February 17, 2026
Board Meeting
MINUTES

PHOENIXVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT
Phoenixville, PA 19460

SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, February 17, 2026
Immediately following Committee Meetings
Phoenixville Area School District
Administration Office Board Room
(TV Channel 28 and www.pasd.com)

MINUTES

OPENING
Mr. Scott Overland, Board President, Presiding called the February 17, 2026, Board Meeting to Order at 6:50 PM. The meeting was held in the Administration Office Board Room and broadcast on the website and local cable Channel 28.

ROLL CALL
Ms. Cameron called the Roll of the Board.

BOARD MEMBER'S PRESENT
Dr. Stephanie Allen-Savage
Mr. Scott Overland (President)
Mrs. Susan Turner (Vice President)
Dr. Sean Halloran
Mr. Graham Perry
Ms. Brittany Remington
Mr. Frank Venezia
Ms. Victoria Walker
Mr. Dan Wiser
Nine Board members present.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT
Mrs. Melissa McTiernan, Superintendent
Dr. Jessica Kilmetz, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Jeremy Melber, Chief Financial Officer
Mrs. Sylvia Rockwood, Director of Human Resources
Dr. Nicole McClure, Director of Communications
Dr. Kate Pacitto, Executive Director of Curriculum & Specialized Programs
Dr. Frank Garritano, Executive Director of Schools
Mr. Matt Oberecker, Director of Technology
Mr. Brandon Hallman, Director of Facilities
Mr. Kyle Worrell, Principal Hares Hill Elementary School

OTHERS PRESENT
Ms. Lenore Cameron, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Cabinet / Board Secretary
Phantom TV Crew

President Overland announced the meetings that took place prior to this evening's meeting, as well as those scheduled for the coming weeks. At the conclusion of the meeting, the board will adjourn to an Executive Session regarding Legal and Personnel.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEETINGS

Monday, February 2, 2026

- Buildings and Grounds/ Finance/Personnel- 5:30 PM
- Executive session- Safety/Security and Legal (5:44 PM to 6:40 PM)
- Board meeting- Immediately following executive session but not before 6:30 PM

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

- Policy/Curriculum- 5:30 PM
- Executive session- Legal and Personnel

UPCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS

Monday, March 9, 2026

- B&G and Finance/Personnel- 5:30 PM
- Executive session- Labor
- Board meeting- immediately following committee meetings but not earlier than 6:30 PM

STUDENT BOARD REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

Not present

PRESENTATION

Hares Hill Elementary School – Mr. Kyle Worrell, Principal

Mr. Worrell welcomed five 6th-grade students who shared updates on the new traditions and community-building activities established during the first year at Hares Hill Elementary School.

- **Anna Finley** described the school's winter break celebration, including classroom festivities and a schoolwide bingo event that created a memorable moment of school spirit.
- **Colin Finley** explained the "Carrot Cash" Positive Behavior program, where students earn rewards for meeting school expectations (Helpful, Optimistic, Prepared, Safe). Incentives include lunch privileges and opportunities such as "Principal for a Day." Colin presented each Board member with Carrot Cash in appreciation for their support.
- **Fatima De Leon Ramirez** spoke about the benefits of having 6th grade in the elementary setting, noting that access to cubbies/lockers, clubs, Student Council, and Safety Patrol roles help students build independence and prepare for middle school.
- **Shaniyah McCoy** discussed Mr. Worrell's monthly classroom meetings held in the learning commons. These sessions foster positive school culture through reflection on "glows and grows," discussions about character traits (leadership, respect, gratitude), and celebration of peers through the Student of the Month program.
- **Ryan Cunampio** highlighted the new HSA-sponsored Harvest Festival, which brought together students, families, and staff for food trucks, games, and community activities. The school hopes to make this event an annual tradition.

Students also shared excitement for the upcoming "Hop-A-Thon" event.
The Board and administration thanked the students for their outstanding presentation and their contributions to building new traditions at Hares Hill Elementary School.

