

# **RIVER EDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

## **RIVER EDGE, NEW JERSEY 07661**

*“Building Bright Futures Together”*

### **Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – January 19, 2022 – 7:30 PM**

The Board of Education, Borough of River Edge, County of Bergen, State of New Jersey met in the Media Center, Roosevelt School, 711 Summit Avenue, River Edge, NJ 07661 and conducted this meeting through a Zoom Meeting.

#### **CALL TO ORDER AND FLAG SALUTE**

Ms. Kang called the meeting to order at 7:35PM.

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Ms. Brown read the Mission Statement

#### **ROLL CALL**

Present on roll call were Ms. Brown, Ms. Dansky, Mr. Herbst, Ms. Juskeliene, Mr. Papiris and Ms. Kang. Also present were Mrs. Danahy, Mrs. Napolitano, Mrs. Heitman and approximately 45 members of the public.

Mr. Sim was absent.

#### **OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE**

Mrs. Napolitano read the Open Public Meeting Act Notice.

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

None

#### **SPECIAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

A. Public Comment on Agenda Items - None

B. Long Term Planning – Joe DiCara (DiCara and Rubino Architects)

Mr. DiCara discussed the district’s need for long term planning; time lines, process and funding. He spoke about available spaces based on enrollment needs; use of existing space; renting space offsite vs. building; free standing structures and modular units. The District would need to also look at the student demographics and enrollment projections.

Mr. DiCara also explained the different types of construction: traditional, portable classrooms or modular constructions. There are advantages and disadvantages of pre-fab units and costs and renovating existing space. The District would need to build based on funding and needs. Mr. DiCara discussed ways to pay for these projects, i.e., capital budgets, lease/purchase options, state funding versus government funding and going out for a referendum as well. There are pros/cons to referendums such as the cost and increased taxes.

There is no space available at Roosevelt School for expansion but, Cherry Hill School is a good place for expansion

Ms. Kang opened the floor to the public for questions.

Questions were asked and answered regarding the long-term planning and solar panels to reduce energy costs.

Mr. Jim Leon (728 Summit Avenue), a former Board of Education member asked about possible solar panels.

Mr. John Binetti (787 Kinderkamack Road) asked about any options for Roosevelt School to expand; or the purchase of a house and/or building at Cherry Hill School and Roosevelt School.

Mr. DiCara answered their questions.

Ms. Kang spoke about looking at the needs of the District now and noted that demographic needs have changed.

## **REPORTS**

### **SUPERINTENDENT**

Mrs. Danahy reported the staff shortages that took place during our Pandemic. Our staff has now returned and we are doing well. Mrs. Danahy also updated on the Pandemic Response Team and the COVID Hub. The Pandemic Response Team includes a diverse group including River Edge parents, nurses and staff. The COVID Hub which is located on our District website is now up and updates in real time. The Pandemic Response Team meets before guidance is updated. Families are also able to access current and up-to-date information regarding COVID protocol, case numbers and more. The HUB proves to be a more efficient option for communicating to the entire community rather than sending emails. Mrs. Danahy also stated that our numbers are declining and we are hopefully on a downward trend

### **PRINCIPAL**

Mrs. Heitman reported on the following items:

The student council had a *Table to Table* fundraiser which helps to give food for those in need, raising over \$5,500. This was the most money raised this year out of any organization and the most of any school in New Jersey. We are happy that they can help families in need.

Spelling bee will be on January 29<sup>th</sup> for participants from grades 3-6. The winner will go to the next competition in February from the Women's Club.

The PTO is just about finished offering teacher grants for our CHS teachers. Thank you.

The Kindergarten winter concert has been moved to later in February.

The 4th grade theatre performance will also be in February, a product of our Mayo Performing Arts Partnership.

Today, the PDIA Cycle II for Math ended. The next cycle will start in two weeks.

Some new security cameras were replaced by New Bridge Center and installed by the blacktop and field for better viewing of our schools.

## **BOARD SECRETARY**

Mrs. Napolitano reported on the reimbursement received from Alyssa's Law. Funds were placed back in the capital reserve account and this is reflected in Motion D5.

This was a 2020 project under Alyssa's law for silent alarm systems which is eligible for funding. The funds came from capital reserve account.

Mrs. Napolitano also said that they met with the architects to look at different options for our building space needs.

Administration met with Di Caro & Rubino and a modular building company to discuss options for a possible modular unit.

Questions were asked about schools that used or are using modular units. All were questions were answered.

## **PRESIDENT**

Ms. Kang reported on the upcoming New Jersey School Boards Association ("NJSBA") meeting on January 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:00pm. This is a virtual meeting and more information can be found on the NJSBA website. There will be discussions regarding relationships with Board of Education members and Superintendents. Ms. Kang encouraged many to attend as this is a great way to meet other Board members. Ms. Kang also stated that voting on the executive committee will also take place that evening.

Ms. Kang also updated the Board and attendees on the Finance and Facilities Committee meeting this week.

## **COMMITTEES**

### **Finance and Facilities Committee**

Ms. Danksy reported on the Finance and Facilities Committee meeting. Agenda discussions included: bill procedures, inter-local agreements, spaces, room for improving board office space, tuition from out of district students, budget, possible tours of buildings for Board Members, meeting with Region V and auditors and Board of Education office space. The next meeting will be held on February 1, 2022. Principals will be attending this meeting and discussions will take place regarding space reconfiguration. Future topics will be on budget and space.

### **Pandemic Response Team**

Mr. Papiris reported on the Pandemic Response Team who met last week. The team consists of a very diverse group of community. The meeting was very productive and the team spoke about the COVID Hub which includes meeting notes, up-to-date information. Mr. Papiris also stated that numbers are going down in River Edge.

The Pandemic Response Team will meet before any guidance is changed or updated and as necessary. Their goal is keeping all students safe in school

## **Personnel and Management Committee**

Mr. Herbst spoke about committee agenda items, upcoming vacancies, anticipated vacancies and candidate pool. Mrs. Danahy will be reaching out to local colleges to diversify the candidate pool. Mr. Herbst also said that the Personnel and Management Committee discussed website improvements, substitute rates, surveying other districts to find out their substitute rates, using retirees as substitutes. Mr. Herbst said that a review of organizational chart will be discussed in the Executive Session at the next Board of Education meeting. Mr. Herbst also mentioned Governor Murphy's bill that would allow retired teachers to resume teaching again.

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

#### **ADMINISTRATION/POLICY**

1. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes of January 5, 2022.

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

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

Nays: None

2. That the Board of Education approve the staff development and travel as per the schedules for January 2022 including relevant mileage reimbursement. (Addendum)

3. That the Board of Education approve the River Edge Elementary School Calendar for the 2022-2023 school year. (Addendum)

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

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

Nays: None

4. That the Board of Education approve the English Language Learner Three-Year Program Plans for 2021- 2024. (Addendum)

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

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

Nays: None

Abstained: Ms. Brown

5. That the Board of Education approve the updated ARP ESSER Safe Return Plan for the 2021-2022 school year. (Addendum)

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

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

Nays: None

**CURRICULUM/EDUCATION** - None

**BUILDINGS & GROUNDS** - None

**FINANCE/GRANTS/GIFTS**

1. That the Board of Education approve the bills & claims dated January 2022 totaling \$641,942.68 including checks #10454 through #10539. Payrolls dated December 15, 2021 and December 23, 2021, totaling \$1,366,370.99 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 2021-2022 as of December 31, 2021. (Addendum)
3. That the River Edge Board of Education approve the Secretary's and Treasurer's Report for the period ending December 31, 2021.

Further, we certify that as of December 31, 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 funds 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: Ms. Dansky Seconded by: Mr. Herbst**

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

Nays: None

4. That the Board of Education accept the \$280.00 donation from Jennifer Wong Hernandez for general use at Roosevelt School (Addendum)  
Ms. Kang thanked Ms. Hernandez for continuing to support our schools.

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

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

Nays: None

5. That the Board of Education approve to deposit monies into Capital Reserve in the amount of \$64,113 for the reimbursement of funds used from this account for Alyssa's Law Compliance and School Security Grants project from 2020.

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

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

Nays: None

**PERSONNEL**

1. That the Board of Education designates Louise Napolitano as the Public Agency Compliance Officer for the 2021-2022 school year.
2. That the Board of Education approve the following teachers for Cycle III (ELA) of the Post Dismissal Instructional Academy for the 2021-2022 School Year, as per contract:

**Roosevelt**

Abby Burns-Paterson  
Jason Funabashi  
Kristen Marco  
Alexandra McNeil  
Katelyn Mills  
Colleen Poole

**Cherry Hill**

Rebecca Delpriore  
\*Kristen Karavitis  
\*Kelsey Lapp  
Michelle Parisi  
Gabrielle Sagala  
Noy Sapir

3. That the Board of Education post-approve the following aides for Cycle II (SEL) of the Post Dismissal Instructional Academy for the 2021-2022 School Year, as per contract:

**Roosevelt**

Francisco Benitez  
Lisa Spinetti

**Cherry Hill**

Kathy Lawler  
Jane Gonzalez  
Deanna Wallace

4. That the Board of Education post-approve Shauntea Weaver for Cycle II (Math) of the Post Dismissal Instructional Academy for the 2021-2022 School Year, as per contract.
5. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve a Maternity/Disability Leave of Absence for Leah Gallo to commence on or about June 13, 2022, followed by a State/Federal Family Leave of Absence to commence on or about September 1, 2022 through November 25, 2022. (Addendum)
6. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve professional day requests for the following staff members to attend workshops/conferences as noted and in accordance with appropriate statute:

<b>Name/Position</b>	<b>Workshop/Conference</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Cost to District/Inc. Mileage (not to exceed)</b>
Eric Anderson Teacher/RS Physical Education	2022 SHAPENJ Convention	2/15/2022	\$194.50
Eric James Assistant Principal	2022 SHAPENJ Convention	2/15-16/2022	\$244.91
Christine Moran Supervisor Curriculum & Instruction	2022 SHAPENJ Convention	2/15-16/2022	\$244.91
Wendy Naimister Teacher/CHS Physical Education	2022 SHAPENJ Convention	2/15-16/2022	\$320.81
Ryan Schmid Teacher/CHS Physical Education	2022 SHAPENJ Convention	2/15-16/2022	\$320.81
Leah Gallo Teacher/RS Grade 2	Winter Institute Food for Thought: Introduction to the Phonological Awareness Screening Test, Phonological Awareness, Using Decodable Text for More than Phonics	2/5/22	\$90.00
Katelyn Stehn Teacher/RS Grade 2	Winter Institute Food for Thought: Introduction to the Phonological Awareness Screening Test, Phonological Awareness, Using Decodable Text for More than Phonics	2/5/2022	\$90.00

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

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

Nays: None

**RIVER EDGE SPECIAL EDUCATION** - None

**REGION V ADMINISTRATION & TRANSPORTATION**

1. That the Board of Education approve the bills & claims dated January 2022 totaling \$889,209.58 including checks #60369 through #60466.

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

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

Nays: None

2. WHEREAS, the River Edge Board of Education (the “Board”) is the lead education agency (“LEA”) for the Bergen County Region V Council for Special Education (“Region V”); and

WHEREAS, Region V provides shared services for its member districts, non-member districts such as evaluations, direct services, and consultation; and services to non-public schools as requested by member and non-member districts;

WHEREAS, as the LEA, the Board must approve the contract of the providers that Region V utilizes to deliver shared services to its member districts, non-member districts and services to non-public schools as requested by member and non-member districts;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the contract of the following Region V Shared Services Consultants/Agencies to provide evaluations, direct services, and consultation, to public and non- public schools for member districts and non-member districts upon request for the 2021-2022 school year:

3. That the Board of Education post approve White Glove Community Care, Inc. for the 2021-2022 school year.

<b>Agency</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Rates</b>
White Glove Community Care, Inc	Nursing Services	Public School Nurse: \$85/hr Nonpublic School Nurse: \$85/hr Public/Nonpub LPN:\$60/hr

4. That the Board of Education rescind the following Renewal Contracts for the 2021- 2022 school year.

Route #	Transporter	Per Diem
2643	Morgan Educational Services	\$227.67
2931	First Student, Inc.	\$413.20
936	RC Prime Transportation	\$171.68

5. That the Board of Education post approve the following Renewal Contracts for the 2021-2022 school year.

Route #	Transporter	Per Diem
2475	Valley Transportation	\$76.15
2643	Morgan Educational Services	\$235.84
2931	First Student, Inc.	\$411.84
2936	RC Prime Transportation	\$202.36
2946	All Points Transportation	\$208.38

6. That the Board of Education post approve the following Bid Contracts for the 2021-2022 school year.

Route	Transporter	Per Diem	Per Diem Aide	Increase / Decrease Adjustment cost per Vehicle	Increase / Decrease Adjustment cost per Mile
3011	J&W Financial	\$485.00	\$60.00	\$485.00	\$.01

7. That the Board of Education post approve the following Addendum Contracts for the 2021-2022 school year.

Route	Transporter	Per Diem
2903	All Points Transportation	\$125.00
3011	J&W Financial	\$470.00

8. That the Board of Education post approve the following Quote Contracts for the 2021-2022 school year.

Route	Transporter	Per Diem	Per Diem Aide	Total Per Diem
Q028	Morgan Educational Services	\$299.00	\$86.00	\$385.00

9. That the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Jointure Transportation Agreement between Region V (Host) and Mainland Regional Board of Education (Joiner).

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

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

Nays: None



## OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Dansky stated that the County Leadership is to honor Dr. Lawrence Feinsod, Retiring Executive Director of New Jersey School Boards Association. Dr. Feinsod was very generous and very active in New Jersey

Steve Fogarty, Esq. will present at the next BOE meeting.

Ms. Brown thanked Mrs. Danahy and the principals and teaching staff for keeping the school open and pulling together as a team to keep students in school and for everyone's hard work in keeping our schools open.

Ms. Kang stated that Mrs. Danahy meets with the PTO leadership bi-monthly and requested that a Board of Education representative attend their meetings. Ms. Kang volunteered to be the representative and also said that this is a great way to work together at different levels.

Mrs. Danahy thanked the PTO for their leadership and our district as a whole. The PTO is committed to our district as a whole.

## PUBLIC DISCUSSION

**Lauren Thiffault (159 Greenway Terrace)** Several questions were asked regarding substitutes, student teaching and certification, capital reserve budget, COVID District decisions and if there is a plan for 2022-2023 to cover the cost of Chrome Books. Mrs. Napolitano said there is approximately \$1.5 million in the capital reserve budget which is used for capital projects, boilers, repairs, roofing, air conditioning, etc. These monies are not used for instructional supplies or Chrome Books. Mrs. Napolitano also thanked the PTO for purchasing Chrome books for both schools and said that these items are budgeted as needed in the general fund budget. Ms. Thiffault also expressed concern regarding COVID restrictions with the new variant and how does the district decide on the parameters where student are seated/spaced out. Mrs. Danahy said that this is based on the fact that we are a red level. The entire county is in red level when the numbers go down, children will be able to sit closer together. All questions were answered. Decisions are based following the guidance. There are approximately 15 people are on the Pandemic Response Team.

**Christopher Sullivan (183 Monroe Avenue)** Mr. Sullivan spoke about his feelings of an unsafe class environment in his child's classroom. There is disruptive behavior among several students and he would like the troubled students removed from class so that others can learn. Ms. Kang thanked him for his comments and recommended he speak generally.

**Dana Hosey (219 Voorhis Avenue)** Ms. Hosey spoke about mask wearing in school and how it does effect younger children, including hers. It creates mental health issues in children; little children do not want to wear masks all day, some have sensory issues and are scared to come to school because they have to wear masks. Her child does not want to go to school because of this. Mrs. Danahy went on to say the time will come when not having to wear masks will happen and we do understand that it can hinder the education of younger children.

**Lauren Carrabs (848 Bogert Road)** Ms. Carrabs agreed with Dana Hosey's comments about mental health issues with children wearing masks. She also questioned why Mr. Sullivan's concerns were not addressed at the meeting. Ms. Kang stated it is to be discussed at an Administrative level and not at a public board meeting.

**Sebastian Muscarella (781 Fifth Avenue)** Mr. Muscarella said that he did not agree with the Pandemic Response Team's guidance verbatim. Mr. Muscarella asked questions regarding substitutes, homeschools and parent who are willing to substitute in their homeschools. Mr. Muscarella is requesting to have this practice reviewed. Mrs. Danahy answered questions regarding substitutes and will ensure the substitutes know procedures, protocol and safety procedures.

**CLOSED SESSION** - NONE

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion made by Ms. Kang to adjourn the regular public meeting at 9:46pm

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

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

Louise Napolitano  
Board Secretary/Business Administrator