

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

**“Building Bright Futures Together”
REVISED**

Minutes of the Regular Public Meeting – March 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 7:34PM

MISSION STATEMENT

Mr. Papiris read the Mission Statement.

ROLL CALL

Mrs. Napolitano took roll call.

Present on call were Ms. Dansky, Ms. Juskiliene, Mr. Papiris and Ms. Kang

Absent: Ms. Brown, Mr. Herbst and Mr. Sim

Approximately 27 were in attendance virtually.

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS NOTICE

Mrs. Napolitano read the Open Public Meetings Notice.

CLOSED SESSION (When Necessary)

SPECIAL/DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Comment on Agenda Items

None

Preliminary Budget Discussion

Mrs. Danahy and Mrs. Napolitano presented the **Proposed 2022 – 2023 School Year Budget**.

Mrs. Napolitano said that we are still awaiting our state aid numbers. The Governor’s new address will take place on March 8th and on March 10th and then we should have our state aid numbers. Today, Mrs. Napolitano and Mrs. Danahy presented a proposed adoption of the budget and said the final adoption of the budget will take place in May. A slide presentation explained the budget process; listing expenditures; what the budget supports; the 2022-2023 Budget Goals including continuing educational programs; updating and maintaining the buildings; staffing positions. All questions were answered that were asked by the board members.

Analyzing Historical Data

Nevin Werner presented on **Historical Analysis of Academic Data from 2017 – 2022**. The goals of Mr. Werner’s presentation provided an overview of the academic impacts of COVID-19 over the past two March 2, 2022

years for Grades 2 – 6 in ELA and Math; shared data trends; analyzed areas of strength and areas of growth; progress monitor and also discussed how the data is used in our District. Mr. Werner also spoke about the successes and challenges that some students faced during this time. The students who struggled continue to need a high level of support. Kindergarten students showed some difficulty adjusting to the school environment and structure and there was an increase in behavioral and social emotional concerns. The staff expressed concern regarding the writing structure, grammar, spelling and handwriting. Mr. Werner said that we will continue to offer Math and ELA Post Dismissal Instructional Academy sessions; planning has begun for our Summer W.I.N Academy; preparation for NJSLA Grades 3-6 coaching and support resources are being offered; creation of District and school goals focusing on historical areas in need of improvement; creation of Action Plans focusing on skill areas that have been impacted due to COVID and Continue to progress monitor student growth historically. Mr. Werner also said that the QSAC review reported that we are the highest performing District in the County in growth numbers due to our W.I.N. program. All questions were answered that were asked by board members.

Mrs. Danahy thanked Mr. Werner for an amazing job with this presentation and was impressed by the amount of data collected for this analysis.

REPORTS

SUPERINTENDENT

Mrs. Danahy congratulated the Odyssey of the Mind Team. The Vehicle Team came in third place and the Structure Team came in first place and will advance to compete in the state tournament in April. Mrs. Danahy will invite Mrs. Hafers and the students to one of our Board of Education meetings to speak about this event.

Mrs. Danahy accepted the resignation of Rosemary Kuruc who is retiring this year. Mrs. Kuruc has been working in the District since 2002 and has a very long and successful career. Mrs. Danahy wanted to acknowledge that Mrs. Kuruc will be on the agenda and honored in the spring along with our other retirees.

Mrs. Danahy thanked all the members of the community who attended the Superintendent Forum she hosted this week and hopes that this will improve family engagement. Mrs. Danahy spoke about the differences between family involvement and family engagement. Family engagement is very important in how the community can engage with us in the business of educating our students. Mrs. Danahy said she is very excited to continue the conversation and more about ideas that came about at this Forum.

Mrs. Danahy reported on three potential HIB (“Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying”) reports.

The first involved a fifth grade student at Roosevelt School who was using a racial slur towards another fifth grade student. The incident was investigated and it was found to be a violation of the District’s HIB Policy. Consequences were given according to the Code of Conduct and the students are receiving support from the Pupil Assistance Counselor. Class lessons on equity, diversity and inclusion are taking place and lessons on what an inclusive school environment looks like are also being taught and discussed.

