

**NORTHERN LEHIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Board Minutes**

**Slatington, PA**  
**November 9, 2015**

**PURPOSE** The regular meeting of the Northern Lehigh Board of School Directors was called to order by the President, Mr. Edward E. Hartman, at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, November 9, 2015, in the Administration Office Board Room.

**ROLL CALL** Members present: Mr. Robin T. Distler, Mr. Gary S. Fedorcha, Mr. Mathias J. Green, Jr., Mrs. Natalie J. Green, Mrs. Gale Husack, Mr. Robert J. Keegan, Jr., Mr. Gregory S. Williams and Mr. Edward E. Hartman (8)

Members absent: Mrs. Donna M. Kulp (1)

Non-members present: Mr. Jeffrey Bachman, Mrs. Susan Bahnick, Mrs. Jill Chamberlain, Mr. Greg Derr, Mrs. Michele Dotta, Mrs. Rhonda Frantz, Mr. John Hrizuk, Mr. Gavin Kemery (Sr. Rep.), Ms. Karlyna Kemery (Jr. Rep.), Mr. Paul Leonzi, Mr. Michael Michaels, Mrs. Sherri Molitoris, Mrs. Karen Nicholas, Mr. Scott Pyne, Mrs. Tanya Simms, Attorney Charles Stopp (District Solicitor), and Mr. Robert Vlasaty.

**VISITORS** Approximately twenty-seven visitors attended the meeting.

**APPROVE MINUTES** Mr. Fedorcha made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Green, that the minutes of the regular school board meeting held on October 12, 2015 be approved and ordered filed.

YEA: Mr. Distler, Mr. Fedorcha, Mr. Green, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Keegan, Mr. Williams, Mr. Hartman (8)

NAY: None (0)

**SPECIAL BOARD REPORTS** Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit – Mr. Hartman announced that a full-time psychiatrist was hired at a salary of \$225,000.00. A full time person was hired because they could not find enough part time psychiatrists to fill the need.

Lehigh Career and Technical Institute – Mr. Fedorcha announced that the new Executive Director, Dr. Thomas Rushton, has taken over for Sandra Himes who retired, and there have been other administrative changes as well. He stated that Darin VanNorman, from the Northern Lehigh area, is one of the new supervisors.

Legislative Report – Mr. Williams announced that the State budget is still in impasse and there is no sign of a settlement any time soon. The latest being negotiated is a back-end referendum which would require a school district to have the general public vote on any tax increases.

Lehigh Carbon Community College – Mr. Green reported that enrollment was down slightly this fall. Non-credit courses and work training grants remain strong which helps support the budget. Every Community College in the State of Pennsylvania, except those supported by the counties, had their bond rating downgraded which equates to higher interest rates. According to Moody's, because of the delay in a state budget, they can no longer depend on the State of Pennsylvania to fund the colleges as they had in the past.

Mr. Hartman added that the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit just went out for a \$10 million bond because they are running short of funds due to the budget impasse.

**Committee Reports and/or Meetings**

Minutes of the Education/Policy Committee Meeting held on November 2, 2015 were distributed.

Student Representatives to the Board Report –Mr. Gavin Kemery and Ms. Karlyna Kemery distributed their written student representative report and verbally reported on its contents.

**SPECIAL BOARD REPORTS** Business Manager's Report - Mrs. Molitoris stated that the back-end referendum was brought to the table by the governor and is gaining Republican support. She added that school district taxes could only be raised by referendum meaning Act 1 and filing for exceptions would no longer be options.

**SPECIAL  
BOARD  
REPORTS  
(cont.)**

Without those options and if a referendum is not passed to raise taxes, we would be looking at cutting programs (full-day kindergarten, transportation, sports) because it would be impossible to balance a budget.

Mrs. Molitoris reported that Northern Lehigh's bond rating has not changed by Moody's, but they have downgraded the State of Pennsylvania's rating.

Mrs. Frantz reported that she attended a recent meeting on the Affordable Care Act. While changes may occur with a new President, they do not believe it will be abolished. Mrs. Frantz will keep the board posted on any changes.

Federal and Other Programs Update – Mrs. Karen A. Nicholas reported that the annual Barnes and Noble event will be held on November 10, 2015. This event is held to get our students excited about books and reading. Eric White, an illustrator, will be there as well.

Mrs. Nicholas stated that the School Performance Profile score for the 2014-2015 school year is 77.5. Last year it was 77.8. She reported that a number of factors make up the score: 80% of the score is the Keystone exams. Attendance rates, graduation rates, college readiness tests and industry standard based assessments comprise the rest of the score. Governor Wolf is hinting that there may be changes to the Keystone exams and SPP scores. The State is also re-examining the PSSAs which are administered in grades 3-8. PDE received a one year waiver from the USDE from using the PSSAs to rate schools and evaluate teachers.

Mrs. Nicholas stated that the Bulldog block was discussed extensively at the last Education/Policy committee meeting. Last spring, Administration was looking at ways to remediate students who did not pass the Keystone exams. PDE requires that any student who does not pass the Keystone exam, be remediated before they take the exam again. Students must take the Keystone exams twice before they take the Project based assessment which is a series of modules that takes many hours, and must be taken in order to graduate. The Bulldog block is a time period in the morning where students that need it, participate in remediation. Students that do not need to be remediated, have the opportunity to take a class of their choosing. There is a wide variety of courses to choose from, both rigorous and non-rigorous. A survey is being sent to students, teachers and parents allowing feedback on the program.

Mrs. Green commented that although things don't always go as planned on paper, the Bulldog Block is a good solution for remediation and it is also allowing a different interaction between students and teachers. She added that she believes that is good to have non-rigorous classes offered. Mrs. Green stated that this is also allowing students to communicate with each other at a different level which is solving some of the social problems facing our students.

Mr. Green thanked Mr. Michaels, the administrative team and the faculty for their efforts. He stated that our programs are working and our scores are reflecting that, as we are on the top half of surrounding districts. He also mentioned that he hopes the universal technology at the high school level is still being investigated. Mr. Michaels and Mr. Williams confirmed that it still being explored.

Mr. Keegan questioned whether any of the students or parents were involved in the planning of the Bulldog Block. Mrs. Nicholas replied that they were not. Mr. Keegan stated that some of the pitfalls could have been avoided if they had been included. Mr. Michaels added that the roll out was done poorly. Mr. Keegan stated that he understands that it is a pilot program, but the surveys should have been done last spring. Mr. Keegan suggested that Mrs. Nicholas and some of the administrators meet with parents and students for their input.

Mr. Williams stated that he believes that the Bulldog block is a great idea that was just implemented very poorly. He added that board members have already objected to some of the course offerings at the committee level. He stated that he has faith in the administration both here and the high school that any issues will be corrected with input from parents and students.

Mrs. Tracy Merkle, Slatington Borough, stated that she has two children in the district and up until recently she was happy to say that she was an alumni of Northern Lehigh. She stated that not only should parents and students be involved in the input of Bulldog Block, but also teachers should be included. Mrs. Merkle asked Mr. Michaels if he knew the percent of students that need remediation because she heard it was about 2%. Mr. Michaels stated that the Bulldog Block is a pilot program

