

CLOSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Closter, New Jersey

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Tenakill Middle School

January 6, 2022 - 7:30 PM

The Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Finkelstein at 8:01 PM.

The following Board members were present:

*Ms. Cross, Ms. Fanelli, Ms Finkelstein, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah(remote),
Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh*

The following Board member was absent:

Ms. Kothari

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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

- *School reopened on Monday after our holiday recess. The NJDOE has directed that schools continue in person unless we are unable to staff the schools. Virtual learning is only permitted for students who have tested positive for COVID-19, unvaccinated students who have been in close contact with someone who tested positive, and for those unvaccinated students who have to quarantine. Our teachers, staff and students are continuing to practice layered mitigation strategies, including physical distancing, mask wearing and hand sanitizing along with well-ventilated classrooms. We remind everyone to stay home when sick. Since Monday, we have had 38 students test positive for COVID-19, which is 3.23% of our total student population, and nine staff members test positive, which is 4.61% of our staff population. At Hillside Elementary School there are currently 138 students quarantining or isolating and at Tenakill*

Middle School there are currently 85 students quarantining or isolating, which is 18% of the district student population. Mr. McHale has been in communication with the Health Officer at the Mid-Bergen Regional Health Department and the Bergen County Executive Superintendent of Schools to discuss our current numbers. They have both indicated that based on these numbers we should continue with full-day, in-person learning and continue with quarantine and isolation as we have been. We are following the NJDOH updates issued on December 30, 2021, for K-12 schools regarding very high COVID-19 activity levels and therefore we have postponed after school activities and sports through January 17, 2022. We will continue to assess the COVID-19 activity levels daily and if we are not able to resume after school activities and sports, he will let the community know.

- *He wants to congratulate our new Board members, Liz Fanelli, Sheryl Wagner, and Janice Yeoh, on being elected to serve the Closter Public Schools community. These new Board members attended a district-led orientation in December for our new Board members and they will be attending required training with the New Jersey School Boards Association. On behalf of the entire school community, he welcomes them to their new role in serving as a Board member!*
- *Closter Public Schools will be closed for students on Monday, January 17, 2022, which is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Dr. King's said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?" As a school district, let's continue in our mission to do everything we can for our students so they achieve success academically, socially, and emotionally. The Northern Valley Curriculum Center will lead a professional learning day for our faculty and staff on Monday, January 17, 2022.*

PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS

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

BOARD OPERATIONS

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

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

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah(remote), Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,
Ms. Cross, Ms Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. APPROVAL - Minutes

Motion to approve December 9, 2021, minutes.

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

Motion to affirm the decision of the Superintendent of Schools regarding the following Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) incidents reported to the Board in Executive Session at the December 9, 2021, Meeting:

- Incident #TMS-2122-06
- Incident #TMS-2122-07

C. **APPROVAL - Use of Facilities for the PTO After School Sports Program**

Motion to approve the use of Hillside Elementary Gym for the PTO After School Sports Program January 2022 through June 2022.

D. **RESOLUTION - Opposition on the Opening of the Medical Marijuana Treatment Center and Dispensary in Closter**

Whereas, Closter is a family-friendly community in which our students are safe to walk through town in a safe environment; and

Whereas, Closter students often walk home from school, congregating at various shopping and dining establishments in town; and

Whereas, there is currently a proposal for a medical marijuana treatment center and dispensary to open in Closter near shopping centers that our students pass when walking to and from school; and

Whereas, the presence of a medical marijuana treatment center and dispensary would change the character of our community and be a threat to the safety and well-being of our students due to the visibility and presence of controlled substances, increased activity and traffic in the area, increased possibility for drivers under the influence of marijuana; therefore be it

Resolved, that the Closter Board of Education is in opposition to the opening of the proposed medical marijuana treatment center and dispensary in Closter; and be it further

Resolved, that the Closter Board of Education urges the Closter Mayor and Council to use all available resources to stop the opening of the proposed medical marijuana treatment center and dispensary in Closter.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

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

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

Ms. Wagner inquired if the field trip in motion C would be contingent upon the Covid-19 numbers. Mr. McHale indicated it would.

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah(remote), Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,
Ms. Cross, Ms Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Staff Coursework**

Motion to approve the following courses for 2021-2022 as recommended to the Superintendent by the Principals:

Staff Member: Brittany Steele
Course No./Title: ED 5553 Assessment-Based Reading Instruction
Institution: Capella University
Credits: 3

Staff Member: Laura Abbey
Course No./Title: TEC-968N Youtube for Teachers
Institution: Fresno Pacific University
Credits: 3

Staff Member: Kathy Lee
Course Nos./Titles: 1) EDU 930 Cultural Intelligence in Education
2) EDU 900 Engaging All Students Through Cooperative Learning
Institution: Fresno Pacific University
Credits: 6

B. **APPROVAL - Staff Conferences**

Motion to approve the following staff conferences:

Staff Member(s): Theresa Whitchurch
Conference: STEM Class Observation
Location: NVRHS-D
Date: 1/6/22
Cost to Board: \$0

Staff Member(s): Erika Dunn
Conference: STEM Class Observation
Location: NVRHS-D
Date: 1/19/22
Cost to Board: \$0

Staff Member(s): Keith McElroy
Conference: Link-It Winter User Group
Location: Virtual

Date: 1/18/22
Cost to Board: \$0

Staff Member(s): Margaret Churchill
Conference: NJPSA ELL Committee Meeting
Location: Virtual
Date: 1/24/22
Cost to Board: \$0

Staff Member(s): Jennifer Annese
Conference: Constructing Reading Comprehension: A Blueprint and Instructional Tools Provided
Location: Virtual
Date: 3/9/22 and 3/16/22
Cost to Board: \$115.00

C. **APPROVAL - Field Trips**

Motion to approve the following field trips:

School: Tenakill
Group: TEP 7
Month: February
Destination: Demarest Middle School
Location: Demarest, NJ

School: Tenakill
Group: TEP 8
Month: February
Destination: Demarest Middle School
Location: Demarest, NJ

FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT COMMITTEE

Moved by Ms. Yeoh, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motions A - F.
Motions were approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

Ms. Finkelstein asked if the Pre-School tuition rate is in line with last year's rate. Mr. Villanueva informed the Board that this is about a 3% increase from the previous year.

Ms. Yeoh asked what the difference was between the rates for item C and F. Mr. McHale explained that item C was the tuition rate for a Northvale student to attend the district's PSD program. Item F is the preschool rate for the upcoming school year.

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah(remote), Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,
Ms. Cross, Ms Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. APPROVAL - Monthly Bills

Motion to approve payment of bills from December 10, 2021 to December 23, 2021 in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$1,587,412.80
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 33,462.32
Total	\$1,620,875.12

B. APPROVAL - Monthly Bills

Motion to approve payment of bills from January 1, 2022 to January 4, 2022 in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$138,976.24
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 4,254.53
Total	\$143,230.77

C. APPROVAL – Tuition Contracts for Received Students

Motion to approve tuition contracts for received students as outlined below for the 2021-2022 school year:

<u>NJSMART#</u>	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>District</u>
TBD	\$19,065.24	Pre-K	Northvale

D. APPROVAL – Special Education Placements

Motion to approve the following 2021-2022 Special Education placements for Closter Students:

<u>NJSMART#</u>	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Placement</u>
4621240704	\$41,412.00	K	Brownstone school
2515429166	\$44,010.00 (est.)	5	The Park Academy

E. APPROVAL - Continued Membership in the Northeast Bergen County School Board Insurance Group (NESBIG)

WHEREAS, a number of Boards of Education in Bergen County have joined together to form a Joint Insurance GROUP as permitted by N.J. Title 18A-.18B and;

WHEREAS, said GROUP was approved effective July 1, 1985 by the New Jersey Commissioner of Insurance and has been in operation since that date and;

WHEREAS, the Bylaws and regulations governing the creation and operation of this Insurance GROUP contain elaborate restrictions and safeguards concerning the safe and efficient administration of the public interest entrusted to such a GROUP, and;

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of Closter has determined that membership in the NORTHEAST BERGEN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD INSURANCE GROUP is in the best interest of the District;

NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Board of Education of Closter does hereby agree to renew membership in the NORTHEAST BERGEN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD INSURANCE GROUP and hereby accept the Bylaws as approved and adopted. The renewal term is from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary/Business Administrator is authorized to execute the application for membership and the accompanying certification on behalf of the District and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Secretary/Business Administrator is authorized and directed to execute the Indemnity and Trust Agreement and such other documents signifying membership in the GROUP as are required by the Group's Bylaws and to deliver the same to the Executive Director.

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

Motion to approve the following tuition rates for the 2022-2023 school year:

Pre-School Full Day Program	\$11,150.00
PSD Voluntary Half-Day Extension	\$ 8,400.00

PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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

Mr. McHale brought up the resignations of three(3) paraprofessionals in item G. He wanted to wish them well and that they will be missed by the district.

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

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah(remote), Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,
Ms. Cross, Ms Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Substitute Teacher**

Motion to approve Theresa Flannery as a substitute teacher for the 2021-2022 school Year, pending background verification.

B. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence**

Motion to approve Naynaben Dhorajia, Tenakill School paraprofessional, for an unpaid leave of absence beginning January 24, 2022, with an anticipated return date of March 28, 2022.

C. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence**

Motion to approve Laurie Rochlin, Tenakill School LDTC, for a medical leave of absence using 30 sick days beginning January 7, 2022, with an anticipated return date of February 28, 2022.

D. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence**

Motion to approve Katrina Vastano, Hillside School teacher, for an unpaid leave of absence beginning February 28, 2022, with an anticipated return date of April 25, 2022.

E. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence**

Motion to approve Nila Vora, Hillside School paraprofessional, for an unpaid leave of absence beginning January 14, 2022, with an anticipated return date of February 7, 2022.

F. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence**

Motion to approve Dara Weiss, Hillside School Counselor, for an unpaid leave of absence using FMLA beginning January 5, 2022, with an anticipated return date of February 7, 2022.

G. **APPROVAL - Resignation of Employees**

Motion to approve, with regrets, the resignations of the following employees, with dates:

- Donna (Guerrera) Ahearn - Effective 1/4/22
- Vickie Aponte-Solomon - Effective 1/14/22
- Tarannunigar Contractor - Effective 1/13/22

BOARD COMMITTEES

Ms. Finkelstein asked the Board to send their request to which committee they would like to participate.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Villanueva reminded the new Board Members to submit their personal financial disclosure information within the next two (2) weeks in order for him to review and submit to the county office.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

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

No Public Comments

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

CLOSED SESSION MOTION (If required)

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

Motion was approved by a voice vote of the Board:

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah(remote), Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,
Ms. 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 8:26 PM.

The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 8:38 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Cross to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Floro M. Villanueva, Jr.

Business Administrator/Board Secretary