

**RIVER EDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**RIVER EDGE, NEW JERSEY 07661**

*“Building Bright Futures Together”*

**Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – January 6, 2021 – 7:30 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**

Mrs. Napolitano called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM

A moment of silence took place in memory of Joseph Maugeri. Dr. Ben-Dov spoke about the life of Joe Maugeri. Our River Edge flags will be lowered to half-staff in honor of Mr. Maugeri on Thursday and Friday.

**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. Sim; Mr. Herbst; also present were Dr. Ben-Dov, Mrs. Napolitano, Mr. Henzel and approximately 223 members of the public.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE**

Mrs. Napolitano read the Open Public Meeting Act Notice.

**REORGANIZATION**

**Certification of Election Results – November 3, 2020**

Mrs. Napolitano reported on the official results of November 3, 2020 election.

<u>Candidate</u>	<u>Total Votes Cast</u>
Sheli Dansky (3 Year Term)	3,515
Elizabeth Brown (3 Year Term)	3,745

**Oath of Office to Newly Elected Trustees**

The Board Secretary administered the Oath of Office to Trustees elect Sheli Dansky and Elizabeth Brown.

## 2020 Board of Education and Expiration of Terms of Offices

<u>Trustee</u>	<u>Expiration of Terms</u>
Gyuchang Sim	2021
Adrienne Doyle	2021
Eun Kang	2021
Caleb Herbst	2022
Silvija Juskeliene	2022
Sheli Dansky	2023
Elizabeth Brown	2023

### **Nomination and Election of President**

Motion by Mr. Herbst to nominate Eun Kang as Board President.

Roll call was taken and Eun Kang was unanimously elected Board President.

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

President, Eun Kang assumed the Chair.

### **Nomination and Election of Vice-President**

Motion by Ms. Kang to nominate Sheli Dansky as Vice-President.

Roll call was taken and Sheli Dansky was unanimously elected Vice-President.

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

### **REORGANIZATION MOTIONS**

#### **1. Meeting Time & Location**

That the Board of Education continues to hold regular public meetings at 7:30 p.m. as follows:

<u>Date</u>	<u>School</u>
January 6, 2021	Cherry Hill School
January 20, 2021	Cherry Hill School
February 3, 2021	Cherry Hill School
February 24, 2021	Cherry Hill School
March 3, 2021	Cherry Hill School
March 24, 2021	Cherry Hill School
April 14, 2021	Cherry Hill School
April 28, 2021	Cherry Hill School
May 5, 2021	Cherry Hill School
May 19, 2021	Cherry Hill School
June 2, 2021	Cherry Hill School
June 16, 2021	Cherry Hill School

July 28, 2021	Cherry Hill School
September 1, 2021	Cherry Hill School
September 22, 2021	Cherry Hill School
October 6, 2021	Cherry Hill School
October 27, 2021	Cherry Hill School
November 10, 2021	Cherry Hill School
November 17, 2021	Cherry Hill School
December 1, 2021	Cherry Hill School
December 15, 2021	Cherry Hill School
January 5, 2022 (Reorganization Meeting)	Cherry Hill School

FURTHER, provision is also made for closed meetings immediately following each regular meeting for the purpose of discussing personnel matters or any other private matters if necessary.

FURTHER, the Secretary of this Board is hereby authorized and directed to give at least 48 hours advance notice of all the aforesaid meetings, and said notice shall (a) be delivered to the municipal building and the post office; (b) be delivered to the Board's officially designated newspapers; (c) circulated in the School District; and (d) filed with the clerk of the Borough of River Edge, all as provided for the pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Laws of the State of New Jersey 1975.

**Motion by: Mr. Sim Seconded by: Mr. Herbst**

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

**2. School Ethics**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education abide by the School Ethics Act and the Code of Ethics for School Board Members, pursuant to N.J.S.A.18A:12-21 et seq.

**Motion by: Mr. Herbst Seconded by: Mr. Sim**

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

**3. Parliament Procedure**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education meetings be governed by parliamentary procedure of Robert's Rules of Order.

**4. Official Public Notice Newspapers**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate the *Suburban/Town News* and *The Record* as the Official Newspapers for the Board of Education until the next organization meeting.

5. Designation Board Secretary

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Louise Napolitano as Board Secretary until June 30, 2021.

6. Rules, Regulations and Policies

FURTHER, that all rules, regulations and policies adopted in previous years, and not rescinded by the River Edge Board of Education be continued in full force and effect until altered, amended, modified or repealed by other resolutions of this Board, including board policy on student records.

7. Curricula

FURTHER, that the Board of Education approve all current curricula, textbooks, and programs that have been developed in accordance with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards until the next organization meeting.

