

MUHLENBERG SCHOOL DISTRICT
Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes
April 9, 2025
Lecture Hall, Muhlenberg High School
www.muhlSDK12.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 Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at 6:32 PM by Board President, Mr. Garrett Hyneman.

Members Present

President – Mr. Garrett E. Hyneman
Vice President – Mrs. Kristyna Eagle
Treasurer - Mr. Miguel Vasquez
Secretary – Mrs. Cindy L. Mengle
Member – Mr. Ronald J. Haas, Sr.
Member – Mr. S. Wayne Hardy
Solicitor – Mr. Brian F. Boland, Esq.
Recording Secretary – Mrs. Tara L. Flowers

Members Absent

Assistant Secretary – Ms. Janet Howard
Member – Mr. Andrew L. Eaton, Sr.
Member – Mr. Otto W. Voit, III

Administration Present

Superintendent – Dr. Joseph E. Macharola
Assistant Superintendent - Dr. Alan S. Futrick
Business Manager - Mr. Shane M. Mathias, CPA
Director of Physical Plant – Mr. Ken Patterson
Director of Special Education - Dr.. Nicole Huntbach
Supervisor of Special Education - Mr. Byron Grosselfinger
Licensed Behavior Specialist - Ms. Courtney Knittle
Director of Technology - Dr. Juliana Ciccarelli
Director of Federal Programs - Dr. Cathay Shappell
Director of Food Services - Mr. Carey Kline
Director of Human Resources - Dr. Jessica Heffner
Director of Pupil Services - Mr. Michael Mish
Director of Curriculum & Instruction K-12 - Mr. Kyle Crater
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. Lori Morris
High School Assistant Principal - Mr. Aaron Kopetsky
Junior High Assistant Principal - Ms. Michele Weaver
Junior High Assistant Principal - Mr. Joseph Scoboria
C.E. Cole Intermediate Assistant Principal - Ms. Jaclyn Bellanca/Dr. Tara Nelson

C.E. Cole Intermediate Assistant Principal - Mr. William Dramby
Elementary Principal - Ms. Ginny Hornberger
Elementary Assistant Principal - Ms. Julie Kehr
Elementary Assistant Principal - Mr. Dan Kramer
Social Worker - Ms. Lauren Heydt
Social Worker - Ms. Liliana Moore
Social Worker - Ms. Emily Carmichael

Visitors

Patricia Sustello	Bob Mengle
Susan Roeckle	Enrique Castro
Mariela Zaharia	Diane Benson
Jonah Zaharia	Linda Roebuck
Yadiel Centeno	Scott Eldridge
Alex Ramos	Rick Hoffmaster
Yazaida Centro	Robi Kramer
Carol Ramos	John Lorchak
Nytza Santiago	Samantha Armstrong
Izel Sanjuan	Theodore Werkheiser
Keira Kemp	Amanda Eckert
Dante Fiorvanti	Julius Campbell
Maverick Reinhart	Daniel Heydt

Educational Presentations

A. Leo Club - Ms.Izel Sanjuan, Ms. Keira Kemp and Mr. Wesley Estock

Ms. Sanjuan reported:

Ms. Sanjuan introduced herself as the 2024-2025 president of the Leo Club. The Leo Club encourages students to develop leadership qualities like participating in community service activities. Community service projects are well planned, organized and voluntary efforts designed to address a specific need in the community or surrounding communities. This club provides students with opportunities to plan and implement a project or projects to which they feel personally committed. The weekly meetings take place on Tuesday mornings at 7:15AM. The current number of students in the club is 91. She is the 24-25 present, the vice president is Joan Houser, the secretary is Sophia Lougard and the treasurer is Keira Kemp.

Ms. Kemp reported:

Activities that the Leo Club has participated in thus far is the Muhlenberg High School Open House, they had three student volunteers escort parents to different classrooms to get an overall layout of the school. There was the Haunted Hayride with the township where students volunteered at Jim Dietrich Park to help set up the event, help with the attraction and also run individualized stands. There was the cleanup of the Temple Halloween Parade where student volunteers walk the route of the parade

and clean up candy and other trash alongside the road. There was the Safe Trick or Treat Night at the Muhlenberg Elementary Center, this is a Leo Club run event. There were ten classrooms each decorated for elementary students to receive candy from and there were other events alongside the gym with games and snack bags in the cafeteria, handing out about 400 snack bags. Every third Wednesday of the month there are field trips to Helping Harvest where student volunteers will go to pack senior boxes. There were other Muhlenberg Elementary Center family events such as the Holiday Caroling, Literacy Night, Read Across America, the Math Carnival, STEM Carnival where the Leo Club had student volunteers for. There were Muhlenberg Park and Rec events such as playground cleanups. Moving on to more recent events and upcoming, students volunteered with Easter activities with the township as they helped pack Easter eggs for the upcoming Easter Egg Hunt this Saturday morning. There will be the Hawk Mountain tent setup that students will go on a field trip to help set up tents that will be used during the summer during the scouts camp. There is a concert in the park with the township where students will help run concession stands. There is also the Muhlympics where students are placed to help special needs students complete their events. Finally there is the C.E. Cole field day where students will be assigned stations and games to facilitate the field day for students.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Dr. Macharola thanked the students for their presentation and asked for applause.

B. AI Empowered Classrooms - Mr. Dante Fioravante, Mr. Julius Campbell, Mr. Dan Heydt, Mr. Darian Jones, Mr. Maverick Reinhart, Ms. Ciara Codero Castro, Ms. Samantha Armstrong and Dr. Juliana Ciccarelli

There was a brief video of Students sharing their insights about how responsible use of AI enhanced their interactions with the content, each other, and during Student Senate.

Mr. Fioravante reported:

Thanking the board for having their presentation here, introduced himself and wanted to present on how artificial intelligence helped transform their classroom environment into a forum where students could access specialized expertise previously unavailable to them. During their government studies curriculum the classes encountered significant challenges when examining legislative processes, comprehending the intricacies of how bills become laws require specialized knowledge that extends beyond standard education and resources. It was at this juncture that they implemented artificial intelligence as their virtual lobbyists serving as an expert consultant accessible to each student in their academic community. The AI lobbyists allowed them to ask questions about complicated legislative processes, understand stakeholders perspectives and gain insight that typically would require years of capitol hill experience. For example, when examining a health care bill he could hypothetically ask AI to explain how hospital administrators might use certain

provisions differently from the insurance companies. What's powerful about this technology is that if democratized access to expertise, every student regardless of their background will have connections and access to the same high quality information. This leveled the playing field and enriched their classroom discussions. The skills he developed transferred directly to Senator Schwank's model student senate where they worked alongside actual lobbyists from Berks County. Because he had practice with their AI lobbyist, he was prepared to ask thoughtful questions and contribute meaningful policy discussions with real world professionals. AI did not replace critical thinking, it enhanced it by providing them with expert level background information. It freed them to focus on their own opinions and develop persuasive arguments. Thank you for supporting educational technology that prepares them for meaningful civic engagement.

Mr Campbell reported:

He wanted to share how AI tools transformed their research and help understand legislation in their government class. AI allowed them to start downloading documents and receive accurate summaries highlighting key provisions and potential impacts. This wasn't about avoiding reading, it was about making their reading more strategic and focused. This technology helped them identify which sections required deep examination based on their community assignments. At length, legislative language can present a significant barrier. Those revisions written in specialized legal terminology can be challenging even for adults to figure out. The AI simplified complex language without sacrificing accuracy making the government process more accessible to students at all reading levels. For example, when they were working on an environmental prevention amendment, he used AI to break down regulatory language to clearer terms. This allowed him to understand the course quickly before his position based on evidence rather than confusion. When they participated in the model student senate, these skills proved invaluable. They could engage confidently with real lobbyists because they already understood how the fundamental legislation was being discussed. Some professionals commented on how well prepared the students were than previous years. By incorporating AI responsibly in the classrooms not only prepares them for academic success but informed citizenship, including complex legislative language.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Dr. Macharola thanked the students for their presentation and asked for applause. Mr. Boland questioned if the students took the legislation and fed it into the AI program that read the program and then got results based upon that reading of the program based on their inquiries. Mr. Fiorvante responded yes and based on the history of the government with processes it was able to give them reasonable explanations. Mr. Boland asked if the students then go spot check those answers against the legislation to see if it really says this, verifying what AI told them. Mr. Campbell responded that they did to make sure. Mr. Fiorvante advised most of their inquiries are somewhat hypothetical, but to fact

all of their answers were correct, and with this being a work in progress it has been development and have been sort of guinea pigs. He advised it has developed in time for them to go to Harrisburg and have these such meaningful conversations with real world lobbyists. Mr. Boland questioned the software that synthesized that legislation for them and put it in by giving it inquiry inputs and then those inputs gave them information that they were then able to use in their discussions. Mr. Fiorvante responded yes.

C. Physical Plant Update - Mr. Ken Patterson

Mr. Patterson reported:

- Maintenance and Custodial Staff update - With Spring officially arriving, the outside grounds crews have been busy getting ready the athletic fields to support all of the spring sports currently in season on campus. Grass cutting season will soon get underway and a lot of tree and yard debris was removed from some of the storms that occurred these last few weeks. Inside maintenance techs continue to take care of the maintenance items related to work orders and they are also doing some work at C.E. Cole in preparation for the upcoming IT project happening over the spring break. Inside custodians continue to be involved in the activities taking place in all of building throughout the evenings and weekends, and also preparing to do some deep cleaning in areas during the spring break. The entire maintenance and custodial staff continue to a great job keeping the buildings and grounds clean and safe.
- Multi-Purpose Turf Field Update - The multi-purpose turf field continues to move forward. The MRC basin liner has been installed and that area was filled in with stone. The containing walls have been installed and the concrete curbing around the outside of the field is also being installed. The replacement of a sanitary line and stoning the entire area will be the focus for the rest of April. Light installation has also begun for that area. Turf installation should begin in May. Substantial completion of this project is scheduled for the beginning of June provided the weather remains favorable.
- New 5/6 Building Update - The new 5/6 middle school project is also underway, land and development is in full swing as can be seen by the mounds of topsoil out there. A lot of the topsoil has been removed and site preparation for underground utilities and pouring footers continues. Footers being poured are scheduled to begin within the next two weeks.
- Football Stadium & Multi-Purpose Field Change Orders - One change order for the football stadium project and two for the multi-purpose field. The football stadium is the final cost for the removal of rock as the project bid as classified, the district only paid for what needed to be removed. The multi-purpose field is the change order for the cost of the permit for the installation of the lights and

the second one is for removal of large chunks of concrete of unforeseen piping changes that had to be made to the field due to unforeseen field conditions uncovered during the land development stage.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Dr. Macharola advised this was a done deal now, the rock that was removed ended up being much less than what was anticipated.

- Time Lapse and Security Camera for 5-6 Middle School Construction Site - The leasing of a time lapse and security camera to cover the 5-6 middle school construction site and able to document the project.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Mr. Haas advised he is in agreement with this and asked if this is the district's responsibility to pay for it even though it's meant to protect the contractor and subcontractors. Dr. Macharola responded it is and it will eventually get absorbed in. Dr. Futrick advised that every Friday the social media team will take videos with the district drone to update the progress of the construction and place the footage on social media.

Dr. Macharola also advised that the junior high is so overcrowded, he may need to ask for possibly eight modular units added to the junior high as the district has a responsibility and eventually will need to build a new junior high.

D. Preliminary Budget Review - Mr. Shane M. Mathias, CPA

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Dr. Macharola, Dr. Futrick, and Mr. Mathias discussed the district being the lowest per pupil cost in the county, the second in the county with poverty, being an underfunded district by the state, having a growing enrollment and the district having to fund everything on its own with no help from Harrisburg.

Mr. Mathias reported:

Local budgeted revenues are forecast to increase about \$715K over the 2024-25 budgeted local revenues.

Notable:

- Budgeted property tax does not include millage increase (see page 3). Increase in revenue is due to a change in total taxable assessment (\$158k).
- Earned Income Taxes projection based on recent trends.
- Earnings on investments budgeted conservatively to account for future interest rate decreases and corresponding revenue decreases (not sustainable).

- Other local revenues expected to remain fairly consistent with small increases likely.
- State budgeted revenues are forecast to increase about \$2.82M over the 2024-25 budgeted state revenues.

Notable:

- Basic Ed funding (BEF), Special Ed Funding (SEF) and Ready to Learn Block Grant (RTLBG) amounts shown at 2024-25 actual amounts. See page 3 for Gov Shapiro proposed increases.
- There is concern regarding the sustainability of the State's budget. The Independent Fiscal Office (IFO) performed a 5 year outlook of the State's budget and reported that the State's fund balance was expected to be depleted by 2025-26 and the State's rainy day funds were expected to be depleted by 2026-27.
- Building Reimbursement Subsidy (PLANCON). This is the last year of State subsidy for District construction projects. All reimbursable debt will be paid off in 2025-26.

Federal budgeted revenues are forecast to decrease about \$487M from the 2024-25 budgeted federal revenues.

Notable:

- Decrease anticipated as all ESSER Funds that have been received over the last few years are completely spent down and received.

Budgeted local and state expenditures are forecast to increase \$4.58M over the 2024-25 budget.

Notable:

- Salary and benefits are forecast to increase \$3.9M over the current year. This increase in costs includes no new positions. Salary increases average about 6.6% while medical insurance is expected to increase approx 9.9%.
- Other notable increases are: CTC expenditures \$336K; Special education budget \$257K; Placements budget (including cyber charters) \$203K; Transportation budget (IU) \$373K; School Resource Officer costs \$221K.
- Budgeted decrease in debt service of \$237K is due to a reduction in the total payments due on the 2019 & 2020 bonds. This is the final year of payments for these two bonds. Anticipated borrowing of additional \$75M will result in additional debt service of between \$3.1 and \$4.75M (see page 3 & 5).
- Capital Reserve Transfer budgeted in 2024-25 of \$357K was a projected surplus in the prior year. Currently there is no surplus projected for the 2025-26 budget.

The net impact of these forecasted revenues and expenditures is a deficit (prior to budgetary considerations) of \$1.96M.

Budgetary considerations (page 3) includes the following items of note:

A tax increase at the adjusted index of 5.70% would generate an estimated \$2.62M in additional property tax revenue . This is at a collection rate of 96.30% (5yr historical average).

Governor Shapiro's proposed budget would provide a 2.77% and 6.17% increase in BEF and SEF, respectively. The total dollar increase over 2024-25 funding for the two appropriations would be \$495K. This is a relatively small increase compared to the increases provided the last three years .

A larger increase is proposed by Governor Shapiro in the RTLBG funding. This is the new funding that was created in response to the fair funding lawsuit. A total increase of \$2.14M in RTLBG funding is projected for the District under the Governor's current proposed budget. As mentioned before, there are concerns about the sustainability of this funding for future years .

It's anticipated that the District will need to issue additional bonds during fiscal year 2025-26. These bonds are necessary to fund the ongoing construction project. With the recent change in the order of construction projects, cash flow projections will need to be reviewed and updated followed by an update to the District's financing plan. It's estimated that the District will need to borrow approximately \$75M in 2025-26. This will be updated when a new financing plan is received.

A total of eleven (11) new positions at a net cost of \$1.12M are identified on page 6.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Mr. Haas questioned what the millage rate would be. Mr. Mathias advised it would be roughly 38.

Dr. Macharola spoke about continuing to follow the financial plan.

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

Policy No. 103, *Discrimination/Harassment Affecting Student*

Purpose

This policy is the 2020 version of Policy 103 with additional updates to address amendments to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA) regarding religious creed as a protected classification and specific definitions for pregnancy, race and

religious creed. Please note that the PHRA contains a definition for "gender identity or expression" that was not used in this policy due to the scope of the federal order. The policy contains additional minor updates. The Bostock v. Clayton County case was removed from the Legal References listing for Policy 103 because it is a U.S. Supreme Court decision regarding discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity that specifically protects employees, not students.

103-Attach 1 Report Form - 2020 version updated with additional questions and policy cross-references.

103-Attach 2 Discrimination - 2020 version with updates reflecting general references to the report form, other process clarifications and additional policy cross-references.

103-Attach 3 Title IX Sexual Harassment Procedures and Grievance Process for Formal Complaints - 2020 version with updates reflecting references to the report form, other process clarifications and additional policy cross-references.

103-Attach 4 Parental Objection to Participation Letter - 2024 version with new title to reflect the purpose of the letter, new statement identifying availability of supportive measures, and other minor edits.

Policy No. 103.1, *Nondiscrimination - Qualified Students With Disabilities*

Purpose

This policy was revised both to align with the terminology and provisions of the revised 103 policy on handling reports of discrimination/harassment, as well as to update the language related to school safety and security reporting based on Act 33 of 2023. One of the major changes brought about by Act 33 was the removal of School Code language outlining the Office for Safe Schools in the PA Department of Education (PDE), and moving many of those assigned responsibilities to the School Safety and Security Committee, which operates under the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). PDE maintains responsibilities for collecting the annual incident reports from school entities. Based on these changes, language and legal citations that address incident reporting to law enforcement and PDE, as well as school entity responsibilities under the school safety and security sections of the School Code, were revised. Minor revisions were made to the section on retaliation and the complaint procedure to reflect provisions included in Policy 103 and the accompanying procedures, in order to align the steps taken by school employees in responding to complaints of discrimination and harassment. The accompanying attachments for Policy 103.1 also received minor revisions to align terminology with the policy. Policy 103.1 is recommended for legal liability purposes

Policy No. 104, *Discrimination/Harassment Affecting Staff*

Purpose

This policy is the 2020 version of Policy 104 with additional updates to address amendments to the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act (PHRA), the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) and amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act for Breastfeeding Accommodations in the Workplace including identifying religious creed and pregnancy, childbirth and pregnancy-related conditions as protected classifications, as well as specific definitions and examples for those terms. Please note that the PHRA contains a definition for "gender identity or expression" that was not used in this policy due to the scope of the federal order. The policy contains additional minor updates.

104-Attach 1 Report Form - 2020 version updated with additional questions and policy cross-references.

104-Attach 2 Discrimination - 2020 version with updates reflecting general references to the report form, other process clarifications and additional policy cross-references.

104-Attach 3 Title IX Sexual Harassment Procedures and Grievance Process for Formal Complaints - 2020 version with updates reflecting references to the report form, other process clarifications and additional policy cross-references.

Policy No. 234, *Pregnant/Parenting/Married Students*

Purpose

This policy is the 2024 version of Policy 234 using options instead of a standard listing regarding reasonable modifications for students experiencing pregnancy, parenting or pregnancy-related conditions and removal of legal citations and content for Title IX.

Policy 234 is recommended for legal liability purposes.

Policy No. 247, *Hazing*

Purpose

The language addressing discrimination/harassment in this policy guide was revised to more broadly reference the responsibilities for coordinating with the Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator when reports of alleged hazing may also be impacted by laws, regulations and policies addressing discrimination/harassment. The language on incident reporting to law enforcement and the PA Department of Education was also updated to reflect the current School Code terminology based on Act 33 of 2023. Legal citations to the new sections of the School Code were added as well.

Policy 247 is mandated by 18 Pa. C.S. Sec. 2808.

Policy No. 249, *Bullying/Cyberbullying*

Purpose

The language addressing discrimination/harassment in this policy guide was revised to more broadly reference the responsibilities for coordinating with the Compliance Officer and Title IX Coordinator when reports of alleged bullying may also be impacted by laws, regulations and policies addressing discrimination/harassment. Reference to the Safe Schools reporting was replaced with language reflecting school safety and security incident reports, in accordance with Act 33 of 2023.

Policy 249 is mandated by 24 P.S. 13-1303.1-A

Policy No. 252, *Dating Violence*

Purpose

The language addressing discrimination/harassment in this policy guide was revised to more broadly reference the responsibilities for coordinating with the Title IX Coordinator when reports of dating violence may also be impacted by laws, regulations and policies addressing discrimination/harassment.

Policy No. 810, *Transportation*

Purpose

This policy was revised to replace the Data Administrator to “the designee assigned by Superintendent” under Delegation of Responsibility.

Policy No. 824, *Maintaining Professional Adult/Student Boundaries*

Purpose

The language addressing discrimination/harassment in this policy guide was revised to more broadly reference the coordination with the Title IX Coordinator and the updated terminology from Policies 103, 104 and their accompanying attachments. Minor revisions were made throughout based on recommendations for maintaining appropriate boundaries. The language on incident reporting was also updated to reflect the current School Code terminology based on Act 33 of 2023. Legal citations to the new sections of the School Code were added as well.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Mr. Hyneman questioned the policy pertaining to bullying/cyberbullying if incidents occur outside of school does the district still have a responsibility. Dr. Macharola responded that the district could have responsibility depending on the circumstances.

Dr. Macharola discussed the recently passed policy this year regarding cell phones; and advised it is not working. He spoke about it not working for many reasons and he does not want the district's students hurt, he doesn't want the staff and the teachers hurt and this policy needs to be discussed. Dr. Macharola talked about unfortunately yesterday after receiving a phone call from the district's police officers after learning of

potential circumstances, resulting in putting the district's schools on administrative hold for safety. He talked about debriefing from the incident today with the police officers and key administrators, and the cell phone is officially a problem. He stated he jeopardized the lives of the students and staff yesterday. He discussed understanding the kids brought up in the age with the cell phones, however parents called into their kids cell phones while this event was happening and they were in class, the kids answered their phones. He explained the phones are supposed to be off and he later learned that there are kids that were told by their parents to fight if their teacher was to take a phone. Dr. Macharola advised the solution to this is that these cell phones are banned; they will have to be turned off when they come to school and turned on when they leave. He explained that not only was that a disruption, the teachers are worried to approach students about the cell phones because they don't want to get into the conflict of someone saying my mom and dad said the teacher cannot have their phone and have to have it for safety reasons. He reiterated that cell phones jeopardized safety reasons. He explained when parents are calling their child while in an administrative hold and telling them there has been a murder and somebody is dead and are they safe, the parent only raises the anxiety and causes the internal measures to be extremely difficult to manage; this is how an internal riot is created. He spoke about having cooperation from everyone on the school board when speaking in the community, teachers to have a backbone to do their job and do what's right for the district's students, however he also needs parents and guardians to help the district. He advised if they don't help the district, they only make the job ten times worse. Dr. Macharola explained the current cell phone policy is not working and the concern for coming under fire and there is nothing funny about this. Dr. Macharola spoke about lying awake at night worrying about this and he does not need anything from the outside exacerbating safety with children and adults lives in the school. He spoke about sitting down and discussing how to update the cell phone policy, however this will be done this year not next year. He advised yesterday was a sad day to learn that the district will not be safe if these cell phones are on and the kids have them in school.

Dr. Macharola spoke about having enough anxiety already going on in the district and invited to speak to the children. He advised it is "Washington born" and it is coming in the district schools. He advised he is not talking about immigration and illegal children in the school, he is talking about kids wondering if they are going to be able to afford college, if mom and dad are going to be able to have meals on their table, the district is growing and no the kids are not coming from Reading. Dr. Macharola spoke about being tired of hearing that he is letting people come into the district unlawfully and he is insulted by this. He talked about the district being so strict on enrollment. He spoke about having seven fights in the high school, the cell phone was one of the reasons why. He spoke about another reason being the kids coming into the high school have a credit deficiency, they are not going to graduate but they are entitled to a free and appropriate education until they are 22 years of age. He explained they did not get credit deficiency from the district, they were underserved in previous districts before coming here. Dr. Macharola advised another reason is drugs; there is a drug problem and the reasons are all tied together. He spoke about another reason being the kids having serious mental health and social emotional issues and having social workers working nonstop. Dr. Macharola advised the last reason is overcrowding; and he reiterated they are not

crowded because they come from Reading and he is tired of hearing this. He talked about having ten residency checks last month after a report. He explained he had the Director of Pupil Services and staff look into these reports and it was found this report was a lie; as there wasn't a single person of those ten people reported that were no bonafide residents of Muhlenberg School District. He spoke about the homeless students in the district. He asked the solicitor how many lawsuits there were for the district because the district denied a student a free and appropriate education. Solicitor Boland responded none. Dr. Macharola spoke about having future lawsuits after he is gone if denying a student who is entitled to be in the school. He spoke about the 1302 students that have to do with due process, they have to go to school. He talked about unaccompanied youth, those are students that have to come to school that have no parents and there is the McKinney Vento Act. Dr. Macharola talked about the district knowing what needs to be done and not throwing a student out. He advised there may be a student that leaves the district and does not tell the district, this is the only time however this is not a thousand students. He talked about the district growing by 3,000, this is a fact. Dr. Macharola reiterated the district has not had any lawsuits over this and if you get on the board here and deny students education, they will be sued; costing the taxpayers millions of dollars. Dr. Macharola also spoke about having enough of the racism, asking if people don't like the children in the district because they are black, latino, etc. He talked about having a former commissioner dealing with this in the past and now seems to be reverberating; "God made all of us one." Dr. Macharola spoke about the underserved students coming to the district, the district being tagged with their scores. He spoke about the schools needing to be built, the student coming from Reading is the smallest percentage and they are coming from other countries and school districts by triple the percentage. Dr. Macharola spoke about there being eighteen school districts in Berks County, and this district has an Aa2 bond rating because the district has a fantastic business department, outstanding administrators and he understands school finance. He advised the district is the lowest per pupil cost in Berks County and the district is so tight the district does not waste a penny. Dr. Macharola spoke about his worry right now are the students in this district and their parents, this is not a game and he is very disappointed with what is happening in the country right now. He advised if someone is dumb enough to go ahead, even though he is a public figure, and start making accusations he is going to lawyer up. He explained he is tired of it and this will be hurting the district students and staff. Dr. Macharola spoke about needing teachers here that are "trauma surgeons" as the district is an urban school district, there is a culture here and the district needs people who care, understand, have great methodology and are willing to work here. Dr. Macharola advised if a parent comes to him that they are being harassed because they are homeless, a 1302 student, unaccompanied youth the district will be going after them as the district has the best attorney.

Dr. Macharola introduced Troop 155 boy scouts who were in attendance learning at the board meeting. He discussed this is why everyone is here, everything the district does is for the children and young adults.

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.

Rick Hoffmaster- resident/Frederick Blvd.

He talked about being present at the meeting last month and it being a shame people keep putting people down. He advised he is a commissioner of the township and they want people to move into the township, there are a lot of places they can build houses in the township and they really want people to move in. He advised they have to have a good school district and have good people to move in here. He advised if there is a good school district, people will want to move into the school district. A lot of districts are in trouble now because they didn't budget the money right. They are building a brand new school here and it will make people want to move into the district. There are homes over in Jim Deitrich park going for \$400,000-\$500,000, where are they coming from, they are not coming from Reading sorry to say that. People from outside are coming here and moving into this district and people have to realize there is a good board now, a great superintendent, a great assistant superintendent, everyone has to work together. One of the board members is running for commissioner, Mr. Wayne Hardy is running this time and he loves Muhlenberg. He is getting tired of hearing things, they can come after him and he is not backing down from anyone who wants to keep putting down Muhlenberg Township and the school district. If anyone has something to say they can call him anytime, he will talk to anybody. What's being said hurts the board members, the administrators, the teachers, and putting people down all the time, why not work all together. All the people are adults and if someone has something to say go face-to-face with somebody; it's unreal what is going on with the politics. Why are they doing this, this is worse going back ten years when commissioners were doing this; it's a shame.

Board Business

Personnel

1. Administrative Appointment

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following administrative appointment:

- a. Dr. Tara Nelson, Assistant Principal (J. Bellanca), effective date to be determined, at a salary of \$100,110, prorated for days worked.

2. Professional Appointment

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

- a. Ms. Kyleyah Billela, Long-Term Substitute Teacher (S. Cerroni), Muhlenberg High School, pending emergency certification, effective March 26, 2025 through the end of the 2024-2025 school year, at a salary of \$55,170 (B + 9, 16 Steps from the Top), prorated for days worked.

3. Classified Appointments

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

- a. Ms. Stephanie Murphy, Cafeteria Worker (O. Gehris), Muhlenberg Elementary Center, effective March 31, 2025, at a pay rate of \$20.29 per hour.
- b. Ms. Jenifer Brady, Cafeteria Worker (C.Andrews), Muhlenberg Junior High School, effective March 31, 2025, at a pay rate of \$20.29 per hour.

4. Acceptance of Resignations

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

- a. Ms. Alexis Stoudt, Special Education Paraprofessional, Muhlenberg Elementary Center, effective March 28, 2025.
- b. Ms. Jaclyn Bellanca, Assistant Principal, C.E. Cole Intermediate, pending release from Muhlenberg School District per PA School Code.
- c. Ms. Elizabeth Slater, Math Teacher, Muhlenberg Junior High School, resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective the end of the 2024-2025 school year.
- d. Ms. Carol Santo Domingo, Class A Secretary, Muhlenberg High School, resignation for the purpose of retirement, effective August 5, 2025.

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 2024-2025 school year:

- a. Ms. Kathleen Haas, mentor for Ms. Taryn Buono, Special Education Teacher, Muhlenberg Elementary Center, for thirty (30) hours.
- b. Mr. Shane Silas, mentor for Ms. Christina Taveras, Long-Term Substitute Teacher, Muhlenberg Elementary Center, for thirty (30) hours.
- c. Ms. Sarah Kopetsky, mentor for Ms. Caitlin Ambruster, Elementary Teacher, Muhlenberg Elementary Center, for sixty (60) hours.
- d. Ms. Danielle Ast, mentor for Ms. Amy Martzall, Long-Term Substitute Teacher, Muhlenberg Elementary Center, for thirty (30) hours.

6. Co-Curricular Appointments

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

- a. Ms. Lucille Palangio, Sports Event Monitor, effective March 12, 2025, at a pay rate of \$15.00 per hour.
- b. Ms. Kachina Leigh, MHS Spring Musical Business Manager, effective February 10, 2025, at a salary of \$2,610 (year 1), prorated for days worked.
- c. Mr. Robert McGowan, MHS Varsity Boys Tennis Assistant Coach, effective March 12, 2025, at a salary of \$2,393 (year 1).
- d. Ms. April Baylor, MJHS Girls Softball Assistant Coach, effective April 1, 2025, at a salary of \$3,263 (year 1), prorated for days worked.

7. After-School Tutoring Hours for Professional Staff

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve after-school tutoring hours (funded by Title I) for the following employees:

- a. Ms. Megan Grandinetti, six (6) hours for keystone preparation, at the professional pay rate of \$30.00 per hour.
- b. Mr. Robert Brad, six (6) hours for keystone preparation, at the professional pay rate of \$30.00 per hour.
- c. Mr. Matthew Christman, six (6) hours for keystone preparation, at the professional pay rate of \$30.00 per hour.

8. Completion of Probation

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the completion of probation for the following classified employees:

- a. Ms. Charlita Andrews, Special Education Paraprofessional, Muhlenberg Junior High School, completion of thirty (30) day probation as of March 21, 2025 and recommended for permanent employment as of March 24, 2025.
- b. Mr. Christopher Fox, Custodian, Muhlenberg Elementary Center, completion of forty-five (45) day probation as of March 21, 2025 and recommended for permanent employment as of March 24, 2025.
- c. Ms. Rosemarie Sysenh, Special Education Paraprofessional, Muhlenberg Elementary Center, completion of forty-five (45) day probation as of April 7, 2025 and recommended for permanent employment as of April 8, 2025.

9. 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. 1434, Health Services Technician, FMLA Leave, effective on or about April 1, 2025 through on or about April 28, 2025.

- b. Employee No. 2450, Special Education Paraprofessional, Leave of Absence, effective on or about March 20, 2025 through on or about June 5, 2025.
- c. Employee No. 3022, Teacher, FMLA/Leave of Absence, effective on or about August 20, 2025 through on or about June 5, 2026.
- d. Employee No. 2911, Teacher, FMLA/Leave of Absence, effective on or about February 17, 2025 through on or about June 6, 2025.
- e. Employee No. 2833, Teacher, FMLA/Leave of Absence, effective on or about August 20, 2025 through on or about the first day of the 2026-2027 school year.
- f. Employee No. 2677, Health Services Technician, FMLA, effective on or about April 1, 2025 through on or about June 5, 2025.

Management

1. Board Secretary's Bond and Compensation

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the School Board Secretary's Fidelity Bond of \$10,000 and that the premium for said bond be paid by the school district. Be it further resolved, that the School Board Secretary's compensation shall be \$600.00 per year.

2. Cyber Incident Response Plan and Processes

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the Confidential Cyber Incident Response Plan and Processes for Muhlenberg School District.

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:

- a. National Junior Honor Society, use of the Muhlenberg Junior High School auditorium on Sunday, April 27, 2025 to hold the 2024-2025 induction ceremony.

2. Time Lapse and Security Camera for 5-6 Middle School Construction Site

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the leasing of a time lapse and security camera for the new 5-6 middle school construction site at a cost not to exceed \$15,077.24 (funded through Bond Issue Funds) as presented.

3. Change Order Requests

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the change order requests for the football stadium and multi-purpose turf fields as presented.

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:

Fund	Treasurer's Report	Financial Report	Bills Paid Month	Investments	Budget Transfers
General	Feb 2025	Feb 2025	Mar 2025 Ck#58246-58414 V#28253-28283	Feb 2025	
Cafeteria	Feb 2025	Feb 2025	Mar 2025 Ck#8542-8573 V#3159-3163	Feb 2025	
Capital Reserve (Fund 32)	Mar 2025	Mar 2025			
Capital Reserve (Fund 39)	Mar 2025	Mar 2025	Mar 2025 Ck#1030-1035		
Activity	Feb 2025	Feb 2025			

2. Agreement with JP Harris Associates, LLC

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the agreement between Muhlenberg School District and JP Harris Associates, LLC to assist in collecting payments for delinquent school accounts as presented.

3. Agreement with BusPatrol America, LLC

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the agreement between Muhlenberg School District and BusPatrol America, LLC for a School Bus Stop Arm Program as presented.

Questions/Comments/Concerns:

Mr. Haas questioned if there were cameras in the bus tops arms. Dr. Macahrola advised they do not. Dr. Futrick explained that the district is purchasing the software that if someone goes around the bus the district will be able to see it. Mr Haas asked if the district owned the buses. Dr. Macharola responded that we do not, the district leases. Mr Haas questioned if the district has to supply the inside cameras. Dr. Macharola responded no.

Education

1. 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. United States Tennis Association Middle States Section (USTA MS), grant awarded of tennis equipment for students at Muhlenberg Junior High School in the Muhlenberg School District.
- b. The Perk Up Truck/Ms. Michelle Lorah, donation of \$1,000 for graduation necessities for senior graduating students at Muhlenberg High School in the Muhlenberg School District.

2. Conference Requests

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

- a. Dr. Jessica Heffner, to attend the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA) Annual Conference in Nashville, TN on October 6, 2025 to October 10, 2025 at a cost not to exceed \$3,287.64 (funded through Human Resources).
- b. Dr. Cathy Shappell, to attend the 2025 PDE Data Summit in Hershey, PA on March 24, 2025 through March 26, 2025 at a cost not to exceed \$751.56 (funded through Curriculum).

3. Settlement Agreement and Mutual Release of Claims

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the Settlement Agreement and Mutual Release of Claims between Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School and Muhlenberg School District as presented.

4. Extended School Year Student Tuition Agreements

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the following extended school year student tuition agreements for the 2025-2026 school year as presented.

- a. Student #37754, Hogan Learning Academy
- b. Student #33544, Hogan Learning Academy
- c. Student #33047, Hogan Learning Academy

5. Agreement with The Meadows Psychiatric Center

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the agreement with The Meadows Psychiatric Center for the 2025-2026, 2026-2027 and/or the 2027-2028 school years as presented.

6. Student to Complete Senior Year as a Non-Resident Student

Resolved, that the Board of Education of the Muhlenberg School District approve the request for the following senior to complete the 2024-2025 school year as a non-resident student:

- a. Student No. 33500, grade 12, Muhlenberg High School

7. 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 approve the Settlement Agreement and Release for the following student as presented:

- a. Student "H", Muhlenberg High School

Minutes

Review minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of March 12, 2025 and the Regular Board Meeting of March 12, 2025.

Old Business

Mr. Hardy discussed the issues with cell phones, there are also issues with phones on the buses when kids get into fights they are recording. Dr. Macharola agreed and advised this will be included in the discussion with the IU and addressed.

New Business

1. Memoriam of Mr. Donald E. Greth

Resolved, that we remember the passing of Mr. Donald E. Greth who served in the Muhlenberg School District for four (4) years (1989-1993) as a Boys Soccer Head Coach. We honor his memory for his dedicated service to the school district and community.

Be it further resolved that we convey through this resolution our deepest sympathy to his family, and that this resolution be made part of the permanent record in the minutes of the Muhlenberg School District.

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.

Enrique Castro - resident

When mentioning the high school seniors and helping, he is aware that Craft 2700 on Sunday has a free prom dress event for Muhlenberg seniors and just wanted to make everyone aware.

Jacqueline Bellanca - resident

Wanted to take time to thank the board personally, Dr. Macharola, Dr. Futrick and all of these wonderful people sitting behind her. It's been over twenty years since she has been here and this has been a bittersweet decision, but she thanks everyone for all of their support. She still lives here, her kids still go here and she will still be here and she will always be a Muhl. Go Muhls.

MSD/RMCTC Board Visitor of the Month

Schedule 2024-2025

April	Ms. Janet Howard
May	Mr. Ronald J. Haas, Sr.

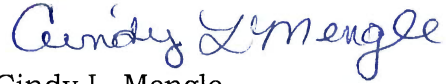
Review of Board Meetings and Calendar of Events

April 9	6:30 PM	Committee of the Whole Meetings and Regular Board Meeting
April 14	6:30 PM	RMCTC Board Meeting
May 7	7:00 PM	Committee of the Whole Meeting
May 12	6:30 PM	RMCTC Board Meeting
May 14	7:00 PM	Regular Board Meeting
June 9	6:30 PM	RMCTC Board Meeting
June 11	6:30 PM	Committee of the Whole and Regular Board Meeting

Adjourn Meeting

Moved by Mr. Hardy and Mr. Vasquez that there being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting be adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Attest:



Cindy L. Mengle
Secretary