

CLOSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Closter, New Jersey

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Tenakill Middle School

April 9, 2024 - 7:30 PM

The Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Finkelstein at 7:31 PM.

The following Board members were present:

Ms. Yeoh, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Micera, Mr. Choi, Ms. Finkelstein,
Ms. Li (arrived at 7:39), Ms. Fanelli (arrived at 7:35), Ms. Kwon

The following Board members were absent:

None

Also present:

Mr. McHale and Mr. Villanueva

NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT - Read by the President:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meeting of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Secretary to the Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting by having the date, time, and place thereof, posted at each school building within the district, district website, the Board of Education office, the Office of the Borough Clerk, and transmitted to *The Record* and *Northern Valley Suburbanite* newspapers.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Dianne Smith, Principal of Hillside Elementary School, shared her report with the board and the community:

- *Hillside enrollment is currently at 631.*
- *Today we held our security drill in collaboration with the Closter Police.*
- *On April 1, HNN broadcast a special episode for April Fool's Day. Our staff participated and played along. It was enjoyed by all as Hillside School was transformed into a farm, broadcast included tips on how to grow vegetables and care for farm animals. Staff dressed in farm attire for the event.*

- Our students enjoyed the solar eclipse, with many roaming on the field with their families to view it. We appreciate the PTO for providing classes for all students and staff. Ms. Smith acknowledged our staff members, many of whom stayed to help ensure a smooth and safe dismissal. She also thanked the Closter Police, who provided extra officers and a light tower in the upper loop.
- Tomorrow is our Kindergarten Songfest, and our incoming kindergarten parents will have a Kindergarten Parent Orientation at 7 p.m. Enrollment is up to 91.
- Grades 1-3 staff continues working with Literacy Consultant Patty McGee. The second cycle started this week as they moved from nonfiction reading to writing with small group support.
- Afford staff time to look at the revisions to the ELA curriculum to plan for fall.
- Hillside Happenings:
 - **Kindergarten** scientists are identifying living and non-living things.
 - **First-grade** friends enjoyed a field trip to Bergen PAC.
 - **Second-grade** writers practice their skills by writing persuasive pieces.
 - **Third-grade** mathematicians are learning all about fractions.
 - **Fourth-grade** friends are learning about the western region of the US
- Our counselors started the month of April with an important lesson on including others. These lessons are part of the Choose to Include Diversity initiative, which focuses on respecting each other's differences and showing respect for people with disabilities.
- With spring upon us comes the opportunity to enjoy outdoor recess! While the sunshine creates joy and excitement, it is also an important time to remind our students about rules and expectations.
- During the week of April 22nd, we will have an Olympics-themed week to focus on ICARE at Recess:
 - Monday: Wear green for Integrity (and Earth Day!)
 - Tuesday: Wear yellow for Caring
 - Wednesday: Wear black for Attitude
 - Thursday: Wear blue for Respect
 - Friday: Wear red for Empathy
- Attentive parenting: establishing positive family relationships
- Preparations for NJSLA are underway, Ms. Zanin sent home information to parents, we will have an infrastructure trial after spring break, and Grades 3-4 will begin on May 1.
- April 25- Take your child to work day

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Vincent McHale, Superintendent of Schools, shared with the Board and the community his report:

- Congratulations to the Closter PTO on a wonderful gala this past Saturday! The Gatsby-themed party was a fun evening for all who attended. Thanks to all those who attended, the sponsors, and the hard-working committee who arranged many raffle baskets and silent auction items. The entire school community is grateful for your commitment to our students!
- Congratulations to our seventh-grade students, who tied with Norwood for first place in Bergen County in the New Jersey Math League Contest. We are so proud of our students: Joel Finkelstein, Johanna Park-Kim, Jaein Song, Ellie Park, and Sharro Jin. Kudos to Mr. Bomzer,

our seventh-grade math teacher, and all of the teachers who taught the students from PreK through seventh grade to prepare them for this great accomplishment.

