

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

*"Building Bright Futures Together"*

**Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – May 19, 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**

Ms. Kang called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Ms. Kang 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 were Dr. Brockel, Mrs. Napolitano, Mrs. Heitman and approximately 63 members of the public.

Ms. Brown arrived at 9:00 PM.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE**

Mrs. Napolitano read the Open Public Meeting Act Notice.

**SPECIAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Public Comments on Agenda Items – None

Honor Teachers of the Year –Dr. Brockel and Ms. Kang

Dr. Brockel stated he has gotten to know the teachers of River Edge and see the hard work they do in all three schools. Teachers were forced to do so much more in terms of Technology and the Hybrid Model with this pandemic. He was extremely happy when the Teacher of the Year Committee decided to honor all of our teachers this year as Teacher of the Year. Dr. Brockel thanked them and congratulated all of them. He also stated there is no other staff like the River Edge staff.

Ms. Kang stated this year we have chosen to honor not just teachers but Nurses, Secretaries, Aides, Custodians, Tech Team, Board Office, and all staff that is part of River Edge this year. Every single person has gone above and beyond and dedicated themselves to this district. Without them, this year would not have been possible. We thank you and honor all of you for your hard work, sacrifice, and flexibility to make everything work for the students and community. There will be a celebration for staff at Cherry Hill School tomorrow and at Roosevelt School on Friday. A generous donor has donated \$1,600.00 for us to have a dessert truck come to the schools. She hopes that the staff enjoys and hopes this token shows their appreciation to all the staff in River Edge.

That the Board of Education authorize \$1,000.00 to Cherry Hill School, \$1,000.00 to Roosevelt School, and \$1,000.00 to New Bridge Center for the Teacher Recognition Award for the 2020-2021 school year to be spent at the discretion of the Teachers of the Year for the benefit of the schools.

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

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

Nays: None

## **REPORTS**

### **SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Brockel reported on the following:

- Dr. Brockel stated New Jersey's Executive Order 175, which allowed remote instruction, will expire at the end of this school year. Beginning of September 2021 remote instruction will not be allowed. All students must return in-person. This is a big relief to school districts as we are planning classes and staffing for next year.
- Last week the CDC eased its guidelines on mask wearing for vaccinated people. In New Jersey, masks will still be required indoors only. Dr. Brockel read a quote from New Jersey Spotlight News, on May 17<sup>th</sup>: "Governor Phil Murphy announced Monday that he planned to sign an executive order eliminating the outdoor mask mandate in public settings, regardless if someone is vaccinated or not."
- Dr. Brockel stated unmasking our students outdoors is further supported in Frequently Asked Questions from the official site of the State of New Jersey on May 18<sup>th</sup>. It addresses face coverings. It says face coverings should be worn except "when doing so would inhibit a student's health, when it is hot outdoors, or when the student is engaged in aerobic or an aerobic activity." Dr. Brockel would like to recommend that our mask requirement is dropped for outdoor activities such as for Physical Education and Recess. He also made it clear that it will no longer be a requirement, however anyone who feels more comfortable wearing a mask outdoors certainly may do so.
- We have also been working on lunch in school and have developed 3 plans. Option one would be eating lunch in classrooms only. Option two is a hybrid lunch. That means lunch in both classrooms and large areas. Option three is completely back to normal. For the first two options as many as 10 to 15 aides would be required as well as the teacher duty rotation. The issue is we need coverage, not only for lunch but also recess simultaneously. We have posted for aides but have received very little interest. We will continue to modify these options for next September. Dr. Brockel predicted that since all students are required to be in-person, distancing would need to be dropped, and therefore option three would take place which means a normal lunch would return.
- In a recent survey of Bergen County Districts the question was asked: What is your district's plan for the remainder of the school year? Of the 25 respondent districts, six reported full day with lunches.
- Dr. Brockel stated people no longer need to quarantine when entering the State of New Jersey according to the official site of the State of New Jersey, on May 19<sup>th</sup>. This applies to New Jersey residents returning home and travelers visiting New Jersey. This does not include international travel.

- Dr. Brockel feels optimistic about the future, our schools, and the return to normalcy as we continue to take these positive steps forward.

## **PRINCIPAL**

Mrs. Heitman reported on the following:

- Mrs. Heitman stated the PTO finished up an outdoor Book fair for all of our students. She thanked all of the parents that helped out. It was a very successful book fair.
- On May 7<sup>th</sup>, the PTO had a Mother's Day plant sale. She thanked and all of the parents that helped out. It was a very successful plant sale
- The storm drain art work at both schools is officially finished. Congratulations to Jack and Ava who had the original art work. Their artwork is superb! Their work will make an impact on our local Hackensack River. Ms. Dansky stated the Green Team and the Environmental Committee met and said there is a plan for next year to paint four more drains and to expand the participation at school. Next year it will include fifth and sixth graders. It will be done around town not just on the school campus. This will be done annually with four being done next year and two drains a year moving forward.
- Correspondences went out about 6th grade events at both schools. We are deep into planning at both schools. We are working closely with the custodians and our Technology Department and our Music Teachers. We will notify families as soon as we get more details.
- We are planning Kindergarten parent orientation on June 2nd via Zoom. Upcoming kindergarten students will visit in person at both schools on June 10th.
- Last week our Sunshine Committee provided snacks for Teacher Appreciation Week. Our PTO provided lunch for all staff from Habit Burger and some special gift cards. Mr. James and Mrs. Heitman provided a Taco Tuesday for all staff on Friday! Our Supervisors provided ice cream treats earlier this week at both schools. Our Counselors prepared, with the help of class parents, an opportunity for all students to log on to Zoom and share inspiring thoughts in regard to teacher appreciation. There was a special Padlet created for our Related Arts and Related Services staff.
- This week is spirit week and the power word is Acceptance. There are events planned for each day.
- We are focusing on Field Day which takes place next week. Mr. James has been working closely with the Physical Education staff and different grade levels to create the events for each grade. We hope everyone has a lot of fun.
- We are very excited to celebrate with all of our wonderful, dedicated teaching professionals for our Teacher of the Year. We thank each staff member for helping, teaching, and making a difference for each and every student in River Edge. Both schools are very excited to welcome Polka Dot Cakes that is coming to Cherry Hill School on May 20th at 2:00 PM and Roosevelt School on May 21st at 2:00 PM. Thank you so much to our Board of Education for approving this wonderful celebration.

- We are excited to welcome Mr. Jed Dearybury who will meet with all our staff on Monday. He will be sharing his positivity and motivation with us. Mrs. Heitman thanked the Curriculum Team for arranging this visit.

### **BOARD SECRETARY**

Mrs. Napolitano reported on the following:

- There is a motion on tonight's agenda to approve to accept the CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER-II). This is our formal acceptance of the monies.
- There is a motion on tonight's agenda to amend and approve the submission of the grant for Alyssa's Law Compliance and School Security Grants in the amount of \$64,113.00. Alyssa's Law is to put silent panic alarms in the schools and law enforcement is directly notified.
- There is a motion on tonight's agenda to appoint Mayerling Martinez as the District Liaison to the Board of the River Edge Public Library for the 2021-2020 school year. Mrs. Napolitano welcomed Ms. Martinez and thanked Ms. Rabinowitz who was our former District Liaison.

### **PRESIDENT**

Ms. Kang reported on the following:

- Ms. Kang stated she is happy to announce we have hired R-Pat Solutions as a search firm to help us with the Superintendent search. They come highly recommended by other districts in Bergen County. We have begun advertising for the position and the deadline is June 25<sup>th</sup>.
- In June, there will be a survey going to all of the stakeholders in the district and the community.
- It has been decided to remain virtual for our board meetings in June. We will reassess for July and going forward.

### **COMMITTEES**

- Ms. Dansky stated the Finance and Facilities Committee met on May 10<sup>th</sup>. They spoke about ongoing contractual matters with the municipality, the After School Program resuming, policy language on facilities usage, Region V follow up, and the River Edge School District School Bus.
- Mr. Sim attended the New Jersey School Board Delegate Assembly on May 15<sup>th</sup>. They elected new officers for the 2021-2023 school year, two resolutions were approved regarding LBGTQ and Inclusiveness, and spoke about parent training for Special Education.

**MOTIONS TO BE ACTED UPON**

**A. ADMINISTRATION/POLICY**

1. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of April 28, 2021.

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

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

2. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of May 5, 2021.

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

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

3. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of May 12, 2021.

**Motion by: Mr. Herbst Seconded by: Ms. Juskeliene**

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

4. That the Board of Education approve the following bus evacuation drills:

<b>Class</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>
IEP Students Receiving Transportation	April 28, 2021	8:30 AM
IEP Students Receiving Transportation	April 28, 2021	8:35 AM

5. That the Board of Education approve the following class trips:

<b>School</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>Cost to District</b>
Cherry Hill	6	Swim Club River Edge, NJ	\$0
Roosevelt	6	Swim Club River Edge, NJ	\$0

6. That the Board of Education approve the revised River Edge Elementary School Calendar for the 2021-2022 school year. (Addendum)

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

Ayes: Ms. Dansky, Ms. Doyle, Mr. Herbst, Ms. Juskeliene, Mr. Sim, Ms. Kang  
Nays: None  
May 19, 2021

**B. CURRICULUM/EDUCATION - None**

**C. BUILDING & GROUNDS**

1. That the Board of Education approve to amend the account number for repairs to the Cherry Hill School fire alarm system from Cherry Hill School construction services 1-12-000-400-450-20-00 to the Cherry Hill School Building Maintenance Account 1-11-000-261-420-10-96.

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

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

**D. FINANCE/GRANTS/GIFTS**

1. That the Board of Education approve the bills & claims dated May 2021 totaling \$604,386.04 including checks #44381 through #44455. Payrolls dated April 15, 2021 and April 30, 2021, totaling \$1,210,959.10 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 April 30, 2021 (Addendum).
3. That the River Edge Board of Education approve the Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports for the period ending April 30, 2021 (Addendum).

Further, we certify that as of April 30, 2021, 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 overexpended 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.

4. That the Board of Education approve to accept the CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER-II) as follows:

ESSER II Allocation	\$229,546
Learning Acceleration	\$25,000
Mental Health Supports and Services	\$45,000

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

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

5. That the Board of Education accept the donation of \$1,600.00 from an Anonymous Local Business for the Polkadot Cakes food truck for the District Teacher of the Year celebration.

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

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

6. That the Board of Education amend the submission of the grant for Alyssa's Law Compliance and School Security Grants in the amount of \$64,113.
7. RESOLVED the Board of Education of River Edge affirms the district's application of the "School Security Grant" to the State of New Jersey, Department of Education. FURTHER RESOLVED the Board of Education of River Edge in the County of Bergen affirms local funds are available in the event the total estimated costs of the proposed work exceed River Edge in the County of Bergen's grant allocation of \$64,113.00.

**Motion by: Mr. Herbst Seconded by: Ms. Juskeliene**

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

Nays: None

**E. PERSONNEL**

1. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Leeann Cameron, Mental Health Clinician, effective September 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, MA, Step 6.
2. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Carrie Bryer, Resource Teacher, effective September 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, MA+30, Step 8.
3. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Alrick Douglas, Pupil Assistance Counselor, effective September 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, MA, Step 4.
4. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Diana Maurice, Leave Replacement Teacher, effective September 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, BA+15, Step 3.

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

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

Nays: None

5. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Maria Morales, Spanish Teacher, effective June 30, 2021.

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

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

Nays: None

6. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Tracy Bommarito, ABA Aide, effective June 30, 2021.

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

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

Nays: None

7. That the Board of Education with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve a Maternity/Family Leave of absence for Mona Naik, followed by a Child Care Leave of Absence for the 2021-2022 School Year.
8. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the employment of the following teachers for the Summer Academic Programs, from June 28, 2021 to July 23, 2021.

Ashley Adimando  
Kismet Bohajian  
Nicole Colon  
MaryAnn Crudello  
Jason Funabashi  
Melissa Gant  
Gianna Hrnciar  
Kelsey Lapp  
Alex McNeil

Christine Morales  
Shannon O'Brien  
Christine O'Keefe  
Colleen Poole  
Lauren Proda  
Heather Rothschild  
Annice Ryu  
Tara Vernieri

9. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the employment of the following teachers for the Summer Extracurricular Programs, from June 28, 2021 to July 23, 2021.

Michelle Attardi  
Leah Del Guidice  
Kelly Dent  
Jason Funabashi  
Maria Garcia  
Megan Lai-Chan  
Steven Luca  
Harrison Mashig  
Lauren Proda  
Rozanna Schindelman  
Tara Vernieri

10. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the employment of the following substitutes teachers for the Summer Academic Programs and the Summer Extracurricular Programs, from June 28, 2021 to July 23, 2021.

Caitlin Ryan  
Gabrielle Sagala

11. That the Board of Education designate Michael Henzel, Affirmative Action Officer, for the River Edge School District for the 2021-2022 school year.
12. That the Board of Education approve the Affirmative Action Team, under the Affirmation Action Officer Michael Henzel, for the 2021-2022 school year:

Abby Burns-Paterson  
Alrick Douglas  
Janel Blake  
Christine Moran

13. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, appoint Mayerling Martinez, as the District Liaison to the Board of the River Edge Public Library for the 2021-2022 school year.

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

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

**F. RIVER EDGE SPECIAL EDUCATION - None**

**G. REGION V ADMINISTRATION & TRANSPORTATION**

1. That the Board of Education approve the bills & claims dated May 2021 totaling \$815,949.32 including checks #74618 through #74712. (Addendum)
2. **WHEREAS**, Destiny 23 Transportation, LLC ("Destiny 23") has a contract to provide transportation services for certain routes including Routes 2943, 2946, A946, 2952 and 2969 for the period from March 15, 2021 through June 30, 2021; and

**WHEREAS**, multiple complaints were received from families and receiving schools involving health and safety concerns; and

**WHEREAS**, Destiny 23 was made aware of these complaints and failed to take corrective action; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board attorney served a formal notice on Destiny 23 that they were in breach of contract and that their contracts for Routes 2943, 2946, A946, 2952 and 2969 were being terminated in accordance with the termination provisions of the contracts issued for those routes.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board hereby ratifies and reaffirms the termination of Destiny 23's contracts for Routes 2943, 2946, A946, 2952 and 2969 effective May 14, 2021.

**Motion by: Mr. Herbst Seconded by: Ms. Juskeliene**

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

Nays: None

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Dansky attended the NJSBA Board of Directors Meeting virtually on May 7th. They spoke about Bill A4461 and Bill S2698 passing by the Assembly and the Senate, the October workshop being virtual again, NJSBA offering an online University for Professional Development for all educators and for course work for Board of Education members, Support for Bill 3434 and another bill requiring another year for Special Education services for the 2021-2022 school year.

Mr. Herbst stated there is a Bergen County School Board Association meeting on June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 PM.

Ms. Kang stated the Board of Education Meeting dates have a few changes. The June 16<sup>th</sup> board meeting has been changed to June 23<sup>rd</sup> and the September 1<sup>st</sup> board meeting has been changed to August 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

Dana Hosey (219 Voorhis Avenue): parents should be given a choice if they want their child to wear a mask outside. We have to go with science now and not personal fears. Please take this into consideration and allow parents to make this choice.

Sebastian Muscarella (781 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue): what is the reason for some of the board members to be hesitant for removing the masks outside? Please re-think this.

Lauren Thiffault (159 Greenway Terrace): can the board please speak up and tell us why we cannot do these things. Can the board please make a decision tonight regarding wearing a mask outside?

Dr. Brockel responded it is optional for people to continue to wear masks. It is his recommendation to allow people to remove the masks when outdoors during physical activities.

Brianne Etter (711 Elm Avenue): thank you Dr. Brockel for all you have done with bringing us to some sort of normalcy.

Lauren Carrabs (848 Bogert Road): thank you Dr. Brockel for all that you have done. Let's improve and repair the learning loss our children have experienced this year and move forward.

Ms. Kang read an email from Mr. Werner. He gave a shout out to the fifth grade teachers and complimented and spoke about the storm drain art work.

Carmen Philbin (219 Dorchester Road): thank you for the discussion regarding the removal of masks during recess and PE. I am in full support of removing masks, or at least making it optional, and I this can be made effective for field week next week. Ms. Kang thanked her for her comment.

Larissa Owsik (215 Kinderkamack Road): thank you Dana for bringing this up yet again. Parents should be allowed to make this decision for their children. It's an option out of schools and at some point we need to follow. Ms. Kang thanked her for her comment.

Michelle Bressack (708 Millbrook Road): I fully support no masks outdoors. My kids are coming home from school with wet, sweaty masks and that is unhealthy and I am so tired of this! I am not sure why we are not following science. What needs to be further discussed? This is beyond absurd why we can't have an answer tonight! The Governor made the call for no more masks outside. Let's go! Ms. Kang responded the executive order that the Governor had put out to lift masks in outdoor spaces does exclude elementary and secondary school, child care centers, and camps. We are getting such conflicting information and that is why it is difficult to make that decision.

Kiersten Eng (921 Bogert Road): I didn't hear the beginning of what Dr. Brockel said about conflicting information on masks, but didn't the Governor say we don't need masks outdoors anymore? Ms. Kang stated the conflicting part is that he lifted masks in outdoor spaces but he does say it does not include child care centers, camps, elementary and secondary schools.

Dana Hosey (219 Voorhis Avenue): thank you Dr. Brockel for being our voice of reason. It is more appreciated than you'll ever know. Ms. Kang thanked her for her comment.

Jesse Richins (River Edge Parent): thank you Dr. Brockel

Brianne Etter (711 Elm Avenue): I am also unsure where his job position stands as I have heard multiple things, but I am in full support that Alrick Douglas be approved to be a full time position. He has been such an amazing presence for our children and my child specifically has responded greatly to his help and programs that he runs. Ms. Kang responded Mr. Douglas was on tonight's agenda and was approved as a full time Pupil Assistance Counselor. Thank you for your kind words about Mr. Douglas.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Motion made by Mr. Sim, seconded by Ms. Doyle to convene into closed session at 9:15 PM.

**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

### **RECONVENE**

Motion made by Ms. Dansky, seconded by Mr. Sim to reconvene and adjourn the regular public meeting at 10:16 PM.

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

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

Louise Napolitano  
Board Secretary/Business Administrator