

**Northwest Area School District  
School Board Meeting  
July 26, 2023**

The Northwest Area Board of Education held a Regular Board Meeting on July 26, 2023 in the library of the Middle/High School. Mr. LeValley, School Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

The following members were present during the meeting: Mr. LeValley, Mr. Benson, Mr. Beleski, Mr. Pierontoni, Mr. Sutliff, and Mr. Lanza. Attorney Angela Evans, Mr. Long, Mr. Miner, Mr. Yarnell, Mr. Mills, Mr. Shoemaker, and Ms. Hurst were also present.

Mr. LeValley reported that there was an Executive Session held from 6:00-7:00 PM to discuss Personnel and litigation.

1. Approve of Minutes

Mr. Benson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Pierontoni to accept the minutes of the following previous meeting:

a. Regular School Board Meeting/Executive Session - June 19, 2023

Upon voice vote, all present voted yes, motion passes.

2. Comments: Community member, Mr. Brace asked to clarify items 9.24 and 9.25 on the agenda.. Attorney Evans answered that there was interim approval to post and advertise for an Art Teacher in motion 9.24. Secondly, Mr. Brace asked if mentors receive a stipend. Attorney Evans responded that mentors receive a stipend pursuant to the CBA. Mr. Brace asked if there are identified job duties for mentors. Mr. Long noted that it's a state mandated requirement to have a mentor teacher when hired.

3. Reports

Mr. Lanza made a motion, seconded by Mr. Beleski to approve the following reports:

- a. Treasurer's Report - June 2023
- b. Cash Flow - June 2023
- c. Cafeteria Report - June 2023

Upon voice vote, all present voted yes, motion passes.

4. Payment of Bills

Mr. Lanza made a motion, seconded by Mr. Benson to approve the payment of the following bills:

- a. General Account list of bills for July 2023 - \$120,304.80
- b. Prepaids - June 2023- \$68,577.49

Upon roll call, all present voted yes, motion passes.

5. Superintendent's Comments – Mr. Long announced that the NWASD has entered into a feasibility study. We have employed the A&E Architectural Group who has begun to look at our physical structures to determine what we should do to become more financially sound. We have also partnered with PFM, a financial institution that is waived by the Department of Education. They look at the last three or four budgets and then offer solutions that could help our district financially. The LIU will be doing a Chapter Four Audit. Chapter Four includes mandates from the state as to what we have to offer educationally K-12. We will then look at what we offer and what we would like to offer. When all studies have been completed, there will be a presentation to the Board of Education. At that time we will move forward with a presentation to the district stakeholders as to all of our options. Mr. Long will continue to update everyone as the reports come in. The first student day of school will be Monday, August 28, 2023. We have changed our bus routes. We have eliminated routes to save transportation costs. Messages will go out to parents within two weeks. House bill 1422 is Cyber Reform. Mr. Long noted that he is a big advocate of this. Our district has 52 students in Cyber Charter. The state is looking to make one flat rate of \$8,000 for regular education students and scaling special education costs back by close to \$20,000 per student. This would be a significant savings to our district. Mr. Long has written to senators to support this bill.

6. Administrative Reports – Elementary Principal, Mr. Yarnell reported that the Summer Academy went well, and that there were an average of 88 students who attended from grades K-6. Mr. Yarnell noted that there will be a treat day, with an ice cream truck tomorrow. Lastly, the buildings are getting cleaned and ready for the start of school. Athletic Director/Assistant Principal, Mr. Mills reported that fall sports are almost here and heat acclimation will take place August 8 for the football team. Mr. Mills also reported that he made two fans with misters to help keep our athletes cool. Secondary Principal, Mr. Miner noted that scheduling is underway and almost finished. The Guidance Department is coming in next week to finish. Schedules will be sent out and put on the portal at the end of next week. Mr. Miner is working on teacher induction, planning for new teacher orientation, and professional development for August. Mr. Miner noted that he and Mr. Long attended the Grand Opening of the Cross Valley Credit Union in Mocanaqua, and thanked them for their partnership. The ATM is scheduled to be installed shortly, and two of our students are being trained for the student branch. Mr. Miner thanked Mr. Long and Mr. Henderson for their support. Lastly, Mr. Long mentioned that Mr. Shoemaker and

his staff did a great job painting the stairwell and entryway of the building. Mr. Long encouraged the board to take a look at the work.

7. Policy/Procedures - No Report.

8. Personnel

Mr. Benson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Beleski for the following:

- a. Accepted, with regret, the retirement of Tami Pavill, Paraprofessional, effective August 20, 2023.
- b. Accepted, with regret, the resignation of Jamie Scott, Paraprofessional, effective June 5, 2023.
- c. Accepted, with regret, the resignation of Jessica Hulslander, Art Teacher, effective Immediately.
- d. Accepted interim approval to post and advertise for an Art Teacher effective with the start of the 2023-24 school year.
- e. Appointed Katelyn Kalie as an Art Teacher, effective with the start of the 2023-24 school year, as per the Northwest Area Education Association CBA.
- f. Approved to post for a mentor to Katelyn Kalie, Art Teacher for the 2023-24 school year.
- g. Appointed the following Huntington Creek Recovery Center Tutors for the 2023-24 school year:
  - Heath Hines
  - Ryan Miner
  - Desiree Morris
  - Rick Boyer
- h. Appointed the following Elementary ELA Tutors for the 2023-24 school year:
  - Patricia Axtell
  - Amy Carle
- i. Appointed Patricia Axtell as an Elementary Math Tutor for the 2023-24 school year.
- j. Appointed the following part time Paraprofessionals as per the Northwest Area Educational Support Personnel CBA, effective with the start of the 2023-24 school year,

- pending receipt of required paperwork:
- Brittany Firth
  - Britanya Hays
  - Jacquelyn Hettes
  - Nicole Tattersall
- k. Appointed Janet Stone as part time Elementary Building Aide, as per the Northwest Area Educational Support Personnel CBA, effective with the start of the 2023-24 school year, pending receipt of required paperwork.
- l. Appointed the following part time Cafeteria employees as per the Northwest Area Educational Support Personnel CBA, effective with the start of the 2023-24 school year, pending receipt of required paperwork:
- Dorothy Derby
  - Melissa Troy
- m. Approved the following Detention Monitors for the 2023-24 school year:
- Amy Carle
  - Heath Hines
  - Jessica Kerr
  - Wendy Lukowski
- n. Appointed Heath Hines as a Homebound Tutor for the 2023-24 school year.
- o. Appointed Brandon Whitmire as Long Term Chemistry Substitute Teacher for the first half of the 2023-24 school year.
- p. Posted for a mentor to Brandon Whitmire, Long Term Chemistry Substitute Teacher for the first half of the 2023-24 school year.
- q. Approved to appoint Sidney Mistysyn as Special Education Teacher as per the Northwest Area Education Association CBA, effective with the start of the 2023-24 school year, pending receipt of required paperwork.
- r. Approved to post for a mentor to the Special Education Teacher for the 2023-24 school year.
- s. TABLED the motion to appoint a Long Term Special Education Substitute Teacher for the first half of the 2023-24 school year.
- t. TABLED the motion to post for a mentor to the Long Term Special Education Substitute Teacher for the first half of the 2023-24 school year.
- u. TABLED the motion to appoint Hannah Stepanski as a Long Term Speech Pathologist,

- effective on or about September 18, 2023 through the end of the 2023-2024 school year.
- v. TABLED the motion to post for a mentor to Hannah Stepanski, Long Term Speech Pathologist.
  - w. Appointed Megan May as Long-Term Elementary Guidance Counselor Substitute for the first half of the 2023-24 school year.
  - x. Approved the motion to post for a mentor to Megan May, Long Term Elementary Guidance Counselor for the first half of the 2023-24 school year.
  - y. Approved to post for the following Northwest Virtual Academy positions for the 2023-24 school year:
    - Monitors
    - Tutors
    - Coordinator
  - z. Approved the FMLA for employee number 5216, effective July 11, 2023 through August 21, 2023.
  - a. Accepted, with regret, the resignation of Taylor Stair, Elementary Life Skills Teacher, effective immediately. *Attachment*
  - b. Accepted interim approval to post and advertise for an Elementary Life Skills Teacher, effective with the start of the 2023-24 school year.
  - c. Appointed Madison Goodrich as Elementary Life Skills Teacher, as per the Northwest Area Education Association CBA effective with the start of the 2023-24 school year, pending receipt of required paperwork.
  - d. Approved to post for a mentor to the Elementary Life Skills Teacher for the 2023-24 school year.
  - e. Appointed Jennifer Trudnak as a part time cleaner, effective with the start of the 2023-24 school year, as per the Northwest Area Educational Support Personnel CBA.

Upon roll call vote, all present voted yes, motion passes.

9. Finance –

Mr. Sutliff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Benson for the following:

- a. Approved the English as a Second Language Agreement with the Luzerne Intermediate Unit for the 2023-24 school year. *Attachment*

Upon roll call, all present voted yes, motion passes.

10. Buildings & Grounds/Safety -

Mr. Sutliff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Beleski for the following:

- a. Approved the Health and Safety Plan for the 2023-24 school year.

Upon roll call, all present voted yes, motion passes.

11. Education/Curriculum –

Mr. Sutliff made a motion, seconded by Mr. Benson for the following:

- a. Approved the MOU between the Northwest Area School District and Luzerne County Head Start for the 2023-24 school year.

Upon roll call, all present voted yes, motion passes.

12. Co-Curricular –

Mr. Benson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Beleski for the following:

- a. TABLED the motion to appoint Ryan Miner as the Junior High Girls Basketball Coach for the 2023-24 school year/season. (\$4,400)
- b. Approved a board resolution recognizing the induction of the following Northwest Area Alumni into the Luzerne County Sports Hall of Fame:
  - Jim Hill
  - Bill Downey
  - Joseph Hasay
- c. Approved to post for Head Varsity Coaches for the following sports for the 2023-24 school year/season:
  - Baseball - (\$4,500)
  - Softball - (\$4,500)
  - Track and Field - (\$4,500)
- d. Approved the resignation of Madison McLendon, Assistant Cross Country Coach for the 2023-24 school year/season.
- e. Approved to appoint Madison McLendon as a Volunteer Cross Country Coach for the 2023-24 school year/season, at no cost to the district.
- f. Approved to post for an Assistant Cross Country Coach for the 2023-24 school year/season.

Upon roll call, all present voted yes, with the exception of Mr. Beleski abstained to motions d.) and e.) because of a family relation, motion passes.

13. Transportation: No Report.

14. Additions to the Substitute List -

Mr. Benson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Sutliff for the following:

- a. Approved the attached list of substitutes for the 2023-24 school district, pending receipt of required paperwork. **Attachment**

Upon roll call, all present voted yes, motion passes.

15. Tabled Items - No Tabled Items

16. Legislative – No Report.

17. West Side CTC - Mr. Benson noted that there were a few positions which were posted/advertised.

18. LIU Update -Mr. Lanza reported that there was no July meeting. The next meeting will be in August.

19. New Business – No New Business.

20. Solicitor's Report – No Report.

21. Comments - Community member, Mr. Brace asked about construction and bus routes for the upcoming start of school. Mr. Long responded that the district has a plan in place, and it will add time and mileage until the bridge is fixed.

Mr. Brace asked if Pre-K is in the facility. Mr. Long responded that it is in the Primary School. Mr. Brace asked about neighboring schools offering programs that we don't.

Mr. Long noted that a student would go there full time and we pay tuition. Mr. Brace spoke about the student to teacher ratio as 13:1. Mr. Long disputed 13:1. If we include Special Education programs, the ratio changes. Mr. Brace noted that within our website, the School Performance profile shows nothing. Mr. Long noted that he will have a link added. Mr. Brace thanked Jessica Hurst for taking care of the Right to Know Request protocol on the district website. Mr. Brace spoke about the budget. Mr. Long noted that specific questions can be addressed to Mrs. Straub, who is on vacation. Mr. Brace spoke about retirement and 401Ks. Attorney Evans encouraged Mr. Brace to email or call Mr. Long with additional questions. Mr. Brace noted that he will do a Right to Know Request for additional information.

22. Adjourn – Mr. Benson made a motion, seconded by Mr. Pierontoni and unanimously by the Board to adjourn the meeting at 7:28PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Pete Lanza, Board Secretary