

Minutes for the Meet and Discuss Voting Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District held in the High School Gymnasium on Wednesday, May 12, 2021.

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, May 12, 2021. This meeting is being held 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 present to rise for the flag salute.

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
Mr. Chuck Campalong
Mrs. Kathleen Curtis
Mrs. Denise Manganello
Mr. William Metz
Ms. Valerie Pedigo
Ms. Valerie Young

Others Present
Dr. Joseph W. Pasquerilla, Superintendent
Mr. Barry J. King, Assistant to the Superintendent
Ms. Megan Turnbull, Solicitor
Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary

V. Sunshine Law

Mrs. Mueller read the following statement

The Board of School Directors held Executive Session(s) on Wednesday, May 12th to discuss:

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

VI. Amendments to the Agenda/Approval of the Agenda

VII. Recognition/Presentation**Mrs. Kehoe will recognize the following Students:****Beaver County Career & Technology Center (CTC) Award Winners 2020**National Technology Honor Society (NTHS)

Brandan Hare, 12th Grade, Inductee, Carpentry

Health Occupations Students of America, HOSA States

Emma Preston, 11th Grade, 2nd Place, Event: Interviewing Skills

Future Business Leaders of America Scholarships to Pittsburgh Technical College

Ben Wyar, 12th Grade, 6K

Troy Jacob, 12th Grade, 6K

Future Business Leaders of America Regional Leadership Conference

Troy Jacob, 12th Grade, 1st Place

Richard Nartey, 12th Grade, 4th Place

Benjamin Wyar, 12th Grade, 4th Place

Challenge Program - Business Information Systems – Semester 1

Alexa Czoper, 11th Grade, Attendance

Benjamin Wyar, 12th Grade, Academic Excellence

BCCTC February Student of the Month

Devon Pollock, 12th Grade, Vet Assistant

Zaire Ellis, 12th Grade, Masonry

Mrs. Fischer will recognize the following Students:Graduation for Military Students

Logan Hoover

Autumn Brickner

Chad Fitlin

Participation in Pennsylvania Music Educators Association (PMEA) District 5 Honors Chorus, Region 1 Chorus and PMEA State Chorus

John Barnhart, 12th Grade and Noah White, 12th Grade were chosen by audition to perform in PMEA State Chorus

Participation in Pennsylvania Music Association (PMEA) District 5 Chorus

Leah Fritsch, 11th Grade, was chosen by audition to perform in PMEA State Chorus

Mancini Awards NominationsJadyn Perza, 11th Grade, Best ActressRyan Krokonko, 12th Grade, Best Actor

Additionally, Zoe Setzenfand, Heidi Setzenfand, Lily Vignere, Elizabetta Pucci and Leah Fritsch will present a scene from our musical at the Mancini Virtual Awards.

2021 Pennsylvania TSA State CompetitionJoy Jun, 11th Grade, Top 10 Future Tech TeacherKyla Fitzgibbons, 12th Grade, Outstanding Technology Student Scholarship AwardSociety for Analytical Chemists of Pittsburgh – 2021 Middle School Essay ContestBenjamin Francis, 1st Place

Veida Miller, Honorable Mention

Beaver County Conservation District EnvirothonThe Environerds Team, 8th Graders, 2nd Place

Lauren Mealie

Sheridan Olenic

Scarlet Truskowski

Madison Kozak

Allison Baker

The Envirogeeks Team, 8th Graders, 4th Place

Cody Roper

Rylee Girardi

Mikayla Wolf

Hannah Larimore

Thayne Barton

The Enviromaniacs Team, 8th Graders, 5th Place

Josh Kuny

Aiden Groom

Dean Chalupiak

Owen Buchanan

A.J. Gerace

Mr. Campalong will recognize the following Athletes:WRESTLING2ND Place 3A sectionTyler Holman, 11th GradeTRACK/FIELDMAC ChampionshipsMaura Devine, 12th Grade, 6th Place 1600 M RunLeah Fritsch, 11th Grade, 4th Place Javelin/6th Place Pole VaultBethany Naughton, 12th Grade, 1st Place 100m Hurdles/2nd Place 300 M HurdlesValeria Young, 11th Grade, 5th Place Javelin 6th Place Shot Put

MIDDLE SCHOOL TRACK/FIELD

Addison Creese: 800 M

Athena Bruno: 1600 M & Shotput

Lily Denny 100H, 100 M, Long Jump

Mara Ilko High Jump & Discus

Adonis Mycyk Shotput & Discus

Ethan Davis-Gardner 100 M, 400 M, High Jump

Noah Toma 1600 and Long Jump

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' comments/questions 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.

See attachment

IX. LEGISLATIVE ACTION FOR THIS MEETING**Personnel****Mr. Angus****1. Retirement**

It is recommended to approve the following resignations due to retirement, effective June 11, 2021, with regret.

- a) Joanne Gonzalez, a Teacher at High School
- b) Erin Malatesta, a Teacher at Economy Elementary
- c) Grace DeBona, a Teacher at the High School
- d) Marianne Rupick, a Teacher at Economy Elementary
- e) Randy Mercadante, a Teacher at the High School
- f) Nancy Boswell, a Teacher at Economy Elementary
- g) Lisabeth Peters, a Teacher at State Street Elementary
- h) Susan Somerville, a Teacher at Economy Elementary
- i) Terry George, a Teacher at the High School
- j) Jennifer Grabski, a Teacher at the High School
- k) Bonnie Jacquel, a Teacher at Economy Elementary
- l) Marie Dewar, a Teacher at the High School

2. Retirement

It is recommended to approve the resignation due to retirement of Kathy Meder, a School Nurse at Economy Elementary, effective June 11, 2021, with regret.

3. Resignation

It is recommended to approve the resignation of Patricia Fronk, an Elementary Speech Teacher, effective August 16, 2021, with regret.

4. Resignation

It is recommended to ratify the resignation of Greg Helsel, the Girls' Soccer Head Coach, effective April 26, 2021, with regret.

5. Resignation

It is recommended to ratify the resignation of Sarah White, the Girls' Assistant Coach, effective April 26, 2021, with regret.

6. Para-Professionals (Teaching-Assistants)

It is recommended to ratify Megan Racioppo as a Para-Educator (Teaching Assistant) at the High School, as per the terms of the Ambridge Area Education Support Professional Association (ESPA/PSEA/NEA), pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening.

Mr. Angus moved to accept items 1-2, seconded by Mr. Metz, vote in favor was unanimous.

X. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Pasquerilla thanked the teachers, nurses and entire staff and appreciates them for all of their hard work. Also, thanked the parents and students who came out to the meeting and to the Board for recognizing the students and thanked their coaches and their teachers, very proud of them.

Mrs. Fischer thanked Mrs. Heim for her work on the Bridger Bulletin. You can find the Bridger Bulletin on the District's website.

Solicitor's Report

No Report

XI. Motion to Adjourn the Voting Meeting

At approximately 7:45 p.m., Ms. Pedigo moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mrs. Kehoe. All in favor.

RECONVENE THE MEET AND DISCUSS

Respectfully Submitted,

Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary

ATTACHMENT

Melinda Arlof
2917 Conway Wallrose Road
Baden

On the agenda this evening, is acceptance of retirement for 5 of our Economy Elementary teachers and our school nurse. Upon seeing the agenda, our parents are very concerned. We would like to be reassured that we will indeed still have these classrooms covered for the 2021-2022 school year.

In February, during the height of Covid, the board voted and passed the end of one of our 5th grade classrooms. Starting next school year, we will have 2 classrooms, with a class size of 28/29 students as of today. I am not sure what the enrollment was exactly in February. But the number TODAY is 28/29 students, that is with students coming back from cyber. I am really not sure how this was decided when no one could even come into our school and physically see 21-25 students in class at one time. We are tight! 5th grade bodies take up more room than the first graders, the desks are spaced out as much as they can be, still not allowing much walking room between them. I am thinking that may even be a fire code violation.

This morning, while parents were reading the agenda, someone mentioned the deletion of the 5th grade class. And it wasn't good. I have been getting calls since 8:30 am, texts, emails, as well as I am sure some came your way. Parents are beyond worried about the education our students will have, the learning environment, and the burn-out of our staff (as you can see from the list of retiring teachers). I have had multiple families already telling me that they will switch into full PA Cyber, leaving Ambridge paying the bill. If I myself, decided that, I would be taking 5 kids out of the Ambridge school district. Many of Economy Elementary families have big families.

