

MIFFLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

201 Eighth Street - Highland Park
Lewistown, Pennsylvania 17044

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Vance S. Varner, Superintendent
Paul J. Maidens Chief Operations Officer Kevin J. O'Donnell, Jr., Chief Academic Officer
Melinda K. Kenepp, Chief Financial Officer

Local Advisory Council
Federal Programs-Mifflin County School District
Thursday, November 4, 2021
11:30 am
Zoom

Minutes

In attendance: David Boyer, Aleta Kammerer, Martha Leister, Cindi Marsh, Frank Miller, Kevin O'Donnell, Michelle Siruc, Vance Varner, Robin White, and Cristy Yoders.

- I. Attendance Sign in and Welcome
 - Mr. Miller welcomed attendees to the meeting.
- II. Approval of Minutes from September 16, 2021
 - Mr. Miller asked attendees to review the minutes from the September 16th meeting. Dr. O'Donnell made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Varner.
- III. Federal Programs Review
 - a. Title I
 1. Allocation/Expenditures
 - Mr. Miller reiterated that the district received a \$2,260,049 Title I allocation this year.
 - He noted that the Beginning of Year (BOY) assessments have been given, and the data was analyzed during the October 15th Act day.
 - He also noted that math and reading interventions continue to take place, along with multiple PBIS activities.
 2. Expenditures
 - Title I funds continue to be used to purchase supplemental reading and math interventions for K-3 students and pay for the salary and benefits of 22 reading and math intervention teachers, the Federal Programs Coordinator, the Federal Programs Secretary, and the Chief Academic officer. Funds are also used to support Camp on Your Way to Kindergarten and school-wide positive behavioral supports (PBIS).

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3. Kindergarten Readiness Workshops

- Mrs. Yoders said the Kindergarten Readiness Workshops have returned and are in their ninth or tenth year. This year's workshops will be offered at Strodes Mills Elementary on January 8, 2022, Indian Valley Elementary on January 22, 2022, East Derry Elementary on February 5, 2022, and Lewistown Elementary on February 19, 2022 from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Mrs. Yoders is thankful that the majority of the staff who have assisted with the workshops continue to be consistent.
- Younger siblings of incoming kindergarten students are welcome to attend the workshops with their parents. However, they will not be able to participate in the actual workshop activities, as the activities will not be developmentally appropriate for younger children.

4. Parental Engagement

- Set-aside
 - Every district that receives a Title I allocation of \$500,000 or more must set aside 1% of their funds to be used for parent engagement activities. One popular activity that many of the buildings implement is called, "One Book, One School". All children receive the same book, which they read at home with their parents, and then participate in various activities related to the book.
- Parent Engagement Building Policies and Compacts
 - The K-3 parent engagement policies and compacts have been updated and added to the MCSD Federal Programs website. They can be found by clicking on Students/Parents, Federal Programs, and Parent Engagement.
- Parent Engagement Coordinators for each Title I building
 - The parent engagement coordinators completed a building needs assessment, which will help drive parent engagement activities for this school year.

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5. Student Homelessness
 - Current Numbers
 - Fifty-one students have been identified as homeless so far this year.
 - Homelessness Awareness Week
 - Homelessness Awareness Week is set for November 15- 19 this year. District staff will have the opportunity to dress down on Friday, November 19th in exchange for a \$5 donation. The funds will be donated to the local homeless shelter, as it is experiencing a severe deficit in donations due to COVID. Staff will also be encouraged to wear red on Friday, November 19th.
 - American Rescue Plan Grant
 - MCS D was awarded \$68,707 from the American Rescue Plan to assist students experiencing homelessness. Mr. Miller and Mrs. Siruc recently submitted the grant for approval. They plan to use half of the funds to pay for transportation and the other half to create building level pantries. The funds can be used through the 2023-2024 school year.
- b. Title II-Improving Teacher Quality – Nothing new to add
 1. Allocation
 - Mr. Miller had no new information to add to Title II, but reiterated that the district received a \$272,850 allocation.
 2. Expenditures
 - Title II funds are used to support the salary and benefits of class size reduction teachers at the primary level.
 - The non-public schools in the district also receive an equitable share, which is used for professional development.
- c. Title III – Nothing new to add
 1. Allocation
 - Mr. Miller had no new information to add to Title III, but reiterated that the district received a \$13,059 allocation this year.

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2. Expenditures

- Funds are used to purchase supplemental resources for EL students and provide professional development to EL teachers. This year, EL teachers attended the WIDA conference and the “Catching Up Your English Language Learners Who Have Fallen Behind” training through the Bureau of Education and Research.
- The non-public schools in the district also receive an equitable share to purchase EL resources

d. Title IV

1. Allocation

- Mr. Miller had no new information to share on Title IV, but reiterated that the district received a \$171,642 allocation this year.

2. Expenditures

- Funds are used to pay for the salary and benefits of a district social worker and elementary school counselor. Funds are also used to pay for a 2-day smartboard training for new teachers at the beginning of the school year.

e. Rural & Low Income

1. Allocation

- The district received a \$94,526 allocation this year.

2. Expenditures

- Funds are used to pay for the contracted services of a full-time Master’s level behavioral therapist and the salary and benefits of a class size reduction teacher.

f. Ready to Learn (State)

1. Allocation

- The district received a \$968,914 allocation this year.

2. Expenditures

- Funds are used to pay for the salary and benefits of full-day kindergarten teachers.

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- g. PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency School Safety and Security Grants (State)
1. Grant ID 33852 -COVID Response & Preparation
 - Allocation
 - The district received a \$315,606 allocation. The funds have been spent and the grant has been closed.
 - Expenditures
 - The district used the funds to purchase:
 - 30 iPads to increase the amount of educational technology available for distance learning to ensure the continuity of education if remote learning become necessary at any point in the future due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Newsela, an instructional content platform that brings together engaging, accessible content with integrated assessments and insights to supercharge reading engagement and learning in every subject.
 - educational technology related items and health and safety items (flash-drives, HDMI adapters, headsets, hotpots, monitors, batteries) to address the COVID-19 disaster emergency.
 - cleaning and sanitizing products that meet the CDC and DOH's criteria.
 - equipment, including personal protective equipment, thermometers, infrared cameras and other necessary items
 2. Grant ID 31391 – Mifflin County School District Trauma Team
 - Allocation
 - The district received a \$450,000 allocation.
 - Expenditures
 - The district used the funds to pay for the contracted services of a mental health coordinator and a Master's level behavioral therapist for the 21-22 & 22-23 school years.
 - Funds were also used to pay for the salary and benefits of a licensed social worker for the 21-22 & 22-23 school years, as well as the cost of SEL training.

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3. Grant ID 31311 – Mifflin County SRO

- Allocation
 - The district received a \$45,000 allocation. The funds have been spent, and the grant has been closed.
- Expenditures
 - The funds were used to pay for the services of an additional school resource officer.

4. Grant ID 29390 – Mifflin County School District Trauma Team

- Allocation
 - The district received a \$550,500 allocation.
- Expenditures
 - Funds were used to pay for the services of a Systems Level Psychologist during the 19-20 & 20-21 school years. A project modification request was submitted and approved to change the title of the position to, “Mental Health Coordinator”.
 - Funds were also used to pay for the contracted services of a Master’s level behavioral therapist during the 19-20 & 20-21 school years, a school resource officer during the 18-19 school year, and the salary and benefits of a licensed social worker during the 19-20 and 20-21 school years.
 - SEL training was also paid for with these funds.

h. Continuity of Education Equity Grant

1. Allocation

- The district received a \$24,500 allocation, which it spent.

2. Expenditures

- Funds were used to purchase 45 additional laptops for distribution to ensure equitable access for learning for students with disabilities.

i. Special Education COVID-19 Impact Mitigation Grant

1. Allocation

- The district received a \$52,027 allocation, which it spent.