8. Mission Statement

FURTHER, that the Board of Education adopt the Mission Statement as follows:

The River Edge School District is a partnership of students, parents, staff, and community members. We are dedicated to providing a supportive environment in which all students can reach their maximum academic potential, while developing as responsible citizens who respect individuality. Our goals will be achieved because:

- curriculum and instruction are aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards
- all decisions reflect the academic, social/emotional and physical needs of pre-K to sixth grade students
- cooperation and on-going communication exist between the school district and the community
- school administrators and the Board of Education work together to assess and adjust procedures in response to new mandates and the changing needs of the community

9. Designation of Depositories & Signature Authorizations

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate the Columbia Bank as the depository for funds for the Board of Education.

FURTHER, that the Board Secretary/Business Administrator and the Treasurer of School Monies be authorized and directed to maintain accounts for and on behalf of the Board in Columbia Bank and

FURTHER, that the Board of Education official warrants be signed by three of the following five:

President, Vice President, Board Secretary/Business Administrator, Treasurer of School Monies, Superintendent of Schools

**10. Signature Authorization – Taxes, Payroll, Insurance**

FURTHER, that the President or Vice President in his/her absence, and the Board Secretary/Business Administrator or Superintendent in his/her absence, and the Treasurer of School Monies, be authorized and directed to execute warrants without further action on the part of the Board of the payment, when due, for salaries of all employees of the Board and for withholding taxes, pension funds, medical insurance plans, property insurance, Social Security and New Jersey Unemployment Insurance.

**11. Office Account Signatures**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education authorize the following individuals to approve the Petty Cash Reimbursements:

- Louise Napolitano, Custodian of Petty Cash
- Louise Napolitano, Board Secretary/Business Administrator
- Dr. Tova Ben-Dov, Superintendent of Schools (until March 1, 2021)

FURTHER, that the maximum allowable amount per warrant be established at \$125.00 providing all necessary claims are found to be in order according to law.

**12. Designation of Board Auditor, and**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Lerch Vinci & Higgins, as Board Auditor until June 30, 2021.

**13. Designation Board Attorney**

WHEREAS, the law firm of Fogarty & Hara, Esqs., has the expertise and experience to provide professional services to the River Edge Board of Education; and,

WHEREAS, the Board is desirous of appointing the law firm of Fogarty & Hara, Esqs, to provide professional services to the Board;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the River Edge Board of Education appoints the law firm of Fogarty & Hara, Esqs., as the Board Attorney until June 30, 2021 at the following rates: \$175.00 Partner and \$155.00 Associate.

**14. Designation Board Architect**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate DiCara Rubino Architects, as Architect of Record until June 30, 2021 at an hourly rate of \$175 Principal, \$165 Senior Associate Architect, and \$140 Project Architect/Engineer until June 30, 2021.

**15. Designation Board Insurance Agency**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Brown and Brown Advisors of Lambertville, New Jersey as the Broker of Record for Dental Benefits.

**16. Designation Bond Attorney**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Wilentz, Goldman, and Spitzer as Board Bond Attorney until June 30, 2021.

**17. Designation School District Consulting Physician**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Dr. Christopher Nicpon as Board School Physician until the June 30, 2021 at a rate of \$3,500.

**18. Custodian of Public Records**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Louise Napolitano as Custodian of Public Records until June 30, 2021.

**19. Designation 504 Coordinator**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Alrick Douglas until June 30, 2021 and Tara Malkowski from September 1, 2021 until the next organization meeting as 504 Coordinators for Roosevelt School and Janel Blake for Cherry Hill School as 504 Coordinator until the next organization meeting.

**20. Designation Attendance Officer**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Denise Heitman, Attendance Officer, for a yearly stipend of \$500.00 until the next organization meeting.

**21. Designation Homeless Student Liaison**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education approve Eric James, Homeless Student Liaison, for the River Edge School District until the next organization meeting.

**22. Designation District Anti-Bullying Coordinator**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Eric James, District Anti-Bullying Coordinator, until the next organization meeting.

**23. Designation District School Safety Specialist**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education approve Michael Henzel, District School Safety Specialist, for the River Edge School District until the next organization meeting

**24. Designation District Pest Management Coordinator**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Stan Stevens as the Integrated Pest Management Coordinator until the next organization meeting.

**25. AHERA Coordinator**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Environmental Design, Inc. to become the designated party to ensure compliance with the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) until the next organization meeting.

**26. Designation Treasurer of School Funds**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education designate Antoinette Kelly as Treasurer of School funds until the next organization meeting.