We would like for you to reconsider and bring the issue with Economy Elementary fifth grade classroom to the table once again. This year with so many changes and set backs, now is NOT the time to take this classroom away. Not to mention, all the classes after this upcoming 5th grade, are large classes already. 70 at least per grade, so that's 35 students per 5th grade class?

So, once again, we as parents at Economy Elementary would like this brought back to the table and really discussed as a whole. We need to, as a district, come to a cap on what is acceptable as a classroom size.

Lisa Patton
3261 Ridge Road Ext
Freedom, PA

First of all, let me thank you all for volunteering your time to be on the board. It's not something that I am able to commit to. Which is why I was unaware that a 5th grade teacher position was going to be eliminated from Economy. I haven't been checking in to see what has been coming up on the agenda. With that being said, shame on me as a parent. I'm assuming that our student's welfare is the top priority. It doesn't always seem like that is the case. However, that is why I am here now. Most of my son's classmates' parents were not able to come at such a last minute. But I had a free moment to do so.

I am here in response to the board's decision to reduce the number of fifth grade teachers for the 2021-2022 school year at Economy Elementary. I think it is an injustice to these kids for you to cram them into a classroom of 28 students. I have a question for you. Have any of you actually been in our classrooms to see how small they are? There are classes that currently have 25 kids in them with barley any extra stuff in the rooms for the teachers to enrich our children with and you can barely walk from the back of the room to the

front. What is the plan when more students enroll during the school year? Is the plan to squeeze more kids into these two rooms? Redistrict them to State St like has happened in the past? Or is the plan to hire a new unseasoned teacher and then pick and choose which students to put in his or her room? You are going to put a third fifth grade teacher back in rotation during the 2022-2023 school year. So why not keep all three of them there and not create more disruption for these students? What if they bid to another grade of a retired teacher's position and we have to start from scratch for a whole grade level? Have you asked the student's what their thoughts were on being crammed into a class of close to 30?

If you remember the last year, we are living in a pandemic. We all are working our way out of this pandemic but this group lost the last 12 weeks of third grade. That was 12 weeks of instruction that they missed! The teachers did the best that they could despite being thrown at home and rushing to copy things for the two week time period just so that the children had stuff to work on. And then two weeks turned into 12 weeks. They lost a lot of learning during that time frame. They were learning multiplication which was now left to the parents and the fourth grade teachers to deal with. And let's look at this school year. We spent four months only coming to school two days a week and trying to learn from home the other three days. We had the shutdown this year where they were full remote for 2 months! The teachers and the students managed to the best of their ability. I know there is more that they would have learned had they been in all five days. I would like to thank the pandemic for this. When my daughter attended Economy for her fourth grade year, it was a different story. I was shocked at how much they were responsible for. Things that could not have happened this year because they were not even in the building and the technology wasn't cooperating for all with assignments being turned in and vanishing into cyberspace. But we all did the best that we could and accommodated as needed.

We cannot compare the number of students in a fifth grade classroom to a Kindergarten classroom. The Kindergarten classrooms at Economy are much larger than the classrooms for first to fifth grade. It's packed. Plus they are not the same size so there really isn't much of a comparison.

I also want to remind the current school board about the previous school board doing the same thing a few years back. The board cut a fifth grade teacher at Economy due to numbers and to save money. And then had to scramble to get a teacher to fill the third position because they were way over on numbers. Why would you want to repeat the same thing?

Would it not make more sense to keep all three fifth grade teachers at Economy for the next school year to give these students a chance to learn with decent sized classrooms? They will be going to the Middle School the following year and then failed by our district. Are we not tired of hearing about the failures of our district? Wouldn't we want to hear how the district took into account their students and how we can help them to succeed? Are you not tired of sending money to the cyber schools and charter schools? Issues like this are what makes people start to look around at other options. You keep saying, Let's get everyone who goes to Cyber and Charter schools to come back. So let's do it. Make it so they want to come back. Don't make it so they want to find another option.