

NORTHERN TIOGA SCHOOL DISTRICT

110 Ellison Road
Elkland, PA 16920

Minutes – Work Session
November 22, 2021

The Northern Tioga School District Board of Directors met for a work session in the Board Room at 110 Ellison Road, Elkland, PA. The session was called to order by Board President Julie Preston at 6:03 PM.

Board Attendance: Board Members Present: Ed Bonham, Greg Cummings, Ben Howe, Jolene Meisner, James Moyer (entered at 6:05 PM), Kim Strauser, and Julie Preston. Via Zoom: Jean Kohut. Absent: Jim Neal.

Administrators Present: Superintendent Barnes, Kathy VanSchaick, Jeremy Freeman, Kris Kaufman, Jess Millard, Dan Fie, Christina Fry, Matt Sottolano, Cheryl Sottolano, and Bill Butterfield.

Schedule Alignment

Matt Sottolano, Principal of Cowanesque Valley High School, and Bill Butterfield, Principal of Williamson High School, shared handouts with the board showing examples of their aligned schedules. The high schools have agreed that the best schedule format for aligning schedules is to use a rotating schedule. A rotating schedule allows for increased and enhanced instructional time, collaboration, and scheduling efficiency. It also allows for more course offerings for students.

James Moyer entered the meeting at this time (6:05 PM).

Using a rotating schedule provides a balance between the 40 and 80 minute class periods found in other schedules. The rotation means that students do not have the same classes at the same time every day. This is beneficial because students will not miss the same classes each time they leave early for things like sporting events or have afternoon assemblies. The rotating schedule also evens out prep periods for teachers. This schedule would allow for a community lunch and learn in the middle of the day. This is time for students to work on course work or to meet with the teachers of classes with which they are struggling. Clubs and organizations can also use this time to meet. This schedule allows for easier position absorption through attrition than other scheduling formats.

Jean Kohut inquired about the courses that Williamson High School is able to add to their schedule with this format and wondered how enrollment decreases will affect the number of sections needed for each course. Mr. Butterfield said that which courses are added will be dependent upon student requests. He noted that this format provides for flexibility with enrollment changes. Jean asked if this aligned schedule meets the goals set by the board when asking the principals to align schedules. Greg Cummings noted that the Resolution adopted by the board directing the high schools to align their schedules asked them to adopt a district wide block or modified block schedule. The rotating schedule the principals have presented does not meet the wording of the directive. Mr. Sottolano stated that if the board's goal is to share teachers between the schools, the high schools must use a block schedule. Greg said that the goal is to have the best system for students. Looking towards the future, the district must do what is most efficient with decreased enrollment and funding. The high schools need to create an option for sharing teachers and for offering the same classes at both schools. Kris Kaufman, Principal of Academic Affairs, noted that the rotating schedule allows for the reduction of staff through attrition. This schedule is the best option for students as other options take away from one or both schools. Mr.

Kaufman asked why the board is interested in moving to an aligned block schedule. Jolene Meisner asked how the schools could share teachers if they do not use a block schedule. Mr. Kaufman stated that if sharing teachers is the goal, a block schedule would be best but noted that an aligned block schedule would hurt the students. Greg noted that the students are going to lose something either way. Mr. Kaufman stated that he does not think the district will benefit from a block schedule in the way Greg is hoping for. Mr. Butterfield added that, through attrition, staff can be reduced and the high schools will offer fewer sections of classes.

Kim Strauser stated that the board must look at what is best for both schools. We must rely on the administration to do what is best for the district and the students. Jean agreed with Kim noting that at previous meetings where schedule alignment was discussed, the principals were not told to create a block schedule. Greg noted that he does not feel the administration wants to follow the directive from the board. Kim Strauser asked if teachers can be shared using the rotating schedule. Mr. Sottolano said that, with creativity, they can be shared. Due to teacher shortages, the district will eventually need to move towards sharing teachers. Ed Bonham stated that what has been presented tonight is more efficient, it serves students better, and, with creativity, it does allow for the sharing of staff. Jolene asked Dr. Barnes if that is accurate. Dr. Barnes stated that, from the options they have looked at, yes that is correct. Moving to an aligned block schedule would limit Cowanesque Valley High School. When coming up with an aligned schedule, the administration wanted to preserve programs at each school. They are trying to do what is best for students.

Act 158 Update

Dr. Barnes shared that Act 158 determines the graduation requirements for students. She asked Mr. Kaufman to share updates to the requirements. Mr. Kaufman provided a handout to the board with information on the requirements. Currently, they are set to take effect with the class of 2023. He noted that these requirements are in addition to the district's requirements. Mr. Kaufman shared information about the 5 pathways to graduation for students: Keystone Proficiency Pathway, Keystone Composite Pathway, CTE Concentrator Pathway, Alternative Assessment Pathway, and Evidence Based Pathway. Guidance counselors will be required to track this information for students. There is also a post-graduation tracking component. Mr. Kaufman stated that parents will be sent a letter with this information, it will be posted on the district's website, and the course catalog will be reconfigured to feature this.

Grant Update

Mr. Kaufman shared a handout with the board detailing updates on the district's ongoing grant applications. He shared the areas to which they have allocated set aside funds including the summer school program, an after school program, and learning loss. He also shared a survey that was provided to community members for them to express the areas in which they feel grant money should be used. Mr. Kaufman stated that he feels the district is meeting the needs of the community based on what they expressed in the survey.

ATSI Update

Mr. Butterfield shared that the district was finally able to submit the ATSI plan for Williamson High School. Williamson has been implementing data driven instruction, professional development opportunities, weekly academic alerts, and is targeting truancy and absences as part of the ATSI plan.

Assistant Principal Positions Update

Dr. Barnes provided the board with a draft Act 93 Agreement and job description for the assistant principal positions. These items will be placed on the December agenda to be voted on. She asked that the board review them ahead of time.

McClure Update

Jeremy Freeman shared that he has received budget scope and cost numbers from McClure for the air quality improvement project the board is looking into. To upgrade air quality in the entire district, the estimated cost is \$23.1 million. To update just some areas where need has been identified in each school would cost approximately \$7.4 million. The Buildings & Grounds Committee will hold a meeting on December 9, 2021 with McClure to further discuss the costs.

Thank You to Clark Wood Staff

Jess Millard, Principal of Clark Wood Elementary School, shared that the custodial staff was short-handed last week. Staff members throughout Clark Wood offered to step in and help the custodial staff during this time. He thanked these staff members for their efforts to help the custodians.

Booster Clinic

The district is hosting a COVID-19 booster vaccine clinic on November 24, 2021 beginning at 12:30 pm in Elkland. All staff and board members were offered the opportunity to register for the clinic.

Property Update

Dr. Barnes shared that she has contacted the district solicitor, Chris Lantz, to look into the property that the district owns on Coates Avenue. Wesley Academy in Elkland has expressed an interest in purchasing the property. Chris is going to look into getting an updated map of the property.

Update on Contract Signing

Dr. Barnes shared that the professional contract the board voted to approve at the regular November meeting has been signed by all parties.

Reminder that December 1 Meeting is Reorganizational

Dr. Barnes asked board members to be prepared for their reorganizational meeting scheduled for December 1, 2021.

Update on Board Vacancy

Dr. Barnes shared that Ian McLaughlin was re-elected to the board in the November election. Ian had resigned from the board effective August 1, 2021 but was still on the ballot for the November election. Ian has declined the newly elected seat as he no longer lives in our district. At the December meeting, a Resolution will be on the agenda for the board to vote on officially declaring that the board has a vacant seat. The board will then need to appoint a new member who will serve a two year term until the next

election. Ben Howe was appointed to fill the remainder of Ian's previous term and has expressed an interest in being reappointed to the seat.

Open Forum

No one from the public wished to address the Board at this time.

The board adjourned the work session at 8:04 PM.

Alyson Yerrick
Board Secretary