

JOHNSTOWN-MONROE LOCAL SCHOOLS

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The Johnstown Monroe Board of Education took several notable actions at its March Regular Board Meeting, including adoption of a new K-12 math series.

The Board also was presented with a 5-year-forecast that, by law, could not factor in funds from two levies pending expiration set to appear for renewal on the May 2 ballot.

Johnstown-Monroe Board of Education approves new K-12 math series

Representatives of McGraw Hill attended virtually and in-person to field questions from Board Members regarding a new K-12 math series the Board approved unanimously on March 13, 2023.



Principal Derick Busenburg discusses math focus efforts underway at the high school.

Ahead of the vote, building principals outlined steps and initiatives being taken in each of their schools to identify students in need of further math assistance, including inviting them to attend math “boot camps,” or school-day intervention sessions being offered before and/or after school across all four school buildings.

Principals noted that in nearly all cases, the majority of families offered this assistance for their children embraced these additional instruction opportunities.

Following Monday night’s board approval, the District is expected to hit the ground running with a focus on the new series instruction being made a centerpiece of

Friday, March 17’s scheduled Professional Development Day.

Speaking of the newly adopted Math Series, Board President Tim Swauger said, “I appreciate all the work, and I’m really excited about where we’re going.”

Board member Amanda Davis agreed, noting, “We had a Curriculum Committee meeting with all of the administrators, and they were talking about the teachers being excited, and they themselves are excited. Unanimously, everyone is really looking forward to this and implementing (the series). I’m really excited next year to see how it all looks.”

State-required 5-year forecast indicates mounting deficits if levy renewals fail

District Treasurer Kim Pulley and Superintendent Dr. Philip H. Wagner presented the Board with a state-required 5-year forecast.

Also as required by state law, that five-year forecast had to be prepared presuming the failure of two, no-new-tax levy renewals scheduled to appear on the May 2 ballot.

Absent the revenues resulting from the two levies — combined funds which make up a significant portion of the District's operating monies — exponentially mounting deficits are indicated that would continue to cascade and require staff reductions, even as the district is facing increasing enrollment growth, Dr. Wagner said.

"We are negative in the year 2026," he said. "That means for the 2025-26 school year, we're negative almost a million dollars. Then, if you go out the following year, we're negative 14.7 million dollars."

Pulley said the District is also closely watching proposed state legislation titled, "House Bill 1," that would have the net effect of reducing Ohio school district tax revenues while simultaneously raising state property owners' tax rates.

Reminders were also made that while much attention is lavished on the Intel Chip development's location within the school district's boundaries, income tax revenues that could result from that project are still many years away, as the facility requires multi-years of construction time.

"It's a moving target," Treasurer Pulley cautioned. "It's very hard to forecast."

Board approves 'Residency and Attendance Services' agreement

Related to district enrollment and fiscal oversight of district resources, the Board of Education also unanimously approved an agreement with Licking Height Local Schools to immediately provide Johnstown-Monroe with residency and attendance services through June 30 of this year.

As discussed during February's regular BOE meeting, this residency officer will, as needed, ensure that enrolled students are indeed living within school district boundaries. This will be accomplished through a variety of means, including home visits.

A mechanism for providing anonymous tips regarding suspected residency violations is also in the works.

In February, Dr. Wagner cited a neighboring Licking County District that went through a similar exercise that revealed over a two-year period more than 300 students were living outside that school district's boundaries.

Board member Alan Benton said it's not only a space issue driving this residency enforcement tightening, but a matter of funding, as well. "If you have 300 students who are not supposed to be in your school district, you are funding the education for those 300 students."

In other business...

Board member Anne Thomas praised Johnstown Elementary's recent, "Family Reading Night." Built around a Dr. Seuss theme, the event attracted hundreds of families and featured guest readers, including elected city officials, school board members and representatives from Intel.

Dr. Wagner noted a factual information sheet regarding the two district renewal levies can now be found [on the District's Official Website](https://www.johnstown.k12.oh.us) at <https://www.johnstown.k12.oh.us>

In an update regarding the Brig. General Mile's estate — a matter involving the now six-decades-plus unsettled deed of local "Hometown Hero" Perry L. Miles, a celebrated war hero across two major international engagements, including the French frontline trenches of World War I, Dr. Wagner pointed to two new district-produced videos celebrating the life of Brig. Gen. Miles.



B.G. Perry L. Miles

"This is a man who passed away over sixty years ago and we're still talking about his deeds, but," he cautioned, "things are not looking positive in a legal direction right now... Everyone has been removed as a potential 'interested party' for now, except for the State Attorney General's Office and the trustee."

"On a more positive note," Dr. Wagner said that with the help of Board Member Ruth Ann Booher and others, the District is in the process of setting aside space within the Johnstown Intermediate School conference room to honor Perry L. Miles.

Member Booher said of Miles, "I think it's fascinating the more you learn about his life, and the more you see the relationship to Johnstown. I've been looking at it for many years, but I've also learned a great deal in the last year-and-a-half as I've tracked family members... We do have a hero in our midst..."

The Miles videos can be seen [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).