

OCTORARA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Minutes of Board Meeting Held on January 24, 2022

The regular meeting of the Octorara Area School Board was held in the Octorara Area Jr./Sr. High School Multi-Purpose Room and via Zoom on January 24, 2022. (This meeting was the rescheduled meeting of January 17, 2022 due to inclement weather.)

A moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance preceded the meeting.

The President, Mr. Fox, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Other members present were: Ms. Bowman, Mr. Falgiatore via Zoom, Mr. Ganow, Mr. Hurley, Mr. Koennecker, Mr. Norris, Ms. Yelovich, and Mr. Zimmerman. Also present were Mrs. Hardy, Secretary; Dr. Orner, Superintendent; Mr. Curtis, Business Manager; members of the administrative team; 36 citizens and 91 citizens via Zoom.

The minutes of the Reorganization Meeting of December 6, 2021, the Work Session of December 6, 2021 and the Regular Meeting of December 13, 2021 were approved on motion of Mr. Norris, second by Ms. Yelovich and approval of all members present.

There were no presentations or information items.

The Treasurer's Report, which can be found at the end of these minutes, was approved on motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Mr. Koennecker and approval of all members present. (Appendix A-1/24/22)

A list of bills for the General Fund totaling \$2,648,621.55; Cafeteria Fund totaling \$34,495.95, Capital Projects totaling \$155,251.44, and Capital Reserve totaling \$0.00 of which are attached to these minutes as Appendix B-1/24/22, were approved and ordered paid on motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Ms. Bowman and approval of all members present.

Under visitors' comments for agenda items only, John Nowicki, West Fallowfield Township, offered suggestions on communication and a different approach to disagreements.

Kristin Weber, West Fallowfield Township, said if the mask mandate is not overturned tonight, she will be filing a claim on the insurance company that holds the bonds of the Board treasurer and secretary for deprivation of rights.

John Miller, Parkesburg, said the Board is acting outside their lawful sworn capacity as agents for parents who he believes have been bullied, threatened, intimidated, coerced and put in duress by the Board. He said the Board has sold out to the District and the union.

Melissa Falgiatore, Atglen, said schools that are masking and those that are not masking are very close in numbers. She alleged the Board has sunshine law violations and sneaky executive sessions on open public topics. She announced 16 families are prepared for a class action law suit.

Matthew Taylor, Christiana, believes masks don't work and said he is a supporter of free speech.

Molly Mastrippolito, West Sadsbury Township, asked the Board to allow parents to make the decision that is best for their family. She said her daughter, who has attended several meetings, has learned a lot about what the Board does.

Gloria Lapp, Highland Township, expressed her concerns about masking and said they withdrew some of their children because of the mask mandate.

Ginny Walker, Sadsbury Township, shared a *Community Courier* article where a picture showed kindergarten students in masks and the adults beside them were unmasked. She believes five year old students are not a threat to adults.

Chuck Walcott, West Sadsbury Township, said the Board is neglecting religious beliefs.

Sue Boninu, Parkesburg, requested masking be the choice of the parent. She said teachers have gone too far with knowing who is and who is not vaccinated.

Brittany Hopkins, Christiana, expressed concern about cloth masks and requested masking be the choice of the parent.

Jay Lusby, Parkesburg, requested masking be optional and to focus on the students and make Octorara the District we know it can be.

The following items were approved on motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Mr. Zimmerman and approval of all members present:

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Opt Out Resolution for the 2022-2023 budget process. (Appendix C-1/24/22)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the annual fiscal audit report of the District for the year ending June 30, 2021 as prepared by the auditing firm of Herbein & Company. (Appendix D-1/24/22)

Mr. Hurley motioned, second by Mr. Ganow that the Octorara Board of School Directors approve a revision to the Health and Safety Plan that replaces the current language regarding masking with the language used in the August 17, 2021 Health and Safety Plan, that masks are recommended but not required.

