

MUHLENBERG SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes  
January 10, 2024  
Lecture Hall, Muhlenberg High School  
[www.muhsdk12.org](http://www.muhsdk12.org)

**Call to Order**

The Committee of the Whole Meeting of the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District was called to order on Thursday, January 10, 2024 at 6:30 PM by Board Vice President, Mrs. Kristyna Eagle.

**Members Present**

Vice President – Mrs. Kristyna Eagle  
Treasurer - Mr. Miguel Vasquez  
Secretary – Mrs. Cindy L. Mengle  
Assistant Secretary – Ms. Janet Howard  
Member – Mr. Andrew L. Eaton, Sr.  
Member – Mr. Ronald J. Haas, Sr.  
Member – Mr. S. Wayne Hardy  
Member – Mr. Otto W. Voit, III  
Solicitor – Mr. Brian F. Boland, Esq.  
Recording Secretary – Mrs. Tara L. Flowers

**Members Absent**

President – Mr. Garrett E. Hyneman

**Administration Present**

Superintendent – Dr. Joseph E. Macharola  
Assistant Superintendent - Dr. Alan S. Futrick  
Business Manager- Shane M. Mathias, CPA  
Assistant Business Manager - Susan Hawkins  
Director of Physical Plant – Mr. Ken Patterson  
Director of Federal Programs - Dr. Cathy Shappell  
Director of Special Education - Ms. Nicole Huntbach  
Supervisor of Special Education - Ms. Lori Morris  
Supervisor of Special Education - Dr. Janet Heilman  
Director of Human Resources - Dr. Jessica Heffner  
Licensed Behavior Specialist - Mr. Zachariah Milch  
Director of Technology - Mr. Daniel Houck  
Director of Food Services - Mr. Carey Kline  
Athletic Director - Dr. Timothy Moyer  
Community & Family Outreach Coord. & Distr. Interpreter – Ms. Elizabeth Laviena  
High School Principal - Mr. Haniff Skeete  
High School Assistant Principal - Ms. Julianna Ciccarelli  
High School Assistant Principal - Mr. Aaron Kopetsky  
Junior High School Principal - Mr. Steve Baylor  
Junior High School Assistant Principal - Mr. Daniel Kramer  
Junior High School Assistant Principal - Ms. Jennifer Doyle

C.E. Cole Intermediate Principal - Mr. Christopher Becker  
C.E. Cole Intermediate Assistant Principal - Ms. Jaclyn Bellanca  
C.E. Cole Intermediate Assistant Principal - Mr. Joseph Scoboria  
Elementary Principal - Mr. Kyle Crater  
Elementary Assistant Principal - Ms. Ginny Hornberger  
Social Worker - Ms. Liliana Moore  
Social Worker - Ms. Emily Carmichael

### **Visitors**

Diane Benson	Morgan Wenzel
Linda Roebuck	Marina Parznik
Melissa Carroll	Marc Wolfe
Mrs. Iannacchino	Nick Gehringer
Mia Innacchino	Richard Hoffmaster
Darnell Robles	Michelle Eaton
Jessenia Saunders	Andrew Eaton, Jr.

### **Educational Presentations**

- A. C.E. Cole Intermediate Student Council - Ms. Mia Iannacchino, Mr. Darnell Robles, Ms. Jessenia Saunders, Ms. Morgan Wenzel and Ms. Marina Parznik

Ms. Iannacchino reported:

She introduced herself as the President of the student council and in 6th grade. Student council meets the first and last Tuesday of every month to discuss students' concerns and ideas to vote on them. As a student council representative they are expected to follow their COLEture cornerstones everyday inside and outside of school. The COLEture cornerstones are respect, responsibility, readiness, and resilience. They have done more fundraising this year to be able to go on more field trips, have fun activities during the school year and hopefully order their 2023-24 shirts for their field trips. Tonight her fellow officers and she will be informing everyone of things that they have done to make their school and community a better place. In October, they readied \$745 for Breast Cancer Support Services at Berks County. Any staff who donated to their pajama/comfy day was given a pink wristband to show support. On October 2 they honored their custodian for national custodian day having donuts for breakfast. They started their fundraising with Joe Corbis and Panera. They hosted Panera Night in October, the night of the homecoming game and were able to raise money for the student council just by enjoying a nice night out to eat with their families. This money helps for activities and for field trips for all grades at C.E. Cole. In October they were given a chance to walk in the Temple Halloween Parade, this was so much fun as they even got to dress up with a theme: Rock n' Roll. In November, they opened COLEmart, their school store, which provides fun things for her fellow students such as smelly pencils, fun erasers, stress balls, Christmas Grinch mystery bags and water bottles just like the ones they provided to the board members tonight. The school store is run by their student council representatives and officers. In November they voted to sell Philly Pretzels at school lunch in their

cafeteria. After they were done eating their lunch, they were able to enjoy a Philly Pretzel for \$1 each and are looking forward to having another one soon. They ran a Penny War Fundraiser which they really had fun doing. Penny Wars is when they put their change into their grade levels jar. Pennies and dollar bills are positive points and also coins are negative. Whichever grade got the most positive points won an ice cream sundae party. They even got to run their refreshment table at parent conferences and sold candy grams and offered free coffee, tea and snacks for parents.

