

Branchburg Township School District

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

April 15, 2021

Executive Session - 6:30 p.m.

Public Meeting – 7:30 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

On a motion by Mrs. Fabriczi, seconded by Mr. Horowitz, and carried unanimously, the Board agreed to convene to public session at 7:03 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Board Vice President, Cathy Curcio, who stated that the meeting was convened in compliance with the provisions of Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, the Sunshine Law; notices were sent to the *Courier News*, filed with the Township Clerk and posted in the Branchburg Township Schools.

The following members of the Board of Education were present: Vincent Carpentier, Cathy Curcio, Kristen Fabriczi, Noah Horowitz, Robert Maider, Keerti Purohit and Jonathan Sarles.

The following members were absent: Mrs. Joyce and Mrs. Phelps

Also present were: Superintendent of Schools Rebecca Gensel and Business Administrator/Board Secretary Kelly Morris.

II. The Secretary called the roll.

III. CALL TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Mr. Horowitz, seconded by Mr. Maider, and carried unanimously, the Board agreed to convene to Executive Session at 7:03 p.m. to discuss Personnel, Student Matters, Contracts and Legal Issues.

On a motion by Mrs. Fabriczi, seconded by Mr. Horowitz, and carried unanimously, the Board agreed to adjourn Executive Session at 7:23 p.m.

On a motion by Mrs. Fabriczi, seconded by Mr. Horowitz, and carried unanimously, the Board agreed to reconvene to public session at 7:33 p.m. with 4 members of the public present.

IV. The assembly saluted the flag.

V. Statement of Adequate Notice

VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Jennifer Anderson, Director of Curriculum, gave a presentation on the Branchburg School District's Assessment.

Ms. Gensel gave an update on the each of the schools since returning from spring break.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Charles Tuma, 260 Carol Jean Way, asked about Item XII.K. on the agenda regarding attorney fees.

Randi Lee Childers, Branchburg Township Education Association President, asked about Item VIII.C., regarding May 27, 2021 being changed from a half day, with professional development for staff in the afternoon, to a full school day.

VIII. GOVERNANCE

Motion by Mrs. Fabriczi, seconded by Mr. Carpentier that Items VIII.A. through VIII.C. be moved upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

On call of the vote, Items VIII.A. through VIII.C. were approved by Roll Call, with Mrs. Purohit abstaining from Item VIII.A.

Ms. Curcio reminded the Board members that their financial disclosure information is due by April 30, 2021.

Ms. Curcio said that Gwen Thornton of the New Jersey School Boards Association will be attending the May 20, 2021 Board meeting remotely to go over the evaluation process.

A. Approval of Minutes

It is recommended that the Board approve the Minutes of the Executive Session and Regular Meeting of March 18, 2021.

B. Approval of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Report			
Building	Incident #	Date	Discussion
BCMS	SSDS# 002332	3/5/21	BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts the recommendation of the Superintendent that this incident did not meet the criteria of H.I.B. as defined in N.J.18A:37-14.

C. Approval of Revised 2020-2021 School District Calendar

It is recommended that the Board approve the revised 2020-2021 School District Calendar.

IX. POLICY

Motion by Mr. Sarles, seconded by Mr. Horowitz that Items IX.A. through IX.B. be moved upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

On call of the vote, Items IX.A. through IX.B. were unanimously approved by Roll Call.

Mr. Horowitz went over the policies listed on the agenda for first and second reading.

