

CLOSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Closter, New Jersey

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Tenakill Middle School

March 10, 2022 - 7:30 PM

The Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Finkelstein at 7:32 PM

The following Board members were present:

Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,
Ms. 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, 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

PRESENTATION OF SY 2020-2021 COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Gary Higgins from Lerch, Vinci and Higgins, LLP presented to the Board and the community the 2019-2020 Audit Report.

- For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 the district received an unmodified audit opinion which means the financial statements are presented in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.
- There are no recommendations for the fiscal year.
- The District was able to add money into various reserves (Capital, Surplus, Emergency), started a Maintenance Reserve Account and finally continued to fund a \$500,000 tax relief for the SY 22-23 budget.

Mr. Villanueva, thanked the business office staff, administrators, teachers and district employees for a successful fiscal year. He appreciates everyone's understanding of the various requests needed for backups such as payroll vouchers and purchase orders. He also thanked Mr. McHale and the Board of Education for their leadership and partnership as the district continues to provide fiscal responsibility and transparency.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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

- We are proud of our middle school students who participated in the MathCounts Competition! The Competition series has four levels of competition—school, chapter, state and national. Each level of competition is comprised of four rounds—Sprint, Target, Team and Countdown Round. We had twelve students participate in the chapter level, which had a total of 260 competitors! Congratulations to our seventh grader, Sophie Chen, who has advanced to the state level. We are still awaiting the team round ranking, which could qualify more of our students for the state level. We are so proud of our students and offer best wishes to Sophie at the state level.
- The PTO will have their annual dinner dance at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, April 1, 2022, at The Rockleigh. This year's theme is Prom Night – so dress to impress! This is the PTO's biggest annual fundraiser, and we are excited it will be back in person this year. For more information and to purchase event and raffle tickets, please visit www.ClosterPTO.org.
- District Goals Update
 - The 2021-2022 district goals are posted at: <https://www.closterschools.org/Board-and-District-Goals>
 - Goal 1: *District Diversity Council* – The district administrators, faculty and students are continuing their work on implementing the action plan items. Students at both schools will soon be celebrating “Choose to Include” week, participating in a “learn about others” campaign to read books with characters from a racial, ethnic, or cultural group different from their own, and our district will participate in a diversity job fair in April. The District Diversity Council will be meeting next week to begin work on drafting action items for the 2022-2023 Diversity Action Plan.
 - Goal 2: *Identifying Future Ready Practices* – The research team identified future ready skills, including critical thinking, communication, decision-making skills, problem solving, teamwork, initiative, business fundamentals, and more. Through research they also identified instructional practices that develop these skills, including problem-based/project-based learning, public speaking, collaborative learning, student-driven classrooms, using choice boards, etc. The team then surveyed teachers on how prevalent the practices are in classroom instruction. The research team has been working on developing action steps for eight instructional practices.
 - Goal 3: *Transition from Grade 8 to High School* - Mr. Tantum met with eighth grade teachers to review students' performance in grade 8 and during the first quarter at Northern Valley Regional High School. They will be having a vertical articulation meeting with the high school curriculum supervisors on March 21, 2022, to identify skills necessary for high school success and areas in which our students may need additional support prior to ninth grade.
- Pandemic Update
 - Since Thursday, March 2, 2022 (the day after my last report), we have had one student at Hillside Elementary School and no students at Tenakill Middle School test positive for COVID-19. No staff members have tested positive. Since September 2, 2022, the

cumulative number of students who have been COVID-19 positive is 252, which is 21% of the student population. With regard to vaccinations:

- Hillside Elementary School
 - 94% of staff are vaccinated and 35% have been boosted
 - 41% of students are vaccinated; *HES students are not eligible for a booster*
- Tenakill Middle School
 - 97% of staff are vaccinated and 49% have been boosted
 - 33% of students are vaccinated and boosted; 25% of students are vaccinated but are not yet boosted - a total of 58% with vaccination, which is a good sign!

Ms. Kothari asked Mr. McHale if the majority of the students remained masked or unmasked. Mr. McHale reported per his observation it seemed there were more students at Hillside who were masked than unmasked and at the Middle School more students were unmasked than masked.

Ms Yeoh stated since our CALI score is yellow if we were to go to orange would the Board have a discussion on bringing back the mask mandate. Mr. McHale responded that at the last special meeting it was discussed that based on the recommendation of Dr. Persichilli, Commissioner of the Health and Dr. Allen-McMillan the Commissioner of Education, masking and other protocols will be handled by local districts in consultation with the local Board of Health Department to determine what is happening in our area and district.

BOARD COMMITTEES

No Board Committees update

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.

No Public Comments

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

BOARD OPERATIONS

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

Dr. Puttannah asked for clarification for the use of facilities by Girls and Gear mentioned in item B. Mr. McHale explained that they are a nonprofit organization which operates a cycling program for girls and

also has a girl empowerment component. The organization reached out to the Mayor who then referred them to us. The organization needs to provide a certificate of insurance.

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

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,
Ms. Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Minutes**

Motion to approve the following Board Minutes:

- February 17, 2022 Regular Meeting
- March 2, 2022 Special Meeting

B. **APPROVAL - Use of Facilities**

Motion to approve Girls in Gear to use Hillside Elementary School parking lot every Saturday beginning April 2, 2022, through June 18, 2022.

C. **APPROVAL - Use of Facilities**

Motion to approve the PTO use of Tenakill Middle School Auditorium to host Porch Light production of Peter Pan, Jr. on May 6th and May 7th. The auditorium will also be used for rehearsals beginning in March.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

Chairperson Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh

Moved by Ms. Kothari, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motions A & B.

Ms. Kwon requested clarification for the conferences Mr. Villanueva will be attending. Mr. McHale explained that NJASBO – the statewide organization for Business Administrators is hosting an annual conference which provides training, and updates on new laws and regulations. Mr. Villanueva will also be participating in Professional Development which would provide opportunities to gain QPE credits as a Qualified Purchasing Agent beneficial to the district.

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

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, 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: Jaime Caruso

Course No./Title: 5190-080 Intro to Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder:
Developmental Disorders
Institution: William Paterson University
Credits: 3

Staff Member: Min Jeong Kim
Course No./Title: 1) EDU 919 Women in Mathematics and Science
2) EDU 920 Using Literature to Teach Mathematics
Institution: Fresno Pacific University
Credits: 6 (3 credits each)

Staff Member: Julia Leibowitz
Course No./Title: ELCL 6041 Writing in the Mid
Institution: William Paterson University
Credits: 3

Staff Member: Jennifer Levy
Course No./Title: EDLP 6010 Leadership in Learning Communities: From Theory to
Practice
Institution: William Paterson University
Credits: 3

B. APPROVAL - Staff Conferences

Motion to approve the following staff conferences:

Staff Member(s): Floro Villanueva, Jr.
Conference: NJASBO Annual Conference
Location: Atlantic City, NJ
Date: 6/7, 6/8, 6/9 and 6/10/22
Cost to Board: \$847.40 (includes registration, lodging, meals & mileage reimbursement)

Staff Member(s): Floro Villanueva, Jr.
Conference: NJASBO - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Location: Robbinsville, NJ
Date: 3/23/22 (with additional dates to follow)
Cost to Board: \$255.00 (includes sessions & mileage reimbursement)

Staff Member(s): Dara Weiss/Alexandra Earle/Elhaam Manoochehri
Conference: Realtime 504 Training
Location: Virtual
Date: 3/14/22 tentative
Cost to Board: \$175.00 total

FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT COMMITTEE

Chairperson Ms. Kwon, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Yeoh

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

Ms. Kothari asked if the donation by Closter PTO mentioned in item D was the same as the wish list. Mr. McHale explained it was. The Building Principals met with the PTO to discuss ideas of what was needed. Both were mindful the wish list would have items which were long lasting, such as furniture and technology. Mr. McHale thanked the PTO for their generosity.

Ms. Yeoh asked for clarification for the purchase of a new maintenance truck mentioned in item F. Mr. McHale explained it was to replace an older truck. This truck will be purchased through an approved state vendor at a discounted price. Mr. Villanueva explained that we purchased a new truck two years ago and because the new snow removal company we are contracted with is limited in what they can do, it would be in the best interest to have a second truck. Ms. Fanelli asked what would happen to the older truck, Mr. Villanueva stated it would have to be advertised and sold.

Dr. Puttannah inquired about the tables mentioned in item G. Mr. Villanueva responded that it was a request from Mr. Tantum to replace tables in one of the science classrooms.

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

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,
Ms. Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. APPROVAL - Monthly Bills

Motion to approve payment of bills from March 1, 2022 to March 8, 2022, in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$ 765,085.00
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 31,081.85
Debt Service (Fund 40)	\$ 279,517.50
Enterprise (Milk – Fund 60)	\$ 415.42
Total	\$1,076,099.77

B. APPROVAL - Staff Remuneration

Motion to approve remuneration to staff members as follows:

Staff Member: Meghan Pleus
Course: EDUC 718S Mindful Teachers, Mindful Students
EDUC 7127 Understanding Autism

College/University: LaVerne University
Remuneration: \$625.00 (total remaining from 2019-2022 3-year-option)

C. **ACCEPTANCE - SY 2020-2021 Audit**

Motion to accept the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and Auditor's Management Report (AMR) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, as audited by Lerch, Vinci & Higgins, LLP.

D. **APPROVAL - Acceptance of Donation from the Closter PTO**

Motion to accept, with gratitude, the donation from the Closter PTO in the amount of \$149,446.65.

E. **APPROVAL - HVAC Unit Upgrade - TMS Room B209**

Motion to approve the contract with Aspen Heating & Air Conditioning Corporation in the amount of \$7,498 for the HVAC Unit Upgrade at TMS Room B209. \$5,755 of the amount is funded by the American Rescue Plan Grant.

F. **APPROVAL - Purchase of Maintenance Department Truck**

Motion to approve the purchase of a Ford F-250 Maintenance Truck from Beyer Ford in the amount of \$36,817.50, through the State of New Jersey Contract #88727.

G. **APPROVAL - Purchase of Science Tables - Tenakill Middle School**

Motion to approve the purchase of 14 science tables from School Specialty LLC in the amount of \$13,665.64, through the Educational Data Services Bid# 9917.

H. **APPROVAL - Landscape & Maintenance Contract with Lupardi Nursery**

Motion to approve the contract with Lupardi Nursery Inc., in the amount of \$4,385 for the spring landscape and maintenance services for both HES and TMS.

I. **APPROVAL - Disposal of Copier**

Motion to approve the disposal of a Ricoh copier, tag #10031 from Hillside Elementary School.

PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson Ms. Cross, Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Finkelstein

Moved by Ms. Cross, seconded by Ms. Micerato approve Motions A - E.

Mr. McHale read to the Board and the Public the letters of retirement from Ms. Janet Felice and Ms. Cynthia Barry. Everyone wished them well on their retirement.

Mr. McHale explained item E, the new paraprofessional Ms. Donna Borland will be employed by the district as a paraprofessional but will be sent to the Valley Program for a Closter student who is attending their program.

Mr. McHale further explained the field hours for Ms. Lagomarsino mentioned in item A. This is a requirement needed in order for Ms. Lagomarsino to fulfill her field experience.

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

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,
Ms. Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Maria Lagomarsino - 50 Hours' Field Experience at TMS**

Motion to approve Maria Lagomarsino, Montclair State University student, for 50 hours' field experience at Tenakill Middle School.

B. **APPROVAL - Bass ABA Therapist for Students ID #350001 and #361001**

Motion to approve Bass ABA Therapist, Andre Cabrera, (parent paid) for Students ID #350001 and #361001 for the 2021-2022 school year.

C. **APPROVAL - Retirement of Staff Members**

Motion to approve, with regrets, the retirement of the following staff members, effective July 1, 2022:

- Janet Felice as Basic Skills Teacher
- Cynthia Barry as Elementary School Teacher

D. **APPROVAL - Matthew Vassallo as Baseball Coach**

Motion to approve Matthew Vassallo to split stipend with Kevin Hernandez as baseball coach for the 2021-2022 school year, stipend amount of \$1,433.50.

E. **APPROVAL - Donna Borland as Paraprofessional at Valley Program**

Motion to approve, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, Donna Borland as paraprofessional at the Valley Program for the 2021-2022 school year, pending criminal history background check. Salary is \$19.23 per hour, 5.75 hours per day.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Chairperson Ms. Micera, Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Kothari

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Dr. Puttannah to approve Motion A.

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

YEAS: Ms. Fanelli, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Wagner, Ms. Yeoh,
Ms. Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Second Reading of Revised Policy #3270**

Motion to approve the second reading of the following **revised** policy as per attached Appendix A:

- 3270 Professional Responsibilities

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Villanueva, thanked the trustees for completing their financial disclosure statements. He also informed the trustees that we received the state aid numbers and will be meeting with the Finance and Physical Plant meeting to discuss the preliminary budget for the March 24, 2022 meeting.

Mr. Mchale also thanked Mr. Villanueva for all his hard work and making sure our students have what they need. He thanked him for all his great work and support.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

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

Mr. James Johnson who is here on behalf of the Reuten family. The Reuten Family have owned an industrial property over the past 40 years which is currently outdated. The family has approached the town over the last several years and has proposed a new project for senior housing, which will consist of independent living, assisted living and memory care. This project would not only help the community but the school district. Currently the taxes the school is receiving for this property are \$70,000 with this new proposal it could be 10X that. This is without adding students to the school because the development would be for those 62 and over.

If anyone has questions to please contact James@metropolispropertygroup.com and they will answer any questions.

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

CLOSED SESSION MOTION (If required)

Moved by Ms. Kwon, 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. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttanniah, 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
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 8:23 PM.
The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 9:14 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Yeoh to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



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

3270 PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Board of Education will establish and enforce rules for the assignment of specific duties to teaching staff members and for the conduct of teaching staff members during the work day.

The Board directs the Superintendent to require the preparation of lesson plans by each teacher that implement the goals and objectives of the educational program. Teachers shall also be responsible for providing adequate direction and guidance to substitutes. Lesson plans will be subject to periodic review by the Principal.

The Superintendent shall apply uniformly throughout the district, except as may otherwise be provided in this policy, the following additional rules for teaching staff member conduct:

1. During the work day, teaching staff members may be assigned extra or alternative duties by the Principal in accordance with Board Policy No. 3134;
2. Teaching staff members are expected to attend every faculty meeting unless expressly excused by the Principal.

Teaching staff members who are assigned as department heads or who are assigned to work on curriculum revision during the regular school day will be given an appropriate reduction in teaching assignments.

Adopted: 27 May 2021

Revised/Readopted:

