

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
BOROUGH OF TOTOWA**

MEETING MINUTES

07/15/2020

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of Totowa was held at Washington Park School Media Center, 10 Crews Street, Totowa, New Jersey and in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:48-8(b), and guidance from the NJ Department of Community Affairs Division of Local Government Services via Zoom on July 15, 2020.

1. Call To Order

President Guarneri called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M. and led all present in the salute to the flag and remain standing for a moment of silence for our past and present troops.

2. Roll Call

Members Present: Ms. Alesandrelli, Mr. Bierach, Ms. Carr, Ms. DeCeglie, Mr. Guarneri,
Mr. Kerwin, Mr. Reynoso and Mr. Tangora

Members Absent: Ms. Antonucci

Also Present: Patricia Capitelli, Superintendent of Schools
Vincent Varcadipane, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Mr. Raymond B. Reddin, Board Attorney

3. Open Public Meeting Notice

The following statement was read by Mr. Varcadipane:

The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this act, the Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted in the Municipal Building and notice was mailed to the North Jersey Herald News and The Record.

4. Public to be Heard

Mr. Varcadipane stated that he will read all of the public questions and a response will be given after all questions are read.

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Ms. Shannon Taylor asked:

I would like to know if there's any plan in place to have a meeting with parents to discuss the changes and plans for the upcoming school year in regards to the coronavirus?

Ms. Katherine Ulloa asked:

Below are the concerns or questions that we have as residents of Totowa and having a son that will go to Washington Park School on 8th grade, prior the meeting of today.

- If a teacher tests positive for COVID-19 are they required to quarantine for 2-3 weeks? Is their sick leave covered, paid?
- If that teacher has 5 classes a day with 30 students each, do all 150 of those students need to then stay home and quarantine for 14 days?
- Do all 150 of those students now have to get tested? Who pays for those tests? Are they happening at school? How are the parents being notified? Does everyone in each of those kids' families need to get tested? Who pays for that?
- What if someone who lives in the same house as a teacher tests positive? Does that teacher now need to take 14 days off of work to quarantine? Is that time off covered? Paid?
- Where is the district going to find a substitute teacher who will work in a classroom full of exposed, possibly infected students for substitute pay?
- Substitutes teach in multiple schools. What if they are diagnosed with COVID-19? Do all the kids in each school now have to quarantine and get tested? Who is going to pay for that?
- What if a student in your kid's class tests positive? What if your kid tests positive? Does every other student and teacher they have been around quarantine? Do we all get notified who is infected and when? Or because of HIPAA regulations are parents and teachers just going to get mysterious "may have been in contact" emails all year long?
- What is this stress going to do to our teachers? How does it affect their health and well-being? How does it affect their ability to teach? How does it affect the quality of education they are able to provide? What is it going to do to our kids? What are the long-term effects of consistently being stressed out?
- How will it affect students and faculty when the first teacher in their school dies from this? The first parent of a student who brought it home? The first kid?

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- How many more people are going to die, that otherwise would not have if we had stayed home longer?
30% of the teachers in the US are over 50. About 16% of the total deaths in the US are people between the ages of 45-65.

What probably we would like to happen is either 2 things:

- Remote School during the 1st marking period
- Or have the 2 options of Presential School and Remote School

Thanks

Ms. Michelle Rogin stated:

I hope all is well. I just wanted to voice my opinion on reopening schools Since it has been shown that not only do very few kids get sick, they rarely, if ever, transmit it to others. Further, even asymptomatic people rarely transmit the virus

The kids have suffered enough and should be allowed back in school, full time, no social distancing and no masks.

For parents who work, a PT option would never be possible.

Homeschooling has always been an option. So for parents who want to do that, that's fine. For those of us who want them to go back, let the kids back full time.

Thank you!

Ms. Kristin Rivera asked:

I have a few questions about the upcoming school year. I have one child in Memorial School going into first grande and one child in Washington Park School going into sixth grade. Will parents definitely be able to choose to remain with completely remote online instruction from the school when school starts in September? Also, if this option is chosen does it have to be chosen for the whole year or will it be contingent on the parent choosing to send the child back to school when they choose to do so? I absolutely do not feel comfortable sending my children back to in person learning while so much is unknown and with the current restrictions that will be placed on them right now but if things change I would like the option to change my mind. Thank you for your time and have a wonderful day!

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Ms. Antoinette Medina stated:

Hello my name is Antoinette Medina and I am a concerned parent..I understand we need to protect our children but I also think we need to understand they need school. I have 8 yr old twins in your school and they both have an IEP, my kids need the programs offered to them. My daughter has a learning disability and she still cannot read or write. They fell way behind during the lockdown to where I had to hire a tutor for them for the summer. I cannot teach them the right way, I am not a teacher..I believe the schools should be open..they want to come back to school!..

