

COCALICO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Denver, PA

A special meeting of the Cocalico School Board was called to order at 7:00pm on Monday, February 8, 2021 by the President, Rev. Kevin Eshleman, who welcomed all those in attendance. The meeting was held virtually. A moment of silence was held, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Board Members Present

Richard Brenner

Pamela Blickle

Juanita Fox

Randall Renninger

Brett Buckwalter

Desiree Wagner

Douglas Graybill

Rev. Kevin Eshleman

Administrators Present

Dr. Ella Musser

Sherri Stull

Dr. Stephen Melnyk

Dr. Andria Weaver

Dr. Beth Haldeman

Bradley Kafferlin

Guests Present

Erin Kregar

Aubree Fahringer

Kurt Eckenroad

Denise Logue

Rev. Eshleman began the meeting by explaining the policy for public participation in a public work session. He then turned the meeting over to Dr. Ella Musser, Superintendent, who introduced Mr. Kurt Eckenroad, Director of Buildings and Grounds. Mr. Eckenroad presented the timeline and project phasing schedule for four major school building construction projects over the next five years. He similarly described the timeline for the High School project in more detail, adding that those building renovations had been put on hold due to concerns about the supply chain, costs related to supply shortages, and the impact of COVID-19 on administrators' availability to actively participate in the endeavor. Mr. Eckenroad stated that the bidding phase of the project would take place early next fall.

Mrs. Sherri Stull, Business Manager, shared a Multi-year Capital Projects Financial Plan that anticipates when funds would be needed to pay the related construction expenditures, possibly through debt service loans or bond issues. She explained that the plan also includes large equipment purchases, technology infrastructure costs, and major maintenance projects anticipated over the next five years.

Mr. Eckenroad stated that under Act 39 of 2018, school districts may, but are not required to, test for lead levels annually in the drinking water of any building where children attend school. He continued that if a district chooses not to test for lead levels, then that district must discuss the topic of potential lead issues in school facilities at a public meeting once a year. Mr. Eckenroad shared that since no plumbing had been disturbed throughout the district in the past year, only those few areas where issues were mitigated previously, through removal/replacement of fixtures/fittings in affected water

lines and through flushing and retesting, would be retested this year after the school kitchens are back in full use.

Mrs. Stull informed the Board that the District would be seeking approval of a quote from Apple, Inc. for the 4-year lease of 470 13-inch MacBook Air laptops. She explained that the new units would be assigned to incoming 5th and 9th graders at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year to be used by these students for the next four years of their education. The total dollar amount of the four-year lease is \$366,130, with an annual cost of \$92,204.71 and APR of 0.04%. Mrs. Stull added that the laptops can be purchased for \$1 at the end of the four-year term. In the past year, many more instructional devices have been added throughout the District due to all the requirements related to virtual learning options for students. Initiating the lease now will provide additional time for the Technology Department to ready the laptops for the new school year.

Mrs. Stull reported on Governor Wolf's proposed State Budget. She shared key points, such as a proposed increase in PIT from 3.07% to 4.49% to raise the basic education subsidies for schools by \$1.3 billion, proposed increase of \$200 million for special education funding, establishment of a statewide cyber charter school rate of \$9,500 for regular education students, and application of the four-tiered special education funding formula for special education cyber charter students. Mrs. Stull cautioned that although the proposed increases in the two subsidies could mean as much as \$545,000 in additional revenues for Cocalico, the Governor was already experiencing a lot of pushback, and that his budget would most likely not be passed as presented. She also advised on the uncertainty of the property tax credit being level-funded due to a sizable decrease in gaming revenues.

Dr. Beth Haldeman, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, spoke of the various costs resulting from the current COVID-19 pandemic and how the District has been able to match federal and state funding against those expenses. She listed personal protective equipment, additional personnel costs, online instructional programs, technology devices for remote learning, tutoring, tables for social distancing, and additional cleaning supplies and equipment for custodial and maintenance crews as just some of the expenses the District has incurred. Dr. Haldeman additionally described the various grants that have been made available to the Cocalico District through Lancaster County, PCCD, and ESSER Funds that were used to offset these unexpected expenses.

Mrs. Denise Logue, Director of Academic Supports K-12, provided a PowerPoint presentation on the various academic interventions available to students who have experienced learning losses due to the challenges resulting from remote learning. She shared that the shift to virtual learning had a greater adverse impact on Math performance as compared to English Language Arts performance. By offering additional supports such as individual and group tutoring with after-school bussing, summer learning opportunities, credit recovery, access to therapists, additional ELA and Math educational material resources, and added professional development for the teaching staff, Mrs. Logue is confident that learning gaps can quickly be addressed.

Dr. Musser announced that the District held a National Letter of Intent and Commitment Ceremony on February 3rd for senior athletes during which they signed their respective documents virtually. She also stated that the meal provided to the Board prior to the meeting was courtesy of the Cocalico Education Association for School Board Appreciation. Rev. Eshleman thanked the Association on behalf of the School Board.

Time was given for questions and answers after each presentation. There being no more business to conduct, the meeting was then adjourned on a motion by Mr. Buckwalter and a second by Mrs. Fox, with all Board members voting yes.

Sherri L. Stull
Secretary