After extensive Board discussion, on motion of Ms. Bowman, second by Mr. Norris the Octorara Board of School Directors approved, by a roll call vote with 5 yes and 4 no, to amend the motion to approve a revision to the Health and Safety Plan that replaces the current language regarding masking with the language used in the August 17, 2021 Health and Safety Plan, that masks are recommended but not required. (Ms. Bowman, Mr. Fox, Mr. Koennecker, Mr. Norris, and Ms. Yelovich voted yes; Mr. Falgiatore, Mr. Ganow, Mr. Hurley, and Mr. Zimmerman voted no.)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved, by a roll call vote with 6 yes and 3 no, a revision to the Health and Safety Plan that replaces the current language regarding masking with the language used in the August 17, 2021 Health and Safety Plan, that masks are recommended but not required effective February 28, 2022. (Ms. Bowman, Mr. Fox, Mr. Ganow, Mr. Koennecker, Mr. Norris, and Ms. Yelovich voted yes; Mr. Falgiatore, Mr. Hurley, and Mr. Zimmerman voted no.)

The following items were approved on motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Mr. Norris and approval of all members present:

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the following policies, first reading:

- 810.3 *District Vehicle Drivers*
- 816 *District Social Media*
- 818 *Contracted Services personnel*
- 819 *Suicide Awareness, Prevention and Response*
- 822 *Automated External Defibrillator (AED)/Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)*
- 823 *Naloxone*
- 824 *Maintaining Professional Adult/Student Boundaries*
- 827 *Conflict of Interest*
- 828 *Fraud*

(Appendix E-1/24/22)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the student activity club “Secular Student Alliance” at the Octorara Jr./Sr. High School. (Appendix F-1/24/22)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the student activity club “Craft Club” at the Octorara Jr./Sr. High School. (Appendix G-1/24/22)

The Octorara Board of School Directors extended the sabbatical leave for Mr. Nick Kluge through the end of the 2021-2022 school year. (Mr. Kluge is a learning support teacher at the Octorara Elementary School and was originally approved for a first semester sabbatical.)

The Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Ms. Sandy Affourtit as a cafeteria employee effective October 22, 2021. (Hired August 16, 2021)

The Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Ms. Stormy Umble as a cafeteria employee effective October 13, 2021. (Hired October 18, 2021-started employment September 27, 2021)

The Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Mr. Jeff Milligan as varsity girls’ soccer coach effective December 19, 2021. (Hired for the 2019-2020 school year)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved Ms. Karlie DeCola as a long-term substitute sixth grade teacher at the Octorara Intermediate School effective December 20, 2021 through approximately March 4, 2022 pending completion of employee related documents required by law and the District. Ms. DeCola’s rate will be \$150 per day. (Replacing Melissa Fanelli who transferred.)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved Ms. Rhonda Stoltzfus as a long-term substitute math teacher at the Octorara Jr./Sr. High School effective January 3, 2022 through May 16, 2022. Ms. Stoltzfus’ salary will be \$53,267 pro-rated. (Ms. Stoltzfus is an approved substitute and is replacing Katherine Westervelt who is on sabbatical leave.)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the extension of Ms. Caitlyn Cressman as a long-term substitute learning support teacher at the Octorara Elementary School through the end of the 2021-2022 school year. Ms. Cressman’s salary will be \$53,267 pro-rated. (Ms. Cressman was originally approved through January 17, 2022 and is replacing Nick Kluge who is on sabbatical leave.)

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the extension of Ms. Amber Lowe as a long-term substitute guidance counselor at the Octorara Jr./Sr. High School through February 14, 2022. (Ms. Lowe was originally approved through January 14, 2022 and is replacing a medical leave.

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the following substitute teachers for the 2021-2022 school year:

- Angela Christou, 60 Credits
- Jule Ann Wakeman, Emergency Permit
- Matthew Carstens, Emergency Permit
- Beth Mulhollan, Elementary K-6
- Emily Wheeler, Emergency Permit
- Cheryl Coughlin, 60 Credits
- Amy Hollingsworth, 60 Credits
- Ida Babiak, 3+ Years Experience
- Esmeralda Oseguera, 60 Credits

The Octorara Board of School Directors approved the following supplemental contract for the 2021-2022 school year:

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------|
| Catherine Smith | Mentor Amanda Hegarty | 1.3 pts. @ \$620 | \$806 |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------|-------|