A. Policy and Regulations Second Reading		
Policy/Regulation	Title	Discussion
P 0145	Board Member Resignation and Removal (M)	Revised
P 0164.6	Remote Public Board Meetings During A Declared Emergency (M)	New
P 1642	Earned Sick Leave Law (M)	New
P 2415	Every Student Succeeds Act (M)	Revised
P 2415.02	Title I – Fiscal Responsibility (M)	Revised
P 2415.05	Student Surveys, Analysis, and/or Evaluations (M)	Revised
P 2415.20	Every Student Succeeds Act Complaints (M)	Revised
P 4125	Employment of Support Staff Members (M)	Revised
P 5330.01	Administration of Medical Cannabis (M)	Revised
P 6360	Political Contributions (M)	Revised
P 8330	Student Records (M)	Revised
P 9713	Recruitment by Special Interest Groups (M)	Revised
R 1642	Earned Sick Leave Law (M)	New
R 2415.20	Every Student Succeeds Act Complaints (M)	Revised
R 5330.01	Administration of Medical Cannabis (M)	Revised

B. Policy and Regulations First Reading		
Policy/Regulation	Title	Discussion
P 7425	Lead Testing of Water in Schools (M)	Revised
R 7425	Lead Testing of Water in Schools (M)	New

X. EDUCATION

Motion by Mr. Horowitz, seconded by Mrs. Fabriczi that Items X.A. through X.E. be moved upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

On call of the vote, Items X.A. through X.E. were unanimously approved by Roll Call.

There was no Education Committee report.

A. Conferences/Travel

WHEREAS, the employees listed below are requesting Board of Education authorization to attend the conferences/workshops listed below; and

WHEREAS, the attendance at the stated function was previously approved by the Chief School Administrator as work related within the scope of the work responsibilities of the attendee and within the funds budgeted for this purpose; and

WHEREAS, the attendance at the function was approved as promoting delivery of instruction or furthering efficient operation of the school district; and fiscally prudent;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes attendance at the stated conferences/workshops and reimbursement for the related expenses in accordance with Board policy on conference and workshop attendance.

Conferences/Workshops	Employee/ Account Number	Date(s)	Registration Fee	Hotel	Meals /Exp.	Tolls/Parking /Mileage	Total
NJ Association of School Business Officials Legislative and School Official Update Virtual	Kelly Morris 11-000-251-580-01-585	4/29/21	\$50	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$50
NJ Association of School Business Officials Legislative and School Official Update Virtual	Patricia Rodgers 11-000-251-580-01-585	4/29/21	\$50	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$50
Leveled Literacy Intervention Grades K-2 Institute Virtual	Jennifer Anderson 20-270-200-500-02-649	5/4/21 5/5/21 6/9/21	\$500	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$500
Leveled Literacy Intervention Grades K-2 Institute Virtual	Kelly Boyle 20-270-200-500-02-649	5/4/21 5/5/21 6/9/21	\$500	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$500
Leveled Literacy Intervention Grades K-2 Institute Virtual	Lauren Knoke 20-270-200-500-02-649	5/4/21 5/5/21 6/9/21	\$500	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$500
Leveled Literacy Intervention Grades 3-8 Institute Virtual	Jennifer Anderson 20-270-200-500-02-649	5/13/21 5/14/21 6/10/21	\$500	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$500
Leveled Literacy Intervention Grades 3-8 Institute Virtual	Kelly Boyle 20-270-200-500-02-649	5/13/21 5/14/21 6/10/21	\$500	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$500
Leveled Literacy Intervention Grades 3-8 Institute Virtual	Lauren Knoke 20-270-200-500-02-649	5/13/21 5/14/21 6/10/21	\$500	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$500
Hot Issues in Human Resources Law Virtual	Enea Brotzman 11-000-230-580-01-303	4/28/21	\$125	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$125
The Power of Legal Information: Personnel Virtual	Rebecca Gensel 11-000-230-580-01-303	4/26/21	\$150	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$150
School Administrator Mentor Training Virtual	Rebecca Gensel 11-000-230-580-01-303	4/30/21	\$395	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$395

B. Approval of Student Teacher					
Name	College/University	Certification	Location	Dates	Discussion
Ryan Collins (subject to delivery of documents)	Centenary University	Elementary School Teacher in Grades K-5 & Teacher of Students with Disabilities	WES	9/1/21-4/29/22	Cooperating Teachers: Linda Abey & Danielle Cordaro

C. Approval of 2020-2021 Out of District Program					
Program/Location	Account Number	Student ID #	SY Tuition	Dates	Total Cost
Pillar Care Continuum Pillar Elementary School Livingston, NJ	11-000-100-566-03-109-000	7930912675	\$13,088 (\$409 per diem/32 days)	4/5/21-6/23/21	\$13,088

D. Approval of Field Trip				
Trip	Teachers	Grade	Purpose	
Meadowbrook Day Camp Long Valley, NJ	Matthew Barbosa	8	8 th Grade Graduation Picnic	

E. Approval of Contracted Educational Service						
Vendor	Account Number	Student ID#	Rate	Total (not to exceed)	Effective Dates	Discussion
Silvergate Prep Bridgewater, NJ	11-150-100-320-03-069-020	1967330178	\$45 per hour	\$2,700	4/12/21- 5/21/21	Homebound contracted instruction, 10 hours per week, not to exceed 30 days.

XI. HUMAN RESOURCES

Motion by Mrs. Fabriczi, seconded by Mr. Maider that Items XI.A. through XI.N., be moved upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

On call of the vote, Items XI.A. through XI.N., were unanimously approved by Roll Call.

There was no Human Resources Committee report.

Ms. Gensel wished JanMarie Motz well on her retirement.

A. Approval of Retirement				
Name	Account Number	Position	Location	Effective Date
JanMarie Motz	11-000-219-104-01-168-340	Social Worker	WES	6/30/2021

B. Approval of Non-Athletic Stipend					
Name	Account Number	Position	Stipend	Dates	Discussion
Regina Santangelo	11-401-100-101-01-078-020	Strings Concert Prep	\$827 (prorated to \$413.50)	4/16/21-6/18/21	Prorated due to one concert instead of two

C. Approval of Extended Day Hours				
Name	Account #	Position	Rate	Dates
Meghan Castellano	11-421-200-101-01-330	Teacher	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed 3 hours per week for 7 weeks, \$861.00 total)	4/16/21-6/11/21
Michele Rina	11-421-200-101-01-330	Instructional Aide	\$18.81 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours per week for 7 weeks, \$263.34 total)	4/16/21-6/11/21

D. Approval of Resignation				
Name	Account Number	Position	Location	Effective Date
James Hager	11-000-270-160-01-459	Transportation Supervisor	Transportation	4/30/21

E. Approval of Spring Professional Development Presenters				
Name	Account#	Position	Rate	Discussion
Kristen Allen	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	Morphology for Vocabulary Acquisition and Comprehension (5-8)
Kristen Allen	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	Reading Comprehension Strategies for the Struggling Reader (4-8)
Ludmila Battista	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	Teaching Inferencing and Drawing Conclusions
Kelly Boyle	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	Incorporating More Phonemic Awareness into Your Reading Instruction: Grades K-2
Kelly Boyle	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	Vocabulary Strategies for Developing Readers
Stephanie Formus	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	eSpark! What is it?
Amy Garner	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	Enhancing Students Writing Using Multisensory Techniques
Amy Garner	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	Building Vocabulary and Comprehension, How are they connected?
Lauren Knoke	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	Strategies to Support Digital Reading
Heather Lilly	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	The Reading Continuum Part 1-Learning to Read
Heather Lilly	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	The Reading Continuum Part 2-Reading to Learn
Zach Miracle	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 1 hour)	Teaching Reading in Content Subjects
Zach Miracle	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 1 hour)	Framing Your Thoughts
Danielle Puzzo	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	Reading Disabilities in Math (K-2nd/3rd)
Danielle Puzzo	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	Reading Disabilities in Math (3rd/4th - 5)
Emily Williams	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 1 hour)	Teaching Reading in Content Subjects
Emily Williams	11-000-223-104-02-210-999	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 1 hour)	Framing Your Thoughts

