

# CLOSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

*Closter, New Jersey*

MINUTES

WORK SESSION MEETING

*Tenakill Middle School*

*October 7, 2021 - 7:30 PM*

---

The Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Finkelstein at 7:35 PM

The following Board members were present:

Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Cross,  
Ms. Finkelstein

The following Board members were absent:

Ms. Lee

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:

- *Our faculty and staff participated in professional development this past Monday, October 4, 2021. Former NVCC Director, Bob Price, led teachers in a morning workshop on using student assessment data to guide instruction. Dr. Price will be continuing this work through the fall by meeting with grade level teams to continue the professional learning about how best to use assessments for academic progress for all students. The grade level teams will be taking a deeper dive into the Linkit! start-of-year assessment data. In the afternoon session on October 4, 2021, teachers attended professional development sessions by school. The sessions included Character Strong training; planning for delivery of Start Strong Assessments; planning lessons for observances of Global Diversity Awareness Month (October 2021) and National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month (November 2021) which are part of our District Diversity Council Action Plan for this year. We thank the Board of Education for their support of the professional development of our faculty and staff.*
- *On tonight's agenda there is a motion to approve a Virtual or Remote Instruction Plan. This is a new requirement, legislated in N.J.S.A 18A:7F-9(c), which will require school districts to*

*annually submit a plan for virtual or remote instruction that would be implemented during a school closure lasting more than three days due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or a directive by an appropriate health agency. The approved plan would allow a day of virtual or remote instruction to be considered a day of school attendance for the purposes of meeting the 180-day requirement. The NJDOE provided guidance that the plan must include:*

- o how virtual instruction would be provided to students who need a device or Internet access;*
- o how lunch would be provided to students who are eligible for free/reduced lunch;*
- o the required length of a virtual or remote instruction day.*
- The plan must also be posted to the district website. The administrative team created our plan using the protocols we already have in place for virtual instruction. The plan was then reviewed by the Closter Education Association leadership, who agreed that the plan was acceptable. The plan is now being submitted to the Board of Education and once approved it will be submitted to the Bergen County Office of the New Jersey Department of Education for review and approval.*
- The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act requires that the week beginning with the first Monday in October of each year be designated as the Week of Respect in New Jersey. This week our students and staff have been observing the Week of Respect with lessons on preventing bullying, with special morning announcements, wearing their favorite team jerseys to team up against bullying, practicing respectful manners, Wellness Wednesday lessons, and learning the ICARE cheer at Hillside. We will continue being respectful all year-long and pledge to avoid bullying behavior.*

#### **PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Dr. Puttannah 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. Bhagat to resume the regular order of business.

#### **BOARD OPERATIONS**

Moved by Dr. Puttannah, seconded by Ms. Bhagat to approve Motions A - F.

*Ms. Finkelstein reminded everyone item E was the board goal which was discussed at that last board meeting.*

*Ms. Kwon asked for clarification regarding the bus drills. Mr. McHale explained that school districts are required to have emergency evacuation drills in case of an emergency. This must be done at least twice a year.*

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Cross,  
Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Minutes**

Motion to approve the September 23, 2021, minutes.

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

Motion to affirm the decision of the Superintendent of Schools regarding Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) incident(s) (Incident #TMS-2122-01) reported to the Board in Executive Session at the September 23, 2021, Meeting.

C. **ACKNOWLEDGMENT - School Bus Emergency Evacuation Drill - TMS**

The Board acknowledges that Tenakill Middle School successfully conducted its first emergency school bus exit drill, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:27-11.2, at 9:25 a.m. at the location of Tenakill Middle School, 275 High Street, September 29, 2021; Keith McElroy, Vice Principal, was the staff member in charge, BOE bus and parent paid bus were included in the drill.

D. **ACKNOWLEDGMENT - School Bus Emergency Evacuation Drill - HES**

The Board acknowledges that Hillside Elementary School successfully conducted its first emergency school bus exit drill, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:27-11.2, at 9:35 a.m. at the location of Hillside Elementary School, 340 Homans Avenue, September 29, 2021; Ms. Courtney Carmichael, Vice Principal, Anna Suttora and Doreen Scarpelli were the staff members in charge. The BOE bus and parent paid bus were included in the drill.

E. **APPROVAL - Board Goal for the 2021-2022 School Year:**

Motion to approve a second Board goal:

2) The Board of Education, with the Superintendent and Business Administrator, will generate a process for onboarding new Board of Education members.

F. **APPROVAL - Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Program Plan**

Motion to approve the submission of the Closter Public Schools Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Program Plan to the New Jersey Department of Education as per Appendix A.

**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE**

*Chairperson Ms. Lee, Ms. Cross, Dr. Puttannah*

Moved by Ms. Cross, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motions A- B.

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, 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: Soojung Kwak  
Course No./Title: ELA-932 Multicultural Literature & Teaching  
Institution: Fresno Pacific University  
Credits: 3

B. **APPROVAL - Staff Conferences**

Motion to approve the following staff conferences:

Staff Member(s): Margaret Churchill  
Conference: WIDA eConference  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 10/14/21  
Cost to Board: \$0

Staff Member(s): Vincent McHale  
Conference: NJ School Boards Association Conference  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 10/26-28/2021  
Cost to Board: \$450.00

Staff Member(s): Alexandra Earle, Elly Manoochehri  
Conference: Northern Valley K-8 Counselor Meeting  
Location: Haworth School  
Date: 10/26/21  
Cost to Board: \$0

Staff Member(s): Leanne Schettino-Falkenstern  
Conference: General Introduction to AAC and Language  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 10/19/21  
Cost to Board: \$75.00

**FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT COMMITTEE**

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

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

*Ms. Kothari asked for clarification for item C. Mr. McHale explained it was to purchase a math program called TouchMath which is a multisensory program which can be used by any student. The program will be purchased through the ARP-IDEA funds for students with disabilities. The program will give extra support for the students.*

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttanniah, Ms. Cross,  
Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Monthly Bills**

Motion to approve payment of bills from September 24, 2021 to September 30, 2021 in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$684,606.75
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 11,528.66
Total	\$696,135.41

B. **APPROVAL - Monthly Bills**

Motion to approve payment of bills from October 1, 2021 to October 7, 2021 in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$ 90,611.39
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 10,846.05
Enterprise Fund (Fund 60)	\$ 56.44
Total	\$101,513.88

C. **APPROVAL - Purchase of TouchMath**

Motion to approve the purchase of TouchMath - multisensory math program in the amount of \$40,719.99 funded by the American Rescue Plan (ARP) - IDEA Basic Grant.

**PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

*Chairperson Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Linn*

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

*Ms. Finkelstein read the walk in motion item E. Mr. McHale informed the board item E was for a different student who required home instruction.*

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttanniah, Ms. Cross,  
Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Movement on the Salary Guide Retroactive to September 1, 2021**

Motion to approve movement on the salary guide retroactive to September 1, 2021, for the following staff member:

Name	Current Placement	New Placement	Step	Salary
Sarah Kang	BA	BA +15	6	\$66,567
Brittany Steele	BA	BA +15	6	\$66,567

**B. APPROVAL - Sports Supervision - Schedule F**

Motion to approve Jeffrey Roem for sports supervision for SY 21-22 at a rate of \$26.82/game as per Schedule F.

**C. APPROVAL - Rachel Fineman - Home Instruction**

Motion to approve Rachel Fineman as home instructor for student ID# 9303971503, two hours per day, five days a week at a rate of \$50 an hour.

**D. APPROVAL - Bridget Duffy - Paraprofessional**

Motion to approve Bridget Duffy as paraprofessional for the 2021-2022 school year, at a rate of \$19.23 per hour, pending criminal history background check.

**E. APPROVAL - Christopher Rota - Home Instruction**

Motion to approve Christopher Rota as home instructor for student ID# 6176799742, two hours per day, five days a week at a rate of \$50 an hour.

**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. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttanniah, Ms. Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

**A. APPROVAL - Second Reading of Bylaws 0155.1**

Motion to approve the second reading of Bylaws 0155.1 Board Member Participation at Board Meetings Using Electronic Device as per Appendix B.

**BOARD COMMITTEES**

*Ms. Bhagat informed the Board and the public that the Personnel Committee met on September 29 and discussed the need of a Spanish long term substitute. It was also discussed that as an option - any world language teacher for grades K - 4 which will also allow students to have exposure and an added culture of a language they are teaching. Ms. Bhagat also advised that we are in need of more substitute teachers. With regards to the Mid-Bergen Mental Health program, Mr. McHale has been having extensive interviews to find the staff that best fits our needs. It was also discussed for the school nurses to receive extra compensation for covid contact tracing after hours. On October 4th, Bob Price conducted a workshop on LinkIt and a session on designing their own assessments.*

*The Finance Committee is looking to meet soon.*

*Mr. McHale stated that the Policy Committee will also be meeting to discuss the updates on policies which were mandated by new legislation.*

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

*New Business - Mr. McHale discussed the possibility of changing the quarantine mandate for siblings who may have been exposed to Covid-19.*

*Ms. Bhagat expressed her support for this change.*

*Ms. Cross and Dr. Puttannah expressed that the Board must be consistent in following guidelines. After further discussion, it was agreed that Mr. McHale would discuss the topic further with Dr. Patel, the district physician before any decision is made.*

**PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

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

*Ms. Avizov - 17 Buzzoni Drive, Ms. Avizov stated that she is opposed to Dr. Patel's suggestion on allowing a sibling to attend school while the other is quarantined. She feels it is irresponsible to take Dr. Patel's position.*

*Ms. Hunt - Hillside Teacher, speaking on behalf of the Closter Education Association Pride Committee. On September 29, 2021 the committee sponsored a day of gold recognizing childhood cancer awareness month. \$2600 in donations was collected from staff, students and families for Josephine's Garden, which helps raise monies for research and families affected by childhood cancer. She thanked everyone for their donations.*

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

**CLOSED SESSION MOTION (If required)**

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

Motion was approved by a voice vote of the Board:

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Kwon, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, 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:

***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 8:07 PM.  
The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 8:26PM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Ms. Bhagat, seconded by Mr. Linn to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Floro M. Villanueva, Jr.", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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



# VIRTUAL OR REMOTE INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

DISTRICT CODE 03-0930

SEPTEMBER 2021



## **Closter Public Schools**

340 Homans Avenue

Closter, NJ 07624

201-768-3001

Vincent McHale, Superintendent

This plan has been developed in  
accordance with *N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-9(c)*.  
School will be in session for 180 days.

## Introduction & Overview

The Closter Public School District is dedicated to educational excellence. In partnership with the family, staff, and community, we are committed to meeting the educational needs of each child by providing the programs and environment necessary to:

- Enable every child to reach full potential;
- Promote self-esteem, respect, responsibility, and appreciation of diversity;
- Develop knowledge, skills, and academic achievement as per the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. (NJSLS);
- Prepare each child for continued education and responsible citizenship;
- Instill a lifelong passion for learning. Closter Public School District is committed to fostering and instilling a culture that personalizes learning, prepares students for college, careers, and life, and supports confident, responsible citizenship.

In keeping with Closter's commitment to providing our students with an exceptional education, this Virtual or Remote Learning Plan has been developed to guide the instruction and resources in the case of a school closure lasting more than 3 consecutive days.

Our goal during any school closure will be to maintain the same full-day schedule that would be followed during the regular in-person school day and utilize a Zoom live-stream to provide instruction.

## **Virtual Day Schedule**

Students will follow their regular schedule on virtual days.

<b>Hillside Elementary School</b>	<b>Tenakill Middle School</b>
	<b>Period</b>
Log-in: 8:30-8:35 am	Log-in/Homeroom: 8:30 am
8:35 am - 3:10 pm: Students remain with their classroom teacher, except for specials, PLUS, ELL, related services and special education. Classroom teacher provides instruction in ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.	1: 8:40-9:26 (46 minutes)
	2: 9:28-10:14 (46 minutes)
	3: 10:16-11:02 (46 minutes)
	4: 11:04-11:50 (46 minutes)
	5: 11:52-12:38 (46 minutes)
	6: 12:40-1:26 (46 minutes)
	7: 1:28-2:14 (46 minutes)
	8: 2:16-3:02 (46 minutes)

Hillside Elementary School Lunch Periods:

- Lunch/recess for Grades 3 & 4: 11:30-12:20 (50 minutes)
- Lunch/recess for Grade K: 12:00-12:50 (50 minutes)
- Lunch/recess for Grades 1 & 2: 1-2 12:30-1:20 (50 minutes)

Tenakill Lunch Periods:

- Lunch/Recess for Grades 5 & 6: 11:04-11:50 (46 minutes)
- Lunch/Recess for Grades 7 & 8: 11:52-12:38 (46 minutes)

Total instructional time (minus lunch and recess):

HES: 5.45 Hours      TMS: 5.36 Hours

### **What will happen if we have to close in-person learning and pivot to fully virtual learning?**

While we do not want to have any school closures, **we are prepared to follow the same school in-person schedule using a virtual format in the event of a full school closure.** To ensure that all students have a device for remote instruction, we will provide a Chromebook to every student who requires one to be able to access learning from home. A device pick-up time will be arranged for any student who will need a Chromebook. If a student does not have Internet access at home, we will provide a WiFi connection for the student.

## **Food Service and Distribution**

Closter has a very small number of free or reduced lunch students and does not have a contracted food service vendor. In order to ensure that free/reduced lunch students can continue to receive the nutritional sustenance necessary, we have established a food account with a local vendor who will provide the necessary meals in accordance with state and federal mandates.

## **Access to Technology**

- All instructional staff members have laptops with which they can provide instruction.
- All students in grades K-8 who require a device for home-use will be provided with a Chromebook.
- Verizon mobile WiFi hotspots are available for students without access to the internet at home.
- Families can access low-cost or no cost internet through the Altice Advantage Program. Families can apply here:  
<https://apply.alticeadvantageinternet.com/main>
- All students will use learning platforms that they are already using to sustain instruction: Google classroom, See-Saw, and Schoology.
- Students will be able to receive technical support with devices and exchange of equipment by contacting our Network Administrator, Vincent Salvati, at 201-768-3001, ext. 41134 or [salvati@nvnet.org](mailto:salvati@nvnet.org). Equipment exchange will be available regardless of building closure.

## **Delivery of Fully-Virtual or Remote Learning**

The need for virtual or remote learning may vary throughout the school year. This plan would be implemented during a district closure lasting more than three consecutive school days due to a declared state of emergency, declared public health emergency, or directive by the health department or officer to institute a public health-related closure. We may need to pivot to remote learning for students who are required to quarantine. We may need to pivot a

whole class to remote learning if the teacher needs to quarantine but can teach remotely or if there are several positive cases in one classroom. We may need to pivot to fully-virtual learning if there is a school-wide outbreak or if the Governor issues an executive order.

### **Fully-Virtual Learning**

If there is a pivot to fully-virtual learning, teachers will provide students with a Zoom link to access their classes. Teachers will provide instruction daily using the 2021-2022 in-person period schedule.

### **Remote Learning for Quarantine**

Students who require quarantine due to COVID-19 (testing positive, exposure to a person who tested positive or after travel for the unvaccinated) may access a live-stream of in-person instruction. The school nurse and/or principal will approve remote learning for eligible students and will provide Zoom links for classes.

# BYLAWS

## BYLAWS

0155.1/page 1 of 2  
Board Member Participation at Board Meetings  
Using Electronic Device

0155.1 BOARD MEMBER PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS  
USING ELECTRONIC DEVICE

The board recognizes that it is a duty of the office to which each member is elected that the member physically attends board meetings. The board acknowledges that on occasion, a conflict may arise that prevents a member from being physically present at a meeting. Due to advances in communication technology, the board has the capacity to permit remote attendance at board meetings through the use of electronic devices. Therefore, the board authorizes that a board member may participate in a board meeting from a remote location through the use of an electronic device according to the following guidelines:

- A. There is a good reason why the board member cannot physically attend the meeting, such reason to be approved by the board president, or, in the case of the board president making the request, the vice president;
- B. A request for remote participation is made at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting; however, requests under 24 hours may be approved in case of emergency;
- C. The board member is able to participate in the full public portion of the board meeting and not just part of the meeting; and
- D. An electronic connection is available and is sufficient for the absent member to be heard by the public.

Remote participation of a member shall be announced to the public and recorded in the meeting minutes at the roll call.

Board members approved to participate in a board meeting from a remote location through an electronic device may be counted in the quorum. The electronic connection must be audible to the public and in the same location as the meeting. Any remotely participating member will be considered absent for all or part of the meeting as appropriate, if the electronic connection is or becomes insufficient to be heard by the public; if the transmission is terminated due to equipment or power failure or poor connection; or for any other reason that jeopardizes the public's access to information at the meeting in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. Such absence shall not negate any participation or voting prior to such termination of connection. The member's absence shall be duly noted in the



# BYLAWS

BYLAWS  
0155.1/page 2 of 2  
Board Member Participation at Board Meetings  
Using Electronic Device

minutes, including the time and circumstances regarding the termination of the member's participation.

Under no circumstances shall a board member be allowed to participate in a board meeting from a remote location without prior notice.

A board member attending remotely shall not be permitted to participate in the board's executive session nor vote on any matter at the board meeting that was discussed in executive session.

Adopted:

