

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

“Building Bright Futures Together”

Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – December 15, 2021

7:30 PM Public Meeting

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 7:30 PM.

MISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Herbst read the Mission Statement.

ROLL CALL

Present on roll call were Ms. Brown, Ms. Dansky, Mr. Herbst, Mr. Papiris, Mr. Sim, and Ms. Kang. Also present were Mrs. Danahy, Mrs. Napolitano, Mrs. Heitman and approximately 46 members of the public.

Ms. Juskeliene was absent

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE

Mrs. Napolitano read the Open Public Meeting Act Notice.

Swearing in New Board Member – Dimitrios Papiris

Ms. Kang welcomed Mr. Dimitrios Papiris to the River Edge Board of Education and Mrs. Napolitano administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Papiris.

SPECIAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Comment on Agenda Items – None

Honor Retiree Kathleen Grado

Ms. Kang, Dr. Ben-Dov (former Superintendent of River Edge), Ms. Dansky, and Mrs. Danahy all commented on Mrs. Grado’s hard work, loyal service and dedication to the River Edge Board of Education over the last nineteen years. Mrs. Grado thanked everyone for their kind words and appreciation. Flowers and a framed resolution were delivered to Mrs. Grado in honor of her retirement.

RESOLUTION TO RECOGNIZE OUR HONOREE

Honor Retiree Kathleen Grado

WHEREAS, Kathleen Grado has announced that she is retiring from the River Edge Board of Education after nineteen years of dedicated service as the Secretary to the Superintendent; and

WHEREAS, her loyal service to the Board of Education and the Administration has created a welcoming place for colleagues and all members of the River Edge community; and

WHEREAS, she has participated in the organization and collaboration of Teacher of the Year, Sixth Grade Board Meetings, Fun Run, and SwiftReach Messaging; and

WHEREAS, her professional skills combined with her friendly, helpful, and witty personality has made her an essential part of the Board of Education Office Team; and

WHEREAS, after her years of faithful service to the River Edge Community, she wishes to pursue her retirement; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Borough of River Edge on this Fifteenth Day of December, Two Thousand Twenty One spread upon its Minutes this Resolution of Appreciation for her valued service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the River Edge community offers its best wishes to Kathleen Grado for a long, happy, healthy and productive retirement and its gratitude for her years of service to the District.

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

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

Nays: None

REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT

Mrs. Danahy reported on the following:

- Mrs. Danahy thanked everyone for their warm welcome and said it has been wonderful getting to know many different members of our River Edge Schools Community. She expressed how thrilled she is to be here.
- Mrs. Danahy visited with River Dell last week to see some Social Studies Curriculum being worked on with our fifth and sixth grade teachers in Oradell and seventh and eighth grade teachers in the River Dell Middle School. It was a really productive day. Our Curriculum Specialists planned the day together with all three Districts. It was wonderful to see such a great collaboration and everyone hopes that we can build on that and collaborate across our Districts in curriculum development.
- Mrs. Danahy visited with lots of classrooms and said our schools are happy places where students are learning and collaborating. We do have some students zooming in for virtual learning and we are finding ways for both in person and virtual students to collaborate.
- Our Covid-19 numbers are rising since Thanksgiving. There have been eight students and one staff member cases in Cherry Hill School and there have been 11 students and one staff member cases in Roosevelt School.
- There is a resolution on tonight's agenda to approve Daphne Caplis as the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent. Ms. Caplis comes to us with lots of school district experience. We are looking forward to having her start in January and she is a welcomed addition to our Board Staff.

- There is a potential HIB incident to report on. It involves a Roosevelt Student male sixth grader having a verbal exchange with a female sixth grader. The incident was investigated and while the remarks were deemed insensitive it was not found to be HIB related. Consequences were given according to the Code of Conduct and the students are receiving support from our Pupil Assistance Counselor.

