

**FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION
FORT LEE, NEW JERSEY**

MINUTES

**PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING
September 21, 2020
Zoom Meeting
7:30 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by, Board President, Mrs. Han Silver.

FLAG SALUTE

The Flag Salute was led by Mrs. Richter.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The Public Announcement was read by Mrs. Han Silver.

ROLL CALL

Present: Ms. Elisa Cho, Ms. Paula K. Colbath, Mr. Ralph DiMeglio, Mrs. Holly Morell (6:40 pm), Mrs. Kristen Richter, Mrs. Candace Romba, Mr. Michael Rubino, Mrs. Lauran Tuck, Mrs. Han Silver

Also Present: Mr. Kenneth Rota, Ms. Haquisha Q. Taylor, Dr. Sharon Amato, Dennis McKeever, Board Attorney, Mrs. Diane Baker, Mrs. Lauren Carruba

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mrs. Tuck, seconded by Mrs. Romba, at 6:34 p.m., to move into Executive Session.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

The Board reconvened into the Public Meeting at 7:35 p.m.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Mr. Rota shared that there was (1) HIB investigation.

Mr. Rota shared that the Fire and Security Drills were conducted, albeit differently than normal, and have been posted for the Board's review.

Mr. Rota shared that the grant from the New York Giants Play 60 Initiative in the amount of \$25,000 was received. Mr. Rota thanked the New York Giants, the NFL, and Mrs. Lauran Tuck for the financial support of fitness and well being at the Middle School

Mr. Rota introduced Mrs. Baker and Mrs. Carruba to present the Graduation Pathways Presentation which will be posted online for future viewing.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Colbath shared that the Bergen County School Board Association meeting is scheduled for September 29 with the following meeting scheduled for December 1, 2020.

Ms. Colbath shared that the NJSBA Legislative meeting met on September 12, 2020 discussing topics including the passage of the mini State Budget, the Superior Court upholding of the NJ COVID Emergency Bond Act which was challenged by the republicans as unconstitutional, the passage of the School Employee Health Benefit Reform Act forming a new plan that is intended to save school districts, employees, and tax payers money, and the level, quality, and delivery of special education services during the pandemic.

Ms. Colbath shared that the NJSBA Finance Committee met a few days afterwards with topics overlapping those of the NJSBA Legislative Committee including the budget.

PUBLIC WORK SESSION

Mrs. Han Silver shared the PreK- 4 targeted opening date is September 29 which is welcoming for the parents who selected the hybrid instruction.

Ms. Colbath inquired what the remaining steps need to be achieved, and target dates to open the Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School. Mr. Rota shared that administration is ironing out staffing and transportation issues. Ms. Colbath further inquired about any IT training and educational support administrators can provide to parents. Mr. Rota shared the various supports provided to parents. Mr. Rota further share that Mrs. Carruba and Mr. Cuzzo are focused on working with parents and students suffering emotional distress.

Mrs. Richter offered to share a link providing parents with additional support resources to aid in helping work with their children in technology and educational assistance.

Mrs. Tuck echoes the NJSBA Legislative Committee update presented by Ms. Colbath. Mrs. Tuck highlighted NJSBA Legislative Committee's recommendation for Boards to pass Item 11F on tonight's Board Agenda.

Mrs. Tuck asked Mr. Rota to discuss possible staffing solutions as our vacancies continue to shift. Mr. Rota responded that every avenue to hire additional staff is being explored including the possibility of restructuring existing staff.

Mrs. Han Silver thanked and acknowledged the instrumental role Mrs. Tuck played advocating for our district in obtaining the New York Giants donation.

HEARING OF CITIZENS - QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC ON ITEMS LISTED ON TONIGHT'S AGENDA AND ANY OTHER TOPIC OF CONCERN

Ms. Taylor shared with the Public that Mr. Rota and/or Mrs. Han Silver will address all the public comments after the public participants speak.

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, to open the floor to the public, 8:09 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Several members of the public shared questions and concerns such as; concerns of student emotional distress exacerbated by 100% remote learning; dissatisfied that the delay in school opening is due to staffing and bussing issues; touchless water fountains; concerned that students may not be taught by certified teachers; mandate teachers, staff and students to wear masks; importance of re-establishing in-person instruction; production of virtual tours of the classrooms; survey results to be released to the community; and most importantly gratitude to the extraordinary efforts of administration, principals, and teachers for a successful remote school reopening.

