



**BOARD OF EDUCATION-REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2021
AT PEOTONE HIGH SCHOOL- MEDIA CENTER**

This Regular Board Meeting was conducted via a teleconference call. Present in the Media Center at Peotone High School tonight, were President Tara Robinson, Vice President Rick Uthe, Secretary Jennifer Moe, Trustee Roger Bettenhausen, Trustee Jodi Becker and Trustee Paul Douglas. Also present were Mr. Steve Stein, Dr. Charles Vitton, Mrs. Cathy Cuculich and Mr. Don Swanson. Trustee Jody Thatcher was absent for the board meeting tonight.

CALL TO ORDER:

At 6:00 p.m., President Tara Robinson called the regular board meeting to order and requested all who are present to please stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. A roll call was taken and the following members answered aye (6): Mr. Roger Bettenhausen, Mrs. Jennifer Moe, Mrs. Tara Robinson, Mr. Paul Douglas, Mrs. Jodi Becker and Mr. Richard Uthe. Mrs. Jody Thatcher was absent for the regular board meeting of January 20, 2021.

CONSENT AGENDA:

President Robinson asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for the January 20, 2021 regular board meeting. Mrs. Moe made a motion and Mr. Uthe seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken and the follow members answered aye (6): Mr. Bettenhausen, Mr. Douglas, Mrs. Moe, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Becker, Mr. Uthe and no nays. Mrs. Jody Thatcher was absent for the regular board meeting of January 20, 2021.

OPPORTUNITY FOR VISITORS TO SPEAK:

Mr. Trevor Moore, Chief School Business Official, addressed the Board, Administration and the Public with his State of the District and Five Year Financial Projection presentation. Mr. Moore stated that the presentation is available online for review.

OPPORTUNITY FOR VISITORS TO SPEAK (continued):

Mr. Tim Stoub, of Peotone, IL, addressed the Board to find out what the Board is doing to prepare for a likely decline in enrollment for next year. Mr. Stein, responded that we will always look at those numbers on an annual basis which usually happens now, to make recommendations to the Board in order to make sure that we are providing the appropriate level of education to students. And one of the things that the Board has chosen to do over the years and I think it is a credit to the District, is that they have always kept student numbers very manageable across the board.

Mrs. Dana Sippel, of Peotone, IL, addressed the Board asking why we are not returning to a full day of school like other districts around us. Also, she had questions regarding extending the remote learning day to 3:05 p.m. Mr. Stein responded that if we look at Crete-Monee School District and Joliet School District, they have been remote since the have beginning of the school year with no indication of returning to in-person learning. Also, right now we have a consistent form of education that is going on and so I think a lot of Superintendents and Boards are looking at maintaining that form of education until things stabilize even more, possibly for the fourth quarter.

Mr. John Maxedon, of Peotone, IL, addressed the Board regarding his FOIA request and emails to Mr. Stein and Mr. Trevor Moore. Mr. Stein responded, in regards to the email situation that you are inquiring about, you received the FOIA information that I had at my disposal, and you are also not taking into account that I have in-person conversations with Board members along with telephone conversations with Board members.

GOOD NEWS:

PEOTONE HIGH SCHOOL RECOGNITION OF THE RECIPIENTS OF THE DECEMBER 2020 PEOTONE BOWLING CENTER EXCELLENCE AWARD

President Robinson recognized the December winners of the Peotone Bowling Center Excellence Award, Mrs. Terry Wuske and her district cafeteria staff. Mr. Mike Arnold and his district custodial staff nominated Terry and her staff and wrote on their behalf:

Terry and her staff shows a very strong work ethic year after year keeping our students in every school well fed with proper nutrition for each one of them to keep their minds and bodies nourished for a full school day. I am sure it is difficult to make sure that every week you have the food on hand to fill the menu from week to week to feed our students. To properly prepare and make certain the correct temperatures are maintained in the foods that are required to be served hot or cold. These ladies come in every day and serve our students with a very pleasant attitude, smile, and kindness toward each one of them every school day. With Terry's many years of experience here at our school district we know we have one of the best cafeteria staffs anywhere.

