

# CLOSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Closter, New Jersey*

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

*Tenakill Middle School*

*January 5, 2023 - 7:30 PM*

The Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Finkelstein at 7:54 PM

The following Board members were present:

Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Li, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,  
Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

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

## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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

- He congratulated the re-elected Board members, Janine Micera and Magaly Salamea-Cross, and the new Board member, Jia-Dee Li, for their willingness to serve the Closter Public Schools community. Ms. Li attended a district-led orientation in December for new Board members and all three newly sworn-in Board members will be attending required training with the New Jersey School Boards Association. On behalf of the entire school community, He welcomed them and extend a heartfelt thank you!
- Ms. Earle and Ms. Weisenseel, School Counselors at Tenakill Middle School, will facilitate two Anti-Bullying assemblies on Tuesday, January 10, 2023. Students in grades five through eight will learn more about why harassment, intimidation, and bullying are harmful and ways to prevent HIB in our school community. We must work as a community to stop bullying so I urge parents to have a follow-up conversation with students after the assemblies to remind them that "in a world where you can be anything, be kind."
- Registration for the Closter PTO ASEP program will open on Monday, January 9, 2023. There are many wonderful enrichment classes for students at Hillside Elementary School and Tenakill

Middle School. The PTO is also sponsoring the Porchlight Production of High School Musical Jr. for students in third through sixth grade. Please check out the Closter PTO website for more information.

- We are excited to celebrate Lunar New Year on Friday, January 20, 2023. This celebration will take place at both schools with an exciting and educational assembly featuring our students. More information will be forthcoming.
- During the month of January, students in grades two through eight will be taking the mid-year Linkit! Assessment in language arts and mathematics. Each of the two tests will take about 45 to 60 minutes. The assessments provide teachers with information about how students are progressing toward grade-level standards. If you have any questions about the Linkit! Assessments, please get in touch with Ms. Zanin at Hillside Elementary School or Mr. McElroy at Tenakill Middle School.
- Closter Public Schools will be closed for students on Monday, January 16, 2023, which is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. The faculty and staff will participate in professional development on that day.

### BOARD COMMITTEES

*Ms. Finkelstein stated she will email the Board Members requesting which Committee they would like to participate in.*

### PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS

Moved by Ms Micera, seconded by Ms. Yeoh 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.*

### **No Public Comments**

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

### BOARD OPERATIONS

Moved by Ms. Yeoh, seconded by Ms. Wagner to approve Motions A and B.

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

*Ms. Fanelli inquired how the new rates for the use of facilities were selected. Mr. McHale stated the rates were discussed with the Finance Committee and Mr. Villanueva inquired with other Districts what their fees were for use of facilities and found these rates were a midpoint with the surrounding area. He further stated that these fees pertain to outside organizations. The Closter Recreation, Borough and the PTO would only be required to pay the custodial fee if an event were to occur on a weekend or holiday.*

Ms. Finkelstien inquired if the hourly rate is the full cost for the custodial services. Mr. Villanueva informed her the hourly rate is adjusted each year based on the custodial salaries.

Dr. Puttannah inquired if the district had held Raffles before. Mr. McHale stated all fundraisers need to be approved by the Board especially if monies are involved. He further stated he is aware the Student Council has had fundraisers in the past but is unaware that they were raffles. Dr. Puttannah expressed concerns with the raffle as she knew there are logistics that need to be in place in order to hold a raffle. Mr. McHale stated he would reach out to the attorney. Dr. Puttannah suggested motion to table motion C.

Motion to table item C was made by Dr. Puttannah and seconded by Ms. Micera.

Ms. Li requested if the report of the other districts' use of facilities rates is available to be reviewed by other Board members outside of the Finance Committee. Mr. Villanueva says he can provide the information if needed. Mr. McHale explained that the finance committee has already reviewed the rates and is making the recommendation to the Board on its findings. Mr. Villanueva further explained these rates cover the costs of the facilities maintenance and fees.

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Li, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,  
Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - December Meeting Minutes**

Motion to approve December 8, 2022, and December 19, 2022, meeting minutes.

