

CLOSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Closter, New Jersey

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Tenakill Middle School

August 20, 2020 - 7:30 PM

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

The following Board members were present:

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

The following Board members were absent:

Ms. Kothari, Mr. Lambert

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

Ms. Smith and Mr. Tatum provided the board with the following updates:

- This summer we held meetings with the new leadership of the PTO. We are grateful for their generosity.
- 125 families noted they were in need of a device. We are planning to distribute devices on 9/1. You will receive an email in which you will indicate if you will be picking up a device.
- We have been working hard to ensure the health and safety of all our students and staff. Please note visitors will not be permitted in the building.
- We have been working on schedules and class lists based on hybrid/fully virtual model and AB scheduling. On Tuesday the information regarding AB cohorts will be shared with families. Class lists and schedules will be released later that week.

- For Hillside Elementary School - All students will participate in daily ICARE activities as part of their morning meeting and a scheduled block of time. Ms. Weiss will be sharing these lessons with all classroom teachers. They will consist of videos and activities.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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

- There are 17 days until school starts! As you know, we submitted our Closter Reopening Plan to the NJDOE on July 20, 2020. The NJDOE returned our plan to ask for a few clarifications: that the students will have 180 days of instruction; the roles of the members for each school's Pandemic Response Team; confirmation that students will be seated six feet apart; confirmation that the sharing of materials among students will be limited and that any shared objects would be disinfected between uses; confirmation that everyone will mask while indoors; and how nurses will assist the Department of Health with contact tracing. We have answered those items and will resubmit the plan tomorrow.
- Last Thursday, the NJDOE provided further guidance to superintendents about the "beginning in an all-remote format" that the Governor spoke about in his August 12th press conference. The Interim Executive County Superintendent, Lou DeLisio, told us that the directive from both Governor Murphy and the NJDOE is that we must plan for in-person instruction. The NJDOE said it would be releasing a new set of criteria this week, but it still hasn't been released. If we cannot meet the criteria checklist, we would need to apply to open in a fully virtual format. This process, as described by Mr. DeLisio, will require the district to identify why we cannot open, with evidence of not being able to meet the criteria, and document by which date we will be able to meet the criteria and have in-person instruction. He emphasized that the fully virtual opening is not an optional choice for districts, but rather a specific criteria-based decision that requires NJDOE approval. As of this date, we are proceeding with our plans for the two learning options: hybrid and fully virtual. We will await the full approval of our plan from the NJDOE. I will keep everyone posted if anything should change.
- The NJ Department of Health (NJDOH) did finally release public health guidance to local health departments for K-12 schools. The guidance is for the school district and the local health department, with whom I am already in regular communication. The document does provide helpful information, especially about when classes would quarantine and when school would close. I encourage everyone to review it. It will be added to the Return to School 2020 section of the district webpage tomorrow. One change to note from this guidance is that the Centers for Disease Control and the NJDOH is that universal health screenings are not recommended to be conducted by schools. The NJDOH does encourage the use of a daily health screening questionnaire for all staff and students. We will be utilizing this screening method instead of daily temperature checks before entering school, which are not a reliable screening method since people could have COVID-19 and not have a temperature. Screening for multiple symptoms, as we will employ with our daily health screening questionnaire, is said to be a better a method for mitigating the spread of COVID-19. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of staff and parents monitoring symptoms and staying home while ill. Prior to the start of school, we will communicate clear and accessible directions to parents and

students for completing the daily screening questionnaire, for reporting symptoms, and reasons to remain at home.

- Again, We look forward to the return of our teachers and full staff on September 2, 2020, and our students on September 8, 2020.

Mr Linn asked how will the district know if a parent submitted a questionnaire. Mr McHale explained the questionnaire will be on the district student management program, known as Realtime. When a parent completes the questionnaire online the system will confirm and give the approval whether the student is allowed to enter the school. Each student will be given a barcode which will be scanned upon entering the school. The barcode will advise if the student is cleared to come to school. For the students whose questionnaire is not completed, they will be taken to have their temperatures checked and parents will be notified to complete the questionnaire.

Mr. Linn also asked what the term "closing" meant in Mr McHale's report. Mr. McHale explained if a classroom has a student who has tested positive for Covid-19 the classroom will be quarantined for 14 days, if more than one student in more than one classroom test positive with the guidance of the Department of Health, the school will close and go to all virtual learning.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS

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

No Public Comments

Moved by Ms. Kwon, seconded by Ms. Lee to resume the regular order of business.

BOARD OPERATIONS

Moved by Mr. Linn, seconded by Ms. Kwon to approve Motion A.

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

- A. Motion to approve August 11, 2020 minutes.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

Chairperson Ms. Bhagat, Mr. Linn, Ms. Cross

Ms. Finkelstein questioned motion B. Mr. McHale explained that the school violence program is a grant from the Department of Justice. The program will be used for staff professional development when staff returns on September 2nd. The program discusses trauma from world events. The workshop will give the staff social and emotional health strategies. This is at no cost to the district.

