

Minutes for the Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District held in the High School Cafeteria on Wednesday, September 10, 2025.

I. Mr. Carpenter called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m.

The Meet and Discuss Board Meeting of the Ambridge Area School District is held on Wednesday, September 10, 2025. This meeting is being held to review the agenda for the regular monthly Board Meeting that will be held on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Auditorium.

II. Mr. Carpenter asked all present to rise for the Flag-salute.

III. Mr. Carpenter read the following Notice: 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

Mr. John Carpenter, President
Mrs. Valerie Scott, Vice President
Mrs. Adina Ferragonio
Mrs. Cathy Fischer
Miss Amy Fitsko
Mrs. Mary Jo Kehoe
Mrs. Kelly Romasco
Mr. Matt Zatchey

Others Present:

Dr. Joseph W. Pasquerilla, Superintendent
Dr. Amy Filipowski, Assistant Superintendent
Mrs. Michelle Amadio, Business Manager / Director of Operations
Ms. Megan Turnbull, Solicitor
Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary

V. Mrs. Mueller read the following Sunshine Law

The Board of School Directors held an Executive Session(s) on Wednesday, September 10th to discuss:

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

VI. Correspondence

VII. Amendments to the Agenda/Approval of the Agenda

VIII. Recognition/Presentation

Visitor Bleachers Presentation -Mrs. Amadio

Mrs. Amadio presented a proposal to the district for new visitor stadium bleachers and a replacement for the Quarterback Club concession stand. The presentation included a comparison to similar-sized schools and quotes from two different companies, Keystone Sports Construction and Stadium Solutions.

The board held a lengthy discussion about the visitor stadium bleacher project. Some members expressed a desire for more time and confidence in the project by hiring an architectural company to handle the consulting. The solicitor clarified that if the district chooses to go with a public bid, it will need to be advertised, but using state contracting would allow it to bypass the bidding process.

A key point of discussion was the timeline. The board learned that waiting for an architectural firm could delay the project, whereas using state bidding could allow construction to begin and possibly be completed by spring 2026.

Dr. Pasquerilla, emphasizing the importance of the project, stated he was not trying to rush the decision but felt it was imperative to move forward. He recommended the board vote on the bleacher construction and electrical work in October to avoid further delays in getting visitor-side bleachers and proper lighting for the stadium. He suggested the board could take more time to discuss and weigh options for the Quarterback Club at a later date.

The board reached a consensus to place the bleacher construction and electrical work on the agenda for consideration at next month's meeting. This decision indicates a move toward a formal vote and potential action on the project, rather than continuing with preliminary discussions. This step will allow the board to officially weigh the options presented and make a final decision on how to proceed.

IX. 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.

Josh Gill, Economy Borough

- Urged the board to delay the decision on the bleacher project to allow time to seek out additional bids.
- Questioned why the Chromebooks in item 2 of the Finance and Budget section were not included with the main technology purchase.
- Yearbook Vendor: Asked if the district compared costs from other yearbook vendors besides Jostens.

Cassie Devinney, Economy Borough

- Urged the Board to continue taking time with the bleacher project and to consider the taxpayers' perspective when spending district funds.
- Inquired about the district's fund balance and stressed that education should be prioritized over a sports complex.
- Recommended looking into grants for the bleacher project.

X. LEGISLATIVE ACTION FOR THIS MEETING

Steering and Rules

Mrs. Kehoe

1. Policy 105.1- Curriculum Review by Parents/Guardians and Students – Third and Final Reading

It is recommended, as a third and final reading, to update Policy 105.1 – *Curriculum Review by Parents/Guardians and Students* to ensure that parents/guardians have an opportunity to review instructional material and curriculum.

2. Policy 105.2 – Exemption From Instruction – Third and Final Reading

It is recommended, as a third and final reading, to update Policy 105.2 – *Exemption from Instruction* to update the policy to comply with the requirement of the state Board of Education to assure parents/guardians the right to have their children excused from specific instruction that conflicts with their religious beliefs.

Miss Fitsko moved to approve items 1-2, seconded by Mrs. Fischer. The vote in favor was unanimous.

