

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BRANDYWINE HEIGHTS AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
November 2, 2020**

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Brandywine Heights Area School District was called to order at pm by President John Tomasi.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Board Recording Secretary called the roll:**

- |                  |               |                |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|
| ✓ Mr. Bieber     | ✓ Mrs. Henry  | ✓ Mr. Tomasi   |
| ✓ Dr. Carter     | ✓ Mrs. Huhn   | ✓ Mr. Wagaman  |
| ✓ Mrs. Eisenhart | ✓ Mr. Scheetz | ✓ Mrs. Walizer |

**Administration Present:**

- ✓ Mr. Andrew Potteiger, Superintendent
- ✓ Mr. Jamison Barnhart, High School Assistant Principal
- ✓ Mr. Matthew Dziunycz, High School Principal
- ✓ Mr. Robert Farina, Intermediate/Middle School Principal
- ✓ Mr. Scott Geist, Director of Athletics
- ✓ Mrs. Carolyn Hanych, Director of Brandywine Virtual Academy
- ✓ Ms. Stephanie Kelly, Elementary School Principal
- ✓ Mr. Craig Neiman, Business Manager/Board Secretary
- ✓ Dr. René Reese, Director of Pupil Services
- ✓ Mr. Thomas Voelker, Assistant to the Superintendent
- ✓ Mr. Michael Wetzel, Director of Buildings and Grounds
- ✓ Ms. Carly Worman, Supervisor of Instruction and Assessment
- ✓ Mrs. Mandi Kercher, Curriculum Supervisor

**Solicitor:** Mr. Benjamin Pratt, Esquire

**Visitors:** Rine Strohecker (Teacher), Nancy Chiemelewski (Teacher), Michelle Stoudt (Topton), Nicole Smith (Fleetwood), Michelle Gauby (Fleetwood), Jennifer Fredericks (Topton), Jamie Binkley (Alburtis), Bobby Eisenhart (Mertztown), Kimm Sterner (Mertztown), Amy Crouse (Mertztown), Cheryl Scalzo (Alburtis), Deena Reinert (Boyertown), Mark Heckman (Mertztown), Katherine Klinicki (Mertztown), Karen Sahaydak (Fleetwood), Walter Sahaydak (Fleetwood), Noach Cieliesz, Nicole Italiano (Topton), Joline Cerullo (Mertztown), Chris Rehrig (Mertztown), Selean Miller (Fleetwood), Brain Hohenshilt (Mertztown), Heather Maitland, Sue Davis (Topton), Crys McCarty (Mertztown), Janelle Moser (Mertztown), Jonathan Rex (Macungie), Jonathan Weidman (Topton), Ethan Weidman (Topton)

**Recognitions:**

Mr. Geist recognized Elijah Ruppert for his 2020 BCIAA Individual Golf Championship and for finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in the PIAA Golf Championships for the second straight and for being named berks county male player of the year.

Mr. Tomasi and Mr. Potteiger presented the #newHEIGHTS Awards to outstanding employees nominated by their peers. November recipients were Mr. Rine Strohecker, Kindergarten teacher and Nancy Chmielewski, Intermediate/Middle School Music Education Teacher. Ms. Kelly and Mr. Farina shared personal accolades about each employee.

Thanked the county of Berks for awarding a \$100,000 grant to the District from their Educational Institutions and Services category of CARES Act funding. Funds will be used to offset the District's costs to enable the safe reopening of the District. Mr. Potteiger thanked Mrs. Kercher and Mr. Neiman for working collaboratively on the grant process to acquire these funds for the district.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT**

A motion was made by Mr. Scheetz and seconded by Mr. Wagaman to approve the Board of Directors Report.

### **A. Approval of Minutes**

Dispense with the reading and accept the minutes from the Regular School Board Meeting held October 5, 2020 per Board A.

### **B. Second Reading of Policies**

To Approve the second reading of policies per Board B.1.-B.16.

1. 103. Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harrassment Affecting Students
2. 104. Discrimination/Title IX Sexual Harassment Affecting Staff
3. 237. Student Use of Electronic Devices
4. 246. School Wellness (new policy) - school board member committee member. (Eisenhart)
5. 301. Creating a Position (changed from Administrative Employees to District Personnel Policy)
6. 305. Employment of Substitute Employees (changed from Administrative Employees to District Personnel Policy)
7. 338. Sabbatical Leave - Restoration of Health (changed from Administrative Employees to District Personnel Policy) - add applicable staff
8. 338.1 Compensated Professional Leaves (changed from Administrative Employees to District Personnel Policy) - add applicable staff
9. 831. Use Of Livestream Video On School District Property

#### Policies to Retire:

10. 145. District Wellness (retire)
11. 401. Creating a Position (Professional Employees - retire)
12. 405. Employment Of Substitute Professional Employees (Professional Employees - retire)
13. 438. Sabbatical Leave - Restoration of Health (Professional Employees - retire)
14. 438.1 Compensated Professional Leaves (Professional Employees - retire)
15. 501. Creating a Position (Classified Employees - retire)
16. 505. Employment of Substitute and Short-Term Employees (Classified Employees - retire)

### **C. First Reading of Policies**

To Approve the first reading of policies per Board C.1.-C.17.

1. 302. Employment of Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent (changed from Administrative Employees to District Personnel Policy)
2. 304. Employment of District Staff (new policy)
3. 306. Employment of Summer School Staff (new policy)
4. 307. Student Teachers/Interns (new policy)

5. 308. Employment Contract (changed from Administrative Employees to District Personnel Policy)
6. 309. Assignment and Transfer (changed from Administrative Employees to District Personnel Policy)
7. 309.1 Telework (new policy)
8. 918. Title I Parent and Family Engagement

Policies to Retire:

9. 303. Employment of Administrators - retire
10. 404. Employment of Professional Employees - retire
11. 406. Employment of Summer School Staff (Professional Employees - retire)
12. 407. Student Teachers (Professional Employees - retire)
13. 408. Employment Contract (Professional Employees - retire)
14. 409. Assignment and Transfer (Professional Employees - retire)
15. 504. Employment of Classified Employees - retire
16. 508. Employment Contract (Classified Employees - retire)
17. 509. Assignment and Transfer (Classified Employees - retire)

**D. USDA Resolution**

To approve a Board of Directors' Resolution in appreciation of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) extending the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) through June 30, 2021 per Board D.

**E. Brandywine Heights Health and Safety Plan**

To approve the updated Brandywine Heights Area School District Health and Safety Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year to include the new definition of close contact found on page 20 of the document per Board E.

**Accept the committee reports and make them part of the minutes.**

**Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU)** – Mrs. Huhn, reported on the detailed committee report (attached).

**Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC)** – Mr. Wagaman, No report. There was a meeting on October 28, meeting minutes on committee reports (attached).

**Berks Earned Income Tax Collection Bureau (BEITC)** – Mr. Neiman, reported on the detailed committee report (attached).

**Council on Legislative Action (COLA)** – Mrs. Walizer, The next meeting is Tuesday November 10, 2020.

**Policy Committee** – Mr. Wagaman, No report.

**Strategic Planning/Goals** – Mrs. Eisenhart, No report.

**Negotiations/Compensation Committee** – Mrs. Huhn, No report.

**Building Construction Committee** – Mrs. Huhn, Mr. Tomasi, Mr. Wagaman. Mr. Tomasi, reported on the detailed committee report (attached).

Mrs. Huhn asked the Board if they would be in support of sending a congratulatory message to the Superintendent of Reading School District for being awarded Superintendent of the year. All members of the Board were in favor.

Mr. Tomasi asked for comments from Board members and the public. There were no comments.

Roll call was taken to accept the Board of Directors Report.

Y Mr. Bieber            Y Dr. Carter            Y Mrs. Eisenhart            Y Mrs. Henry            Y Mrs. Huhn  
Y Mr. Scheetz            Y Mr. Tomasi            Y Mr. Wagaman            Y Mrs. Walizer  
Motion Carried – 9 yeas

## **BUSINESS AND OPERATIONS REPORT**

A motion was made by Mr. Scheetz and seconded by Mr. Bieber to approve the Business and Operations Report.

### **A. General Fund Bills**

To approve general fund bills through November 2, 2020 totaling \$2,243,759.61 per Business A.

### **B. Food Service Bills**

To approve food service fund bills through November 2, 2020 totaling \$18,460.37 per Business B.

### **C. Construction Fund Bills**

To approve construction fund bills through November 2, 2020 totaling \$406,975.15 per Business C.

### **D. Capital Reserve Fund Bills**

To approve capital reserve fund bills through November 2, 2020 totaling \$4,740.31 per Business D.

### **E. Financial Reports**

To accept the following Financial Reports through September 30, 2020:

1. General Fund - Revenue/Expenditures/Fund Balance – Business E.1.
2. Food Service Fund - Revenue/Expenditure – Business E.2.
3. Construction Fund - Revenue/Expenditure – Business E.3.
4. Capital Reserve Fund - Revenue/Expenditures – Business E.4.
5. Investment Schedule – Business E.5.
6. Student Activity & Trust Funds – Business E.6
7. Budget Transfers – No Report.

### **F. Special Education/Pupil Services**

1. To approve the Tuition Agreement with New Story, 1245 Perkiomen Ave, Reading, PA, for the (August 5, 2020 – June 4, 2021) 2020-21 school year, for a District student based on the student's IEP at a cost of \$210/day as per Business F.1.
2. To approve the Settlement Agreement with a student that was agreed upon through Resolution that the student will be placed out of District in another education setting and includes the District paying legal fees of the family not to exceed \$2,000.00 per Business F.2.

### **G. Curriculum/Technology - None**

### **H. Facilities/Maintenance - None**

### **I. Act 1 Index**

To adopt the resolution to not exceed the Act 1 index of 3.6% for the 2021-22 fiscal year per Business I.

### **J. General Fund Balance Assignment**

To authorize the Business Manager to assign \$1,000,000 of unassigned general fund balance in the 2020-21 school year for the purpose of transfer to the Capital Reserve Fund.