B. **APPROVAL - Use of Facilities Fees**

Motion to approve the revised fee schedule for the Use of Facilities for the 2022-2023 school year:

- Field - \$150/hour plus charge of custodial cost
- Gym - \$350 per use plus charge of custodial cost
- Auditorium - \$500 per use plus charge of custodial cost and sound & lighting staff if necessary
- Classrooms - \$100.00 per room/day plus charge of custodial cost
- \$55.00 per hour for custodians (\$73.00 per hour on Sunday or Holidays)

C. **APPROVAL – Student Council Fundraiser - Airpods Raffle**

Motion to approve the Tenakill Student Council fundraiser in which students will raffle off a pair of Airpods, worth \$120. Tickets will cost \$5 each, and all proceeds will help fund future Student Council events, as well as prizes.

**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE**

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

*Ms. Li inquired about the budgeted amount regarding the conferences. Mr. McHale explained these are contractual professional development and training needed. In Mr. Chappell's case, he is our Buildings and Grounds Supervisor and will be attending the required training. Mr. Villanueva further explained the threshold which was approved during the reorganization meeting was \$25,000. This covers the cost of professional development, hotels and travel if needed using the GSA rates.*

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

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Li, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,  
Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

**A. APPROVAL - Staff Coursework**

Motion to approve the following courses for 2022-2023 as recommended to the Superintendent by the Principals:

Staff Member: Brittany Steele  
Course No./Title: ED 5501 Assessment and Improvement of Instruction  
Institution: Capella University  
Credits: 4

**B. APPROVAL - Staff Conferences**

Motion to approve the following staff conferences:

Staff Member(s): Ralph Chappell  
Conference: NAETI - EPA/AHERA/OSHA Asbestos Refresher  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 1/16/23  
Cost to Board: \$210.00

Staff Member(s): Keith McElroy & Kristen Zanin  
Conference: NVCC Curriculum Meetings  
Location: NVRHS-D Curriculum Center  
Date: 1/17/23, 2/14/23, 3/21/23, 4/25/23, 5/16/23, 6/13/23  
Cost to Board: \$0

Staff Member(s): Dianne Smith & William Tantum  
Conference: NVPA Meetings  
Location: NVRHS-D Curriculum Center  
Date: 1/13/23, 2/10/23, 3/17/23, 4/21/23, 5/12/23, 6/9/23  
Cost to Board: \$0

Staff Member(s): Vince Salvati  
Conference: Apple Workshop  
Location: Linden, NJ  
Date: 1/18/23  
Cost to Board: \$2.54

Staff Member(s): Jennifer Levy  
Conference: NJ ELA Supervisors Mid-Year Meeting  
Location: Drew University, Madison, NJ  
Date: 1/11/23  
Cost to Board: \$0

Staff Member(s): Brianna Kehoe  
Conference: Teaching About Climate Change in Grades K-12 (Part 2)  
Location: RVCC, Branchburg, NJ  
Date: 1/25/23  
Cost to Board: \$0

C. **APPROVAL - Field Trips**

Motion to approve the following field trips:

School: Hillside School  
Group: Grade 2  
Month: April 2023  
Destination: Newark Museum  
Location: Newark, NJ

**FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT COMMITTEE**

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

*Ms. Wagner inquired about the full capacity of our preschool. Mr. McHale explained that it would be 30-35, depending on the Special Education enrollment.*

*Dr. Puttannah requested further clarification on item B. Mr. Villanueva responded that it is the renewal of our participation in the ACES program where almost all Board of Educations participate. They organize as to where we purchase our natural gas supply.*

*Ms. Li inquired if other energy options were explored. Mr. Villanueva responded that it is needed for the current construction of the building. Mr. McHale commented the state is looking to have schools change over to electric which would be very expensive. The NJ School Board and Superintendents Boards are opposed to this.*

Dr. Puttannah asked if it was a renewal for Pascack Valley. Mr. McHale responded that it was and these services are used on a needed basis. The cost has been minimal.

Ms. Salamea-Cross asked if we were to find a nurse are we able to cancel the contract. Mr. Villanueva stated the process to have the board approve the nurse and have the applicant fingerprinted would not be completed on time.

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

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Li, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,  
Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Monthly Bills**

Motion to approve payment of bills from December 8, 2022, to December 30, 2022, in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$1,538,597.55
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 26,931.24
Enterprise (Milk - Fund 60)	\$ 451.31
Total	\$1,565,980.10

Motion to approve payment of bills from January 1, 2023 to January 5, 2023, in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$676,358.77
Total	\$676,358.77

B. **APPROVAL - Purchase of Natural Gas Through the Alliance for Competitive Energy Services (ACES) Bid Cooperative Pricing System ID#E8801-ACESCPS**