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2. Expenditures

- Funds were used to pay teachers to receive training in various software programs and supplemental resources to support students in synchronous learning.
- Six Lenovo L15 touch screen laptops, one Zoomtext Magnifier/Reader, 50 network licenses, five Zoomtext Magnifier/Reader standalone licenses, and a 3-year Snap & Read license were purchased to ensure students with vision impairments have remote access.
- Supplemental resources to support CCS services were also purchased.

j. Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER)

1. Allocation

- The district received a \$1,835,215 allocation.

2. Expenditures

- Funds will be used to:
 - maintain two elementary teaching positions (20/21 & 21/22).
 - maintain a middle school reading teaching position (20/21 & 21/22).
 - maintain a high school English teaching position (20/21 & 21/22).
 - maintain a high school guidance counselor position (20/21 & 21/22).
 - maintain an elementary special education teaching position (20/21 & 21/22)
 - create an additional guidance counselor position at EDES (20/21 & 21/22)
 - create a new Alpha English teaching position (20/21 & 21/22).
 - pay for supplemental afterschool and summer learning programs.
 - purchase personal protective equipment/supplies to support the return of students/staff to school and in-person instruction.
 - purchase cleaning and sanitizing supplies to support the return of students/staff to school and in-person instruction.
 - purchase a data analysis system to analyze the impact of

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COVID-19 on academic performance.

- pay the salary and benefits for temporary technology staff to sanitize district laptops.
- pay for the services of Mifflin County Regional Police and event staff to hold a COVID-19 mitigation compliant graduation
- purchase software that will allow laptops to be used at home and in school.
- The non-public schools also received an equitable share.

k. Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER II)

1. Allocation

- The district received a \$8,433,337 allocation.
- Mr. Miller explained that the district had to submit a pre-approval form for construction projects and any items costing over \$5,000.
- Mr. Varner said that the grant money allowed the district to put away about \$4,000,000 from the 20-21 budget into its capital reserves.

2. Expenditures

- Funds will be used to:
 - maintain two elementary teaching positions (22-23).
 - maintain a middle school reading teaching position (22-23).
 - maintain a high school English teaching position (22-23).
 - maintain a high school guidance counselor position (22-23).
 - maintain an elementary special education teaching position (22-23).
 - maintain an additional school counselor position at EDES (22-23).
 - maintain an English teaching position at Alpha (22-23).
 - maintain a math teaching position at MCMS (21-22, 22-23).
 - maintain a chemistry teaching position at MCHS (21-22, 22-23).
 - maintain two MCO teachers (21-22, 22-23).
 - maintain an Alpha administrator ((21-22, 22-23).
 - maintain a social studies teaching position at Alpha (21-22, 22-23).
 - hire a full-time guidance secretary at Alpha (21-22, 22-23).

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- pay for supplemental afterschool and summer learning programs.
- pay for transportation for supplemental summer learning programs.
- purchase personal protective equipment/supplies to support the return of students/staff to school and in-person instruction.
- purchase cleaning and sanitizing supplies to support the return of students/staff to school and in-person instruction.
- upgrade the district's network.
- purchase iPads and laptops as part of a one-to-one student initiative.
- replace teacher desktops and laptops.
- upgrade the district's power infrastructure for the one-to-one initiative.
- purchase School Gate Guardian scanners.
- pay Technology Department staff overtime for duties relating to the one-to-one initiative.
- hire additional custodians for cleaning and sanitizing buildings.
- hire a custodial floater (20-21-21-22, 22-23).
- hire a maintenance floater (20-21-21-22, 22-23).
- complete the Lewistown Elementary School ESCO maintenance project.
- hire a career pathways facilitator (21-22, 22-23).
- hire a contact tracer.
- pay for additional days for school nurses.
- purchase supplemental intervention resources to account for loss of learning time.
- hire an additional special education teacher in Alpha (21-22, 22-23).
- pay for additional days for the athletic director.
- perform a plumbing upgrade at SMES for better disinfection.
- purchase servers and switches.
- pay teachers to perform curriculum writing.
- pay for contracted services for safe schools training.
- purchase vision spot screeners for district nurses.
- purchase a dishwasher at IVES.
- purchase an image access scanner.

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- purchase a vinyl printer.
- purchase and install washers and dryers at schools to wash mops and rags being used for COVID-19 cleaning.
- purchase a “6300” network switch for increased bandwidth for online learning throughout the district.
- purchase a “6400” network switch for increased bandwidth for online learning throughout the district.
- purchase a wireless controller to monitor and configure the upgraded wireless access points to increase wireless coverage throughout the district.
- repair exterior coatings and insulation on exterior ductwork at MCHS and MCMS. This will prevent moisture from infiltrating the ductwork and promoting mold/bacteria growth in the air that is circulated by HVAC systems.
- purchase window treatments at MCJH to help maximize outside air being introduced into HVAC system.
- purchase replacement carpet and flooring at MCMS.
- purchase touchless fountains for students to fill water bottles.
- hire two additional floating custodians to support cleaning and sanitation of buildings to minimize the spread of infectious disease (remainder of 20-21, 21-22 and 22-23 school year).

1. American Rescue Plan (ESSER III)

1. Allocation

- The district received a \$17,058,201 allocation.

2. Expenditures

- Funds will be used to:
 - maintain two elementary teaching positions, a middle school reading teaching position, a high school English teaching position, a high school guidance counselor position, an elementary special education teaching position, an additional school counselor position at EDES, an English teaching position at Alpha, a math teaching position at MCMS, a chemistry teaching position at MCHS, two MCO teachers, an Alpha administrator, and a social studies teaching position at Alpha during the 2023-2024 school year.

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- maintain an English teaching position at Alpha, a math teaching position at MCJHS, a math teaching position at MCHS, a tech ed teaching position at MCHS, a 4th grade teaching position at LIS, 1st grade teaching position at LES, a 1st grade teaching position at EDES, and a 5th grade teaching position at LIS during the 21-22, 22-23, and 23-24 school years.
- hire an elementary technology facilitator and a 2nd Shift maintenance supervisor for the 21-22, 22-23, 23-24 school years.
- maintain a guidance secretary for Alpha, a career pathways facilitator, a custodial floater, and maintenance floater during the 23-24 school year.
- cover the cost of custodial substitutes.
- pay the salary and benefits of a COVID coordinator during the 20-21, 21-22, 22-23, 23-24 years.
- maintain an EL teaching position during the 21-22, 22-23, 23-24 school years.
- hire a part-time para at Alpha and a full-time para at LES for the 21-22, 22-23, 23-24 school years.
- create a teacher/learning management software educator at Alpha for the 21-22, 22-23, 23-24 school years.
- maintain a math teaching position and two science teaching positions at Alpha for the 21-22, 22-23, 23-24 school years.
- hire a health room assistant at MCMS and at LES for the 21-22, 22-23, 23-24 school years.
- create a technology facilitator position for the 21-22, 22-23, 23-24 school years.
- maintain a licensed social worker position, who was originally hired with funds from the PCCD grant, ID 3139, for the 23-24 school year.
- purchase Zoom licenses, MiFi, vision screeners, and technology upgrades.
- purchase smartboard displays, sound bars, mounts, carts, webcams, and HDMI cables to support the K-12 purchase and installation of smartboards. These items will support the one-to-one technology initiative and differentiation of instruction to close the achievement gap created as a direct result of the loss of learning from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- purchase smart notebook advanced software and LAN

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school system software.

- purchase teacher and student laptops and desktops to support the one-to-one technology initiative for differentiation of instruction. These laptops and desktops will help to close the achievement gap created as a direct result of the loss of learning from the COVID-19 pandemic. They will also help prepare administrators, teachers, and students to respond to any future remote learning that may be necessary throughout ongoing pandemic.
- purchase servers, switches, and storage for a physical and virtual server environment for the technology upgrades during the 2021-2022 school year.
- purchase software licensing and services for a physical and virtual server environment for technology updates during the 2021-2022 school year.
- complete a roofing project at LES.
- perform a HVAC/window project at the Administration Building.
- purchase supplemental intervention resources to account for loss of learning time.
- purchase an early warning system.
- pay teachers to complete curriculum writing and professional development to account for loss of learning time.
- support supplemental afterschool and summer learning programs, as well as the transportation for these programs.
- purchase personal protective equipment/supplies to support the return of students/staff to in-person instruction.
- purchase cleaning and sanitizing supplies to support the return of students/staff to in-person instruction.
- maintain an additional special education teaching position at Alpha and two additional custodians for the 23-24 school year.
- hire two additional maintenance floaters to support building efforts to minimize the spread of infectious disease for the 21-22, 22-23 and 23-24 school years.

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m. ESSER/American Rescue Plan, 7% Set Asides Consolidated

1. Allocation

- The district received a \$1,325,805 allocation. Mr. Miller explained that this grant is sometimes referred to as, “ESSER IV”.
- Dr. O'Donnell said the district is seeing an increased need for student emotional support and targeted/explicit phonics instruction. Typically, 70% of 1st graders are reading on grade level as this point in the school year. However, this is only happening in 40% of students this year. The district is planning on implementing LETRS, which is a professional development opportunity for staff to learn a specific way to model phonics. Dr. O'Donnell plans to have 25 staff members initially trained, who will then be able to pass the knowledge down to other staff members over the course of several years. The district invested in this initiative several years ago, but many of the staff have retired or left the district.

2. Expenditures

- A minimum of 30% of the funds must be used for student social, emotional, or mental health supports.
- A minimum of 10% of the funds must be used for social, emotional, and mental health professional development for staff. Mifflin County is seeing a lot of mental health strain on its community resources, which is affecting students in the district. Last year, MCJHS had 66 students referred to the Student Assistance Program (SAP). Sixty students have already been referred so far this year. The district is going to advocate for adding two additional mental health therapists, as the two current therapists are overwhelmed.
- A minimum of 8% of the funds must be used for reading support and improvement.
- A minimum of 1% must be set aside for summer enrichment.
- Another 1% must be set aside for afterschool programs.

3. Deadline for submission

- The deadline for submitting the grant is November 29, 2021.

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n. American Rescue Plan/Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HYC)

1. Allocation

- The district received a \$68,707 allocation.

2. Expenditures

- The district plans to use the money to create building-level pantries for its homeless students. Storage units will be purchased, along with various student resources, like toiletries, clothing, and school supplies.
- Funds will also be used to pay for the cost of transportation for homeless students.

o. Future Ready Comprehensive Planning

1. Updates

- The plan was approved at the last board meeting.

2. Mission

- Educate each student to meet life's challenges

3. Vision

- The relentless pursuit of excellence

4. Action Plan

- Emphasis on differentiation of instruction for all students (one-to-one technology initiative, evidence-based resources and interventions).
- Systemic focus on heterogeneous grouping as part of the development of a K-12 multi-tiered systems of support.
- Support students social and emotional learning through a strategic and systemic SEL implementation (PBIS, morning meetings).
- After-school and summer school programs to support recovery of lost instructional time due to COVID-19 pandemic.

5. Completion of Other State Required Reports

- Academic Standards and Assessment Requirements (Chapter 4).
- Gifted Education Plan Assurances (Chapter 16).
- Student Services (Chapter 12).
- Induction Plan (Chapter 49.)
- Professional Development Plan (Act 48).

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- The deadline for submission is the end of November.

p. Other District Programs

1. Dr. Kevin O'Donnell, Jr. – Chief Academic Officer

- Dr. O'Donnell said that the district has some really great kids and teachers doing great things. In fact, they are doing more with less.
- He is working to add more robust courses of rigor, including additional coursework where students will have the ability to earn college credit. The district already offers a course in Spanish, but hopes to add one in social studies, as well.
- Secondary students are also being surveyed to find out what courses they would like to see added. Currently, a forensic science and survivalist science class are being developed.

