

**Northwest Area School District  
School Board Meeting  
March 21, 2024**

The Northwest Area Board of Education held a Regular Board Meeting on March 21, 2024 in the library of the Middle/High School. Mr. LeValley, School Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

The following members were present during the meeting: Mr. Lanza, Mr. LeValley, Mr. Benson, Dr. Yarnell, Mrs. Biller, Mr. Pierontoni. Attorney Angela Evans, Mr. Long, Mr. Miner, Mr. Amos, Mr. Lukachinsky, Mrs. Kratz, Mrs. Straub, Mr. Shoemaker, Mr. Sorber, and Ms. Hurst were also present.

Mr. LeValley reported that there was an Executive Session held from 6:15-6:45 PM to discuss personnel, litigation, and co-curricular.

1. Approve of Minutes

Mr. Lanza made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Biller to accept the minutes of the following previous meeting:

- a. Regular School Board Meeting/Executive Session -February 15, 2024

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

2. Comments: No comments.

3. Reports -

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

- a. Treasurer's Report - February 2024
- b. Cash Flow - February 2024
- c. Cafeteria Report - February 2024

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

4. Payment of Bills

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

- a. General Account list of bills for March 2024 -1,633,956.12
- b. Prepaids - February 2024 - \$325,538.95

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

5. Superintendent's Comments – Mr. Long reported that on March 5, 2024, Mr. LeValley, Mr. Malacari, and Mr. Long went to Harrisburg to represent Northwest Area on the floor of the House of Representatives during the Education Funding Hearing. The argument by a representative was that our district was left behind in the record setting funding by our state. The goal that day was to get the Secretary of Education to say on record the following: 1. We will be taken care of, and 2. He is not trying to close rural schools, both of which he said in an open record. When questioned as to 19 of the 20 lowest school funded were small rural districts, he did not have an answer. Mr. Long said that we need to advocate to the Governor's Office, the Secretary of Education, our representatives, and our senators to send Northwest Area what we deserve. Mr. Long gave an example of how our neighboring district who is three times larger than Northwest, Greater Nanticoke Area, received \$2.7 million, while Northwest received \$60,000. Also, we need to advocate for Cyber Reform in the funding realm. Around \$600,000 per year of local tax dollars leaves our district to places such as CCA and Agora . It would be a game changer, in our budget, to get that money back. Additionally, we have to advocate for PlanCon, which is money from the state to supplement construction projects. We also need to advocate for any grant that we apply for through the state. Mr. Long will put out an informational piece on the Northwest App regarding what we are advocating for. If we all sit back and say nothing, the state will think we are good with it, and we are not. We need to let our voices be heard. Tonight, on the agenda, is the Comprehensive Plan which will be uploaded to the website for review. It will also be at the Nanticoke Public Library, which is the closest library to our district. Mr. Long noted that if anyone has any questions to please contact a district administrator. Mr. Long thanked Mr. Miner, Mr. Amos, Mr. Lukachinsky, and Mrs. Kratz who did the bulk of the Plan. When the Plan was sent to the IU, Mr. Long was told that it was one of best written plans. It was a team effort. Spring Break is coming. There will be a half day on March 28, and schools will be closed on March 29, April 1 and April 2, 2024. Reopening April 3, 2024. PSSA testing is on the horizon. The dates will be sent out. The CDC has released a new COVID plan. If you are exhibiting symptoms, stay home until you don't have a fever for one day. Lastly, on April 8, 2024, we are having a solar eclipse which will be hitting around 3:15 p.m.in our area. There is some discussion regarding a safety issue for students and bus drivers. More information will be coming, as we haven't made a decision if we will be dismissing early.

6. Administrative Reports – Mr. Lukachinsky congratulated Mr. Hines and his Environmental Science students who were recognized for winning the grand prize and two honorable mentions in a recent UGI Innovations Challenge. Mr. Hines will be receiving \$1,000 in educational grants to be used in his classroom. Mr. Hines announced that UGI partnered with National Energy Institute, and gave a presentation to the students on saving energy, especially while running water. Mr. Amos announced that we recently formed a relationship with the

Wilkes Barre Scranton Penguins and the Wilkes Barre Scranton Rail Riders. On the March 25, members of the Penguins staff will be coming in for the kick-off at the Primary School to provide lesson plans and supplies for students to participate in floor hockey for the month of April. Next year they will also be going to the Intermediate School. The Rail Riders will be coinciding with our Positive Behavior Support Program. Teachers will decide how they will chart classroom behavior, and each classroom will pick an MVP, who will receive tickets to a Rail Rider's game, prize pack, and their name on a jumbotron at a Rail Rider's game. Read Across America was recently held in the elementary schools. Third Grade students read "Happy Birthday to You" by Dr. Seuss to students in grades 4-6. The event was streamed to the Primary School students. Students in the Intermediate School participated in the "Invent- A Word" and "Birthday Bonnet Challenge." The winners of the challenge will receive a trip to Barnes and Nobles and a \$20 gift card. We will run a van to Barnes and Nobles for this award. The Primary School had a theme week which involved several guest readers. Students were challenged to read five books, and record them in a log to receive points. Mr. Amos also announced that the Pre K audit was held, and we received a perfect score. Thank you to Mrs. Logsdon for doing a great job! Mrs. Kratz announced that the Special Education audit has been completed. We received many compliments during the administrative interview for communication and collaboration. PDE said it was one of the best audits and paperwork organization wise that they have seen so far this year. Their in person interviews also went well. They visited all three schools, interviewed regular education teachers and special education teachers, and contacted parents. PDE left us with the impression that we did a good job, and now we are waiting for the final report. Mr. Miner announced that on March 1, 2024 we held our Aevium Day, "The Talk." Thank you to Mr. Martin and his Aevium Group. Our senior students who led that day were awesome. There were over eighty visiting students. We also had a team of our middle school students who were going through the training that day. It is great to have student leaders who can stand up and say, it's ok to seek help and identify leaders who are able to provide some of that assistance. Thank you to the Cross Valley Credit Union who sponsored lunch for that day. Our Creative Foods class baked cookies for all of the students who were here. Lastly, Mr. Miner noted that on March 15, we had a successful faculty and staff wellness In-Service Day. The day was led by Ms. Shiptoski. There were sessions on Mindfulness, Yoga, Martial Arts, Ethics, Foundations of Special Education, Physical Fitness, and many more. Additionally, vendors from WYVAD, NE Counseling, Nutrition Inc., YMCA, and others were on hand to provide resources for staff. On behalf of Ms. Shiptoski, Mr. Miner thanked Mr. Long, the administration and the Board of Education for supporting the staff with this wellness day.

7. Policy/Procedures -

Mr. Pierontoni made a motion, seconded by Dr. Yarnell for the following:

- a. Approved the adoption of the Luzerne Intermediate Unit's policies and procedures for the 2024-25 school year.
- b. Approved the 2024-25 to 2026-27 Comprehensive Plan.
- c. Approved the 2024-25 High School Plan.

Upon roll call, all present voted yes, motion passed

8. Personnel

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

- a. Approved the FMLA request of employee number 9385, effective March 7, 2024 through June 7, 2024.
- b. Approved the FMLA request of employee number 5654, effective on an intermittent basis from March 1, 2024 through September 1, 2024.
- c. Approved the FMLA request of employee number 5931, effective on an intermittent basis from March 15, 2024 through September 15, 2024.
- d. Approved to post and advertise for a part time cleaner.

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

9. Finance – Mr. Lanza made a motion, seconded by Mr. Benson for the following:

- a. Approved the 2023 Union Township real estate refund in the amount of \$14.17.
- b. Approved the 2022 Huntington Township real estate refund in the amount of \$62.16.

Upon roll call, all present voted yes, motion passes

10. Buildings & Grounds/Safety - No Report

11. Education/Curriculum –

Dr. Yarnell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Pierontoni for the following:

- a. Approved the field trip request of Mr. Quinn to attend the PMEA Northeast Regional Orchestra Festival March 20-22, 2024 at Blue Ridge High School, at an estimated cost of \$899.58.
- b. Approved the Senior High Course Guide for the 2024-25 school year. *Attachment*
- c. Approved the Middle School Course Guide for the 2024-25 school year. *Attachment*

Upon roll call, all present voted yes, motion passes

12. Co-Curricular –

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

- a. Accepted, with regret, the resignation of Vicki Duvall, Head Varsity Cheerleading Coach, effective immediately.
- b. Approved to post and advertise for a Head Varsity Cheerleading Coach for the 2024-25 school year/season.
- c. Approved to post for the following positions for the 2024-25 school year/season:
  1. Head Varsity Girls Basketball Coach

2. Head Varsity Boys Basketball Coach
- d. Approved to appoint Robert Besconan as a Volunteer Football Coach for the 2024-25 school year/season, pending the receipt of required clearances.

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

13. Transportation -

Dr. Yarnell made a motion, seconded by Mr. Pierontoni for the following:

- a. Approved the FFA Field Trip Transportation agreement between the Northwest Area School District, Benton Area School District, and Millville Area School District.

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

14. Additions to the Substitute List -

Mrs. Biller made a motion, seconded by Dr. Yarnell for the following:

- a. Appointed the following substitutes for the 2023-24 school year, pending the receipt of required paperwork:
  1. Kerry Higgins - Nurse
  2. Valerie Firth - Cafeteria
  3. Colin Firth - Maintenance

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

15. Tabled Items - No Tabled Items

16. Legislative – Mr. Benson reported the recent trip to Harrisburg with Representative Cabell

17. West Side CTC -Mr. Benson reported that a nursing instructor, with a strong nursing background was hired.

18. I.U. Update - Mr. Lanzas reported that minutes are available upon request.

19. New Business – No new business.

20. Solicitor's Report – No Report.

21. Comments - No comments.

22. Adjourn – Mr. Benson made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Biller, and unanimously by the Board to adjourn the meeting at 7:23PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Lanza, Board Secretary