

RIVER EDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

RIVER EDGE, NEW JERSEY 07661

"Building Bright Futures Together"

Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – July 15, 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 6:15 PM.

MISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Herbst 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, and approximately 150 members of the public.

Mr. Sim arrived at 6:45 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:

- The Superintendent's Association of Bergen County had a meeting with Lou DeLisio, Executive County Superintendent, and Jim Tedesco, Bergen County Executive. We learned that the state is expecting our full opening plan by July 27th and parents need to be informed of this plan four weeks before the opening of school. We are expecting a checklist from the state that may or may not coincide with the re-opening plan and we should be getting it within a week. Once we get it, we need to see that it is based on the expectations and where we stand. We are also expecting information on parents that want to opt out, teachers who might be medically compromised, and that might not be ready to come back in person, a flow chart directing us how to proceed when we have a positive case once we open schools, or an upsurge of cases prior to opening. Things are changing daily so it may change in our directives.

- Dr. Ben-Dov asked the board to consider revising the 2020-2021 school calendar so teachers will have four days of Professional Development, instead of two, and have students start after Labor Day, on September 8th instead of September 3rd. The teachers could use four days to be well prepared for the start of school. We will need to make up the two days of school because we still need to have students attend school for 180 days. Dr. Ben-Dov stated the board can decide where to take the two days from. The board had a discussion and agreed to the four days of Professional Development. Dr. Ben-Dov will give the board two different options on where to take the two days. One option will be take two days away from February Break and the other will be to add two days to the end of the school year.
- Dr. Ben-Dov stated in River Edge we have seven Task Sub-committees that have been operating for almost six weeks. They have been meeting diligently and all of our constituencies are represented within the committees. The seven Sub-committees work independently, but they must interface. Dr. Ben-Dov has been meeting with the chairs and attending the different committee meetings. She stated we are working on it and are very close.
- Dr. Ben-Dov presented a draft of a Phase 1 of School Reopening of September 2020. Dr. Ben-Dov reviewed the master schedule: Students in Kindergarten and First grade will attend school Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday according to their assigned AM or PM cohort. The AM session will run from 8:25 to 11:00 AM. The PM session will run from 12:25 to 3:00 PM. Wednesday will be a virtual day. Students in Second grade through Sixth grade will attend school according to an A/A-B/B cohort schedule. Cohort A will attend school on Monday and Tuesday from 8:25 to 1:15 PM. Cohort B will attend school on Thursday and Friday from 8:25 to 1:15 PM. Wednesday will be a virtual day for all. Students at home will participate via live stream. There will be no lunch or recess. Students will eat a snack in Second grade through Sixth grade daily. Symptom checks and handwashing will be part of the master schedule. For Special Education: To be finalized, shared, and discussed at the Town Hall meeting on July 28, 2020 at 6:30 PM. For Related Arts: Kindergarten and First grade will receive their related arts virtually. Students in Second grade through Sixth grade will receive related arts in their classroom. The related arts schedule will rotate on a two-week basis to provide the students with in-person classes every other week. Students at home will participate in the classroom live stream. For Preschool: The PreK 3 session will run from 9:00 to 11:15 AM on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. The PreK 4 session will run from 12:15 to 2:30 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Phase 1 is just for the month of September. We will evaluate and re-evaluate in September to see if and what needs to be tweaked. Dr. Ben-Dov stated we considered health and safety in this plan. If this schedule is accepted the Principals can move to creating their specific schedules with students and parents so that parents can be notified about their children's day and times of attendance. The board had a discussion on this. Dr. Ben-Dov reviewed with the board the issues of square footage in our rooms and the state is mandating social distancing in our classrooms. The state is demanding that students be seated six feet apart with desks arranged one behind the other. The state is also demanding we have 113 square feet radius available for each student.
- Dr. Ben-Dov stated that we are sympathetic to working parents. She stated there are a few venues that we are thinking about for child care: River Edge Extended Day Care Program-a proposal may or may not be done. Discussions with the Director will continue, Stepping Stone- which is next door may have a proposal for parents, and Dr. Ben-Dov discussed with Dr. Katz ways parents can help each other by alternating "Child Care Pads" for each other.

- We received 1,169 parental survey responses from parents and 162 employees completed the survey expressing a variety of their concerns. They were all positive about getting the school year started. There were at least 500 narrative comments written down. Dr. Ben-Dov will create a list of the frequently asked questions and send them to the parents along with the proposed schedule by the end of the week. An important statistic that Dr. Ben-Dov wanted to share with the board and parents at this time was that 22.3% of parents that responded said they wanted their children to learn virtually.
- Dr. Ben-Dov will have a 2nd Cup of Coffee. The date will be announced shortly.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Dr. Ben-Dov and Mr. Herbst answered a number of questions that were listed in the Zoom chat that were related to the hybrid model, student schedules, live streaming, technology, safety of students and teachers, small group instruction, ELA, speech, extra help for students, NJ Mandate square foot, resource students, parents opting out of all non-instructional virtual sessions, zoom sessions, health and safety protocols, Covid-29 testing for students and staff, and cleaning of the buildings.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion made by Ms. Kang, Seconded by Ms. Brown to convene into closed session at 7:20 PM to discuss a personnel and contractual matter.

Motion by: Ms. Kang 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. Doyle, Seconded by Mr. Sim to reconvene the regular public meeting at 9:23 PM.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Dr. Ben-Dov and Mr. Herbst answered questions that were listed in the Zoom chat that were related to the health and safety of the staff and students, lunch during the 2020-2021 school year, schedules and protocols, Pre-k and Kindergarten, related arts, virtual learning and in-person learning, students with medical problems, students that are struggling academically, social/emotional needs of students, the rooms in the buildings, daycare/aftercare, the capacity of students allowed in a classroom, conducting emergency drills, cleaning of the buildings, cleaning supplies, air ventilation, air testing, proper PPE materials, social distancing, backpacks in the classrooms, policies, procedures, Covid-19 testing, parent volunteers, parent input, drop off and pick up of students, more meetings for information, and the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

PRINCIPAL

No Principal report at this meeting

BOARD SECRETARY

Ms. Napolitano reported on the following:

- Our nurses have been working very hard to help us get supplies and protocols in place.
- State aid came out but not the final numbers.
- We have been working with Building and Grounds getting ready for the return of school including an air conditioning update, cleaning buildings, PPE, and Plexiglas for small group instruction.

PRESIDENT

Mr. Herbst reported on the following:

- Mr. Herbst stated that Finance and Facilities and Personnel and Management received policies for review. The board members will receive the policies this week. The first reading of these policies will be on the July 29th board meeting.
- Mr. Herbst met with Mayor Papaleo, Mr. Poerio, and Mrs. Busted. They did not have much to report. We did not receive the full plan. Mr. Herbst is excited to say he met with them and we will be moving forward.
- Committees have not met, but many of the Re-opening Task Force Committees have been meeting.

COMMITTEES

No Committee Reported at this meeting

MOTIONS TO BE ACTED UPON

A. ADMINISTRATION/POLICY

1. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes and Confidential minutes of June 17, 2020. (Addendum)
2. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the 2020-2021 Comprehensive Equity Plan Statement of Assurance.

B. CURRICULUM/EDUCATION - None

C. BUILDING & GROUNDS - None

D. FINANCE/GRANTS/GIFTS - None

E. PERSONNEL

1. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Jena Corbett, Leave Replacement Teacher, effective on September 1, 2020 through December 23, 2020, BA, Step 2.

2. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Taylor Spina, Leave Replacement Teacher, effective on October 1, 2020 through February 3, 2021, BA, Step 1.
3. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Nancy Fiore, Part-time Resource Teacher (0.7) to a full time Resource Teacher, MA, step 5, for the 2020-2021 school year.
4. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Nancy Hafers, from part-time (0.8) Gifted and Talented Teacher to full time Gifted and Talented Teacher, BA, step 9, for the 2020-2021 school year.
5. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve a Maternity/Disability leave of absence for Leigh Anne Kaufmann to commence on or about October 5, 2020 through November 20, 2020, followed by a State/Federal Family leave of absence to commence on or about November 23, 2020, through March 1, 2021.
6. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve a Maternity/Disability leave of absence for Julie Fallon to commence on or about November 18, 2020 through December 23, 2020, followed by a State/Federal Family leave of absence to commence on or about January 4, 2021, through April 1, 2021.
7. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Carly Reitano,.5 Physical Education Teacher, effective July 1, 2020.
8. That the Board of Education approve, the following individuals for movement on the step guide effective September 1, 2020 based on educational credentials.

Leah Gallo	from	MA	to	MA +15
Ryan Schmid	from	BA+15	to	MA
Kate Stehn*	from	MA	to	MA +15

*As per agreement between REEA and the REBOE, Article XI; 11.5, B-5

9. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Sarah Lucinese, Region V Administrative Assistant, starting on July 6, 2020 through June 30, 2021.
10. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Jennifer Ulman, Region V Clerical Assistant, starting on July 16, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

F. RIVER EDGE SPECIAL EDUCATION – None

G. REGION V ADMINISTRATION & TRANSPORTATION

1. WHEREAS, the River Edge Board of Education (the “Board”) is the lead education agency (“LEA”) for the Bergen County Region V Council for Special Education (“Region V”); and

WHEREAS, Region V provides shared services for its member districts such as evaluations, direct services, and consultation; and

WHEREAS, as the LEA, the Board must approve the consultant agreements of the providers that Region V utilizes to deliver shared services to its member districts.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, re-approves the consultant agreements of the following Region V Shared Services Consultants, Psychologists, Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultants, Social Workers, Speech Language Specialists, Occupational and Physical Therapists, and Translators to provide evaluations, direct services, and consultation, to non-public and public schools for member districts upon request for the 2020-2021 school year:

Debbie Hollender LLC

Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant

Evaluator

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

OLD / NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Kang thanked the administrators and teachers who are giving of their time being on the Re-Opening Task Force Committee. She stated so much work, thought, and effort is being put in and it is incredible.

Mr. Herbst thanked everyone that called in tonight.

Ms. Dansky stated all state level meetings increased frustration as we look more and more to Trenton for guidance and we receive less and less. It is great that Dr. Ben-Dov is working with her colleagues for help because school districts are really left on their own.

Ms. Dansky stated there is a meeting on Wednesday, July 29th on Key Decisions for Special Education Post Covid-19.

Ms. Dansky stated there will be a virtual Bergen County Summer Meeting on Thursday, July 30th.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION – No more public discussion at this time

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Ms. Brown, seconded by Mr. Sim to adjourn the regular public meeting at 12:01 AM.

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

Nays: None

Louise Napolitano
Board Secretary/Business Administrator