

RIVER EDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION
RIVER EDGE, NEW JERSEY 07661

“Building Bright Futures Together”

Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – March 24, 2021
7:30 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

Ms. Kang called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM.

MISSION STATEMENT

Ms. Juskeliene read the Mission Statement.

ROLL CALL

Present on roll call were Ms. Dansky, Ms. Doyle, Mr. Herbst, Ms. Juskeliene, Mr. Sim, and Ms. Kang. Also present was Dr. Brockel, Mrs. Napolitano, Mrs. Heitman, and approximately 112 members of the public.

Ms. Brown was absent

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE

Mrs. Napolitano read the Open Public Meeting Act Notice.

SPECIAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Comment on Agenda Items – None

Presentation on the Status of Goals after Mid-Year Assessments and the Progress of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – Ms. Christine Moran, Mr. Nevin Werner, and Ms. Meagan Yorio

Ms. Moran, Mr. Werner, and Ms. Yorio gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Status of Goals after the Mid-Year Assessments and the Progress of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Goal. Ms. Moran reviewed the Goal Process for 2020-2021, the Six Performance Levels, and the District Goal 1 of English Language Arts. Mr. Werner reviewed the District Goal 2 of Mathematics and the Challenges. Ms. Yorio reviewed the Interventions and Next Steps. Ms. Moran then reviewed the progress of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. She reviewed the Highlights, Focus Areas of Professional Development Sessions, School Climate/Environment Survey Results, and Next Steps. All questions asked were answered by the Curriculum Team.

REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Brockel reported on the following:

- We have taken many steps towards an eventual normalcy. Since March 1st we have eliminated virtual Wednesday and starting on Monday, March 29th cohorts A and B will be combined for in-person learning for five days a week. We did this despite the Covid-19 Activity Level Report that remains orange in Northern New Jersey as of last week.

- We updated our Frequently Asked Questions document and travel quarantine rules for parents. We continue to monitor the recommendations of the Governor, the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and the CDC. We try to piece together conditions by which we can run our district safely and responsibly.
- Our next date for change will be on May 1st which is based on the end of the three month parent choice survey that ends on April 30th. We are potentially looking at lowering our distancing to three feet. The CDC now says that this is possible. Our staff is getting vaccinated more and more and it is a possibility that this is the direction we will go in.
- Next week we will send out a survey to families to choose in-person or virtual from May 1st through the end of the school year. We will include information on the conditions by which parents can make that decision comfortably with the survey.
- The Governor announced that he expects total school day opening with everyone in-person in the fall. We don't know if he will still allow virtual learning.
- Dr. Brockel stated he thinks we are moving in the right direction and he thinks we will be able to do even more by May 1st.

PRINCIPAL

Mrs. Heitman reported on the following:

- We had Zoom Parent Conferences on March 16th and March 18th. Many parents attended.
- This March we are celebrating many activities such as: Pi Day, March Mathness, Family Math night, and March Madness.
- Our first virtual International day at Cherry Hill School was on March 19th. We celebrated five countries, Nepal, Sweden, Israel, Serbia, and Turkey. Each parent created a video and activity. Mrs. Heitman thanked the following parents: Anu Mehra, Liz Stanković, Karen Taylor, Jane Yarar and Yael Ben Yossef. The children had a wonderful time.
- Cyber safety is scheduled for March 31st for the 5th and 6th grade students in both schools. It is live on Zoom and then there will be questions and answers for the students.
- This month many lessons surrounds women's history
- We are all looking forward to March 29th when we combine both cohorts. The teachers and custodians are working very hard to make sure everything is in place for that.
- We are working on learning more about the NJSLA Assessment. Access testing will begin on April 13th for our ELL students. The 5th Grade Science Assessment will follow. A letter will be sent out to parents to inform them of more details.
- Mrs. Heitman thanked the PTO for sharing positive teacher signs and also purchasing snacks for the staff.
- Both schools did a Trivia Activity for the teachers: It was a fun activity. Mrs. Heitman thanked the Technology Coaches who were instrumental in coordinating the teams and breakout groups. Overall it was fun for the staff and a positive way to end the week.

BOARD SECRETARY

Mrs. Napolitano reported on the following:

- The ESSER II money has been released. This is additional grant money that was given to school districts. There was \$45,000 for Mental Health Supports for Professional Development and school based mental health support and interventions. A \$25,000 Grant for Learning Acceleration for summer learning academy and school year academy. A \$229,546 allocation for preparing the schools, testing, repairing, and upgrading building and technology needs.
- Our budget passed the County approval and we will be voting on it at the May 5th board meeting. An important bill came out on March 15th that Governor Murphy signed. Ms. Dansky stated its Bill S2691A. It raises surplus from 2% to 4%. The Governor and school districts see a need to keep more money in surplus for costs that may come up during the year.
- Please remember to fill out your Personal/Relative and Financial Disclosure Statements. All forms need to be completed by April 30th.

PRESIDENT

Ms. Kang reported on the following:

- Ms. Kang will email the board members to schedule some time to interview the Search Firm for the Superintendent search.

COMMITTEES

- Ms. Kang spoke about the Curriculum/Instruction Committee that met on Thursday, March 18th. They spoke about findings from Mid-Year Assessments as they reviewed the data from DIBELS and LinkIt!, the progress of Student Growth Objectives goals at each school/district level, how the academic needs of the students are being met through the WIN program, office hours, PDIA, conclusions reached, and future discussions.
- Ms. Dansky spoke about the Finance/Facilities Committee that met on Monday, March 15th. They spoke about a contractual matter, a discussion regarding language being added to our current facilities usage policy to include our outdoor grounds, and a Region V update. All of these items are ongoing. We will need a plan for another Finance/Facilities meeting soon.
- Mr. Sim spoke about the Personnel/Management Committee that met tonight at 7:00 PM. They spoke about the current status of hiring a Region V Coordinator, policy 1120 (Board of Education Meetings), and non-tenured staff review.

A. ADMINISTRATION/POLICY

1. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of February 24, 2021.

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

Ayes: 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 March 1, 2021.

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

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

Nays: None

3. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of March 3, 2021.

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

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

Nays: None

4. That the Board of Education approve the staff development and travel as per the schedule for March 2021 including relevant mileage reimbursement. (Addendum)

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

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

Nays: None

5. That the Board of Education approve the First Reading of the following policy:

Policy #	Title
1120	Board of Education Meetings

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

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

Nays: Mr. Sim

B. CURRICULUM/EDUCATION - None

C. BUILDING & GROUNDS - None

D. FINANCE/GRANTS/GIFTS

1. That the Board of Education approve the bills & claims dated March 2021 totaling \$1,170,734.75 including checks #44219 through #44328. Payrolls dated February 12, 2021 and February 26, 2021, totaling \$1,234,332.71 issued therefore, a copy of such warrants list be 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 February 28, 2021. (Addendum)
3. That the River Edge Board of Education approve the Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports for the period ending February 28, 2021.

Further, we certify that as of February 28, 2021 after review of the secretary's monthly financial reports (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)

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

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

E. PERSONNEL

1. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the retirement of Maryann Durante, School Psychologist, effective July 1, 2021.

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

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

2. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Sharon Cardia, Instructional Technology Coach, effective May 14, 2021.

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

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

3. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Megan Lai-Chan as a Substitute Teacher for the 2020-2021 School Year.

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

Ayes: 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 Educational Enterprises for parent training for the 2020-2021 school year, not to exceed \$6,500.00.
2. That the Board of Education approve The Parent Train for parent training for the 2020-2021 school year, not to exceed \$6,500.00.
3. That the Board of Education approve Above and Beyond Learning Group for parent training for the 2020-2021 school year, not to exceed \$6,500.00.
4. That the Board of Education approve Neurology Group of Bergen County for Neurological evaluations purposes for the 2020-2021 school year, not to exceed \$2,000.00.

G. REGION V ADMINISTRATION & TRANSPORTATION

1. That the Board of Education approve the bills & claims dated March 2021 totaling \$626,598.45 including checks #74424 through #74518.
2. That the Board of Education approve the following Bid Contracts for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

Route #	Transporter	Per Diem	Per Aide
2961	Joshua Tours	\$374.00	\$69.00

3. That the Board of Education post approve the following Quote Contracts for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

Route #	Transporter	Per Diem	Per Aide
Q950	Morgan Educational Services	\$196.00	\$66.00
Q951	American Star Transportation	\$210.00	N/A
Q953	American Star Transportation	\$220.00	\$48.00
Q954	Pro Trans School Transportation	\$145.00	N/A
Q955	Morgan Educational Services	\$236.00	N/A
Q956	D&M Transportation	\$244.00	N/A
Q957	American Star Transportation	\$220.00	\$48.00
Q961	Morgan Educational Services	\$299.00	\$71.00
Q962	John Leckie Inc.	\$567.00	N/A
Q964	Sun Transportation	\$139.00	N/A
Q965	N&Y Transportation	\$199.00	\$37.00
Q966	Sun Transportation	\$175.00	N/A
Q968	RC Prime Transportation	\$189.00	\$50.00
Q969	Sun Transportation	\$169.00	N/A
Q970	American Star Transportation	\$194.00	\$48.00
Q971	Joshua Tours	\$374.00	\$69.00

4. That the Board of Education approve the following Renewal Contracts for the 2020 - 2021 school year.

Route #	Transporter	Per Diem	Per Aide
2233	RC Prime	\$183.97	\$75.00

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

Route #	Transporter	Adjusted Per Diem
1819	Valley Transportation	\$254.17
1900	Valley Transportation	\$220.41
1963	Valley Transportation	\$425.88
2028	Valley Transportation	\$227.34
2035	Valley Transportation	\$523.66
2035	Valley Transportation	\$325.00
2472	Valley Transportation	\$391.56
2493	Valley Transportation	\$209.46
2946	Destiny 23	\$198.00
2957	Destiny 23	\$219.00

6. That the Board of Education approve the 2020-2021 Jointure Transportation Agreement between The Educational Service Commission of Sussex County (Host) and Region V (Joiner).
7. That the Board of Education approve the 2020-2021 Jointure Transportation Agreement between The Leonia Public School District (Host) and Region V (Joiner).

8. That the Board of Education approve the 2020-2021 Jointure Transportation Agreement between The Region V (Host) and West New York Public School District (Joiner).
9. That the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Jointure Transportation Agreement between The SBJC (Host) and Region V (Joiner).
10. That the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Jointure Transportation Agreement between The Region V (Host) and Region I (Joiner).
11. That the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Jointure Transportation Agreement between The Region V (Host) and Region II (Joiner).
12. That the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Jointure Transportation Agreement between The Region V (Host) and Region III (Joiner).

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

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

Nays: None

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Dansky spoke about the Board of Directors Meeting she attended. They discussed Bill S2691A and Bill A4461, the NJSBA budget, no raise in dues for 12 years in a row, and the virtual October workshop for 2021.

Ms. Juskeliene asked if there is any work being done to assess where our students are and what loss they had during this last year of the pandemic. Is there a plan on how to restore it? Ms. Kang responded this is continuously being done since September. Mrs. Heitman responded assessment is always ongoing in many different areas with many different standardized type of assessments that the teachers use. We are also working on a summer program.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Sebastian Muscarella (781 5th Avenue): thanked the board and Dr. Brockel for all the progress they have made in one month. He asked what the plan is for the 2021-2022 school year. He stated there is nothing in writing. Why haven't we seen a plan? Dr. Brockel responded it's a matter of taking the steps we have taken. We are planning to do what the Governor says. He says everyone is back in person as a normal school day. He hasn't mentioned if virtual will be allowed. We are working with staffing for either way. Once we get the word from Governor Murphy we can be more concrete. We are trying to put together the best plan we can for our district. He will pass information to the parents as soon as he receives it.

Christine O'Keefe (River Edge Teacher): the members of the River Edge Education Association were very upset to find out they had been threatened with disciplinary actions if they opted to take an out of state vacation over the April spring break. Why can't teachers teach virtually during their quarantine? She asks that the district reconsiders their decision. Ms. Kang thanked her for her comments.

Nichol DelRosso (River Edge Teacher): does not feel that the districts response to the spring break vacation took into accounts the needs of the River Edge teachers. Why are we not allowing teachers to teach virtually after returning from spring break? Why weren't we given the option of a seven day quarantine with a negative test result after returning? Ms. Kang thanked her for her comments.

Dana Hosey (219 Voorhis Avenue): will the school consider allowing the students to take off their masks during recess? Ms. Kang responded we will look at the guidelines and consult with our nurses.

Kiersten Eng (921 Bogert Road): have you been able to look at the updated NJ DOH guidelines published today? I believe they are saying that 3 feet is okay as well despite color zone now as well. Did you get the same out of it if you had a chance to read it yet? I'm very happy with a return to 5 days in person next week, but just curious when you say more is coming 5/1. Can you give us an idea what that might mean? Lunch? Dr. Brockel responded it does talk about the 3 feet and essential travel and quarantine is still needed even if you are fully vaccinated. Anyone in a classroom with students needs to be a certified staff member so we cannot have lunch aides in a classroom for the teachers to eat lunch. We will look at the three feet when we do make changes for May 1st. Mr. Henzel responded three feet with masks on is what the Governor recommends. He did say anytime with no masks on (which would be lunch) there needs to be a minimum of 6 feet.

Marilena Puma (River Edge Teacher): will anyone address the teachers' comments?

Diana Richards (River Edge Teacher): just a reminder, during inclement weather the students eat snack inside with masks off.

Dana Halpin (233 Beech Court) do we have enough certified substitutes to support a lunch plan? Ms. Kang responded no, we do not.

Lauren Thiffault (159 Greenway Terrace): some schools are going to full days that will include lunches. Ms. Kang thanked her for her comment.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion made by Mr. Herbst, seconded by Ms. Doyle to convene into closed session at 9:05 PM.

Motion by: Mr. Herbst Seconded by: Ms. Doyle

Ayes: Ms. Dansky, Ms. Doyle, Mr. Herbst, Ms. Juskeleiene, Mr. Sim, Ms. Kang

Nays: None

RECONVENE

Motion made by Mr. Sim, seconded by Ms. Dansky to reconvene and adjourn the regular public meeting at 9:39 PM.

All Ayes

Louise Napolitano
Board Secretary/Business Administrator