

*Branchburg Township School District*  
**REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**  
February 16, 2023

**Executive Session – 6:30 p.m.**  
**Public Meeting – 7:30 p.m.**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

On a motion by Mrs. Shah, seconded by Mrs. Joyce, and carried unanimously, the Board agreed to convene to public session at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Board President, Vincent Carpentier, 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, Puja Desai, David Dugan, Kristen Fabriczi, Theresa Joyce, Robert Maider, Carmela Noto, Bindu Shah and Charles Tuma.

The following member was absent: None.

Also present were: Superintendent of Schools Dr. Karen Chase and Interim Board Secretary Debe Besold.

**II.** The Secretary called the roll.

**III. CALL TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

On a motion by Mr. Maider, seconded by Mr. Tuma, and carried unanimously, the Board agreed to convene to Executive Session at 7:00 p.m. to discuss Personnel, Student Matters, Contracts and Legal Issues.

On a motion by Mrs. Shah, seconded by Mr. Tuma, and carried unanimously, the Board agreed to adjourn Executive Session at 7:32 p.m.

On a motion by Mrs. Shah, seconded by Mr. Tuma, and carried unanimously, the Board agreed to reconvene to public session at 7:33 p.m.

**IV.** The assembly saluted the flag.

**V.** Statement of Adequate Notice

**VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Chase introduced Branchburg Central Middle School Student Council Leader, Wendy Michels, who spoke about the fundraising activities they do for the district and community. Ms. Michels introduced her Officers who each shared a bit of what they do.

Dr. Chase thanked the Student Council for attending the meeting. She also thanked them for everything they do as leaders in the school community to promote the characteristics of leadership and community service, and supporting their peers as they navigate the middle school environment.

Dr. Chase acknowledged the following student artists:

- Kyra Jhawar (Teacher: Chris Boehm)
- Olivia Asimoglou (Teacher: Samantha Rueger)
- Aubrey Flynn (Teacher: Meghan Russo)

Dr. Chase also recognized the following retirees:

- Deborah Jacobsen
- Alice Willard

## VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

## VIII. GOVERNANCE

Motion by Mr. Tuma, seconded by Mrs. Shah that Items VIII.A. and VIII.B. be moved upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

On call of the vote, Items VIII.A. and VIII.B. were unanimously approved by Roll Call, with Mrs. Noto abstaining on both items.

Mr. Carpentier said the March 2, 2023 Board of Education meeting is now cancelled.

### A. Approval of Minutes

It is recommended that the Board approve the Minutes of the Executive Session and Regular Meeting of February 2, 2023.

B. Approval of Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Report			
Building	Incident #	Date	Discussion
SBS	SSDS# 030163	1/17/23	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.
BCMS	SSDS# 028105	1/11/23	BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts the recommendation of the Superintendent that this incident did meet the criteria of H.I.B. as defined in N.J. 18A:37-14.

## IX. POLICY

Motion by Mrs. Desai, seconded by Mr. Maider that Items VIII.A. and VIII.B. be moved upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

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

Mr. Dugan said the Policy Committee met, and discussed the policies listed on the agenda, and recommends the Board adopt these policies.

<b>A. Policy and Regulations First Reading</b>		
<b>Policy/Regulation</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
P 0161	Call, Adjournment, and Cancellation	Revised
P 0162	Notice of Board Meetings	Revised
P 2423	Bilingual and ESL Education (M)	Revised
R 2423	Bilingual and ESL Education (M)	Revised
P 2425	Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Program (M)	Revised
R 2425	Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Program (M)	New
P 5200	Attendance (M)	Revised
R 5200	Attendance (M)	Revised
P 8140	Student Enrollments (M)	Revised
R 8140	Enrollment Accounting (M)	Revised
P 8330	Student Records (M)	Revised
R 8330	Student Records (M)	Revised

<b>B. Policy and Regulations to be Abolished</b>		
<b>Policy/Regulation</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
P 1648.11	The Road Forward COVID-19 – Health and Safety (M)	Abolished
P 1648.13	School Employee Vaccination Requirements (M)	Abolished

## **X. EDUCATION**

Motion by Mrs. Noto, seconded by Mr. Maider 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.

Mr. Maider said the Education Committee met last week, and discussed the following:

- The staff well-being camp that is being held on February 17, 2023; and
- Reviewed the standardized testing schedule for the year.

### **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
Making Best Use of DESMOS to Strengthen your Math Instruction Virtual	Kathleen Gaston 20-270-200-500-02-649	3/6/23	\$279.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$279.00
Making Best Use of DESMOS to Strengthen your Math Instruction Virtual	Katie Kline 20-270-200-500-02-649	3/6/23	\$279.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$279.00
Support New Units of Study in Reading K-2 Virtual	Kelly Boyle 20-270-200-500-02-649	2/15/23 2/16/23 3/29/23 3/30/23	\$280.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$280.00
Keys to Literacy Conference Virtual	Kelly Boyle 20-270-200-500-02-649	5/12/23	\$49.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$49.00
Motivating Children to Love Literature Piscataway, NJ	Kristen Cardona N/A	2/23/23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
NJ School Buildings & Grounds Association Conference Atlantic City, NJ	Samad Mobley 11-000-261-580-10-428	3/20/23- 3/22/23	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$189.00	\$189.00
NJ Agriculture in the Classroom Bridgewater, NJ	Brad Moore N/A	3/20/23	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Music Centers Masterclass Virtual	Jennifer Palermo 20-270-200-500-02-649	2/25/23	\$147.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$147.00
You Too Can Do ABA New Providence, NJ	Shannon Reilly 20-270-200-500-02-649	2/22/23 2/28/23 3/8/23	\$345.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$345.00
Helping Your Struggling Readers Virtual	Amanda Roper 20-270-200-500-02-649	3/6/23	\$279.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$279.00
Middle School Students: Understanding & Managing Mental Health Kenilworth, NJ	Margaret Ryan 20-270-200-500-02-649	3/29/23	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$24.44	\$24.44
What's New in School Law Virtual	Enea Yard 11-000-230-580-01-303	5/17/23	\$40.00	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$40.00

<b>B. Approval of Fundraisers/Service Projects</b>				
School	Group	Event Coordinator	Dates	Purpose
BCMS	Band Program & Odyssey of the Mind Club	Suzanne Updegrave	3/4/23	To fundraise by selling food and refreshments at the Odyssey of the Mind Regional Competition being held at BCMS. This will help to offset the costs of the Music in the Parks trip.
BCMS	Drama Club	Cassandra Devita	2/17/23-3/10/23	Fundraiser for the Drama Club to sell space in the playbill to family and friends of students involved in the play. Funds raised will offset Drama Club costs.

<b>C. Approval Well-Being Camp Outside Presenter</b>				
Vendor	Account Number	Cost	Dates	Discussion
Helga Nashed Yoga	11-000-223-320-02-225-999	\$65 (not to exceed)	2/17/23	Chair Yoga & Brain Health Yoga for Stress and Anxiety Release

<b>D. Approval of Field Trip</b>			
Trip	Coordinator	Grade	Purpose
Somerville High School Somerville, NJ	Cassandra DeVita	6-8 Choir	To collaborate with Somerville Middle School and Somerville High School to create a cohesive choral department between the three schools.

<b>E. Approval of 2022-2023 One to One Instructional Assistants</b>					
Vendor	Account	Student ID #	Cost	Dates	Discussion
Somerville Board of Education	11-000-100-562-03-105-000	9172033606	\$46,873.00	9/6/22-6/30/23	One to One Instructional Assistant for Somerville High School Student
Somerville Board of Education	11-000-100-562-03-105-000	3248981936	\$13,140.39	9/6/22-1/13/23	One to One Instructional Assistant for Somerville High School Student
Somerville Board of Education	11-000-100-562-03-105-000	9676224959	\$37,523.00	9/6/22-6/30/23	One to One Instructional Assistant for Somerville High School Student

## **XI. HUMAN RESOURCES**

Motion by Mr. Tuma, seconded by Mr. Maider that Items XI.A. through XI.G., be moved upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

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

Mr. Tuma said the Human Resources Committee met, and discussed the following;

- Future items for Board approval;
- Changes being made in the district were positively received; and
- Item G on the agenda regarding a step correction.

A. Approval of Well-Being Camp In-House Presenters					
Name	Account Number	Position	Rate	Date	Discussion
Suzanne Updegrove	11-000-223-320-02-225	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	2/17/23	Anomia
Suzanne Updegrove	11-000-223-320-02-225	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	2/17/23	Hello, Cupcake!
Suzanne Updegrove	11-000-223-320-02-225	Teacher	\$41 per hour (not to exceed 2 hours)	2/17/23	Ideas for Interior Design

B. Approval of Non-Athletic Stipend			
Name	Account	Position	Stipend
Kelly Evans	11-401-100-101-01-078-020	Encore Team Leader	\$2,259 (prorated)

C. Approval of Resignation				
Name	Account Number	Position	Location	Effective Date
David Caruso	11-213-100-101-01-057-020	MLR - Special Education Teacher	BCMS	2/8/23

D. Approval of Retirements				
Name	Account Number	Position	Location	Effective Date
Debra Jacobsen	11-000-240-105-01-336-020	School Secretary	BCMS	6/30/23
Alice Willard	11-230-100-101-01-072-090	Gifted & Talented Teacher	WES	6/30/23

E. Approval of Personnel						
Name	Account Number	Position	Step/Level	Salary/Rate	Dates	Discussion
Valentina Aiello-Martinez (subject to delivery of documents)	11-120-100-101-01-012-090	2nd Grade Teacher	11/BA	\$65,945* (prorated)	4/17/23-6/30/23	Replacing Christy Bitner
Noelle Decowski (subject to delivery of documents)	11-120-100-101-01-012-060	MLR - 4th Grade Teacher (no tenure accrual)	1/BA	\$59,449* (prorated)	2/24/23-10/10/23	MLR for Employee #5597
Linda Madison (subject to delivery of documents)	11-000-221-102-01-207-999	Educational Consultant (no tenure accrual)	NA	\$90 per hour (not to exceed \$4,500 total)	2/17/23-6/30/23	To assist with staff observations

E. Approval of Personnel (continued)						
Name	Account Number	Position	Step/Level	Salary/Rate	Dates	Discussion
Katrina Wong (subject to delivery of documents)	11-120-100-101-01-012-060	LR - 5th Grade Teacher (no tenure accrual)	1/150	\$61,599* (prorated)	2/21/23- 3/17/23	LR for Employee #4873

\*Salary is subject to change pending the 2022-2025 BTEA agreement

F. Approval of Leave			
Employee #	Account Number	Type of Leave	Discussion
5676	11-000-219-104-01-159-999 11-000-221-102-01-207-999	Paid Maternity/Disability Leave of Absence: 5/15/23 PM Only - 5/19/23 PM Paid Maternity/Disability Leave of Absence: 5/22/23-7/5/23 Personal Days: 7/6/23-7/7/23 Accumulation Vacation/Vacation: 7/10/23-8/4/23 NJ Family Leave Act/FMLA: 8/7/23-10/6/23 Intermittent FMLA: 10/9/23-6/6/24	Estimated date of return is 10/9/23

G. Approval of Step Correction						
Name	Account Number	Position	From	To	Effective Date	Discussion
Kenneth Forsyth	11-130-100-101-01-021-020	Social Studies Teacher	Step 23	Step 24	2/17/23	Correction of step from error in the 2009-2010 school year

## XII. BUSINESS

Motion by Mrs. Shah, seconded by Mr. Maider that Items XII.A. through XII.J. be moved upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

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

There was no Business Committee meeting report.

Mr. Carpentier said the next Business Committee meeting is scheduled for February 23, 2023.

### A. Bill List

It is recommended that the Board approve the List of Bills for the period February 3, 2023, through February 16, 2023, totaling \$492,067.52, and ratify the Payroll for the period February 1, 2023 through February 15, 2023, totaling \$972,038.64.

### B. Secretary's Report

The Report of the Secretary for January 2023 has been submitted for Board review. As required by N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(c)(3) I, Beverly Vlietstra, Interim 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 January 2023 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 2022-2023 fiscal year.

**C. Treasurer’s Report**

It is recommended that the Treasurer’s Report be accepted and filed for the month of January 2023.

**D. Line Item Transfers**

It is recommended that the Board accept the list of Line Item Transfers for the month of January 2023.

**E. Monthly Transfer Report**

It is recommended that the Board approve the Monthly Transfer Report for the month of January 2023.

**F. Approval of Amendment of Fiscal Year 2023 ESEA Grant Funds**

The Branchburg Township Board of Education hereby resolves to approve the submission of the proposed program plan amendment and carryover funds, and budget for the FY 2023 ESEA Title IIA application as follows, and to accept funds when it has been reviewed and approved.

Allocation Source	Original FY23	Carry-Over Amount	Final 2023 Allocation
Title II-A	\$28,638	\$2,773	\$31,411

**G. Approval of Submission of Application for Special Education Medicaid Initiative Waiver**

It is recommended that the Board approve the submission of an application for a waiver to not participate in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative to the County Executive Superintendent of Schools.

**H. Approval to Enter into Agreements with the Somerset County Educational Services Commission to Administer the Nonpublic Programs**

It is recommended that the Board enter into an agreement with the Somerset County Educational Services Commission to administer the following Nonpublic Programs for the 2023-2024 school year.

- Chapters 192/193 Program
- Nonpublic Technology Initiative Program
- Nonpublic Textbook Program
- Nonpublic Security Aid
- Nonpublic School Nursing Services



**I. Approval of Resolution/Agreement for Participation in Coordinated Transportation Services**

It is recommended that the Board approve a Resolution/Agreement for Participation in Coordinated Transportation Services with Somerset County Educational Services Commission for the 2023-2024 school year.

**J. Approval to Pay Bills**

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:19-4.1, the Board of Education approves Beverly Vlietstra, Interim School Business Administrator, to issue payment of bills for February 16, 2023 through March 16, 2023 prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of March 16, 2023, and with the approval and consent of the Superintendent of Schools, and then present said bills to the Board at the March 16, 2023 meeting for ratification.

**XIII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Gretchen Keller, Pine Ridge Drive, read a letter to the Board with concerns of an incident involving her son at Branchburg Central Middle School.

Randi Lee Childers, Branchburg Township Education Association President, spoke about the following:

- Thanked the Board for addressing the step correction listed on the agenda; and
- Thanked Alice Willard and Deborah Jacobsen for their dedication to the school district, and wished them well on their retirement.

**XIV. BOARD LIAISON REPORTS**

Mrs. Fabriczi said the Somerville Board of Education met on February 14<sup>th</sup>, and discussed the following:

- Discipline issues;
- Audit presentation by Nisivoccia;
- Music Department is hosting a movie night;
- This year's play will be "Newsies", and will be held in March;
- Key Club bake sale;
- Project Graduation needs volunteers;
- Scholarship opportunities are up on the website; and
- The Interim Superintendent was approved.

Mrs. Shah said the PTO is thankful to all who purchased items for the Gertrude Hawks and Harlem Wizard's fundraisers. She said the Gertrude Hawks fundraiser is still going on until February 27, 2023; and tickets for the Harlem Wizards fundraiser are still on sale.

Dr. Chase said the Emergency Management Committee met, and discussed the threat assessment teams Governor Murphy has required all school districts to establish for the 2023/2024 school year.

Mrs. Joyce said the SEPAG Committee met, and discussed the following:

- Improving communication;
- They are trying to improve membership, and open it up to more people to try to help the non-special education community understand what the SEPAG organization is for;
- They talked about doing a monthly newsletter; and
- There is going to be a SEPAG table at kindergarten registration next year.

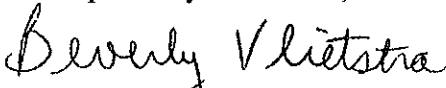
**XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no second Executive Session.

**XVI. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mrs. Shah, seconded by Mr. Maider, and carried unanimously, the Board agreed to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beverly Vlietstra  
Interim Board Secretary