F. Approval of Title One Tutors				
Name	Account	Location	Rate	Dates
Lauren Knoke	20-231-100-101-02-648	SBS	\$41 per hour (not to exceed \$1,107)	4/15/21-6/30/21
Devra Hobbs	20-231-100-101-02-648	BCMS	\$41 per hour (not to exceed \$779)	4/15/21-6/30/21
Emily Loughman	20-231-100-101-02-648	BCMS	\$41 per hour (as needed)	4/15/21-6/30/21
Leigh Keely	20-231-100-101-02-648	BCMS	\$41 per hour (as needed)	4/15/21-6/30/21

G. Approval of Revision of Title One Tutors					
Name	Account	Location	From	To	Dates
Ludmila Battista	20-231-100-101-02-648	SBS	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$2,542.00)	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$3,116.00)	9/8/20-6/30/21
Paul Cutaneo	20-231-100-101-02-648	BCMS	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$2,542.00)	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$2,829.00)	9/8/20-6/30/21
Michele Jordan	20-231-100-101-02-648	BCMS	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$2,542.00)	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$2,911.00)	9/8/20-6/30/21
Robert Katz	20-231-100-101-02-648	SBS	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$2,542.00)	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$3,116.00)	9/8/20-6/30/21
Sonia Pereira	20-231-100-101-02-648	BCMS	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$2,542.00)	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$3,054.50)	9/8/20-6/30/21
Emma Ryan	20-231-100-101-02-648	SBS	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$1,435.00)	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$2,009.00)	1/21/21-6/30/21
Abbie Sutherlin	20-231-100-101-02-648	SBS	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$5,002.00)	\$41.00 per hour (not to exceed \$5,576.00)	9/8/20-6/30/21

H. Approval of Personnel						
Name	Account Number	Position	Step	Salary	Dates	Discussion
Tara Prunty (subject to delivery of documents)	11-213-100-106-01-057-060	Instructional Aide	I	\$13,501.04 (prorated)	4/16/21- 6/30/21	Replacing Laurie Acosta

I. Approval of Maternity Leave				
Employee #	Account Number	Type of Leave	Dates	Discussion
5742	11-000-218-104-01-141-020	Paid Maternity/Disability Leave of Absence NJ Family Leave Act/FMLA	9/8/21-10/22/21 10/25/21-1/31/22	Estimated date of return will be 2/1/22

J. Approval of Transfer			
Name	From	To	Dates
Meredith Molinaro	Full-Time Guidance Counselor 11-000-218-104-01-141-090	Part-Time Guidance Counselor 11-000-218-104-01-141-090	9/1/21-6/30/22

K. Approval of Substitute Pay Increase for Remainder of the 2020-2021 School Year				
Position	From	To	Discussion	
Substitute Teacher	\$95.00 per day	\$150.00 per day	Temporary rate of pay for substitutes in the district for the remainder of the 20-21 school year due to an increase in classroom coverage needs.	
Substitute Instructional Aide	\$83.33 per day	\$100.00 per day		
Substitute Bus Driver	\$18.87 per hour	\$22.00 per hour	Increase in Substitute Bus Driver pay	

L. Approval of Substitute Pay Increase for 2021-2022 School Year			
Position	From	To	
Substitute Teacher	\$95.00 per day	\$110.00 per day	
Substitute Instructional Aide	\$83.33 per day	\$90.00 per day	
Substitute Bus Driver	\$18.87 per hour	\$22.00 per hour	

M. Approval of Revision of Home Instruction						
SID #	Teacher	Account	Hourly Rate	From	To	Dates
5078384624	Emma Ryan	11-150-100-101-03-066-060	\$45 per hour	Not to exceed 30 hours	Not to exceed 33 hours	2/22/21-4/13/21

N. Approval of Stipend				
Name	Account #	Position	Stipend	Discussion
Emma Priester	11-000-270-160-01-459	Assistant Dispatcher	\$4,000	Transportation supervisor transition

XII. BUSINESS

Motion by Mr. Horowitz, seconded by Mrs. Fabriczi that Items XII.A. through XII.L. be moved upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

On call of the vote, Items XII.A. through XII.L. were approved by Roll Call.

