

RIVER EDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RIVER EDGE, NEW JERSEY 07661

"Building Bright Futures Together"

Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – June 3, 2020 – 6:00 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 AND FLAG SALUTE

Mr. Herbst called the meeting to order at 6:07 PM.

MISSION STATEMENT

Ms. Brown read the Mission Statement.

ROLL CALL

Present on roll call were Ms. Brown; Ms. Dansky; Ms. Doyle; Ms. Juskeliene; Ms. Kang; Mr. Herbst; Also present were Dr. Ben-Dov, Mrs. Napolitano, Mr. Henzel and approximately 15 members of the public.

Mr. Sim arrived at 6:13 PM

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE

Mrs. Napolitano read the Open Public Meeting Act Notice.

SPECIAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Comment on Agenda Items - None

REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Ben-Dov reported on the following:

- Dr. Ben-Dov thanked our Administrators for all of their hard work and dedication. She stated they do a lot of behind the scenes and work long hard hours. She also stated they are keeping it going in a positive way.
- Dr. Ben-Dov sent a letter to the parents today with resources to have discussions with their children, if they wish, on civil unrest. She also asked the teachers not to discuss the complex topic unless they observe the stress or sadness in their students or if the students bring it up. She stated we need to develop a cohesive approach with curriculum that will be included with our curriculum work in the summer to be ready to implement with our students.
- We had a Climate Committee Meeting this afternoon. We started discussing the civil unrest and how we would like to find a sensible way to deal with it with our students. Parents were also a part of this meeting. It was clear from the parents that they didn't think we should be initiating these discussions at this time in response to what is going on but It is our responsibility to prepare over the summer to teach our students about diversity and these sensitive topics through curriculum.

- Dr. Ben-Dov set up a Curriculum Committee Meeting for June 16th at 4:00 PM.
- Pick-up of student belongings and drop off of textbooks took place yesterday at Cherry Hill School and it took place today at Roosevelt School. Both were very successful.
- Next week we will spend four days visiting every home of our 6th graders, outside, providing a heartfelt recognition for our graduates and their families. The principals, teachers, and I are excited about this and to see the students. The photographer will follow us to each visit.
- The return of musical instruments and Chrome books will be on June 17th or June 18th. We will allow the children who will be in Summer School to keep their Chrome Books until Summer School is complete.
- Dr. Ben-Dov gave a heartfelt thank you to everyone who was so helpful with the pick-up of the student's belongings and drop off of the textbooks. She thanked the teachers, custodians, nurses, aides, secretaries, principals, and technology departments. She explained how this was done in a safe manner.
- The Fifth and Sixth grade students enjoyed sessions with Rodney Salomon with his Konscious Youth Development and company service. The students enjoyed the mindfulness activities. The staff had a nice and relaxing session with the company as well.
- In lieu of Field Day, teachers initiated Pride Day for Roosevelt School and Fun Day for Cherry Hill School. These activities will take place on June 15th, with a rain date of June 16th, and there will be a lot of non-screen activities that can be demonstrated on screen.
- We held four Parent Academies virtually: SEPAG Meeting on April 27th, two Zoom Fatigue Academies on May 20th and May 28th, a Poetry one with Janet Wong on June 1st, and we are expecting one with Liberty Science Center on June 15th.
- Dr. Ben-Dov asked the board members what are their thoughts about making Summer School four days this summer instead of five days since it will be held virtually. The board asked questions such as: what is the work load for a student in one day? what would a four day schedule look like? what would a five day schedule look like? and how many mindful breaks will a student receive? Dr. Ben-Dov answered all of the questions that were asked, a discussion was held and it was decided to have a four day Summer School week this year.
- There is a re-opening task force that will meet on Friday, June 5th, and it will be our first meeting. Our Committee is very large. It include Board representation by Caleb Herbst, with Parent Leaders, Principals, Curriculum Supervisor, and Teachers with REEA representation, Nurses, Technology, Mental Health, the Business Administrator, and the Building and Grounds Supervisor. We are planning on breaking up this larger group into smaller sub-committees that can focus on different areas. These Committees will deal with several topics. We will need to speak to the After School Program to see how to structure things. We have made it known to the Department of Education and the Governor we need more information and guidance which we don't have at this time. A survey came from the Department of Education and the Governor to parents to see what the parents will be comfortable with for September.

- The Governor made a statement last week about permitting graduations outdoors. It was a very general statement, with no fine print. This was not coordinated with the Department of Education. He still put limits to 25 people and temperatures need to be taken. Elementary Schools were not included in this statement. Dr. Ben-Dov stated we are doing something very personal for our graduates since we will not be having a regular graduation this year.
- Dr. Ben-Dov stated we are still eagerly waiting for more guidance from the Department of Education and from the Governor.

PRINCIPAL

Mr. Henzel reported on the following:

- Today we had our collection of library books, chorus vests, classroom books, and textbooks. Additionally, we returned student belongings that were left in the classroom from our departure in March. We still have about 60 or so student bags left. We will figure a way to get them to their owner. We received some great feedback from parents and Mr. Henzel read two emails he received. Mr. Henzel stated the day would not have been possible if it weren't for the help of our custodians at both schools. They were invaluable. He also thanked Mrs. Blute, Mrs. Sherlock, Mrs. Vernieri and select aides that came and helped out. Mr. Henzel also gave an extra shout out to the PTO for providing them all with lunch.
- Mr. Henzel stated since graduation cannot take place in elementary schools under the order of the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management, we have come up with a creative way to make graduation a little more special for our kids. A very small group of us will be visiting the homes of our students, presenting them with their diploma, and wishing them well. Both schools will be conducting home visits beginning Tuesday and concluding on Friday in the morning. Additionally, we will be creating a graduation video for the kids which will be shared the last week of school. Thank you to Ms. Cardia and Ms. Miele for putting this together for both of our schools.
- On Monday, June 15 (with a rain date of June 16) we will hold our virtual Roosevelt Pride Day and Cherry Hill will hold their virtual Fun Day. It all started with an email from Ms. Rigg encouraging her colleagues to put together something fun for the kids. The response from the teachers was overwhelming! Ms. Rigg compiled all the ideas into a Google Slide presentation. Teachers contributed to it and the students will preview next week before taking part in the fun activities on Monday. The slides will be posted in the students' Google Classroom under Announcements on either Wednesday or Thursday of next week. The aim of the day is to be stress-free and screen-free day.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Mr. Herbst read the following public comment from Everlyn Kim (780 Elm Avenue):
 “Thank you to the Administrators and teachers today and also for coming up with clap in for the 6th graders, making it personal and special. I was happy to see a letter from Dr. Ben-Dov today regarding current events. It is easy to keep silence because it is easier but it needed to be addressed. I would expect more from our district and I agree with Dr. Ben-Dov that it has to be included in our curriculum. Thank you to all.”
 Mr. Herbst thanked Ms. Kim for her comment.

BOARD SECRETARY

Mrs. Napolitano reported on the following:

- Governor Murphy signed that Municipalities can delay the tax payments to schools. Mrs. Napolitano did want to thank the Borough of River Edge because they did not delay the tax payment to us.
- State Aid payments will be delayed
- Our funding is looking to be reduced. We are looking at a decrease of \$179,159 which means our budget must be reduced by that amount. We are waiting to see if that is the final amount.
- The Cares Act is based on Title Funds that has been distributed to each district that has Title I funds. Part of that money goes to the non-public schools based on enrollment numbers. It is a grant that we apply for and it's broad on what we can spend it on however, it is based on funding for needs due to the pandemic.
- FEMA reimbursement will be available for school districts to get reimbursed for certain items. It has to come out of pocket and they reimburse you for a percentage.
- We do not have clear documentation yet on what our schools should look like. We do have a meeting set up to start discussing this and come up with alternative plans for different scenarios.

PRESIDENT

Mr. Herbst reported on the following:

- Mr. Herbst read the statement issued by the New Jersey School Board Association president Michael McClure and the Executive Director Lawrence Feinsod regarding the ongoing events in our Country.
- Mr. Herbst spoke about the Bergen County School Board Association meeting he attended on May 27th. He stated knew of what was discussed at this meeting because of Mr. Gaffney's updates.
- Mr. Herbst gave the board members an additional update from Mr. Jim Gaffney, President of the Bergen County School Board Association. He stated there is no more information on how or when schools will re-open, hopefully Governor Murphy will give guidance by the middle of June, school aid cuts are hopefully final as now but still can change, when ready to start in-person Board of Education meetings consult with the Board Attorney and the Insurance Carrier for specific guidelines, consult with Board Attorney and the Insurance Carrier for in-person outdoor graduations, if possible boards should plan to meet once a month in the summer to stay current on important issues, be ready for questions from parents, and there are attorneys out there contacting school personnel who may have contracted the Covid-19 virus and see if they can connect it to exposure at the school and filing a law suit against the district.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion made by Ms. Dansky, seconded by Ms. Doyle to convene into closed session at 7:02 PM.

Motion by: Ms. Dansky Seconded by: Ms. Doyle

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

RECONVENE

Motion made by Mr. Sim, seconded by Ms. Brown to reconvene the regular public meeting at 8:00 PM.

Mr. Herbst stated the Board of Education needs to go back into closed session and will reconvene approximately 8:45 PM.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion made by Mr. Sim, Seconded by Ms. Brown to convene into closed session at 8:01 PM

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

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

RECONVENE

Motion made by Ms. Dansky, Seconded by Ms. Kang to reconvene the regular public meeting at 8:49 PM.

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

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

COMMITTEES

- Ms. Dansky stated that Finance and Facilities met on June 3rd. They spoke about sink ratio, purchasing PPE items, gloves, masks, FEMA, Cares Act, plexiglass, shields vs. gowns, hand held fogging machines, custodial support, snow removal extension , After School Program, decrease in our funding, tax payment from River Edge, and aid payment.

MOTIONS TO BE ACTED UPON

A. ADMINISTRATION/POLICY

1. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of May 18, 2020. (Addendum)
2. That the Board of Education approve the staff development and travel as per the schedules for June 2020 including relevant mileage reimbursement. (Addendum)

Motion by: Ms. Kang Seconded by: Ms. Brown

Ayes: Ms. Brown, Ms. Dansky, 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 authorize the contract with Educational Data Services for services in connection with the cooperative bidding for supplies and other categories as mutually agreed upon for the 2020-2021 school year at a fee of \$3,140.00 (Addendum).

- That the Board of Education approve the acceptance and submission of the application for the SFY 2021 IDEA-B Grant as follows:

Basic IDEA Grant	\$242,488	Pre-School Idea Grant	\$18,023
Basic Non-Public	\$227,227	Pre-School Non-Public	0
Total	\$469,715	Total	\$18,023

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

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

Nays: None

E. PERSONNEL

- That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Jessica Jablin, Teacher, starting September 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, BA, Step 3.
- That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Bianca Kim, Teacher, starting September 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, MA, Step 2.
- That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Katelyn Mills, Teacher, starting September 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, MA, Step 2.
- That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Alrick Douglas, Leave Replacement Pupil Assistance Counselor, effective on September 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, MA, Step 3.
- That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the employment of Tenured Staff in the REEA for the 2020-2021 school year as per the list on file in the District Office.
- That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the employment of Non-tenured Staff in the REEA for the 2020-2021 school year as per the list on file in the District Office.
- That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the employment of Tenured Administrators for the 2020-2021 school year.

Denise Heitman	Principal
Michael Henzel	Principal
Rosemary Kuruc	Supervisor of Special Services

- That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the employment of the following Non-tenured Administrator for the 2020-2021 school year.

Eric James	Assistant Principal
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- That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the employment of Tenured Supervisors for the 2020-2021 school year.

Christine Moran
AnneMarie Spiegel

- That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the employment of a Non-tenured Supervisor until September 17, 2020 and as a Tenured Supervisor as of September 18, 2020 through the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year.

Nevin Werner

11. That the Board of Education approve \$1,750.00 compensation for Chris Armen, for partial responsibilities for the summer W.I.N. Academy.
12. That the Board of Education rescind Heather Rothschild as Clerical Assistant at a stipend of \$1,250 for the Summer Enrichment 2020 Program.

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

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

13. That the Board of Education postpone until June 17, 2020 the approval of the Job Description for the School Mental Health Clinician. (Addendum)

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

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

14. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Mary Bosco, Interim Supervisor for the River Edge School effective July 1, 2020, until a leading Administrator is employed.
15. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a Maternity/Disability leave of absence for Stephanie Rosenblum to commence on or about, October 12, 2020 through December 1, 2020, followed by a State/Federal Family leave of absence to commence on or about, December 2, 2020, through March 11, 2021.
16. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Tiffany Petzinger, Academic Interventionist, starting September 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, MA, Step 6.
17. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Samantha Cedeno, Secretary to the Director at Region V, effective June 30, 2020.
18. 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 medical leave of absence by an employee whose name is on file in the Superintendent's office with pay through the close of business on December 31, 2020.
 2. 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.
19. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the retirement of Nural Islam, Custodian effective December 31, 2020.

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

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

F. RIVER EDGE SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. That the Board of Education approve Care Plus NJ, as a service provider effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, up to a maximum of \$50,000.

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

Ayes: Ms. Brown, Ms. Kang, Mr. Sim, Mr. Herbst

Nays: Ms. Dansky, Abstained: Ms. Doyle

G. REGION V ADMINISTRATION & TRANSPORTATION - None

OLD / NEW BUSINESS - None

PUBLIC DISCUSSION No more public comments at this time

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mr. Sim, seconded by Ms. Doyle to adjourn the regular public meeting at 11:18 PM.

Voice vote all Ayes

Louise Napolitano
Board Secretary/Business Administrator