2. Mr. Vance Varner, Superintendent

- Mr. Varner said he is blessed with knowledgeable administrators and staff.
- He said it is a shame that there is a lot of negativity expressed at board meetings, especially when there are great things going on in the district. For example, the high school band just won the AAA Atlantic Coast competition, elementary students recently decorated cards for veterans at Geisinger-Lewistown Hospital, and a 2nd grade student put all of her PBIS tickets into a bucket to win a popcorn party for her class, instead of trying to win a prize for herself.
- Mr. Varner also noted that the district is now present on social media.

3. Mrs. Cindi Marsh, Director of Student Services

- Staff are currently working to support the social and emotional needs of students. School counselors received initial SEL training last year and are receiving additional training this year.

q. Agency Reports

1. Ms. Nikki Knepp, Clear Concepts

- Mrs. Siruc shared an update on Ms. Knepp's behalf. The SAP program has been busy over the past month. The MCMS and MCJHS have been especially busy with referrals. Clear Concepts is seeing an increase in anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, sleep

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issues, gender identity issues, relationship/peer issues, and vaping/marijuana use.

- Ms. Knepp thinks the MCSD is doing a great job at handling challenges the pandemic created. The school staff she comes in contact with have been wonderful.

2. Ms. Martha Leister, Tri-County Drug & Alcohol

- The Drug & Alcohol Commission has not received an increase in SAP funding for the past eight years, even after SAP was added at the elementary level. It is becoming difficult to spend funds carefully, while trying to target needs based on specific use of drugs and alcohol.
- On a positive note, a grant was recently received, which will cover SAP training for 40 staff members across several counties next year.

3. Ms. Aleta Kammerer, Communities that Care

- The CTC did a keychain event at the beginning of the year, as well as a tie dye shirt event on September 22. Mr. Crosson allowed the CTC to set up a table in the Commons Area at the high school, so that students could tie die a shirt during the school day, in case they were not able to do so after school. There was not as much community participation as last time, but Ms. Kammerer believes that was due to the poor weather. Overall, 577 shirts were dyed by students and 625 were dyed by community members. Everyone was encouraged to wear their shirts on October 1.
- The Positive Vibes group is planning on entering a gingerbread house contest.
- Students will be entered to win a \$250 prize through the Heartwarming Project Action grant. The prize will be given to students who implement inclusion and kindness in their community. The deadline to enter is December 21.
- The CTC is also considering holding a mini-thon.
- 8th grade students have already completed the PA Youth Survey. Surveys will be distributed to students at MCMS and MCHS later this fall.
- Ms. Kammerer also added that she appreciates that Mr. Varner created social media pages, and that he has been covering a wide variety of activities.

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4. Mr. David Boyer, Parent

- Mr. Boyer would like to send, “high fives” to everyone who has continued to add value to the community and district.

5. Mrs. Cristy Yoders, Success by 6

- Mrs. Yoders also thinks it is wonderful that the district is now using social media. People often get consumed in negative things, so it is nice to hear positive initiatives happening. She hopes the rest of the community is enjoying it, as well.
- Mrs. Yoders was only able to attend two of the community resource nights that were held at the elementary schools, but she thinks they went well. She noted that an honors student at the high school created a Halloween display at LES, which allowed families to take costumes if they were in need.
- Mrs. Yoders reminded attendees to keep their ears to the ground. If universal pre-k is passed, she expects it will have a large impact on the local community.

6. Ms. Robin White, Mifflin Junita Human Services

- Mrs. Siruc shared an update on Ms. White’s behalf. The Energy Bank program will begin on November 15 for families, who are denied LIHEAP.
- The Point in Time homeless count will take place on Wednesday, January 26. Volunteers are needed to participate.

r. Future Meeting Dates

- The next meeting will be held on February 3, 2022 at 11:30 am via Zoom. The last meeting of the year will be held on May 5.

s. Adjournment

- Dr. O’Donnell made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Mrs. Marsh.