

# CLOSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Closter, New Jersey*

MINUTES

WORK SESSION MEETING

*Tenakill Middle School*

*April 8, 2021 - 7:30 PM*

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

The following Board members were present:

Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Finkelstein

The following Board members were absent:

Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross

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, remote access information, 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**

**BOARD OF EDUCATION ETHICS TRAINING**

Mr. Matt Lee, Field Service Representative - NJ School Boards Association, Bergen County

Mr. Lee presented to the board and the community the Board Ethics Training.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

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

- Today was Yom Hashoah or Holocaust Remembrance Day. Our school district stands with the Jewish community to remember the horrors of the Holocaust. It is a painful remembrance but we must always confront hate and work together to ensure the refrain: "never again."
- He is proud to report that the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) have once again recognized Closter Public Schools as a Best Community for Music Education award. Thank you to our teachers, administrators, parents, students and the Board of Education for

supporting music in our schools. Music is part of a well-rounded education and our students excel in music! Kudos to eighth grader David Kim for receiving a Gold 1 rating on violin at a recent music festival.

- This week was National Assistant Principal Week. Thank you to Dr. Carmichael and Mr. McElroy for all of their work year-round to ensure success for our students. We especially appreciate all the extra work they have done this year during the pandemic.
- The Closter PTO is currently sponsoring a Read-a-Thon at Tenakill Middle School. Information has been sent, including the link to register students for the fundraiser. The PTO will award prizes to the students who read and raise the most. This is a great way to encourage reading and to help out the PTO in their fundraising efforts.
- Our Kindergarten registration for the 2021-2022 school year is underway. All information is on our district website, [www.ClosterSchools.org](http://www.ClosterSchools.org). The link is on the main page – it is the first banner on the right-hand side, entitled, Kindergarten Registration 2021-2022. If you have questions about Kindergarten registration, please call Ms. Cheryl Boehm at Hillside School.
- Closter Public Schools is part of the Northern Valley consortium that shares computer network and phone services. Collectively, the consortium of schools leases the fiber cables between schools and the network at Northern Valley Regional High School. We currently pay \$33,372 per year for fiber and Internet service. The consortium, under the lead of the Northern Valley Regional High School, is upgrading the fiber cable. The cost for this upgrade will be done through financing shared by the consortium. This upgrade will come at savings to Closter Public Schools due to credits we will receive from the surplus of the Northern Valley Curriculum Center and Region III. In the first of the four-year finance plan, we will save \$27,726. In years two to four, we will need to budget \$8,625 more than our current cost. Thereafter, we will save \$23,694 every year. The new dark fiber will be easily upgraded to faster speeds in the future. The long-term savings on this project will benefit our future budgets.
- Both Hillside Elementary School and Tenakill Middle School have implemented the NJDOH- and CDC-updated guidance to allow those students who chose in-person learning for the third trimester to attend school five days a week. At the last Board of Education meeting parents asked when we could extend to a full-day session. The obstacle to this is arranging supervision during the lunch period. The supervision must be by a certificated employee. We are working through various scenarios to see if we can make this happen.
- Our schools will be closed for spring break next week. For any students who will be traveling out of the area, there is a required quarantine upon return. Please have a safe, relaxing week off. Let's continue to work together to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Please remember to wear a mask, practice social distancing, wash or sanitize hands, and avoid large group gatherings.

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Moved by Ms. Kwon, seconded by Ms. Micera 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 policy 1120. 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.

***No Public Comments***

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Kothari to resume the regular order of business.

**BOARD OPERATIONS**

Moved by Dr. Puttannah seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motions A and B.

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

YEAS: Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Minutes**

Motion to approve the March 25, 2021, minutes.

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

Motion to affirm the decision of the Superintendent of Schools regarding Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) incident(s) reported to the Board in Executive Session at the March 25, 2021, Meeting.

**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE**

*Chairperson Ms. Lee, Ms. Cross, Dr. Puttannah*

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

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

NAYS: YEAS: Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Staff Coursework**

Motion to approve the following courses for 2020-2021 as recommended to the superintendent by the Principals:

Staff Member: Brittany Steele

Course No./Title: ED-5500 Standards-Based Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Institution: Capella University  
Credits: 4

Staff Member: Josephine Hunt  
Course No./Title: 15:310:500 Curriculum and Instruction  
Institution: Rutgers University  
Credits: 3

B. **APPROVAL - Staff Professional Development**

Motion to approve the following staff conferences:

Staff Member(s): Floro Villanueva  
Conference: Preparing for the Audit, GASB84: Internal Controls  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 5/18/21  
Cost to Board: \$50.00

C. **APPROVAL - Field Trips**

Motion to approve the following field trips:

School: Hillside Elementary  
Group: Grade 2  
Month: May 2021  
Destination: Pete the Cat Virtual Performance (TheaterWorks USA)  
Location: Virtual  
Total Cost: \$520.00

**FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT COMMITTEE**

*Chairperson Ms. Kwon, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Kothari*

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

*Ms. Kothari inquired which wing would receive the new roof and when it would be completed as mentioned in Motion B. Mr. Villanueva responded that the roof will be replaced in the D wing over the summer.*

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

YEAS: Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Monthly Bills**

Motion to approve payment of bills from March 26, 2021, to April 8, 2021, in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$979,560.40
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 5,703.79
Total	\$985,264.19

B. **APPROVAL – Award of Contract to Laumar Roofing Company, Inc.**

WHEREAS, the Closter Board of Education (“the Board”) advertised for bids for Partial Roof Replacement - Phase IV, at Hillside Elementary School (the “Project”); and

WHEREAS, on March 18, 2021, the Board received bids for the Project; and

WHEREAS, the lowest bid for the Project was submitted by Laumar Roofing Company, Inc. (“Laumar”), which submitted a base bid price in the amount of \$295,499, together with Alternate No. 1 in the amount of \$42,499, for a total contract sum of \$337,998; and

WHEREAS, the bid submitted by Laumar is responsive in all material respects and it is the Board's desire to award the contract for the Project to Laumar.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

1. The Board hereby awards the contract for the Project to Laumar for a total contract sum of \$337,998.
2. This award is expressly conditioned upon the contractor furnishing the requisite insurance certificate and labor and materials/performance bond as required in the project specifications, together with an AA201-Project Manning Report, and an executed AIA Agreement, as prepared by the Board Attorney, within ten (10) days of the date hereof.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Attorney is hereby directed to draft the agreement with the successful bidder consistent with this Resolution and with the terms contained in the bid documents approved by the Board for the Project. The Board President and the Board Secretary are hereby authorized to execute such agreement and any other documents necessary to effectuate the terms of this Resolution.

C. **APPROVAL - Disposal of Outdated Smart Boards**

Motion to approve the disposal of three (3), outdated Smart Boards, from Tenakill Middle School; tag numbers 10096, 10126 and 10191.

**PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

*Chairperson Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Linn*

Moved by Mr. Linn, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motions A -I.

*Ms. Kothari asked if the Affirmative Action Team mentioned in Motion E was new. Mr. McHale explained it was not . It is a requirement for the district in case there are any affirmative action complaints. The team is set for next year and therefore placed on the agenda.*

*Mr. McHale discussed Motion I, the 21/22 school calendar and hopes this will meet with everyone's approval. The calendar is based on the feedback received from the public, the Board and the Closter Education Association.*

*Motion J was presented to the board to add Gabriella Slozan as a substitute for the district. Ms. Slozan currently works as a paraprofessional at Hillside Elementary School.*

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

YEAS: Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms.Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Leave Extension for Leanne Falkenstern**

Motion to approve the discretionary leave of absence extension for Leanne Falkenstern until September 1, 2021.

B. **APPROVAL - Leave Extension for Katelyn Lee**

Motion to approve the Family and Medical Leave Act extension for Katelyn Lee until May 31, 2021.

C. **APPROVAL - Discretionary Leave of Absence for Margaret Prano**

Motion to approve a discretionary leave of absence (unpaid) for Margaret Prano from April 5, 2021, through June 30, 2021.

D. **APPROVAL - Long-Term Substitute Teacher Extension for Kathy Keller**

Motion to approve Kathy Keller's continuation in the same position as Long-Term Substitute Teacher through May 31, 2021.

E. **APPROVAL - Affirmative Action Team for the 2021-2022 School Year**

Motion to approve the following personnel as the Affirmative Action Team for the 2021-2022 school year to assess the District's needs and to continue its compliance with the Comprehensive Equity Plan:

- Keith McElroy, Affirmative Action Officer
- William Tantum

- Patricia Eichenlaub
- Alexandra Earle
- Patricia Brett
- Tara Eddy

F. **APPROVAL - Sarah Comstock - Language Arts Teacher - Tenure-Track Position**

Motion to approve Sarah Comstock as tenure track Language Arts Teacher for the 2021-2022 school year, pending a criminal history background check. Salary is \$65,639, plus benefits (MA, Step 3).

G. **APPROVAL - Noelle Caramanna - Long-Term Substitute Teacher**

Motion to approve Noelle Caramanna as long-term substitute teacher for James Klika, from April 5, 2021, to May 21, 2021, pending a criminal history background check. Salary will be \$200 per day on days 1 through 10; then beginning on day 11, MA Step 0, prorated, ending on May 21, 2021, at a salary of \$59,714.

H. **APPROVAL - James lafrate - Long-Term Leave Replacement Teacher**

Motion to approve James lafrate as long-term leave replacement - M.S. Social Studies teacher - from 0.75 FTE to 1.0 FTE effective March 31, 2021, through the end of the school year at a salary of \$51,184 pro-rated (BA Step 0).

I. **APPROVAL - 2021-2022 School Calendar**

Motion to approve 2021-2022 school calendar as per Appendix A.

WALK-IN RESOLUTION:

Motion was approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms.Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

J. **APPROVAL - Substitute Teacher**

Motion to approve Gabrielle Slozan as a substitute teacher.

**BOARD COMMITTEES**

*No Board Committees*

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Villanueva reported to the board and community that there were approximately 51 people composed of staff, students and community members who took advantage of the Covid-19/Antibody testing site at Hillside Elementary School. He encouraged everyone to participate and get tested. During spring break the testing site will not be available, but will return when school resumes.

Ms. Lee asked if this was only for Closter residents. Mr. Villanueva said he was going to reach out to neighboring districts if they would like to participate. Ms. Finkelstein asked if it would be until the rest of the school year. Mr. Villanueva said it was until June. Mr. Linn asked for the hours for the testing site. Mr. Villanueva said the hours were from 1 PM to 6 PM every Tuesday.

#### PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Kothari to open the meeting to public discussion.

*Mr. Larry Rinas, 250 Demarest Avenue*

*What happened on Tuesday, where the breakdown was in the chain of command, how to avoid it and what can we do in the future to make sure parents know when children will be in school?*

*Mr. McHale explained that we have been working for several weeks to bring the hybrid students back during the third trimester. As information was available for teachers, they were asked for and provided input and we moved forward. The teacher association indicated that they had concerns about the board's decision to move forward with the CDC guidelines but did not provide specifics. On Monday, the night before school was to return, they raised concerns about safety and since we have said from the onset that the safety of our staff and students are our priority, we recognized the need that our teachers needed to feel safe. Those concerns were addressed on Tuesday morning when we met with the Association and met again at the end of the day. A couple of adjustments were made and classes were able to resume on Wednesday.*

*Moving forward, an internal checklist will be provided to the association so that they are fully aware of those items and are on board with it.*

Moved by Mr. Linn, seconded by Ms. Micera to close the meeting to public discussion.



**CLOSED SESSION MOTION (If required)**

Moved by Ms. Lee, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve the following Closed Session Motion.

Motion was approved by a voice vote of the Board:

YEAS: Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

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

**Legal Matters**

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 9:09 PM.

The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 9:26 PM.

**ADIJOURNMENT**

Moved by Ms. Kwon, seconded by Mr. Linn to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Floro M. Villanueva, Jr.

Business Administrator/Board Secretary

# Closter 2021-2022 School Year Calendar

## September

- 1 Staff Reports (Prof Dev Day)
- 2 **First Day - Students**
- 6 Labor Day - CLOSED
- 7 Rosh Hashanah - CLOSED
- 16 Yom Kippur - CLOSED

SEPTEMBER (18)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

## FEBRUARY (15)

## February

- 21 Presidents' Day - CLOSED
- 21-25 Feb. Recess - CLOSED

FEBRUARY (15)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28					

## October

- 4 Staff Reports (Prof Dev Day)
- 4 CLOSED FOR STUDENTS

OCTOBER (20)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## MARCH (23)

## March

- 9 **12:42 PM Dismissal**  
Parent/Teacher Conferences

MARCH (23)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

## November

- 4 & 5 NJEA - CLOSED
- 24 **12:42 PM Dismissal**
- 25-26 Thanksgiving - CLOSED

NOVEMBER (18)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

## APRIL (15)

## April

- 15 Good Friday - CLOSED
- 15-22 Spring Recess - CLOSED

APRIL (15)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

## December

- 1 **12:42 PM Dismissal**  
Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 23 **12:42 PM Dismissal**
- 24-31 Holiday Recess - CLOSED

DECEMBER (17)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

## MAY (21)

## May

- 30 Memorial Day - CLOSED

MAY (21)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## January

- 1 New Year's - CLOSED
- 17 MLK, Jr., Day - CLOSED
- 17 Staff Reports (Prof Dev Day)

JANUARY (20)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

## JUNE (14)

## June

- 16, 17, 20 **12:42 PM Dismissal**
- 20 Last Day for Students & Staff

JUNE (14)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

Please note: 12:42 PM dismissal days are indicated by slashes. Please be advised that emergency closing days will be made up by adding days in the following order: June 21, 22, 23 & 24. If there are more than four emergency closings, the make-up days will include June 21-24, and then days will be added in the following order: April 22, 21, 20, 19 & 18. Therefore, no plans, which cannot be changed, should be made for April recess.

\*One (1) emergency closing day has been built into the school calendar. In the event this day is not used, it will be "given back" through a reduction in the number of school days. When this information becomes available, it will be communicated to parents/guardians following a decision by the Board of Education.

### Number of School Days

	Students	Staff
September	18	19
October	20	21
November	18	18
December	17	17
January	20	21
February	15	15
March	23	23
April	15	15
May	21	21
June	14	14
<b>Total*</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>184</b>

REVISED 4/7/21

BOE Approved:

4/16/2021

APPENDIX A