

CLOSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Closter, New Jersey

AGENDA

WORK SESSION

Tenakill Middle School

April 16, 2020

5:00 PM

The Board meeting was called to order by Mr. Lambert at 5:02 PM

The following Board members were present:

Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera,
Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert

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, the Board of Education office, the Office of the Borough Clerk, and transmitted to *The Record* and *Northern Valley Suburbanite* newspapers.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

Hillside Elementary School

Ms. Smith thanked the BOE and Admin for supporting her and HES staff. She also thanked the community members that are supporting our student's education, from teachers to support staff and parents.

Closter Schools was awarded the best communities for education award by the Namm foundation. Congratulations to our students and staff!

Students created pictures for healthcare heroes. This was related to our ICARE program in collaboration with Feel Good Friday. Ms. Iyo compiled students' work and created a video to be shared with a parent who was working on the frontlines. Overnight the video was shared with facilities across the tri-state area and country, and further continents!

Kindergarten Registration is underway, we currently have 59 registrants. Parents will be receiving further information on April 17th that normally would have been done during in person registration. We would like to hold Orientation for students, however decisions will be based upon the Governors decisions regarding schools.

Tenakill Middle School

Mr. Tantum thanked the teachers and support staff for the quick turnaround of the Virtual Learning implementation. Technology in terms of training and keeping the teachers up to speed has been vital to the success of Virtual Learning. Special thanks to teacher volunteers for sharing their expertise and ideas related to google hangout or zoom meeting. He also thanked the custodians for cleaning and disinfecting the building as well as the support staff for doing attendance and registration.

Re-registration is underway for 5th grade and information was sent out Wednesday April 15th.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. McHale shared with the Board and the community his report:

Over the past month, our school community has participated in a major first: providing online instruction to students in Closter. We were all placed in this situation, in short order. Here are some of the things we have done in the past month:

- Finalized the Virtual Learning Day Plan;
- Posted Virtual Learning Day information to the district website;
- Began providing virtual learning for students PreK through grade 8 on March 16, 2020;
- Conducted a survey of students, parents, and teaching staff at the conclusion of week one;
 - 599 responses (106 staff members, 148 parents, 345 students)
 - 88.4% of staff, 90% of parents, and 94.4% of students either strongly agreed, agreed or were neutral to the statement, "I am satisfied with the Closter Public School virtual learning days during the first week."
 - 95% of parents and 96% of students felt communication from district and teachers has been effective.

- Used survey data to revise our plan for week two and beyond, including increasing the use of video streaming to provide teacher instruction and opportunities for students to connect virtually with the teacher and classmates;
- Conducted professional development sessions for teachers and staff using Zoom, Schoology advanced features, Screencastify, Go Math! online access, Seesaw, and Google Classroom; and provided teachers with access to online professional development offered through the Northern Valley Curriculum Center;
- Created the *Closter Cares Hotline* (201-256-3405) to assist parents and students with:
 - Questions regarding social/emotional issues relating to COVID-19 isolation,
 - Help organizing and scheduling a student's virtual learning day,
 - Behavior management techniques,
 - Referrals to outside Community Agencies, if necessary and
 - General wellness questions;
- Implemented *Feel Good Fridays* as part of the virtual learning day schedule; Every Friday, students now participate in special area content lessons (music, art, physical education, guidance lessons, etc.); the classroom teachers use this time for planning, providing feedback on student work, recording video lessons, and attending virtual faculty meetings or professional development;
- Created the *Guidance for Online Virtual Instruction During School Closures* document to provide consistent guidance for teachers in providing pre-recorded lessons and live drop-in sessions for students; this document includes step-by-step video directions for teachers to set up Zoom meeting rooms with every safety feature activated;
- Provided parents with information about our expectations for using online instruction and required their acknowledgement that parents may not participate in online instruction, will not audio-record or video-record the session, and will reinforce their child's obligation to adhere to and comply with all Board policies governing the use of technology during online instruction;
- Provided parents of students who receive related services with the opportunity to provide consent for having those services provided through an online virtual format;
- Communicated with teachers, parents and students regularly about the virtual learning day process (including email and video messages from principals and teachers);
- Provided Chromebooks to 50 students who needed a device for use at home;
- Teachers, school counselors and administrators have reached out to students who were not logging-in their attendance or were not completing assignments; we are formalizing support teams at both schools to provide daily or semi-weekly phone calls to support students who are not completing assignments;
- Delivered 19 days of virtual learning to students.

This has been a monumental shift in how we do our work. Has our process been perfect and stress-free? No! But together – students, parents, teachers, administrators and Board of Education – we can smooth whatever bumps we encounter. I want to applaud everyone for their dedication, perseverance, and great care in making the transition to virtual learning happen. It has been nothing short of extraordinary. We will continue to adjust and make improvements to our virtual learning days, for as long as this continues to be the way schools must operate.

The Governor announced earlier today that school buildings will remain closed through May 15, 2020. In the coming weeks, we will be increasing the amount of pre-recorded lessons created by our teachers, as well as the number of live drop-in sessions teachers have for students. Our administration team has been discussing and planning for how best to assess and grade students and how to have fourth grade moving up and eighth grade graduation in the event that school buildings remain closed through the end of this school year. We will share those plans if and when needed.

Our school district was pleased to donate personal protective equipment (PPE) to be used by Closter's first responders (police, firefighters, and ambulance corps). We gave gloves and masks that we had available in our school health offices. In addition, we lent two goggle-sterilization cabinets from our STEM labs so that the police and ambulance corps can sterilize the goggles and other PPE that they are using. The Closter first responders are always there for us and we are happy to assist them during this very challenging time.

As previously announced, the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (formerly PARCC) have been cancelled for this year. This information was communicated to all parents via an email from me on March 25, 2020. In addition, there have been changes made to the teacher and administrator evaluation process, which I communicated to the Board trustees on April 7, 2020, and to teachers and administrators on April 12, 2020, when they returned from spring break.

As we continue to provide education to our students, in person or online, we remain committed to our shared core beliefs in Closter Public Schools.

Teachers will be given an opportunity next week to enter schools

Mr. McHale shared the NJ Student Learning Assessment in Science. Overall, 56.6% of students in 5th grade meeting or exceeding expectation, and 57.6% of students in 8th grade meeting or exceeding expectation.

Mr. McHale shared with the board that he received a letter from a person representing some parents attending the PreK program requesting that the district waive tuition for the months of April - June. Mr. McHale shared that due to A-3904 districts are required to pay all employees their compensation and benefits.

Mr. McHale proposed that the board work out with parents a payment plan and/or tuition relief of one month for the months of April - June. The district will also plan to gather materials and packets for pre-k students to use at home.

- Board members agreed with Mr. McHale's recommendation.

Separate to the Superintendent's Report, Mr. Lambert thanked the Administrators, Teachers, Custodians, Support Staff and all other district employees for the wonderful job as the district implements Virtual Learning.

BOARD OPERATIONS

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn,
Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert
NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Board Meeting Minutes**

Motion to approve the March 12, 2020 minutes.

B. **AFFIRMATION - HIB Decision**

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 12, 2020, Workshop Meeting.

C. **APPROVAL - Closter BOE's Opposition to Assembly Bill 3902**

WHEREAS, Assembly Bill 3902, currently pending in the State Legislature, would authorize the Department of Community Affairs to permit municipalities to delay the quarterly transmission of property tax revenues to school districts during gubernatorial-declared emergencies; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's public schools are highly dependent on property tax revenue to support education programs; and

WHEREAS, on average, local property taxes constitute close to 60% of public school revenue, with the percentage even greater in a significant number of districts; and

WHEREAS, a delay in payments from municipalities would result in a financial crisis for school districts, seriously disrupting the educational process—and bringing it to a halt; and

WHEREAS, although public school buildings are closed during the current health

emergency, the education of our students is taking place through remote learning and home instruction; and

WHEREAS, continued timely transmission of school property taxes is critical for the education process to continue without interruption; and

WHEREAS, even though municipalities are designated as the authorities to collect property taxes, these taxes are levied for specific purposes—e.g., municipal, school, county, fire district—and these obligations must continue to be met; and

WHEREAS, as currently written, A-3902, which is intended to ease a financial burden on municipalities, would place a severe strain on school districts and the students and families that they serve; and

WHEREAS, the Closter Board of Education recognizes the impact of the current public health emergency on the state and local governments, as well as local school districts, but believes this legislation would worsen the situation for our communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Closter Board of Education urges the State Senate and the Governor to oppose A-3902; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution be delivered to Governor Phil Murphy, State Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin; and the 39th Legislative District's representatives in the state Senate and General Assembly; and be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be sent to the New Jersey School Boards Association.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS

Moved by Mr. Linn, seconded by Ms. Finkelstein 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. 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.

Diana Amaya, 449 Closter Dock Road - She asked how is it fair for students attending the half day program to receive the same exact materials as full-day students and charged differently. She also wants to know what will happen if virtual learning continues in May and beyond.

Mr. McHale responded that tuition relief for the month will be provided for both half and full day students. Half day program students also receive a reduced amount of instruction time. Mr. McHale and the HES administrators will work on making sure that hours of instruction will be equitable.

Karen Adler 68 Wilson Place - She suggested that students in Kindergarten and other lower grade level students receive instruction via Zoom even for a short period of time. Mr. responded that he will be working with administrators to further enhance the district's Virtual Learning program.

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

FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT COMMITTEE

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

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn,
 Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert
 NAYS: None

A. APPROVAL - Monthly Financials and Certification

Motion to approve the following items as required, pursuant to NJSA 18A:17-9 and NJAC 6:20-2.13, as per Appendix A attached:

- a. Board Secretary and School Treasurer Financial Reports for February 2020.
- b. Board of Education's Monthly Certification of Budgetary Major Account /Fund status for February 2020.
- c. Transfer of funds for February 2020.

B. APPROVAL - Monthly Bills

Motion to approve payment of bills from March 13, 2020 to April 15, 2020 in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$2,944,939.52
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 10,554.33
Enterprise (Milk – Fund 60)	\$ 750.89
TOTAL	\$2,956,244.74

C. **APPROVAL – Special Education Placements**

Motion to approve the following 2019-2020 Special Education placements for Closter students:

NJSMART#	Tuition	Grade	Placement
1483137465	\$18,434.07	PSD	The Valley Program

D. **APPROVAL - Lease Agreement with United Business Systems**

Motion to approve a 60-month contract starting July 1, 2020 with United Business Systems for the lease of two(2) Canon IR Advance 8595 and two(2) Canon IR Advance 525iFz copiers at a monthly cost of \$874.71. This price includes the cost of the lease, service, and supplies. The copiers will be billed at .0035 per black and white copy and pricing is based on the GSA/NJ State Passthrough G-2075.

E. **APPROVAL - Purchase of F-250 Truck for Buildings & Grounds Department**

Motion to approve the purchase of a Ford F-250 Truck with Beyer Ford in the amount of \$29,705.50 to be used by the Buildings and Grounds Department. Pricing is based on State of New Jersey Contract #A88727.

F. **APPROVAL - Special Services Rates for SY 2020-2021**

Motion to approve the following special services rates for school year 2020-2021:

	<u>Group</u>	<u>Individual</u>
Speech/Session	\$37.00	\$74.00
OT/PT/Session	\$40.00	\$80.00
MSR/Session	\$37.00	\$74.00
Counseling/Session	\$37.00	\$74.00
ELL/Session	\$37.00	\$74.00

G. **APPROVAL - Tuition Rates for SY 2020-2021**

Motion to approve the following tuition rates for school year 2020-2021:

Kindergarten	\$15,463
Grades 1-5	\$13,888
Grades 6-8	\$13,851
PreSchool Disabled	\$31,952
LLD	\$25,375
AUT	\$28,003

H. **APPROVAL - PRE-K TUITION RELIEF (Added motion)**

Motion to approve a one month tuition relief for the Pre-School program covering the months of April - June.

PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson Ms. Lee, Mr. Lambert

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn,
Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert
NAYS: None

A. APPROVAL - Affirmative Action Team for the 2020-2021 School Year

Motion to approve the following personnel as the Affirmative Action Team for the 2020-2021 school year to assess the District's needs and to develop a Comprehensive Equity Plan:

- Keith McElroy, Affirmative Action Officer
- William Tantum
- Patricia Eichenlaub
- Alexandra Earle
- Patricia Brett
- Tara Eddy

B. APPROVAL - Resignation of Matthew Scheidle

Motion to approve, with regrets, the resignation of Matthew Scheidle as middle school science teacher effective June 30, 2020.

POLICY COMMITTEE

Chairperson Ms. Micera. Ms. Kothari

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Mr. Linn to approve Motion A.
Motions was approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn,
Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Lambert
NAYS: None

A. APPROVAL - Second Reading of Amended Tutoring Policies

Motion to approve the second reading of the following amended policies, as per Appendix B attached:

- 6164.6 - Tutoring
- 4138.2 - Private Tutoring

BOARD COMMITTEES

Personnel and Finance committee will meet

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

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

A question was typed by a member of the public. The question is related to grading. She wants to know how grading works for the specials (music, phys.ed, etc.).

Mr. McHale answered that specials are provided during Feel Good Fridays, and the district still has to workout guidelines for the specials and will share with the parents.

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

CLOSED SESSION MOTION (If required)

There was no closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Ms Micera, seconded by Ms. Kothari to adjourn the meeting at 6:04PM.

Respectfully,



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