Personnel

Mrs. Scott

***ALL NEW HIRES, PENDING RECEIPT OF SATISFACTORY AND CURRENT CLEARANCES, SATISFACTORY DRUG SCREENING, TB TESTING, RESPONSES BY CURRENT/FORMER EMPLOYERS TO ACT 168 SCREENING, AND PDE CERTIFICATIONS IF APPLICABLE.**

1. Resignation

It is recommended to approve the resignation of Sarah Schaffer from her position as a Social Worker at Ambridge Area High School and Highland Elementary School, effective September 3, 2025, with regret. The district reserves the right to retain the employee for the sixty (60) day statutory period or until they are relieved of duties, whichever occurs first.

2. Resignation

It is recommended to approve the resignation of Miranda Swartz from her position as an Ambridge Area School District School Psychologist Grades K-12, effective September 10, 2025, with regret. The district reserves the right to retain the employee for the sixty (60) day statutory period or until they are relieved of duties, whichever occurs first.

3. Resignation

It is recommended to approve the resignation of Elizabeth Vincent from her position as a Food Service Worker at State Street Elementary, effective September 5, 2025, with regret.

4. Professional Employee

It is recommended to retroactively hire Lea Ritz as an Ambridge Area Middle School English Teacher at a salary of \$50,981.00 (Step 1, Master), effective September 5, 2025, as per the terms of the Ambridge Area Education Association AAEE/PSEA Agreement, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening, and PDE certifications if applicable.

5. Cafeteria Food Service Union Worker

It is recommended to retroactively hire Ruth Cooper as a Four-Hour Cook at Highland Elementary, effective September 2, 2025, in accordance with the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing, and responses from current or former employers to Act 168 screening.

6. Credit Recovery

It is recommended that the following individuals be approved as instructors for the Credit Recovery Program at the high school. Teachers will be paid as per the collective bargaining agreement.

Pamela Green, Anatomy and Biology
Nicole Tallarico, Social Studies
Christina Briola, English and Social Studies
Shane Newhouse, Social Studies
Kim Bogati, English
Paul Hladio, Physics, General Science, and Math
Kent Withrow, Math
Jodi Musser, Math
Jeffrey Modrovich, Health and Physical Education
Teri Kutzavich, Chemistry

7. High School After-School Detention

It is recommended that the following individuals be approved as supervisors of the after-school detention at the Ambridge Area High School. The teachers will be paid as per the collective bargaining agreement.

Stephen Rodgers
Joie Dusold

8. Department Head

It is recommended to rescind the approval of Stephen Rodgers as the Fine Arts Department Head.

9. Club Sponsorship

It is recommended to rescind Ben Holmes as full sponsorship of the Technology Student Association (TSA) Club and approve a co-sponsorship with Pam Green. A stipend of \$1,350.00 will be split equally between the co-sponsors, with each being paid \$675.00.

10. Posted Positions: Department Heads and Building Heads

It is recommended that the following individuals who have applied for the specified posted positions for the 2025-2026 school year be approved at the salary designated in the negotiated agreement, pending receipt of current clearances and drug screening:

DEPARTMENT HEADS**SALARY****Secondary:**

Math	Jodi Musser	\$1,365.00
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K-12:

Fine Arts	Todd Hartman	\$1,365.00
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11. Posted Positions: Clubs / Activities

It is recommended that the following individuals who have applied for the specified posted positions for the 2025-2026 school year be approved at the rate of pay as per the collective bargaining agreement, provided the school year allows, and sponsors can hold activities as normal.

ACTIVITY/CLUB (High School)**Stipend**

Band 2 nd Assistant	Daphney Tanner	\$3,450.00
Bowling	Jennifer Bohrer (Co-Sponsor)	\$375.00
Ecology Club	Pamela Green	\$470.00
Thespian Club	Michelle Cary (Volunteer)	No Remuneration
Science Club	Robert Prokopchak	\$470.00

12. ABC Transit Bus Driver/Aide

It is recommended to approve the individuals listed as operators, attendants, and maintenance for ABC Transit, Inc. for the 2025-2026 school year, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing, and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening.

Bus Drivers**Van Drivers****Bus Aide**

Glenn Jones

Amie Hutchinson

Silvia Saenz

Brandon Kail

William Reich

Chinua Solomon

Richard Tucker

Jessica Burr

David Tritinger

Jorge Saenz

Silvia Saenz

13. Rescind Coach

It is recommended to rescind Lethera Harrison as the Middle School Girls' Volleyball Coach.

14. 2025-2026 Coaches

It is recommended to ratify that the following individuals be approved to fill the designated coaching positions for the 2025-2026 school year at a salary as per the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, pending receipt of current clearances, satisfactory drug screening, TB testing, and responses by current/former employers to Act 168 screening, provided the school year allows coaches to hold sports as normal.

1) <u>Football</u>	<u>Stipend</u>
a) Craig Wiltrek, Volunteer Coach	No Remuneration
2) <u>Girls' Basketball</u>	
a) Savannah Fischer, Assistant Coach	\$2,410.00
b) James Barton, Assistant Coach	\$2,410.00
3) <u>Boys' Tennis</u>	
a) Ty Baker, Assistant Coach	\$1,050.00
b) Joseph Fortune, Volunteer Coach	No Remuneration

15. Mentor Teacher

It is recommended to approve the following mentor teacher assignment for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 school years, as per the negotiated agreement:

<u>Mentor Teacher</u>	<u>New Teacher</u>
Amy Braund	Lea Ritz

Mrs. Scott moved to approve items 1-15, seconded by Mrs. Romasco. Mrs. Fischer abstained from item 14. 2) a), and Mr. Zatchey voted against Item 14.

XI. COMMITTEE REPORTS (NON-VOTING AGENDA ITEMS)**Education and Technology****Mrs. Romasco**1. 2025 Annual Conference of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA)

It is recommended to approve Celeste Schaltenbrand to attend the 2025 Annual Conference of the American Orff-Schulwerk Association (AOSA). The conference, titled "Connecting in Kentucky," will be held in Lexington, Kentucky, from November 19-22, 2025. This conference is a professional development opportunity for music educators. All expenses (travel, lodging, and meals) are paid per Board Policy 431, Job-Related Expenses. The estimated total cost for this attendance is \$555.00.

2. Technology Purchase

It is recommended to approve a quote from CDW-G to purchase fifty (50) Chromebooks for district employees who provide ACCESS services for the district at a cost of \$24,300.00 through Keystone Contract Pricing. This will be paid for out of ACCESS funds.

3. Caring Foundation Agreement

It is recommended to approve an agreement between the Ambridge Area School District and the Caring Foundation for School-Based Peer Support Groups for Grieving Children. This agreement will be at no cost to the district.

Finance and Budget

Mr. Zatchey

1. School District Monthly Bills and Salaries

It is recommended that the monthly school district bills in the amount of \$2,547,127.47 and the monthly school district personnel salaries in the amount of \$1,032,505.38 be paid.

2. Cafeteria Monthly Bills and Salaries

It is recommended that the monthly cafeteria bills in the amount of \$109,258.85 and the monthly cafeteria personnel salaries in the amount of \$14,793.34 be paid.

3. Jostens' Yearbook Agreement

It is recommended to approve a three (3) year agreement with Jostens' Yearbook to provide yearbook services for the Ambridge Area High School. **Pending Solicitor's review.**

4. Disabled Veterans Tax Exemption

It is recommended to approve the requested real property tax exemption for 403 Golden Grove Road, Economy Borough (Parcel 60-001-0512-000) for 2025 school taxes, as certified by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs letter dated May 16, 2025.

5. Repository Settlement

It is recommended to approve the Sale of Property from the Beaver County Repository of Unsold Property for the following property to be purchased by Ryan Oliver and Michael Pesce:

- a) Tax Parcel 13-003-0314.000, located at 882 Schiller Street, Baden, PA, for the bid amount of \$1,783.10.

6. Tax Exoneration

It is recommended to approve tax exoneration regarding the collection of Real Estate Tax, conditioned upon mutual municipal and county reciprocal exonerations for the same years, relevant to the following property to be purchased by Ryan Oliver and Michal Pesce:

- a) Tax Parcel 13-003-0314.000, 882 Schiller Street, Baden, PA, for the real estate taxes from 1982-2024.

Building and Grounds**Mrs. Ferragonio****1. Rescind**

It is recommended to rescind the approval of a quote from F. Bevilacqua Remodeling to replace the roof of the Quarterback Club Concession Stand, approved at the May 21, 2025, Board Meeting.