### **K. General Fund Balance Transfer**

To authorize the Business Manager to transfer \$1,000,000 in the 2020-21 school year from the general fund assigned fund balance to the capital reserve fund for the purpose of capital improvement projects.

### **L. Architectural Firm**

To approve the selection of KCBA Architectural Firm to provide professional services for future construction projects per the attached proposal.

Mr. Neiman presented a recap of the 2019-20 budget, an update for the 2020-21 budget and a budget overview for 2021-22.

Mr. Neiman spoke about the Architectural firm that is being recommended by the Administration. The district went through a competitive RFP process while looking for an architect firm to partner with. The Administration is happy to move forward with KCBA Architectural Firm. Mr. Mike Kelly is the leader of the firm and will be the primary contact for the district.

There was hesitation from Mr. Scheetz and Mrs. Huhn about the recommendation of KCBA Architect firm due to past experiences that the district has worked with them. One of the main concerns was the communication between KCBA and the district and what kind of controls would be put into place to make sure the communication is effective.

Mr. Kelly spoke to the concerns of the board members and assured them there would be effective communication and spoke about how critical it is for there to be good representation for the District. Every meeting with the district will start with a schedule and a budget. Mr. Kelly will also be available for any board meetings to answer any questions if needed as well as provide monthly board updates. He also explained there is a completely new team that will be working with the district and customer service and communication are paramount.

Mrs. Huhn remembered the painful conversations and disappointments that were happening in the past with KCBA. Although she was unable to attend the RFP interviews she is going off of the recommendations of the administration and other board members that were there. She is glad to hear things have changed however it still feels risky. Mrs. Huhn questioned if there is an effective date that the School District would start working with KCBA Architect firm and what the target time frame is.

The Board thanked Mr. Neiman for creating this presentation and showing the board and the public the updates for the 2020-21 budget.

Mr. Kelly is engaging with the administration as soon as possible knowing we have a tight timeline to keep moving forward and bid in the spring.

Mr. Tomasi asked for comments from Board members and the public. There were no other comments.

Roll call was taken to approve items under the Business and Operations Report.

Y Mr. Bieber      Y Dr. Carter      Y Mrs. Eisenhart      Y Mrs. Henry      Y Mrs. Huhn  
Y Mr. Scheetz      Y Mr. Tomasi      Y Mr. Wagaman      Y Mrs. Walizer

Motion Carried – 9 yeas

### **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

A motion was made by Mr. Scheetz and seconded by Mr. Bieber to approve the Superintendent’s Report.

### **A. Girls High School Wrestling Team**

To approve the implementation of the High School Girls Wrestling Program, effective for the Winter, 2020-2021 season with a High School coaching salary of \$3,500.00, as presented to the Board on October 5, 2020.

### **Accept the informational reports and make them part of the minutes.**

Superintendent's Report – Mr. Potteiger

Enrollment Report – Mr. Potteiger

Mr. Tomasi asked for comments from Board members and the public. There were no other comments.

Roll call was taken to approve items under the Superintendent's Report.

Y Mr. Bieber      Y Dr. Carter      Y Mrs. Eisenhart      Y Mrs. Henry      N Mrs. Huhn

Y Mr. Scheetz      Y Mr. Tomasi      Y Mr. Wagaman      Y Mrs. Walizer

Motion Carried – 9 yeas

### **PERSONNEL REPORT**

A motion was made by Mr. Scheetz and seconded by Mr. Bieber to accept the Personnel Report.

**A. Resignations/Retirements/Terminations/Furloughs** - None

**B. Change of Status** - None

**C. Appointments**

1. Professional Staff – None
2. Support Staff – None
3. Long Term Substitutes
  - a. Approve to extend the duration of assignment for Mrs. Cassandra Conrad, HS Gifted/Art Long Term Substitute Teacher, through the end of the 2020-21 school year per Personnel C.3.a.
4. Co-Curricular
  - a. Instructional Co-Curricular Advisors – None
  - b. Instructional Co-Curricular Student Activity Group Advisors – None
  - c. Approve the Winter Season Athletic Co-Curricular Appointments per Personnel C.4.c.
  - d. Approve the Winter Season Athletic Event Staff and Volunteer Coaches per Personnel C.4.d.

**D. Support Staff Substitutes** - None

**E. Leaves**

1. Approve the request from Employee #10695 to continue a professional development sabbatical leave of absence through the second semester of the 2020-21 school year as attached and marked Personnel E.1. *Note: Sabbatical requests adhere to Board Policy 338 which specifies teachers earn half of their normal salary and retain health benefits while on sabbatical leave.*
2. Approve the request from Employee #11065 for a one semester professional development sabbatical leave of absence to take place during the second semester of the 2020-21 school year as attached and marked Personnel E.2. *Note: Sabbatical*

*requests adhere to Board Policy 338 which specifies teachers earn half of their normal salary and retain health benefits while on sabbatical leave.*

3. Approve the request from Employee #15150 for a paternity leave of absence beginning approximately December 1, 2020 through January 22, 2021 per Personnel E.3.
4. Approve the request from Employee #15310 for a maternity leave of absence beginning approximately April 6, 2021 through the end of the 2020-21 school year per Personnel E.4.
5. Approve the request from Employee #11180 to delay a previously approved professional development sabbatical leave of absence scheduled to take place the second semester of the 2020-21 school year per details described in Personnel E.5.