During the lockdown I was able to do the best that I could,but now I am back to work full time and I have to work so how am I supposed to be home to virtual teach them and work at the same time?.. There is no way I can leave my job! We need to work so,what is the answer?..If the schools can reopen I am all for it..Thank you for listening..

Ms. Erin Yannarelli asked:

I know that this was all new to everyone but why couldn't the school continue with classes just like all the other districts did? You sign into the class via zoom or google and the teacher teaches the children? or at least explains the daily assignment? I think posting 2 weeks worth of work and thinking that kids are able to teach themselves is acceptable, doesn't sit well with me. I also have a child with an IEP and I don't think that was followed one bit. Where was the help/assistance? Why didn't any of the teachers reach out? I find that unacceptable. I don't want to put my children in harms way if going back to school is not the safe thing to do but the way Totowa is virtually teaching my children it is doing more harm for their future!!

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Ms. Kristin Karam asked:

1. What is the proposed plan for returning to school in September for K and 3rd grade? I ask because as a teacher, I can't make a decision to return to work until I know the plan Totowa has decided on for my children. Little Falls and PV and many other districts have proposed plans and the governor has said

"Districts should strive to share preliminary scheduling plans with staff, families, and students at least four weeks before the start of the school year in order to allow families to plan child care and work arrangements."

2. If virtual learning will be part of the plan, will my children be zooming daily to get instructed lessons in core content areas? There were 5 zoom meets from March - June where my son could see his teacher and some friends, but no actual teaching took place.

3. If zooming is in place, how is a kindergartner expected to learn virtually daily? Or what is the plan for how kindergarten will learn in September?

Ms. Lynn Lions asked:

1. Does our school district have a date in mind by which the reopening plan will be put in place and shared with the community?

2. Should our district decide to reopen and resume physical learning, will the absence policy be modified?

3. Is the first day of school remaining as September 8?

4. Is 3rd grade orientation remaining as 9/3? And if so, will it be a physical orientation?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Ms. Carla Grant asked:

1.) I would like to know why we don't allow residents to virtually speak at the board of education meetings. Other districts allow their residents to speak by providing them with a code or login. This also allows residents to speak for their allotted 3 minutes if they so choose.

2.) I would like to know if and how teachers and parents will be trained to use Microsoft Teams effectively? We were fortunate enough to have two wonderful teachers and two wonderful Occupational Therapists who did an amazing job providing instruction and therapy sessions during the pandemic. In speaking with other parents from the district, we have come to realize that this was not the norm. While we are thankful for our situation, I am concerned that in the fall if we have to do virtual learning, teachers and parents will not be prepared because the district has not prepared them to teach in a virtual setting. Has the district provided professional development to teachers on synchronous and asynchronous learning? Has the district considered services such as screencastify which provides teachers with a way to record lessons and post them in microsoft teams?

3.) Little Falls has already notified parents of their instructional plan for the fall. When will we be notified as to the method of instruction? In person? Virtual? Hybrid?

Ms. Lisa Moreno asked:

Hope all is well. Will the schools have an air filtration system put in place since there's no air conditioning? Can budget money be used to give classrooms or install air systems to help kill bacteria? I feel this would help a lot with all kinds of germs and allergies.

Thank you,

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Ms. Capitelli stated the following:

The Totowa School District has created a professional development schedule that will address the needs of the teachers and will focus on utilizing a hybrid model of instruction which combines face-to-face and online teaching in one cohesive experience. Twenty five teachers are participating in our summer workshops which will run for eight full days. These teacher will also have monthly visits from our consultants and work with them throughout the year. Additionally, PLC's will be formed for all teachers ensuring the hybrid model is utilized throughout all classrooms.

We have posted on our website under Quick Links the NJDOE issued The Road Back which provides us with a set of standards to assist in the process of reopening schools. We encourage parents to become familiar with this document. Governor Murphy has instructed that all school buildings will open in some capacity for in-person instruction and operations in the fall. The reopening of our school will include all necessary adjustments to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff. Committee meetings are scheduled for next week and the district is working hard to create a plan that best fits the needs of our district. Upon completion of our plan, all parents will be notified.

5. Psychiatric Evaluations

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Director of Special Education, recommends the Board approve evaluations for the 2020 - 2021 school year with the Mental Health Clinic of Passaic at the rate of \$700 per evaluation.

6. Policy Adoption 1649 - Federal Families First Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Act

The Superintendent presents to the Board the first read of the new mandated Policy 1649 - Federal Families First Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Act.

7. Policy Revision 2270 - Religion in the Schools

The Superintendent presents to the Board the first read of the revised Policy 2270 - Religion in the Schools.

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8. Policy Revision 2622 - Student Assessment

The Superintendent presents to the Board the first read of the revised mandated Policy 2622 - Student Assessment.