- *Hillside Elementary School will present the Kindergarten Songfest tomorrow, April 10, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. Parents are invited to attend this great musical performance.*
- *Orientation for incoming Kindergarten parents will be held tomorrow, April 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Hillside Gymnasium. This event is for parents to learn about our wonderful Kindergarten program. We currently have 92 students enrolled to start Kindergarten in September 2024, and we hope to see all the parents tomorrow!*
- *Tenakill Middle School will host the annual TREP\$ Marketplace on Thursday, April 11, 2024, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. This is a wonderful event for the entire community to come and support our student entrepreneurs. The sixth-grade students have created many products to sell, so remember to bring cash!*
- *Coffee with the Counselors will be held on Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. in the Hillside School Media Center. The topic will be "Attentive Parenting: Enhancing Positive Family Relationships." All parents are invited to attend.*
- *The NJDOE has posted the 2022-2023 School Performance Reports on the state website. He posted a link to the reports on the Closter Public Schools website's main page. You may find the link on the right-hand side of the main page, which is listed as the District Performance Report. This link also contains my letter about the School Performance Reports, explaining what's new*
- *in this year's reports. He encouraged everyone to view the performance reports to learn more about our district and schools.*
- *He was happy to announce that once again, the Closter Public Schools have been honored by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation as one of the "Best Communities for Music Education" in 2024. This prestigious award celebrates the exceptional dedication of our teachers, administrators, parents, and students who champion music as an integral part of a comprehensive education for every child in Closter. Special appreciation goes to Ms. Pidi, Ms. Abbey, and Ms. Riecken for their unwavering commitment to nurturing our students' musical growth. Heartfelt congratulations to our talented student musicians and their families! A big thank you to our Board of Education for your continued support of music and the arts, which are crucial elements in shaping well-rounded students.*
- *Don't forget that our next Board meeting will take place on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, and will include the public hearing on the 2024-2025 budget.*
- *Schools will be closed for spring recess from Monday, April 15, 2024, through Friday, April 19, 2024. Have a wonderful vacation! Schools will reopen on Monday, April 22, 2024.*

BOARD COMMITTEES

There were no Board Committee reports.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾ , seconded by Ms. Salamea-Cross ▾ to open the meeting to the public.

Statements made by individual participants are limited to a duration of three (3) minutes unless otherwise announced at the beginning of the discussion. A maximum of 15 minutes for public input is scheduled as per bylaw 0167. The Board urges large groups to select one person to represent them. The Board reminds those individuals who take the opportunity to speak to please step up, identify themselves by name and address, and to limit their comments to items listed on the agenda.

There were no public comments

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾ , seconded by Ms. Salamea-Cross ▾ to resume the regular order of business.

BOARD OPERATIONS

Moved by Ms. Kwon ▾ , seconded by Ms. Micera ▾ to approve Motions A - C.

Motions were approved ▾ by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Yeoh, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Micera, Mr. Choi, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Li, Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Minutes**

Motion to approve the March 26, 2024, meeting minutes.

B. **APPROVAL - Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB)**

Motion to affirm the decision of the Superintendent of Schools regarding Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB) incidents TMS-2324-34, TMS-2324-35 and TMS-2324-36 as reported to the Board in Executive Session at the March 26, 2024, meeting.

C. **APPROVAL - Use of Facilities - Slam Jam Sports & More, LLC**

Motion to approve Slam Jam Sports & More, LLC to use Hillside Elementary School gymnasium and grounds June 20 - 21, 2024.

FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Ms. Yeoh; Members: Mr. Choi, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Kwon

Moved by Ms. Yeoh ▾ , seconded by Ms. Micera ▾ to approve Motions A - H.

Ms. Yeoh had a question about item C regarding Chromebooks. She wanted to know how we decide who gets the next batch of Chromebooks and who doesn't. Mr. Villanueva explained that out of the 400 planned purchases, 160 will be given to the new 5th-grade class, while the remaining 240 will replace

some of the computers we bought in 2020 from COVID grant money. Ms. Yeoh asked if all the laptops were for Hillside or Tenakill students. Mr. Villanueva explained that all the laptops are for students, a mix for Hillside and Tenakill. He noted that most of the laptops being replaced are from Tenakill. We need 670 Chromebooks to replace, but we're only buying 400 because we saved some decent-conditioned devices from Hillside.