**27. Designate Purchasing Agent**

WHEREAS, the recent changes to the Public School Contracts Law gave Boards of Education the ability to increase their bid threshold up to \$44,000; and

WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3A, permits an increase in the bid threshold if a Qualified Purchasing Agent is appointed as well as granted the authorization to negotiate and award such contracts below the bid threshold: and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 5:34-5 et seq. establishes the criteria for qualifying as Qualified Purchasing Agent; and

WHEREAS, Louise Napolitano possesses the designation of Qualified Purchasing Agent as issued by the Director of the Division of Local Government Services in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:34-5 et seq.: and

WHEREAS, River Edge Board of Education desires to increase the bid threshold as provided in N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the governing body of the River Edge Board of Education in the County of Bergen, in the State of New Jersey hereby increases its bid threshold to \$44,000; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the governing body hereby appoints Louise Napolitano as the Qualified Purchasing Agent to exercise the duties of a purchasing agent pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-2b, with specific relevance to the authority, responsibility, and accountability of the purchasing activity of the Board of Education; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in accordance with the N.J.A.C. 5:34-5.2 the Board of Education Secretary is hereby authorized and directed to forward a certified copy of this resolution and a copy of Louise Napolitano's certification to the Director of the Division of Local Government Services.

- 28.** Move to authorize the Business Administrator/Board Secretary to seek sealed bids, Educational Data Services, county contract, and/or state contract for all goods and services until the next organizational meeting.

**29. Membership in Bergen County Region V**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education continue its membership in the Bergen County Region V Council for Special Education, does hereby accept, adopt and agree to comply with the Region V by-laws; designates the District Superintendent as its representative to Region V; and empowers her to cast all votes and take all other actions necessary to represent its interest in Region V; until the next organization meeting and

FURTHER, approve the Joint Transportation Agreement for all River Edge students who are transported through Region V.

### **30. Tax Shelter Annuity Sales Companies**

FURTHER, that the Board of Education approve the following to solicit sales to district employees for 403b and 457 retirement plans for the 2020-2021 school year:

Aspire Financial Services  
Equitable Financial  
Security Benefit  
Union Central Life Insurance Company

**Motion by: Mr. Sim Seconded by: Ms. Doyle**

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

### **SPECIAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**Public Comments on Agenda Items** - None

#### **Presentation of Staff and Parent Survey Results**

Dr. Ben-Dov started the presentation with a brief background. In late November we administrated a survey to both parents and staff. We did not receive enough responses so we gave it another week. We doubled our responses and we analyzed the survey answers statistically but also read all the comments. We read every single response and derived from them themes. From the themes we established actionable items and began to work on them immediately. We presented those results with the beginning of our themes and actionable items to the Pandemic Response Teams. Now we have additional plans to address the actionable items. Dr. Ben-Dov shared them with the board before our holiday break along with a potential plan that will be discussed tonight. Mr. Werner presented the statistical results for all the questions for the staff and the parent surveys. Dr. Ben-Dov presented the actionable themes and actionable items.

As some of the suggestions that were offered in the surveys, such as eliminating virtual Wednesday or creating virtual and in-person teachers weren't acceptable to most people, Dr. Ben-Dov is exploring the possibility of proposing a new plan to get more in-person students into school.

As more people opted to be virtual recently the plan proposes combining cohorts and having our students in-person on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday in school. This is being explored for grades K-6. In this plan the K-1 students who come every day and whose short schedules weren't favored in the surveys would also attend Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday 8:25-1:15 just like grades 2-6. She explained that we need to know how many people are interested in this to see if the plan could work for all. If the plan is possible it will require some movement of classes into large spaces, changes of related arts, more custodial assistance, and additional purchase of material. To try to do this, we are requesting parental commitment of learning designation for virtual or in-person for three months. She stated we will not compromise the safety of our staff and students. We are trying to get as many in-person students back into our district for in-person learning but we'll only know if this is possible after parents respond to the one question survey about their choice. Next week when we have the results, we will have two meetings. Two separate meetings for the Pandemic Response Teams for each school. The Pandemic Response Teams will review the numbers and will help us make a recommendation about what we can and cannot do. If it isn't possible to do for all we may consider doing it for only some bands of grades across the district. All questions that were asked were answered by Dr. Ben-Dov. A copy of this presentation will be uploaded to our district website.



