

RIVER EDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION
RIVER EDGE, NEW JERSEY 07661

"Building Bright Futures Together"

Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – May 6, 2020 – 5:00 PM

The Board of Education, Borough of River Edge, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey conducted this meeting through a Zoom Meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Herbst called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion made by Ms. Dansky, Seconded by Mr. Sim to convene into closed session at 5:00 PM for the review of non-tenured personnel.

RECONVENE

Motion made by Mr. Sim, Seconded by Ms. Kang to reconvene the regular public meeting at 6:12 PM.

CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE

Mr. Herbst called the meeting to order at 6:12 PM.

A moment of silence took place in memory of the lives that were lost to the Coronavirus and the lives that were lost to our community members, family, and friends within the last few months.

MISSION STATEMENT

Ms. Kang read the Mission Statement.

ROLL CALL

Present on roll call were Ms. Brown; Ms. Dansky; Ms. Doyle; Ms. Juskeliene; Ms. Kang; Mr. Sim Mr. Herbst; Also present were Dr. Ben-Dov, Mrs. Napolitano, and approximately 21 members of the public.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE

Mrs. Napolitano read the Open Public Meeting Act Notice.

SPECIAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Comments on Agenda Items – none

Public Hearing on the 2020-2021 Proposed School Budget - Dr. Ben-Dov and Mrs. Napolitano

Dr. Ben-Dov and Mrs. Napolitano presented the 2020-2021 School Year Budget to the public (Addendum). They reviewed and explained each slide to the board members and the audience. Dr. Ben-Dov explained the budget was developed over the last few months and has been submitted to the County, accepted, and revised to meet our needs. She also stated that a responsible budget sustains our current programming and looks to provide for future needs. The Board reviewed and approved the submission of the Final Budget.

REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Ben-Dov reported on the following:

- We are in week seven of Virtual Learning. We have learned that school will be closed to the end of the 2019/2020 school year.
- This week is Teacher Appreciation Week. We are truly grateful to all of our teachers. We have tried our best to show our appreciation creatively, virtually with videos and padlets that were sent to the teachers. This was done by PTO's students, and administrators. Ms. Dansky and her husband made a donation to the Center of Food Action. We are very grateful for such a wonderful donation on behalf of our teaching community.
- We administered a survey to the parent community based on parent's questions and comments. We wanted to see how we can improve our Virtual Learning for students. We wanted to see the length of time it takes students to complete their work, what was the balance between the work that was given, the level of stress the family was experiencing, the responsiveness of the teachers and staff to their students, and how we can improve learning for individual students for every grade level and every class. We weren't interested in statistics and therefore, requested for the answers not to be anonymous. In this way we could provide specific feedback to teachers based on their students' needs. 506 families responded and most were positive. There were some constructive suggestions: most wanted more interactive instruction. They also wanted to have more clarity and consistency with weekly schedules and wanted them to include related arts. They also wanted more balance between screen time and written assignments. Dr. Ben-Dov shared that 96.3% who took the survey felt that teachers/staff "have been available and helpful to my child during the remote learning experience." She applauded the staff for that.
- There is a motion on tonight's agenda approving the Preparedness Plan that was made from the previous requirements by the Department of Education. We will have a new Preparedness Plan by the May 18th board meeting. Dr. Ben-Dov received a notice changing the new information they requested. There is a new checklist in which we need to document what we are doing with our closure and Virtual Learning. They are requesting class assignments by grade level, group, and individual work, differentiation of instruction, plans for ESL, and building maintenance during the closure. Special Education requirements need more clarification especially about the Extended School year Plans. At this time we were required to prepare for summer school in July with in-house and Virtual Learning. Dr. Ben-Dov is not sure how to plan effectively for both so she is looking for clarity from the Department of Education. At this time we will do our best to create a Preparedness Plan based on our understanding of the requirements.
- Dr. Ben-Dov would like to have a discussion with the board members at the May 18th board meeting to discuss how to plan for summer school and graduation.
- Dr. Ben-Dov attended a virtual SEPAG Meeting on April 27th. She stated Ms. Elmera did a wonderful job in guiding the parents on how to assist their children in the sessions. Dr. Ben-Dov is looking into having a virtual Parent Academy to address "Zoom fatigue."

PRINCIPAL

Mr. Henzel reported on the following:

- On Friday, April 24th the fifth grade had a Zoom meeting with Astronaut Colonel Nick Hague. Through Ms. Humphries, husband's connections with the US Air Force, Colonel Hague had an hour long presentation with the students. It was incredible experience for the students.
- Specific survey information was distributed to each teacher this week. Teachers were able to analyze their class responses and will be reaching out to parents to provide support where necessary.
- This week, Mr. Henzel met with interested parents to review the latest round of Post Dismissal Instructional Academy. He had eight parents join him in a zoom session to learn about the program.
- One of our very own Roosevelt School students, Leana, has been named a Zaner-Bloser National Handwriting Contest State Winner. Congratulations to Leana! We are really proud of her.
- Mr. Henzel wanted to formally thank all of the teachers for all of their hard work and dedication during Virtual Learning. They are doing a great job. Happy Teacher Appreciation Week!

BOARD SECRETARY

Mrs. Napolitano reported on the following:

- The custodians have been cleaning our facilities and we are also allowing limited service people in to take care of some of the projects now instead of over the summer since the students will not be coming back for the remainder of this school year. We are also preparing for our future for when the students and staff return to school. We are making sure it is clean and safe and meets the standards so everyone is comfortable coming back.
- Mrs. Napolitano spoke about the Cares Act: Education Stabilization Fund. It makes a portion of money available to the school based on Title One Funds. It's for School Emergency Relief in various areas such as mental health services and supports, technology, training, supplies for sanitizing, etc. We don't have information on how to get those funds yet, but we are anticipating direction soon.

PRESIDENT

Mr. Herbst reported on the following:

- Mr. Herbst stated it has been a tough seven weeks for everyone. It is very inspiring the way everyone is coming together and getting the work done. We appreciate our teachers and staff and he thanked them.
- Mr. Jim Gaffney, President of the Bergen County School Board Association, has been keeping the School Board Presidents informed of school board events. He stated schools will be closed for the remainder of the school year, the CSA evaluation due date is as originally planned, and all counties will have a remote county meeting. Bergen County's meeting will be on May 27th and Mr. Herbst will attend. The Delegate Assembly will be virtual and will be held on June 27th. He also instructed the School Board Presidents to keep their eye on state aid because it may change due to Governor Murphy's request for more financial assistance.

COMMITTEES

- Ms. Brown spoke about the Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting that took place on April 23rd. They spoke about Special Education and remote learning and spoke with administration addressing questions that came up.

MOTIONS TO BE ACTED UPON

A. ADMINISTRATION/POLICY

1. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of April 22, 2020.
2. That the Board of Education approve, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the Stronge Model to be used as the District Evaluation Rubric for Teachers, Principals, and other Certified Staff for the 2020-2021 school year.
3. WHEREAS, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor has declared a state of emergency and a public health emergency, and ordered all schools closed for in-person instruction; and

WHEREAS, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Legislature has revised N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9 to permit the use of virtual instruction to establish compliance with the 180 school day requirement during a public health emergency, subject to Board approval of a virtual instruction program;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves River Edge School Closure Preparedness Plan which includes the program of virtual instruction to meet the 180 school day requirement, which was previously submitted to the Department of Education on March 13, 2020 and implemented since the District’s closure on March 16, 2020.

4. That the Board of Education approve the revised River Edge Elementary School Calendar for the 2019-2020 school year. (Addendum)

Motion by: Ms. Brown Seconded by: Ms. Dansky

Ayes: Ms. Brown, Ms. Dansky, Ms. Doyle, Ms. Juskeliene, Ms. Kang, Mr. Sim, Mr. Herbst
Nays: None

B. CURRICULUM/EDUCATION – None

C. BUILDINGS & GROUNDS - None

D. FINANCE/GRANTS/GIFTS

1. That the Board of Education approve the Final 2020-2021 School Year Budget as follows:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Local Tax Levy</u>
Total General Fund	\$19,976,779	\$16,031,391
Total Special Revenue Fund	\$1,204,342	N/A
Total Debt Service	\$1,419,425	\$1,200,325
Total	\$22,600,546	

Be It Further Resolved, that the Board of Education requests the approval of a Capital Reserve Withdrawal in the amount of \$200,000. The District intends to utilize \$200,000 for paving, a new boiler, fire panel upgrade, classroom renovations, security projects, and waterproofing at Roosevelt School.

2. That the Board of Education accept the \$140.00 donation from Jennifer Wong Hernandez for general use at Roosevelt School (Addendum).

Motion by: Ms. Kang Seconded by: Ms. Doyle

Ayes: Ms. Brown, Ms. Dansky, Ms. Doyle, Ms. Juskeliene, Ms. Kang, Mr. Sim, Mr. Herbst
Nays: None

E. PERSONNEL

1. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Doreen Luca, Payroll Coordinator, starting May 18, 2020 through June 30, 2020.
2. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Donna Lindsay, Teacher, effective June 30, 2020.
3. BE IT RESOLVED by the River Edge Board of Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") as follows:
 1. The Board hereby approves the request for a personal leave of absence by an employee whose name is on file in the Superintendent's office with pay through the close of business on June 30, 2020.
 2. The Board hereby approves the request for retirement by said employee effective at the close of business on June 30, 2020.
 3. The terms, stipulation and conditions of the Separation of Employment Agreement annexed to this Resolution, are hereby adopted and approved by the Board of Education. The Board President and School Business Administrator/Board Secretary are hereby authorized and directed to execute the attached Separation of Employment Agreement, and any other documents necessary to effectuate same.

Motion by: Ms. Dansky Seconded by: Mr. Sim

Ayes: Ms. Brown, Ms. Dansky, Ms. Doyle, Ms. Juskeliene, Ms. Kang, Mr. Sim, Mr. Herbst
Nays: None

F. RIVER EDGE SPECIAL EDUCATION - None

G. REGION V ADMINISTRATION & TRANSPORTATION – None

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Dansky will attend the Board of Directors Meeting of New Jersey School Boards Association on Friday, May 8th.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Mrs. Ortiz (287 Valley Road, River Edge) asked if Dr. Ben-Dov and the board members will consider opening school for the 2020-2021 school year earlier than September if the restrictions are lifted. Dr. Ben-Dov explained we are guided by the 180 day calendar and contractual agreements. We are not sure what the opening will look like. At this point, there is no discussion on this.

Ms. Kim (River Edge Resident) posted a lovely note thanking the teachers for all of their hard work during this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mr. Sim, seconded by Ms. Brown to adjourn the regular public meeting at 7:20 PM.

Ayes: Ms. Brown, Ms. Dansky, Ms. Doyle, Ms. Juskeliene, Ms. Kang, Mr. Sim, Mr. Herbst

Nays: None

Louise Napolitano

Board Secretary/Business Administrator