Mr. Carpentier said the Business Committee met on April 8, 2021 and discussed the following:

- On-going capital projects;
- Window balances project at Whiton Elementary School has started;
- Transportation Supervisor position;
- Sewer pump issue at the transportation garage;
- Substitute bus drivers; and
- Raising substitute pay rates.

Ms. Gensel spoke about the substitute pay rates, and said the District wanted to stay competitive.

A. Bill List

It is recommended that the Board approve the List of Bills for the period March 19, 2021 through March 31, 2021, totaling \$392,652.00, and for the period March 19, 2021 through April 15, 2021, totaling \$1,858,394.46, and ratify the Payroll for the period March 16, 2021 through March 26, 2021, totaling \$937,415.98, and for the period April 1, 2021 through April 15, 2021, totaling \$931,405.05.

B. Secretary's Report

The Report of the Secretary for March 2021 has been submitted for Board review. As required by N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(c)(3) I, Kelly Morris, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, certify that no line item account has been over expended and that sufficient funds are available to meet the District's financial obligations this fiscal year.

It is recommended that the Secretary's Report for March 2021 be accepted and filed, and the Board of Education hereby certifies that no major account has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(c)(4) and that sufficient funds are available to meet the District's financial obligations for the remainder of the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

C. Treasurer's Report

It is recommended that the Treasurer's Report for the month of March 2021 be accepted and filed.

D. Line Item Transfers

It is recommended that the Board accept the list of Line Item Transfers for the month of March 2021.

E. Monthly Transfer Report

It is recommended that the Board approve the March 2021 Monthly Transfer Report.

F. Approval of Agreement Covering Continuing Disclosure Agent Services

It is recommended that the Board approve an Agreement between Phoenix Advisors, LLC and the Branchburg Township Board of Education to continue to act as Continuing Disclosure Agent and Independent Registered Municipal Advisor for fiscal year 2021-2022 at a fee of \$1,000 to be paid from account #11-000-230-339-01-001, and sufficient funds are available in the 2021-2022 budget.

G. Approval of Emergency Project for Window Balance Replacement at Whiton Elementary School

Whereas, the CDC has recommended that classroom windows remain open to the greatest extent possible for improved air quality due to the COVID-19 pandemic; and

Whereas, the District returned students to in-person instruction for full days beginning April 6, 2021; and

Whereas, over 75% of the classroom windows at Whiton Elementary School cannot safely be opened because the internal window balances are not functional; and

Whereas, the District has determined that the inability to comply with CDC recommendations that classroom windows remain opened will cause a negative effect on the health and safety of staff and students; and

Whereas, three competitive quotes were solicited by the District with the lowest quote being above the public bid threshold; and

Whereas, there are no available State Contracts or Cooperative Purchasing Contracts available for replacement of window balances; and

Whereas, N.J.A.C. 18A:18A-7 allows that, "Any contract may be negotiated or awarded for a board of education without public advertising for bids and bidding therefor, notwithstanding that the contract price will exceed the bid threshold when an emergency affecting the health or safety of occupants of school property requires the immediate delivery of goods or the performance of services;" and

Whereas, Rebecca Gensel, Superintendent, sent a memo to the County Superintendent of Schools on March 22, 2021 to serve as notification from the District that we have deemed this capital project as an "Emergency Project" that must be completed now due to the COVID-19 Pandemic; therefore

Be it resolved, that the Branchburg Township School District Board of Education hereby declares this project as an Emergency Capital Project in accordance with N.J.A.C. 18A:18A-7; and

Further be it resolved, that the Board authorizes the School Business Administrator to proceed with replacement of window balances at Whiton Elementary School using the lowest quote presented effective immediately.