**F. Other Personnel Items**

Approve a change in mentor for Ms. Olivia Fenstermacher, KU Reading Specialist Intern, from Mrs. Angela Bucci-Herb (previously approved on 8/17/2020) to Mrs. Jennifer Snyder, ES Reading Specialist. Professional staff members who serve as mentors to new teachers receive a stipend of \$650 prorated based on the duration of the assignment.

Mr. Tomasi asked for comments from Board members and the public. There were no other comments.

Roll call was taken to approve items under the Personnel Report.

Y Mr. Bieber      Y Dr. Carter      Y Mrs. Eisenhart      Y Mrs. Henry      Y Mrs. Huhn  
Y Mr. Scheetz      Y Mr. Tomasi      Y Mr. Wagaman      Y Mrs. Walizer

Motion Carried – 9 yeas

**OTHER BUSINESS**

In reflection of the concerns voiced by community members on both sides of the issue, Mr. Potteiger recommended that the Administrative team develop a committee with a group of stakeholders that evaluates the existing health and safety plan. The goal of this process would be to ensure that the District is responding to the concerns from the community while also following the science and the data surrounding this issue. The committee would work on analyzing and incorporating local data sets to facilitate the process of ensuring our students and staff remain safe while operating in a specific educational model. The timeline for evaluating the information and presenting a recommendation to the Board would be in two weeks or the middle of November. This may necessitate a Special Board Meeting to review the recommendations of the committee.

Mr. Scheetz questioned the size of the review committee and commented that there would need to be a quick turnaround.

Mr. Potteiger explained having key stakeholders that are heavily engaged in the conversation is critical. The target is to have about fifteen to twenty people that consists of administrators, teachers, board members, students, and parents. A tight knit, smaller group will allow for everyone to have a strong voice in the process.

There was support from the board to create the committee. Mr. Scheetz and Mr. Bieber offered to be on the review committee. It will have to be a quick and busy time frame.

Mrs. Huhn thanked you for hearing the request to create the committee and taking the lead to form it so quickly. She reminded everyone that we all have a common goal to get students the best education they can have. Mrs. Huhn applauded the effort of the administration and if support is needed she is available to help.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Michelle Stoudt (Topton) spoke about BCTC and how Brandywine is the only school that has their students attending BCTC virtually about of the sixteen districts in the county. There are fifteen minutes of instruction time with teachers for virtual instruction at BCTC. The first two months of the year were spent trying to make up work from last year which my student is still required to make up. Now students cannot attend BCTC in-person at all and there are three parts to the program which includes labs. A lab cannot be done at home and it is a risk for students not to be able to pass their certifications and continue on like the rest of the students in the program. If transportation was an issue I would drive my child to BCTC, so he could learn in person. He is suffering because he cannot complete the assignments from home. If he had to drive there himself I would allow it because it is his future. It is completely Brandywine Height's decision because BCTC is basing their instruction off each district's health and safety plan. Please make a decision as soon as possible so BCTC students can resume learning their trades and professions.

Nicole Smith (Rockland), has a child in third grade and kindergarten. Ms. Smith was very hesitant to send her child to kindergarten due to the pandemic. She was very happy with how the school opened for kindergarten. Elementary school students, especially kindergarten students cannot learn in a virtual environment. She has seen a lot of setbacks in her third-grader and that is hard to accept as a parent because she is struggling and her grades are showing it. Teachers are doing everything possible they can do, and they are doing tremendous work with their students given the circumstances. There are some families that have two full time working parents and that means they need help from people who may not be able to navigate an online environment as easily. At the beginning of the school year families had the option to either send their children to school for the hybrid learning or have them attend virtual academy and now that option is gone. There is no choice but to do virtual schooling. Ms. Smith supports the metric not being based on the county but based on local zip codes. She hopes the new committee can help get the children back to school full time. The District has taken so many precautions to keep everyone safe, and we need to continue to utilize those while keeping the children in school.

Fredericks (Topton) has four children in the district. Ms. Fredericks was displeased with the decision for the school district to move to a virtual environment. Keeping a plan in place just for integrity does no favor to the children and families in the District. Policies and plans need to be fluid and change. Not every plan is full proof. If I were to go off a plan for work without accepting change when it is needed I could build a bridge too short. That is what the board has done for the children at Brandywine Heights. The first day of virtual learning for her children did not go well. This is not a one size fits all solution for every child or every family. Not a teacher, not want to be a teacher, not good at teaching, now much work and be a teacher and sort through frustrations of the day. Ms. Fredericks did not choose the virtual academy because it was not a good fit for their family, and they were confident in their choice to send their children to school. Now that choice has been taken away from families. The decision needs to be based on the parents and the students' voices. To not allow for change in the plan and policies put in place has nothing to do with integrity, there will be tremendous costs to that decision.



