

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

**MINUTES**

**PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING  
November 16, 2020  
Zoom Meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by, Board President, Mrs. Han Silver.

**FLAG SALUTE**

The Flag Salute was led by Ms. Cho.

**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, Mrs. Kristen Richter, Mrs. Candace Romba, Mr. Michael Rubino, Mrs. Lauran Tuck, Mrs. Esther Han Silver

**Also Present:** Mr. Kenneth Rota, Ms. Haquisha Q. Taylor, Mrs. Diane Collazo-Baker, Marty Mafague, Board Attorney, Ms. Jill Scarpa, Fort Lee Health Official (Executive meeting only).

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, at 6:35 p.m., to move into Executive Session.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

The Board reconvened into the Public Meeting at 7:32 p.m.

**REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Mr. Rota shared that there were two (2) HIB investigations. One (1) was founded.

Mr. Rota shared the Academy of Theatre Arts and International Thespian Society Troupe 3103 is presenting a virtual production of Arsenic and Old Lace. The premieres will take place on November 19, 20 and 21 all at 7:00 p.m.; tune into the link on the Fort Lee High School Website.

Mr. Rota shared there has been positive COVID-19 cases at the Fort Lee High School. Due to the recent cases, it was determined, out of an abundance of caution, it would be in the best interest to close the school for students and shift them to 100% remote learning for a period of 14- days immediately. Fort Lee High School will return to the in-person, hybrid model on Monday, November 30. Elementary schools will remain on the hybrid model and the Middle School and Intermediate School will return to the hybrid model on November 19<sup>th</sup> as scheduled.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Ms. Colbath shared there was a Policy Committee meeting to finalize the Attendance and Gifted and Talented policies that appeared on tonight's agenda. Ms. Colbath shared they will continue to look at the Gifted and Talented policy from an equity stand point. Ms. Cho summarized several points the committee will continue to review and develop.

### **PUBLIC WORK SESSION**

None.

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

MOTION by Ms. Colbath, seconded by Mr. Rubino, to open the floor to the public, 7:37 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

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

Caryn Gilbert, a teacher's aide in the Middle School, expressed her concern of constant switching back and forth of virtual and hybrid instruction can be very disruptive for the community households. Ms. Gilbert believes it would be most beneficial for the students and parents to remain 100% virtual at least until the first of the year in hopes of a more definitive date regarding the availability of the coronavirus vaccine, and the flu season comes to a close.

Tanya Byers-Kang thanked the District for working so hard to provide the hybrid model at the elementary schools. Mrs. Byers expressed her gratitude that the elementary schools remain open and strongly believes in-person instruction is an extreme benefit for the students providing it remains safe. She also thanked Mr. DiMeglio for his outstanding job working on the teachers' contract.

Margarita Viglodnor shared information regarding the COVID vaccine availability, and her belief the children will be the last to receive the vaccine. Ms. Viglodnor requested confirmation if a student tests positive for COVID that the other student's siblings would be required to quarantine. She also shared her belief that schools are not super spreaders because the teachers, custodians, students and parents work hard to abide by the CDC guidelines.

MOTION by Mrs. Richter, seconded by Mrs. Tuck, to close the floor to the public, 7:46 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Mr. Rota shared that the districts are pondering the idea of operating 100% remotely or remain with a hybrid platform. The information received by the Board of Education doesn't give us the opportunity to be proactive and close as a safety precaution unless the positive cases the Department of Health identifies classifies the region as high risk. If this occurs the District will have the option to switch to full remote. At this time, the District plans to continue in-person instruction placing a high priority on safety.

Mr. Rota confirmed that if a student contracts the virus and exposes other siblings, all children in the household are mandated to a 14-day quarantine. Mr. Rota expressed the importance of conducting the hybrid platform to provide as much in-person classroom experience but only do so providing the safety of the students and staff is maintained at an acceptably healthy level.

Ms. Taylor shared Ms. Cho asked to update the minutes to reflect how her name is noted.

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mr. DiMeglio, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves to amend the minutes to properly reflect Ms. Cho's name.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Morell, to re-open the floor to the public, 7:50 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Julene Stassou expressed concern of the lack of clubs and the children missing out on social participation. Ms. Stassou shared she would like to see more student social interaction for the students who are interested in club participation whether it be conducted virtually or in-person.

Caryn Gilbert responded to Ms. Stassou concerns regarding implementation of clubs. Ms. Gilbert shared the Middle School is starting virtual meetings next week to develop virtual clubs.

Cean Spahn shared she is quite ill with the coronavirus and her family as well, and is concerned she contracted the virus from interacting with the school staff and/or working with Chromebooks. Mrs. Spahn strongly encouraged Mr. Rota to be pro-active and to close the schools immediately. She believes if the District switches to 100% remote the students will continue to receive a high level of education as they have in the past. The Fort Lee Education Association went on record advocating the District to switch to full remote learning until after the New Year, and at that time, the District reassess the situation to determine if schools should reopen.

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mr. DiMeglio, to close the floor to the public, 7:58 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Mr. Rota shared that the past three meetings several co-curricular activities were presented by the building principals and approved and a few more are on tonight's agenda.

