

**MINUTES  
CANTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2021**

The regular meeting of the Canton Area School District Board of Education was held in the Canton Jr/Sr High School Auditorium on Thursday, September 9, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

Our President, Mrs. Judy Sourbeer, called the meeting to order, welcomed all in attendance, and reminded the audience to please sign in if they had not done so.

All stood and recited the Pledge to the Flag.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mrs. Judy Sourbeer, President; Mr. Ryan Allen, Mr. Eric Anderson, Mr. Gary Black, Mr. Bill Holland, Mr. Scott May, Mrs. Arica Jennings, Mr. Neal Palmer, and Mr. Denny Sourbeer.

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Dr. Eric Briggs, Superintendent; Mr. Mark Jannone, Business Manager/Board Secretary; Mr. Michael Wells, Elementary School Principal; Mr. Donald Jacopetti, High School Principal; Attorney Cassie Blaney, District Solicitor; Mrs. Amy Repard, Special Education Supervisor; Ms. Rachel Heitzenrater, Newspaper Reporter; Thomas Cochran, Harry Barnes, Sheri Brown, Shawna Lee, Jennifer Jackson, Michelle VanHorn, Heather Frisbie, Jonathan Frisbie, Josh Kelley, Andy Pepper, Angela Hess, Sam Wesneski, Katie Steever, Shauna Wesneski, Sherry Lambert, Amber Fitzwater, Samantha Campbell, Joan Terry, Cheryl Neitz, Stacey Groover, David Groover, Angela Schoonover, James Segur, Cassandra Castle, Amanda Pepper, Travis Pepper, Nathan Jennings, Stacey Segur, Jessica Watson, Corrin Rockwell, Cindy Dewey, Cindy Black, Jamie Taylor, Dave Loomis, Cindy Reed, Jenna Boyce, Tessa Whitmoyer, Wendy Route, Courtney Roberts, Jasmine Mayek, Brent Mayek, Don Golobek, Sara Gordon, Chris Gordon, John Mays, Melinda Seeley, Mark Smith, Joe Shores, Casey Holley, Travis Burgess, Camden Route, Tiesha Barrett, Holly Shultz, Justin Walker, Tracey Barnes, Tiffany Pauling, Taylor Pepper, Lacy Pepper, Jonathan Pepper, C. Bastion, Lindsey Phillips, Gordon Phillips, Kylie Mills, Sarah Tice, Tulsa Frey, Ned Whitehead, Pam Larcom, Nicole Vroman, Megan Taylor, Sylvia Adams, Brianna Ellison, Kevin Adams, Heather Walker, Jason Bellows, Wendy Bellows, Shawna Pepper, Sherry VanHorn, Brenda Calaman, Pamela Denlinger, and Christina Bedford.

**MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. Eric Anderson and seconded by Mr. Gary Black to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of August 12, 2021.

Voice Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

**REPORTS**

**Superintendent**

Dr. Eric Briggs, Superintendent, reported on the following items:

- As you are aware, effective September 7, 2021, the Acting Secretary of the Department of Health issued a face covering mandate for all school districts, brick and mortar and cyber charter schools, private and parochial schools, career and technical centers, intermediate units, and early learning and other childcare settings. This mandate required all students, staff, and visitors of the above institutions to wear face coverings while inside these buildings. I know this decision by the Department of Health has created division throughout many communities throughout our commonwealth. This is not an issue that is unique to the Canton community or Bradford County. The reality is that this order has placed many of us in very difficult situations with our communities.

School districts and superintendents have been faced with many challenging decisions as they move forward with implementing the order. We take these decisions very seriously, while also understanding that the decisions we make will not be favorable to all, but moreover, are in the best interest of our students and staff, and to protect ourselves and the community from unnecessary repercussions should we not follow the order. The consequences have been made abundantly clear to us. Failure to adhere to the order could lose the protection of sovereign immunity and may personally face lawsuits from those who may be affected by any official's attempt to ignore the order. School officials who fail to implement or follow the control measures may expose individuals to personal liability under 42 Pa.C.S § 8550 (relating to willful misconduct), as well as other remedies as provided by law. Failure to implement and follow the control measures under the order also subjects a person to the penalty provisions of the Disease Prevention and Control Law of 1955. In short, we each could be held personally liable for purposely not following through with this order.