Bobby Eisenhart (Rockland) in full disclosure Mr. Eisenhart commented that he is the husband of School Board Member, Alexis Eisenhart. He was encouraged by the special board meeting that was held on Friday and commended the board for listening to the community. He fully acknowledged that the decision came with a lot of concern. The long term implications of students not being in school may not be able to be calculated but the loss is there. We will only know the harm not being in school causes children after it is too late. It is not leadership to solve one problem but in doing so create another problem. Mr. Eisenhart asked the Board to consider that it is possible to balance student safety with the absolute necessity of having full time in person instruction. The two can be accomplished. The current plan gives no options to have children in class. There needs to be an option for full time in person education if families choose that is best for their students similar to the option for families to send their children to virtual academy.

Kimm Sterner (Rockland) has two children in the district and is a current teacher in a Berks County school district. She teaches students both in person and virtually. Mrs. Sterner strongly disagrees with the district going virtual. She thought we had excellent procedures set up to keep students and staff safe. She understands the plan however this is not the case. The District is failing children by not making an effort for them. Children do not have the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and to attend BCTC. Families should at least be given the opportunity to make the decision to send their students or send them to virtual academy. Berks County is having a winter season and if we stay virtual Brandywine Heights students will not be able to participate. BCTC is continuing and our students should not have to fall behind and not get the hands-on training they need. Mrs. Sterner supports the district using local zip codes metrics instead of county metrics. She has faith in the safety measures that are currently in place.

Amy Crouse (Longswamp) has two students in the district. Ms. Crouse serves multiple school districts in Berks and has seen what education is like in person without COVID-19 spreading. She was pleased with a plan put in place for kindergarten students with an AM and PM schedule. The district needs to quickly get kindergarten back into the classroom because these early learners cannot learn like older students. This is far from an easy decision and the district is acting on a number that is .1 percent of the data that includes unmasked spread at gatherings in the community and shows nothing about what is happening in the walls of the district. Local zip code and district data should be used in place of county data. She has sent emails to the board monthly and advocates for full return of in-person instruction. She is in support of at the least returning to a hybrid model and to continue to work to create a plan for students being back in the building full time. The full virtual model should still be in place but families should be able to make that decision for themselves.

Cheryl Scalzo (Longswamp) thanked the administration and staff for continually keeping the children and teachers safe. Ms. Scalzo is extremely proud of the education that is being received from Brandywine Heights School District. Both the hybrid and remote models are less than ideal however this is a less than ideal time. The support the teachers are giving is incredibly helpful in this difficult time. They continue to support their students through every phase. She reminds her son of how important school is but how it is more than education it is also athletics and extracurriculars that are important. Athletics and extracurriculars have a positive impact on students' outcomes including their grades. A lot of student athlete's goals revolve around athletics and extracurriculars, that being said Ms. Scalzo asked the board to consider allowing sports and to trust the coach and the athletic department to keep students safe while participating in sports. If

winter sports do not continue students' socialization may be impacted and their social welfare and academic drive will decrease.

Deena Reinert (District Township) commented that it seems like BHASD is moving backwards compared to other districts in the county. She suggested the district base the metrics off the local zip code data and not the county data. She thanked the Board members that responded to the emails, it is important to the community to know that the Board is listening to what families want. Ms. Reinert is in support of continuing with hybrid instruction and hopefully moving to a full time schedule. She is worried about the mental health of students and the recruiting process for seniors especially if the other schools in the county are allowing sports. It would be a disadvantage to BHASD students to not have winter sports. She supports the idea of creating a committee and would be happy to be a part of it.

Katherine Klinicki was very happy to hear the district would be forming a review committee to reevaluate the plan and get children back into school. She suggested the district look at local zip code data and not the county data. It is so difficult for kindergarten students to learn virtually.

Karen Sahaydak (Rockland) has two children in the district and is a high school english teacher in another district in Berks County. Mrs. Sahaydak is very concerned about the recent decision to go virtual. It is a disservice to the students to be virtual. Although hybrid had its struggles it was a compromise for students to be in the buildings part time. Speaking as a teacher, students are receiving low grades, mainly because of a lack of motivation. Teachers have been doing a wonderful job but face to face instruction is critical. Mrs. Sahaydak is concerned about the values and understanding of education. Mrs. Sahaydak's oldest student is a senior and he attends BCTC. He also has an IEP and was able to attend school four days a week. Once he was back in the building for four days every week his grades went up which proves children learn better in person. Not allowing BCTC students to attend is putting students at Brandywine Heights behind other students in the county. She understands the health and safety plan and that the District took heat for changing it before however this entire pandemic is something that no one has any experience in and is difficult. Districts who have been virtual are going hybrid and Brandywine Heights is going the opposite direction. The spread is not happening in the school districts. This is going to push parents to look for other educational opportunities outside of the Brandywine Heights. Mrs. Sahaydak appreciates the desire to look out for the wellbeing of the district's students but please remember you are here to represent the community and the overwhelming majority want the district to stick with the hybrid phase and not go virtual.

Noah Cieliesz (Longswamp) echoes what the community is saying. Children benefit more with teacher interaction and being in school. As parents we have little background in teaching. He understands the need to protect children and staff and respect the decisions that need to be made but asked that the board and administration also see that point of view of the community. The teaching staff have been doing a great job and he appreciated everything they are continuing to do. Mr. Cieliesz suggested staying in a hybrid model and seeing what happens over the next few weeks.

Joline Cerullo (Longswamp) thanked Mr. Potteiger for making the commitment to forming a review committee. To know the opportunity is taken away from athletics is disheartening. To know that the future careers are being affected is concerning. Hybrid was very challenging with only having two shortened days with teachers. Some teachers refused to post in google classroom and others posted after school hours which made it difficult for all students especially those who are athletes.

No teacher is being asked to teach high school honors classes and elementary school at the same time it is absurd and now parents are being asked to do the same. It should not be ok to put children in daycare full time but not be able to go to school full time. She questioned how other schools are able to have full in person instruction but we are forced to go virtual. There is a huge financial burden for families who are already struggling. The decision to go virtual was the biggest disservice to kids. She hopes the committee comes up with a new plan and the board members take it into consideration.

Selena Miller (Longswamp) commented that students with disabilities will suffer the most by the school district moving to a virtual model. Board members might not realize that children with disabilities need a routine and this is ruining that for them. If parents are trying to support their families by working how are they going to be able to help their children with their schedule and classwork. She asked the board to rethink the decision for the kids, they need school, their friends, and the social interaction.

Bryan and Krista Hohenshilt (Rockland) are both full time working parents, the hybrid model was somewhat manageable however after one day of full virtual classes it is going to be even more challenging. The adaptability of the teachers has been great. Hearing other people's stories, we are fortunate to have a schedule to work from home. By now we all know how resilient children are but they shouldn't have to be. Board members, you have the power to make a significant positive impact by changing to full in person instruction. It doesn't seem like you are all putting aside your personal feelings. The metrics are not the only thing that is important when making these decisions. It is overwhelmingly obvious that people want their children back in school whether in a hybrid model or full in person model. Mrs. Hohenshilt suggested sending a survey to families to get a feel of what the entire district wants. She is looking forward to what the review committee comes up with. It is upsetting looking where children were before the pandemic and where they are now. She hopes the board hears everyone's concerns about getting kids back in school.

Sue Davis (Topton) commented that she feels there are issues with the education in the hybrid model. We need to think about the mental health of our students that comes with being virtual. They are not getting social interaction they would get if they were in person. We are the parents and if we are asking for them to be back in the building and we are willing to take the chance and not live in fear we should be given that opportunity. Teachers are posting assignments last minute and only teaching for fifteen minutes which is not helping students learn. Parents should be able to make the decision for their children whether they would go to school in person or continue with virtual instruction.

Crys McCarty (Mertztown) thanked the board and administration for reevaluating the health and safety plan. The current hybrid plan was not working. Ten to fifteen minutes in front of teachers was not enough. The first day of virtual her children spent the entire day learning in front of a teacher. A lot of people think virtual will be the same as it was in the spring however it is different because there are live sessions. For all of those fighting for BCTC to be back in person, she agrees however we need to realize that BCTC has students from all over the county attending. Ms. McCarty challenged the board to make visits to the school once students are back. She understands virtual is not ideal however students have received more time with teachers today than they have the whole year.

Janelle Moser (Teacher) thanked everyone for all the time and commitment that has been put into creating the health and safety plan. Mrs. Moser is invested in the district in many different ways including as a teacher, parent, coach, department head and alumni. She is an elementary school teacher with a difficult group of students. We are trying to teach them to become learners and in order for that to happen they need to mimic other students in the classroom. It is challenging to separate emotions when working with children with disabilities. She has experienced students, including her own daughter upset to hear the news of the district going to a virtual model. Students crave structure and this will make it hard to have a routine. Some students are not fortunate to have parents who are able to help give them support at home. Students have done a fabulous job of wearing their masks and staying socially distanced from each other. Brandywine Virtual Academy allowed parents an option at the beginning of the school year. The students who came to school were the ones who needed it and the parents felt comfortable sending them. If the district stays virtual there is no option for people who want their students to come to school.

John Weidman (Topton) is a Brandywine Heights senior. He commented that we have been the mercy of the board since the beginning of the year. Virtual Academy is already an option for students and families who do not feel safe coming to school. A lot of students liked the hybrid plan because it had some structure. He also attends BCTC and struggled finishing projects in the spring because of being virtual. Not allowing students to continue going to BCTC creates a disadvantage for Brandywine Heights students. Employers look at attendance and experience and if students cannot attend BCTC they are not getting the experience they need. Mr. Weidman also suggested looking at ways to improve the hybrid system. He would like to get back to school so he can finish his senior year out strong and get into the job market after graduating.

Ethan Weidman (Topton) an eighth grader in the district. He commented that he does not agree moving to a virtual model is the logical option for the district. There are some issues that will happen if the district continues virtually. The first issue is clarity of assignments. Sending emails and listing instructions can be vague and hard to understand. It is much easier for students to be in a classroom asking teachers questions face to face. It also is quicker because students are not waiting for an email back and forth. There are also tech issues, if someone is having a computer issue students may not be able to send an email to figure out what is wrong. If students are in school they are able to get loaners but that won't be available. Another issue that Mr. Weidman brought up was if there are power outages and students cannot log onto their classes. There have only been three (3) cases in the district since the beginning of school and it is not spreading throughout the school. Students and staff are trying hardest to follow rules and to ensure the health and safety of people around them.