Mr. Robles reported:

He introduced himself as the Vice President of C.E. Cole student council. In December they hosted their second holiday shop which was made possible by the generous volunteers who helped during the school day. Students could shop for Christmas presents for their families. Student council also sold and delivered candy canes 2 for \$1. They are proud to let everyone know that all of their field trips have already been paid for by all the fundraisers they have done so far this year. January is thank you month and National School Board Appreciation Month, thank you school board members. They honored their school board members with their C.E. Cole water bottles and chocolates to thank all of their hard work they do at Muhlenberg. During their January meeting they were able to participate in their version of Shark Tank. They planned as groups and drew products to try to sell to the "Sharks" who are their co-advisors. This activity taught them about confidence and leadership. As a leader it is important to know how to sell yourself to others. Sometimes being ready to talk about your strengths and creativity like the companies doing Shark Tank. They are really looking forward to their first Glow Danceathon in a few weeks which they will enjoy during their specials. In February, they will complete a random act of kindness activity for No Place for Hate, however they are unsure what that will be. They will be voting at their next student council meeting. Their winter social is scheduled for February which they chose Winter Wonderland as their theme. They are looking forward to voting on fun activities and snacks they will have. In honor of National Counselors Week, they will honor their school counselors by decorating their doors and hallways. Also for February, the student council will complete their project called "Bigs and Littles" where they will get to help out in MEC classrooms or write encouraging letters to those classes. They are looking forward to hosting their first spaghetti dinner in February or March.

Ms. Saunders reported:

She introduced herself as a 5th grader and the secretary of the C.E. Cole student council. In March, they will hold a schoolwide March Madness bracket to match with the NCAA March Madness basketball tournament. Every homeroom will be able to pick a team and the winner of the brackets will win an extra recess, pizza party with the principals. In march with the amazing help of their art teacher Ms. McGowan, the Arts to Remember are able to create art and give their parents an opportunity to purchase art of things like key chains and a mug. In April, they are

looking forward to their second annual Krispy Kreme Fundraiser. As always they will be rewarding the highest selling homeroom with the opportunity to silly string Ms. Bellanca, Mr. Scoboria, Mr. Becker and even Mr. Reininger. For Earth Day, they will be painting rocks and decorating their courtyard with a new garden. The 4th graders get to visit the Lehigh Valley Zoo, the 5th graders get to visit the Reading Public Museum and the 6th graders get to go to the Reading Fightin Phils game for a field trip. In May, they will get to guide the 3rd graders around C.E. Cole. They are really excited to celebrate student council at the end of the year picnic where they will give fun awards and an ice cream sundae party. Being a part of the student council they will get to help choose spirit days such as Dress Like a Teacher, help give back to their classmates and school while building a relationship making their school a more fun and exciting place every day.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

*Dr. Macharola thanked the students for their wonderful presentations. Mrs. Eagle thanked the students for fundraising for breast cancer awareness as she is a survivor and how much she appreciates their efforts. Mr. Voit spoke about each of the students being an officer of their student council and asked them what got them interested in student council and how did they go about running for their offices. Ms. Iannacchino responded that she wanted to help her school to be a better place and she could be a part of making that happen. Ms. Iannachino advised they had to make Google Slides for their campaign for offices. Mr. Robles spoke about being interested in this since he was little and since he got an opportunity to run for office this year he took advantage of it. He talked about how wanting to support the school and make it a better place. Ms. Saunders talked about wanting to try something different and not just being a regular student. Mr. Voit congratulated everyone on their extra effort and spoke about what they are doing to help create this society; and those that participate in it, they are giving back to the community. Mrs. Eagle spoke about being a counselor in another district and encouraging these students to stick with the student council all the way through school. She spoke about having other interests, however if they stay with the student council this will help them all throughout their schooling. Mr. Eaton asked the students what has been so far the biggest benefit from participating in the student council. Ms. Iannacchino talked about helping to choose the spirit days such as Dress Like a Teacher Day. Ms. Howard spoke to the students about when they are gearing up to be a leader, whether the school or community, there are going to be some things that make them nervous or scared, she wanted to encourage them to "lean into that" meaning don't run away from it. She talked about understanding that everyone is a human being, everyone feels those same feelings, and to be willing to make themselves vulnerable that way. Ms. Howard also spoke about getting "solid" on whose opinions matter, whether that's a parent or a particular mentor, whoever it is to stay focused on the people that matter. Mr. Haas asked the students what other interests they have such as sports and clubs. The students responded they did. Mr. Haas talked about staying diverse within the district and not just sticking to one program and carrying this all through their school days from here to the end. He advised they will benefit from it. Dr. Macharola talked about how proud he was for each student and how each of them did an amazing job*

*presenting this evening. He also thanked them for recognizing the Board with the gifts from the student council.*

B. School Director Recognition Month - Dr. Joseph E. Macharola

Dr. Macharola spoke about this month of January being School Director Recognition Month and he wanted to take a moment to recognize the District's school board members. Dr. Macharola also wanted to recognize a former board member here this evening, Muhlenberg Township Commissioner Mr. Richard E. Hoffmaster. He spoke about Mr. Hoffmaster who swore into commissioner Monday evening, and it was a joy to be there to witness this as he knows that Mr. Hoffmaster will do an incredible job there. Mr. Hoffmaster thanked everyone for what they have done for him. He spoke about how he has met some great people, how he got into politics, and about how his life has changed being in the board for around thirty years. Mr. Hoffmaster talked about all the current board members right now are "for the kids" and this is great. He spoke about how the District has a friend down in the township and this will continue. Mr. Voit spoke about being on the board for twenty-four years and with Mr. Hoffmaster for many years, how Mr. Hoffmaster has helped him on the board and they have become great friends. He talked about not knowing anyone better in the community who has a heart of gold and wants to help everyone in the community. He talked about how honored he is to fill Mr. Hoffmaster's term for the next two years; and thanked Mr. Hoffmaster for his service. Mrs. Eagle also thanked Mr. Hoffmaster for his support and encouragement from day one as it was very much appreciated. Mr. Hardy spoke about how long his day goes back with Mr. Hoffmaster with M.T.A.A. baseball days and thanked him.