PRINCIPAL

Mrs. Heitman reported on the following:

- We had our Holiday Concert on December 9th. This included the fifth and sixth grade Band, Chorus and Orff Ensemble. Mrs. Heitman thanked Ms. Cuadra, Ms. Dent and Ms. Del Guidice. Roosevelt School will have their concert tomorrow. Mrs. Heitman has already met with the music department to start planning for the Spring Concert and involvement of more students.
- The District just received our Start Strong Results for the fourth through sixth grade students. The letters will get mailed on Tuesday, December 21st for both schools.
- The report card portal opened at 3:00PM on Monday. Parent Conferences were held Tuesday, December 14th and will continue on Thursday, December 16th. We had a mix of virtual and in person conferences and they seemed to go well.
- The Cherry Hill PTO set up snack for the teachers for Parent Conferences. They are also providing a holiday breakfast for the staff on Monday, December 20th. The PTO and a committee of teachers created the first Cherry Hill School Recipe Book. We asked any interested sixth graders to create a front and/or back cover. We received recipes from both staff and parents. There are over 100 recipes. It has been published and we hope it will be given out next week for all who purchased it. Mrs. Heitman thanked Ms. Jaskot, Ms. DeVasto, Ms. Wendrychowicz, Ms. Miele and the PTO for this.
- We are looking forward to the first grade assembly with the Center for Aquatic Sciences tomorrow.
- There will be a 12:45 day session for Thursday, December 23rd. Mrs. Heitman wished all a relaxing enjoyable time with families during the holidays and the break.

BOARD SECRETARY

Mrs. Napolitano reported on the following:

- There is a resolution on tonight's agenda (D4) to dispose of 200 Chromebooks to Green Wave Electronics. This company will reimburse the District based on assessing the devices. These Chromebooks aren't usable as they are right now, but they can be recycled.
- There is a resolution on tonight's agenda (G8) to terminate a Region V Independent Consultant Contract.
- Mrs. Napolitano stated in 2020 we were able to apply for a Security Grant for Alyssa's Law. We just received the monies in the amount of \$64,113. We will put the money back into Capital Reserve, which is where it was appropriated from, and it may help to pay for our boiler project.
- The auditors from Lerch, Vinci, and Higgins have come and started the annual audit of the River Edge School district today.

PRESIDENT

Ms. Kang reported on the following:

- Ms. Kang welcomed Mr. Papiris to the River Edge Board of Education and looks forward to working with him.
- Ms. Kang thanked the board members for completing the Board Self-Evaluations. Mr. Matt Lee is compiling it all together for the board.

COMMITTEES

Ms. Dansky stated the Finance and Facilities Committee met on December 8th. They discussed touring small group instructional spaces at Roosevelt School, options for small group instructional spaces at Roosevelt School, follow up on the shed request from REGAL, Interlocal Agreements, new bills approval system, and future items.

Mr. Herbst attended a New Jersey School Board Association Committee Meeting. Mr. Herbst was appointed to serve as the Alternate Representative for Legislative District 38. He read a letter for the board and audience to better understand what that Committee is tasked with.

Mr. Herbst attended a Legislative Committee Meeting on December 11th and reported the following:

The Legislative Committee is a standing committee of NJSBA and is charged with adopting the advocacy action plan recommended to the NJSBA Board of Directors for each State Legislative session. Legislative Committee members engage in advocacy efforts at the grassroots level to advance the Association's legislative agenda. The ability of committee members to communicate with legislators is critical in advancing NJSBA's goals.

At the meeting, the Legislative Community unanimously recommended the 2022-2023 Legislative Advocacy Agenda/Action Plan. While it is not public until the NJSBA Board of Directors approves it, it covers similar topics to the 2020-2021 Legislative Advocacy Agenda/Action Plan, reflecting advocacy issue changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic including teacher/staff shortages, mental health, and learning loss.

There was a variety of federal and state legislation discussed. The federal infrastructure law includes money for greener construction in schools, so we will have to see if it impacts River Edge. The current proposal for the Build Back Better bill includes universal pre-k, which Governor Murphy is pushing for heavily in New Jersey, so we will see how it plays out over the next few months. The USDOE sent a letter to the NJDOE indicating that state funding for certain districts that received high amounts of federal relief aid would need to stay the same; although the NJDOE is responding to this letter, it is not anticipated that this would impact River Edge. There was a lot of discussion at the legislative committee meeting on December 11th regarding NJ S3434, the new special education age-out bill that was passed by the governor which requires boards of education to provide special education and related services to certain students exceeding age of eligibility for special education and related services due to the Coronavirus pandemic. A question was asked about NJSBA's stance on NJ A6100, which would require school districts to provide instruction on Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) history in the social studies curriculum. The legislative team responded that while they usually oppose state mandates in the curricular realm, NJSBA is remaining neutral on this bill due to the rise in hate crimes and racial injustice against the AAPI community. There were further discussions on mental health, diversity, and learning loss bill packages making their way through the legislature. A final

discussion highlighted committee member concerns regarding the lack of consistency in individual district responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the realm of quarantine policies. The legislative team shared that the updated Legislative Advocacy Agenda/Action Plan will allow them to pursue advocacy for more coordinated responses to the pandemic in the state legislature.

MOTIONS TO BE ACTED UPON

A. ADMINISTRATION/POLICY

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

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

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

Nays: None, Abstained: Mr. Herbst, Mr. Papiris

2. That the Board of Education approve the staff development and travel as per the schedules for December 2021 including relevant mileage reimbursement. (Addendum)
3. That the Board of Education approve the 2022 Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement between the River Edge Elementary Schools and the River Edge Law Enforcement Officials for the 2021-2022 school year.

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

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

Nays: None

B. CURRICULUM/EDUCATION - None

C. BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

1. That the Board of Education approve for dual use of room 105 in the Roosevelt School for the 2021-2022 school year.

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

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

Nays: None

D. FINANCE/GRANTS/GIFTS

1. That the Board of Education approve the bills & claims dated December 2021, totaling \$850,999.59 including checks #10386 through #10453. Payrolls dated November 15, 2021 and November 29, 2021, totaling \$1,294,854.21 issued therefore, a copy of such warrants list are 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 October 31, 2021 and November 30, 2021. (Addendum)
3. That the River Edge Board of Education approve the Secretary's and Treasurer's Reports for the period ending October 31, 2021 and November 30, 2021.

Further, we certify that as of October 31, 2021 and November 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 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)

4. That the Board of Education approve to recycle 200 Chromebooks to Green Wave Electronics in the amount to be determined upon completion of assessing the devices.

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

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

Nays: None

E. PERSONNEL

1. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Jacqueline Frontauria, Part-time Aide, starting on December 16, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

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

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

Nays: None, Abstained: Mr. Papiris

2. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the retirement of Sharon Francin, 504 Aide, effective December 31, 2021.

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

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

Nays: None

3. That the Board of Education authorize the payment due to the following employees for unused sick days.

Sharon Francin

Kathleen Grado

4. That the Board of Education post approve Courtney Sweet 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 post approve Lynn Bosche (as an aide) for Cycle II, Math, of the Post Dismissal Instructional Academy for the 2021-2022 School Year, at her hourly rate.
6. That the Board of Education with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Lauren Jackson for Student Field Experience to consist of 30 hours of classroom observation to commence on or about January 3, 2022 through January 21, 2022 pending criminal history review.

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

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

Nays: None, Abstained: Mr. Papiris

7. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Daphne Caplis, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, starting January 3, 2022 through June 30, 2022.

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

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

Nays: None

F. RIVER EDGE SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. That the Board of Education approve Dr. Sameh Ragheb to conduct in person Psychiatric Evaluations for the 2021-2022 school year, not to exceed \$850.00.

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

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

G. REGION V ADMINISTRATION & TRANSPORTATION

1. That the Board of Education approve the bills & claims dated December 2021, totaling \$921,675.57 including checks #60274 through #60368.
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 consultant agreements 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, approves the consultant agreements 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:

Consultant	Discipline	Area of Service	Hourly Rate/Rate Per Evaluation
Lincy Aprigliano	Speech Language Therapist Consultant	Evaluations	\$350 Evaluation
Taryn Corrigan	Occupational Therapist	Direct Services	OT Home Services \$100/hr*
Edyta Oldakowska	School Psychologist	Direct Services and Evaluations	Public \$75/hr, \$350 Evaluation

*consultant previously approved, approval of additional rate for home services

3. BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent approve the following rates that are part of already established contracts.

Agency	Service	Rates:
Aveanna	Substitute RN/LPN	Previously Approved: Sub RN/LPN \$60/hr.
Bayada	Substitute RN/LPN	Previously Approved: Sub RN \$60/hr/LPN \$50/hr.
Priority Nursing	Transport RN	Previously Approved: Transport RN \$120/hr.

4. That the Board of Education rescind the following Addendum Contract for the 2021-2022 school year.

Route	Transporter	Per Diem
1819	Valley Transportation	\$858.54

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

Route	Transporter	Per Diem
1819	Valley Transportation	\$1015.31
2907	First Student , Inc.	\$580.41
2909	First Student , Inc.	\$614.37
2940	All Points Transportation	\$256.26
3018	Valley Transportation	\$325.00

6. 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 Transportation	\$299.00	\$86.00	\$385.00

7. That the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Jointure Transportation Agreement between The Palisades Park Board of Education (Host) and Region V (Joiner).

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

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

8. **WHEREAS**, a consultant whose name is on file in the Board office has a contract with a seven (7) day notice provision; and

WHEREAS, the Coordinator of Region V Council for Special Education has recommended that the Board invoke the seven (7) day notice provision to terminate said consultant's contract; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby invokes the seven (7) day notice provision of the above referenced consultant's contract; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary/Business Administrator shall provide the consultant with notice of the Board's action as set forth in this Resolution forthwith.

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

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

OLD/NEW BUSINESS - None

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Lauren D'Alessandro (292 Woodland Avenue): wanted to know if the school was updating the quarantine procedures to make it equal for the vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals? Mrs. Danahy responded high schools have been dealing with this the entire year. That is what our local high school are doing, and the high schools in Bergen County. We also have this in place for our staff members. This is the practice now. We can re-evaluate but those are the guidelines that are in place. Ms. Kang responded this has been in place as of September.

Sebastian Muscarella (781 5th Avenue): what is going on with the fourth grade IEP students with the Dual Room Usage? Ms. Dansky responded that is the room that we are moving. We are moving the sixth graders so the fourth graders in that room will have their lesson without any other instruction going on.

John Binetti and Melcer Flores (787 Kinderkamack Road): what is going to happen come September 2022 when we have more students in the building and less space than we have now? Why was the architects plan not considered when they evaluated the buildings in 2019? What are we going to do about having zero space in the buildings? They would like to work with the board and administration to come up with a solution and figure out what we can do for the upcoming school year. What is the plan for the space issue we have? Mr. Herbst stated we do have those plans from 2019 and it has been brought up in several Finance and Facilities meetings. It is a good time in January to invite our architect back in and review those plans again and discuss and to look at Roosevelt School. Ms. Dansky stated at the Finance and Facilities Committee Meeting it was stated for future items to begin the educational process for the public regarding space concerns and viable options. Making the school bigger will require a referendum. We will need the approval of the community for a referendum. The climate for having a referendum right now is not favorable. Ms. Dansky thanked him for his help and enthusiasm on getting this done. Ms. Kang thanked him for his comments and starting up the conversation.

Rita Houghtalin (300 Woodland Avenue): K-6 schools does not always have the ability or knowledge to maintain a six foot distance and the high school students have this ability and maintain it a little better. Now is a great time to revisit the policy for the vaccinated and unvaccinated as the numbers are rising. Mrs. Danahy responded this is the policy that is in place for the end of the year. We are revisiting and relooking at it every day.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion made by Mr. Papiris, seconded by Mr. Herbst to adjourn the regular public meeting at 9:13 PM.

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

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

Nays: None

Louise Napolitano

Board Secretary/Business Administrator