Mrs. Carubba shared that the teachers are trained to identify students' mental health issues which are unique to each student.

Mr. Rota responded to the questions and concerns of the public.

Ms. Taylor addressed transportation issues identifying that there are many moving parts involved being researched and addressed.

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, to close the floor to the public, 8:09 p.m.

MOTION carried upon voice vote, 9-0.

RESOLUTIONS

BOARD

1B **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves the following minutes:

Public Business Meeting Minutes	August 24, 2020
Private Executive Meeting Minutes	August 24, 2020
Public Business Meeting Minutes	September 8, 2020
Private Executive Meeting Minutes	September 8, 2020

2B **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves amending the Schedule of Meetings to be held during the month of October 2020 as follows:

<u>AMENDED BOARD MEETING DATES FOR OCTOBER 2020</u>			
	Month	Day	Location
CANCEL	October	12th	N/A
ADD	October	5th	Remote access as posted on the District Website prior to each meeting at www.flboe.com
ADD	October	19th	

3B THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the commencement of the in-person hybrid model [September 2020 Revised Reopening Plan] for general education students in grades PreK-4 and for self-contained special education students in grades PreK - 6 at all elementary schools and the Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School on Tuesday, September 29, 2020 and to amend to include the opening of Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School on or before October 5th for general and special education students in grades 5-6.

[As Amended –to include the opening of Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School on or before October 5th for general and special education students in grades 5-6]

4B THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves the submission of the attached Merit Goals for Business Administrator/Board Secretary Haquisha Q. Taylor for the 2020-2021 school year to the Executive County Superintendent for approval. [See Appendix Page 10](#)

MOTION by Mrs. Tuck, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1B through #4B (item #3B as amended).

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0.

CURRICULUM

1CUR THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following additional out-of-district placements for the 2020-2021 school year:

Student	Placement	Dates	Tuition/Costs
#9492934884	Windsor Bergen Academy 56 Passaic Street Ridgewood, NJ 07450	9/2/2020 - June 2021	Annual tuition of \$56,592.75 (183 days @r \$309.25 per diem). Occupational Therapy 2xs/week for 30 minutes and Counseling 1x/week for 30 minutes included in tuition cost.. Annual Transportation cost of \$11,700.00 (\$65.00 per diem).

2CUR THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves Patricia Vitale-Reilly Consulting to provide professional development support during the 2020-2021 school year, as outlined below. [See Appendix Page 12](#)

Professional Development Training	Total Not to Exceed	Account
To provide classroom teachers in grades K-4 with support for the teaching of reading and writing, using an in-person, hybrid, or fully remote model of instruction.	\$1,700.00	#11-000-221-320-30-000

3CUR THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the Non-Public School Consultation Programs and Services Plan for the 2020-2021 school year, as per the attached. [See Appendix Page 13](#)

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1CUR through #3CUR.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0.

FINANCE

1F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, has received and accepts the financial reports of the Secretary and Treasurer of School Monies for the month ending July 2020 and certifies that the reports indicate that no major account or fund is over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.13 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the school year. [See Appendix Page TBD](#)

2F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, confirms the line item transfers for the month of July 2020. In order to accomplish the aforesaid purpose, the Business Administrator was authorized to transfer the amount of money into and out of the line items set forth on the attached schedule. [See Appendix Page TBD](#)

3F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the payment of the claims on the current bills list in the amount of \$ \$789,139.88 for September 2020 checks. [See Appendix Page 37](#)

4F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the payment of the claims on the current Cafeteria bills list in the amount of \$14,022.01 for September 2020 checks. [See Appendix Page 57](#)

5F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves the Special Education Annual Tuition Rates for Eligible Non-Resident Students through June 30, 2021.

<u>SPECIAL EDUCATION TUITION RATES</u>			
LLD	M.D.	Autism	PreK FT
\$20,160	\$25,159	\$18,619	\$28,955

6F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, authorizes the Board President and School Business Administrator to execute Non-Resident Special Education Tuition Agreements between the Fort Lee Board of Education (receiving district) and Englewood Cliffs Board of Education (sending district) for non-resident special education students including any related-services costs for the 2020-2021 school year.

NON-TUITION SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENT AGREEMENTS		
STUDENT	PROGRAM	SCHOOL ATTENDING
JP	Autism	School No. 2
AK	PreK FT	School No. 2

7F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, authorizes the Board President and School Business Administrator to execute Non-Resident Tuition Student Agreements for non-resident students whose parent(s) are employed by the district for the 2020-2021 school year. Tuition rates to be determined by the Business Office and according to Board policy.

NON-TUITION STUDENT AGREEMENTS 2020-2021		
STUDENT ID	GRADE	SCHOOL ATTENDING
SID#32070591	Grade 1	School No. 2

8F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the rates on the attached Officials Fee Schedule for the 2020-2021 school year. This resolution supersedes Resolution No. 30401 dated September 8, 2020. [See Appendix Page 59](#)

9F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, authorizes the Business Administrator/Board Secretary to renew Joint Transportation Agreements with Cliffside Park for the 2020-2021 school year as follows:

Route #	Contract Amount
Cliffside Park 1 Summer	\$17,800.00
Cliffside Park 2	\$381,480.00
Total Contract Amount	\$399,280.00

10F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, officially accepts the following donation for the funding from the NY Giants Play 60 Initiative Grant Program (previously referenced on Resolution No. 29915 dated November 4, 2019):

Item	Amount/ Estimated Value	Donor	On Behalf Of
Check	\$25,000.00	The Giants Foundation 1925 Giants Drive East Rutherford, NJ 07073	To create a fitness/wellness room at Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School

11F

RESOLUTION
URGING CONTINUED STATE FUNDING OF THE
SCHOOL BASED YOUTH SERVICES PROGRAM

WHEREAS, the School Based Youth Services Program (SBYSP), administered by the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, provides students – in a school setting – with critically important supports, such as mental health counseling, employment counseling, substance abuse education and prevention, preventive health awareness, primary medical linkages, and learning support; and

WHEREAS, the SBYSP, in which nearly 100 New Jersey school districts participate, has a proven record of success and has achieved positive results for students and parents across the state; and

WHEREAS, the SBYSP is one of the state's most effective efforts to serve the mental health and social-emotional needs of students and their families; and

WHEREAS, during the current public health crisis, which has increased isolation and anxiety, these services should not only be maintained, but also strengthened and expanded; and

WHEREAS, in state Fiscal Year 2020, school-linked services were funded at almost \$15.3 million and were originally expected to receive in an increase in funding to nearly \$17 million when the Governor unveiled his original Fiscal Year 2021 budget proposal in February; and

WHEREAS, when the Governor issued his revised FY2021 budget plan on August 25, he proposed cutting the funding for school-linked services to less than \$5 million, and the SBYSP is expected to be completely eliminated at the end of September 2020; and

WHEREAS, the proposed cuts to the SBYSP have sparked an outcry from the educational community, and many local boards of education oppose this drastic departure from the Governor's original budget proposal and the change in the state's funding priorities; and

WHEREAS, while these financially difficult times will require difficult choices to be made to address the economic realities brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, cutting the critical services provided through the SBYSP is not an appropriate way to meet these budgetary challenges; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey School Boards Association has conducted extensive research into programming that promotes the health and wellness of students, and believes that the SBYSP plays a critical role in supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of students; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Lee Board of Education recognizes the importance of maintaining funding for the SBYSP so that student and parents may continue receiving the critical services provided through the program.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fort Lee Board of Education urges the State Legislature and the Governor to reverse the cuts to the School Based Youth Services Program contained in the Governor's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2021,

and to maintain and increase funding for the program beyond the next fiscal year; **and be it further**

RESOLVED, that this resolution be delivered to Governor Phil Murphy, Commissioner of the NJ Department of Children and Families Christine Norbut Beyer, State Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, and the New Jersey 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 School Boards Association.

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mr. DiMeglio, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1F through #11F.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0.

PERSONNEL

1P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the attendance of staff members at the staff trips/conferences listed on the attached summary. [See Appendix Page 60](#)

2P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts, with regret, the retirement of Kathy Stanzone, as a BSI Teacher at School No. 1, after dedicating 25 years of service to the district, effective February 1, 2021.

3P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the salary adjustment for Paraprofessionals (.83) hired at Step1/Degreed from an annual salary of \$21,975 to \$21,976 for the 2020-2021 school year.

4P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following leaves:

<u>LEAVES</u>										
Name	Position	L o c	Type	New or Amend	Paid Leave	Paid FFCRA Leave Full Salary up to \$511.00/day	Paid FFCRA Leave ½ Salary up to \$200.00/day	Unpaid Leave with benefits	Unpaid Leave No Benefits	Return Date
Ada Acosta Cheherian	Teacher Spanish	H S	Maternity	New	12/7/20 to 1/28/21	N/A	N/A	1/29/21 to 9/30/21	N/A	10/1/21

Lola Athans	Paraprofessional	S 2	FFCRA	New	N/A	9/29/20 to 12/31/20	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/1/21
Amanda Schroeder	Speech Language Specialist	S 2	Maternity	Amend	11/9/20 to 12/15/20	N/A	N/A	12/16/20 to 6/30/21	N/A	9/1/21
Laurie Butler	School Secretary	M S	FMLA	New	9/29/20 to 9/30/20	N/A	N/A	10/1/20 to 1/10/21	N/A	1/11/21
Stephanie Chevalier	Teacher Grade 1	S 1	Maternity	Amend	9/1/20 to 9/17/20	N/A	N/A	9/18/20 to 1/3/21	N/A	1/4/21
Rachel Ventrella	Teacher Grade 3	S 4	FFCRA	New	N/A	09/29/20 to 12/31/20	N/A	N/A	N/A	1/1/21
Karen Chereci	PT Paraprofessional	S 4	FFCRA - Childcare	Amend	N/A	N/A	9/29/20 to 12/31/20	N/A	N/A	1/1/21

5P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the payment of additional unused vacation days for Scott Bendul, Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds and Security, in Central Office, in the amount of \$2,504.79, based upon 5 days at a per diem rate of \$500.96 for the 2019-2020 school year.

6P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves a pensionable stipend of \$6,500, for each teaching staff member assigned to teach a sixth period at Lewis F. Cole Middle School for the 2020-2021 school year as outlined below:

<u>6th Period Stipends</u>	
Lewis F. Cole Middle School	
Name	Subject
Danielle Hanna	Special Education
Nina Anderson	Art

7P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following additional District translators for 2020-2021 school year, at the rate of \$30.00 per hour, on an as needed basis:

<u>DISTRICT TRANSLATORS 2020-2021</u>	
Name	Language
Doris Hobeika	Arabic

- 8P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following job description as per the attached. [See Appendix Page 61](#)

JOB DESCRIPTION
PT Courier Job Description (Revised)

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Tuck, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1P through #8P.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0.

POLICY

- 1POL **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the second reading and adoption of the following policy/regulation updates listed below: [Click here for 2020-09-21 #1POL Back-up](#)

Policy/Reg No.	Topic
P1648	Restart and Recovery Plan (M) (Revised)
P1648.03	Restart and Recovery Plan Full-Time Remote Instruction (M) (New)
P5350	Student Suicide Prevention (M) (Revised)
R5350	Student Suicide (M) (Revised)

MOTION by Ms. Colbath, seconded by Mrs. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves item #1POL.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Colbath thanked the School 3 PTA for being instrumental in the translation of the parent survey into multiple languages.

Mr. Rota shared that the lunch hours have been expanded as a result of the concerns voiced at the September 8, 2020 meeting.

Mr. Rota reminded Board members that tonight is Dr. Amato's last Board meeting. Mr. Rota expressed his sincere gratitude towards Dr. Amato for her extensive dedication to the teachers, staff and students of Fort Lee. Mr. Rota shared that Dr. Amato will be extremely missed and

wished her a very happy and healthy retirement.

Mrs. Han Silver thanked Dr. Amato for sharing her compassion and knowledge of education and for her dedication contributing to a strong District for the Fort Lee community.

Dr. Amato graciously responded that it has been an extremely rewarding career at the Fort Lee District.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Morell inquired if a COVID-19 meeting with teachers and parents can be conducted indoors and if not, outdoors. Mr. Rota shared the options of an outdoor meeting venue.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, to adjourn, 9:23 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Haquisha Q. Taylor

HAQUISHA Q. TAYLOR
SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY

HQT/toc 09/25/2020