Ms. Salamea Cross then asked about the insurance on the Chromebooks and how long it lasts. Mr. Villanueva clarified that the insurance lasts for a 4-year cycle. So, when a 5th-grade student receives a Chromebook, they're only charged for 1 year. Mr. McHale mentioned that Chromebooks typically last about four years, so for 8th-grade students graduating, the warranty ends. Mr. McHale added that we still need more for everyone, so we may need to buy more at the end of the year if funds allow. Mr. Villanueva also mentioned that new 5th and 6th graders have the newer Chromebooks, while the 8th graders' laptops will be replaced for the new 5th graders.

Ms. Fanelli asked about Item F and if it was for our existing system in the modular units. Mr. McHale responded that it was for new devices, including six Promethean boards for those units. Ms. Fanelli inquired about the emergency notification system, wondering if it would connect with the Closter Police Department or just for the school. Mr. McHale clarified that it's solely for the school, but the Police Department is alerted during an emergency. Mr. Villanueva added that we need to buy these items in advance so that they can be easily set up and installed when the modular classrooms arrive.

Ms. Li asked about item C and what national cooperative purchasing agreements meant. Mr. Villanueva explained that we usually go through a bidding process when the district buys something over \$44,000. However, there are exemptions to this rule. Exemptions include using a state contract or an education service commission. There's another way to make big purchases: national cooperative purchasing. In this particular purchase, the devices are bought through the Hunterdon County Education Services, while the warranty is purchased through the national cooperative because it is more cost-effective.

Motions were approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Yeoh, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Micera, Mr. Choi, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Li, Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon

NAYS: None

A. APPROVAL - Payment of Bills

Motion to approve payment of bills from April 1, 2024, to April 8, 2024, in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$1,050,608.32
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 52,974.00
Enterprise (Milk – Fund 60)	\$ 1,461.94
NJ Dept of Labor & Workforce	\$ 188.30

Total	\$1,105,232.56
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B. APPROVAL - Staff Remuneration

Motion to approve remuneration to staff members as follows:

Staff Member: Alexandra Earle
 Course: Strategies for Supporting Children with ADHD
 College/University: Concordia University St. Paul
 Remuneration: \$449.00

Staff Member: Erika Dunn
 Course: 1) Short Stories in American Literature
 2) Content Comprehension: Helping Students Read & Understand
 College/University: Fresno Pacific University
 Remuneration: \$1,000.00

Staff Member: Gila Rachlin
 Course: Gestalt Language Processing
 College/University: Colorado State University
 Remuneration: \$429.00

C. APPROVAL - Purchase of 400 Chromebooks

Motion to approve the purchase of 400 Chromebooks from Trafera for a total of \$148,800. The purchase is broken down into the following contracts:

- \$99,600 for the devices and EDU license under the Hunterdon County Ed Services Commission of NJ Contract (#34HUNCCP) #HCESC-CAT-22-01: Technology Supplies and Equipment.
- \$49,200 for the four-year warranty and asset tags under the OMNIA Contract, Region 14 ESC—National Cooperative Purchasing Alliance. The Notice of Intent of Award was published on March 14, 2024, per P.L. 2011, c. 139.

Trafera is a National Cooperative vendor that was awarded a contract through OMNIA Partners, 501 Aspen Grove Franklin, TN 37067. The Region 14 Educational Services Center awarded the contract, 1850 Highway 351 Abilene, TX 79601-4750 as the Lead Agency. The Contract Award - Technology Solutions, Products and Services Contract Number 01-149 Expires November 30, 2025.

The Board of Education is permitted to purchase from national cooperative purchasing agreements without advertising for bids under the authority of N.J.S.A. 52:34-6.2(b)(3).

D. RESOLUTION - Notice of Contract on Use of Federal Funds - West Bergen Mental Health

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4.5(a), the Business Administrator/Board Secretary advertised Request for Competitive Contracting Proposals for Mental Health Support and Services on August 5, 2021, for SY 2021-22, June 9, 2022, for SY 2022-23, and May 12, 2023, for SY 2023-24, in the Bergen Record and Northern Valley Suburbanite Newspapers, as well as on the District website; and

WHEREAS, upon thorough review of the proposals and scoring, it was determined that West Bergen Mental Health Care Inc. possesses the requisite qualifications to perform the services, coupled with an acceptable rate conducive to serving the district's needs; and

WHEREAS, the Closter Board of Education, during subsequent board meetings, passed resolutions approving West Bergen Mental Health as the provider for the following periods:

SY 21-22 - September 23, 2021, for \$7,250/month

SY 22-23 - August 11, 2022, for \$76,600

SY 23-24 - July 12, 2023, for \$68,300

WHEREAS, with the culmination of the CRRSA (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act), ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief), and ARP (American Rescue Plan) Funds, the Closter Board of Education utilized these federal grants to fund the Mental Health Support and Services provided by West Bergen Mental Health Care Inc., thereby recognizing the imperative to formalize the notice of contract award to West Bergen through the Competitive Contracting RFP Process spanning SY 21-22, SY 22-23, and SY 23-24, ensuring compliance with relevant federal and state procurement laws;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4.5(g) and N.J.A.C. 5:34-9.5, a notice delineating the nature, duration, service, and amounts of these contracts shall be published in the Board's official newspapers no later than 20 calendar days after the passage of this resolution; and

Furthermore, said contracts are on file and readily accessible for public inspection in the Business Office.

E. RESOLUTION - Notice of Contract on Use of Federal Funds - Patty McGee LLC

WHEREAS, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4.5(a), the Business Administrator/Board Secretary advertised Request for Competitive Contracting Proposals for a Professional Developer - Coaching Model on September 12, 2023, on the District website; and

WHEREAS, upon thorough review of the sole proposal received and scoring, it was determined that Patty McGee LLC possesses the requisite qualifications to perform the services, coupled with an acceptable rate conducive to serving the district's needs; and

WHEREAS, the Closter Board of Education, during the October 26, 2023, meeting, passed the resolution approving Patti McGee LLC as the Professional Developer - Coaching Model provider in the amount of \$44,000; and

WHEREAS, with the culmination of the CRRSA (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act), ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief), and ARP (American Rescue Plan) Funds, the Closter Board of Education utilized the American Rescue Plan Grant to fund the Professional Developer - Coaching Model provided by Patty McGee LLC, thereby recognizing the imperative to formalize the notice of contract award ensuring compliance with relevant federal and state procurement laws;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-4.5(g) and N.J.A.C. 5:34-9.5, a notice delineating the nature, duration, service, and amounts of these contracts shall be published in the Board's official newspapers no later than 20 calendar days after the passage of this resolution; and

Furthermore, said contracts are on file and readily accessible for public inspection in the Business Office.

F. **APPROVAL - Contract with Eastern DataComm LLC for Phones and Emergency Notification System Installation**

Motion to approve the contract with Eastern DataComm LLC. for the phones and installation of the emergency notification system for the new modular unit in Hillside Elementary School. The total contract amount is \$15,800.11, and pricing is based on Ed Services Commission of NJ Contract—Emergency Notification Systems Bid #ESCNJ 22/23-09.

G. **APPROVAL - Purchase of Six(6) Promethean Boards**

Motion to approve the purchase of six Promethean boards for the new modular unit in Hillside Elementary School, in the amount of \$29,454.00, from Keyboard Consultants through the Hunterdon County Ed Services Commission of NJ Contract (#34HUNCCP) #HCESC CAT-23-07.

H. **APPROVAL - Tenakill Middle School Student vs. Teacher Volleyball Game Student Council Fundraiser**

Motion to approve the Student vs. Teacher Volleyball Game Student Council fundraiser for April 2024. Proceeds will go to the TMS Student Council.

PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Ms. Salamea-Cross; Members: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Micera

Moved by Ms. Salamea-Cross , seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motions A - I.

Mr. McHale clarified that several new hires are needed for next year due to resignations and retirements. Ten positions need to be filled, including an additional ESL position. This new position is necessary because of the increasing number of multilingual learners in the school population.

Ms. Wagner asked when Ms. Cohen's contract was up. Mr. McHale responded that her assignment as Interim Director is until June 30th.

Ms. Yeoh asked if Tenakill teachers would help pick the new principal. Mr. McHale said yes, Tenakill teachers, parents, and members from SEPAG will be involved in the interviews to ensure various stakeholders are part of the process.

Motions were approved - by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Yeoh, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Micera, Mr. Choi, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Li, Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Deborah Gonzalez as ESL Teacher**

Motion to approve the appointment of Deborah Gonzalez as Hillside School ESL Teacher, full-time tenure track position, for the 2024-2025 school year, at a salary of \$57,904, BA Step 1, starting September 1, 2024, pending criminal history background check.