## **REPORTS**

### **SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Ben-Dov reported on the following:

- Dr. Ben-Dov welcomed everyone back to 2021 and thanked everyone for their cooperation and hard work upon returning back from winter break. Upon our return, we did have a couple of positive covid-19 cases that were contracted over the break. These cases were all virtual students. Between September and today we had a total of 23 positive cases which is 1.5% of our total population of students and staff that are both in-person and virtual. Everyone has recovered or is in the stages of recovering.
- Dr. Ben-Dov read the Violence, Vandalism and Harassment Intimidation and Bullying report which comes from the Student Safety Data Report. As reported to the State, our reporting period 1 (July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020) indicates no HIB investigations or reports for this period. Dr. Ben-Dov discussed some of the HIB training and proactive programs being implemented by the River Edge School District.
- The district will be pursuing a multi-year goal in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. This goal is very dear to Dr. Ben-Dov and she would like to get it started before she retires in March. Dr. Ben-Dov made a connection with a representative through Schoolboards, Vincent DeLucia who introduced her to Dr. Penelope Lattimer. Dr. Lattimer met with Ms. Moran and Dr. Ben-Dov. She submitted a proposal to us. We will lay out the details after our next meeting with her on Friday. This will be a consultation on how to proceed in the near future with establishing and implementing this goal.

### **PRINCIPAL**

Mr. Henzel reported on the following:

- As an alternative to our Odyssey of the Mind participation, River Edge Schools will be holding our own spontaneous problem solving competition. There will be coaching and practice sessions run by Mrs. Hafers leading up the competition which will be held on February 23rd and February 24th. Since the competition will be held via Zoom there will only be verbal spontaneous type problems used.
- There will be a Professional Development Session for all staff on Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>. It will focus on Classroom Strategies for Engaging Learners and Managing Student Behavior during Remote Learning. It will be presented by Michelle Lockwood.
- All staff will be participating in training on cybersecurity awareness. Staff will learn about best practices and concepts when it comes to keeping their personal information safe on the Internet.
- The first day of Community Buddies was today for Roosevelt School and Cherry Hill School. It is off to a great start. Students in first and sixth grade meet once a week, on virtual Wednesdays, during community time to foster social and emotional growth. The program was designed to promote leadership skills for sixth graders and to offer a more welcoming environment for our first graders. Students are placed in small breakout

rooms with adult support as they participate in activities coordinated by the Pupil Assistance Counselors. Mr. Henzel thanked Mr. Douglas and Ms. Blake for their hard work on this.

### **BOARD SECRETARY**

Mrs. Napolitano reported on the following:

- We are working on the Mid-Year Budget Review now and it will be sent to the County Office next week for review.
- We are working on the budget for the 2021-2022 school year. The Administrators have met and have gone over the Budget Calendar and started preparing their budgets for the 2021-2022 school year.

### **PRESIDENT**

Ms. Kang reported on the following:

- Ms. Kang thanked the board members for electing her as the River Edge Board President. She thanked Mr. Herbst for serving as the Board President for the last two years, his hard work, and his leadership.

### **COMMITTEES**

Ms. Dansky stated the Finance and Facilities Committee met on December 7<sup>th</sup>. They discussed the 2021-2022 Budget Calendar, completed projects, upcoming projects, presentations, and review of purchasing procedures presented to Region V employees. Region V billing procedures, and future topics were also discussed.

Mr. Sim stated the Personnel and Management Committee that met on December 7<sup>th</sup>. They discussed the status of current River Edge employees, surveys for staff and parents, potential plans and challenges for hybrid model moving forward, potential plans and challenges for virtual model in case of prolonged closure, staff absenteeism, the challenge of obtaining leave replacement personnel and subs, as well as the status of the Region V office.

Ms. Kang stated Curriculum and Instruction Committee met on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Moran, Mr. Werner, and Ms. Rosen presented on the beginning of the year assessments on DIBELS and LinkIt! They also spoke about the new Gifted and Talented policy and the legislations that came in from Governor Murphy. This discussion focused on how River Edge is adapting G&T programming to meet the requirements of this policy.

### **MOTIONS TO BE ACTED UPON**

#### **A. ADMINISTRATION/POLICY**

1. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes of November 18, 2020.

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

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

2. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of December 2, 2020.

**Motion by: Ms. Brown Seconded by: Ms. Doyle**

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

3. That the Board of Education approve the staff development and travel as per the schedules for January 2021 including relevant mileage reimbursement. (Addendum)
4. That the Board of Education approve the completion of the following emergency drills:

School	Dates
Cherry Hill School	December 11, 2020 Fire Drill December 14, 2020 Shelter in Place December 15, 2020 Fire Drill December 21, 2020 Shelter in Place
Roosevelt School	December 7, 2020 Shelter in Place December 11, 2020 Fire Drill December 15, 2020 Fire Drill December 18, 2020 Shelter in Place

5. That the Board of Education approve the Violence, Vandalism and Harassment Intimidation and Bullying Report and HIB Training Report for Reporting Period 1. (July 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020)
6. That the Board of Education approve the Health and Safety Evaluation of Schools Buildings Checklist Statement of Assurance for the 2020-2021 school year.