"YOU LUNCH LADIES ROCK!"



Congratulations Terry and her Cafeteria Staff!

PEOTONE HIGH SCHOOL

JANUARY 2021 ACADEMIC STUDENT OF THE MONTH

President Robinson recognized **Colin Emsweller**, as the January 2021 Board of Education Academic Student of Peotone High School. Colin is a freshman at Peotone High School with a grade point average of 4.0 on a 4.0 grading scale.



Congratulations Colin!

PEOTONE HIGH SCHOOL

RECOGNITION OF KANKAKEE AREA CAREER STUDENTS FOR FIRST AND SECOND QUARTER

President Robinson recognized **Rebecca Reidy** and **Joel Lee** as Kankakee Area Career Center's Students for First and Second Quarter. Rebecca was recognized for Early Childhood Development II, and Joel was recognized for Engineering and Design.



Congratulations Rebecca and Joel!

PEOTONE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

DECEMBER 2020 STUDENTS OF THE MONTH

President Robinson recognized the December 2020 students of month of Peotone Junior High School, **8th Grade - Mariah Young, 7th Grade - Dulce Reyes, and 6th Grade - Jillian Roark**. These students have demonstrated outstanding behavior, good work ethic, and have "gone above and beyond the call of duty".



Congratulations Mariah, Dulce and Jillian!

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

RECOGNITION OF BUS DRIVERS

President Robinson recognized **Jolene Fritz** and **Bud Ivanoff**, for their donation of time driving District families to the Annual American Legion Christmas Event.



Thank you Jolene and Bud!

FOR ACTION:

REPORT NO. 37:

**FOR ACTION: APPROVAL OF THE 2022 PEOTONE BOARD OF
EDUCATION REGULAR BOARD MEETING CALENDAR.**

President Robinson asked for a motion to approve the **2022 Peotone Board of Education Regular Board Meeting Calendar**. Mr. Uthe made a motion and Mrs. Moe seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken and the following members answered aye (6): Mrs. Moe, Mrs. Robinson, Mr. Douglas, Mrs. Becker, Mr. Uthe, Mr. Bettenhausen, and no nays. Mrs. Thatcher was absent for the regular board meeting of January 20, 2021.

REPORT NO. 38:

**FOR ACTION: APPROVAL OF KEEPING THE CLOSED
EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES CLOSED
FROM (JULY 2020 - DECEMBER 2020)**

President Robinson asked for a motion to approve **Keeping the Closed Executive Session Minutes closed from July 2020 through December 2020**. Mr. Uthe made a motion and Mrs. Moe seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken and the following members answered aye (6): Mrs. Moe, Mr. Bettenhausen, Mrs. Robinson, Mr. Douglas, Mrs. Becker, Mr. Uthe and no nays. Mrs. Thatcher was absent for the regular board meeting of January 20, 2021.

REPORT NO. 39:

**FOR ACTION: APPROVAL OF THE CONNOR SHAW CENTER'S
ROOFING PROJECT BID**

President Robinson asked for a motion to approve **Connor Shaw Center's Roofing Project Bid**. Mr. Uthe made a motion and Mrs. Moe seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken and the following members answered aye (6): Mrs. Moe, Mr. Bettenhausen, Mrs. Robinson, Mr. Douglas, Mrs. Becker, Mr. Uthe and no nays. Mrs. Thatcher was absent for the regular board meeting of January 20, 2021.

REPORT NO. 40:

FOR ACTION:

APPROVAL OF PERSONNEL

(*Contingent upon receipt and evaluation and employment documentation required by the District and the Illinois State Board of Education*)

President Robinson asked for a motion to approve the **Certified and Classified Staff Personnel**. Mr. Uthe made a motion and Mrs. Moe seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken and the following members answered aye (6): Mrs. Moe, Mr. Bettenhausen, Mrs. Robinson, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Uthe, Mrs. Becker and no nays. Mrs. Thatcher was absent for the regular board meeting of January 20, 2021.

