

**Minutes for the Meet and Discuss Non-voting Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District held virtually via ZOOM on Wednesday, September 9, 2020.**

**I. Call to Order: Mrs. Fischer called the meeting to order at approximately 7:18 p.m.**

The Meet and Discuss Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District is held on Wednesday, September 9, 2020. This meeting is being held to go over the agenda for the regular monthly Board Meeting that will be held on Wednesday, September 16, 2020 at 7:00 P.M. virtually.

**II. Flag Salute-Please rise**

**III. Notice: Mrs. Fischer read the following statement:** 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

Mrs. Kathleen Curtis

Mrs. Denise Manganello

Mr. William Metz

Ms. Valerie Pedigo

Others President

Dr. Joseph W. Pasquerilla, Superintendent

Mr. Barry J. King, Assistant to the Superintendent

Mr. Keith Bielby, Director of Business and Operations

Ms. Megan Turnbull, Solicitor

Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary

**V. Correspondence**

**\* See attached**

**VI. Student/Teacher Recognition**

**VII. Presentations**

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

In light of the state declared disaster emergency, the Board has adopted modified public meeting and public comment processes, consistent with the Sunshine Law. These modified rules have been published in a newspaper of general circulation and on the District's website. Public comments received in advance of this virtual meeting by the Board Secretary will now be read.

**IX. Committee Reports****Education and Technology****Mrs. Manganello****1. BVIU 2020-2021 Special Education Programs and Services**

It is recommended the Beaver Valley Intermediate Unit shall provide Special Education Programs and Services on behalf of the Ambridge Area School District for the 2020-2021 year. The cost for service will be based on enrollment of students in the BVIU Special Education Programs and Services, as presented.

**2. Technology Purchase**

It is recommended to authorize the purchase of new technology equipment and licenses (laptops) via state contracted pricing through direct purchase for the 2020-2021 school year at a total cost not to exceed \$60,000.00 for equipment and ancillary devices.

**Finance and Budget****Ms. Pedigo****1. School District Monthly Bills and Salaries**

It is recommended that the monthly school district bills in the amount of \$1,723,260.69 and the monthly school district personnel salaries in the amount of \$1,080,637.28 be paid.

**2. Cafeteria Monthly Bills and Salaries**

It is recommended that the monthly cafeteria bills in the amount of \$11,137.08 and the monthly cafeteria personnel salaries in the amount of \$11,620.57 paid.

**3. Capital Project Expenditures**

It is recommended that \$38,377.32, be paid from the Capital Projects Fund 39.

**4. Resolution 2020-2021-03 – Tax Exoneration**

It is recommended to approve Resolution 2020-2021-03 approving the requested tax exoneration in the amount of \$1,092.05 for 284 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Ambridge, PA 15003, a property recently acquired by the Ambridge Historic District Economic Development Corporation, a 501(c)(3) entity, for the preservation of a historic Harmonist house structure.

**5. BVIU 2020-2021 IDEA Allocation**

It is recommended to accept the 2020-2021 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Allocation to the Ambridge Area School District, in the amount of \$379,876.00.

**Buildings and Grounds****Mr. Angus**1. **Crossing Guards**

It is recommended to ratify the approval of the crossing guards being placed at locations throughout the Ambridge Area School District for the 2020-2021 school year as listed below:

15<sup>th</sup> Street and Church Street  
High School / then 10<sup>th</sup> & Lenz Avenue  
11<sup>th</sup> Street and Merchant Street  
1<sup>st</sup> Street and Valley Road  
5<sup>th</sup> Street and Duss Avenue  
High School / then 8<sup>th</sup> & Duss Avenue  
6<sup>th</sup> Street and Duss Avenue  
Harmony Road and State Street-Baden

**Athletics****Mr. Campalong****Public Relations****Mr. Metz****Steering and Rules****Mrs. Kehoe****Legislative****Ms. Young**1. **PSBA Officer Elections**

It is recommended the Board Secretary be directed to cast the vote of the Ambridge Area School Board for election of the following PSBA Slate of Candidates for 2020:

President-elect \_\_\_\_

Vice President \_\_\_\_

Insurance Trust \_\_\_\_

Section Advisor \_\_\_\_

**X. Sunshine Law**

The Board of School Directors held an Executive Session on Wednesday September 9, 2020 to discuss:

- Personnel matter(s)
- Matters subject to attorney client privilege and other confidentiality laws

**XI. Motion to Adjourn**

**At approximately 8:09 p.m. Mrs. Fischer moved to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Kehoe. All in favor.**

Dan Finnegan, husband of former teacher Dawn Finnegan donated a check to the State Street STEAM program in the amount of \$2000. Dawn taught in the district for over 35 years dedicating herself to the Math and Science fields. Dawn passed away in 2015, after a long and courageous battle with ALS. Dan committed to a donation in her memory to keep her love for math and science alive. He committed to \$2,000 dollars a year for 5 years to the State Street STEAM program

This is the fourth year for the donation and the STEAM program and our children have greatly benefited. Mrs. Darroch purchased Edison Robots and Lego Education Simple Machines last year for our children to use and enjoy. Items like these allow our children to learn and have fun at the same time. It is because of your generous donations over the past four years that we are able to provide the "hands on learning" that Dawn loved so much.