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------------------------|----------------|---------|
| Haley Neff | Head Varsity Softball Coach | 7 pts. @ \$620 | \$4,340 |
| Ashley Antosh | Assistant Varsity Softball Coach | 6 pts. @ \$620 | \$3,720 |
| Matthew Carr | Assistant Varsity Baseball Coach | 6 pts. @ \$620 | \$3,720 |

On motion of Mr. Norris, second by Mr. Ganow and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors accepted, with regret, the resignation of Ms. Frances Propper as an autism/emotional support teacher at the Octorara Intermediate School effective TBD. (Hired January 3, 2005)

On motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Ms. Bowman and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the release of the following cafeteria employees:
 Bianca Adorno – effective November 15, 2021 (Hired November 15, 2021)
 Travis Compton – effective December 31, 2021 (Hired November 15, 2021)

On motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Mr. Norris and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the following change in salary due to graduate credits earned:
 Anthony Slusher From M+15 (\$67,108) to M+30 (\$69,034) Step 12 to MAX

On motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Mr. Koennecker and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Ms. Bianca Cortez as an instructional assistant at the Octorara Primary Learning Center effective January 10, 2022. (Hired August 23, 2021)

On motion of Ms. Bowman, second by Mr. Koennecker and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Ms. Jessica Compton as an instructional assistant at the Octorara Elementary School effective January 8, 2022. (Hired August 16, 2021)

On motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Mr. Koennecker and approval of all members present except Mr. Hurley who abstained, the Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Ms. Shelly Hurley as a CTE instructional assistant at the Octorara Jr./Sr. High School effective February 11, 2022. (Hired August 19, 2019)

On motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Mr. Koennecker and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors accepted the resignation of Ms. Haley Neff as assistant varsity softball coach at the Octorara Jr./Sr. High School effective January 19, 2022. (Ms. Neff is transferring to head varsity softball coach upon Board approval of agenda item “P”.)

On motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Ms. Bowman and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved a sabbatical leave for Mr. Dean Bicking for the second semester of the 2021-2022 school year. Mr. Bicking is a technology education teacher at the Octorara Elementary and Intermediate Schools.

On motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Mr. Norris and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Service Agreement between the Octorara Area School District and the Chester County Intermediate Unit for a review of the K-12 implementation of the Multi-Tiered System of Support Framework and the K-12 English Language Development Program for English Learner students. (Appendix H-1/24/22)

On motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Ms. Bowman and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Waiver Agreement for student “A”. (Appendix I-1/24/22)

On motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Ms. Yelovich and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Settlement Agreement for student “B”. (Appendix J-1/24/22)

On motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Mr. Norris and approval of all members present the Octorara Board of School Directors approved the Waiver Agreement for student "C". (Appendix K-1/24/22)

Under the Policy Committee Report, Ms. Bowman reported the Committee discussed the first reading policies on tonight's agenda.

Under the CCIU Board Representative Report, Mr. Norris reported there was no meeting in December. He will report on January's meeting next month.

There were no items of old business, new business, or other items or announcements.

Under visitors' comments for items in general, Craig Fackler, Highland Township, read portions of Board policy 903 *Public Participation in Board Meetings* regarding the length of time the public has to speak during visitors' comments.

Mr. Fox replied the Board made a motion and amended the policy to allow three minutes per speaker.

Dave Lapp, West Sadsbury Township, said he knows of staff that are being harassed for standing up against "this nonsense". He said the CDC is not a governing body and they do not create laws we have to follow. He expressed concerns with the Special Education Department and his son.

Kelly O'Donnell, West Fallowfield Township, expressed concern about the pay of the aides.

Melissa Falgiatore, Atglen, said her daughters were disciplined on December 13. She discussed Board respect, complaints and lawsuits being filed, alleged lies and cover up in administration, special education, air scrubbers, and requested the District lawyer be present at Board meetings.

John Nowicki, West Fallowfield Township, appealed to reason through communication. He requested time with the Board to discuss communication and a different approach to disagreements. He shared stories of students showing kindness to others.

Christina Kostyk, Londonderry Township, requested masking be the parent's choice. She said she pulled her children from the District because of the mask mandate and failing education.