CERTIFIED STAFF

CHANGE IN STATUS:

- Kara Lindsay - PHS Special Education Department Lead Teacher to PHS - Special Education Teacher (effective date of 01/04/2021).
- Moira Burke - PHS Special Education Teacher to PHS - Special Education Department Lead Teacher (effective date of 01/04/2021).

EMPLOYMENT:

- Kasey Spisak - PES Long Term Teacher Substitute to Second Grade Teacher for the 2021-2022 school year (effective date of 08/16/2021).

CLASSIFIED STAFF

EMPLOYMENT:

- Jennifer Price - Custodian - PES (effective date of 01/15/2021).

CHANGE IN STATUS:

- Ann Comrie - PES - 1:1 Paraprofessional to PES - SI Program Aide (effective date of 01/04/2021).

FOR DISCUSSION:

- **1st Reading of PRESS106 Board Policies:**

President Robinson asked the Board members to please review the 1st Reading of PRESS 106 Board Policies. If anyone has any questions regarding these policies, please reach out to Mr. Stein.

- **Increasing Instructional Time:**

President Robinson reported that the next item for discussion on the Agenda tonight, is a discussion about increasing the instructional time.

President Robinson asked Mr. Stein to speak on this discussion item.

Mr. Stein reported that Mrs. Moe had asked that we look into what might be the possibilities of extending the school day, as we look to move forward throughout this school year. So actually, Mrs. Moe, Mrs. Becker, Dr. Vitton and I met and talked about some basic framework items and the administration team met to dig

deeper into the concept of extending the school day. One thing that I have found in terms of talking to some of my colleagues in the area, is that going to a true full day, because I know is a question that we get a lot of times, is “why don’t we go a full day?” Well, the problem that it poses is in the scheduling of the day with the teachers and with the students, and the fact that we still under the mandate of allowing parents to have the choice of having students attend remote or in-person learning. So if we are offering that in-person learning as we are, they have to have the choice of being remote. And this puts a tremendous level of difficulty when you look at scheduling for an entire day.

I firmly believe that if the Board wants us to lengthen the school day at some point, I would suggest and I think I can speak for the entire administrative team that we do not look to extend it to a “full school day”. My concern is the negative impact it will have on our remote students. Currently the day still allows teachers to have office hours for students. Any day that still allows teachers to have office hours for students - and I think ultimately this would be the best. We are preliminarily having discussions about extending the day, and more discussions will be happening when the vaccine is more widespread. Right now, we are in a routine, and keeping that routine for the time being is beneficial and having a plan, maybe having more discussions regarding looking towards fourth quarter for extending the school day.

- **Technology Department Job Descriptions Updates:**

Dr. Charles Vitton addressed the Board regarding the Technology Department Job Descriptions updates. Dr. Vitton stated that these job descriptions simply reflect current job duties as well as changes to the job duties and levels of responsibilities given that our technology environment has changed significantly this year. The additions or changes are highlighted in yellow. I ask the Board to please review the job descriptions updates, and I will present this as an action item for the Board’s approval at the February 17, 2021 board meeting. Any questions regarding these updates, please feel free to email me.

ADMINISTRATION REPORTS:

Dr. Charles Vitton, Assistant Superintendent, reported to the Board about the EL Bilingual Service Plan:

This school year ISBE is requiring that all school districts complete an EL (English Learner) Bilingual Service Plan. According to ISBE, this plan is designed to:

- Conform with School Code Article 14C and 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Part 228;
- Inform ISBE of the TBE/TPI programs that are implemented or will be put in place to serve the ELs; and
- Serve as a need assessment data for program improvement, professional development and training and technical assistance.

Based on the information submitted in our EL Bilingual Service Plan and our current EL enrollment in the district, which comprises a total of 53 students PK-12, ISBE is now dictating that we need to hire three (3) full-time EL certified teachers for the 2021-2022 school year.

