

**RIVER EDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**RIVER EDGE, NEW JERSEY 07661**

*“Building Bright Futures Together”*

**Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – December 2, 2020**

**6:00 PM Public Meeting**

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 6:05 PM.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Ms. Dansky read the Mission Statement.

**ROLL CALL**

Present on roll call were Ms. Brown, Ms. Dansky, Ms. Juskeliene, Ms. Kang, Mr. Sim, Mr. Herbst. Also present were Dr. Ben-Dov, Mr. Henzel and approximately 48 members of the public.

Ms. Doyle was absent

Mrs. Napolitano was absent

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE**

Dr. Ben-Dov 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:

- River Edge Schools have been learning virtually as per the Board of Health’s recommendation since November 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will re-open schools on Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. All staff and Dr. Ben-Dov, are looking forward to seeing students in person! Dr. Ben-Dov hopes we can manage to stay open. She urges everyone to take the necessary precautions. She stated we had three additional positive Covid-19 cases which will not affect our opening date on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Ben-Dov likes to write the Community Advisory Notice even when it does not affect school closure because some individuals may not be affected in school but may have been active in the community and become infected. That will result in contact tracing from the Department of Health.
- Dr. Ben-Dov expressed her gratitude for the hard work on the part of all our staff that it takes to provide for our students and their instruction.

- Report cards and virtual conferences are on Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>. The report card portal will open on Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Ben-Dov urges all parents to sign up so teachers will have their schedules and can prepare for the virtual conferences.
- There was a Parent Academy on November 23<sup>rd</sup> on Assessments and Report Cards. Ms. Moran, Mr. Werner, and Mrs. Rosen presented on these topics. Parents really benefited from this meeting. They gained an understanding of the assessments leading up to different goals set up for them and benchmarks students need to achieve. Since we developed these report cards four years ago and we have many new parents who weren't part of the information process we felt that we needed to clarify our way of reporting achievement. The parents who attended or watched the presentation on the website learned about our report cards that are based on standards and benchmarks, versus the traditional, more subjective report cards that featured grades.
- There will be a Parent Academy on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM on Proactive Tips for Behavior for parents of students in Grades Pre-K-6. Our presenter for this meeting will be Michelle Lockwood. She presented for us a couple of years ago, giving tips to teachers and parents about handling behavior and did a fantastic job.
- All parents and staff were sent a survey to fill out on November 20<sup>th</sup>. We gave everyone two weeks to fill out the surveys. We have been monitoring what came back so far. Dr. Ben-Dov believes that because of the holiday, people may have not have responded as quickly. We have a total of 75 staff members and 173 parents who responded so far. Dr. Ben-Dov is hoping more people will respond to the survey as it closes on Friday. If we don't have enough responses by Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> we will postpone the survey by one additional week.
- The December 16<sup>th</sup> board meeting has been cancelled. The next board meeting will be on Wednesday, January 6, 2021.
- Dr. Ben-Dov wishes everyone a happy and healthy holiday season. She asked everyone to be mindful of traveling and of large gatherings.

## **PRINCIPAL**

Mr. Henzel reported on the following:

- Parent-teacher conferences are next week. Parents have been notified to sign up for a conference. Grades kindergarten through fourth will sign up through the Genesis Parent Portal and grades fifth and sixth through SignUpGenius. Kindergarten through fourth grade conferences will take place on Tuesday, December 8th, and Thursday, December 10th. Fifth and sixth grade conferences will be on December 8th, 9th, and 10th.
- Roosevelt School student council is conducting a food drive through the Helping Hands Food Pantry. The food drive will last through December 14th. If you would like to participate, bins are placed outside Roosevelt School under the portico on Summit Avenue. Some of the needed items include: canned fruits and vegetables, flour, sugar, oil, pancake mix, and personal care items.
- Mr. Henzel thanked Mr. Douglas and Mrs. Blake. He stated they have been meeting with all grade levels to share short video presentations with a follow up discussion to spread awareness and remove any stigma towards anyone impacted by Covid-19.
- Mr. Henzel is looking forward to Monday and Thursday of next week to welcome back all the students.

## **BOARD SECRETARY**

Dr. Ben-Dov reported for Mrs. Napolitano on the following:

- The 2021-2022 budget process has started. The development has begun with the budget calendar. Dr. Ben-Dov made a request to the principals to give her their anticipated projected enrollment. They will begin to look, analyze it, and see how this will affect the budget in terms of salaries, space, and materials.
- Lerch, Vinci, and Higgins will come and start the annual audit of the RE School district on Monday, December 14th
- Mrs. Napolitano will be able to report on all of the grants and other financial matters at the next board meeting.

## **PRESIDENT**

Mr. Herbst reported on the following:

- The New Jersey School Boards Delegate Assembly was held on November 21st. Mr. Herbst stated Mr. Sim attended this meeting and asked if he could report on that meeting. Mr. Sim reported on the New Jersey School Boards Association Delegate Assembly. New Jersey School Boards Association believes that a board member whose seat is not up for re-election in the upcoming election cycle should resign the seat they currently have before submitting a nominating petition to become a candidate for a board seat other than the seat currently held by the member on the same board. It was adopted/approved by the delegation. New Jersey School Boards Association did not have this language in their manual so they recommended an adoption of this resolution. The final amendment was approved by the delegation. They also mentioned that the virtual New Jersey School Board Association convention was very successful and the attendance was more than the in-person convention.
- Mr. Herbst received the re-cap of the last board meeting from Mr. Matt Lee recently. Mr. Herbst will review it and will begin to revise action plans for the board goals shortly.

## **COMMITTEES**

Ms. Dansky attended the Board of Directors Meeting on November 13<sup>th</sup>. The most important information she received at the meeting was there was a lot of talk about the virtual New Jersey School Boards Association Workshop, which was very successful. She reminded the board members they may access anything from the workshop for a year from the time of the workshop.

Ms. Dansky attended a CAL (County Association Leadership) Meeting on mandated assessments. We are hoping the assessments will be waived, but it has to be handled on the federal level. We are waiting for some guidance on this. The tone of the meeting indicated that standardized assessments at this point are meaningless. In-house assessments make sense and districts are doing them. There is nothing to compare with for these standardized tests. The presenters felt strongly that there is a big push to have that information in terms of students' progress ascertained locally within districts rather than doing it on a state scale. There was also talk that our priorities are different right now and there needs to be recognition of that on both state and federal levels. She asked Dr. Ben-Dov about this and Dr. Ben-Dov confirmed the point of view represented at the committee by her colleagues that the NJSLA will be of little value to us at this time. She also mentioned that the new curriculum standards that are expected to be implemented next September are ill timed in her opinion given the circumstances and that the Bergen County Curriculum Consortium is appealing to the NJDOE to delay this implementation.

Ms. Dansky attended the Bergen County School Boards Association Meeting last night. The topic of the meeting was Social/Emotional needs at this time. There were two very good presentations by the New Milford Board of Education and the Superintendent of Ramsey Public Schools on the social/emotional programs and supports that they are providing within their districts. It was also mentioned that Sharon Seyler, our Legislative Advocate for Bergen County through New Jersey School Boards Association is leaving the Association after 16 years.

**MOTIONS TO BE ACTED UPON**

**A. ADMINISTRATION/POLICY**

1. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of November 11, 2020.

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

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

2. That the Board of Education approve the completion of the following emergency drills:

School	Dates
Cherry Hill School	November 2, 2020 Notification Drill November 10, 2020 Fire Drill November 17, 2020 Fire Drill
Roosevelt School	November 2, 2020 Notification Drill November 16, 2020 Fire Drill November 19, 2020 Fire Drill

3. That the Board of Education approve the following District Goals for the 2020-2021 school year.

**Goal # 1:** By June 2021, 100% of students in Grades 3 through 6 will demonstrate growth in targeted areas of English Language Arts, as per baseline data. River Edge students will demonstrate a positive percentage point increase from Form A to Form C, as per each grade level's targeted area of instruction. The overall average point increase for River Edge will be  $\geq +14.5$  points. This goal will focus on the following:

- Grade 3 - Literary Text
- Grade 4 - Literary Text
- Grade 5 - Informational Text
- Grade 6 - Informational Text

**Goal # 2:** By June 2021, 100% of students in Grades 3 through 6 will demonstrate an average growth in targeted areas of Mathematics, as per baseline data. River Edge students will demonstrate a positive percentage point increase from Form A to Form C, as per each grade level's targeted area of instruction. The overall average point increase for River Edge will be  $\geq +24.4$  points. This goal will focus on the following:

- Grade 3 - Operations & Algebraic Thinking
- Grade 4 - Fractions
- Grade 5 - Fractions
- Grade 6 - Expressions & Equations

4. That the Board of Education approve the following School Goals for the 2020-2021 school year.

### **Cherry Hill School**

**Goal # 1:** By June 2021, 100% of students in Grades 3 through 6 will demonstrate growth in targeted areas of English Language Arts, as per baseline data. Cherry Hill students will demonstrate a positive point increase from LinkIt! Form A to Form C, as per each grade level's targeted area of instruction. Historical Data for growth reflects a range for baseline score of 42-58 and an average point increase of 13 on Form C. This year the baseline range is 42-62 reflecting similar needs in a more challenging instructional environment. The overall average point increase for Cherry Hill School will be  $\geq +15.25$  points. This goal will focus on the following:

- Grade 3 - Literary Text
- Grade 4 - Literary Text
- Grade 5 - Informational Text
- Grade 6 - Informational Text

**Goal # 2:** By June 2021, 100% of students in Grades 3 through 6 will demonstrate an average growth in targeted areas of Mathematics, as per baseline data. Cherry Hill students will demonstrate a positive point increase from LinkIt! Form A to Form C, as per each grade level's targeted area of instruction. The overall average point increase for Cherry Hill School will be  $\geq +23$  points. This goal will focus on the following:

- Grade 3 - Operations & Algebraic Thinking
- Grade 4 - Fractions
- Grade 5 - Fractions
- Grade 6 - Expressions & Equations

### **Roosevelt School**

**Goal # 1:** By June 2021, 100% of students in Grades 3 through 6 will demonstrate growth in targeted areas of English Language Arts, as per baseline data. Roosevelt students will demonstrate a positive point increase from LinkIt! Form A to Form C, as per each grade level's targeted area of instruction. Historical Data for growth reflects a range for baseline score of 45-68 and an average point increase of 8 on Form C. This year the range is 47-59 reflecting the need to review skills that were not mastered in 2019-2020. With this challenge in mind, the overall average point increase for Roosevelt School will be  $\geq +13.75$  points. This goal will focus on the following:

- Grade 3 - Literary Text
- Grade 4 - Literary Text
- Grade 5 - Informational Text
- Grade 6 - Informational Text

**Goal # 2:** By June 2021, 100% of students in Grades 3 through 6 will demonstrate an average growth in targeted areas of Mathematics, as per baseline data. Roosevelt students will demonstrate a positive point increase from LinkIt! Form A to Form C, as per each grade level's targeted area of instruction. The overall average point increase for Roosevelt School will be  $\geq +25.8$  points. This goal will focus on the following:

- Grade 3 - Operations & Algebraic Thinking
- Grade 4 - Fractions
- Grade 5 - Fractions
- Grade 6 - Expressions & Equations

5. That the Board of Education approve the following Board Goals for the 2020-2021 school year.

**Goal # 1:** The Board of Education will continue to assess and evaluate options to address increasing District enrollment.

**Goal # 2:** The Board of Education will explore its partnership with stakeholder groups to broaden its engagement with the community.

**Goal # 3:** The Board of Education will continue to enhance its understanding of the District's financial reports through professional development provided by the Business Administrator, Treasurer of School Monies, and NJSBA resources.

**Goal # 4:** The Board of Education will continue to enhance its understanding of the District's operational areas through professional development.

6. **WHEREAS**, the Board of Education is meeting in public session on December 2, 2020.

**WHEREAS**, certain business transactions must necessarily be addressed during the hiatus of public sessions of the Board, including but not limited to, the offering of contracts of employment,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Superintendent of Schools is authorized to offer contracts of employment on behalf of the Board between December 2, 2020 and January 6, 2021 subject to final approval of the Board at the next Regular Public Meeting.

7. That the Board of Education approve the Business Administrator/Board Secretary to pay bills, as necessary, during the month of December which will be ratified at the next Regular Public Meeting.

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

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

Nays: None

**B. CURRICULUM/EDUCATION - None**

**C. BUILDINGS & GROUNDS - None**

**D. FINANCE/GRANTS/GIFTS - None**

**E. PERSONNEL**

1. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the retirement of Dr. Tova Ben-Dov, Superintendent, effective March 1, 2021. The Board extends warm wishes for a happy, healthy, and relaxing retirement and will forever be grateful for her leadership, work ethic, and legacy of excellence.

Mr. Herbst spoke briefly about his work on the Board with Dr. Ben-Dov since he joined the Board four years ago. He praised her legacy of excellence, hard work and dedication to the children of River Edge. He thanked her for all that she has done.

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

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

Nays: None

2. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, appoint Julie Rabinowitz, as the District Liaison to the Board of the River Edge Public Library for the 2020-2021 school year.
3. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent rescind the approval of Diana Maurice BA+15, Step 3 to continue as Leave Replacement Teacher on January 11, 2021 through June 30, 2021 and for the Building Bridges Extended School Year Program from July 1, 2021 through July 30, 2021, BA+15, Step 4.
4. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Diana Maurice BA+15, Step 2 to continue as Leave Replacement Teacher on January 11, 2021 through June 30, 2021 and for the Building Bridges Extended School Year Program from July 1, 2021 through July 30, 2021, BA+15, Step 3.
5. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Elizabeth Bovino-Jackson, ESL Teacher, effective on or about January 6, 2021 through June 30, 2021, MA, Step 7.
6. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve an extended child care leave of absence for Caitlin Montuori to continue from January 4, 2021 through June 30, 2021.
7. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Kelsey Lapp, BA, Step 1 to continue as a Leave Replacement Teacher through June 30, 2021.
8. That the Board of Education approve Abby Burns-Paterson and Alexandra McNeil for Cycle II of the Post Dismissal Instructional Academy for the 2020-2021 School Year, as per contract.
9. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Laurie Moffitt, Region V Clerical Assistant, starting on or about December 7, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

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

Ayes: Ms. Brown, Ms. Dansky, 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 - None**

### **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

Diana Richards (River Edge Teacher): what is the communication between Dr. Ben-Dov and our Board of Health? Our numbers on Covid-19 are rising. Dr. Ben-Dov responded that they made a recommendation to close for two weeks. Dr. Ben-Dov did what they recommended for us to do. It was a recommendation to reopen on Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup> which is exactly what we are doing. There were no new recommendations since then. Starting on December 7<sup>th</sup> we will do what we have done before. We will go case by case, unless a recommendation from the Department of Health tells us to do otherwise or a broader mandate is given to all of us. Dr. Ben-Dov stated that while the positivity rate in the region is high the numbers in RE are 14 cases at this time which with a population of 1,260 students and 200 employees is about 1%. This means that all are relatively safer in school than out in the community.

Beth Gautier (River Edge Resident): best of luck in your retirement, do you have any idea who will be the new superintendent? Mr. Herbst responded we will begin a search as soon as possible.

Nicole Colon (River Edge Teacher): the initial closing would not have happened if you had not reached out and questioned it, so shouldn't the same be done prior to reopening? I would feel better with a call to confirm that it is the best decision. It seems nothing happens unless we reach out. Dr. Ben-Dov responded they know everyone's concerns from both sides of the opinions. They know and have a mandate to reach out to us and make a recommendation as they see fit.

Diana Richards (River Edge Teacher): are you at all concerned that there is not enough substitute coverage as teacher will be out sick? Dr. Ben-Dov responded there is a terrible shortage of substitutes all over the County, the State, and the Country. Ms. Dansky responded this is a national problem not just a River Edge problem.

Ariana Hastings (River Edge Resident): I can be a substitute if need be. We need to figure out how to get and keep kids in school.

Beth Gautier (River Edge Resident): I am happy our kids are going to school; my kids suffer in the home environment.

Ariana Hastings (River Edge Resident): thank you for saying this Ms. Dansky.

Kate Daibes (River Edge Resident): thank you for having the schools open back up! My children desperately need it.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Motion made by Ms. Dansky, seconded by Mr. Sim to convene into closed session at 7:03 PM

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

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

### **RECONVENE**

Motion made by Ms. Brown, seconded by Ms. Kang to reconvene and adjourn the regular public meeting at 7:53 PM.

Voice vote all Ayes

Dr. Tova Ben-Dov  
Superintendent of Schools