H. Award of Emergency Project for Window Balance Replacement at Whiton Elementary School

It is recommended that the Board award RIS Construction Corporation, as contractor to replace 350 window balances at Whiton Elementary School, in accordance with CDC recommendations, for a cost of \$51,345, to be paid by purchase order through Account #12-000-400-450-08-612, and sufficient funds are available in the 2020-2021 budget.

I. Approval of Purchase of One New Savin Copier

It is recommended that the Board approve the purchase of one new Savin IM7000 copier from Atlantic, Tomorrow's Office, at a total cost of \$11,886, as per New Jersey State Contract #A40467, to be paid by purchase order, through account #12-000-240-730-08-609 for Whiton Elementary School, and sufficient funds are available in the 2020-2021 budget.

J. Approval of Purchase of Two Konica Minolta Bizhub Copiers

It is recommended that the Board approve the purchase of two Konica Minolta Bizhub Pro 1100 copier from Atlantic, Tomorrow's Office at a cost of \$21,054.97 each, as per New Jersey State Contract #A40464, to be paid by purchase order, through account #12-000-240-730-08-609 for Whiton Elementary School, and through account #12-000-240-730-05-609 for Stony Brook School, for a total cost of \$42,109.94, and sufficient funds are available in the 2020-2021 budget.

K. Approval of Agreement for Attorney to Provide Legal Services

It is recommended that the Board approve an Agreement with Rita Barone, Esq. of the firm Purcell, Mulcahy & Flanagan, LLC, to provide legal services to the District for a special education matter, at an hourly rate of \$160, for expenses related to the matter, to be paid from account #11-000-230-331-01-276, and sufficient funds are available in the 2020-2021 budget.

L. Resolution Urging Relief from Increased Costs to School Districts Resulting from the Implementation of "Chapter 44," the 2020 School Employee Health Benefits Reform Law

WHEREAS, P.L.2020, c.44 ("Chapter 44") requires the School Employees' Health Benefits Program (SEHBP) to offer plans, beginning on January 1, 2021, for medical and prescription benefits coverage including the New Jersey Educators Health Plan (NJEHP); as adopted and implemented by the School Employees' Health Benefits Commission; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 44 established reduced premium contributions for any employee who selects, or is placed into, the NJEHP as his or her health care coverage option; and

WHEREAS, The SEHBP applies to the following employers who elect to participate in the SEHBP: local school district, regional school district, county vocational school district, county special services school district, jointure commission, educational services commission, state-operated school district, charter school; and

WHEREAS, The provisions of Chapter 44 also apply to these same employers even if they do not elect to participate in the SEHBP; and

WHEREAS, Many school districts had previously negotiated health benefit agreements with lower net costs compared to the plan design and cost-sharing requirements under “Chapter 44,” and/or have staff that previously declined coverage but now are choosing to enroll in the NJEHP due to its low employee cost-sharing provisions; and

WHEREAS, A significant number of school districts will experience a net increase in their health care costs because the NJEHP premiums are higher than the premiums for the collectively bargained plans previously offered by the district, which is further exacerbated by reduced employee contributions under Chapter 44; and

WHEREAS, Other school districts will experience a net increase in their overall health care costs even if the NJEHP premiums are lower than that of the previous plan offerings because the reduction in employee contributions will offset any overall premium savings, resulting in increased net costs to the district; and

WHEREAS, The low employee contribution requirements under NJEHP encourage employees who had previously waived or declined coverage to enroll thereby increasing the districts’ health benefit costs for the balance of fiscal year 2021, continuing into fiscal year 2022 and likely beyond; and

WHEREAS, These costs may exceed districts’ ability to address within their budgets owing to the limitations of the 2% property tax levy cap; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 44 was a well-intentioned proposal that aimed to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in savings for school districts, school employees and taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, While some school districts may indeed be realizing savings due to the provisions of Chapter 44, many are experiencing the opposite effect and witnessing an increase in their health care costs, which may result in cuts to critical programs, services and staff in order to balance their budgets; and

WHEREAS, Since Chapter 44 essentially froze the level of health benefits and employee contributions for the seven-year period following the law’s effective date, districts are unable to control cost increases through the traditional collective bargaining process; and

WHEREAS, It is incumbent upon the Legislature and Governor to address and correct the unintended financial consequences districts are experiencing due to Chapter 44 and ensure that all districts share in the anticipated savings.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Branchburg Township School District Board of Education requests that the State Legislature and Governor provide relief from the increased health care costs experienced by school districts due to the implementation of Chapter 44; and be it further

RESOLVED, that relief from Chapter 44 should include direct, short-term assistance from the state to ensure that all school districts are held financially harmless in both the current and subsequent fiscal years; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Legislature and Governor should expeditiously begin to explore long-term structural reforms that reverse the unintended consequences of Chapter 44 and generate lasting savings for school districts, employees and taxpayers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that any proposals to amend or revise Chapter 44 include input from all affected stakeholders before moving forward, including feedback from representatives of local boards of education, school business administrators, superintendents, building-level supervisors and school employees; 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 16th 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 Association of School Business Officials and the New Jersey School Boards Association.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENT

Heather Maturin, 20 Henry Road, thanked the Board for making the schools the best that they can be. She also expressed her concerns about the students wearing masks for almost 6 hours a day, and shared part of a study she prepared regarding the potential risks the children may be exposed to because of wearing masks all day.

Tara Murphy, 333 Lukes Pond Road, thanked the Board for giving the Special Education Parents Advisory Group (SEPAG) a liaison, Noah Horowitz, and they are looking forward to working with him.

Randi Lee Childers, Branchburg Township Education Association President, thanked the Board for the rollout of the Employees Assistance Program. She also suggested that low class numbers be a priority for the upcoming school year. She said she looks forward to the open line of communication continuing, and being able to contribute to planning decisions for the 2021/2022 school year.

XIV. BOARD LIAISON REPORTS

Mr. Horowitz gave the following PTO updates:

- The PTO has been doing monthly pick-me-ups for the teachers and staff to brighten their day;
- Craft activities for classroom parties;
- They had a successful year with the Gertrude Hawks fundraiser;
- They will be introducing a new fundraiser "Mascot Mania";
- The annual PTO bookfair will be held May 3 – May 7, 2021; and
- They are recruiting PTO Board members for the 2021/2022 school year.

Mr. Carpentier spoke about the following New Jersey School Boards Association events:

- There will be a "Public Speaking Community Engagement in Social Media" virtual class on June 3, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; and
- Registration is now open for the first virtual Spring Symposium.

Mr. Horowitz said he is honored to be the liaison for SEPAG.

XV. BOARD FORUM

Mr. Sarles shared his concerns about students wearing their masks all day.

Mr. Horowitz said it is encouraging to see the lack of drop off in a decent amount of grades in the district's testing.

Mrs. Purohit thanked Mrs. Anderson for her data presentation.

Mrs. Fabriczi said she is grateful to the teachers and families for hanging in there with all the schedule changes.

Mr. Maider said he is glad to see Stony Brook School and Whiton Elementary School back to five days a week, and hopefully Branchburg Central Middle School will also be back to five days a week soon.

Ms. Gensel spoke about the following:

- The need for substitute teachers;
- She acknowledged teachers and parents for their hard work; and
- She spoke about the passing of our Crossing Guard, Mr. Sahli, and sent her condolences to his family.

Ms. Curcio said the next Board of Education meeting is scheduled for May 6, 2021.

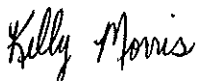
XVI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no second Executive Session.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mrs. Fabriczi, seconded by Mr. Maider, and carried unanimously, the Board agreed to adjourn at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kelly Morris
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary