



**MEETING OF BOARD OF EDUCATION
February 24, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

Board of Education Goal:

Montville graduates will possess the skills and dispositions to navigate complex tasks. Our graduates are communicators, information consumers, problem solvers, and independent learners. They exhibit empathy, perseverance, inclusivity and self-awareness.

Library Media Center

Item 1. Call to order/ Pledge of Allegiance / Moment of Silence – 6:00 P.M.

Board Chair Wills Pike called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

Board members attending were: Bonnie Bacon, Timothy Shanahan, Tina Grove, Donna Funk, Bob Mitchell, Carol Burgess and Lisa Terry. Erika Striebel was absent.

Also participating were: Superintendent of Schools Dianne Vumback, Assistant Superintendent Andrea Flynn, Recording Secretary Pamela Rodgers, Business Manager Kathy Lamoureux, Director of Facilities Willie Quinones, Director of Technology Nic Savoie, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent Jennifer Lemay, Administrators Rob Alves, Ken Daniewicz, Greg Gwudz, Jessica Lilienthal, David Gollsneider, William Klinefelter, Theresa Gouveia, Jill Mazzalupo and Liz Dumond.

Item 2. Alterations to the agenda

None

Item 3. Citizens' Comments (regarding agenda items only)

MHS Student - Ethan LaCross (grade 11) – Voiced the collective concerns of the student and staff population regarding the newly drafted district-wide prohibition of cell phones.

Adam Gallagher (grade 12) – Agreed with Ethan LaCross concerns of the prohibition of cell phones and explained why using phones for the last five minutes would not interfere with instructional time in the classrooms.

Item 4. Letters and Communications

Wills: The Board received communication from six people and will address when 7a Policy 5131.81 Electronic Devices is discussed; all letters can be found in Board Materials on the district site. Letters received from: MHS Department Heads: Kelly Brooks, Vicky Clifford, Hollyann Moriarty, Ted Richmond; students: Eric Richmond and Jade Wynn

Item 5 Presentations

a. Pre -School

Superintendent – Dianne Vumback, Ed.D.: Discussed current and future Pre School Enrollment. Presented three options which included the times of instruction, cost of Teachers and busing. Recommended option three but would be considerate of budget increase.

The proposed options can be found on the school's website under "Board of Education" and then in the drop down "Agendas & Minutes".

b. Instructional Coaches:

Assistant Superintendent- Andrea Flynn: Explained the benefits of Instructional Coaches.

This presentation can be found on the school's website under "Board of Education" and then in the drop down "Agendas & Minutes".

c. 2025-2026 Budget Presentation:

Superintendent – Dianne Vumback, Ed.D : Presented the proposed Budget for fiscal year 2025-2026. Explained Board of Education strategies, Budget Code Explanations, Budget Summaries, 2025-26 Operating Budget.

*Maintaining Current Services and Meeting IEP Requirements - \$47,446.502.
Represents an increase of \$2,032,825 or 4.49% above FY2025 Budget.*

Item 6. Approval of the Consent Calendar

Motion: To approve the consent calendar as presented.

Moved by: Tim Shanahan
Seconded by: Bob Mitchell
Vote: Carried (8-0)

Item 7. Old Business

a. Continued discussion: Policy 5131.81 Electronic Devices

Letters were received and read from: MHS Department Heads: Kelly Brooks, Hollyann Moriarty, Ted Richmond; students Eric Richmond and Sabria Wynn, A letter was received from Department Head Vicky Clifford- which was not read at the meeting; all of these letters are available on the district Board page under agendas and minutes.

Dr. Tina Grove concerning Policy – Policy committee have been researching data and meeting for several months. The policy committee voted on a no cell phone use for the last 5 minutes of class. No decisions have been made. Recommended a form be completed by staff for permission to use cell phones in class, 24 hours in advance of the use.

Wills – Didn't know the extent of how these cell phones were being used in the classrooms, this information should of been brought to our attention months ago, it frustrates me. The expectation that students have to bring their phones bothers me. I think the board should be supplying this technology.

Principal Alves: This information was presented at a Board meeting in the fall, a lot of these points were brought up. The technology we have in this building do not keep up with the technology these cell phones offer. The students have their phones anyway and enhances the learning experience.

Donna Funk: Do we provide the calculators students need? Adam Gallagher: We do receive these calculators

Carol Burgess: I am struck with how much utility is available to these students through their phones.

Tim: Technology changes daily, it is hard to come up with, I see where teachers can use their discretion, utilize the pouches.

Donna: Wondering how many issues you have with students misusing them.

Rob Alves: The big issues most often happen outside of the building, parents have been very cooperative

Bonnie: I want to thank Ethan and Adam for their letters. I am disappointed that we don't have the technology on our computers that you have on your cell phones. Consider looking into technology so we have a tool that students can use.

Lisa: So it sounds like laptops are better than Chromebooks, as far as putting an app on, is this nearest to cellphones? Nic: Yes and no, we have to follow privacy laws for our students. We were in these meetings for about four months, I give a lot of credit to Tina because she has done a lot of work on this. We did not know about the instances of academic use, maybe Rob touched on that. My opinion is you can have down time when you are between classes or at lunch. I understand that at times that they are needed for academics, it does seem that it is a small segment of kids, the AP kids and that is fine. And you know one segment I have not heard from? It's parents. Not one parent has called me, not one parent has come to the meeting, not one parent has said, it's a bad idea, and parents mean a lot to me in this district and in this community. So I would still like to see us not have them in the classroom.

Bob: I have spoken to my friends in surrounding areas. We pay the admin the big bucks to give us this information, these teachers who wrote letters are top tier teachers, we can trust them to make up their mind on what they want to happen. It is simple enough for them to ask permission from Rob. Allow the discretion of the people we are paying to do their job.

Lisa: This was not meant to sit on the agenda for another month, are we voting tonight.

Wills: No and the reason we are not is because these communications came to us.

Lisa: These communications came to us

Wills: I want to hear if any administrators want to Speak

Ken D: Why the 48 hours, I trust the teachers in our building and if they cannot be trusted it is our job to have those conversations:

Greg: This misuse of cell phones is a problem in our building. There is a clear delineation in how the HS uses them appropriately. Our teachers do not need cell phones for academic purposes. What Rob and the staff said is really appropriate and really well said.

Item 8. Committee and Liaison reports:

- a. Policy – Dr. Grove – Meeting this week to update policies.*
- b. Montville Education Foundation – Carol Burgess – nothing to report*
- c. LEARN- Bob Mitchell-nothing to report*
- d. Montville Youth Services Bureau- Tim Shanahan, no meeting held, next meeting March 13th..*
- e. Student Board Representatives –*

Adam Gallagher - *Two weeks ago we had our winter spirit week, and capped it off with a pep rally which resulted in the senior class winning. As the tennis season comes up, I just have to say again we're so appreciative of the work put towards the courts and we are very eager to start the season. For our February project, NHS made valentines and delivered them to senior citizens. Discussed thoughts and feelings on cell phones previously.*

Tiana Bamber *We're into the second semester of the school year and things have been going well for MHS so far. For our athletics department, Girl's Indoor track won the ECC championship and received a plaque and will receive a banner in the gymnasium. For track the girls have officially gone back to back with winning indoor ECCs last winter and ECCs for Outdoor. This spring season of Outdoor is looking very promising for the girls. The boys and girls basketball teams have been working extremely hard as well with our boys now playing against Griswold for the conference title at Mohegan Sun (Wednesday). Wrestling has also had a great season with two athletes winning, one in first place and one in second place, at the Class M championships. Finally, our cheer team has ALSO won the division 3 title at the ECC championships! MHS has some seriously incredible talent.*

Some more fun things going on for MHS this semester are in the choir department. More specifically there will be a combined concert/workshop with TYL where the high school choir members will learn songs that the middle school choir are performing and once we all get together we will go into little breakout sessions and work on specific parts of the song so that when we all come together at the end after everything is nice and cleaned up, we can perform !! I think it'll be a great experience working with the middle schoolers because we each have very different ways of learning and techniques so it will be thrilling to see how we can collaborate.

f. Principals' Report

OAK -Jill Mazzalupo: *Student and Staff of the Elementary Schools are turning the corner on coming out of sicknesses.*

PAL-David Gollsneider: *Mohegan Tribe did presentation for the students, students engaged. Have an upcoming field trip.*

TYL- Greg Gwudz: *Chorus performed National Anthem at Wolfpack game and we have an upcoming 7th grade dance. MEF awarded best buddies' grant*

MHS – Rob Alves: Athletics are thriving. Athletics Booster have purchased 40 tickets for free admission to Boys Basketball game at Mohegan Sun at 4:00 on Wednesday. Ken and I are ½ way on teacher evaluations.

Item 9. Information Items

Next scheduled meeting March 4, 2025

Item 10. Report on District Operating Plan

- a. Report from the Assistant Superintendent – Andrea Flynn

We once again had a robust professional development day on January 30. Some of the highlights were that Tyl conducted their first choice PD called Tyl Academy which allowed teachers to choose sessions that best supported their individual learning needs. These sessions were run by a variety of staff members which further supports our vision of building capacity and learning from each other.

At the elementary level teachers continued engaging in Purposeful Play with Karen Gray and we also used the expertise of our math coaches to work with grades 1-5 as to how to incorporate the tenets of Purposeful Play in their classrooms as a way to support executive functioning.

- b. Report from the Superintendent – Dianne Vumback, Ed.D.

Shared student demographics: 58% White, 17% Hispanic or Latino, 12% 2 or more races, 6% Asian, 4.60 Black or African American, .7 American Indian, 4.80% ML Learners, 48% Free or Reduced Lunch, 21.4% Qualify for Special Education

Item 11. Citizens' comments

Art and Band Students. *The teachers had to purchase devices to take pictures of art work. We need to listen to YouTube in order to perform in the Rock band in the music class. Phones are also needed in photography. Not asking to purchases new devices but rather use our own devices.*

Kelly Brooks– *Leaving you with these final thoughts concerning cell phone policy. BOE refuses to include input from students, teachers or parents in their conversations on cell phones. The way this has been handled is full of double standards. Lack of problem-solving abilities. What message are we sending to students and communities? Are we really proud of our schools or are we proud of ourselves?*

*Jenny Natale (MEA President) – Clarifying that one of the letters received **was** from a parent*

Item 12. Board Member Remarks

Tina Grove–*We had (4) months of Public meetings, open to the public. Requesting not to cancel our regular meetings.*

Donna Funk – *Clarify that I remember very clearly, Mr. Alves speaking very clearly on all of the technology used in the classroom. Dianne did a Great job on the budget, thank you.*

Wills Pike –*Thank you for robust conservation. Great job on the Budget ,look forward to next meeting. Thank you for your comments.*

Lisa Terry: *We had four months of public meeting, open to the public, that is all that I will say to that. One other thing, I would like to request that we do not cancel regular meetings, we vote on those dates, Jen LeMay sends these dates out well in advance, we all have them and plan for them. To cancel a regular meeting because one or two things is not ready is not acceptable.*

Wills Pike: *That is easy*

Item 13. Future agenda items

Budget 2025-2026 - next meeting on March 4th.

Item 14: Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn

Moved by: Bob Mitchell
Seconded by: Tim Shanahan
Vote: Carried (8-0)

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by,

Wills Pike, Chair
Montville Board of Education

Bob Mitchell, Secretary
Montville Board of Education

Minutes Approved: _____