voices of the students first to see what they feel the district missions are. The perceptions are not necessarily reality for our kids. The project GAME, they are in the process of starting interviews, that is the group that will be working at our high school with some students that may need a little extra support and that will be a full-time position through our collaboration with Penn State and some of the other affiliations. That concludes my report.

**Education/Legislation/Policy** – Diane Elias/Mindy Sturgess – Mrs. Sturgess reported. We also met on March 9th, I have some exciting news to report. In the green sheets this evening we approved two postings for four positions that will be added next year as Dr. Holtzman said. We learned from our on-line experiences this year and we know some things that we don’t want to do again, that we would like to do different for next year. We will be conducting interviews for two elementary online teachers and two high school online teachers. So those students participating in our virtual program next year will have that opportunity for synchronous instruction which is live teacher interaction. I have had concerns with the independent learning that we have had through Edmentum and I think everybody would agree that we are excited for these teachers. That concludes my report.

**Finance/Grants/Outside Funding** – Diane Elias/James Poston – Mr. Poston reported. Yes, we met last Wednesday as a group. We talked about the amnesty program which we voted on here tonight and that concludes my report.

**Personnel** – Mindy Sturgess/Steve Kondrosky – Mrs. Sturgess reported. We did not have a separate personnel meeting this month, but we did discuss those items that were approved on this evening’s green sheets on March 17th at our Executive Session and that concludes my report.

**Safe Schools** – James Poston/David Donato/Thomas Filotei – Mr. Poston reported. Yes, we met as a group last Wednesday also and prior to that the Administrators and Dr. Holtzman all met and had their conversations and passed along to us for the meeting. All the schools are ok, everything is being fixed as needed on a weekly basis and the police chief is looking to get the

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signage and the lighting out on O’Neil Boulevard along with possibly some safety issues at Founders Hall gym. I have not had a chance to meet with him to look at that. That concludes my report. Mrs. Sturgess – Mr. Poston, I do have one question, are we still looking to fill our police officer positions? Any updates of those? Mr. Poston – We kind of different because of the Covid thing right now. The chief said he is good with filling in with what we have here. Instead of spending that money right now, we held off so hopefully we will have all those positions filled for next school when we open up. Mrs. Sturgess – Are they actively posted? Mr. Poston – They had posted before, we haven’t actively recently posted them. I guess it’s hard to say, we’ll hire you but you can’t start until…. So, we are going to try that in the summertime before the opening of the school year. Dr. Holtzman – We only have one vacancy and we posted last time without much attention. If anybody is listening and interested, please reach out.

**Solicitor’s Report** – Thank you, Mr. President. My report was given in Executive Session, but I would like to thank everybody for reaching out and their understanding of me having to come here last minute as your Administration is always flexible and works with me and I appreciate that. I know Gary appreciates all of you reaching out to him, I know many of you did, so thank you.

**Correspondence** – None

**New Business** – Mr. Donato – Mark, could you give us an update of what percentage of our student enrollment are currently in buildings.

Dr. Holtzman – So, we have approximately 78% of our overall population, it fluctuates between 75 and 80 percent depending on the count that’s done that are actually in schools presently and approximately 20 to 25 percent that are doing strictly virtual learning.

Mr. Donato – Is there a percentage that is beginning to grow either way?

Dr. Holtzman – Every nine (9) weeks we allow via smooth transition for children to return. We have seen maybe 60 or 70 children district-wide return in the past beginning of the fourth nine-week concept. We are hopeful that we can have more return. Historically, we have had approximately 100, 150 children in online learning. Right now, we probably have closer to 600 children. We are hoping for the start of the fall we can kind of get back and couple hundred more children. I think that the way that education has shifted, it’s never going to be what it once was, but I do think that there is still that value of those families and those children being in school. We are optimistic that will occur and hopefully we can get a couple in during the summer school session to recoup some learning loss and prepare for the upcoming year.

Mr. Donato – Thank you.

Dr. Holtzman – You’re welcome.

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**Adjournment** – 8:20 PM – Mr. Poston moved for adjournment. Seconded by Mr. Hampton.

Voting aye. All Members present.

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

Joan Wehner, Business Manager/Board Secretary