WHEREAS, the Alliance For Competitive Energy Services (hereinafter referred to as "ACES"), an alliance composed of the New Jersey School Boards Association (hereinafter referred to as "NJSBA"), the New Jersey Association of School Administrators, and the New Jersey Association of School Business Officials, will from time to time during the Effective Period as defined below solicit bids from natural gas suppliers for retail natural gas supply services including interstate transportation to the local natural gas distribution utility company (Natural Gas Supply Services) through an energy aggregation program in which NJSBA will act as Lead Agency of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System #E8801-ACESCPS in accordance with the "Public School Contracts Law", N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-1 et seq., and the Electric Discount and

Energy Competition Act, N.J.S.A. 48:3-49 et seq. ("EDECA") and the regulations promulgated thereunder; and

WHEREAS, Closter Public Schools is a Participating member of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System and is eligible thereby to obtain natural gas services for its own use through one or more contracts to be awarded to natural gas suppliers following said bids for natural gas services pursuant to the aggregation program; and

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will from time to time during the Effective Period (from date of adoption through May, 2028, hereinafter referred to as "Effective Period") issue one or more Requests for Bids for natural gas services on behalf of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System pursuant to the Public School Contracts Law and EDECA; and

WHEREAS, due to significant volatility and the potential for price increases in the wholesale natural gas market, Participating Members will preauthorize the Lead Agency to award contracts for Natural Gas Supply Service in each service territory to one or more natural gas suppliers that submits bids which are reasonably forecasted to provide estimated savings to the Participating Member based upon its previous natural gas usage and utility provided Basic Gas Supply Service rates; and

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will only award contracts for said Natural Gas Supply Services to natural gas suppliers that submit bids with pricing reasonably estimated to be lower than the utility-provided basic gas supply service; and

WHEREAS, the District agrees to purchase all Natural Gas Supply Services for its own use during the Effective Period through any natural gas supplier(s) awarded a contract, it being understood that the term of any one contract shall be subject to the provisions of Public School Contracts Law; and

WHEREAS, the Lead Agency will notify the Department of Community Affairs' Division of Local Government Services by mail prior to the issuance a Request for Bids for natural gas supply services, with the understanding that if the Division of Local Government Services does not respond within 10 business days, it will be deemed to have approved the issuance of the Request for Bids or the Request for Rebids.

NOW, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the District binds itself to the ACES Cooperative Pricing System ##E8801-ACESCPS to purchase all natural gas supply services needed for its own use during the Effective Period from the natural gas supplier or suppliers awarded a contract for natural Gas supply services by the Lead Agency; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Lead Agency of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System is hereby authorized to execute a master performance agreement that obligates the district to purchase natural gas at the terms and conditions stated therein with a third-party supplier or suppliers who have been awarded the contract or contracts by the Lead Agency on behalf of the participating members of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System #E8801-ACESCPS (or any CPS number to be assigned in the future), and provided further that all such contracts shall be at prices reasonably forecast and estimated by the Lead Agency to provide savings to the districts relative to the price charged for basic gas supply service by the natural gas public utility that would otherwise provide such service; and, be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that ACES is authorized to continue to bid to obtain natural gas services at any time during the Effective Period on behalf of the ACES Cooperative Pricing System including, for example, a rebid if energy market conditions do not initially lead to a successful bid, on additional dates to be determined by the Lead Agency; and

FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect immediately upon passage. The authorization provided to the NJSBA pursuant to the Local Public Contracts Laws (N.J.S.A. 40A:11-11(5)), and the Local Public and Public School Contracts Laws Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 5:34-7.1 et seq.) shall be valid until May, 2028 (the Effective Period) at which time the Cooperative Pricing System will be subject to renewal. Any rescission of this resolution shall not affect any Agreements entered into prior to such rescission or expiration.

C. **APPROVAL - Nursing Coverage Contract**

Motion to approve the contract with Best Choice Home Care for a substitute nurse for up to six weeks beginning January 2, 2023, at a rate of \$69.00 per hour, but not to exceed \$16,000.00.

D. **APPROVAL - Pre-School Tuition Rates**

Motion to approve the following tuition rates for the 2023-2024 school year:

Preschool Full Day Program	\$11,540.00
PSD Voluntary Half-Day Extension	\$ 8,700.00

E. **APPROVAL - Independent Child Study Team Therapy Evaluations and/or Services Joint Agreement Between Region II and Closter Public Schools**

Motion to approve the agreement between the Pascack Valley Council for Special Education and Closter Public Schools for Independent Child Study Team Therapy Evaluations and/or Services from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

**PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Moved by Ms. Wagner, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motions A - K.

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



Mr. McHale read the letter of retirement from Ms. Maria Clarke. Mr. McHale thanked her for her time and wished her a wonderful retirement. She will be greatly missed.

Ms. Kwon inquired about item C. Mr. McHale explained that Custodians are required to have a Black Seal license to operate a boiler. Once they do they are given a \$100 differential per their agreement.

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Li, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,  
Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Resignation of Patricia Higgins, HES Paraprofessional**

Motion to accept, with regrets, the resignation of Patricia Higgins as HES Paraprofessional as of 12/22/22.

B. **APPROVAL - Lyndsay Lucious as HES Paraprofessional**

Motion to approve Lyndsay Lucious as HES paraprofessional for the 2022-2023 school year, at a salary of \$19.23 per hour, 5.75 hours per day, pending criminal history background check.

C. **APPROVAL - Agustina Rosemary Guillon for Black Seal Fireman's License**

Motion to approve the \$100 differential (prorated) for Agustina Rosemary Guillon for obtaining Black Seal Fireman's License for the 2022-2023 school year.

D. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence - Isabella Prulello**

Motion to approve the Leave of Absence for Isabella Prulello as follows:

- Paid sick leave from March 20, 2023, through March 24, 2023;
- An FMLA and NJFLA leave from March 27, 2023, through June 19, 2023, (including spring break); and
- A discretionary child bonding leave pursuant to Board Policy 3435 from June 20, 2023, through June 30, 2023, with an anticipated return to work on September 1, 2023.

E. **APPROVAL - ESEA Title III Grant Staff**

Motion to approve, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the payment of \$200.00 per staff for the Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee Meetings, funded by ESEA Title III & Title III-Immigrant Grant for SY 22-23:

- Soojung Kwak
- Margaret Churchill
- Sarah Kang
- Kathy Lee

F. **APPROVAL - Substitute Teachers/Paraprofessionals**

Motion to approve the following substitute teachers for the 2022-2023 school Year:

**Substitute Paraprofessional**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Certification</u>
Tara Erol	N/A

**Substitute Teacher**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Certification</u>
Paula A Lopez	NJ Substitute Certification

- G. **APPROVAL - Extension of Discretionary Leave of Absence for Meghan Pleus**  
Motion to approve an extension of discretionary leave of absence for Meghan Pleus until June 30, 2023, with an anticipated return date of September 1, 2023.
- H. **APPROVAL - Retirement of Maria Clarke as Payroll Specialist**  
Motion to approve, with regrets, the retirement of Maria Clarke as Payroll Specialist as of April 30, 2023.
- I. **APPROVAL - FMLA - Ankita Patel**  
Motion to approve FMLA for Ankita Patel from January 2, 2023, with an anticipated return date of January 23, 2023.
- J. **APPROVAL - FMLA - Nila Vora**  
Motion to approve FMLA for Nila Vora from January 6, 2023, with an anticipated return date of January 23, 2023.
- K. **APPROVAL - Long-Term Substitute**  
Motion to approve James Gerbig as Long-Term Substitute from January 6, 2023, through February 3, 2023. Salary will be \$200 per day on days one through ten; the beginning of day 11, BA Step 0, (\$52,309) prorated.

**POLICY COMMITTEE**

*Chairperson:        Members:*

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Wagnerto to approve Motion A.

*Mr. McHale explained this was an internal decision and not from Strauss Esmay which guides us for state mandated legislation. This revision is for Policy #0155 to allow four (4) members on the board committees. Currently the policy states three (3) as the maximum number.*

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

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Li, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,  
Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

- A. **APPROVAL - First Reading of Revised Policy #0155 - Board Committees**  
Motion to approve the first reading of revised policy #0155 - Board Committees.

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

*Mr. Villanueva shared that while going over the QSAC manual, we have been doing the required process but not necessarily as what is prescribed. One of the items is the presentation of the Budget calendar for the next school year. Administrators have already received their spreadsheets and the deadline to submit their budget is January 6th.*

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

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

***No Public Comments***

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Dr. Puttannah to close the meeting to public discussion.

**CLOSED SESSION MOTION (If required)**

Moved by Ms. Salamea-Cross, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve the following Closed Session Motion. Motions were approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Li, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,  
Ms. Salamea-Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

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

**HIB**

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 8:37 PM.

The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 9:22 PM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Ms. Wagner, seconded by Ms. Fanelli to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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