

Minutes for the Meet and Discuss Voting Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District held virtually on Wednesday, June 10, 2020.

**I. Call to Order Mrs. Fischer called the meeting to order at approximately 7:10 p.m.**  
The Meet and Discuss Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District is held on Wednesday, June 10, 2020. This meeting is being held to go over the agenda for the regular monthly Board Meeting that will be held on Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. and to take action that has come before the Board. All meetings have been advertised to permit legislative action as necessary.

**II. Flag Salute-Please rise Mrs. Fischer asked all to rise**

**III. Notice: Mrs Fischer read the following:** This meeting is being recorded for District purposes. It is or may be published in part or in its entirety on the District's website without the express permission of meeting participants.

**IV. Roll Call**

Mrs. Cathy Fischer, President  
Mr. Scott Angus, Vice President  
Mrs. Mary Jo Kehoe, Treasurer  
Ms. Jodi Gill  
Mrs. Terry Mylan  
Ms. Valerie Pedigo  
Ms. Meagan Trimbur  
Ms. Valerie Young

Others President

Dr. Joseph W. Pasquerilla, Substitute Superintendent  
Mr. Barry J. King, Director of Academics  
Mr. L. Douglas McCausland, Director of District Operations  
Ms. Megan Turnbull, Solicitor  
Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary

**V. Sunshine Law Mrs. Mueller read the following:**

The Board of School Directors held Executive Session on Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss:

- Personnel matter(s)
- Matters subject to attorney client privilege and other confidentiality laws
- Litigation or threatened litigation matters
- Salary Schedule and Labor Relations

**VI. Amendments to the Agenda/Approval of the Agenda**

Item 4 under Personnel was Tabled.

Mr. Angus moved to accept the amendment to the agenda, seconded by Mrs. Mylan. Vote in favor was unanimous.

**VII. Presentation****VIII. Public Comment (Regarding Agenda Items Only)**

At this time, DISTRICT RESIDENTS may come forward to comment on agenda items only. Each person must state their first and last name and address prior to speaking. Each resident will be allowed three minutes and can speak only once. This period for public comment prior to the standing committee reports will be limited to one-half hour. Although not required, board members desiring to address questions or concerns may do so after the residents' comment/question or at the conclusion of the committee reports. There will still be an opportunity for residents to comment on any business relevant to the Ambridge Area School District under Old and New Business at the end of the meeting.

Dr. Pasquerilla thanked the Housing Authority of the County of Beaver for working with the Ambridge Area School District and reimbursing the District for the technology devices purchased for those Public Housing children K through 12 residing in public housing developments.

Dr. Pasquerilla thanked the Ambridge Area Education Association for working together for the success of the district with a contract extension due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Pasquerilla announced that there will be a plan and a date released for the teachers and students to clean out the buildings.

Ms. Jodi Gill suggested the District do a pay freeze and Administration pay cuts to help the District with the budget and the Pandemic.

- Mr. Doug McCausland volunteered to take a pay freeze and was thanked by all Board members.

The Board voted to put an athletic plan into place to start sports on July 6<sup>th</sup>.

Public Comment sent in by the following:

Stefanie Priorie, Baden, PA \*attached

Adrianna Cepas, Ambridge, PA \*attached

Response to Public Comment:

- There was a parent survey sent out in regards to the reopening plan
- Professional Development was held for teachers/staff and Technology Integrators for remote learning.
- There was a meet and greet reception for Dr. Pasquerilla at the February 12<sup>th</sup> Board meeting when Dr. Pasquerilla was approved as Superintendent
- There was a district wide event that was to be held in the Spring and due to the pandemic was canceled. This event will be rescheduled when we can do so.
- Dr. Pasquerilla also did a presentation on his Entry Plan at the February 12<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.
- The community was encouraged to reach out to the District for support due to the diversity during this difficult time.

**IX. LEGISLATIVE ACTION FOR THIS MEETING**

**Education and Technology**

**Ms. Trimbur**

1. Extended School Year Program

It is recommended to approve the virtual Extended School Year program, to provide specialized instruction for students with IEPs. The virtual program will be held from Monday, July 13<sup>th</sup> through Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

2. Housing Authority of the County of Beaver MOU

It is recommended to hereby approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ambridge Area School District and the Housing Authority of the County of Beaver to mutually commit to a cooperative purchasing agreement to procure newly purchased computing devices for all Public Housing children K through 12 residing in public housing developments situate in the boundary of the District, to ensure the advancement of the child's educational experience while responding to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic, **subject to solicitor review.**

Ms. Trimbur moved to accept items 1-2, seconded by Mrs. Kehoe. Vote in favor was unanimous.

**Salary, Schedule and Labor Relations****Mrs. Mylan**1. Memorandum of Understanding

It is recommended to hereby approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Ambridge Area School District and the Ambridge Area Education Association to extend the term of the AAEA collective bargaining agreement, as presented.

Mrs. Mylan moved to accept item 1, seconded by Ms. Gill. Vote in favor was unanimous.

**Personnel****Mr. Angus**1. Administrative Layoffs

It is recommended to hereby approve the following administrative layoffs, effective June 30, 2020, in order to realign the District's administrative staff to meet its institutional and budgetary objectives for the 2020-2021 school year.

AASD Employee #2739

AASD Employee #2790

AASD Employee #2548

2. 20 #20-2021 Temporary Professional Employee Suspensions Pursuant to 24 P.S. Section 11-1124(a)(1)

It is recommended to not renew temporary professional contracts and to suspend (furlough) the following temporary professional employees for the 2020-2021 school year:

AAEA Employee # 2818

AAEA Employee # 2802

AAEA Employee # 2804

AAEA Employee # 2634

AAEA Employee # 2597

AAEA Employee # 2797

3. Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA) – Pandemic Safety Officer

It recommended to approve Barry King as the District's Pandemic Safety Officer.