**SPECIAL  
BOARD  
REPORTS  
(cont.)**

which was created for remediation, enrichment and fun activities to get the students communicating and socializing. Mr. Vlasaty answered that 40% of the junior class needs remediation. Mr. Vlasaty stated that both freshman and sophomores do not need remediation. Mrs. Merkle stated that she is concerned about the decline in educational opportunities offered to our children and she feels they are not as prepared as possible for life as an adult in the workforce or as a student looking to attend higher level education. She cited examples of classes not being offered: Singles Life, SAT prep, Creative Writing and Public Speaking. For her child specifically, she stated that she finds it challenging to find any value in classes such as crafts and painting that don't interest her child and that are not going to help her become successful in her life goals. She went on to say that the elimination of the LCCC English course and replacing it with English IV does not assist students in gaining knowledge for use in the college setting. This class does not prepare students for college but prepares them to pass the Keystones. She stated that she can still enroll in LCCC and drive herself, but many people do not have that option. She went on to say that she understands that there were concerns with the LCCC professor not meeting the expectations of a great teacher, but even with an average teacher that class that would be more beneficial. We have bad teachers, bad professors, bad bosses, and bad co-workers and to thrive one has to learn how to adapt and deal with challenging situations; taking the option away does not teach any form of discipline, adaptability or provide keys to success. She added that the most disheartening concern for her this year is Bulldog Block. Taking away time from core classes and using the best time of the day to teach, in the morning, is very concerning. Having this block means 40 minutes a week of instructional time is lost for each core class! She added that she understands that it is to meant to help those that need remediation, but to take a small percent needing remediation and impact hundreds of kids is ridiculous. She stated that the best use of time for her child is study hall and now they are being removed and more non-value classes are being added. Instead of classes that don't get graded, maybe the time should be used to meet with teachers who can assist them. She stated that other districts she researched had their remediation around lunch time. Part of the time is for lunch and the other time they are assigned to a teacher who is their advisor. They either make up lab work, they see teachers for extra help, they attend club meetings, they go to the library, they have study hall or if they need it, they have remediation. Another district does remediation during the summer. She went on to say that although we can't afford multiple options, we should make sure the ones we have are the most beneficial for our students. Our mission statement states that we are looking to have all of our learners to become responsible, contributing citizens through challenging and evolving educational opportunities. She concluded by stating that she understands how education is challenging but she also believes we need to give our students every opportunity to be prepared so that they may be successful in their future endeavors.

Mr. Hartman thanked Mrs. Merkle. He acknowledged that Mrs. Merkle made a lot of good points and he agreed with some of them. Mr. Michaels added that some of the classes mentioned will not be offered because he does not agree with them either. He stated that this is a pilot program and we are working diligently on how it can be improved. Mr. Michaels agreed that it should not be taught first thing in the morning. Mr. Michaels added that the State is asking us to accomplish something while moving the target. Mr. Michaels agreed that the Bulldog block should have had a year of preparation and planning before it was introduced. Right now we are in the fixing mode and if it does not get fixed, we will come up with another idea. Northern Lehigh students are better than the test scores show. The teachers do a great job. Mr. Michaels stated that he appreciated the parents coming out and he apologized to all of the parents and students about how Bulldog Block was rolled out.

Mr. Williams stated that the board meeting is agenda driven and not necessarily the best format for an exchange of ideas. He stated that the Education/Policy committee, which is open to the public, meets the Monday before the board meeting at 5:30 p.m. except for December and July. Mr. Williams stated that he has been the chair of that committee for eight years and very few people from the public have ever attended. If you know you want to come and there is something you would like to discuss, he suggested that you email Mrs. Nicholas so she can be prepared.

Superintendent's Report - Mr. Michaels introduced Mr. Jonathan DeFrain, High School Student Council Advisor. Mr. DeFrain thanked the board for allowing them to attend this evening and he introduced Student Council president, Rebecca Blocker, who gave a brief overview of events they held and that are planned for the rest of the school year.

Mr. Michaels announced that American Education Week is November 16-20, 2015. Mr. Michaels thanked the parents, the School Board, the teaching staff and the support staff for their dedication

to the students of this district.

**SPECIAL  
BOARD  
REPORTS  
(cont.)**

Mr. Michaels asked Mr. Leonzi to expound on the recent donation of book bags. Mr. Leonzi explained that through collaboration with the ministerium, book bags filled with school supplies were disseminated to students in need. In addition, if any child was interested in Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and needed assistance with the fees, the ministerium would cover the cost.