9. Policy & Regulation Revision 5111 - Eligibility of Resident/NonResident Students

The Superintendent presents to the Board the first read of the revised mandated Policy & Regulation 5111 - Eligibility of Resident/NonResident Students.

10. Policy & Regulation Revision 5200 - Attendance

The Superintendent presents to the Board the first read of the revised mandated Policy & Regulation 5200 - Attendance.

11. Policy & Regulation Revision 5320 - Immunization

The Superintendent presents to the Board the first read of the revised Policy & Regulation 5320 - Immunization.

12. Policy & Regulation Revision 5330.04 - Administering An Opioid Antidote

The Superintendent presents to the Board the first read of the revised mandated Policy & Regulation 5330.04 - Administering an Opioid Antidote.

13. Policy Revision 5610 - Suspension

The Superintendent presents to the Board the first read of the revised mandated Regulation 5610 - Suspension Procedures

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The Superintendent presents to the Board the first read of the revised mandated Regulation 5610 - Suspension Procedures

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15. Policy Revision 5620 - Expulsion

The Superintendent presents to the Board the first read of the revised mandated Regulation 5620 - Expulsion.

16. Regulation Revision 8320 - Personnel Records

The Superintendent presents to the Board the first read of the revised mandated Regulation 8320 - Personnel Records.

17. Merit Goals Review and Approval

The Board approves a merit payment to Ms. Patricia Capitelli, Superintendent, for the achievement of the 2019-2020 Quantitative Merit Goals (Increasing Student Mathematics Proficiency, 3.33% - \$5,561.10, Increasing Student Reading Levels, 3.33% - \$5,561.10, Integration of Technology, 3.33% - \$5,561.10) and Qualitative Merit Goals (Implementing STEAM, 2.5% - \$4,175, Building Transition Program, 2.5% - \$4,175) pending New Jersey Department of Education approval, as per the attached.

Motion for approval of items 5-17

MOTION: Ms. DeCeglie

SECONDED: Mr. Reynoso

VOTE: Unanimous

18. Informational

Summer Academy

Summer Projects Update

Dates for Your Information

August 19 Board of Education Meeting - WPS 7:00 P.M.

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19. Committee Reports

Mr. Guarneri said committee meetings were not held.

20. Executive Session

A request for executive session was made to discuss personnel matters and other business excluded from the Open Public Meeting by Law. The Board entered executive session at 7:23 p.m.

Mr. Reddin said, in Executive Session the Board will be discussing personnel and legal matters. The discussion will last approximately thirty (30) minutes and no action will be taken.

Motion for approval of item 20

MOTION: Mr. Reynoso
SECONDED: Ms. Alesandrelli
VOTE: Unanimous

The Board returned from executive session at 8:20 P.M.

21. Additional Hours - Part-time Speech/Language Therapist

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve additional hours for Julie Levy, Part-time Speech Therapist for the Totowa School District. Ms. Levy will work twenty-nine and one-half (29.5) hours per week beginning September 2, 2020, through November 20, 2020, at the rate of \$80 per hour, to partially cover Speech/Language Therapist maternity leave.

22. Approval - Maternity Leave Replacement

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board appoint Mr. Joseph Segura, as a Maternity Leave Replacement for grade 2 beginning on Wednesday, September 2, 2020, through approximately Friday, February 19, 2021, at the rate of \$17.75 per hour with no benefits.

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23. Resignation - Kelly Hennion

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board accept the resignation of Kelly Hennion, grade 4 teacher, for the Totowa School District effective Thursday, July 16, 2020.

24. Posting - Elementary Education Teacher

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve posting the position of Elementary Education Teacher for the 2020-2021 School Year.

25. Approval - Accumulated Sick Leave at Retirement - Zambrano

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve the accumulated sick leave at retirement for Cheryl Zambrano, teacher for the Totowa School District as per the following calculation:

Cheryl Zambrano: 160.5 Sick + 44.5 Personal = 205 Total Days @ \$100.00/per day
contracted = \$20,500.00. Payment as per contracted maximum = \$15,000.00

26. Approval - Accumulated Sick Leave at Retirement - DiBlasio

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve the accumulated sick leave at retirement for Giuliano DiBlasio, custodian for the Totowa School District as per the following calculation:

Giuliano DiBlasio: 91.5 Sick + 13.5 Personal = 105 Total Days @ \$150.00/per day
contracted = \$15,750.00. Payment as per contracted maximum = \$15,000.00

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27. Approval - Accumulated Sick Leave at Retirement - Cornetta

The Superintendent, in consultation with the Administrative Team, recommends the Board approve the accumulated sick leave at retirement for Angelo Cornetta custodian for the Totowa School District as per the following calculation:

Angelo Cornetta: 88.5 Sick + 41.5 Personal = 130 Total Days @ \$150.00/per day
contracted = \$19,500.00. Payment as per contracted maximum = \$15,000.00

Motion for approval of items 21-27

MOTION: Ms. DeCeglie

SECONDED: Mr. Tangora

VOTE: Unanimous

28. Approval of Minutes- June 25, 2020 – Regular Meeting

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the minutes of the meeting of June 25, 2020 as presented.