**Motion by: Ms. Doyle Seconded by: Mr. Sim**

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

**B. CURRICULUM/EDUCATION - None**

**C. BUILDINGS & GROUNDS - None**

**D. FINANCE/GRANTS/GIFTS**

1. That the Board of Education approve the bills & claims dated December 2020 totaling \$782,253.27 including checks #44014 through #44076. Payrolls dated November 13, 2020 and November 30, 2020, totaling \$1,248,039.04 issued therefore, a copy of such warrants list are attached as part of these minutes. (Addendum)
2. That the Board of Education approve the Budget Transfers for the school year 2020-2021 as of November 30, 2020. (Addendum)
3. That the River Edge Board of Education approve the Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports for the period ending November 30, 2020.

Further, we certify that as of November 30, 2020 after review of the secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the districts financial obligation for the remainder of the fiscal year. (Addendum)

4. That the Board of Education approve a donation from Joy and Jan Holmstrup to be used towards the purchase of children books for the mobile cart in memory of Erika Steinbauer in the amount of \$100.00.

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

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

Nays: None

#### **E. PERSONNEL**

1. That the Board of Education, with recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Meagan Yorio, Literacy/Social Studies Instructional Coach & Supervisor, effective on or about February 16, 2021 through June 30, 2021, as per employment contract on file in the Board Office.
2. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Beth Rosen to continue as the Leave Replacement for the Literacy/Social Studies Instructional Coach & Supervisor through on or about February 12, 2021 at an agreed upon per diem rate.
3. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve an extended child care leave of absence for Kaitlyn DeVasto to commence on February 4, 2021 through June 30, 2021.
4. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Jason Funabashi, BA, Step 1 to continue as a Leave Replacement Teacher through June 30, 2021.
5. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Harrison Mashig, MA, Step 1 to continue as a Leave Replacement Teacher through March 12, 2021.
6. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Christine Morales as a Leave Replacement Teacher, MA, step 2 to commence on February 1, 2021 through April 1, 2021.
7. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Kevin Monahan, School Custodian, Step 3, from January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021.
8. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve a Maternity/Disability leave of absence for Alice Buttery to commence on or about June 1, 2021 through June 30, 2021

9. That the Board of Education approve the following for Cycle II of the Post Dismissal Instructional Academy for the 2020-2021 School Year, as per contract.

**Roosevelt**

Katelyn Mills  
Christine Morales  
Lauren Proda

**Cherry Hill**

Jason Funabashi  
Nancy Jencsik  
Kelsey Lapp  
Harrison Mashig  
Tiffany Petzinger

10. That the Board of Education approve the Job Description for the Literacy/Social Studies Instructional Coach & Supervisor. (Addendum)
11. That the Board of Education approve the Job Description for the Math/Science Instructional Coach & Supervisor. (Addendum)
12. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the following as Substitute Teachers for the 2020-2021 School Year:

Diane Forster  
Michael Gallo  
Wendy McGinley  
Christine Morales  
Danielle Scher

13. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Steven Luca as a Student Teacher to commence on January 11, 2021 through May 7, 2021.
14. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the request for a medical leave of absence to an employee whose name is on file in the Superintendent's office to commence on or about January 20, 2021 through March 24, 2021.

**Motion by: Mr. Sim Seconded by: Mr. Herbst**

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

**F. RIVER EDGE SPECIAL EDUCATION**

1. That the Board of Education approve the Parent Training Agreement between Region II and Non-member Districts for the 2020-2021 school year.

**G. REGION V ADMINISTRATION & TRANSPORTATION**

1. That the Board of Education approve the bills & claims dated December 2020 totaling \$744,367.89 including checks #74135 through #74232.

**Motion by: Mr. Herbst Seconded by: Mr. Sim**

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

## **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Brown asked if there is a program in which parents in our community can get assistance with increasing bandwidth in their homes. Are we checking to make sure the disruption with the Chromebooks is not internal or is the household bandwidth causing this disruption? Mrs. Napolitano stated we looked into purchasing hot spots for any students that do not have any internet at all. Families can get assistance with Verizon and Optimum regarding their bandwidth. The families have to apply for this through Verizon or Optimum. Mrs. Heitman stated that we can do some more research and get more answers for the parents. We also have help documents that suggest speed tests for parents under our Technology support page. We offer trouble shoot information for the parents as well and she encouraged them to contact the help line.

Mr. Herbst thanked the board for the last two years for trusting him as the Board President. It was a position he took very serious. He tried to do his best for all of the students, teachers, and everyone in the community. He is very thankful to have had that opportunity. It was his honor tonight to nominate Ms. Kang as the Board President.

## **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

Ms. Joohyon (River Edge Resident): congrats Eun. Ms. Kang responded thank you for your support. I appreciate it.

Beth Gautier (River Edge Resident): congratulations Eun. Ms. Kang responded thank you for your support. I appreciate it.

Beth Chinigo (River Edge Resident): congrats Eun. Ms. Kang responded thank you for your support. I appreciate it.

Ariana Hastings (River Edge Resident): congratulations Eun. Ms. Kang responded thank you for your support. I appreciate it.

Su Lee (River Edge Resident): congrats. Ms. Kang responded thank you for your support. I appreciate it.

Brianne Etter (711 Elm Avenue): congrats Eun. Ms. Kang responded thank you for your support. I appreciate it.

Irina Z (River Edge Resident): the problem with in person is that it's not really in person. It's more like zoom at school's premises right now.

Jenni Shahin (River Edge Resident): with that being said-I hope that parents don't "reserve" the spot in hybrid and not send their child for even one day of the entire session. In my opinion, that should not be allowed and is a waste of precious space and school resources.

Beth Barone (River Edge Resident): thank you Dr. Ben-Dov for addressing the need for commitment in choosing hybrid or virtual.

Patti Cordts (River Edge Resident): who is on the pandemic response teams. Ms. Kang responded that information is on each schools website.

Lauren Thifault (River Edge Resident): can the minutes from the PRT be published so we can understand all of the considerations? Dr. Ben-Dov responded yes, we can complete a general summary.

Brianne Etter (711 Elm Avenue): how was the pandemic response team chosen? Dr. Ben-Dov responded there were specific jobs that had to be represented. That was the basis of it and the principals chose a few parents from each school.

Dana's IPad (River Edge Resident): just curious why the quarantine is 14 days when the CDC only requires 10 as of today? Dr. Ben-Dov responded the CDC changed its requirement because there was no compliance in work places. The true safer way of doing it is 14 days. The New Jersey Department of Health did not take that out so we will follow the New Jersey Department of Health.

Jen K (River Edge Resident): irrespective of what the majority of parents (who are not experts on science or know the best guidelines for dealing with a pandemic) where is the science based decision aspect of moving to a 4 day in person learning? Especially given that we are in a surge and a new strain of the virus is spreading. The numbers in March 2020 is comparable to the numbers now. The majority voice of the parents is not the voice of science. Every single child and parent wants in person learning-that's perhaps not the right decision. Dr. Ben-Dov responded we have always given parents, from the beginning, the option with the knowledge that in person is better especially for younger children. If we had the room, we would have been in for four days already. There is really no change in our approach. The change came from the fact that more students are virtual now and we are considering combining the cohorts if the numbers allow it and if it's safe to do so using larger spaces available.

Lauren Thifault (River Edge Resident): if we do move ahead with the February-April what are the numbers that can prevent us from moving ahead from a covid perspective, not based on the parent responses? Dr. Ben-Dov responded we look at the recommendations of the Health Department.

KA (River Edge Resident): of the 23 reported cases, how many were teachers or staff and how many were students. Dr. Ben-Dov responded we cannot divulge that information.

Brianne Etter (711 Elm Avenue): The Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC are in favor of in person learning.

Jen K (River Edge Resident): Several kids (mine and my neighbor's kids) have reported that the 6 feet distance is not maintained especially during mask breaks. Some children snack longer while working during class meaning the mask is lowered. This is an on-going pattern. How will the school ensure that teachers are enforcing these safety measures? Dr. Ben-Dov responded that Administrators walk through the buildings all the time and observe and monitor the situation. If a parent hears that this is happening in a specific class, please call your school principal and they will look into it immediately.

Emma Chen (River Edge Resident): what is the percentage of parents who would keep the current in person learning days instead of proposed 4 days. Dr. Ben-Dov responded she isn't sure. We will come back and let everyone know whether the 4 day option that is being proposed is feasible based on the responses and spaces we have.

Scott Levy (River Edge Resident): you can contact your internet provider to assess home's internet capacity. They will recommend the most optimum service for home and situation. Optimum and FIOS have this.

Lauren Thifault (River Edge Resident): what are the safety precautions/ standards that need to be held to move to in person? Meaning the CDC suggests to have Plexiglas/dividers where 6 feet cannot be maintained. Dr. Ben-Dov responded our staff and some parents would not be comfortable if we did not adhere to the standards we established initially.

Jenni Shahin (River Edge Resident): is it necessary for hybrid children to bring their Chromebook when they are physically in the building. There seems to be a lack of consistency on this between grades and classes. I do hope that especially if they K and 1 increases their time in person, they will not need to bring their Chromebook into school. One of the benefits of being in person does not need to be on the screen. Dr. Ben-Dov responded we will first need to see where we stand and then all of those details will be worked out.

Kate Daibes (River Edge Resident): I know there was a lot of discussion about getting the younger K-1 kids in school more, but they are already in 4 days. I think they should be in for more than 2 hours, but why is there not more attention to the older grades going in more than 2 days with hybrid. Ms. Kang responded with the new plan, it is for all students.

Ryan Ungaro (River Edge Resident): if parents need to commit to a decision for hybrid or virtual by Friday, will there be an opportunity for those who choose hybrid to reconsider if it ultimately means that their child's teacher will be switched. Dr. Ben-Dov responded there will be no switching of teachers at this point.

River Edge Family (River Edge Resident): is it true that Roosevelt School gets some form of recess? Is so, why not Cherry Hill School? Ms. Kang responded this is a question to ask the principals directly.

Kristen Apa (175 Voorhis Avenue): has a committee been formed for the Superintendent search? If so, who is on it? Has an outside firm or NJ School Board been hired to do the search. Mr. Herbst responded at this time we will be looking for an Interim Superintendent to take over on March 1<sup>st</sup>. We are pursuing all our options for the next permanent Superintendent.

Elizabeth Belfiore (159 Valley Road): I'm having a difficult time with having to make a decision that is locked in for months without further information. Our family avoids large crowds/gatherings such as going to mass in person which is a big deal to us. I'd hate to make a decision to send my child into school to find out her classroom is now in the gym with three other classes. Will snacks be allowed again? Mask breaks? How large will the classes be? How will families make such important decisions with such little information? Dr. Ben-Dov responded the details will have to come after parents respond. We are willing to invest all of the work that is required to bring more children in person to school. But such a decision has to be based on parental commitment, in order to know if it can work. There has to be some flexibility from people who want their children more in school.

Patti Cordts (River Edge Resident): I think it would be a great idea to have a member of the River Edge Board of Health to be on the Pandemic Team. We are a group of healthcare professionals who can contribute our medical expertise in all covid related guidelines. Dr. Ben-Dov ask who the group represented as our obligation is to follow the directives of the local Dept. of health. She stated that she did ask the nurses to ask Ms. Faustini if she could participate in some of the Pandemic Response Teams. Maybe the request can be repeated for the upcoming Pandemic Response Teams.

Michelle Bressack (River Edge Resident): why doesn't 6<sup>th</sup> grade get recess at Roosevelt yet the younger grades do? Mr. Henzel responded 6<sup>th</sup> grade recess at Roosevelt School is from 10:30AM to 10:45 AM.

Ariana phone (River Edge Resident): how is the next superintendent decided though? The Board does a search only and hires someone? Mr. Herbst responded we have not fully decided the process at this point and time. Ms. Dansky reviewed how the search process worked in the past.



Lauren Carrabs (River Edge Resident): with kindergarten registration coming up, it's important for parents to know what the schedule/environment will look like in September. Is the plan and goal of school officials to move us forward in a return to a pre covid school environment? Dr. Ben-Dov responded she would certainly hope that it would be possible by then.

Colon (River Edge Resident and Teacher): my children have been virtual all year. We are fortunate that my husband was able to rearrange his work schedule for the time being. If he is told he needs to go back full time, I will have no other choice but to put my children back in school. Would they be denied coming back if this happens in the 3 month period? Dr. Ben-Dov responded that in order to proceed with such a plan we have to make that decision firmly to be three months. If the Principals encounter a true hardship situation with a family they will discuss it with the incoming Superintendent and see if anything is considered a true hardship and what that does to the make-up of the class.

Dana Hosey (River Edge Resident): will it ever be possible to have no Plexiglas if 6 feet apart. Just curious why both needed? If you have masks why need the box? Dr. Ben-Dov responded the barrier is an extra measure that makes people more comfortable. Every layer of safety we can bring into the situation is helpful.

Lauren Carrabs (River Edge Resident): have we thought about opening a childcare in the school's available space for teachers to bring their children for free/low cost. Dr. Ben-Dov responded this is not allowed. It was explored very early with our attorney.

Lisa's iPhone (271 Midland Avenue): how do you (admin) balance the needs or wants of the teachers and the needs of the parents/students? It seems like many teachers want to do virtual while many parents want to do in-person learning. Some of the survey answers were different from the teacher perspective versus the parent perspective. How do you make everyone happy? Dr. Ben-Dov responded that the one thing she is sure of is the fact that she can never make everyone happy. We do the best we can with the needs of the students in mind and while protecting, as best we can, our hard working staff.

Carmen Philbin (219 Dorchester Road): with the new plan, will the students be allowed snacks or lunch and will this be in class? (My child is currently virtual so I am unsure of the current plan). Dr. Ben-Dov responded there will still be snack but no lunch or lunch period.