2026-2027 Budget - Dr. Jeremy Melber (Budget presentation attached)

- **Preliminary 2026–2027 Budget Update**

Preliminary Budget Overview

Dr. Melber presented an update on the 2026–2027 preliminary budget ahead of the March 2nd Facilities Town Hall.
He noted that local revenue projections remain steady with no major changes since last month's presentation.

REVENUES

Following the Governor's proposed budget, the district received **lower-than-expected increases** in key state subsidies:

- **Basic Education Funding:** projected +$97,000, now +$68,000.
- **Special Education Funding:** projected +$34,000, now a **$22,000 decrease**, largely due to a decline in **Average Daily Membership (ADM)**.

The district will see a **$50,000 increase** in the *Ready to Learn* grant.

Federal revenues remain unchanged.
Total projected revenues: $121,250,245.

EXPENDITURES
Dr. Melber reviewed major expenditure drivers:

- **Staffing & Personnel**
  Final staffing plan includes **three (3) elementary special education teachers**, a **school psychologist**, a **district culture & climate advisor**, a **community liaison**, and a **high school job coach**.
  - Total salary cost: **$371,000**
  - Total benefits: **$180,499**
  - **Total: $551,499**

  Two long-term substitute positions will not continue next year, resulting in a budget-neutral shift to support the new special education positions.

Other Expenditure Pressures

- **Health insurance +4%:** $314,519
- **PSERS:** $444,340 (district share after state reimbursement)
- **Transportation:** $168,217 (fuel bids opening; routes still being finalized)
- **Substitutes:** $204,057 (continued shortage and higher fill-rate needs)
- **CC Vo-Tech tuition:** $285,693 based on three-year ADM trends.
- **Operations:** Higher electricity usage/rates (+$50,000) and the addition of **$100,000 annual rental** for fieldhouse bathrooms added after last year's budget.
- **Schools & Security:** Increase reflects consolidation of district professional development into this budget line and increased security contract costs.
- **Business Office:** Higher legal expenditures (RTK, special education matters) and property/casualty insurance.
- **Public Relations:** $50,000 for translators moved from Special Education.
- **Special Education Budget Note**

The apparent decrease is due to reallocations of services and staffing—not reductions in student support.
Outplacement costs declined as 26% of students graduated or aged out, allowing reinvestment into in-house staffing.

- **Charter School Costs**
  Charter and cyber tuition formula changes saved the district **$159,000**.
  Enrollment decreased from 261 to 247 students, resulting in an overall **$825,000 reduction** in charter school spending.

BUDGET SUMMARY
Total Expenditures: $122,908,733

Preliminary Deficit: ($1,658,488)
A **2.05% tax increase** (0.7191 mills) would generate $1,658,488 to close the deficit.
Impact on median assessed home ($128,700): **$92.55/year**.

- **Facilities Planning Impact**
  If the district moves forward with Option C of the facilities plan, the district will need **$1,168,808/year for four years**, equal to ~5.5% additional tax impact.
  A 3.5% Act 1 Index increase would generate $2,831,769—$1.17M more than the 2.05% scenario.
  For median assessed homes, a 3.5% increase equals **$158/year**.

BOARD DISCUSSION

- The impact of repeated tax increases on families facing inflation, fixed incomes, rising utility costs, and food insecurity.
- Consideration of senior/low-income tax offset programs.
- Long-term pressure from a declining Act 1 Index.

- Need for community feedback prior to selecting a facilities option.

DISCUSSION OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS & FUTURE VOTING ITEMS
President Overland opened the floor for reports from the Committee Chairs.

PERSONNEL AND FINANCE – Personnel & Finance Committee Chair Mr. Frank Venezia
Mr. Venezia reported on the Personnel and Finance Committee items scheduled for approval on this evening's consent agenda.

