

PENN

# BOARD REPORT

Volume 46 No. 7

CAMBRIA

February 2025

This report summarizes the actions taken by the Penn Cambria Board of Education at its regular meeting, February 18, 2025. Routine business, such as approval of agenda, minutes, and payment of bills was accomplished. The Board also took the following actions and approved the following resolutions:

## I. SPOTLIGHT ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Congratulations to the following Penn Cambria students who competed at the Skills USA Competition:

Straight to States

Automated Manufacturing Technology - Gabriel Barnish, Troy Logan, and Alex Walters

CNC Turning Specialist - Grace Sheehan

Health Occupations Professional Portfolio - June Bushore

Painting and Decorating - Hannah Plazek

Gold Medal Winners

Automotive Service Technology - Tyler Barnish

Electrical Construction Wiring - Blake Miller

Job Interview - Rylee Weakland

Technical Drafting - Cameron Mears

Silver Medal Winner

Power Equipment Technology - Kurtis Weakland

Bronze Medal Winners

Early Childhood Education - Jacey Karlheim

Health Knowledge Bowl - Olivia McDaniels and Evan Russian

## II. HEARING OF VISITORS - Questions, concerns, comments related to school business.

A. Lindsay Conrad, Ashville, requested that more information be provided and available to the community in regard to where the seventh and eighth grade students will be housed at the high school in the upcoming school year, the pros and cons of block scheduling, and the possibility that track and field would be available to seventh and eighth grade students in the 2025-2026 school year.

B. Tonee Rice, Cresson, expressed concerns about the recent executive order being issued that has the potential to harm our students and teachers' ability to work, teach, and exist in what should be a diverse, equitable, and acceptable environment. Tonee asked what the school district is doing to create contingency plans for the schools, should the district be instructed by the federal government to stop recognizing students that prefer using pronouns or to deny support and/or resources for students with learning, developmental, physical and/or emotional disabilities. As school districts are forced to teach rhetoric that has been whitewashed or to ignore diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, Tonee asked if the Board could take a stand, come out publicly, and be transparent about how the district plans on supporting the mental and emotional well-being of our small population of children.

## III. BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

### LOCAL AUDIT REPORT

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Directors hereby accept the Auditor's Reporting Package for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2024, as prepared and presented by *Mark C. Turnley, CPA*.

## IV. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

**RESOLVED:** That the Superintendent's recommendations be approved as follows:

A. Personnel

1. Accept Resignation

- a. Richard Hockenos, Ashville, Assistant Junior High Girls Basketball Coach, effective January 16, 2025
  - 2. Approve Appointment, effective immediately
    - a. Eric Gaida, Cresson, from 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Assistant to Volunteer Varsity Football Coach
  - 3. Approve Appointments, pending documentation
    - a. Josalyn Miller, Duncansville, IU08 Substitute Teacher
    - b. Christine Weidencamp, Johnstown, IU08 Substitute Teacher
- B. Approve New High School Curriculum Maps
  - 1. Introduction to E-Sports
  - 2. STEM- Robotics
  - 3. STEM- Engineering
  - 4. Strength Training for Fitness & Performance
  - 5. Modern Music Literacy
- C. Approve Updated High School Curriculum Maps
  - 1. Algebra 1
  - 2. Honors Algebra 1
  - 3. Calculus
  - 4. Physical Education
  - 5. Health
  - 6. Band
  - 7. Chorus
- D. Approve the Revised 2024-2025 School Calendar
- E. *The Board discussed the three options for the 2025-2026 school calendar that included: option 1 - include two Act 80 days, where the school district could potentially be penalized \$12,000 due to child accounting, option 2 - 180 calendar days with no teacher professional development days, or option 3 - include two hour early dismissals, that allow teachers professional development time throughout the year.*

*Mr. Dziabo shared that even though it is hard for parents to find child care for option 3, himself included, with the \$12,000 penalty of continuing with past practice, it is not in the school district's favor with upcoming projects.*

Approve the 2025-2026 School Calendar (*option 3*)

V. **NEW BUSINESS**  
**SCHOOL MASCOT LOGO**

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Directors approve the Penn Cambria School District mascot logo.

**DONATION**

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Directors approve the donation of a Mitsubishi Electric Heating and Air Conditioning High Efficiency Heat Pump System for the High School Press Box from Beers Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling, LLC, Altoona, PA.

*Mr. Sheehan extended a thank you to Beers Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling, LLC for the donation.*

**APPRAISAL SERVICES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Directors approve entering into an agreement with Ginger Jakubowski Appraisals & Realty Services, Inc., Johnstown, PA, to provide professional appraisal services for Penn Cambria School District, at a cost not to exceed \$1,400.

**SCHEMATIC DESIGN AND PROJECT COST ESTIMATE**

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Directors approve the Schematic Design and Project Cost Estimate for the Penn Cambria High School Renovations and Elementary School Addition, and to authorize the Architect and Construction Manager to proceed with the Design Development Phase of the project, with an estimated total project cost of \$28,286,239 as documented in the Construction Manager's Schematic Design Estimate, dated February 7, 2025.

### **GENERAL OBLIGATIONS BONDS, SERIES OF 2025**

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of School Directors of the Penn Cambria School District (the “School District”) does hereby authorize the Administration to work with PFM Financial Advisors LLC, as Financial Advisor, Dinsmore & Shohl LLP, as Bond Counsel, and the local Solicitor in conjunction with the issuance of General Obligation Bonds, Series of 2025 in the approximate amount of \$9,995,000 for the purpose of funding the new money needs of the District via a competitive internet auction.

### **PASBO AGREEMENT**

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Directors approve entering into an agreement with PASBO to provide interim Business Administrator services at a rate of \$47.25 per hour, retroactive to January 21, 2025.

### **DUAL CREDIT AGREEMENT**

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Directors approve entering into a dual credit agreement with Penn State Altoona.

### **TEXTBOOK ADOPTION**

**RESOLVED:** That the Board of Directors approve the adoption of GO Math, *HMH*, for grades K-6.

### **SECOND READING AND ADOPTION OF NEW, REVISED, OR BOARD POLICIES FOR REVIEW:**

- A. 610 - Purchases Subject to Bid/Quotation
- B. 611 - Purchases Budgeted
- C. 626 Attachment - Procurement – Federal Programs
- D. 823 - Opioid Antagonist

### **VI. FIRST READING OF NEW, REVISED, OR BOARD POLICIES FOR REVIEW:**

- A. 217 - Graduation
- B. 218 - Student Discipline
- C. 218.1 - Weapons
- D. 218.2 - Terroristic Threats
- E. 222 - Tobacco and Vaping Products
- F. 800 - Records Management
- G. 803 - School Calendar

### **VII. ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

**Benjamin Watt**, High School Principal, shared activities and events that took place at the High School over the past year.

Mr. Watt stated that when he took his position as High School Principal just over a year ago, it was evident that the high school was an effective, successful institution that provided a safe and engaging educational experience.

“But what does it look like through the eyes of our students? Last Spring Mrs. Blackburn and I, with the help of our faculty, created a list of outspoken students from multiple grades and interests including sports, the arts, academics, and vocational trades. Our goal was to meet with this group of students regularly and get a student’s perspective on our school.

When asked, “how do the students feel about our school?”, responses were: our school is dirty, kids don’t take pride in our school, we get a pretty good education, but there is no fun, and very little school pride. The answer was disheartening. After that first meeting, we knew it was time for a change. We wanted to continue with the outstanding education that our staff provides, but we also wanted to make our school a place that our students would enjoy.