Mr. Michaels reminded board members that Monday, December 7, 2015 is the next School Board Meeting beginning with a Reorganization meeting in the Board Room at 7:15PM. The Regular School Board Meeting will follow at 7:30PM.

Mr. Michaels recognized Mr. Edward Hartman for eight years of service to the school board and presented him with a certificate. Mr. Michaels asked Mr. Hartman to accept a twelve years of service certificate for Mr. Raymond Follweiler, who passed away this summer, and share it with his family.

Mr. Hartman reported that an executive session was held prior to tonight's meeting to discuss personnel issues.

**PERSONNEL** Mr. Fedorcha made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Keegan, that the Board of Education approves the following personnel items:

Appointment  
Instructional Approve the following individuals as District Wide permanent substitute teachers for the 2015-2016 school year. They will be paid a daily per diem rate of \$120 and will receive district health benefits according to the Affordable Care Act regulations with co-payment amounts equivalent to that of district personnel.

Sarah Fink  
Michelle McCormick  
Stephen Reimert  
Jo Leigh Sponsler\*

\* Pending Verification of Missing Personnel File Items

Appointment  
Non-Instructional Robert Reese\*  
Assignment: Second Shift Custodian Slatington Elementary School replacing Beverly Rupert who retired.  
Salary: \$9.00 Per Hour 2:30-11:00 p.m., 5 Days/Week  
Effective: December 1, 2015  
\* Pending Verification of Missing Personnel File Items  
\* 60 Day probationary period ending January 29, 2016

Retirement  
T. Lobach Accept the retirement resignation of Theresa Lobach from her position as Special Education Teacher at Slatington Elementary School effective the end of the work day December 14, 2015. At this time, she will begin her retirement from the Northern Lehigh School District after 30 years of service.

Resignation  
Co-Curricular Accept the resignation of Maria Van Norman from her position as Cheerleading Advisor effective at the end of the 2015-2016 football season. Stipend to be paid will be \$1,064.67.

Co-Curricular Appointment 2015-2016	Megan Filchner*	Cheerleader Advisor – Shared Stipend	\$1,064.67
	Tanya Ahner*	Cheerleader Advisor – Shared Stipend	\$1,064.67
	Henry Ojeda	Middle School Co-ed Soccer Coach	\$2,730.00
	*Pending Verification of Missing Personnel File Items		

Game  
Workers  
2015-2016 Motion to appointment the following person as a Game Worker for the 2015-2016 school year. Game Workers consist of ticket sellers and takers, game announcers, scoreboard operators, timers, field judges, scorekeepers. Rate of pay is consistent with the rates approved on the 2015-2016 Supplementary Personnel Salary Schedule

David Pristash\*

\*Pending Verification of Missing Personnel File Items

**PERSONNEL** (cont.) Approve the following substitute teachers for the 2015-2016 school year at the 2015-2016 substitute teacher rates as approved at the October 12, 2015 board meeting.

Substitute-  
Instructional Jacqueline Gawronski\* – Elementary K-6; School Counselor  
Lee Ann De Angelis – CLIU Guest Teacher  
Stephanie Funk – CLIU Guest Teacher  
Vicki Kistler – CLIU Guest Teacher  
Preston Kucsan – CLIU Guest Teacher  
Shaun Midas – CLIU Guest Teacher  
Ashley Smith – CLIU Guest Teacher  
Denise VanSickle – CLIU Guest Teacher  
**\*Pending Verification of Missing Personnel File Items**

Substitute-  
Non-  
Instructional Approve the following individuals as substitute secretaries or instructional aides for the 2015-2016  
Aides/ school year at the 2015-2016 substitute rate as approved on the Supplementary Personnel Salary  
Secretary Schedule:

Davina Blose*	Jessica Jones*
Crystal Buck*	Amanda Trelease*
Kristin Garrison*	Janice Williams*

**\*Pending Verification of Missing Documents**

Cafeteria  
Workers Approve the following individuals as substitute cafeteria workers for the 2015-2016 school year  
at the 2015-2016 substitute rate as approved on the Supplementary Personnel Salary Schedule:

Davina Blose*	Jessica Jones*
Crystal Buck*	Amanda Trelease*
Sabrina Clouse*	Janice Williams*
Kristin Garrison*	

**\*Pending Verification of Missing Personnel File Items**

Custodians Approve the following individuals as substitute custodians for the 2015-2016 school year at the 2015-  
2016 substitute rate as approved on the Supplementary Personnel Salary Schedule:

Eric Miedzwiecki*	Frank Stoss*
Robert Reese*	Janice Williams*

**\*Pending Verification of Missing Personnel File Items**

Unpaid  
Volunteers Approve the following unpaid volunteer aide in the Peters and Slatington Elementary Schools  
for the 2015-2016 school year:

Sheila White\*  
**\*Pending Verification of Missing Documents**

YEA: Mr. Distler, Mr. Fedorcha, Mr. Green, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Keegan, Mr. Williams,  
Mr. Hartman (8)

NAY: None (0)

**POLICY** Mr. Williams made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Fedorcha, that the Board of  
Education approves the following policy items:

Board Policy Approve school board policy #304 – Programs – Merged Employee Section – Employment of  
First District Staff, as presented after first reading.

Reading Approve school board policy #317 – Merged Employee Section – Disciplinary Procedures, as  
presented after first reading.  
Approve school board policy #324 – Merged Employee Section – Personnel Files, as  
presented after first reading

Approve school board policy #331 – Merged Employee Section – Job Related Expenses, as  
presented after first reading.

**POLICY**  
**(cont.)**

Approve school board policy #332 – Merged Employee Section – Working Periods, as presented after first reading.

Approve school board policy #333 – Merged Employee Section – Professional Development, as presented after first reading.

Approve school board policy #336 – Merged Employee Section – Personal Necessity Leave, as presented after first reading.

Approve school board policy #337 – Merged Employee Section – Vacation, as presented after first reading.

Approve school board policy #338 – Merged Employee Section – Sabbatical Leave, as presented after first reading.

Approve school board policy #341 – Merged Employee Section – Benefits for Part-Time Employees, as presented after first reading.

Approve school board policy #346 – Merged Employee Section – Workers' Compensation, as presented after first reading.

Board Policy  
Second  
Reading

Approve school board policy #137 – Programs – Home Education Programs, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #138 – Programs – English as a Second Language/Bilingual Education Programs, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #304.1 – Merged Employee Section – Conflict of Interest, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #311 – Merged Employee Section – Suspensions and Furloughs, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #318 – Merged Employee Section – Penalties for Tardiness, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #319 – Merged Employee Section – Outside Activities, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #320 – Merged Employee Section – Freedom of Speech In Non-school Settings, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #321 – Merged Employee Section – Political Activities, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #322 – Merged Employee Section – Gifts, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #323 – Merged Employee Section – Tobacco Use, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #325 – Merged Employee Section – Dress and Grooming, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #326 – Merged Employee Section – Complaint Process, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #328 – Merged Employee Section – Compensation Plans/Salary Schedules, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #334 – Merged Employee Section – Sick Leave, as presented

after second reading.

**POLICY**  
**(cont.)**

Approve school board policy #335 – Merged Employee Section – Family and Medical Leaves, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #338.1 – Merged Employee Section – Compensated Professional Leaves, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #339 – Merged Employee Section – Uncompensated Leave, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #342 – Merged Employee Section – Jury Duty, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #343 – Merged Employee Section – Paid Holidays, as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #349 – Merged Employee Section – Early Retirement Incentive (ERI), as presented after second reading.

Approve school board policy #918 – Community – Title I Parent Involvement, as presented after second reading.

YEA: Mr. Distler, Mr. Fedorcha, Mr. Green, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Keegan, Mr. Williams, Mr. Hartman (8)

NAY: None (0)

**NEW**  
**BUSINESS**  
ERIP  
2015-2016

Mr. Fedorcha made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Williams, that the Board of Education approves to adopt an Early Retirement Incentive Plan for all eligible professional employees, on a voluntary basis for the 2015-2016 school year.

Roll call.

YEA: Mr. Fedorcha, Mr. Keegan (2)

NAY: Mr. Distler, Mr. Green, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Williams, Mr. Hartman (6)

Motion defeated.

**FINANCIAL**

Mr. Hartman announced that item “G” will be voted on separately. Mr. Distler made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Fedorcha, that the Board of Education approves the following financial items:

Financial  
Reports

Approve the following financial reports:

General Fund Account month of July, August September and October, 2015

NLMS Student Activities Account months of July, August, & September, 2015

NLHS Student Activities and Scholarship Accounts months of July, August, & September, 2015

List of  
Bills

Approve the Following List of Bills:

General Fund months of October & November, 2015

Cafeteria Fund month of November, 2015

Capital Projects month of October, 2015

Refreshment Stand month of October, 2015

Salary  
Schedule  
2015-2016

Approve the 2015-2016 Northern Lehigh District Salary Schedule as presented.

Resolution  
NC Tax  
Claim Bureau

Approve the resolution directing Northampton County Tax Claim Bureau not to collect delinquent taxes on behalf of Northern Lehigh School District as presented.

Resolution  
LC Tax

Approve the resolution directing Lehigh County Tax Claim Bureau not to collect delinquent taxes on behalf of Northern Lehigh School District as presented.

Claim Bureau

Per Capita Abatements/ Exonerations Approve abatement/exoneration requests of per capita taxes, for the residents that fall within the guidelines, as presented.

YEA: Mr. Distler, Mr. Fedorcha, Mr. Green, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Keegan, Mr. Williams, Mr. Hartman (8)

NAY: None (0)

**FINANCIAL (cont.)**

Mr. Fedorcha made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Green, that the Board of Education approves the following financial item:

Mr. Fedorcha stated that this property was owned originally by the Borough of Walnutport and unfortunately there was a fire. In order to obtain loans to fix the property, the fire company had to own the property which meant a change to the tax rolls which automatically the property becomes taxed. The county, the borough and hopefully the school district will be exonerating their taxes. The Diamond Fire Company is a volunteer fire company and the cost to operate is very high.

Mr. Green stated that as a matter of record, the fire companies in Washington Township are all tax exempt.

Exonerate Diamond Fire Company Approve the motion to exonerate the property known as 110 Main Street, located in the Borough of Walnutport, and owned by the Diamond Fire Company, from all school real estate taxes for Tax Years 2014 and 2015.

YEA: Mr. Distler, Mr. Fedorcha, Mr. Green, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Keegan, Mr. Williams, Mr. Hartman (8)

NAY: None (0)

**INFORMATION**

Minutes of the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit 21 Board of Directors meetings held on September 21, 2015 were distributed.

Minutes of the Lehigh Career & Technical Institute Joint Operating Committee meeting held on September 30, 2015 were distributed.

Mr. Hartman reminded everyone that Wednesday Is Veterans Day and to please take time to remember all of those who put on a uniform. In addition, November 10<sup>th</sup> is the Marine Corp Birthday.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Distler made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Green, that the regular meeting of the Northern Lehigh School District Board of School Directors is adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

YEA: Mr. Distler, Mr. Fedorcha, Mr. Green, Mrs. Green, Mrs. Husack, Mr. Keegan, Mr. Williams, Mr. Hartman (8)

NAY: None (0)

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Williams  
Secretary

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_ President  
Edward E. Hartman