4. **TABLED Assistant to the Superintendent**

It is recommended to approve a change of title for Mr. Barry King from Director of Academic Affairs to the Assistant to the Superintendent and Pandemic Safety Officer at a salary of \$101,675.70, as per the terms of the negotiated Act 93 Agreement.

5. **Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent**

It is recommended June Mueller, the Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent; receive the recommended salary increase as per the employee agreement for the 2020-2021 school year.

Mr. Angus moved to accept items 1-3, and 5, seconded by Ms. Gill. Vote in favor of items 3 and 5 was unanimous. Ms. Young abstained from items 1-2.

**X. Superintendent's Report**

**XI. Solicitor's Report**

**XII. Old and New Business**

It is now time for old and new business. Any DISTRICT RESIDENT who desires to comment on any business relevant to the Ambridge Area School District should now come forward. Each person must state their first and last name and address prior to speaking. Each person will be allowed three minutes and can speak only once.

**XIII. Motion to Adjourn the Voting Meeting**

At 7:43 p.m., Mr. Angus made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Gill. All in favor.

**XIV. RECONVENE THE MEET AND DISCUSS**

Submitted by Stefanie Priore 128 Willow Drive Freedom 15042

June 10, 2020

urges the Board of Directors to reconsider the staffing curtailments approved at the May 13, 2020 meeting. The furlough of such a large amount of staff is a great disservice to all students of the Ambridge School District, as class sizes will increase significantly, especially in primary grades where a foundational education of basic skills is of utmost importance. Classes of approximately 25 students in the incoming Economy first grade class is inconceivable.

Small class sizes ensure the following:

- More one-on-one time
- Easier to identify issues
- More cohesive classroom culture
- Teachers and students can form stronger, more personalized relationships
- Students are more engaged
- Less chaos, less clerical tasks

Research suggests long-term performance benefits and teacher retention when class sizes are smaller. I would be happy to elaborate on the advantages of small class sizes at your request.

All of the above would be true in normal times. However, when considering the information released by the Department of Education last week (Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools: June 3, 2020; Version 1), the suggested class sizes are, at best, negligent to the safety and welfare of students and staff.

My son will be in first grade at Economy Elementary. The current class size is 74, shared among three teachers. Simple math suggests class sizes of 25, 25, 24. Among the recommendations listed by the CDC are to limit the number of individuals in the classrooms and other spaces; the CDC recommends no more than 25 individuals, including staff. Therefore, we are already out of compliance with such large class sizes.

Additionally, the CDC recommends establishing distances of 6 feet between student desks/seating to the maximum extent feasible and appropriate. Have you recently spent time in an elementary classroom? The classrooms are not designed for social distancing, and, admittedly, this would be challenging in a class of any number. However, limiting the number of students will make some type of distancing possible.

The guidelines make further recommendations for limiting the sharing of materials among students. Among the recommendations are to clean and disinfect shared items between uses, which will be an exorbitant task in a class of 25. Additionally, they

recommend keeping students' belongings separated, which is also logistically challenging since the number of available cubbies is less than the number of students in the classroom, and students tend to share.

The conversation among the community is one of disappointment and continued frustration with the decision-making of the Board of Directors and administration. Many are exploring other schooling options, both for pandemic and personal reasons. The cost to the Ambridge School District to educate a student via cyber or charter school should be considered when making such widespread staffing decisions.

The Board of Directors has a responsibility to provide a safe and productive learning environment for all students. I implore you to reconsider the staffing curtailments and make class sizes reasonable for all.

Finally, I hope the Board of Directors and the administration are preparing for distance learning in the fall, as it is a very real option for schools across Pennsylvania and the country. I hope this includes providing devices to all students in need, the creation of online learning platforms, and the continuance of learning and achievement with as minimal disruption as possible. I recognize the school closures on March 13 were abrupt and unpredictable and our teachers had limited or no training for distance learning

Adrianna Cephas, 932 Ohioview Avenue, Ambridge, PA

I would also like to address my concerns from the last meeting. I would like ALL of my question to be addressed please.

- Is the board still getting rid of a lot of the staff/teachers especially at Highland which includes the only African American teacher?

-what is the plan /goal for classroom sizes and sitting the students on the school bus per seat?

- Why are we not allowed to speak on this zoom Call during the meeting? There may be things addressed that I'm not pivot to before hand and will not get my FREEDOM of speech to ask it?

-what/ how do you plan on tackling the hurt and pain the African American students/family /community are going through right now and or should I say always have been going through? I would like this topic to be addressed during this meeting and it NEEDS/MUST be on the agenda?

And if you are not sure how we are feeling or how to address this ask us, listen to us! (And I'm hurt by the board and the superintendent for not sending an email addressing /acknowledging this matter, Incase you all forgot there are black students in your district

show them you care and send something acknowledging their/ our pain, this is the right thing to do and I would hope you do it sincerely)

And for the new superintendent when will you have a zoom meet and greet for the community to meet you and you get to understand and care about our concerns/needs or at least act like you care and show enough professionalism to sit up straight and show some respect to the community on the zoom call (it would also help us to understand you clearly, Incase you haven't realized when you speak on zoom it goes in and out).

Thank you for reading my concerns, I look forward to hearing them be answered on the zoom meeting!