There are a few challenges with this mandate from ISBE. The first is simply finding licensed candidates for these positions – we had one EL position posted for this current school year and had no qualified candidates. Furthermore, hiring these additional certified teachers will result in an increased financial commitment with no real additional support from ISBE. In my email correspondence with ISBE regarding these mandates, they recommend we use our additional EBF funding designated for EL students to help support this initiative. The additional EBF funding we received this fiscal year to support EL students was \$294.89 - this does nothing to help us provide these mandated services. As we start to plan for the 2021-2022 school year we will keep these ISBE recommendations in mind, and bring any additional staffing proposals to the BOE for guidance and approval.

Mr. Steve Stein, Superintendent, reported to the Board that I have received two FOIA requests for this meeting, one from Mr. John Maxedon regarding the January 19th date and one from Mr. Tim Stoub, regarding in-person learning versus remote learning students.

Mrs. Carole Zurales, Principal of Peotone Elementary, reported to the Board that the PES staff, students, and family continued to do a great with remote learning after winter break. When we returned from winter break, we reviewed different remote learning expectations each day during my morning announcements. Students focused on these skills in their meeting to earn double pop tickets.

- We are so excited to be back in person with students. They have done a great job transitioning back to in person. The students did amazing adjusting back to their routine and remembering our safety measures that we have in place.
- We currently have 752 popstars for quarter 2 with our last call down of the quarter tomorrow. It will be record breaking call down tomorrow!
- Our January Monthly focus is PES Students have SNOW many skills and we are talking about different skills and character traits to be a successful student.
- This week, we are doing Aims web testing. We are looking forward to having this benchmark data on all our students in K-3.
- On February 1st, we will begin inviting students back for special ed support and expanding our reading intervention program in the afternoon.

Upcoming Dates:

- January 29th - Report Cards Sent Home
- February 12th - Valentine's Day Party

Mrs. Joanne Obszanski, Principal of Peotone Intermediate Center, reported to the Board that although our pace was somewhat slower on Tuesday morning at 7:30 a.m. as we welcomed students' return to the building, nonetheless, we were all happy to see our colleagues and our classmates. By Wednesday morning our halls were filled with louder voices, a quicker pace at the sound of the bell, and the business of the school day has returned. Our in-person and remote student numbers remain consistent since the start of the school year.

PIC's January/February Character Trait is Dependability. The upcoming weeks will include classroom lessons to explore Dependability and how it applies to choices 4th & 5th grade students are confronted with.

PIC's after dismissal Learning Lab resumes on Tuesday, 1/26/2021. Currently we provide support after our 11:30 dismissal for approximately 40 students.

Quarter 2 Report Cards go home with students on 1/29/2021.

PIC students in 4th & 5th grade are taking NWEA tests in the upcoming week/s. This assessment provides teachers with detailed data that allows them to plan instruction and individualized support for students.

PTO sent home Little Caesars Pizza flyers this week. Please be sure to place your order and help PTO support our schools. Your participation is appreciated. Orders are due by 2/1/21.

Finally, fortunately Mrs. Schubbe has confirmed a virtual author visit from Keri Graff on 4/8/21. She is the author of "The Tiny Mansion" and details will be worked out as the day approaches.

In light of the many adjustments made to our learning this school year, it is important to extend appreciation for the countless individuals that contribute to a successful school year. We appreciate PIC's teachers & families, paraprofessionals & office staff, related service, nursing staff, custodial staff, maintenance, technology and PTO who all continue to support each other and our students at very high levels. Thank you to all cafeteria staff with food services who have prepared and served approximately 130 delicious lunches to PIC students on Tuesday & Wednesday of this week alone. We are successful because of the ways we support each other.

Mrs. Wendy Bean, Assistant Principal of Peotone Junior High School, reported to the Board that:

Learning Lab

We are looking to begin our learning lab again next week. We'll invite some of our struggling learners back into the building for some additional assistance during the afternoon. We began this in November and were off to a successful start so we're happy to pick that up again and provide help to our students who need it most.