Athletics**Mrs. Fischer****Public Relations****Miss Fitsko****Steering and Rules****Mrs. Kehoe****Legislative****Miss Fitsko****1. PSBA Officer Elections**

It is recommended the Board Secretary be directed to cast the vote of the Ambridge Area School Board for the election of the following PSBA Slate of Candidates for 2026:

President-elect: Holly Arnold, Tunkhannock Area School District

Vice President: Matt Vannoy, Sharon City School District

Insurance Trust: Kathy Swope
Roberta Marcus

XII. President's Address

Mr. Carpenter thanked Mrs. Scott for organizing a thoughtful fundraiser for Aliquippa scheduled for the upcoming Friday's football game and also expressed gratitude to everyone who helped. He commented that it was great to see the students and extracurricular activities back in swing for the start of the school year.

Mr. Carpenter also addressed the board's approach to the bleacher project, assuring the public that no one is rushing the decision. He acknowledged past mistakes by previous boards and commended the current board for taking their responsibilities seriously, especially regarding being financially prudent with taxpayer money.

He highlighted a significant achievement: for the first time in a long time, the district's budget was able to add \$2 million to its fund balance. He concluded by commending the current board and administration for making difficult, and at times unpopular, decisions over the last four years, which he believes have led to this financial success. He noted that despite these gains, the district is "still not out of the woods" financially and thanked everyone again for their efforts.

XIII. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Pasquerilla welcomed back the entire staff, students, and parents, thanking them for a great start to the school year. He noted that students seem excited to be back and it's good to see the athletes and band perform.

XIV. Solicitor's Report

Ms. Turnbull spoke about the deliberative legislative process in Harrisburg for school district budgets, commending the board on its **state obligations**.

XV. 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. This period for public comment prior to the standing committee reports will be limited to one-half hour.

Fabiola Gergerich, Ambridge, PA

- Stadium Rental: She referenced a comment from a board member about increasing stadium seating to attract renters and asked if the district's facilities are currently rented out to external groups.
- Technology Purchase: She inquired about which employees the recent technology purchases were for.
- Ms. Gergerich suggested the district's website should list current expenditures and foreseeable needs for the buildings, along with future expenditures.
- Civil Debate: She expressed concern about the decline of civil debate, suggesting that decisions are often based on "motion" rather than "thought and reasoning." She urged the district to incorporate reasoning and thoughtful debate into its academic curriculum.

Dr. Pasquerilla

- stated that the district's spending is publicly available, as the minutes listing all expenditures are posted on the website. He elaborated on his earlier comments regarding the importance of fiscal responsibility, highlighting that the district has managed to negotiate collective bargaining unit contracts without raising taxes.
- He clarified that his recommendation to move forward with the bleacher project is not about rushing, but about proactive planning. He suggested, to the point of Civil Debate, that if the project is delayed and not ready in time, the board could face criticism for not acting sooner. Dr. Pasquerilla reiterated that the board is being mindful of taxpayers and is carefully considering the costs of additional architectural proposals, especially with all collective bargaining units entering contract negotiations soon. He noted that despite these financial

responsibilities, the district has been able to make updates to its buildings without a tax increase for the past five to six years. He concluded by thanking the board for their hard work in achieving the current fund balance.

During a board discussion, Dr. Pasquerilla explained the district's approach to facility rentals. He said that while the district does rent out its facilities, primarily to non-profit organizations, the practice doesn't generate significant profit.

The costs of cleaning, staff supervision, and general wear and tear often outweigh the rental fees. Additionally, scheduling conflicts with district events make renting out facilities a logistical challenge.

Josh Gill, Ambridge

- ABC Transit - expressed disappointment with ABC Transit, stating that despite a presentation last month, the company is still "falling short in many ways." He asked the board when they plan to start considering other options for student transportation, saying that it's unfair to continue with the current problems.
- He reiterated his belief that the board should hold informal town hall meetings with the community in various locations. He feels this would give community members a greater chance to have an impact and engage more directly with the board.

Mrs. Scott

- Expressed her support for the idea of holding town hall meetings. She agreed with the sentiment that these meetings would be a good opportunity to engage with the community directly and gather their ideas.

XVI. Motion to Adjourn

At approximately 9:00 p.m., Miss Fitsko moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mrs. Fischer. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mrs. June Mueller, Board Secretary