Curt Hershey, West Sadsbury Township, expressed concerns with the Special Education Department and his sons. He said they are looking at other options for their sons.

Melanie Lowry, Sadsbury Township, thinks the Board is pushing their political agenda on parents and we are failing to educate the children. She said Covid and the flu are not going anywhere and people should use proper etiquette when they are sick.

Molly Mastrippolito, West Sadsbury Township, expressed disappointment with the date and said it is unfair there is not a religious exemption for families. She expressed concern with the Special Education Department.

Kara Bortner, Parkesburg, believes the February 28 date will be pushed back and students will be wearing masks all year. She shared the definition of the word "coward" from the Oxford dictionary. She expressed her concerns with masking.

Deborah Watters, West Fallowfield Township, expressed her concerns with mask wearing.

Under administrator comments and announcements, Ms. Lease announced over 30 families participated in the kindergarten meet and greet held last week. The next incoming kindergarten activity is February 16. Ms. Lease announced the new PTO officers and thanked previous officers for their service.

Dr. Propper sadly announced the passing of two Octorara Braves recently. Student Nathan Mann died last week as a result of suicide. Nathan was a fantastic student and will be missed. A tribute to Nathan will be held in the future.

Mr. Kenneth Gary Wetzel passed away on January 9. Mr. Wetzel was a District teacher for 33 years and boys' basketball coach for 30 years. Mr. Wetzel loved teaching and coaching

A moment of silence was held for Nathan Mann and Mr. Wetzel.

Dr. Orner said she appreciates the direction of the Board. She said the misconception that administration is doing whatever they want to do without the direction of the Board is not true. She thanked staff for helping administration cover classes and thanked the students for supporting the Health and Safety Plan. Dr. Orner thanked the school community for their support of the Mann family.

Under Board comments, in response to the concern over pay for the aides, Ms. Bowman said their pay is contracted and the Board is aware of the low pay. In response to the concerns in the Special Education Department, she said if anyone has an issue, they should go to the administrator or teacher and make them aware of your concerns. She said she was not present at the December 13 meeting where a speaker referenced a comment Ms. Bowman made. The speaker then made a connection to requiring facial masks in schools to requiring Jewish people in Nazi Germany to wear yellow stars. Ms. Bowman said she strongly disagrees with that comparison, does not support that view, and finds the comparison offensive.

Mr. Falgiatore asked if teachers are aware of who has mask exemptions. Dr. Orner replied they are. He asked if the nurses will be expected to contact trace since the Health Department is no longer doing it. Dr. Orner replied no contact tracing will be done in school. Nurses will still support parents who call in and ask for help.

Mr. Hurley said he hopes the Board considers relaxing the date if conditions change for the better sooner. He reminded anyone who thinks he does not care about the health and welfare of students and staff that his wife and daughter are in the building every day. Mr. Hurley said he will respect the decision of the Board.

Mr. Zimmerman expressed his concern with the mental health of the students and suggested hiring a licensed psychiatrist who is not a counselor or teacher – someone the students can go to that they feel comfortable talking to who are not associated with them every year.

Mr. Fox requested the following letter he received referencing the December 13 meeting be added to the minutes:

“To the Octorara Area School Board,

As a Jewish member of the OASD community, I find it necessary to speak out against a comparison that was made at the board meeting held on December 13, 2021. To imply that requiring students and staff to wear masks in schools is the same thing as requiring Jewish people to wear a yellow star in Nazi Germany is insensitive and, quite frankly, ignorant.

First, the yellow stars Jews were forced to wear in Nazi Germany were about labeling communities so that they could easily be moved from their homes to ghettos to camps to gas chambers and crematoria. This is far different than asking students and staff to wear masks to protect the larger community from a deadly virus.

Second, the tragic irony in Wiesel's memoir of his father's words regarding the yellow star had nothing to do with challenging the Nazi government. Wiesel's intent was to point out the truly horrific depravity the Jews, the German citizens, and the world did not believe Hitler and the Nazis were actually capable of. No one predicted that registering as a Jew would eventually lead them to their deaths in some of the most inhumane ways. Wiesel is not condemning his father because his father did not challenge the order to wear the yellow star.

