

Despite the Snow Day for the district on 1/16/24 the school board held its January voting meeting.

You can find the agenda and soon meeting minutes on the district website but here are some takeaways:

The meeting opened with a reminder that board members met for their first workshop this past weekend where they (again) reviewed climate survey data and that they will 'meet with stakeholders and determine a path forward with that data' which sounds a lot like what was said after the previous board reviewed the staff climate survey data.

Stay tuned for updates on public review of the data that will soon be a year old.

Full staffing updates can be found in the agenda but some notable ones are:

- The retirement of Laura Houghton from the HS at the end of this school year. Best wishes for retirement!
- The resignation of Dr. Steiner from 1st Grade at John Beck sometime before 3/8/24
- The hiring of Hannah Dunnenberger as an additional Kindergarten teacher at Lititz EI in response to enrollment

Congratulations are in order for three teachers whose tenure was approved last night. They are:

- Ashley Driscoll, Learning Support at WHS
- Kristen Bonshock, Intervention Specialist at JRB
- Chris Ferranti, PE teacher at Lititz EI

A calendar update was approved for the upcoming school year that will mean a two-week winter break next year due to the Winter Holidays falling mid week. The District sent the updated calendar out via email to families today.

The District Safety plan as required for ESSER funds we received was approved.

- Several board members expressed that this vote was more about fulfilling requirements based on the prior board's acceptance of ESSER funds than about the plan itself which it was noted will not be required beyond September of 2024.

Which brings us to committee recommendations:

Building & Property did not meet this month but reviewed bids electronically for 3rd party testing on the HS renovation project.

- Hillis-Carnes Engineering Associates was recommended and approved unanimously for that contract.

Education Committee brought 3 recommendations:

- Dual Enrollment agreements with 3 Higher Ed institutions
- An update to a dual enrollment contract needed because two institutions merged

- A recommendation for the WHS School Counseling department to continue to use the Byrnes Center for Health Education to present "Breaking the Silence" to 9th graders to fulfill health requirements.
 - The program was piloted last year with noted success in student growth in learning about Mental Health stigma, common diagnoses and treatments.

The first two recommendations passed unanimously with little discussion but the third one resulted in much discussion and ultimately passed but by a vote of **5 to 4**

- Three dissenting board members expressed concerns over not being able to review the entire program before voting due to the proprietary nature of the information, concerns about the diagnoses and treatments reviewed in the program and an interest in exploring alternatives to the Byrnes Center. The remaining dissenting board member gave no input.
- Families can expect notification of when the program is scheduled and an opportunity to opt out for their student.

Student Activities Committee brought a recommendation to approve a 2-year, ~\$12,000 contract with A Better Way Athletics to provide a platform of training and resources to support coaching staff.

- This recommendation failed by a vote of **4 to 5**.
- This was an item the previous board was considering at the request of the AD. It was presented and discussed in both Student Activities Committee and a Committee of the Whole in which the public was able to hear directly from A Better Way Athletics about the platform.
- The standard contract was 3 years but the company agreed to make an exception for a 2-year contract for Warwick.
- The treasurer was asked for input on the cost of the program and confirmed the district budget could handle the cost. Admin noted the cost equated to an \$80 investment per coach.
- The platform is used by some other districts in the L-L League and apparently board members have asked coaches in those districts about their experience. No formal data on those responses or identification of those individuals were presented.
- Coaches were surveyed recently about the plan and 43 out of 77 coaches responded. The aggregate data from that survey was not shared publicly except in the form of board member takeaways from their review of the data.

4 of the 5 board members that voted NO shared some of their concerns prior to voting. A few were as follows:

- again the inability to review all the program materials before voting given their proprietary nature.
- again a desire to explore alternative programs or ways to meet the coaching needs within the district through mentoring (Although that would also cost the district as an additional responsibility for coaches)

- -an assertion that the program equates to curriculum and therefore needs reviewed in Education Committee. Administration twice took issue with this concept stating the program is for coaches, not students.
- a lack of objective measurement of the program's success

No update was provided from the Legislative Committee Representative despite the major news out of Harrisburg about the long anticipated school funding bill.

To find out more check out the bill itself at the PA General Assembly site or Education Voters of PA.

3 people gave public comment including Kimberly.

Kimberly took time to clarify some conflicting information about Schizophrenia diagnoses in adolescence that came up in discussion of the Byrnes Center program.

She also pointed out that the program includes a valuable and relevant point about the relationship between substance use and mental health conditions. This is a huge issue with the increasing use of synthetic drugs have dramatic and long lasting effects on the brain.

With her remaining time she reiterated a request that the District maintain recordings of board meetings for public viewing. The District IS following current laws requiring meeting minutes and agendas but like other nearby districts they could choose to go above and beyond in the interest of transparency by maintaining recordings.