

RIVER EDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION
RIVER EDGE, NEW JERSEY 07661

"Building Bright Futures Together"

Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – May 5, 2021 – 6:30 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

Ms. Kang called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM.

CLOSED SESSION

Motion made by Mr. Sim, Seconded by Ms. Dansky to convene into closed session at 6:33 PM to interview a Superintendent Search Firm.

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

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

RECONVENE

Motion made by Ms. Brown, Seconded by Mr. Sim to reconvene the regular public meeting at 7:30 PM.

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

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

CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE

Ms. Kang called the meeting to order at 7:33 PM.

A moment of silence took place in memory of Sergeant, Christopher Cheevers of the River Edge Police Department.

MISSION STATEMENT

Ms. Brown read the Mission Statement.

ROLL CALL

Present on roll call were Ms. Brown; Ms. Dansky; Ms. Juskeliene; Mr. Sim; and Ms. Kang. Also present were Dr. Brockel, Mrs. Napolitano, and approximately 64 members of the public.

Ms. Doyle was absent
Mr. Herbst was absent

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE

Mrs. Napolitano read the Open Public Meeting Act Notice.

SPECIAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Comments on Agenda Items – none

Public Hearing on the 2021-2022 Proposed School Budget

Mrs. Napolitano presented the 2021-2022 School Year Budget to the public (Addendum). She reviewed and explained each slide to the board members and the audience. Mrs. Napolitano answered all questions that were asked. The Board reviewed and approved the submission of the Final Budget.

REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Brockel reported on the following:

- Dr. Brockel explained that normally the Superintendent and Business Administrator present the budget together, however with his arrival to the district on March 1st he had Mrs. Napolitano present the 2021-2022 budget alone. He stated she did an excellent job with the presentation, and said Mrs. Napolitano, along with the administrators, did an excellent job in creating the budget. He also stated he supports the budget at this point.
- According to the New Jersey Department of Health, North Jersey is in the yellow zone as of last week. As a result of this change, the principals, school nurses, and Dr. Brockel met to see if any changes could be made now based on the CDC and local Department of Health. There are two changes that will be implemented: In conjunction with the New Jersey Department of Health the 14 day quarantine requirement is reduced to 10 days regardless of test status. Second, it was agreed that the tri-fold screens on top of the students' desks will be removed as long as students continue to wear masks. The screens should be back on the desks each day during snack, since masks are off during that time. For the entire instructional day (except for snack) screens are to be removed.
- The Governor has increased indoor gathering to 50% of capacity. Six feet of distance between students is still required for large eating venues. We are continuing to work on plans for utilizing classrooms and larger spaces in the buildings. We are looking at the schedules and certification of our aides that already have working for us along with checking private agencies for their services. Dr. Brockel hopes the six feet distance will be lifted soon so it can help us with using the larger spaces.
- Dr. Brockel wishes everyone a Happy Spring and a Happy Mother's Day.

PRINCIPAL

Mr. Henzel reported on the following:

- Mr. Henzel made a shout out to everyone involved in the drain art contest. Jenny Schnieder, Watershed Ambassador, approached Mrs. Heitman and Mr. Henzel about creating storm drain art to bring awareness of the harmful effects that litter, gasoline, oil, grass clippings, road salt, chemicals, and other types of pollution have on our waterways. The first storm drain was painted last weekend at Cherry Hill and Roosevelt's storm drain will be painted this weekend.
- Special thanks to Heather Walker, Angela Gozenput, and Ariana Hastings for putting together the PTO plant sale.
- Staircase videos are being submitted and the watch party will be held on June 4th. A big shout out to Mrs. Kristin Stewart for all her hard work in putting this special night together.

- We are looking forward to our upcoming Family Literacy Night on Tuesday, May 11th from 6:30 PM-7:30 PM on Zoom. During this session, Pam Koutrakos, will lead families in a fun filled evening of literacy activities and games. She will also provide helpful tips to support literacy learning at home.
- A big shout out to all of our wonderful teachers who go above and beyond every single day. Happy Teacher Appreciation Week!

BOARD SECRETARY

Mrs. Napolitano reported on the following:

- Mrs. Napolitano attended two workshops this week in-regards to the ESSER II funding which we are working on the needs assessment for. These are additional monies for mental health, learning loss, and preparing the schools, testing, repairing, and upgrading the building and technology needs. At last week's board meeting, the Summer Program was approved. This will address the learning loss. We are working on the mental health with Professional Development and purchasing PPE and additional cleaning. We have also been upgrading some of our uninvents.

PRESIDENT

Ms. Kang reported on the following:

- Ms. Kang stated Happy Teacher Appreciation Week. She thanked all of the teachers and staff members for going above and beyond. We also thank the PTO for everything they have done to show appreciation to the teachers.
- Happy National Nurse's Day tomorrow. She thanked all of the district nurses and nurses all around for their hard work.
- Ms. Kang gave an update on the Superintendent Search Firm. We are very close at hiring one and hoping it will be finalized in the next day or so. We will share this information with the public as soon as we hire a company and create a timeline for the search.
- There was a Bergen County School Board Meeting on April 29th. The main topic of discussion was Special Education. They spoke about learning loss, looking at each student's IEP, and how we can catch students up if needed.
- Ms. Kang asked the committee chairs to start planning dates for committee meetings for the month of May.

COMMITTEES

No committees reported at this meeting

MOTIONS TO BE ACTED UPON

A. ADMINISTRATION/POLICY

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

School	Dates
Cherry Hill School	April 12, 2021 Fire Drill April 19, 2021 Lockdown Drill
Roosevelt School	April 15, 2021 Shelter in Place April 20, 2021 Fire Drill

2. That the Board of Education approve, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve the Stronge Model to be used as the District Evaluation Rubric for Teachers, Principals, and other Certified Staff for the 2021-2022 school year.

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

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

B. CURRICULUM/EDUCATION – None

C. BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

1. That the Board of Education approve to allocate monies from Maintenance Reserve Account to Cherry Hill School construction services 1-12-000-400-450-20-00 in the amount of \$44,785.00 for the purpose of repairs to the Cherry Hill School fire alarm system.

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

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

D. FINANCE/GRANTS/GIFTS

1. That the Board of Education approve the Final 2021-2022 School Year Budget as follows:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Local Tax Levy</u>
Total General Fund	\$20,828,143	\$16,352,019
Total Special Revenue Fund	\$1,214,873	N/A
Total Debt Service	\$1,416,100	\$1,194,506
Total	\$23,459,116	

Be It Further Resolved, that the Board of Education requests the approval of a Capital Reserve Withdrawal in the amount of \$390,000. The District intends to utilize \$390,000 for an electrical upgrade at Cherry Hill School.

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

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

E. PERSONNEL

1. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Kellie McClain, Psychologist, effective September 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, MA+30, Step 7.

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

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

2. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Jane O'Connell, Region V Bookkeeper, effective May 25, 2021.

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

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

3. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Julie Fallon, Resource Teacher, effective June 30, 2021.

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

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

4. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the retirement of Tara Deckler, Part-time Instructional Aide, effective July 1, 2021.
5. That the Board of Education authorize the payment due to Tara Deckler for unused sick days.

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

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

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

G. **REGION V ADMINISTRATION & TRANSPORTATION** – None

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Juskeliene asked what the difference is between a policy and a regulation of a policy. Ms. Kang answered her question.

Ms. Juskeliene asked about Policy 5113 Attendance. She asked about the sentence pertaining of a school day consisting of not less than 4 hours of actual instruction. She asked what actual instruction consisted of and do/did we comply with the 4 hours starting with the beginning of the pandemic. A discussion was held on this.

Ms. Brown wished the teachers a Happy Teacher Appreciation Week and thanked them for all of their hard work.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Lauren Thiffault (159 Greenway Terrace): why are we not pushing everyone to an 8-3 school day now? Can you clarify what the certification is needed for the lunch aides, how many are needed, and when will it be posted? Ms. Kang responded there is a lunch aide position posted on our website and it includes the requirements of what is needed. They need a substitute certification, criminal background check, and fingerprinting. The requirements from the CDC will depend on how many lunch aides we will need.

Sebastian Muscarella (781 5th Avenue): what is being done to transition the children this year into next year so they get up to the states standards? Can we do a test run with the right amount of staff for a full day of school? Dr. Brockel responded we have LinkIt! that assess the students in the fall, in the middle of the year, and at the end of the year. The New Jersey Department of Education has mandated the testing come back in September. This will allow us a good feel to see where the kids are right away and we also have the LinkIt! assessments. We have reached out for additional aides and are looking at staff to see if we can do a test run. Dr. Brockel responded he would love to do it if we can.

Michelle Bressack (708 Millbrook): while that is great news about the quarantine being 10 days now what about 7 days with a negative test as well? I believe that is also what the CDC suggest? Dr. Brockel responded we go by our local Department of Health and they are not comfortable with that.

Scott Levy (235 Kensington Road): with regards to the classroom dividers when will this be implemented? Is this a proposal or definitely happening? Will this be the classroom teacher's choice, whether to take down the screens? Can the screens be left up for individual children at the request of the parents? Dr. Brockel responded we will have to see how the parents feel about this, but right now they will come down for instruction and go back up for snack time.

Kate Daibes (749 Williams Avenue): has there been any talk of having lunch outside? Dr. Brockel responded that is one of the considerations we have discussed about lunch. There are many things we have discussed regarding lunch.

Jenni Shahin (201 Cherry Lane): is there any possible way to link up with a local college for students that are training for education to match students for the open aide positions we will have? Ms. Kang responded that is a possibility. We can look at it, but the students will need 60 college credits.

Ariana Hastings (107 Adams Avenue): why is it taking so long to find a search firm for the next superintendent? What happens when Dr. Brockel's contract is up on 6/30? Does he continue after that? Ms. Kang responded we did interview a few firms. We are very close to hiring one. We plan on speaking about Dr. Brockel staying after June 30th if do not hire a permanent Superintendent before July 1st.

Kirsten Apa (175 Voorhis Avenue): it was asked at the last meeting about continuing Zoom for BOE meetings or broadcast them. I would ask that this be looked into further to support community involvement and awareness. Ms. Kang responded she will speak with Dr. Brockel and Mrs. Napolitano next week to plan for our in person board meeting for June 2nd. Thank you for your comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mr. Sim, seconded by Ms. Brown to adjourn the regular public meeting at 8:46 PM.

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

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

Nays: None

Louise Napolitano
Board Secretary/Business Administrator