- Personnel Report

He noted that the Personnel Report for February 17, 2026, includes standard personnel actions such as retirements, appointments, unpaid leaves of absence, and volunteer approvals. Mr. Venezia highlighted several long-serving retirees, noting the significant contributions of:

- Mr. Ken Gibson, long-time district administrator
- Ms. Lisa Snaith, over 37 years of service
- Ms. Tammy Kurtz, over 37 years of service
- Mr. Robinson, Schuylkill custodian
- Ms. Walker-Shaw

Board members expressed appreciation for the dedication of these employees and extended best wishes for their retirements. Additional items include new support staff appointments, extra-duty/extra-pay approvals, and routine unpaid leaves of absence.

- Finance Items

Finance items recommended for approval include:

1. Disbursement of School District Funds – December 2025
2. Receipt of District Financial Reports – December 2025

Mr. Venezia noted that all items listed above appear on the consent agenda for action later this evening.

CURRICULUM – Curriculum Committee Chair Dr. Stephanie Allen-Savage
Dr. Allen-Savage reviewed the curriculum items discussed during the meeting and noted that these items are scheduled for approval on March **9, 2026,** consent agenda.

Items Reviewed for March Approval

- **Book Disposal**
  The Board reviewed the proposed disposal of outdated and unusable instructional materials from the **Schuylkill Elementary Library**, the **District Administration Office**, and the **PAMS Library**.
- **Overnight Trips / Transportation Requests**
  Two student overnight experiences were discussed and will be brought forward for approval in March:
    - **Boys' and Girls' Swimming – State Championships** at Bucknell University
    - **Junior Classical League Convention** at Penn State University
- **Chapter 339 Counseling Plan**
  The updated Chapter 339 Plan, including a detailed presentation and discussion of district counseling services, will also appear for approval on March 9.

Dr. Allen-Savage clarified that these items were reviewed during this meeting but will **not** be voted on until the March consent agenda.

POLICY COMMITTEE, Dr. Sean Halloran – Policy Committee Chair
The Policy Committee met to review a comprehensive list of updated policies, several of which are scheduled for approval at the March 9, 2026, Board Meeting. Dr. Kilmetz provided an overview of each policy revision, noting that many updates reflect changes to state law, clarification from PSBA, or reorganization for clarity and consistency.

Policy 105.2 – Exemption from Instruction

Revisions incorporate recent case law regarding “sincerely held beliefs” and specify the circumstances under which students may request exemptions from specific lessons or topics.
Key updates include:

- Students **18 years and older** may independently submit exemption requests.
- Exemptions apply to **specific lessons**, not entire core courses.
- Examples include dissection or similar activities where alternate assignments may be appropriate.

Policies 122 & 122.1 – Extracurricular Activities / Noncurricular Student Groups
These policies were recently updated in full; PSBA has now issued **minor clarifying edits**.
Revisions focus on:

- Clearer language and corrected typographical issues.
- Ensuring consistency in definitions, reporting expectations, and supervisory procedures.
- No substantive programmatic changes.

Policy 204 – Attendance
Updated to reflect the December changes to PA School Code concerning habitual truancy.
Key provisions:

- **Habitually truant students may not transfer to a cyber charter school mid-year.**
- All district notifications have been updated accordingly.
- New language outlines resources and supports available to families to meet compulsory attendance requirements.

Policy 218.1 – Weapons
Revisions provide clearer and more streamlined definitions of weapons in accordance with PSBA guidance and current regulations.
Important clarifications:

- **Replica weapons** are treated the same as actual weapons.
- “Look-alike” language formerly struck from one section has been **relocated under the “Authority” section** of the policy.
- Updated notification and reporting requirements are included.

Policies 610 & 611 – Purchases Subject to Bid/Quotation & Purchases Budgeted
Both policies were updated to reflect the **new competitive bid and price-quotation thresholds**, which are revised annually at the start of the calendar year.
These updates bring district policy into alignment with current state requirements.

Policies 805, 805.1 & 805.2 – Emergency Preparedness, Relations with Law Enforcement, and School Security Personnel
These policies were presented together due to their alignment with school safety and security requirements.

- **Policy 805 – Emergency Preparedness**
  Adds the updated **Safe2Say** procedures attachment already reviewed under a prior policy.
- **Policy 805.1 – Relations with Law Enforcement Agencies**
  Clarifies coordination procedures between the district, law enforcement, and the **Threat Assessment Team**, consistent with MOUs currently under review.
- **Policy 805.2 – School Safety and Security Coordinator**
  Updates training and responsibility requirements in accordance with School Code changes.

Committee Clarifications:

- A Board member asked whether new policy language requiring more frequent meetings with school leadership reflects current practice; Dr. Kilmetz confirmed these meetings **already occur regularly** under Dr. Garritano’s leadership.
- Regarding annual feedback on safety training: contracted security guards **are included**, and administration already solicits their input (confirmed by Dr. Garritano).

Policy 816 – District Social Media

Updated to clarify expectations for district social media use, including examples of acceptable and prohibited conduct (not exhaustive).
Discussion Points:

- **Legal Review:** PSBA's legal review covers this update; solicitor review can be added at Board request.
- **Approval of New Accounts:** The policy requires Board approval only for the creation of **new district-run accounts**. Current building, district, athletics, and club-managed accounts are unaffected.
- Board members emphasized the value of periodic solicitor review to ensure wording does not introduce legal risk.
- Administration reminded the Board that procedures are districtwide; buildings do not maintain separate policies.

Policy 224 – School Wellness (Approval Item)
Dr. Kilmetz summarized changes recommended by the District Wellness Committee, chaired by Ms. Rockwood.
Updates reflect:

- Expanded wellness reporting for students, staff, and community.
- Added requirements such as dental and health-related reporting, aligned with updated timelines.
- A shift toward semi-annual reporting rather than annual updates.
- Committee discussion emphasized existing structured movement and "brain break" practices within classrooms.
- Ms. Rockwood has expanded committee membership and will provide future updates on ongoing wellness initiatives.

Board Meeting Minutes February 2, 2026, Approval
President Overland noted the minutes from the February 2, 2026, board meeting is scheduled for approval later this evening.

BOARD REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS
PCEF (Phoenixville Community Education Foundation) – Dr. Sean Halloran, Board Representative
Dr. Halloran reported that the Phoenixville Community Education Foundation (PCEF) met on February 9. There were no PASD staff presentations at this meeting; however, the PCEF Board reviewed several small-scale funding requests. Thoughtful discussion took place, and all requests were ultimately approved in support of PASD students and programs.

Dr. Halloran also noted that PCEF's major annual fundraiser, the Phantom Fundraiser, is already sold out, and the committee is working actively to prepare for the event.

CHESTER COUNTY INTERMEDIATE UNIT – Graham Perry, Board Representative
Chester County Intermediate Unit (Mr. Perry)
Mr. Perry, CCIU Board Representative, reported that the CCIU Board will meet tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE – Dan Wiser, Board Representative
Legislative Update (Mr. Wiser)
Mr. Wiser provided an update from the Legislative Committee. He shared that the General Assembly held additional session days on February 3, 4, and 5, with key topics including the Governor's proposed budget and anticipated statewide focus on school facility and infrastructure funding.

He noted that the House Education Committee recently passed House Bill 2152, legislation related to delaying secondary school start times. The committee will continue monitoring the bill's progress.

Mr. Wiser also reminded the Board of two upcoming advocacy events:

- **Education Day of Advocacy** in Harrisburg – **May 4**
- **Legislative Breakfast** – **May 8**, 8:30–11:00 AM

Both events offer opportunities for engagement with state legislators. He encouraged Board members to attend, noting that the Legislative Breakfast typically includes participation from local state representatives and congressional leaders.

The Legislative Committee's next meeting is scheduled for February 25.

PHOENIXVILLE PUBLIC LIBRARY – Brittany Remington, Board Representative

Phoenixville Public Library (Ms. Remington)

Ms. Remington reported that the Phoenixville Public Library Board met on February 2. The primary update concerned the library's passport processing program. The library has not received a cease-and-desist letter, but it has been asked to supply additional information and is awaiting further guidance. As a precaution, the Library Board has begun budget planning and contingency discussions should the passport program be discontinued, as it represents a meaningful revenue source.

The Board also shared that exterior painting and masonry work are scheduled to begin in the spring (March–May), and interior painting has either begun or is already planned.

Finally, the Library will soon be posting openings for the Board of Trustees.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT – Mrs. Melissa McTiernan, Superintendent

Superintendent's Report (Mrs. McTiernan)

Mrs. McTiernan provided several updates and recognitions as part of the Superintendent's Report.

- **District Town Hall – March 2**
  She reminded the community of the upcoming **District Town Hall** on **March 2 at 6:30 p.m. in the High School Auditorium**, where the administration will present an overview of the proposed high school facility updates and the projected impact on the district budget in future years. All community members are encouraged to attend, ask questions, and share feedback.
- **Student Recognitions**
  - **Angie Marroquin**
    Angie was selected as the recipient of the Next Generation Impact Award from the Phoenixville Chamber of Commerce, recognizing her volunteer work with Crescendo. She will be honored at the Chamber's Annual Awards Dinner on March 18.

    The award was created by Kits Closet and the Phoenixville Chamber of Commerce to recognize K–12 students who have made a meaningful contribution to the community.
  - **Emerson Cairns**
    Emerson was nominated and selected for the Vista - Superstars Under 40 – 2026. She is one of 39 Chester County professionals receiving the honor and the only high school student to be recognized this year.

    Mrs. McTiernan extended congratulations to Emerson and acknowledged the ongoing communication and support from her family.

A Board member added that Kits Closet continues to expand its year-round services, supporting students especially during prom season by providing formalwear and accessories.

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT SECTION on any Consent Agenda Item

President Overland opened the floor for comment on any consent agenda item.
No public comment.

VOTING ITEMS under CONSENT AGENDA

President Overland listed the following items for board approval under the consent agenda and requested a motion to approve.

- ***Personnel Report***
  1. February 17, 2026

- ***Buildings & Grounds***
  1. Buildings & Grounds - Approval of the General Contractor Change Order GC-028 = Credit ($273,919.05)
  2. Buildings & Grounds - Approval of the Phoenixville Public Library Maintenance Agreement 2026-2029

- ***Finance***
  3. Disbursement of School District Funds – December 2025
  4. Receipt of District Financial Reports – December 2025

- ***Other Approvals:***
  5. Approval of Minutes of February 2, 2026, Board Meeting

President Overland requested a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was made by Mrs. Turner with Ms. Remington seconding.

Ms. Cameron conducted a roll call vote on the motion.
Dr. Stephanie Allen-Savage - YES
Dr. Sean Halloran - YES
Mr. Graham Perry - YES
Ms. Brittany Remington - YES
Mrs. Susan Turner - YES
Mr. Frank Venezia - YES
Ms. Victoria Walker - YES
Mr. Dan Wiser - YES
Mr. Scott Overland - YES

MOTION PASSES 9 – 0

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT SECTION on any School Subject
No public comment.

ADJOURNMENT
President Overland announced that the next scheduled public meetings include the Buildings & Grounds and Finance/Personnel committee meetings as well as the Board Meeting on March 9th beginning at 5:30 PM. The meeting was adjourned at 7:42 PM for the executive session on Legal and Personnel.

The Minutes of February 17, 2026, Board Meeting are scheduled to be approved at the board meeting on March 9, 2026, Board Meeting. Minutes for February 17, 2026, were prepared by Ms. Lenore Cameron, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent & Cabinet/Board Secretary.

______________________________ ____________________
Lenore Cameron, Board Secretary Date