Thank you for your continued support!

Sincerely,

JoAnn Hoover

Kim Roppa

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Joni Hostetter  
506 Dettmar Ave  
Baden Pa 15005

I would also like to ask the board if there is any consideration in cutting the virtual part of kindergarten for those students doing the hybrid? Asking a 5 year old to be attached to their iPad all day at home or daycare is unrealistic and developmentally inappropriate to ask of them.

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Sarah Huppenthal  
109 Fairview Ave  
Ambridge PA 15003

I would be interested in the board's thoughts on part time kindergarten instead of them needing to go 3 days virtual? It seems to be a struggle for children that age to sit and learn. I think it isn't benefiting them much. Plus, a parent needs to work with them all day due to the fact they cannot read or write yet and other grades do not have this issue.

Thank you!

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Heather Fernandez  
826 Beaver Road  
Ambridge PA 15003

I would just like to add positive note Thank All of our staff for wonderful support and jobs there all doing under these trying time's. We all are in this together everyone main goal is our Children futures.

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Stefanie Priore  
128 Willow Drive  
Freedom 15042

Thank you to the staff and administration for their hard work in ensuring a safe, purposeful return to school. It is evident the teachers have given so much of their personal time to prepare for this unprecedented year. All the teachers we have encountered are poised, patient, and demonstrate flexibility each day with teaching in two modalities at the same time. I've received notice that our teacher is reviewing work on Seesaw after 9pm; this is clearly her own time. Communication has been clear, consistent, and of value. My child is engaged in learning throughout the entire school day. Our family appreciates the hard work of every educator who has worked tirelessly in the return to school. Thank you!

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Cherie Paugh  
1830 Simpson Ct  
Ambridge, PA 15003

1. The following options have been provided to parents: 1) 100% cyber – complete at your own pace, 2) 100% virtual – team meetings with teacher/classroom following the normal school day, 3) hybrid – 2 days in-person instruction and 3 days virtual with no option to complete the 3 virtual days at your own pace. There is no option for 5 days in-person instruction for the families that would prefer that. Not all children will be able to thrive in a remote learning environment, and some grades are very difficult to conduct in a virtual environment. Please understand this concern is not around childcare burden that families have relied on the school day to provide. This is specific to the learning environment itself. Even if the child can be at home during the day in a quiet space and able to concentrate on an ipad for hours straight (which is not the case for many), not all parents are cut out to be teachers, and the younger grades (Kindergarten, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> grades) cannot learn virtually without an adult present to constantly read instructions and navigate the apps and submit the assignments. This environment forces the parent to become a teachers aid and to actively try to teach a Kindergartener how to properly hold a pencil and write within the lines and activities that some parents are not going to be effective teaching. There is a reason I'm not a teacher – bless them all for the patience they have!! Is there any way we can offer a 100% in-person instruction option to families? If not for the whole school, can we explore this for the very young grades?

2. In the hybrid option, it is very difficult for the parents to know what assignments in the app need to be completed. I've had teachers respond to me in the app that we have completed an assignment too early that would be covered in class and thus removed the submission from the app marking it incomplete again, I've had assignments show as incomplete that should have been done on an in-person instruction day and unclear if the parents are supposed to work with the child to complete it. We cannot rely on 5 year olds to tell us what is and is not covered in class and what has verbally been communicated as needing done at home. Please do not take this as criticism, I understand we are only 1 week in and we are all learning. To effectively work together, we need more communication. Can the teachers send emails outlining what assignments have been loaded in the app, when they should be started and when they are due, and if they are covered in class or to be completed at home? Is there a way to mark the assignments completed that were done during in-person instruction without the parent repeating it with their child?
3. It is my understanding that the children are not allowed to play on the outdoor play equipment. However, public playgrounds are open. Can we make this a parent choice? One suggestion may be to get the sanitizer sprayers (similar to what is used at Wexford Swim School every 30 minutes between swim classes) and spray down the equipment between classes. Or let parents complete a form and if they do not wish for their child to touch the equipment that child can take their recess toy brought from home outside and play independently while the approved children play on the equipment?
4. While it is understandable that several of the school measures are necessary to try to cut down on the spread of germs, many parents are concerned about the social/emotional implications to our children. Parents have spent years trying to teach their children to be kind and share and normally that is a fundamental item that schools naturally teach and reinforce in young children. However, our children are not allowed to play together and are discouraged from helping other students that are struggling to perform a task. I think we can all agree that frequent hand washing and sanitizing is important, and masks (whether you like them or not) can be tolerated all day. However, do we really have to go to social distancing extremes with young children that are going to regress on their ability to interact nicely with others? Please reconsider the social/emotional impacts and the risk/benefit implications of the decisions being made. Again, I realize not all parents share the same views, which is why I beg for you to put more of the decisions on the parents. For those that do not want the risk, give them options to stay home. For those that have children that desperately need that social interaction and better learning environment and do not have high risk individuals at home, give them the option to send their children to a 'closer to normal' school environment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Mrs. June Mueller**  
**Board Secretary**