The second incident involves a fifth grade student at Roosevelt School making insensitive remarks to another fifth grade student. The incident was investigated and it was found to be a violation of the District’s HIB Policy. Consequences were given according to the Code of Conduct and the Pupil Assistance Counselor has conducted class lessons on citizenship and diversity.

The third incident involves a sixth grade student at Roosevelt School sixth having a verbal exchange with another sixth grade student. The remarks were insensitive but the incident was investigated and found not to be HIB related. The student will receive SEL support during school with the Pupil Assistance Counselor.

Ms. Kang said she came as a parent to the Superintendent's forum and appreciated the collaboration with other parents at the Superintendent's Forum. The sharing of ideas opened up a lot of conversations and she thanked Mrs. Danahy for this and said that this was missed during the last few years.

PRINCIPAL REPORT

Mr. Henzel reported on Read Across America week. There were many theme days during the week for students to get involved in and tomorrow is Heritage Day. Heritage Day ties in with the book titled "Leila in Saffron". Mr. Henzel also said that to coincide with our celebration of Read Across America, our Read-a-thon is in full swing. The school has eclipsed over the target goal in scholarships which results in Mr. Henzel being slimed. If students are able to log more than 50,000 cumulative minutes, Mr. Henzel will be getting his head shaved in front of the entire student body. Mr. Henzel said that SEL PDIA will begin next week and letters will be going out regarding this. The Shark Tank presentation for sixth grade parents will also begin next week and finals will take place later this month. Mr. Henzel also said that March Mathness kicked off yesterday and there will be daily math fun facts broadcast each morning, along with brain teasers and puzzles released each week. He said that other events during the month of March include Pi Day, Family Math nights in both schools and an evening with Greg Tang.

BOARD SECRETARY

Mrs. Napolitano reported on several agenda items: Item A2 is a resolution that the Board is required to read it in its entirety this evening from the School Ethics Commission and this resolution will be posted for no less than thirty (30) days prior to our Board of Education meeting this evening as required. After the resolution is read, we will present proof of this with a certified resolution to the commission once it is adopted.

Mrs. Napolitano also reported on Item G2 Region V lease extension; G3 – G7 regarding Region V Transportation; Item G7 is a Jointure Transportation Agreement where Region V is the Joiner with other districts which we use for transportation by sharing routes with other districts.

PRESIDENT

Ms. Kang reported the Bergen County School Boards Association meeting will be virtual on Tuesday, March 29th at 6:45PM and will be about Leadership on the Board.

Ms. Kang also thanked Michael Mascagnay for revamping our website. She was proud to see pictures of our school from the air and Mrs. Danahy said they were taken by Michael's own personal drone. Mrs. Danahy also thanked Michael.

Ms. Kang noted that a copy of a thank you card from our school physician, Dr. Nicpon, was given to Board members and we are all thinking of his family.

COMMITTEES

Personnel and Management Committee will meet Monday, March 7th.

Ad Hoc Policy – TBA

Curriculum and Instruction Committee will meet on March 21st

Pandemic Response Team

Mr. Papiris gave a brief report of the February 28th meeting of the Pandemic Response Team and the lifting of the mask mandate; accepting people's choices about wearing or not wearing a mask; nurses spoke to Department of Health nurses and strategies for these changes in making students feel comfortable.

MOTIONS TO BE ACTED UPON

A. ADMINISTRATION/POLICY

1. That the Board of Education approve the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of February 16, 2022.

Ms. Kang pointed out a typo in the Confidential Minutes. It should read 6:05PM instead of 6:00PM

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

Ayes: Ms. Dansky, Ms. Juskiliene, Mr. Papiris, Ms. Kang

Nays: None

Mr. Papiris read the following Resolution:

2. Whereas, Adrienne Doyle (Respondent) is a school official, as defined in the School Ethics Act (Act), serving as a member of the River Edge Board of Education (Board), located in Bergen County; and

Whereas, by decision dated August 30, 2021, the School Ethics Commission (Commission) found that Respondent failed to comply with the annual training mandate (deadline was December 31, 2020) in violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33, N.J.A.C. 6A:11-3.1(a), and N.J.A.C. 6A:28-4.1; and

Whereas, the Commission recommended that the Commissioner of Education impose a penalty of removal, with such removal to become effective immediately upon adoption by the Commissioner of Education. However, if Respondent completed training before the Commissioner of Education adopted a final decision (which was forty-five (45) days after the Commission's decision was mailed), then the Commission recommended that the Commissioner of Education, in lieu of removal, impose a thirty (30) day suspension, with such suspension to become effective immediately upon adoption by the Commissioner of Education; and

Whereas, on October 14, 2021, the Commissioner of Education issued a decision removing Respondent from the Board; and

Whereas, following the issuance of the Commissioner of Education's decision, Respondent filed a motion for reconsideration claiming she never received notifications from the Commission and, therefore, never had the opportunity to respond to the Commission's Order to Show Cause or to the decision adopted on August 30, 2021; and

Whereas, the Commissioner of Education granted Respondent's motion for reconsideration; and

Whereas, following the filing of her motion for reconsideration, Respondent advised that her term expired on December 31, 2021; and

Whereas, Respondent did not complete the required training prior to the expiration of her term; and

Whereas, by decision dated February 9, 2022, the Commissioner of Education found that Respondent failed to timely honor an obligation placed upon board members by law. However, because Respondent is no longer a member of the Board, the Commissioner of Education found that the only penalty that can be imposed is censure; and

Whereas, N.J.A.C. 6A:28-10.12(d) provides that, for a penalty of censure, suspension or removal, a Resolution shall be adopted at the Commission's next meeting following issuance of the Commissioner's decision, and the Resolution shall be read at the next public meeting of the charter school following its adoption, and shall be posted in such places as the charter school posts its public notices for a period of no less than thirty (30) days; and

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that the Commission adopts this Resolution stating that Respondent is hereby CENSURED as a school official for having been found to have violated N.J.S.A. 18A:12-33 of the Act, and its implementing regulations, namely N.J.A.C. 6A:11-3.1(a) and N.J.A.C. 6A:28-4.1; and

Be It Further Resolved that the Board is ordered to read this Resolution at its next regularly scheduled public meeting following the Commission's adoption on February 25, 2022, and to post it in such places as the Board posts its public notices for a period of no less than thirty (30) days.

Be It Further Resolved, that the Board shall provide the Commission with the minutes, once adopted, from the meeting at which it reads the within Resolution.

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

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

Nays: None

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

School	Dates
Cherry Hill School	February 10, 2022 Fire Drill February 18, 2022 Shelter in Place
Roosevelt School	February 11, 2022 Fire Drill February 17, 2022 Evacuation Drill

Motion by: Ms. Juskiliene Seconded by: Ms. Dansky

Ayes: Ms. Dansky, Ms. Juskiliene, Mr. Papiris, Ms. Kang

Nays: None

B. CURRICULUM/EDUCATION - None

C. BUILDINGS & GROUNDS - None

D. FINANCE/GRANTS/GIFTS

1. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve an out-of-district student, whose name is on file in the Board Office, for a tuition cost of \$1,180 per month, beginning on March 1, 2022 through June 30, 2022,

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

Ayes: Ms. Dansky, Ms. Juskiliene, Mr. Papiris, Ms. Kang

Nays: None

E. PERSONNEL

1. That the Board of Education accepts, with regret, the retirement of Rosemary Kuruc, Supervisor of Special Services, effective August 1, 2022. (Addendum)

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

Ayes: Ms. Dansky, Ms. Juskiliene, Mr. Papiris, Ms. Kang

Nays: None

2. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves Anne Marie Spiegel for additional work requested for the following months: (Addendum)

March 2022: 22 hours at a cost of \$110 per hour not to exceed \$2,420
 May 2022: 6 hours at a cost of \$110 per hour not to exceed \$660

