

JOHNSTOWN-MONROE LOCAL SCHOOLS

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Students share educational experiences for ‘Board of Education Appreciation Month’

Johnstown-Monroe students shared recent educational experiences and growth opportunities that have benefitted them with J-M Board of Education members on Jan. 9, 2023.

January is Board of Education Appreciation Month. In their recognition of the J-M Board, Johnstown Elementary School students thanked members for approving the Foundations reading curriculum.

Students demonstrated various aspects of the program and led board members in several reading exercises.

Many Johnstown Intermediate school students who are participating in the spring musical, *Mary Poppins*, presented the board with a banner signed by every student in the school.

Members of the Middle School student council discussed their recent efforts regarding breast cancer awareness and fundraising. Board members and administrators were presented with pink bracelets that were sold for \$3 each to raise funds to fight cancer.



Instructor Kevin Barnhard and JHS students address the Johnstown-Monroe Board of Education on Jan. 9, 2023.



JIS Principal Janet Smith and students present the Board of Education with a banner signed by all students.

[Click Here To See Video of Board Appreciation Highlights](#)

High School Social Studies Teacher Kevin Barnhard and several Johnstown High School students shared with the board lessons learned during their participation at December's Ohio Model United Nations program, held in Columbus.

Superintendent Dr. Philip Wagner told board members, "Sometimes, people don't really know what the Board of Education is involved with. You do a lot to create the conditions for our staff and students to be successful, and we wanted you to be able to see that all the way from the elementary to the high school."

Board President Tim Swauger said, "Our role is to provide the resources necessary for everyone that works in this district to succeed. Our role is to be fiscally responsible, while looking at what hurdles impede us from being excellent. Our job is to remove those hurdles. We're looking to the expertise of our superintendent and treasurer, talking to staff, finding out what those hurdles are, and removing those blockades to provide an excellent education. That's our role. Our jobs are a lot easier when you have excellent employees, and we do. We have an excellent administration and an excellent superintendent and treasurer. Looking at the future — that's our role."

Board Member Alan Benton said, "We also want to thank the parents, because without your support...we wouldn't be where we are today. There are so many people who volunteer and help our staff be successful. We want to thank the community, too, for supporting us."

Renewal funding issues to appear on May ballot

The Board of Education unanimously approved placement of two funding renewal issues on the May 2, 2023, ballot.

Two district tax levies currently in place are scheduled to expire over the next two calendar years. The first issue is a 1% income tax that generated \$4,911,644 during the 2021-22 school year and will expire on December 31, 2023. The other is an emergency levy set to expire on December 31, 2024; it generates \$2,200,000 annually.

As previously reported, the two levies provide approximately 30% of the district's current annual operating funding. "Obviously, it's a huge part of our operating budget," Treasurer Kim Pulley said.

Pulley and board members noted again that while media and community attention tend to focus on Intel and related development projects, as Pulley previously cautioned, "Intel will have an impact in the future, but that impact will not happen until the Intel plant opens, and that is believed to be sometime in 2025."

President Swauger stressed the board is committed to conservative and responsible management of finances and is determined not to engage in business funding based on Intel and other development prospects, but instead, upon the real tax revenues that will eventually

result from those developments. Swauger said, “We don’t want to bank on that money until it is actually here, and those jobs are created.”

It was stressed again, the two ballot issues are renewals and not new taxes. It was also stated the loss of 30% in operating funds from the two current issues being asked for voter renewal would prove catastrophic for the school district.

Board member Ruth Ann Booher said, “If these proposals on the ballot do not pass and we lose 30% of our budget, think about it: In your home, if you lose 30% of your budget? That’s devastating. Thirty percent is a lot of money.”

Booher also asked for school supporters to consider assisting in the coming ballot issue campaign.

Curriculum Instruction and Board Policy updates

The board is in the process of reviewing and updating district curriculum and policies.

Some policies are receiving more immediate attention resulting from time-sensitive and security needs. Some of those policies touched on include absences for religious instruction, due process rights of students, and school visitor policies.

Dr. Wagner also said there is increasing focus on developing and strengthening the district’s three pathways for graduating students which have been called the “Three E’s” and include post-high school “Enrollment” in a higher-learning establishment; trade education for “Employment”; or “Enlistment” in the U.S. Armed Forces.

In concert with curriculum reviews being conducted by curriculum committee members Amanda Davis and Anna Thomas, Dr. Wagner cited, an “immediate need” for an adopted K-12 math series to be brought forward by the committee this year for consideration by the board.

“I think there needs to be some study around that,” he said. To that end, Dr. Wagner also said there has been preliminary discussion with building administrators, and the process of a math series selection would likely involve staff engagement occurring sometime in March.

In other remarks, Dr. Wagner noted he had another recent meeting with Johnstown Mayor Donald Barnard.

“One of the things I think we need to think about is a compensation agreement with the city when businesses come in,” Wagner said. “If you don’t have that, you default to Ohio Revised Code but typically, there are better models. I think New Albany has a good model and I think we want to look at that.”

Board members congratulated the Big Red Band and its volunteers for a successful Florida trip and Disney performance, despite some complications from a historic holiday-season

snowstorm. Dr. Wagner said administrators and staff stayed in close contact to assure the safety of all involved and the clearance of school properties for returning students, staff, and volunteers.

He expressed the hope that with the passage of time, in terms of the weather, students will fondly regard the experience, “as an adventure.”

Board member Anne Thomas confirmed, “It *was* an adventure!” Thomas also thanked the community back home for its support and offered assistance.

2023 Leadership decisions made; committee assignments set

Prior to its regular meeting, the J-M Board of Education also held an organizational meeting. Members Tim Swauger and Amanda Davis were re-elected as president and vice president, respectively.

Committee assignments were also made, and two new committees formed: one for “Strategic Planning & Economic Development,” the other for “Communications.”

The committee assignments for 2023 are as follows:

Buildings, Grounds & Safety	Anne Thomas	Ruth Ann <u>Booher</u>
Communications	Ruth Ann <u>Booher</u>	Tim <u>Swauger</u>
Curriculum	Amanda Davis	Anne Thomas
Finance	Alan Benton	Ruth Ann <u>Booher</u>
Insurance	Anne Thomas	Ruth Ann <u>Booher</u>
Policy	Amanda Davis	Alan Benton
Technology	Alan Benton	Amanda Davis
Strategic Planning & Economic Development	Tim <u>Swauger</u>	Ruth Ann <u>Booher</u>
Legislative Liaison	Alan Benton	
Student Achievement Liaison	Amanda Davis	