Furthermore, our school district and community have prioritized two key areas when we look at the role the school system plays in our community. First, as a product of the pandemic last school year, we very quickly learned that online learning for most of our students created great challenges for our students and staff academically, socially, and emotionally. While we did our best to educate our students, we acknowledge this is very challenging for all parties. Our goal this year to use our in-person instructional model 180 days. Our second goal is to be able to maintain all our athletic and extra-curricular activities for our students and our community. While we know that COVID-19 does not discriminate against who it infects, we believe this order, with the current contact tracing rules in place, offers us the best opportunity to stay in-person with our instruction and maintain our extra-curricular and athletic activities.

Since the inception of the mandate on September 7, 2021, I have fielded many phone calls from parents around the implementation and planning the school has done to maintain compliance with the order. Almost all of the questions from parents are about why the district will not accept the exemption for face coverings as outlined in Section 3B of the order. Section 3B reads, "If wearing a face covering would either cause a medical condition, or exacerbate an existing one, including respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition or a disability," a child may be exempt from a face covering. I want to be very clear with the community. We are accepting this exception for students who qualify for this exemption. If the exemption claimed is 3B, pertaining to medical and/or mental health conditions or disabilities, the district will then begin the interactive process as outlined in the Americans with Disability Act and have the family speak with a qualified medical and/or mental health professional with personal background information on the patient so they can provide documentation as to said exemption. When this process is complete, the district will then complete an evaluation to address whatever accommodations are needed to address the disability/mental health condition that substantially limits a major life function. I will continue to remind parents to seek this information from their child's personal care physician or specialist that is working with their child.

This week, I thought it would be appropriate to talk to some of our students about their feelings on wearing their face coverings in school. Most of the elementary and high school students I spoke with (about 15) shared many common themes. The themes were as follows:

- I don't enjoy wearing the mask but if it means I can stay in school and not learn from home, I will do it.
- They really aren't a big deal because I know I have to do it to be able to see my friends in school.
- It's no different than the rules you make; it's just another rule we have to follow. Sometimes we have to follow rules we do not like. That's part of life.
- If this is what will help me play in my sports for the year, I'll do it.

Because of the circumstances that I have outlined above, I am formally recommending to the school board that we continue to stay the course and move forward with following all the expectations as outlined in the "Order of the Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Directing Face Coverings in School Entities." By failing to do so, we open ourselves to personal liability issues and the school district will face insurance liability issues with our insurance providers should a COVID-19 event occur in our school district. Finally, by not following through with this mandate, we decrease the probability of full in-person instruction and participation in extra-curricular and athletic activities.

- I would like to personally thank all the staff of CASD for a great start to the 2021/2022 school year. Although we have had a few obstacles since the start of the year, I can say the entire staff did things the only way we know how... THE WARRIOR WAY! Our staff continues to be committed to educating our children and providing them with the best social, emotional, and academic supports they can. I am proud of everyone here in the district and I am confident we will continue to be able to navigate these very challenging times.

### **Board Committee Chairpersons**

- **Personnel Committee:** Chairperson, Mr. Eric Anderson - none this month.
- **Finance/Policy Review Committee:** Chairperson, Mr. Ryan Allen - none this month.
- **Athletic Committee:** Chairperson, Mr. Denny Sourbeer - none this month.
- **Buildings and Grounds Committee:** Chairperson, Mrs. Arica Jennings - none this month.
- **Northern Tier Career Representative:** Mr. Neal Palmer - none this month.
- **PSBA Representative:** Mr. Bill Holland - none this month.
- **BLaST Representative:** Mr. Neal Palmer - none this month.

### **CITIZEN RECOGNITION - AGENDA RELATED**

There were no comments.

### **BUSINESS**

#### **Treasurer's Report**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Eric Anderson to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented for August 31, 2021. (A copy is in the supplemental file.)

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

#### **Bills**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Eric Anderson to approve the bills for August, 2021.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

#### **Tax Additions, Exemptions and Exonerations**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Eric Anderson to approve the tax additions, exemptions and exonerations.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

#### **Transportation Rates**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Eric Anderson to approve updated transportation rates for the 2021/2022 school year.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

#### **Referral Agreement**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Eric Anderson to approve the Referral Agreement between Northern Tier Counseling, Inc. and Canton Area School District effective July 1, 2021 through July 1, 2023.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Eric Anderson to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission and Canton Area School District effective September 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

### **Agreement**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Eric Anderson to approve the Agreement for Nursing Services between Northern Tier Career Center and Canton Area School District.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

### **Letter of Agreement**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Eric Anderson to approve the Letter of Agreement between Bradford/Sullivan Drug & Alcohol, Single County Authority (SCA) and Canton Area School District for the purpose of providing a SAP Liaison effective July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

### **PERSONNEL**

#### **Resignations**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Neal Palmer to accept the following resignations:

- a. Christina Bedford, cafeteria, effective August 23, 2021
- b. Gina Bastion, cafeteria, effective August 15, 2021

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

#### **New Hires**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Neal Palmer to approve the hiring of the following new employees, pending completion of all required paperwork:

- a. JoAnne Tarbox, part-time cafeteria worker, at \$10.00/hour with no benefits, retroactive to August 26, 2021 as all required paperwork was completed.
- b. Abby Larcom, part-time cafeteria worker, at \$10.00/hour with no benefits, effective September 9, 2021.
- c. Sherry Vargson, part-time paraprofessional, at \$17.00/hour with no benefits, retroactive to August 30, 2021.
- d. Madison Thoren, part-time paraprofessional, at \$17.00/hour with no benefits, effective September 9, 2021.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

### **Employee Transfer**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Neal Palmer to approve the following employee transfer:

- a. JoAnne Tarbox, from part-time cafeteria worker to part-time paraprofessional, at \$17.00/hour with no benefits, effective Monday, September 20, 2021.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

### **Additions to Co-Curricular Sports List**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Neal Palmer to approve the following additions to the 2021/2022 Co-Curricular Sports List:

- a. Jackie Thompson, Junior High Volleyball Coach, step 4 \$4,553.54.
- b. Marcie Jennings, Basketball Cheerleading Coach, step 4 \$4,793.20.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

### **Additions to Substitute List**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Neal Palmer to approve the following additions to the substitute list, pending completion of all required paperwork:

- a. Tracey Barnes, cafeteria
- b. Shannon Chilson, cafeteria, retroactive to 9/3/21 as all paperwork has been completed.
- c. Christina Bedford, cafeteria, retroactive to 8/23/21 as all paperwork has been completed.
- d. Tiffany Pauling, substitute teacher, all paperwork is complete.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

### **Additions to Volunteer List**

A motion was made by Mr. Denny Sourbeer and seconded by Mr. Neal Palmer to approve the following additions to the volunteer list; all paperwork has been completed:

- a. Makayla Davis, cheerleading, retroactive to 8/24/21.
- b. Jim Pepper, football, retroactive to 8/17/21.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### **Book List**

A motion was made by Mr. Ryan Allen and seconded by Mr. Gary Black to accept the outdated book list as presented.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

### **PA Youth Survey**

A motion was made by Mr. Ryan Allen and seconded by Mr. Gary Black to approve participation in the PA Youth Survey for students in grades 4 (pilot), 6, 8, 10, and 12.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.

Motion carried.

### **Field Trips**

A motion was made by Mr. Ryan Allen and seconded by Mr. Gary Black to approve the following overnight field trips:

- a. FCCLA State Officers Training at Seven Spring Resort, Champion, PA, September 25-28, 2021.
- b. National FFA Chorus in Indianapolis, IN, October 23-30, 2021.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

### **Quarterly Reports**

A motion was made by Mr. Ryan Allen and seconded by Mr. Gary Black to approve the third quarter (March-May, 2021) and fourth quarter (June-August, 2021) Canton Area School District Elementary and Jr/Sr High School Library Reports.

Roll Call Vote: All nine members present voted yea.  
Motion carried.

### **CITIZEN RECOGNITION - NON-AGENDA RELATED**

The following district residents approached the podium to express their concern with the board following the Department of Health mask mandate. All of them spoke to the board and requested that they do not follow the mandate:

Amber Fitzwater  
Angela Hess  
Jim Segur  
Andy Pepper  
Travis Pepper  
Tom Cochran  
Michelle VanHorn  
Sherry Lambert  
Holly Shultz  
Christopher Gordon  
Jennifer Jackson  
Brenda Calaman

Pamela Denlinger specifically asked a series of questions that were submitted to the board regarding funding.

The following district residents approached the podium to express their gratitude to the board:

Courtney Roberts  
Craig Route

### **Announcements**

An Executive Session was held prior to the Board Meeting, at 4:45 p.m., to discuss legal matters.

The next Board Meeting will be held Thursday, October 14, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. in the Canton Jr/Sr High School Library, Canton, PA.

### **Meeting Adjourned**

Mrs. Sourbeer adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:43 p.m. on a unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark S. Jannone  
Business Manager/Board Secretary