PHS Registration for our 8th Graders

We have several events planned to assist our 8th graders in selecting classes for next year. A virtual orientation was posted last night along with a Q and A session for students and parents. There is a 2nd Q and A session tomorrow night. The PHS counselors will be coming to the junior high next week and will walk the 8th graders through course selection. Remote students will be joining in virtually as well.

Scott Wenzel, Principal of Peotone Junior High School, reported to the Board that:

- **Back to Hybrid Learning (In-Person and Remote)** - It is really nice to have students back in the building. Teachers at the Junior High are teaching in-person learners concurrently with remote learners. Remote learners are following the same schedule as our in-person learning with live streamed instruction. Teachers have organized their rooms for them to be able to work with both sets of students during class. Technology has been very helpful in getting to teacher's needs for their classroom.
- **Numbers** - Upon returning to school with the Hybrid Model, PJHS currently has 47 students choosing the remote option. Breaking that down, we have six 6th graders, 23 7th graders, and 18 8th graders. This is approximately 15% of the student body who chose remote.
- **Yearbook** - Mrs. Wojtanowski and the yearbook staff are looking at new and creative ways to provide memories of this school year in the yearbook. The deadline for ordering a yearbook is Friday, January 22.
- **Extracurricular Activities** - Since we remain in Tier 3 all sports are paused at this time. The IESA Board of Directors is meeting January 29 to discuss the sports that should be participating now. They are volleyball, boys' basketball, and wrestling. If there are no changes they could be cancelling those activities. If we move to Tier 2, volleyball (moderate risk) could start practices, tryouts, and intrasquad scrimmages. Boys' basketball under Tier 2 guidelines may do non-contact practices only. Moving forward Girls basketball is slated to begin March 8th, Track may begin March 1st, and Wrestling on April 5th. Academic clubs (Math, Scholastic Bowl, Spelling) have been put on hold. Conversation with our conference schools will restart in February to see if we are able to have

competitions. Each school has different policies in regards to students staying after the school day which is causing issues.

Mr. Brandon Owens, Athletic Director/Assistant Principal at Peotone High School, reported to the Board that:

PHS Speech Team:

On January 23rd, the PHS Speech & Drama Team participated in the live virtual ICE Conference hosted by Reed Custer High School. The following students won awards for the following categories:

- 3rd place - Kathryn Miller and Molly Peters for HDA Humorous Duet Acting.
- 4th place - Matt Barta for HI Humorous Interpretation.
- 3rd place - Matt Barta for OC Original Comedy - Matt not only wrote his OC, but memorized it, and acted out many different characters. Because he is double entered, he had to perform 8 times on Saturday. 3 times for each category for prelims and 1 time for each category for finals.

These students will be receiving tangible awards for their placements. When I receive these awards, I will stop by the PHS office one day right before school starts to pass out the medals/ribbons to these students. Scott said it was no problem for me to do so. Our next tournament will be on Saturday Feb. 6th which is Regionals hosted by Morris High School. It will also be a live virtual tournament.

Mr. Jason Spang, Principal of Peotone High School, reported to the Board that:

- **Virtual High School Orientation 2021**

Peotone High School would like to thank all 8th grade students and their families for attending our Virtual High School Orientation this year. Although it was unfortunate we were not able to host students in person, we feel that we offered a very thorough virtual experience and are excited to meet the Class of 2025 in person to begin next school year! Included in the virtual orientation was an administrative introduction video to the building, an educational welcome video from our counselors, a PowerPoint presentation commentated by our counselors entitled "What is High School Really Like?", an administrative virtual tour of the high school building, and finally nearly 20 videos of our sport, club, and organizational sponsors describing the experience of what they have to offer to the Class of 2025. We also hosted a Live Parent Q and A last evening where 60 parents logged in to ask various questions answered by the high school and junior high administrative and counseling staffs. We are happy to host one more Live Parent Q and A session from 6-6:30 pm tomorrow evening. The link for the entire Virtual High School Experience is still active on the PHS Facebook page and PHS website. An email was also sent to all 8th grade students and parents which includes the links to all these resources.