B. **APPROVAL - Megan Weis as Kindergarten Teacher**

Motion to approve the appointment of Megan Weis as a Kindergarten Teacher, full-time tenure track position, for the 2024-2025 school year, at a salary of \$59,904, BA Step 2, starting September 1, 2024. A criminal history background check is already on file.

C. **APPROVAL - Jessica Stinson as School Psychologist**

Motion to approve the appointment of Jessica Stinson as a School Psychologist, full-time tenure track position, for the 2024-2025 school year, at a salary of \$79,871, MA+60 Step 2, starting September 1, 2024, pending criminal history background check.

D. **APPROVAL - Ornit Katzin as Special Education Teacher**

Motion to approve the appointment of Ornit Katzin as a Tenakill School Special Education Teacher, full-time tenure track position, for the 2024-2025 school year, at a salary of \$68,437, MA Step 2, starting September 1, 2024, pending criminal history background check.

E. **APPROVAL - Catherine Gordon as Volunteer on Grade 3 Carnegie Hall Trip**

Motion to approve Catherine Gordon, a clinical intern from Ramapo College, to attend the Grade 3 field trip to Carnegie Hall in May 2024 as a volunteer.

F. **APPROVAL - Extension for Clinical Intern Ashley Lewis**

Motion to approve an extension for Ashley Lewis' clinical internship with Dara Weiss from September 1 through December 31, 2024.

G. **APPROVAL - Administrative Internship (Part II) for Rachel Fineman**

Motion to approve an administrative internship for Rachel Fineman from May 6 through July 28, 2024, assigned to Vincent McHale, Superintendent.

H. **APPROVAL - Substitute Teachers**

Motion to approve the following substitute teachers for the 2023-2024 School Year:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Certification</u>
Catherine Gordon	Substitute Certification

I. **APPROVAL - Resignation of Diana Strauss, Paraprofessional**

Motion to accept, with regrets, the resignation of Diana Strauss as Hillside School Paraprofessional, effective April 23, 2024.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Villanueva just wanted to remind the trustees to complete the CSA Evaluation training and email him when finished.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾ , seconded by Ms. Salamea-Cross ▾ to open the meeting for public comments.

Dolores Witko, 17 Bogert Street—Ms. Witko was cleaning things in her house and found something of value. She then mentioned that some mothers would bring the ingredients to school during Thanksgiving and create the recipe book for the feast. She then gave the document to Mr. McHale so that Closter Schools could put it in our archive.

Ms. Jannie Chung, 20 Vivian Street—Ms. Chung just reported that the Closter Council will be introducing its budget tomorrow, and everyone is welcome to attend the council meeting. She also mentioned that the nature center is having its fundraiser on the 28th.

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾ , seconded by Ms. Salamea-Cross ▾ to close the meeting to public comments.

CLOSED SESSION MOTION (If required)

Moved by Mr. Choi ▾ , seconded by Ms. Micera ▾ to approve the following Closed Session Motion.

Motion was approved ▾ by a voice vote of the Board:

YEAS: Ms. Yeoh, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Micera, Mr. Choi, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Li, Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon

NAYS: None

BE IT RESOLVED that the Closter Board of Education will adjourn to a Closed Session to discuss the following:

**HIB Hearing
HIB Matters
Personnel Matter-Negotiations**

The matters so discussed will be disclosed to the public as soon as and to the extent that such disclosure can be made without adversely affecting the public.

The Board went into Closed Session at 8:14 PM.
The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 9:49 PM.

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾ , seconded by Ms. Yeoh ▾ to approve the following motion.
Motion was approved ▾ by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:
YEAS: Ms. Yeoh, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Micera, Mr. Choi, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Li,
Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon
NAYS: None

APPROVAL - Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB)

Motion to affirm the decision of the Superintendent of Schools regarding Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (HIB) incident #TMS-2324-33 as reported to the Board in Executive Session at the March 26, 2024, meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾ , seconded by Ms. Salamea-Cross ▾ to adjourn the meeting at 9:51 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Floro M. Villanueva, Jr.
Business Administrator/Board Secretary