3. That the Board of Education approve the following teachers for **Cycle III (SEL)** of the Post Dismissal Instructional Academy for the 2021 – 2022 School Year, as per contract:

Cherry Hill School

Janel Blake
 Leeann Cameron
 Rebecca DelPriore
 Kristen Karavitis
 Gabrielle Sagala
 Noy Sapir

Roosevelt School

Gina Duprey
 Lauren Proda
 Marisa Schussler

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

Name/Position	Workshop/Conference	Date(s)	Cost to District Excluding Mileage at State Rate
Eric James Assistant Principal	Montclair State University Spring 2022 Career and Internship Fair	3/16/2022	\$50.00
Stephanie Repetti LDTC	Regulations: Assessment, Legal and Social Emotional Challenges (Virtual)	4/8/2022	\$140.00
Nevin Werner Supervisor Math & Science	Rowan University Education Expo 2022	4/14/2022	\$225.00

5. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent approve Joi Jonas, Part-Time Clerical Aide, for 25 hours per week, beginning on or about March 21, 2022 through June 30, 2022.

6. That the Board of Education, with the recommendation of the Superintendent, due to job abandonment, terminates the employment of an employee, whose name is on file in the Board Office, effective immediately.

Motion by: Ms. Juskiliene Seconded by: Ms. Dansky

Ayes: Ms. Dansky, Ms. Juskiliene, Mr. Papiris, Ms. Kang

Nays: None

F. RIVER EDGE SPECIAL EDUCATION - None

G. REGION V ADMINISTRATION & TRANSPORTATION

1. That the Board of Education post approve the following Bid Contracts for the 2021-2022

school year.

Route	Transporter	Per Diem	Per Diem Aide (if applicable)	Increase / Decrease Adjustment cost per Vehicle	Increase / Decrease Adjustment cost per Mile
3013	J&W Financial LLC	\$445.00	\$60.00	\$445.00	\$.01

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

Route	Transporter	Per Diem	Per Diem Aide (if applicable)
Q037	Sun Transportation	\$425.00	\$50.00
Q038	Sun Transportation	\$399.00	\$50.00
Q039	All Points Transportation	\$220.00	\$30.00

3. That the Board of Education approves the 2021-2022 Jointure Transportation Agreement between Region V (Host) and the Bayonne School District (Joiner).
4. That the Board of Education approves the 2022-2023 Jointure Transportation Agreement between Region V (Host) and Region I (Joiner).
5. That the Board of Education approves the 2022-2023 Jointure Transportation Agreement between Region 1 (Host) and Region V (Joiner).
6. That the Board of Education approves the 2022-2023 Jointure Transportation Agreement between Region V (Host) and Region II (Joiner).
7. That the Board of Education approves the 2022-2023 Jointure Transportation Agreement between Region V (Host) and Region III (Joiner).

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

Ayes: Ms. Dansky, Ms. Juskiliene, Mr. Papiris, Ms. Kang

Nays: None

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Lauren Thiffault (159 Greenway Terrace): Ms. Thiffault had several questions and a comment: Do we have a higher percentage of kids in WIN and also how does this gauge in regard to social and emotional impact? Mr. Werner replied WIN numbers have not seen a serious increase but always had a need for another interventionist for this reason because we saw a possibility of more students being enrolled in the intervention program. They have not seen a serious increase where we are under servicing students in intervention programs and in terms of not stigmatizing, students are getting pulled out for enrichment, OT, ESL, a variety of reasons not just because the student is low academically. Teachers pull students out by different group names not the student name and they don't tell students why they are going to that teacher. Parents are notified in the parent portal if their child is being pulled out of class for a specific

reason so the parent knows but the students are not aware of this unless someone tells them why they are being pulled out.

Mr. Henzel also answered about the Basic Skills program and WIN. Everyone gets WIN some with teacher and some for pull out

Sebastian Muscarella (781 Fifth Avenue): Mr. Muscarella thanked Mr. Werner very much for his presentation. He was happy to see it was brought back and he thanked Mrs. Danahy and Ms. Kang for whatever they did to facilitate this. Mr. Muscarella also said it was great to see scores and he was very surprised because he thought we had learning loss but according to the math we don't. Mr. Muscarella questioned about other towns in Bergen County similar to us or if we are just at the top of the heap? He imagined that a lot of the reports out there today and he read some, include some lower income communities which have been devastated by COVID and learning loss because of technology and other things but River Edge is not one of those places. Mr. Werner answered that we do speak with Oradell on a weekly basis and Start Strong scores and our scores are comparable to them. Also in looking at the district factor group/socio-economic groups, we are either better or we are equal than them at every level. Mr. Werner was pleasantly expected as well.

Mrs. Danahy added to Mr. Werner's answer, in years past the state gave district factor information so we were able to compare ourselves to like communities but they don't do that anymore and the only comparison data we get is compared to the state. Ms. Danahy said there is some informal sharing amongst superintendents in the county and once we get state data we will be able to speak broadly about this and give an idea of how we compare. Mr. Muscarella thanked them both.

Patrick Robinson (783 Bogert Road): Mr. Patrick had a question, with the new mask change/rules or it being optional, are we redefining what close contact is? Mrs. Danahy said we are redefining what close contact is. Mrs. Danahy said when we are mask optional, everybody is a close contact and exclusivity goes away. The definition of close contact is changing; contact tracing and protocols will also be changing. Mrs. Danahy will be sending out a communication tomorrow which takes some of those details to the community. Mr. Robinson thanked Mrs. Danahy.

Lauren Thiffault (159 Greenway Terrace): Mrs. Thiffault had a comment that piggy-backed off of Mr. Robinson's close contact question. One request, from her two girls as to what they do, she doesn't see a lot of those things lifts: shields around the tables and if everyone is a close contact as of Monday, do they still need to do those kind of things or if I'm going to get a phone call anyway or if you're keeping them, know what the requirements will be to lift those things – just get that communication and plan for the rest of the year.

Mrs. Danahy answered that she is hopeful there will not be a lot of close contacts; cases are super low, and the Pandemic Response Team did not make too many radical changes for the first few weeks so we will wait and see in terms of numbers. If we are successful, in two weeks, we will reconvene and see where we are and see how it went then ease up on some restrictions. Teachers would like to bring their students on the rug but it is hard to do instruction in the primary grades when kids are in rows and desks. Mrs. Danahy hopes we continue on the path to recovery and gain normalcy. Mr. Papis said it's important to talk about layering the mitigation strategies and learning to live with COVID, not that there is no more COVID and the number one priority is to keep kids in school and it is important that we take advantage of opportunities like this and remove masks. Mrs. Danahy said that the goal is to keep moving forward.

Dana Hosey (219 Voorhis Avenue): Mrs. Hosey questioned are the little kids not doing circle time on the rug anymore? Mrs. Danahy answered they may be if they can distance a little bit since our goal is to keep as many students in school as possible which is why we need to get through the next few weeks and then our Pandemic Response Team will reconvene to see where we are. Mrs. Hosey also asked are the kids not eating like they normally would any other year in the cafeteria or is everything still very different from before this happened.

Mrs. Hosey said that if kids were going to stop eating with the every other row thing – trying to understand moving forward a little bit at a time but her daughter’s room is super tiny, so whether masks are on or off they are still very close to one another which kind of defeats the purpose as to why not let them eat normal instead of doing this. It makes her feel sad for them that they’re watching their other classmates eat when it doesn’t make a difference now. Mr. Papiris explained the difference with close contact in one classroom or multiple classrooms: there are 16-18 kids versus everyone in the lunch room together and the need to figure some of the guidance is left up for interpretation and that is the difficult part.

Mrs. Hosey thanked Mrs. Danahy.

CLOSED SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Kang asked for a motion to adjourn meeting.

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

Ayes: Ms. Dansky, Ms. Juskiliene, Mr. Papiris, Ms. Kang

Nays: None

Mrs. Kang adjourned

Meeting adjourned at 9:12PM.