That link will stay active for weeks to come as a reference for the Class of 2025.

- **PBC December Winner:**

The Custodial department would like to nominate Terry Wuske and her district cafeteria staff for the PBC Excellence Award. Terry's staff shows a very strong work ethic year after year keeping our students in every school well fed with proper nutrition for each one of them to keep their minds and bodies nourished for a full school day. I am sure it is difficult to make sure that every week you have the food on hand to fill the menu from week to week to feed our students. To properly prepare and make certain the correct temperatures are maintained in the foods that are required to be served hot or cold. These ladies come in every day and serve our students with a very pleasant attitude, smile, and kindness toward each one of them every school day. With Terry's many years of experience here at our school district we know we have one of the best cafeteria staffs anywhere. "YOU LUNCH LADIES ROCK!"

Peotone High School will have 93 Remote Learners second semester. We have 19 returning, but 10 changing to full remote, so an overall addition of 9 more students to the building second semester.

PHS will host a two week spirit week beginning Monday February 8th and ending on Friday February 12th. The themes for those include Monday: Jersey Day, Tuesday: Country vs. Country Club, Wednesday: Occupation Day, Thursday: Class Distinction Day (four seasons), and Friday: Purple Out.

Mrs. Amy Loy, Director of Special Services, reported to the Board that I have reviewed the Mental Health Tip Sheets along with the Mental Health Minute videos that our Special Services Department creates and distributes monthly. These are available in parent's email via school messenger and shared via the building Facebook pages. January's focus included ideas on helping kids and teens coping with anxiety and navigating varying stressors. I am working with our PHS Special Services Team to enhance the curriculum in our Resource Study Skills class for 2nd semester. We are going to target lessons that focus on improving study skills, executive function skills, and mindfulness along with goal setting strategies (personal and academic in nature) to help students generalize these skills outside the classroom. Lastly, the annual state assessment for English Proficiency, the ACCESS test, was postponed to March 2021. Typically that is administered January and February. We currently have 53 students throughout the district that are identified as English Learners and we will administer that test in March this year along with the other mandated state assessments.

Mrs. Terry Wuske, Director of Food Services, reported to the Board that the food service department transitioned from total remote to in person Grab and Go smoothly. I would also like to congratulate the food service staff on receiving the December PBC Award.

Mr. Dave Osborne, Director of Buildings and Grounds, reported to the Board that the boilers were inspected and tested for chemicals today and things are going well. They're starting to tweak the system now that they know what is there. Thank you to everyone that has helped with painting while we were on full remote. Terry Wuske and her HS kitchen staff, custodians at PJHS and Jennifer Haag got us a couple bus drivers to help at PJHS.

OTHER:

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

At 8:07 p.m., Mrs. Robinson asked for a motion to move to adjourn the regular board meeting and move into closed executive session and stated that there will not be any action following the closed executive session tonight. Mr. Uthe made a motion and Mrs. Moe seconded the motion to move the Board to meet in closed executive session for the purpose of discussing the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees or legal counsel; collective negotiating matters; student disciplinary cases and other matters relating to individual students; pending, probable, or imminent litigation; security procedures, school building safety and security, and the use of personnel and equipment to respond to an actual, a threatened, or a reasonable potential danger to the safety of employees, students, staff, the public or public property. On a roll call vote, the following members answered aye (6): Mr. Douglas, Mr. Uthe, Mrs. Moe, Mrs. Becker, Mr. Bettenhausen, Mrs. Robinson and no nays. Mrs. Thatcher was absent for the closed executive session meeting of January 20, 2021.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION:

At 8:58 p.m. President Robinson asked for a motion for the Board to return to open session and Mr. Uthe made a motion to return to open session and Mrs. Moe seconded the motion and a voice call vote was taken and the following members answered aye (6): Mrs. Robinson, Mr. Uthe, Mrs. Moe, Mrs. Becker, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Bettenhausen and no nays.

ADJOURNMENT:

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Tara Robinson, President



Cathy Cuculich, Reporter