Ms. Finkelstein questioned if the board will need to re-approve the reopening plan mentioned in motion C. Mr. McHale explained the reopening plan was already submitted. The Department of Education did not require board approval - we only needed to submit a certified resolution.

Mr. McHale advised the version the board received today is the version that was being approved and will be submitted. Mr. McHale also advised if the Department of Education does send the plan back with changes or questions we will not need to submit it for board approval, but will certainly report it to the board and the community.

Moved by Ms. Bhagat, seconded by Mr. Linn to approve Motions A - C.

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, 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:	Karen Caruso
Course No./Title:	TEC 948N Teaching and Learning Online (virtual)
Institution:	Fresno Pacific University
Credits:	3.00

B. **APPROVAL - CARE Plus NJ "Stop School Violence Program"**

Motion to approve the 1.5 hour CARE Plus NJ "Stop School Violence Program" for staff on 9/2/20. There is no cost to the Board of Education; the program is paid for by the STOP grant funded by the Department of Justice.

C. **APPROVAL - Closter Schools Reopening and Recovery Plan**

Motion to approve Closter Public Schools' Revised Restart and Reopening Plan which was submitted to the NJ Department of Education on July 20, 2020.

FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT COMMITTEE

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

Mr. Linn questioned if motion C was a new or anticipated placement. Mr. Villanueva explained it was a placement but was not approved in prior meetings.

Moved by Ms. Kwon, seconded by Ms. Bhagat to approve Motions A - D.

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Monthly Bills**

Motion to approve payment of bills from August 1, 2020 to August 18, 2020 in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$685,602.60
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 27,961.00
Debt Service (Fund 40)	\$ 12,690.00
Total	\$726,253.60

B. **APPROVAL - Staff Remuneration**

Motion to approve remuneration to staff members as follows:

Staff Member: Andrea Watkins
Course: Reading Comprehension (course approved on 5/28/20)
Remuneration: \$847.00

C. **APPROVAL – Special Education Placement**

Motion to approve the following 2020-2021 Special Education placement for Closter student:

<u>NJSMART#</u>	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Placement</u>
330024	\$8,184.00	K	Bergenfield ESY

D. **APPROVAL – Operation of After-Care Program at HES by SEWOC Inc.**

Motion to approve the renewal of an agreement with the Summer Educational Workshop of Closter, Inc. for the operation of the After-Care Program at Hillside Elementary School during the 2020-2021 school year, at the annual rate of \$8,000.00.

PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson Ms. Lee, Mr. Lambert

Ms. Finkelstein advised the board regarding motion A - the addendum to Mr. McHale's contract and that it is not an increase in salary. It is only a move from merit goal to salary. Mr. Linn asked if it was pensionable and Mr. Villanueva advised it was pensionable.

Ms. Micera questioned the mentors being paid by the provisional teachers in motion D. Mr. McHale advised the board that when a teacher in the state of New Jersey is applying for a teaching license, they are first given a provisional certificate. Under the certificate it is a requirement to have a mentor teacher to guide them their first year. The state mandate does not allow the district to not pay the mentor. The novice teacher pays the district and the district then pays the mentor teacher. Ms. Micera questioned if the amount is set by law. Mr. Mchale confirmed the amount was set by law.

Ms Kwon questioned if we are to expect more discretionary leave of absences as listed in motions F and G. Mr. McHale responded that teachers may take a leave of absence for medical reasons or a discretionary leave at any time. The discretionary leave just means it's an unpaid leave. At this point we are not anticipating any more leaves, but that can change at any time based on the circumstances in our employees lives. Mr. McHale noted that parents have emailed asking for leaves of absences and accommodations being taken by teachers however, that information can not be disclosed as it is a personnel matter. A leave can be seen on the agenda if a teacher is taking a leave as it will be approved or not approved. At this point, all of the teachers will be teaching except the two indicated taking the leave for a year.

Ms. Kwon questioned RealTime Training, mentioned in motion N. Mr. McHale explained the transition from Genesis to Realtime was pre-planned prior to Covid. Training would have been planned during the regular school year. Teachers will be coming in on August 21st for Realtime training.. Since they are coming in they will be paid an hourly rate of \$50.

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

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. APPROVAL - Addendum to the Employment Agreement

WHEREAS, the Closter Board of Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") and Vincent McHale (hereinafter referred to as the "Superintendent") are parties to an Employment Agreement for the period beginning July 1, 2019 and ending June 30, 2023 (hereinafter referred to as the "Employment Agreement"); and

WHEREAS, the parties are desirous of revising the Employment Agreement to increase the Superintendent's maximum salary amount; and

WHEREAS, this Addendum has been approved by the Executive County Superintendent in accordance with the standards adopted by the Commissioner of Education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7-8(j); and

WHEREAS, the Board has provided notice to the public at least thirty (30) days prior to its scheduled action and has held a public hearing in accordance with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:11-11.

NOW, THEREFORE, based on the foregoing premises and mutual promises and covenants contained herein:

1. Article 2.a., Compensation, shall be revised as follows:

B. Beginning on July 1, 2020 the Superintendent's annual prorated salary for the term of his Employment Agreement shall be One Hundred Ninety Five Thousand One Hundred Twenty Five Dollars (\$195,125).

2. Article 2.c., Merit Bonuses shall be deleted in their entirety.

3. All other terms and conditions contained in the Employment Agreement and not specifically addressed in this Addendum shall remain in full force and effect.

B. APPROVAL - Title I Salary

Motion to approve, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the payment of a portion of the salary for Ellen Monaghan, BSI Teacher at Tenakill Middle school, from Title I funds as follows:

20-231-100-100-060-00-0	\$ 77,022
11-230-100-101-060-01-0	\$ 33,937

C. APPROVAL - SY 2020-2021 Paraprofessionals

Motion to approve, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the appointment of Paraprofessionals for the 2020-2021 School Year, attached hereto as Appendix A.

D. APPROVAL - Mentors for Two Provisionally-Licensed Teachers for the 2020-2021 School Year

Motion to approve Kim Ramm as mentor to Amanda Eastman, and Sofia Capparelli as mentor to Brittany Anderson. Mentors will be paid by the provisional teacher.

E. APPROVAL - Substitute Custodian Rate

Motion to approve the School Year 2020-2021 hourly rate for Substitute Custodians at \$18.00/hour.

F. APPROVAL - Discretionary Leave of Absence

Motion to approve a discretionary leave of absence for Erica Cho, Gr. 6 ELA teacher, for School Year 2021-2021 from 9/1/2020 with an anticipated return date of 9/1/2021.

- G. **APPROVAL - Discretionary Leave of Absence**
Motion to approve a discretionary leave of absence for Staci Levine, Kindergarten teacher, for School Year 2021-2021 from 9/1/2020 with an anticipated return date of 9/1/2021.
- H. **APPROVAL - Professional Development Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year**
Motion to approve the Professional Development Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year, attached hereto as Appendix B.
- I. **APPROVAL - Substitute Teachers/Custodian**
Motion to approve the following substitute teachers and custodian for the 2020-2021 School Year:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Certification</u>
Jenna Wecht	NJ Substitute Certification
Christopher Rota	NJ Substitute Certification
Agustina Guillon	Custodian

- J. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence Replacement**
Motion to approve Rosemarie Villani as leave replacement elementary school teacher for SY 2020-2021 Salary will be \$200 per day on days 1 through 10; then beginning on day 11 (Sept. 18, 2020), BA Step 0, \$51,184 pro-rated, ending on June 30, 2021.
- K. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence Replacement**
Motion to approve Amanda Eastman as leave replacement elementary school teacher from September 2, 2020, through April 16, 2021. Salary will be \$200 per day on days 1 through 10; then beginning on day 11 (Sept. 18, 2020), MA Step 0, \$59,714 pro-rated, ending on April 16, 2021.
- L. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence Replacement**
Motion to approve Kathy Wellenkamp as leave replacement elementary school teacher from September 2, 2020, through December 23, 2020. Salary will be \$200 per day on days 1 through 10; then beginning on day 11 (Sept. 18, 2020), BA Step 0, \$51,184 pro-rated, ending on December 23, 2020.
- M. **APPROVAL - Leave of Absence**
Motion to approve a leave of absence for Scott Greene from September 2, 2020 through September 25, 2020 utilizing 16 sick leave days under the Family Medical Leave Act.
- N. **APPROVAL – Realtime Training**
Motion to approve, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, Robert Neblung for Realtime training on August 21, 2020, for three hours at a rate of \$50.00/hour per teacher. Mr. Neblung will be replacing Erica Cho in the training program.

BOARD COMMITTEES

Ms. Lee reported that the Personnel Committee met on Monday, August 17th to discuss potential staffing issues which may occur with teachers going all virtual, working from home or taking discretionary leaves. As of now everything looks good and the administrators are still in the planning process where to place teachers.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Moved by Mr. Linn, seconded by Ms. Lee to open the meeting to public discussion.

No Public Discussion

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

CLOSED SESSION MOTION (If required)

Moved by Ms. Lee, seconded by Mr. Linn to approve the following Closed Session Motion. Motion was approved by a voice vote of the Board:

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Cross, Ms. Kwon, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

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

Personnel 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 8:12 PM.
The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 8:55 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Linn seconded by Ms. Kwon to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Floro M. Villanueva
Business Administrator/Board Secretary