

PENN

BOARD REPORT

CAMBRIA

Volume 43 No. 10 April 2022

This report summarizes the actions taken by the Penn Cambria Board of Education at its regular meeting, April 19, 2022. Routine business, such as approval of minutes, treasurer’s report, payment of bills, and financial reports was accomplished. The Board also took the following actions:

- I. ANNOUNCEMENT – Mr. George Pyo, Board President, announced that Penn Cambria School District has been recorded as participating in the PSBA Principles for Governance and Leadership. Mr. Pyo highlighted policy 011 that was approved at last month’s Board of Directors meeting and shared the banner of commitment that has been individually signed by each Board member.
- II. HEARING OF VISITORS – There were no questions, concerns, comments, related to school business.
- III. SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT
Congratulations to the following Penn Cambria students who placed 2nd at the Skills USA State Competition: Xavier Hutsky - Electrical Construction Technology, David Novotny - Technical Drafting, and Gavin Weakland - Collision Repair Technology.

Congratulations to the following Forensics Regional Champions:

- 1st place: Haley Gray - Dramatic Interp., Addyson Ehredt - Oratorical Declamation, and Julia Gil - Persuasive
- 2nd place: Andre Marinak - Commentary and Caleb Hunt - Informative
- 3rd place: Joseph Hite - Extemporaneous, Camilla Wu - Persuasive, and Sydney Greene - Prose

- IV. Approved the Superintendent’s recommendations as follows:

A. PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Accept Resignations

- Nicholas DelPidio, Cresson, High School Custodian, effective March 14, 2022
- Jennifer Seymour, Lilly, Middle School Food Service Worker, effective April 14, 2022

Remove Substitutes

- April Rose, Loretto, Substitute Nurse, effective March 15, 2022
- Alexandra Fleming, Patton, Substitute Teacher, effective May 2, 2022

Approve Appointment

- Amy Walters, Cresson, Volunteer Junior High Girls Basketball Coach, effective immediately

Approve additional Non-Public Title 1 Summer School and Extra Duty Substitute Teachers, pending documentation

- Amanda Zaliznock, Cresson
- Kimberly Rieg, Ashville

Approve McIlwain School Bus Lines, Inc. Drivers

- Richard Lynch, Ashville
- Tammy Coke, Ashville

B. SET GRADUATION LOCATION, DATE, AND TIME

Graduation will be held at the Maurice Stokes Athletic Center/DeGol Arena on the campus of Saint Francis University on Saturday, June 4th at 1:00 PM.

C. APPROVE THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL CALENDAR

- V. Approved the second reading and adoption of the following policies:
111: Lesson Plans
218.1: Weapons
903: Public Participation in Board Meetings
- VI. Determined that the Superintendent, pursuant to Act 141 of the Pennsylvania School Code enacted in 2012, has successfully achieved the mutually agreed upon goals in his contract for the 2021-2022 school year.
- VII. Approved the 2022-2023 IU08 General Fund Budget, including a total contribution of \$173,000 from 35 participating school districts; Penn Cambria's share estimate at \$4,909.89.
- VIII. Approved Penn Cambria School District participation with the Appalachia Intermediate Unit 08 to provide emergency substitute services to the Penn Cambria School District for a fee of \$500 for the 2022-2023 school year.
- IX. Authorized Altoona Area School District's ELECT Program to apply for and expend funds on behalf of the Penn Cambria School District through the AASD ELECT Consortium, to operate the ELECT program and activities for eligible students through 2023.
- X. Approved Ms. Holly Smith, 7 qualified students, and 2 chaperones to attend the National Forensics Competition in Washington, DC on May 26, 2022.
- XI. Approved Jennifer Erculiani and D.J. Gray as volunteer chaperones to accompany qualifying students to the 2022 National Forensics Competition.
- XII. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS
First reading of new or revised board policies
314: Physical Examination
317.1: Educator Misconduct
331: Job Related Expenses
805.2: School Security Personnel
832: Educational Equity
- XIII. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT
Mr. Joseph Smorto, Elementary Principal, highlighted the Trauma-Skilled Schools Model piloted at the intermediate school this year. "Trauma-Skilled Schools Model was created by the National Dropout Prevention Center and is a 5-step process that starts with training all school staff members on the foundations of trauma, then introduces building resiliency, skill acquisition, assessment, and implementation, and then maintenance. Our Trauma-Skilled Schools steering team includes Mrs. Black, Mrs. Kuncelman, Mrs. Madison, Mrs. Mignogna, and Mr. Smearman.
- So, what is trauma? Trauma can be defined as the result of constant stressors and emotionally painful experiences. Trauma can affect anyone. What may cause trauma to one person, may or may not be traumatic to another. According to a study conducted by Finkelhor et al., over two thirds of children in the study experienced or witnessed at least one incident of violence. Other than violence, there are many other more common adverse conditions that may cause trauma such as, homelessness, loss of a loved one, fire, automobile accident, and poverty.

It is imperative that we address trauma because we have students in our schools that have stressors like these. Students and staff who are experiencing trauma can often go unnoticed and behaviors can manifest that are not easily recognized. This is why the Trauma-Skilled Schools Model is beneficial because it is not a program to solely target students who are experiencing trauma, but it is rather a whole-school model to integrate these initiatives and practices for all students, as well as staff members.

So how are we implementing this model? This year at the intermediate school we really focused on building a culture that fosters belonging, which is a component of resiliency in the Trauma-Skilled Schools Model. According to this model, belonging is a sense of acceptance, safety, and membership within the school. This year, I addressed the staff and named belonging as the theme at the elementary schools. We first started with posting positive messages and bulletin boards all connecting to the theme of belonging. The great thing about the Trauma-Skilled Schools Model is that every staff member goes through the same training. They hear the same language and experience the same message. Therefore, teachers and staff can all contribute to the initiatives--and are encouraged to. For example, one of our teachers, Mrs. Gibbons, created affirmation mirrors to hang up around the school. There are positive messages around the mirrors that the students can read and be reminded of when they pass them. Mrs. Madison created a "get to know our staff" game during our lunch periods.

Every elementary school participates in daily challenges included in the morning announcements. Some examples of our daily challenges are "Play with someone new at recess" and "Invite someone playing alone to join your game". Our elementary newsletters contain featured staff members, and we created a Panther Den, where students can submit pictures of accomplishments that they are proud of outside of school. These are just some ways our staff have contributed to building this culture that fosters belonging.

As you heard tonight and I'm sure you already know, life stressors affect everyone. The Trauma-Skilled Schools Model promotes staff members to be intentional and purposeful with practices in hopes that these life stressors can be more manageable. This takes teamwork. I will say that our elementary staff members have accepted this challenge and all work as a team to promote more of a positive culture for learning."

Mr. Smorto provided a handout of some purposeful practices the Trauma Skilled Team distributed to all staff members to use throughout the day.