

School Board Work Session Meeting January 9, 2024

The work session was called to order by Bill Reddinger. The following members were in attendance: Chris Merwin, Heidi Byers, John Sayers, Kevin Johnson, Matt Confer, Chris Adams, and John Kimmel. Absent: Brent Wile

Mrs. Shirey presented her board report. She said that December was a busy month. She stated that there were grade level data meetings and plans were developed for students that are struggling. There was an Elementary band concert that was held at the High School on December 6th, 2023. The Annual Primary School Christmas Story Night was held at the Primary School on December 12th, 2023. The High School students brought their gingerbread houses to the elementary school and supplied prizes to the winners. The IU TAC team did training with the kindergarten teachers, title and learning support teachers, counselor, behavior specialist, social worker, psychologist, aides, and Mrs. Shirey on managing autism in the general education classroom. She discussed many upcoming events in January like the Spelling Bee at the High School for the grade level winners. She also discussed parent teacher conferences that were held this month and there was 85% participation either by phone or meeting with the teachers. She was very pleased with this.

Mr. Hartle presented his board report. He stated that Midterms for the 2nd 9-weeks was Monday, December 4th, 2023 and were made available online through the StudentVue and ParentVue. Robin Fillman from IU#6 came to the high school on December 8th, 2023 to assist in completing the TSI improvement plan and explained how to move forward with the plan. There were high school band and choral concerts held in December. The Go Rockets program has 19 full time students and 19 single class students. On December 21st, 2023, there was a faculty meeting to discuss Parent/Teacher communications, upcoming Keystone testing schedule, and the budget process. The Guidance Department conducted their monthly awareness events on Random Acts of Kindness, and 15 meals were delivered to families in need over the holiday season. The AP Government class has 29 students who raised \$3,800 in a week through soliciting donations and then purchased, wrapped, and distributed gifts to 11 different families (led by Mr. Gold). All students participated in the Holiday Spirit the week of December 18th- 22nd and a door decorating contest. As far as Testing, the 2nd phase of preparatory testing with CDT's and STAR was completed and comparison data will be collected this coming month to analyze student improvement. The winter Keystone phase is starting in January with Literature, Biology, and Algebra all being tested.

Mr. Temchula presented his school board report. Mr. Temchula stated that the Special Education departments will be uploading new information to the school district's website called "Special Education Corner for Parents". This information will entail eligibility information, the evaluation process, LRE, rights of parents, additional resources, and training opportunities. This gives a better understanding of the process. He attended the IU6 contact meeting. He stated that Redbank has 187 total special education students in the district, 30 gifted students, 13 students in process of services, and 24 students have been evaluated for services since the start of the school year (which 3 did not qualify). There are 28 students with a 504 plan in the district. Mr. Johnson questioned if a student can ever go back to general education, and Mr. Temchulla stated that is his goal every day. He talks with the teachers weekly to see if he can make this happen with any of the Special Ed students. No further questions for Mr. Temchula.

Mr. Rapp gave his report. He stated that he was able to get several tasks completed during winter break. The crow's nest in the main gym was extended to facilitate the new bleachers. The main office had painting completed and the floors throughout the campuses were buffed and started removing the excess wax build up on the walls. The new chemical treatment container for the corrosion control additives in the boiler system was installed at the Primary Building. Shirey Overhead Doors finished installing the exterior doors in both the elementary and high school buildings. Johnson Controls installed the new rooftop HVAC units for the Auditorium and office units over Christmas break, but the unit for the auditorium is a steam unit instead of a hot water unit. They are awaiting parts to switch it over and there is no definite time frame for that. Mr. Rapp has met with a couple different door specialty companies and is awaiting bids for interior door keyless entry systems. No further questions for Mr. Rapp.

Mr. Reitz presented his board report. The cafeteria dropped in the red for December due to replacing the walk in cooler units at the Primary Building that cost \$11,000. He stated that typically in December with parties and activities that the lunch participation will dip slightly, however it actually went up a little to over 76%. Breakfast remained steady at around 50%. Mr. Reitz submitted the grant application for PDE's equipment grant and should hear back this spring as to whether or not the district will receive it. Two cafeteria employees resigned and there are still 6 positions that need filled. No further questions for Mr. Reitz.

Mrs. Reitz will present her business manager's report next week.

Dr. Rupp gave her report. She stated that Johnson Controls installed the last of the units over Christmas Break. They are located above the High School offices and the Auditorium. The Winter Wave Keystone testing took place during the past week. Students are testing online in Literature and Biology and with paper pencil testing for Algebra 1. School Counselors will be utilizing these scores to determine graduation pathways. The Education Foundation is applying to be on the EITC list for businesses to receive tax credits. She stated we will also be soliciting for scholarship applications. Dr. Rupp spoke about the approval for a secure vestibule at the elementary schools because this has been a suggestion for the past 3 Risk and Vulnerability Assessments conducted by the PA State Police. The cost for these projects has already been included in the 2023-2024 budget under Security. She also talked about the possibility of a raise for the Tax Collectors. They submitted a written request and there has been no raise in 15 years. No further questions for Dr. Rupp.

There was no additional information presented on the IU6 report. All information was provided in the Board documents submitted to the Board Members.

The Career Center Report was presented by Mrs. Byers. She stated that there is a lot of reorganization going on due to the resignation of a lot of long-term Board members. No further questions for Mrs. Byers.

Mr. Brad Barrett was at the meeting and discussed that Barrett Busing is a family owned business that has serviced the district with busing for several years. He believes that he could eliminate 3 buses if the District went with just Barrett Busing. He feels Barrett Busing could do a better job and they have a good reputation. Mr. Barrett feels his company could take over Valley Lines routes and he would be able to supply enough bus drivers if the district would decide to just use one busing company. Dr. Rupp stated that it would be much easier to go with one company and Barrett Busing is also willing to enter into a 5 year contract at State Formula, which most busing companies charge more than state formula right now.

As an additional Board Item, Mr. Sayers got up and spoke about the possibility of Redbank Valley School District merging with Union School District. Mr. Sayers feels that the tax base and school attendance is shrinking, so this would be the right time to reach out to Union about the possibility of a merger. He believes that having one administrative staff would be an immense savings. Mr. Sayers stated that the distance between each school is only 18 minutes. He proposed the possibility of the High School in one District be the Elementary School, and the High School at the other District be the High School. He does not feel that the small school districts will last and that the State will take over if something doesn't happen in the future. He proposed there be a new school name, new mascot, and new colors for the combining school. Mr. Johnson spoke up and stated that he feels that people are coming out of the cities looking for attractive places to live like New Bethlehem. Mr. Johnson lived in a city prior to moving to the District, and feels more people will be doing the same. He doesn't necessarily think there will be a decline in tax base because there are signs in the economy that things will be different in the future.

An executive session followed the work session concerning personnel and legal matters.

Work session was adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rochelle Reitz

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Board Secretary