Mrs. Huhn thanked the community for the feedback and input everyone has given from the past two (2) meetings. She wanted the community to know the board is listening and cares. We are trying to be solution oriented. There have been a lot of suggestions and they will be taken into consideration. Mrs. Huhn thanked Mrs. Moser for giving her opinions and questioned how other teachers were feeling.

Mr. Tomasi asked for comments from Board members and the public.

Mr. Tomasi announced there was an executive session prior to the meeting regarding legal and personnel matters.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Scheetz and seconded by Mr. Bieber to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 pm.

Motion carried with all yeas.

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Approval Date

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Craig Neiman, Board Secretary  
Chaydeanne Brunner,  
Recording Secretary



## Committee Reports

November 2, 2020

### Berks County Intermediate Unit (BCIU):

<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Thursday, October 15, 2020
<b>Person Reporting:</b>	Mrs. Elizabeth Huhn
<b>Summary:</b>	<p>The BCIU Board of Directors received the following updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The BCIU, along with intermediate units from across Pennsylvania, has been <b>working to advocate for Early Intervention services and raise awareness in Harrisburg about a potential funding shortage</b> for the program. The interim budget that was enacted provides less than half of the needed allocation for the year, yet the BCIU and partner intermediate units have continued to provide full services to eligible children, trusting that the General Assembly will allocate the remaining funds. Pennsylvania's Preschool Early Intervention program serves more than 50,000 children, ages 3 to 5 years, with disabilities and developmental needs. State and federal law requires that these services are provided to all eligible children at no cost to families. <b>In Berks County, the BCIU's Early Intervention program serves more than 2,500 children</b>, a 29% increase since 2016.</li><li>• The first meeting of the <b>Berks County Equity Committee</b> was held virtually on Tuesday, October 6, 2020. The Committee is co-chaired by Dr. Jill Hackman and Reading School District Superintendent Dr. Khalid Mumin (who was recently named Pennsylvania's Superintendent of the Year!). <b>The purpose of the committee is to address a continued commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion within our Berks County school communities.</b> The committee will meet quarterly; the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday,</li></ul>

December 8. The BHASD representative on this committee is Dr. Renee Reese.

- The BCIU has been **awarded \$29,855 through the Keystone Telepresence Education Grant Program**. This grant will enhance opportunities for Berks County special education students requiring home-based instruction with access to live, synchronous classroom instruction. A portion of the grant will be used for the purchase of 11 Owls, or telepresence devices, that will allow students to engage in live classroom instruction using a 360-degree camera.

Additionally, among many other voting items, the Board took action to:

- **Ratify an agreement with PowerSchool for the renewal of maintenance and support fees for eFinancePLUS** and associated tools **to be utilized by the Brandywine Heights Area School District** and the Muhlenberg school district.

The next meeting of the BCIU Board of Directors will be on Thursday, November 19, 2020.

## **Berks Career and Technology Center (BCTC):**

**Date of Meeting:** 10/28/2020  
**Person Reporting:** Mr. Michael Wagaman  
**Summary:** [Joint Operating Committee Meeting Briefs](#)

## **Berks Earned Income Tax Collection Bureau (BEITC):**

**Date of Meeting:** 10/29/20  
**Person Reporting:** Mr. Craig Neiman

**Summary:**

- I. Call to Order – roll call
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Approval of July 30, 2020 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
- IV. Executive Director annual evaluation
- V. Executive Director's Report and Corresponding Action Items
  - a) Approval of financial reports from July 2020 through September 2020
  - b) Review of COVID-19 impact on collections/distributions
  - c) New tax software update
  - d) Resolution regarding mandatory employer online filing for employers with more than 15 employees
- VI. Solicitor's Report
  - a) Tax Appeal Board Regulations - revisions
  - b) Work site location rule during pandemic
  - c) Keymark arbitration update
  - d) Steve Love EEOC claim update
- VII. Meetings: \*\*All meetings scheduled for the Governor Mifflin Education Center at 6:00 PM\*\* 2020 Meeting Dates: Thursday, December 17, 2020
- VIII. Public Comment
- IX. Adjournment

**Berks County Committee on Legislative Action (COLA):**

**Date of Meeting:**

**Person Reporting:** Mrs. Walizer

**Summary:** The next meeting of the COLA Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 10th @ 7:30 a.m. The PASA Executive Director, Mark Rocco, will be the keynote speaker.

**Policy Committee:**

**Date of Meeting:** N/A

**Person Reporting:** Mr. Michael Wagaman



**Summary:**

Personnel Policy review continues. There are 8 new policies for consideration for a first read and 9 policies for consideration of a second and final reading.

**Strategic Planning/Goals:**

**Date of Meeting:**

**Person Reporting:**

Mrs. Alexis Eisenhart

**Summary:**

**Negotiations/Compensation Committee:**

**Date of Meeting:**

**Person Reporting:**

Mrs. Elizabeth Huhn

**Summary:**

No meetings held. Nothing new to report.

**Building Construction Committee:**

**Date of Meeting:**

October 28, 2020

**Person Reporting:**

Mrs. Alexis Eisenhart, Mr. John Tomasi, Mr. Michael Wagaman

**Summary:**

The Elementary Project continues to make strides with the block wall construction completed, steel joists installed and the initial roofing deck installed.

The Committee met on Wednesday, October 28 to interview five architect firms for consideration of the upcoming Middle School and High School projects. KCBA architect firm was selected as the finalist after the interview and reference checks were completed.





## Superintendent Report

November 2, 2020

### Curriculum/Instruction:

#### 1. Graduation Requirements

- BHASD is recommending a new pathway for upcoming students focused on three components:
  - Local course/credit requirements
  - Community service project
  - Keystone pathways

#### 2. Virtual School Climate Workshop

- The BCIU is running a climate workshop that several administrators will be virtually attending. The goal is to find ways to ensure a positive school climate continues in the midst of this global pandemic.

#### 3. Unique Courses in the Hybrid Model of Instruction

- There are several classes that do not lend themselves to operate as well in a virtual environment (i.e. - Project Lead the Way, Wood, STEM, Art, etc.). In all of these cases, there are components of the class that require reading, writing, math, etc. Many of these types of activities can be done well virtually, and then the teacher focuses time for the hands-on activities on the days the students are in-person. It requires some augmentations; however, our students and teachers are handling these situations well.

### Brandywine Heights Virtual Academy:

#### 1. Enrollment

- Full Virtual - 240 (K-12)
- Part-Time - 232 (Grades 6-12)

### Technology:

#### 1. Nymbol IT

- Never before has a solid technology foundation been as important as it is today. BHASD has been on the leading edge in our county (i.e. - 1:1 initiative, hotspot deployment, digital resources, etc.). As such, we have been successful in our transition



# BRANDYWINE HEIGHTS AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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to more online based learning environments. Without the right tools, resources, and supports, these challenging times would be much more difficult.

- After the school year began, the owner of Nymbol IT, our Superintendent, and Assistant to the Superintendent sat down to reflect on the rollout (start of the year).
  - Areas of success and areas for improvement were identified, and plans were developed to best ensure future success.

## Athletics:

### 1. Student Participation during COVID-19

- There has been a decrease of 5 athletes from the 2019 Fall season to 2020 Fall season.

## Brandywine Heights Community Task Force:

### 1. Education/Support Initiatives

- Developing 3-4 part virtual education series with BCIU and District Attorney's office addressing mental health issues, self-care, and cyber security in the "new normal"

### 2. Ongoing Initiatives

- Red Ribbon Sign Fundraiser – contest initiated on social media to increase community involvement
- Red Ribbon Week – various activities being supported by each school, guidance counselors and student clubs
- Halloween – we will distribute activity bags prepared by the Council on Chemical Abuse in Topton on Halloween

### 3. Monthly Meetings

- Next Meeting – Tuesday, November 9, 2020 | 6:30 pm via Google Meet

Brandywine Heights Area School District  
 District Enrollment Board Report  
 November 2020

Class of	Grade	Total Enrollment	Staff 2020-21	Average Class Size	Students with Academic IEPs (with possible related services)		Free/Reduced Lunch students		Virtual Academy Full Time	Virtual Academy Part Time
2033	Kindergarten	94	5	18.80	14	14.89%	17	18.09%	14	0
2032	First Grade	90	5	18.00	14	15.56%	29	32.22%	22	0
2031	Second Grade	101	5	20.20	18	17.82%	36	35.64%	22	0
2030	Third Grade	92	5	18.40	12	13.04%	37	40.22%	18	0
Elementary		<b>377</b>			<b>58</b>		<b>119</b>		<b>76</b>	<b>0</b>
2029	Fourth Grade	102	5	20.40	30	29.41%	42	41.18%	15	0
2028	Fifth Grade	106	5	21.20	33	31.13%	45	42.45%	19	0
Intermediate		<b>208</b>			<b>63</b>		<b>87</b>		<b>34</b>	<b>0</b>
2027	Sixth Grade	109	4	27.25	25	22.94%	35	32.11%	16	0
2026	Seventh Grade	85			27	31.76%	28	32.94%	6	0
2025	Eighth Grade	120			28	23.33%	43	35.83%	23	14
Middle School		<b>314</b>			<b>80</b>		<b>106</b>		<b>45</b>	<b>14</b>
2024	Ninth Grade	115			21	18.26%	32	27.83%	19	43
2023	Tenth Grade	127			27	21.26%	42	33.07%	19	51
2022	Eleventh Grade	121			26	21.49%	43	35.54%	21	64
2021	Twelfth Grade	99			21	21.21%	33	33.33%	26	60
High School		<b>462</b>			<b>95</b>		<b>150</b>		<b>85</b>	<b>218</b>
Out of District Placements		11			11					
<b>Totals</b>		<b>1372</b>			<b>307</b>	<b>21.70%</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>33.88%</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>232</b>