

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

**“Building Bright Futures Together”**

**Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – February 2, 2022**

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 7:32 PM.

**MISSION STATEMENT**

Ms. Dansky read the Mission Statement.

**ROLL CALL**

Present on roll call were Ms. Brown, Ms. Dansky, Mr. Herbst, Ms. Juskeliene, Mr. Papiris and Ms. Kang. Mr. Sim was absent.

Approximately 32 member of the public were present virtually.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE**

Mrs. Napolitano read the Open Public Meeting Notice.

**SPECIAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

Public Comment on Agenda Items

Board of Education Member Training – Steven R. Fogarty, Esq.

Mr. Fogarty’s presentation was titled **Board Governance and the Role of a Board Member**. Mr. Fogarty spoke about the Role of the Board regarding their general powers and duties as defined in Title 18A of the New Jersey statute. Also, as defined in N.J.S.A. 18A:11-1, “General Mandatory Powers and Duties,” the Board of Education is required to, among other things, enforce the rules of the New Jersey State Board of Education; make, amend and repeal rules for government and management of the schools and their employees; and perform all acts and do all things, consistent with law and the rules of the State Board, necessary for lawful and proper conduct, equipment and maintenance of the District.

Mr. Fogarty’s presentation included the following: The Role of the Board; The Board and Administration; Division of Responsibility Between the Board and Superintendent; Agenda Preparation; The Role of the Board Member; Limits on the Role of a Board Member: The Code of Ethics; Code of Ethics: Limits on Board Members’ Administrative Powers; Code of Ethics in Practice; Code of Ethics in Practice – Impermissible Personnel Actions; Code of Ethics in Practice – Volunteering; Free Speech and the School Ethics Act (N.J.S.A. 18A:12-21 et seq.); Letters to the Editor; Advisory Opinions A02-06 and A03-07; and Social Media Guidelines for Board Members.

February 2, 2022

## **REPORTS**

### **SUPERINTENDENT**

Mrs. Danahy thanked Mr. Fogarty for the staff training he conducted this week regarding social media, OPRA requests, student requests, how to handle emails and more.

Mrs. Danahy had asked the Board of Education to vote on a new logo for our school District. The Board of Education, Administration, REEA, PTO and Student Council all voted on the winning logo. Mrs. Danahy thanked Michael for his talent, effort, time and hard work as a graphic artist. Mrs. Danahy showed the logo with our slogan, "Building Bright Futures."

Mrs. Danahy spoke about Professional Day on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Teachers will be working on report card benchmarks. Mrs. Danahy and Mr. Werner will be engaging the Technology Department, Art and Library Media Specialists in a STEAM ("Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math") meeting with the hope of capturing the STEAM labs next year. In preparation for this, we are recalibrating where we are and what is new in the field of STEAM and how do we see this program running.

Mr. James will be leading in a lesson study with the Physical Education and Music teachers. The teachers will be planning lessons together which is a very helpful discipline. At a later date, they will teach these lessons where they can also observe each other and co-teach. Music teachers will be working on Diversity and Inclusivity and Physical Education teachers will focus on health and wellness infused into the Physical Education classrooms.

The EDI committee will also be meeting followed by a community meeting. The committee will speak and plan how to invite community into the conversation. Community members have reached out about learning loss regarding data and Mrs. Danahy will be having a community forum about learning loss.

### **PRINCIPAL**

Mr. Henzel stated that Roosevelt School is looking forward to kicking off the Read-a-thon later this month. Students will have their own webpage when they sign up where they can track how long they read. There will also be various incentives along the way with some special surprises as well. Mr. Henzel also spoke about the PDIA parent meetings that took place in each school today that coincide with the beginning of another cycle of PDIA which will be ELA. Mr. Henzel also said that mid-year assessments are being finalized and Mrs. Heitman and he will be meeting with teachers for mid-year SGO review. Mr. Henzel reminded everyone that all individuals should keep off the snow banks; refrain from throwing snow and ice because recess is planned to be outside as much as possible; therefore, students should dress appropriately.