Dr. Macharola said nine out of every ten students in the United States attend public schools. Therefore, access to high-quality public education is crucial not only for our children's success, but for the strength of our society. He said it takes a team of dedicated people – teachers, administrators, staff, parents and other community members – to provide that education. The nine members of the District's school board are a part of a key team together, making informed decisions that shape public schools. January is designated School Director Recognition Month – a time for us to celebrate and recognize the challenging and vital work boards do on behalf of students, schools and families. On average, school directors devote up to ten hours per month to the complex responsibilities of board business, including adopting policy and voting on budgets, and many other important decisions that have to be made.

The impact of the coronavirus pandemic has certainly added an additional challenge to school boards, as he is grateful for the leadership that Mr. Hardy

provided during COVID, it was a lot of pressure on the entire school board. The District is still dealing with issues from the coronavirus but it definitely provided a forum to address the needs of the District's students and families, especially now in the environment in which everyone lives. From navigating virtual board meetings to supplying students with needed food, which the District did a phenomenal job providing families with thousands of meals, from technology to remote instruction the District's Board was tasked with making critical decisions; The District's Board supported the decisions that were made and they did it with the best information was available to the District at that time. Board service is an unpaid position, and a majority of the school directors cite the desire to give back to the community and to contribute to public education as their main motive for their service here in Muhlenberg.

As locally elected officials, school directors are invested in their communities. He discussed this being as true with the current Board as they deliberate, they discuss, and there are moments that they come together as a family. They are our truly neighbors, friends, local leaders, parents and engaged citizens. On Dr. Macharola's behalf, he would like to ask everyone this month to help recognize these public servants. Please take a moment to share your gratitude for the Muhlenberg School District board members. Dr. Macharola said it is a real joy to work with them and if given an opportunity to express gratitude for their time and efforts on behalf of the District's community. The job they do ensures the District's schools and continuance to provide opportunities and successes for every student, even in unprecedented circumstances. On his behalf, he would like to thank the nine board members, and the District's Solicitors, for advocating on the collective interest and benefit of the District's children and community. Dr. Macharola asked for a round of applause for the Muhlenberg School District board members.

C. Physical Plant Update - Mr. Ken Patterson

Mr. Patterson reported:

- Maintenance and Custodial Staff update - Maintenance crews both inside and outside took advantage of the holiday break painting some small office areas in the high school and Blue Center, emptied out what was a storage area in the high school so it could be converted into usable classroom space, and take care of the winter HVAC filter changes throughout the campus. They also, along with the custodial crew, cleaned up the District's first winter snow event as well. Custodial crews over the break worked on cleaning and sealing the flooring and the fourth grade learning labs. In addition, custodial crews continue to play their part in helping orchestrate winter sports and community activities as well as continuing doing a great job keeping the District's building clean and safe. Maintenance staff has also been busy completing work orders from the staff.

- Summary of Phase 1 Capital Projects progress - Phase 1 of the MSD capital campaign consists of four projects staged in a manner that allows for continued use of the campus facilities while the projects are being completed. The first project is the installation of the turf on the stadium football field. Project is ready to be sent out for requests for proposals from vendors associated with KPN and other purchasing co-ops. If everything stays on track, they hope to have a resolution for this project at the February board meeting. Targeting completion would be the beginning of August of 2024. The second project involves parking lot expansion and access road construction at the MEC and C.E. Cole campus. This project is needed to help alleviate the safety and traffic concerns on Kutztown Road and Sharp Avenue related to parent pickup and drop off, along with providing the additional parking for parents and staff. The engineering study is complete and submission to PennDot for review and approval is underway. The District is looking to send out a request for proposals from purchasing co-ops in the next few weeks; hopefully board action at the April board meeting on that particular project. This project would begin in June with an expected completion by the start of the 2024-2025 school year. The third project is the multi-sport complex behind the high school. This is needed for the District's students and community because the eventual new grade 5-6 building will be constructed on the current JV baseball field, which is field 6. This complex will accommodate nine different sports teams as well as band practice, recess and gym activities. The project should be ready to send out requests for proposals from vendors, again associated with KPN and other purchasing co-ops by the end of March with board action hopefully in April. Expected start for this project is in June with completion by the end of September, early October. The final project in Phase 1 is the actual construction of the new grade 5-6 building, design and development of this phase is to be completed by the end of January. Construction drawings will begin in February and looking to bid the project in the summer with a construction start date of the fall. When the new multi-sport complex is complete, the new building would have a completion of July of 2026. As part of this phase, there will also be a resolution on the February board meeting agenda to approve and authorize an Act 34 meeting which then would be scheduled for March. This is a requirement for the construction of a new building.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

*Mr. Eaton questioned if there will be a virtual rendering going out to the public. Mr. Patterson advised this will happen at the Act 34 hearing, there will be a 3-D model of what it is going to look like. Mr. Boland talked about the Act 34 hearing being where after justifying the projects in terms of the educational needs, sue to student population and then going over what the financing will look like, what the different proposals were, different projects and why the District settled on certain projects. In general the Act 34 hearing is a justification of the projects to the public following a very strict procedure, they will also publish a booklet.*

D. First Reading of Policies - Dr. Joseph E. Macharola

Policy No. 200, *Enrollment*

Purpose

Policy 200 was updated to include the requirements for advanced enrollment of children of military families and to incorporate references to the Compact and Policy 254. Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

In addition to the changes noted above, we wanted to notify you that the PA Department of Education (PDE) issued a policy change in August through a PennLink, stating that students entitled to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) under IDEA may remain enrolled in school until they turn 22 years of age; this was part of a settlement agreement that PDE had reached. There have not been changes to School Code or State Board of Education Regulations regarding a change in age eligibility for students.

*Policy 200 is mandated to comply with state law and regulations.*

Policy No. 202, *Eligibility of Nonresident Students*

Purpose

Policy 202 updated to include the requirements for advanced enrollment of children of military families and to incorporate references to the Compact and Policy 254. Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

*Policy 202 is mandated to comply with state law and regulations.*

Policy No. 217, *Graduation*

Purpose

Policy 217 was updated to include the requirements for advanced enrollment of children of military families and to incorporate references to the Compact and Policy 254. Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

*Policy 217 is recommended for legal liability purposes regarding adoption and posting of graduation requirements in compliance with state law and regulations.*

Policy No. 254, *Educational Opportunity for Military Children*

Purpose

Policy 254 is a newly developed policy to address both the Compact regarding educational opportunity for military children and the PA School Code regarding advanced enrollment requirements for military children.

Policy No. 610, *Purchases Subject to Bid/Quotation*



Purpose

Policy 610 was updated to meet auditing needs. Effective January 1, 2024 - Each year, the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry is required by law to publish changes to the base amounts triggering the requirement for public, telephonic bids or separate bids for certain contracts, or both. These changes are based on the Consumer Price Index and are published annually in the PA Bulletin.

Policy No. 810, *Transportation*

Purpose

Policy 810 was updated as Act 19 of 2023 amended the Transportation Vehicle Code, 75 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 3345.1, to permit school entities to install and operate a side stop signal arm enforcement system. The law allows, but does not require, a side stop signal arm enforcement system to be placed on a school bus. A side stop signal arm enforcement system is different than a side stop signal arm, because the enforcement system contains a camera system installed on a school bus with at least one camera and one computer that produce recorded video and two or more photographic still images of a motor vehicle being used or operated in a manner that violates the requirement to stop for a school bus when the red signal lights on the school bus are flashing and the side stop signal arms are activated.

The legal citation of 75 Pa. C.S.A Sec. 3345.1 was added to the statement in the policy relating to the board purchasing, equipping and maintaining school buses.

*Policy 810 is a mandated policy to comply with state regulations.*

Policy No. 815, *Use of Internet, Computer and Network Resources*

Purpose

Policy 815 was updated to meet the needs of the technology department and district.

E. District Update - Dr. Alan S. Futrick

Dr. Futrick reported:

Ten years ago, there was the creation of the Blueprint for Success which stood as the District's cornerstone, direction, focus for the District and staff members. This really laid the foundation of where the District was heading from that point on. This went into effect and five years into it, the District realized the need to make a couple of tweaks; which then the District created the Action Plan. This did a nice job connecting all of the District's resources at that time and steering the District to the next level; and it worked. In 2018-2019 this was the District's best school year to that point, academically the District received the U.S. News & World Report "stamp" that year and the District was trending in a very positive direction. In the 2019-2020 school year

came around, again trending in a positive direction, and then March hit. COVID came and for the next eighteen months it just changed everything about the District, the way the District operated, keeping in mind there were no students in the building for eighteen months during that time. The District learned a lot of things through COVID. As Dr. Macharola has reviewed many times, there were statistics that stood out. 73% of the District's staff at that time did not feel comfortable coming back to school during the 2020-2021 school year. 34% of the District's parents did not feel comfortable sending their children back to school that year. When the District polled the students, the biggest things the District pulled way is that the kids were grappling with depression, anxiety, suicidal tendencies which were all extremely fast growing concerns. 50% of the District's students said that they experience depression for two or more weeks during that time, 25% of the District's students worried about where their next meal was coming from during that time, another 20% of the District's students dealt with or experienced some type of death in their family. There were a lot of outside factors then that the school dealt with when the kids were brought back, being the second to last school to come back in person during that time. Dr. Futrick explained why all of this is important as the District learned about the District's students and how the District had to change moving forward, so the District came up with a Post Pandemic Plan. The District presented this with everyone with three big things the District was "attacking": building relationships with the students was the most important thing. He explained eighteen months without school, when everyone comes back the District wants them to love coming back to school. The mental health of the students, what they were grappling with at that point in time, the anxiety and depression, was significant and was a huge barrier in involvement. Getting kids involved in something like a club, sport, extra curricular activity, or something that would help them. The District expanded their services for the students and parents, the District significantly added services with the Caron Foundation, in each one of the buildings. The District has PA Counseling connecting with the students, the District did parent workshops for parents and one of the next things the District came up with is SummerStyle. This reignited that love for learning for the students, it's something that will not go away. In projecting out for the next five to six years, the need for new positions that the District needed to add; a pupil services department, a pupil services director, four social workers one in each building, parent outreach coordinator, and additional special education supervisor, police officers, human resources department, all positions that in the past the District just "did." It worked, but the District got to the point where the District is extremely big. Another big thing that the District is reexamining the curriculum, instructional programs, and really took a close look at what were the things that the District was asking the students to do. The District changed the secondary sequencing and course offerings particularly in math and science, grades 7 through 12. The District knew coming down the pipe the District was going to be piloting a new literacy program; the District just did this last year with the teachers ending up picking Amplify. One of the biggest things about this new program is that it relies a lot on non-fiction texts which are talking about Ancient Rome history, talking about the body with the makeup with muscles and cells, and other things like this. Things that students can make better connections with moving down the road. The District will be piloting a couple math programs next year K through 9. The District is currently piloting a new science program in biology and

chemistry in the high school, and the District will pilot next year a new literacy program at the high school grades 9 through 12. Just some things the District realizes that the District needs to tweak and will certainly going to do. In talking about the results, everything that he just shared with everyone. The District is almost back to pre-COVID levels in reading and some parts of math. Seven out of twelve tested areas were well above what the state had predicted for the school year, however there were some when looking at it, in particular what the newspaper reported. They reported 9.7% for the District in the high school; and when everyone looked at it, he explained he felt anger because he knew the reasons behind it. There was no way to explain, everyone just saw the number and the District was in last place compared to other schools in the area. It was very irresponsible of the newspaper to put that in there without justifying a correspondence from PDE (Pennsylvania Department of Education) to the District and every school district in the state during the 2020-2021 school year; summarizing, *that year standardized testing results are anything but standard. Giving last year's extended testing window the irregular and historically low participation numbers, the availability and comparability of data has been significantly impacted. Several limitations inherent in interpreting the 2020-2021 school year assessment results. These limitations, along with the differential effects of the pandemic make comparisons between schools and districts improper.* He explained this came right from the state and went on to say *that PDE recognizes the impact the pandemic had on teaching and learning and has decided not to use state assessment results and educator evaluations because the conditions for teaching and learning were disrupted and not consistent across the state.* Meaning one school might have come back the following year and been in person every single day, this District did not come back until April and in hybrid, so theoretically the District's students were in person 18 days of school. Having said this, everyone having the letter from the state saying the results, that they weren't going to use them. During the 2019-2020 school year, the District has trigger courses where students take the Keystones: Biology, Literature and Algebra I. The 2019-2020 school year, the District had all of the 8th grade honor students, 97 students, that were going to take the Keystones test that year. This was the top 8th graders, who currently these kids are seniors, COVID happens and no one takes the test. So those 97 students, they got a COVID waiver, the school district got nothing. In not taking the test, those students are not counted in the District's score. The following school year, 2020-2021, the District is virtual and has 178 students that are eligible to take the test in Algebra I as 9th graders, 88 out of the 178 students opt out to take the test, their parents do not want them to take any kind of standardized test for that year; this is 185 students in this current group of seniors that have no score. They didn't even take it because of COVID or their parents did not want them to take it. 49.4% of the District's current seniors have no score. School year 2021-2022 comes round, the District has two years then to get those remaining students up to a level where the District should be; the District was able to get 9.7% of the whole class, 374 students, were able to get to that. A couple other conditions that he believes are very important to know, this current group of seniors, 89 of the 374 seniors the District currently has are brand new to the District after COVID, so these students were not even in the District's junior high. These 89 students moved to the district after COVID, the District inherited their score from wherever they came from, keeping in mind about 40% of those students are Special Education and English

Language Learners. Looking at last school year, there were three high school principals, this is unheard of. It was a crappy situation, no doubt about it, something that the District does not want to repeat. With those three principals in one year, three assistant principals in one year, the additional 89 students that came to the district, and keeping in mind 185 students do not have a score; if hypothetically all 97 students would have scored proficient or advanced, and of the 88 that opted out say half of them scored, the District would have been sixth in the county. It's not number one, but it's not last. If everyone knew those facts, with all the phone calls from the community no one wanted to hear the explanation. 9.7% is etched into everyone's head, and this is something that the District never wants to be in this spot again. The District has taken a lot of steps and this will not happen again. The District is now in a much better position, much better place with the staffing, however there are still things needing to be addressed and still going to work on.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

*Mrs. Eagle questioned those students that never took the Algebra Keystone that are seniors now, what is their graduation pathway. Dr. Futrick responded with the Act 158, there are multiple pathways for students, it helped the District because if their parents didn't want them to take the test, the District had to find another pathway for them to graduate. Mrs. Eagle commented that it's a shame because those are students that would have tested well. Dr. Futrick agreed.*

*Mr. Voit spoke about never being an advocate for standardized testing, to him that is not a true measure of the education that the students are receiving. He talked about measuring each student's improvement from one year to the next; and the state always believes in "one size fits all," it doesn't happen that way. Mr Voit spoke about seeing those numbers locally, of course people will be in an uproar. He talked about the true measure as an educator is taking "Student A" and how much do they grow throughout the year, "Student A" may not grow the same as "Student B" and "Student B" may grow more so how to deal with this across the board; that's the very measure of education. Dr. Futrick agreed and advised one of the things that the District focuses on is PVAAS and the District expects each of the teachers to grow the students one academic year. He explained there are teachers in the District that can grow a student two plus years. Dr. Futrick spoke about focusing on the growth of students out of COVID and getting the students involved. Mr. Voit agreed and talked about if the District would "teach to the test," the students would not learn and that's all everyone gets focused on. Mr. Voit talked about teaching what will make a student a better citizen in this society; can they go up to a cash register and offer change, can they think for themselves, do they know who they are going to vote for in any particular office, etc. He talked about loving the philosophy that has always been in Muhlenberg School District and teaching to that growth of a student. Dr. Macharola advised that this has not changed and how important it was for Dr. Futrick to speak to everyone tonight; it is about building the human spirit and growing the minds, the hearts and souls of the children. Dr. Macharola discussed the importance of Dr. Futrick's report is why would the newspaper print something so egregiously wrong that he has had nothing but countless phone calls, rude statements made about the District and teachers, slamming the math department at the*

*high school, slamming the administrators, picking at particular board members, being on the board not doing anything and letting all this happen and stated he has "had it up to here." He spoke about focusing on this school district, all of the new positions added had to happen. Dr. Macharola spoke about how he came to the District, there was only one Supervisor of Special Education for 600 students in a non-ADA compliant building; and there were a lot of things that needed to be done here in Muhlenberg School District, so they "tackled it." He talked about how the District has not gotten away from focusing on the District's children and developing their minds, hearts, and souls; and the District will continue to do so. He advised there will be a Civics Problems of Democracy course at the high school starting next school year, it will be mandatory for all of the students to take. It will be a course to teach students about the Constitution, about the Bill of Rights, about America, about what America is about holistically, diversity, using everyone's gifts and talents and what has happened through the course of this country to make it the greatest country on this planet. He spoke about it being a great course to take and will teach them about America and why it is so important for students to be here, and to be a contributing citizen.*

**Hearing of Visitors** - Muhlenberg School District taxpayers and residents have an opportunity, at this time, to comment on matters of concern, official action, or deliberation which are or may be before the Muhlenberg School Board. ***This period of time is for comments only; it is not a time to engage in a question and answer or debate with the board. Comments from the Board are at the option of the Board.*** The Board retains the option to accept all public comment at this time. Presentations ***will*** be limited to two minutes per person. In the event that the Board determines that there is not sufficient time for residents or taxpayers of the School District to comment, the Board may defer the comment period to the next regular meeting.

*There were none.*

## **Board Business**

### **Personnel**

#### **1. Professional Appointments**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following professional appointments:

- a. Ms. Madison Wolf, Special Education Teacher (K. Flicker), C.E. Cole Intermediate, effective January 2, 2024, at a salary of \$49,186 (B, 17 Steps from the Top), prorated for days worked.
- b. Ms. Jessica Heintzman, Elementary Teacher (J. McIntyre), Muhlenberg Elementary Center, pending release from current employer, at a salary of \$69,716 (B + 24, 8 Steps from the Top), prorated for days worked.

- c. Ms. Kylie Torrens, Elementary Teacher (newly created Title I), Muhlenberg Elementary Center, effective January 2, 2024, at a salary of \$49,186 (B, 17 Steps from the Top), prorated for days worked.
- d. Ms. Erica Berger, Elementary Teacher (newly created Title I), Muhlenberg Elementary Center, effective January 2, 2024, at a salary of \$49,186 (B, 17 Steps from the Top), prorated for days worked.
- e. Ms. Amber Haraschak, Long-Term Substitute (newly created), Muhlenberg Elementary Center, effective January 2, 2024 through the end of the 2023-2024 school year, at a salary of \$57,694 (M, 17 Steps from the Top), prorated for days worked.
- f. Mr. Benjamin Reifsnyder, Elementary Teacher (S. Stambaugh), C.E. Cole Intermediate, pending release from current employer, at a salary of \$79,467 (B + 24, 2 Steps from the Top), prorated for days worked.
- g. Ms. Kortney Rentschler, Long-Term Substitute (Z. Birch), Muhlenberg Junior High School, effective January 8, 2024 through the end of the 2023-2024 school year, at a salary of \$49,186 (B, 17 Steps from the Top), prorated for days worked.

## **2. Acceptance of Resignations**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District accept the following resignations:

- a. Mr. Steve Stambaugh, Math Teacher, Muhlenberg Junior High School, pending release from Muhlenberg School District per PA School Code.
- b. Mr. Austin Schaffer, Custodian, C.E. Cole Intermediate, effective December 5, 2023.
- c. Ms. Elizabeth Figueroa, English Teacher, Muhlenberg Junior High School, effective January 5, 2024.
- d. Mr. Tyler Adam, Special Education Teacher, Muhlenberg High School, pending release from Muhlenberg School District per PA School Code.

## **3. Classified Appointments**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following classified appointments:

- a. Ms. Adriana Santiago, Third Shift Custodian (M. Horning), Muhlenberg High School, effective January 2, 2024, at a salary of \$51,695, prorated for days worked.
- b. Ms. Brenda Torres, Second Shift Custodian (M. De Lima), Muhlenberg Junior High School, alteration of assignment, effective January 3, 2024, at a salary of \$51,695, prorated for days worked.

- c. Ms. Deborah DiLanzo, Cafeteria Assistant (L. Street), C.E. Cole Intermediate, effective January 16, 2024, at a pay rate of \$16.71 per hour.
- d. Ms. Maria Zavala Salas, Cafeteria Worker (A. Garcia), alteration of assignment, Muhlenberg Junior High School, effective January 11, 2024, at a pay rate of \$19.79 per hour.
- e. Ms. Summer McCoy, Third Shift Custodian (A. Schaffer), C.E. Cole Intermediate, effective January 15, 2024, at a salary of \$51,695, prorated for days worked.

#### **4. Co-Curricular Appointments**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District accept the following co-curricular appointments:

- a. Ms. Emily Grube, Social Media Advisor, effective October 10, 2023, at a salary of \$3,480 (year 1), prorated for days worked.
- b. Ms. Jenna Pavlovich, Social Media Advisor, effective October 10, 2023, at a salary of \$1,740 (year 1), prorated for days worked.
- c. Ms. Jennifer Seiders, MHS Co-Ed Diving Coach (C.Wenger), effective December 19, 2023, at a salary of \$2,900 (year 1), prorated for days worked.
- d. Ms. Maegan Miles hockey, MHS Aquatics Age Group Swimming Coach, effective January 2, 2024, at a salary of \$1,000, prorated for days worked.

#### **5. Mentor Assignments**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following mentor assignments at the professional rate of \$30.00 per hour for the 2023-2024 school year:

- a. Mr. Robert Wolfe, mentor for Ms. Megan Grandinetti, Science Teacher, Muhlenberg High School, for thirty (30) hours.
- b. Ms. Christine Law, mentor for Mr. Anthony Calvaresi, Special Education Teacher, Muhlenberg Elementary Center, for sixty (60) hours.
- c. Ms. Kristina Antonellos, mentor for Ms. Amber Haraschak, Elementary Teacher, Muhlenberg Elementary Center, for sixty (60) hours.

#### **6. Approval of New Positions/Job Descriptions**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following job descriptions and creation of new positions funded through Federal and Special Education Funds (Exhibit A-3):

- a. Director of Curriculum and Instruction K-12
- b. Verbal Behavior Coach
- c. Personal Care Paraprofessional
- d. School Psychologist Intern

#### **7. Reclassified Appointments**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following reclassified appointments as confidential secretaries:

- a. Ms. Kelly Bright, Confidential Secretary, effective July 1, 2023, at a salary of \$60,000.
- b. Ms. Michelle Shaffer, Confidential Secretary, effective July 1, 2023, at a salary of \$60,000.
- c. Ms. Jacinda Stella, Confidential Secretary, effective July 1, 2023, at a salary of \$60,000.

**8. Request for Leave of Absence/FMLA Leave**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the request for a Leave of Absence/FMLA leave for the following employees:

- a. Employee No. 1237, Teacher, Leave of Absence/FMLA, effective on or about January 4, 2024 through on or about February 4, 2024.
- b. Employee No. 2925, Teacher, Intermittent FMLA, effective on or about December 19, 2023.

**Management**

**1. Ratify Appointment of Board Member**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of Muhlenberg School District ratify the approval and vote (8-0) of Mr. Otto W. Voit, III to complete the remaining term of Mr. Richard E. Hoffmaster.

**2. Revised Board Meeting Dates for 2024**

Resolved, that the revised calendar of the meeting dates be approved and advertised effective January 2024 as presented (Exhibit B-1).

**3. RMCTC Joint School Committee Alternate Member (M. Vasquez) (one-year term)**

Nominations

Close Nominations

Roll Call by Name

Resolved, that \_\_\_\_\_ be appointed as the RMCTC Joint School Alternate Member for a one (1)-year term effective January 2024 to December 2024 to fill remaining term of Mr. Miguel Vasquez.

**Physical Plant and Transportation**

**1. Sunday Facility Use Request**



Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following Sunday Facility Use Request (Exhibit C-1):

- a. Age Group Swimming Program, use of the Muhlenberg High School swimming pool on Sunday, February 18, 2024 to hold a multi-team relay event.

**2. Upgrade MHS Audio/Visual Platform, Internal Digital Signage and Scorer's Table/Lectern**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of Muhlenberg School District approve upgraded audio/visual platform, internal digital signage and scorer's table/lectern at Muhlenberg High School at a cost not to exceed \$77,041.38 (funded through Capital Reserve) as presented (Exhibit C-2).

**Budget and Finance**

**1. Approval of Financial Reports**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following financial reports and that they become part of the permanent record of the meeting:

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Treasurer's Report</b>	<b>Financial Report</b>	<b>Bills Paid Month</b>	<b>Investments</b>	<b>Budget Transfers</b>
General	Nov 2023	Nov2023	Dec 2023 Ck#55720-55920 V#27874-27892	Nov 2023	
Cafeteria	Nov 2023	Nov 2023	Dec 2023 Ck# 8071-8115 V#3038-3042	Nov 2023	
Capital Reserve (Fund 32)	Dec 2023	Dec 2023	Dec 2023 Ck#972		
Capital Reserve (Fund 39)	Dec 2023	Dec 2023			
Activity	Nov 2023	Nov 2023			

**2. Appraisal Services for Tax Assessment Appeal - MSCI 2006 HQ10 North Chancery Street, LLC (Kmart)**

BE IT RESOLVED, that John E. Muir, Esquire, Brian F. Boland, Esquire and Kozloff Stoudt, Professional Corporation, Solicitors to the Muhlenberg School District, are hereby authorized to retain the professional appraisal consulting services of Douglas A. Haring, MAI, SRA, AI-GRS, inspection of the property, examination of information received from the property owner, assembly of necessary data required to develop the value opinion of the property and preparation of an appraisal report on behalf of the Muhlenberg School District for the Assessment Appeal, as presented (Exhibit D-2):

MSCI 2006-HQ10 North Chancery Street LLC vs. Berks County Board of Assessment Appeals

Berks County C.C.P. No.	20-17483
Property Address:	3045 5th Street Highway, Muhlenberg Township
Property ID No:	66530812862670
Appraisal Report:	\$8,500.00 (with credit of \$2,000.00 which has already been paid by the School District)

Trial preparation/attendance at trial:

Douglas A. Haring: \$200 per hour additional

Administrative Staff: \$100 per hour additional

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

*Dr. Macharola asked the solicitor to explain the change regarding the business going into the old Kmart location. Mr. Bland explained that this tax assessment appeal was to hire Mr. Haring to investigate the property at that time the Kmart building was "dark" there was no occupancy. He advised Mr. Haring did that initial investigation and he went back out to confirm some measurements he discovered that the building was now being leased; half being leased to a restaurant store and the other half to an indoor jumping pit/trampoline facility. Mr. Boland advised that they have obtained those leases, reviewing them with Mr. Haring and now want to proceed forward with this as this is fair market value property instead of a "dark" empty property. He explained this is just authorizing Mr. Haring to proceed with the full appraisal, giving a credit of \$2,000 for work already done, the balance being \$6,500. Mr. Haring will then prepare the appraisal and give it to Kozloff Stoudt to move forward.*

**3. Disposal of Surplus Property**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District authorize the disposal of the following surplus property in accordance with district Policy 706.1, Disposal of Surplus Property as presented:

- a. Chromebooks, iPads, Desktops – These items are broken or have reached end-of-life and have no usable value. (Exhibit – Jan24 Disposal.xlsx)

## **Education**

### **1. Conference Requests**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following conference requests:

- a. Ms. Jaclyn Bellanca to attend the Improving School Performance Conference in Pittsburgh, PA on February 4, 2024 to February 7, 2024 at a cost not to exceed \$1,056.12 (funded through Title I Funds).
- b. Ms. Lauren Heydt the Improving School Performance Conference in Pittsburgh, PA on February 4, 2024 to February 7, 2024 at a cost not to exceed \$116 (funded through Title I Funds).
- c. Dr. Cathy Shappell the Improving School Performance Conference in Pittsburgh, PA on February 4, 2024 to February 7, 2024 at a cost not to exceed \$522.75 (funded through Title I Funds).

### **2. Admission of Fact, Waiver of Hearing, Acknowledgment of Compliance with Procedural Safeguards and Consent to Expulsion**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District authorize the Admission of Fact, Waiver of Hearing, Acknowledgement of Compliance with Procedural Safeguards and Consent to Expulsion for the following students:

- a. Student "D", Muhlenberg Junior High School

### **3. Certificate of Support Students**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the enrollment of Certificate of Support Students, PA School Code 1302, for the 2023-2024 School Year as listed (Exhibit E-3).

### **4. Acceptance of Gifts, Grants, Donations**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District accept the following donations in accordance with district Policy 702, Gifts, Grants, Donations:

- a. The Perk Up Truck/Ms. Michelle Lorah and Mr. Jory Wamsley, donation of twenty-five new sneakers, new gym socks and several slightly used sneakers for students K-12 to wear for physical education classes in the Muhlenberg School District.
- b. Jan's Circle of Friends, grant of \$5,000 to provide resources and materials to promote the healthy relationships program in the Muhlenberg School District.

## **5. West Chester University Affiliation Agreement**

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the affiliation agreement between the Muhlenberg School District and West Chester University (Exhibit E-4).

### **Student Activities**

*There are no items.*

### **Minutes**

Review minutes of the Annual Organization Meeting of December 7, 2023, Committee of the Whole Meeting of December 7, 2023 and the Regular Board Meeting of December 7, 2023.

### **Old Business**

*There are no items.*

### **New Business**

*Mr. Voit discussed considering broadcasting the board meetings to the public because as public servants, they answer and provide. He explained that they are elected to serve the community and when the newspaper would attend these meetings in the past, write about it in the newspaper, then everything was communicated to the community. He spoke about the new technology, being incumbent to communicate back to the community with full transparency above board. Mr. Voit advised this is a great group with the highest integrity and asked the board members to consider broadcasting all of the board meetings. Mrs. Eagle agreed with Mr. Voit. She discussed that in speaking with people in the community, they are saying that they would like to go to the school board meetings but they can't get there due to work or children, they just sometimes don't have the avenue. Mr. Eaton agreed and discussed with the amount of changes that are about to be occurring, and the amount of information that needs to get out to the community with all the different things that the District is proposing to do, it would be a good outlet to get everything out. He talked about if people are not going to be tuned in, the District can at least direct them to tune in for certain updates on these projects. Dr. Macharola talked about hearing a lot of positive things regarding this topic, the one thing they might want to consider is when broadcasting live being cautious about question and answer; as the District will not be able to vet who is part of the community and who is not part of the community. Mr. Voit agreed with this and discussed in order for people*

*to speak out they would need to attend the board meeting in person. Dr. Macharola and Mrs. Eagle agreed.*

### **Hearing of Visitors**

Presentation is limited to approximately two minutes per person. Should any citizen require more than the two minutes allocated, please contact the Superintendent prior to the meeting. He will coordinate such requests for the Board. Citizens addressing the Board should be aware that the meeting is being taped.

*There were none.*

### **MSD/RMCTC Board Visitor of the Month**

Schedule 2023-2024

January	Mr. Otto W. Voit, III
February	Ms. Kristyna Eagle
March	Mr. Miguel Vasquez
April	Ms. Janet Howard
May	Mr. Ronald J. Haas

### **Review of Board Meetings and Calendar of Events**

January 8	7:00 PM	Reading-Muhlenberg CTC Re-Organization Meeting
January 10	6:30 PM	Committee of the Whole and Regular Board Meeting
February 7	7:00 PM	Committee of the Whole Meeting
February 12	6:30 PM	RMCTC Board Meeting
February 14	7:00 PM	Regular Board Meeting
March 6	7:00 PM	Committee of the Whole Meeting
March 11	6:30 PM	RMCTC Board Meeting
March 13	7:00 PM	RegularBoard Meeting

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April 3	7:00 PM	Committee of the Whole Meeting
April 8	6:30 PM	RMCTC Board Meeting
April 10	7:00 PM	Regular Board Meeting
May 1	7:00 PM	Committee of the Whole Meeting
May 8	7:00 PM	Regular Board Meeting
May 13	6:30 PM	RMCTC Board Meeting
June 10	6:30 PM	RMCTC Board Meeting
June 12	6:30 PM	Committee of the Whole and Regular Board Meeting

**Adjourn Meeting**

Moved by Mr. Hardy and Mr. Eaton, that there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting be adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 7:46 PM.

Attest:

  
Cindy L. Mengle  
Secretary