Patti Cordts (River Edge Resident): River Edge Board of Health is having an emergency meeting this week because we want to get involved with the school. We feel our group want to be accessible to the school and school nurses. We want the protocols by the CDC to be followed. We want to be safe and follow the CDC guidelines with keeping the children in school. We would love to be part of the Pandemic Team. Virtual learning is not helpful for the sixth graders because we need to prepare them for Middle School. Let's try to get the sixth graders in the building full time. Dr. Ben-Dov responded you may want to approach your school principal to see if there is any room for another parent on the Team.

Lauren Carrabs (River Edge Resident): We have learned that many schools in neighboring districts with consistent schedules and longer school days are not adhering to the 6 ft. apart rule especially since masks and plastic dividers are being used.

Brianne Etter (711 Elm Avenue): why do we need to keep the virtual Wednesday? Dr. Ben-Dov responded we explained that extensively.

Michelle Bressack (River Edge Resident): yes, I am curious as well about Wednesday. What is the purpose of it? Is deep cleaning happening? It makes no sense. Ms. Kang responded deep cleaning is still happening every Wednesday.

Kristen Apa (175 Voorhis Avenue): could Wednesdays be added as a possible phase 2? The survey was responded to during the hybrid program. Responses may have been different given a M,T,TH,F week. Dr. Ben-Dov responded from the results of the survey it is very important for everyone including the staff, deep cleaning, and neutralizing and “making even” the virtual students with the in person students that day. That’s Iso the only time that the teacher sees her or his entire class.

Charlene Malki (473 Windsor Road): I just want to voice that I fully disagree with the suggestion of taking the window barriers down or shortening the 6 ft. space, especially if we are trying to increase the number of students and days in school.

Christine O’ Keefe (River Edge Teacher): River Edge has been so fortunate this year because we are one of the few schools in Bergen County that have very limited all virtual time. Most of the year we have been in a hybrid model. She wanted to let the board know it is appreciated how hard everyone is working in keeping the schools open and we need to think carefully how hard we want to push a larger group back and not be as safe as we were.

Kerry Milnes (River Edge Resident): we should be keeping the children as safe as can be.

Kate Daibes (River Edge Resident): you seemed to mention that the lower grades had priority with trying to eliminate the cohorts. The older grades have and are suffering as well. Ms. Kang responded first we need to see what the numbers are and then decisions can be made based on what parents decide after Friday.

Nevin Werner (River Edge Teacher): wants to reassure, from a data perspective. Learning loss is not exhibited strongly in River Edge. Students are shoeing progress and gain on their assessments.

Kristen Apa (175 Voorhis Avenue): teachers are front line/essential workers, does the school have information from the state regarding their vaccination schedule and protocol (should they choose)? Dr. Ben-Dov responded her association tried to request some information from her Executive County Superintendent who he had no information. We are considered 1B.

Scott Levy (River Edge Resident): this could be a spring time decision don’t rush.

Lauren Cerullo (162 Valley Road): I appreciate the push to get the kids in now. I don’t understand the need to wait any longer. If we push to spring then it will get pushed to the fall. Ms. Kang responded parents have until Friday to make their decision and we will go from there.

Jen Kim (River Edge Resident): Thank you Dr. Ben-Dov, BOE, Admin and everyone that has been involved in creating these plans for our district. Nothing is an easy decision, especially when it affects the entire community.

Chris Sullivan (River Edge Resident): some parents think there is a prioritization of kindergarten/first grade kids and combining the cohorts verses the older students, there is a significant difference in structural time for the younger kids it’s more difficult for them to learn independently so that is one of the reasons to change from the current cohort model. The new plan applies to get the kids in school more for in person learning for grades 2-6. Is that correct? Dr. Ben-Dov responded yes, she is hoping to get everyone in k-6. This is based on recent trends in terms of people going more virtually but we won’t know if it’s possible for all grades until we have the numbers.

Maya (River Edge Resident): Thank you BOE for working tirelessly. We understand it is not easy to please everyone.

Lauren Carrabs (River Edge Resident): Congrats, Eun

Jen K (River Edge Resident): Thank you to the board for working tirelessly and responding to all of the questions.

Arabia Family (River Edge Resident): what happens if we get a majority of parents voting to open the 4 days in only one school and not the other? Will that one school open and the other keep the two days a week cohort schedule? Dr. Ben-Dov responded unless the board directs her otherwise she would not recommend that. If we decide to do something very different in one school than another you are altering significantly the way education is being delivered in River Edge schools.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Motion made by Ms. Dansky, seconded by Ms. Brown to convene into closed session at 10:15 PM.

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

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

### **RECONVENE**

Motion made by Mr. Sim, seconded by Mr. Herbst to reconvene and adjourn the regular public meeting at 11:30 PM.

All Ayes

Louise Napolitano  
Board Secretary/Business Administrator