Third, to invoke the suffering of millions to forward your own agenda is irresponsible. No physical harm comes to those who wear masks for less than 7 hours a day. 6 million were dehumanized and killed after they were forced to wear the yellow star. To align the extermination of 13 million people with the need to wear masks maligns the sacrifices of those who perished and those who survived. It mocks their memory and dishonors their stories.

To draw the comparison is an insult to the Jewish community. It minimizes the suffering of those who died and those who lived to testify. The loss of life in Nazi Germany was unfathomable. Families torn apart. Human beings treated like animals. Women raped. Men abused. Infants used as target practice. These are pains the Jewish community carries with it throughout the world. Jews weep for the towns that were annihilated. Descendents mourn their loved ones who have no graves or headstones.

To say nothing when the remark is said intentionally to incite an emotional argument is wrong. To stay silent when somebody makes such an ignorant comment is a sin. As a school community, we must teach our students that to draw such parallels must be done carefully, knowledgeably, and sensitively. When such parallels are inappropriate, we must teach our students to speak up against that misinformation. THAT is what Wiesel would have wanted.

I am grateful to Brian Norris who went on record and spoke out against the offensive remark. I ask the Board to go further to condemn the comparison and to make it clear that such ignorance will not be tolerated.”

Mr. Fox announced the following executive sessions held recently:

- January 3, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. for personnel and security
- January 10, 2022 at 6:50 p.m. for legal
- January 24, 2022 at 6:45 p.m. for personnel

Mr. Fox announced the following upcoming meetings:

Executive Session for Legal - Monday, January 24, 2022 - Following the Regular Meeting in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room

Education Committee Meeting – Monday, January 31, 2022 – 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room

Policy Committee Meeting – Monday, February 14, 2022 – 5:30 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room

Facility Committee Meeting – Monday, February 14, 2022 – 6:30 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room

Next regularly scheduled Work Session – Monday, February 14, 2022 – 7:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room/Zoom

Finance Committee Meeting – Monday, February 21, 2022 – 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room

Next regularly scheduled Board Meeting – Monday, February 21, 2022 – 7:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room/Zoom

Education Committee Meeting – Monday, February 28, 2022 – 6:00 p.m. in the Jr. High School Multi-Purpose Room

There being no further items of business the meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m. on motion of Mr. Ganow, second by Mr. Norris and approval of all members present.

This Board meeting can be viewed in its entirety at www.youtube.com/user/OctoraraAreaSD.

**TREASURER'S REPORT
OCTORARA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
STATEMENT OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS
GENERAL FUND
2021-2022**

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| <u>Cash Balance as of November 30, 2021</u> | | \$ | 2,061,944.66 |
| <u>Receipts Deposited:</u> | | | |
| Revenue - (Tax Receipts, State Transfers) | \$ | | 2,924,614.60 |
| Other Receipts - (Retiree Medical Payments, Misc.) | | | 7,926.21 |
| Checking Account Interest | | | 15.64 |
| Accounts Receivable | | | 100,016.78 |
| Transfer in from Investments | | | 4,000,000.00 |
| | | | 7,032,573.23 |
| Total Available | | \$ | 9,094,517.89 |
| <u>Disbursements:</u> | | | |
| Net Payroll | \$ | | 1,099,244.10 |
| Accounts Payable | | | 4,936,032.45 |
| Transfer to Investments | | | - |
| | | | 6,035,276.55 |
| General Fund Cash as of December 31, 2021 | | \$ | 3,059,241.34 |
| <u>Investments Outstanding</u> | | | |
| Beginning Balance PSDLAF Investment Account | | \$ | 9,427,330.79 |
| Beginning Balance Fulton Money Market | | | 28,291,319.24 |
| Earnings on PSDLAF Investment Account | | | 31.80 |
| Earnings on Fulton Money Market | | | 227.07 |
| Net Transfers | | | (4,000,000.00) |
| | | | - |
| Total General Fund Cash and Investments as of December 31, 2021 | | \$ | 36,778,150.24 |

For the January 17th, 2022 Regular Board Meeting

Respectfully submitted,

Jill L. Hardy, Secretary
Octorara Board of School Directors