### **BOARD SECRETARY**

Mrs. Napolitano spoke about the Region V items on tonight's agenda for busing bids, contracts and Joint Transportation Agreements. We ensure transportation for member districts in Region V and that is on the agenda also for an additional need for a district.. The Budget calendar has been distributed to all Board of Education members for their review and also the list of upcoming meetings for submission and approval of the budget along with released state aid numbers.

The Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) waiver is being approved on the agenda this evening. This year, as in the past, there are 18 or less Medicaid eligible classified students and so we will not be applying for monies for medically based services from the state. These funds are at a very discounted rate and very paper labor intensive. Mrs. Napolitano also said that eligible students still receive their services from the school.

The preschool tuition rates are being approved on the agenda this evening as well. The tuition rates have gone up less than 2% each year and are in line with other programs.

Mrs. Napolitano also stated that she will be attending the Association of School Business Officials International Conference in Savannah, Georgia for the next few days and is looking forward to meeting all her fellow Business Administrators from all over. The conference is at no cost to the District and the State is paying for Mrs. Napolitano because she was a past President of Bergen County Association of School Business Officials. Last year, this conference was cancelled due to COVID.

## **PRESIDENT**

Ms. Kang reminded the Board of Education members to register for the upcoming mandated training which will be live and virtual this year in March and April. Ms. Kang also reminded the Board of Education members to complete the financial disclosure forms which are due in April. The Bergen County School Board Association workshop will be held live, on October 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>h</sup> this year.

## **Committee Reports**

Ms. Kang reported on the Ad Hoc Policy Committee that met on January 24<sup>th</sup> to review several policies that were adopted during the pandemic and need to be revised. The following policies were Policy 1250 Visitors, Policy 5113 Attendance, Absences and Excuses and Policy 6173.1 Remote Learning. All the policies have been reviewed, amended and sent to Mr. Fogarty's office for review. Once the review is completed by Mr. Fogarty's office, the policies will then go before the Board of Education. According to policy updates, all drafts of policies will be posted on the District website, the same day as the Board of Education meeting agenda for the public to view. Ms. Kang said that the Ad Hoc Committee will have their next meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

## **Pandemic Response Team Report**

Mr. Papiris reported that there was no new guidance to discuss. The Pandemic Response Team also spoke about "test to stay" and how it works. Mr. Papiris said that this does not apply to our school policies or procedures. The protocols that our District have in place allow for students to stay in school more than the "test to stay" would. The Pandemic Response Team also discussed Executive Order 251 which will be expiring. Mr. Papiris also noted that Mrs. Danahy will be putting together a forum for the community with all data regarding learning loss.

## **QSAC**

Mr. Herbst reported that the QSAC committee met January 26th to make sure everything is ready for QSAC's visit on Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Herbst thanked Mrs. Danahy, Mrs. Napolitano, the Board office staff, the principals and teachers for the District wide effort in gathering all the data in preparation of this visit.

Ms. Dansky reported on the New Jersey School Board Association of Directors meeting and the Bergen County meeting. The New Jersey School Boards Association is looking for a replacement for Dr. Lawrence Feinsod. Ms. Dansky also said the Finance and Facilities Committee will have their next meeting on Tuesday, February 8<sup>th</sup> which will include all principals. The Bergen County meeting was well attended by our Board of Education members. The meeting was virtual and the subject of the meeting was Board of Education and Superintendent Relations.

**MOTIONS TO BE ACTED UPON**

**A. ADMINISTRATION/POLICY**

1. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes of January 19, 2022.

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

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

Abstained: Ms. Brown

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

<b>School</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Cherry Hill School	January 19, 2022 Fire Drill
	January 25, 2022 Shelter in Place with Movement
Roosevelt School	January 13, 2022 Fire Drill
	January 26, 2022 Lock Down Drill

3. **WHEREAS**, NJAC 6A:23A-5.3 provides that a school district may request a waiver of compliance with respect to the district’s participation in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program for the 2022 - 2023, and

**WHEREAS**, the River Edge Board of Education desires to apply for this waiver due to the fact that it projects having fewer than 18 Medicaid eligible classified students.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the River Edge Board of Education hereby authorized the Chief School Administrator to submit to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools in the County of Bergen an appropriate waiver of the requirements of NJAC 6A23A-5.3 for the 2022-2023 school year.

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

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

Nays: None

**B. CURRICULUM/EDUCATION - None**

**C. BUILDINGS & GROUNDS - None**

**D. FINANCE/GRANTS/GIFTS**

1. That the Board of Education establishes the tuition rates per pupil for the 2022 – 2023 school year:

Integrated Pre-School Program 3 half days per week	\$2,881.50
Integrated Pre-School Program 4 half days per week	\$3,544.50

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

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

Nays: None

**E. PERSONNEL**

1. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve professional day requests for the following staff members to attend workshops/conferences as noted and in accordance with appropriate statute:

Name/Position	Workshop/Conference	Date(s)	Cost to District/Including Mileage (not to exceed)
Louise Napolitano Business Administrator/ Board Secretary	ASBO International Leadership Conference Savannah, Georgia	February 3–4, 2022	\$0
Nevin Werner Math & Science Instructional Supervisor & Coach	New Jersey Student Learning Standards Science Committee Virtual Meetings	February 17-18, 2022	\$0
Nevin Werner Math & Science Instructional Supervisor & Coach	Science Advisory Committee Training Session	March 30, 2022	\$0
Risa Louda Speech Therapist Cherry Hill School/ New Bridge Center	Speech Language Pathologists: What's New in Technology to Save Time & Accelerate Therapy Outcomes Virtual Workshop	March 24, 2022	\$279.00

2. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve AnneMarie Spiegel for creating NJSLA student preparation materials and for data analysis support for the W.I.N. program at a rate not to exceed \$4,000.
3. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, post-approve Jessica Barbo for Home Instruction for a total of eight weeks, to end on or about March 7, 2022, at an hourly rate of \$50.00 per hour not to exceed 10 hours per week.
4. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Celine Canizales, River Dell High School student, for a senior internship one day per week as part of a School Sponsored Structured Learning Experience to commence February 3, 2022 through May17, 2022.
5. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the following as substitute teachers for the 2021-2022 School Year:

ChristyAnn Armen
Jillian Demitriou
Natalie Doornheim
Vanessa Hennig-Roshong

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

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

Nays: None

6. That the Board of Education accept, with regret, the resignation of Joyce Kelleher, Clerical Assistant, effective February 18, 2022.

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

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

Nays: None

7. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, post approve Sharon Fadini for additional hours to provide classroom coverage from February 1, 2022 through February 22, 2022.

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

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

Nays: None

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

**G. REGION V ADMINISTRATION & TRANSPORTATION**

1. That the Board of Education rescind the following Renewal Contract for the 2021 - 2022 school year.

Route	Transporter	Per Diem
2931	First Student, Inc.	\$413.20

2. That the Board of Education post approve the following Renewal Contract for the 2021 – 2022 school year.

Route	Transporter	Per Diem
2931	First Student, Inc.	\$411.84

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

Route	Transporter	Per Diem
1899	Valley Transportation	\$248.59
2903	All Points Transportation	\$474.90
2970	Kids Choice Inc.	\$252.00

4. 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
3025	Valley Transportation	\$725.00	\$79.65	\$725.00	\$2.50

5. That the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Jointure Transportation Agreement between Bergen County Special Services (Host) and Region V (Joiner).
6. That the Board of Education approve the 2021-2022 Jointure Transportation Agreement between the Leonia Board of Education (Host) and Region V (Joiner).
7. That the Board of Education approve the 2022-2023 Jointure Transportation Agreement between The South Bergen Jointure Commission (Host) and Region V (Joiner).
8. That the Board of Education approve the 2022-2023 Jointure Transportation Agreement between Region V (Host) and The South Bergen Jointure Commission (Joiner).

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

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

Nays: None

### **OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Papiris noted that there is a change that is going to take place with security drills. It is now required that all parents will be notified by the end of the day after security drills have taken place in our schools allowing parent and students to speak about these drills at home

Ms. Juskeliene spoke about learning loss and looking into children who excelled during this time of remote learning versus previous years.

### **PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

**Dana Hosey (219 Voorhiis Avenue):** Ms. Hosey had several questions and a comment. What plan does our District have in place if and when Governor Murphy lifts the mandated mask order? Other Districts already have plans in place for this, why does River Edge not have a plan and how long will it take for our children to not have to wear the masks if this happens? Why hasn't the Board of Education tried to put something together so that when this does happen we can move forward? Ms. Hosey also had some concerns regarding the Pandemic Response Team and the committee minutes. Ms. Hosey said that the Pandemic Response Team is diverse as far as the people on the team but it is not diverse in train of thought. Mrs. Danahy and Ms. Kang answered Ms. Hosey's concerns regarding the mask mandate and the Pandemic Response Team.

**Anthony and Taylor Minervini (181 Wales Avenue):** Mrs. Minervini offered an opposing conversation regarding the mask mandates. Everyone has different approaches to the masking and she decided to temporarily home school her children. Mrs. Minervini would like to know if the Board of Education has any information on where the entire community stands on this issue. Everyone shares the same goal of keeping our schools open with minimal disruption. Evidence in election results show that the community is in favor of keeping masks on a while longer. Mrs. Minervini recommends the Board of Education surveys all stakeholders, parent, teachers, staff and administrators on this issue before making a final decision on whether or not to remove the masks.

Mr. Minervini agreed with his wife and added that the pandemic won't end because we declare it to be over but common sense says that fewer masks are going to lead to more exposures; more exposures are going to

lead to greater disruption due to illness and quarantines, even if any illness is mild. Mr. Minervini believes that lowering masks would only lead to increased quarantines. In his opinion universal masking has helped keep schools open and requested that the Board considers extending the mask mandate even if Governor Murphy decides to take it down. Ms. Kang thanked Mr. and Mrs. Minervini for their comments and understands their concerns.

**Kristen Apa (175 Voorhiis Avenue):** Ms. Apa had a question, to clarify with Mr. Fogarty's presentation that Board of Education members can speak during the public meeting, offer commentary on a policy, make a statement and possibly offer a voluntary explanation as to why they voted a certain way on something. Ms. Apa also commented on the mask issue and how some parents feel sick doing this to their children every day. It is very unsettling and disturbing as a parent not having a decision-making power over your own child. Ms. Apa also emphasized that people have various opinions but this is really a decision making power. Ms. Apa also asked that once the executive order goes away, how long would this process take. Mr. Fogarty answered Ms. Apa's concerns. Ms. Kang answered Ms. Apa's concerns regarding the lifting of the mask mandate and Board of Education discussions.

**Sebastian Muscarella (781 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue):** Mr. Muscarella had a comment and a question. Mr. Muscarella commented on Mr. Fogarty's presentation being really good but at the same time was not fit for this type of meeting and that the Board should have a better idea about screening presentations before they come to the public. Mr. Fogarty went on for over an hour which was great information but not information the public needs. A closed session is best suited to handle this. Mr. Muscarella questioned if a Board member were to write a written note and pass that note to another Board of Education member during the second reading of a policy would that constitute as a violation. Mr. Fogarty commented that this presentation could not be done in closed session. Mr. Fogarty also answered passing a note would not itself be a violation of the Code of Ethics but that note could be a government record and whether or not there is access to the content of the note would depend upon what it said. Ms. Kang thanked Mr. Muscarella for his comments.

## **CLOSED SESSION**

Motion made by Mr. Herbst, seconded by Mr. Papiris to convene into a closed session at 10:00 PM.

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

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

Nays: None