To achieve this goal, we would implement the following changes: seniors were given the opportunity to paint their parking spots; offered Perfect Attendance Rewards with donut parties; provided quarterly incentives to all the students who did not receive a detention or suspension that quarter one included a field day, ice cream

donated by Valewood Dairy and the Allied Milk Producers, pumpkins for the students to paint and take home donated by Benshaw Farms, funnel cakes provided by the local fire department, yard games brought in by faculty and staff, and additional entertainment was provided by a live band which featured one of our high school students; the second quarterly incentive, all students who did not receive a detention or suspension and did not exceed five unexcused absences were invited to watch Despicable Me in the auditorium, where popcorn and snacks were provided; we also brought back our "Student of the Month" recognition, where students receive a cash award from local sponsors, preferential parking, and a bulletin board display in the lobby; daily recognition and celebration of student birthdays by providing a small prize or treat; we offer Lunchroom Karaoke; easter egg hunts; leprechaun gold; pep rallies; Christmas cookies and trivia; bingo; additional theme dress days; and we made some minor cosmetic upgrades including repainting the hallways and placing air fresheners in the restrooms.

Not only were our students faced with some difficult times and challenges, but our staff had their own challenges that included: flooding and new room assignments from the broken heating system, grade reconfiguration, new room assignments with the addition of grades seven and eight, schedule change from block to traditional, flooding again from the roof drains, and failed heating system in January.

To assist with staff morale, we held a faculty appreciation day where students shared thank you's and stories about how a teacher impacted them; staff appreciation days where coffee, hot chocolate, snacks, candy, donuts, etc. were provided; implemented games like the rock, paper, scissors challenge; held a "snowball fight" to provide a little friendly competition among our staff; and guess that song."

**Scott Sherry**, Director of Facilities, Grounds, and Maintenance, updated the Board of Directors regarding completed and future facilities projects for the school district during the 2024-2025 school year.

"During the past summer we had a major renovation of the high school boiler room. The district took a huge step to be more energy efficient and completely renovated the hot water heating system for the building. The boilers that heated the water were tri-fuel boilers and could be fired with gas or coal. These boilers were not very energy efficient and were costly to operate. When fired with coal, it added the cost of DEP permitting, manpower, and removing the coal ash to a certified landfill.

The heating controls were also out of date for the new technology of moving towards digital instead of pneumatic controls. The renovation of the boiler room consisted of removing the two old heating boilers, one domestic hot water boiler, some pneumatic controls, two circulating pumps, expansion tanks, and all the piping from existing boilers. Contractors that were awarded the work consisted of G & R Excavating, McCarl's, Mervac, Holstrom and Clark, Oz, and Serv Pro. They were monitored by SiteLogiq daily to make sure work would be completed for the first day of school.

McCarl's also installed a new exhaust roof top unit above the kitchen to provide better ventilation while cooking. The biggest and most needed project was the roof replacement for eighty percent of the High School. This was awarded to TRS roofing. The roof work consisted of removing the existing rubber membrane and insulation to the metal decking. Once sections were removed, new insulation was added and a new rubber roof installed.

During the roof replacement by the auditorium, a heavy downpour occurred causing damage to the carpet in the auditorium, hallway, and adjoining classrooms from roof drains. There were wrestling mats also affected as they were being stored in the hallway by the auditorium. This water damage fell under the contractor's insurance policy to fix and repair anything that was damaged. DeGol carpet was awarded the contract to install new carpet and LVT flooring. Wrestling mats were replaced under the contractor's insurance in time for the start of the season.

G & R Excavating removed the existing brick smokestack since the new gas boilers have stainless steel flue pipe. The stack was removed thirty inches above the roof, and a stainless weather tight cap was installed. This work was completed during the Christmas break before staff and students returned.

The work for the summer of 2025 was finalized and awarded by Sitelogiq. The work will be centered at the High School. The work will consist of a new fire alarm system, electrical switch gear, an emergency generator, removal of the suspended ceilings in the hallways, unit ventilators replacing old ones in classrooms, sections of domestic piping that are bad, and a new roof top unit on the cafeteria for heating and cooling.

This summer will be very busy for the maintenance staff with the grade level moves from building to building and the closing of the Primary School. Moving companies have been contacted to put together quotes for moving the larger bulk items (desks, chairs, teaching materials).

This fall, the maintenance dept. also replaced the district's dump truck with the purchase of a 2024 F350 equipped with a stainless-steel dump bed insert, stainless spreader, and a poly v-boss plow. The old dump truck was advertised as a silent bid and sold to a private individual.”