Motion for approval of items 28

MOTION: Mr. Reynoso

SECONDED: Mr. Kerwin

VOTE: Unanimous

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29. Approval of Minutes- June 25, 2020 – Executive Session

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the minutes of the Executive Session during the meeting of June 25, 2020 as presented.

Motion for approval of items 29

MOTION: Ms. DeCeglie

SECONDED: Mr. Tangora

VOTE: Unanimous

30. Approval of Bills List – June Supplemental

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the June Supplemental Bills List as presented.

31. Approval of Bills List – July

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the July Bills List as presented.

32. Acceptance of Financial Status Report – June

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary recommends the Board accept the Financial Status Report for the month of June 2020, as presented.

33. Monthly Financial Certification of the Board Secretary and the Board of Education – June

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, recommends the Board certify that the major accounts and fund balances in the 2019-2020 budget have not been over expended and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the year.

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34. Acceptance of Bank Reconciliations – June

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the Bank Reconciliations for the month of June 2020, as presented.

35. Acceptance of Board Secretary Report – June

The Superintendent in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the Board Secretary Report for the month of June 2020, as presented.

36. Acceptance of Treasurer of School Monies Report – June

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the Treasurer Report for the month of June 2020, as presented.

37. Acceptance of Financial Summary Report – June

The Superintendent in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the Financial Summary Report for the month of June 2020, as presented.

38. Approval of Line Item Budget Transfers – June

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board approve the following line item budget transfer for the month of June 2020, as presented. (See Attachment #1 Monthly Transfer Report)

39. Acceptance of Revenue Report – June

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board accept the Revenue Report for the month of June 2020, as presented.

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40. Approval of Payment of Cafeteria Invoices

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, recommends the Board approve payment of the following cafeteria invoices.

<u>Vendor</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Check #</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Pomptonian	Invoice 912052920	Credit Used	\$ 1,573.33
Passaic Valley HS	June Lunches	1393	\$ 787.50
Ms. Debbie Sanes	Lunch Balance Refund	1394	\$ 4.25
Payschools	Invoice 237493 (Correct Check Number) Listed 1382 should be 1392		

41. Approval of Additional Appropriations (Covid-19)

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends the Board approve the following additional appropriations do to the Covid-19 pandemic.

1. Microsoft PO 20-1526 \$92,163.00 PCs

42. Approval of 2020-2021 Substitute Teacher Registry Agreement

The Superintendent, in consultation with the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, recommends that the Board approve the 2020-2021 Substitute Teacher Registry Agreement in the amount of \$10,522.50.

Motion for approval of items 30-42

MOTION: Mr. Kerwin
SECONDED: Mr. Reynoso
VOTE: Unanimous

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43. Old Business

There was no old business.

44. New Business

There was no new business.

45. Hearing and Petition of Citizens

Mr. Varcadipane stated that he will read all of the public questions and a response will be given after all questions are read.

Ms. Stephanie Wolfersberger asked:

What are the plans for Totowa preschool? Can you speak on that?

Ms. Maya Buono asked:

You did not address a majority of the specific questions that were asked. Can we please hear from other members of the board at this time? We cannot wait until the end of July to get more information.

Ms. Carla Grant asked:

When will we get answers to the questions that were asked this evening?

Ms. Lynn Lions asked:

Will our specific questions be discussed during the executive session and addressed once the open public meeting is resumed?

Otherwise, can the BOE members please provide the name of the person in the district that I should email to get this information?

Thanks again!

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Ms. Carla Grant asked:

How do you expect all the children to complete their summer assignments which are all online when you collected all of their computers?

Ms. Capitelli responded in regards to the summer assignment question stating that anyone that needed accommodations for the summer assignments should contact the main offices and they will be provided.

Mr. Guarneri thanked everyone for asking their questions and stating their concerns. Mr. Guarneri stated that we are taking everyone concerns into consideration. Mr. Guarneri stated that a plan will be in place by early August and we will have answers to your questions then. As Ms. Capitelli stated committee meetings will be held next week to help in the planning process. Mr. Guarneri asked everyone to please bare with us while we put the plan together.

46. Other Matters of a Timely Nature

There were no other matters of a timely nature.

47. Adjournment

Upon motion by Mr. Reynoso and seconded by Mr. Tangora this meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Vincent Varcadipane
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary