

**Avonworth School District  
258 Josephs Lane  
Pittsburgh, PA 15237  
Avonworth Board of School Directors  
Minutes – Work Session/General Purpose Meeting – February 5, 2018  
Avonworth School District – Board Room  
7:30 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**Mr. Beau Blaser, Ms. Sandra Bolain, Mr. John Brandt, Ms. Vicki Carlson,  
Mr. Jeff Carraway, Ms. Kathryn Monti, Mr. David Oberdick, Mr. Patrick  
Stewart, Ms. Kristin Thompson**

**OTHERS PRESENT**

**Dr. Thomas Ralston, Superintendent  
Mr. Brad Waters, Director of Fiscal Management  
Ms. Jodi Piacenti, Parent  
Mr. Cory Bonnett, Parent  
Ms. Nancy White, *The Citizen*  
Ms. Cindy Donovan, Board Secretary**

**Call to Order**

*Board Vice President, David Oberdick, called the Work Session/General Purpose Meeting to order at 8:08 P.M.*

*The Athletic Committee met this evening at 7:00 PM to discuss athletic matters.*

**Visitors' Comments**

*Ms. Jodi Piacenti referenced Pathways to the Future and asked how the district was evaluating technology and asked what she should expect for her fourth grader and from teachers. Dr. Ralston said the district rolled out 1,700 devices to students this year. Evaluations go from taking the place of worksheets to creating new things such as media on the computers. Our IT staff conducts both large and small group staff training sessions and staff members are also undergoing professional development. He suggested she speak with Dr. Battistone. Ms. Piacenti said the college her son attends would not accept the College-in-High School classes he took and she would've liked to have known this before spending the money for his College-in-High School classes. Dr. Ralston said this past fall we had a meeting with college admission counselors where they said their universities value College-in-High School classes rather than AP classes. This year we sent out a post-graduate survey but we did not have a great response.*

*Mr. Cory Bonnett said he had sent the Board members an email but only received one reply. No other Board members received his email. He had 3 questions concerning the 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum: 1) What is the specific goal of the new curriculum; 2) What are the metrics being used; 3) What is the specific success criteria? Dr. Ralston replied that our goal is to provide learning experiences for the students, based upon a presentation, a portfolio, or something they have created. Ms. Bolain said we are creating a benchmark because we have never done this before and over time we will be able to see how it works. Mr. Bonnett asked if this year will be used as a bench mark for next year when the 7<sup>th</sup> grade class goes into the new 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum. Dr. Ralston said it would and that this program goes far beyond*

*the test. We are measuring them from where they started. Mr. Bonnett asked if students show a deficiency in cooperation, working in groups, setting and achieving goals. Dr. Ralston said we are not trying to address a deficiency. This program is based upon what we have done as a school district and what we are hearing from employers. Mr. Stewart said we trust our administrators based on their visits to other schools around the country. Our district is small enough that this is a way to implement it and watch it. Mr. Bonnett has been talking with parents of kids who are having a negative experience with the new curriculum and feels there needs to be a discussion with parents about where their kids are. Mr. Brandt asked what he saw as risks. Mr. Bonnett is concerned that the focus has shifted from academics to soft skills and feels something is “off” this year and unstructured. Ms. Carlson suggested having another meeting with 7<sup>th</sup> grade parents about what is working and what is not. Need to have parents see the work. Mr. Bonnett has not seen any of his son’s writing before it went to grading. Mr. Stewart said parents see a lack of artifacts. Mr. Oberdick said this is not a blind journey and we are still looking at standardized tests scores. Our SAT scores are in the Top 10. Dr. Ralston will discuss these items at his Administration meeting on Wednesday.*

**FINANCE – J. Carraway/P. Stewart, Co-Chairs**

**Motion:** J. Carraway; **Second:** P. Stewart; **Motion Carried:** Unanimous voice vote to approve Item #1:

1. **RESOLUTION #020518:** To continue membership in the Allegheny Intermediate Unit’s Joint Purchasing Program as attached. *Resolution - AIU*

**PERSONNEL – K. Thompson/D. Oberdick, Co-Chairs**

**Motion:** K. Thompson; **Second:** J Carraway; **Motion Carried:** Unanimous voice vote to approve Items #1-3:

1. To amend the Personnel motion #5 on the January 15, 2018 to a change in assignment for **Ms. Jamie Shaulis**, General Food Service Worker from 9:15 A.M. – 1:15 P.M. (4 hours/day) at the Avonworth Middle/High School Cafeteria to 8:15 A.M. – 1:15 P.M. (5 hours/day), retroactive to January 2, 2018 *Chg. in Assignment*
2. To rescind the motion of January 15, 2018 to hire **Mr. John Susi** as a long term substitute Primary Center School Counselor for the first semester of the 2018-2019 School Year, commencing August 21, 2018 through January 14, 2019, at Category M, Step 1, with benefits per the current AEA contract. Clearances are on file with in the District Office. *Rescind Motion*
3. To approve Mr. John Susi as a Paraprofessional retroactive to January 16, 2018, according to the current AESPA contract. Clearances are on file in the District Office. *Para Approval*

**The following items are for discussion for placement on the agenda of the Regular Meeting to be held Monday, February 12, 2018:**

*Approval of the Minutes of the January 8, 2018 Work Session/General Purpose Meeting and the January 15, 2018 Regular Meeting. (Voice Vote)*

**FINANCE – J. Carraway/P. Stewart, Co-Chairs**

- 1.1 Ratify payment of General Fund bills for January, 2018, beginning with Check #43397 and ending with Check #43568 in the total amount of \$486,502.77.
- 1.2 Ratify the January, 2018 payroll in the amount of \$1,086,340.86.
- 1.3 Treasurer’s Report for December, 2017.
- 1.4 Ratify payment of Food Service Fund bills for December, 2017, beginning with Check #2515 and ending with Check #2520 in the total amount of \$19,091.15.
- 1.5 Approval of Capital Project Fund payments in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
  
2. Approval of the proposed 2018-2019 Allegheny Intermediate Unit Program of Services Budget in the amount of \$2,086,109.00. The Allegheny County (AIU3) school districts’ total contribution to the budget is \$1,765,288.00. The Avonworth School District’s contribution to the Program of Services Budget is estimated to be \$28,410.00 and will be determined by PDE according to District Aid Ratio and Weighted Average Daily Membership (WADM).
  
3. To approve the EITC letter in support of Pittsburgh Filmmakers/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts’ proposal to The Grable Foundation for its new summer youth intensives retroactive to January 31, 2018.
  
4. To approve payment of \$1,000 to Dr. Ken Lockette for receipt of the check from The Grable Foundation/Studio A 2018: Designing Creative PBL Regional Teacher Summer Institute Foundation grant in the amount of \$58,590.
  
5. To approve Dr. Thomas Ralston to attend the League of Innovative Schools Professional Development Conference April 24 – April 27, 2018 in North Carolina at a cost not to exceed \$1,300. Digital Promise will reimburse the District a portion of the travel cost.

**PERSONNEL – K. Thompson/D. Oberdick, Co-Chairs**

1. To approve \_\_\_\_\_ as a Paraprofessional retroactive to February 5, 2018, with a primary assignment at the Elementary School, according to the current AESPA contract. Clearances are on file in the District Office.
  
2. To approve \_\_\_\_\_ as a substitute Paraprofessional for the 2017-2018 School Year, at a rate of \$11.43/hour, pending requirements of the district.
  
3. To approve a change in assignment for \_\_\_\_\_, from Substitute Cafeteria Worker to General Food Service Worker from 9:00 A.M. – 1:15 P.M. (4.25 hours/day) at the Avonworth Elementary School Cafeteria retroactive to January 29, 2018. Clearances are on file in the District office.
  
4. To approve a change in assignment for \_\_\_\_\_, from Substitute Cafeteria Worker to General Food Service Worker from 9:30 A.M. – 1:15 P.M. (3.75 hours/day) at the Avonworth Elementary School Cafeteria retroactive to January 29, 2018. Clearances are on file in the District office.

**Personnel, continued**

5. To approve a change in assignment for \_\_\_\_\_, from Substitute Cafeteria Worker to General Food Service Worker from 9:15 A.M. – 1:15 P.M. (4 hours/day) at the Avonworth Middle/High School Cafeteria retroactive to January 29, 2018. Clearances are on file in the District office.
6. To approve an extension for FMLA for \_\_\_\_\_ from January 22, 2018 to January 29, 2018.
7. To approve \_\_\_\_\_ as a Mentor for the Long-Term Substitute Health Teacher for the second semester of the 2017-2018 School Year, per the current AEA contract.
8. To approve the contract with Pittsburgh Behavioral Services to help build staff capacity in dealing with student behavioral concerns.

**CURRICULUM – J. Brandt/V. Carlson, Co-Chairs**

1. Approval to move College in High School Macro-Economics to a course offered in 2018-2019, instead of 2019-2020, with \_\_\_\_\_ and LaRoche College.

*Ms. Carlson noted the course book hasn't been updated and would like the Board to vote on the new course book before parents can review with their child.*

**ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES – D. Oberdick/K. Thompson, Co-Chairs**

1. To approve \_\_\_\_\_ as interim co-sponsor Graduation Project Coordinator from February 1, 2018 through the end of the 2017-2018 School Year, per the current AEA contract.
2. To approve \_\_\_\_\_ as Elementary School Concert Band Director for the 2017-2018 School Year at a stipend according to the current AEA contract.
3. To accept the resignation of \_\_\_\_\_ as Assistant Softball Coach, retroactive to January 10, 2018.
4. To approve the following coaches for the 2017-2018 spring sports:

<b>7/8 Girls' Volleyball – Head</b>	_____
<b>7/8 Girls' Volleyball – Assistant</b>	_____
<b>Baseball Varsity – Head</b>	_____
<b>Baseball – Volunteer</b>	_____
<b>MS Baseball – Head</b>	_____
<b>7/8 Baseball – Assistant</b>	_____
<b>7/8 Baseball – Volunteer</b>	_____

**Athletics & Activities, continued**

<b>Softball Varsity – Head</b>	_____
<b>Softball – Assistant</b>	_____
<b>Softball – Assistant</b>	_____
<b>7/8 Softball – Head</b>	_____
<b>7/8 Softball – Assistant</b>	_____
<b>Track &amp; Field – Head</b>	_____
<b>Track &amp; Field – Assistant</b>	_____
<b>Track &amp; Field – Assistant</b>	_____
<b>Track &amp; Field – Assistant</b>	_____
<b>Track &amp; Field – Assistant</b>	_____
<b>Track &amp; Field – Volunteer</b>	_____

5. To accept the resignation of \_\_\_\_\_ as Assistant Baseball Coach retroactive to February 5, 2018 and approve him as a Volunteer Assistant Baseball Coach for the 2017-2018 School Year.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS – K. Monti/K. Thompson, Co-Chairs**

1. Approve the contract agreement with Root & All LLC for public relations services in the amount of \$2,600 for support for Pathways to the Future initiative retroactive to January 26, 2018.
2. To approve the amount of \$1,300 to cover the cost of meals for the Senior Citizen dress rehearsal of the Spring Musical, *1776*, based on the book by Peter Stone with music and lyrics by Sherman Edwards, on Thursday, April 12, 2018. (*First Student has once again generously offered to donate a bus to transport senior citizens from the Emsworth Borough Building to the dress rehearsal and back.*)

**POLICY – V. Carlson/K. Monti, Co-Chairs**

1. Acceptance of State Audit Report (Limited Procedures Engagement) conducted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Auditor General, for the years ending June 30, 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 and subsequent approval of the Corrective Action Plan in response to Audit Findings #1 and 2 identified in the report.
2. To approve the creation of a National Arts Honor Society beginning with the 2017-2018 School Year.

**Policy, continued**

3. The first reading of new Policy #827 Conflict of Interest:

**827 CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

**Purpose**

**This policy shall affirm standards of conduct established to ensure that Board members and employees avoid potential and actual conflicts of interest, as well as the perception of a conflict of interest.**

**Definitions**

**Confidential information shall mean information not obtainable from reviewing a public document or from making inquiry to a publicly available source of information.[1]**

**Conflict or Conflict of interest shall mean use by a Board member or district employee of the authority of his/her office or employment, or any confidential information received through his/her holding public office or employment, for the private pecuniary benefit of him/herself, a member of his/her immediate family or a business with which s/he or a member of his/her immediate family is associated. The term does not include an action having a de minimis economic impact, or which affects to the same degree a class consisting of the general public or a subclass consisting of an industry, occupation or other group which includes the Board member or district employee, a member of his/her immediate family or a business with which s/he or a member of his/her immediate family is associated.[1]**

**De minimis economic impact shall mean an economic consequence which has an insignificant effect.[1]**

**Financial interest shall mean any financial interest in a legal entity engaged in business for profit which comprises more than five percent (5%) of the equity of the business or more than five percent (5%) of the assets of the economic interest in indebtedness.[1]**

**Honorarium shall mean payment made in recognition of published works, appearances, speeches and presentations, and which is not intended as consideration for the value of such services which are nonpublic occupational or professional in nature. The term does not include tokens presented or provided which are of de minimis economic impact.[1]**

**Immediate family shall mean a parent, parent-in-law, spouse, child, spouse of a child, brother, brother-in-law, sister, sister-in-law, or the domestic partner of a parent, child, brother or sister.[1]**

**Business partner shall mean a person who, along with another person, plays a significant role in owning, managing, or creating a company in which both individuals have a financial interest in the company.**

**Delegation of Responsibility**

**Each employee and Board member shall be responsible to maintain standards of conduct that avoid conflicts of interest. The Board prohibits members of the Board and district employees from engaging in conduct that constitutes a conflict of interest as outlined in this policy.**

**Guidelines**

**All Board members and employees shall be provided with a copy of this policy and acknowledge in writing that they have been made aware of it. Additional training shall be provided to designated individuals.**

**Disclosure of Financial Interests**

**No Board member shall be allowed to take the oath of office or enter or continue upon his/her duties, nor shall s/he receive compensation from public funds, unless s/he has filed a statement of financial interests as required by law.[2]**

**The district solicitor and designated district employees shall file a statement of financial interests as required by law and regulations.[3][4]**

**Standards of Conduct**

**The district maintains the following standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees and Board members engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts.[5]**

**Improper Influence**

**No person shall offer or give to a Board member, employee or nominee or candidate for the Board, or a member of his/her immediate family or a business with which s/he is associated, anything of monetary value, including a gift, loan, political contribution, reward or promise of future employment based on the offeror's or donor's understanding that the vote, official action or judgment of the Board member, employee or nominee or candidate for the Board would be influenced thereby.[1]**

**No Board member, employee or nominee or candidate for the Board shall solicit or accept anything of monetary value, including a gift, loan, political contribution, reward or promise of future employment, based on any understanding of that Board member, employee or nominee or candidate that the vote, official action or judgment of the Board member, employee or nominee or candidate for the Board would be influenced thereby.[1]**

**Organizational Conflicts**

**Organizational conflicts of interest may exist when due to the district's relationship with a subsidiary, affiliated or parent organization that is a candidate for award of a contract in connection with federally funded activities, the district may be unable or appear to be unable to be impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization.[5]**

**In the event of a potential organizational conflict, the potential conflict shall be reviewed by the Superintendent or designee to determine whether it is likely that the district would be unable or appear to be unable to be impartial in making the award. If such a likelihood exists, this shall not disqualify the related organization; however, the following measures shall be applied:**

- 1. The organizational relationship shall be disclosed as part of any notices to potential contractors;**
- 2. Any district employees or officials directly involved in the activities of the related organization are excluded from the selection and award process;**
- 3. A competitive bid, quote or other basis of valuation is considered; and**
- 4. The Board has determined that contracting with the related organization is in the best interests of the program involved.**



**Reporting**

**Any perceived conflict of interest that is detected or suspected by any employee or third party shall be reported to the Superintendent. If the Superintendent is the subject of the perceived conflict of interest, the employee or third party shall report the incident to the Board President.**

**Any perceived conflict of interest of a Board member that is detected or suspected by any employee or third party shall be reported to the Board President. If the Board President is the subject of the perceived conflict of interest, the employee or third party shall report the incident to the Superintendent, who shall report the incident to the solicitor.**

**No reprisals or retaliation shall occur as a result of good faith reports of conflicts of interest.**

**Investigation**

**Investigations based on reports of perceived violations of this policy shall comply with state and federal laws and regulations. No person sharing in the potential conflict of interest being investigated shall be involved in conducting the investigation or reviewing its results.**

**In the event an investigation determines that a violation of this policy has occurred, the violation shall be reported to the federal awarding agency in accordance with that agency's policies.**

**Disciplinary Actions**

**If an investigation results in a finding that the complaint is factual and constitutes a violation of this policy, the district shall take prompt, corrective action to ensure that such conduct ceases and will not recur. District staff shall document the corrective action taken and, when not prohibited by law, inform the complainant.**

**Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge, fines and possible imprisonment. Disciplinary actions shall be consistent with Board policies, procedures, applicable collective bargaining agreements and state and federal laws.[7]**

**Legal**

**1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 1101 et seq**

**2. Pol. 004**

**3. 51 PA Code 15.2**

**4. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 1104**

**5. 2 CFR 200.318**

**6. Pol. 322**

**7. Pol. 317**  
**Pol. 011**  
**Pol. 319**  
**Pol. 609**  
**Pol. 702**

**Old Business**

*Dr. Ralston and Mr. Waters discussed updating two bathrooms at the elementary school and the estimate received in the amount of \$270,000. Mr. Stewart suggested discussing capital projects at the next Building and Grounds meeting and getting the bathroom project out to bid. Ms. Bolain asked if the new roof could be done in phases and Mr. Waters said he'll have more details for the next Board meeting.*

**New Business**

*Dr. Ralston discussed new positions for next year. Some have been built into next year's budget.*

- 1. An Assistant Principal at the Elementary School with a background in literacy.*
- 2. A Grade 8 math teacher.*
- 3. A half time Art teacher – there is currently one uncovered period at the elementary school. The secondary Art teacher travels to the elementary to cover this period. This position would eliminate the travel time and free up the secondary teacher so she can teach two additional Art classes.*
- 4. An additional 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher – the current 5<sup>th</sup> grade class has 5 sections and the class size has grown.*

*Dr. Ralston met with the Superintendent of Northgate to discuss the Co-op Agreement. It has been 50/50 in the past but they'd like to restructure it based on the ratio of student athletes.*

*Dr. Ralston discussed a one-day field trip the drama students would like to take to Philadelphia in preparation for the spring musical, "1776."*

**Adjournment**

**Motion: P. Stewart; Second: J. Brandt; Motion Carried: Unanimous Voice Vote to adjourn to an Executive Session at 10:15 P.M. to discuss personnel, contract, litigation, and student matters.**

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy S. F. Donovan,  
Board Secretary