Mr. Rota shared he is disheartened to hear that Mrs. Spahn and her family is suffering from the coronavirus and wishes her and her family a very speedy and healthy recovery.

Mrs. Morell inquired how many school Districts there are in the county. Mr. Rota shared there are seventy-five (75) in the northeast region (Bergen County) and considerably more because Bergen, Essex, Hudson, and Passaic counties school districts are combined. Mr. Rota reported that nine (9) Districts of the seventy-five (75) are fully remote until January.

Ms. Colbath shared that the Ramsey School District developed a strategy to move to five (5) days in-person instruction.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

### **BOARD**

- 1B** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves the following minutes: **[As Amended]**

Public Business Meeting Minutes	November 2, 2020
Private Executive Meeting Minutes	November 2, 2020

- 2B** **WHEREAS**, the Fort Lee Board of Education has received the Superintendent's report of incident(s) of Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying ("HIB") within the District; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board has had the opportunity to review the Superintendent's recommendations with respect to the incident(s) of HIB.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board accepts the Superintendent's recommendations.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(d), the Superintendent of Schools shall inform the applicable parents/guardians of the students involved in these incidents with the following information within five school (5) days of this Board meeting:

1. The nature of the investigation;
2. Whether the District found evidence of HIB;
3. Whether discipline was imposed;
4. Whether services were provided to address the incident of HIB.

MOTION by Mrs. Tuck, seconded by Ms. Cho, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1B through #2B (item #1B as amended).

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

### **BUILDINGS & GROUNDS**

- 1B&G** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the submission of the **School Safety and Security Plan Annual Review Statement of Assurance (SOA)** to the New Jersey Department of Education.

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Ms. Cho, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves item #1B&G.

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 September 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 33](#)
- 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 September 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 66](#)
- 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 \$646,792.29 for November 2020 checks**. [See Appendix Page 9](#)
- 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 \$64,574.17 for November 2020 checks**. [See Appendix Page 20](#)
- 5F **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 **Athletics bills list in the amount of \$5,705.00 for November 2020 checks**. [See Appendix Page 22](#)
- 6F **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **2021-2022 Preliminary Budget Development Calendar** as per the attached. [See Appendix Page 28](#)

- 7F **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the following **donation**:

<b><u>DONATIONS</u></b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount/ Estimated Value</b>	<b>Donor</b>	<b>On Behalf Of</b>
Okioacam T USB Document Camera for Chromebook, PC and Mac	\$89.00	Ms. Victoria Kim 2190 Mackay Avenue Fort Lee, NJ 07024	School No. 1 Classroom Technology

- 8F **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, authorizes the Business Administrator/Board Secretary to utilize **joint transportation services with the Leonia Public Schools Board of Education for out-of-district transportation of students at a cost not to exceed \$43,500.00 for the 2020-2021 school year.** *See Appendix Page 30*

MOTION by Mrs. Richter, seconded by Mrs. Romba, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1F through #8F.

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 32*
- 2P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **appointments** for the 2020-2021 school year, pending verification of employment:

<b><u>APPOINTMENTS</u></b>						
<b>First Name</b>	<b>Last Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Loc</b>	<b>Position Control #</b>	<b>Annual Salary Prorated</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
Monique	Kim	Supervisor	CO	00-0300-02	\$100,000.00	11/30/20 Amended
Jennifer	Cella	Teacher Grade 3	S2	02-1007-14	\$57,575.00	11/30/20 Amended
Jasmine	Morel	Instructional Aide Grades 9-12 Resource (.83)	FLHS	07-9101-59	Step 1/ Degree \$21,976.00	11/23/20

**3P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **leaves**:

<b>LEAVES</b>										
Name	Position	Loc	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
Genna Kornweiser	Teacher BSI	IS	Maternity	Amend	12/1/20 to 1/19/21	N/A	N/A	1/20/21 to 5/1/21	N/A	5/3/21
Sarah Levy	LDTTC	S4 /IS /MS	Maternity	New	2/25/21 to 4/5/21	N/A	N/A	4/6/21 to 4/28/21	N/A	4/29/21
Rachel Ventrella	Teacher Grade 3	S4	FFCRA	Amend	N/A	9/29/20 to 11/15/20	N/A	N/A	N/A	11/16/20

**4P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of **leave replacements** during the 2020-2021 school year, as outlined below:

<b>LEAVE REPLACEMENTS</b>					
Name	Grade/ Subject	Loc	Salary	Effective Dates	Reason for opening
Yanill Beato	Teacher Grade 2	S3	Sub pay for the first 60 days \$150 per day, day 61+ at the daily rate equal to a BA, Step 1; No Benefits.	12/14/20 to 6/30/21	Cassandra Gonzalez (Maternity)
Pinhsuan Sung	Teacher Grade 3	S2	Sub pay for the first 60 days \$150 per day, day 61+ at the daily rate equal to a BA, Step 1; No Benefits.	11/30/21 to 6/30/21	Sally Macaluso (Maternity)

5P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following list of certificated staff members to provide **Title I tutoring** during the 2020-2021 school year at the rate of \$45.00 per hour for certificated teachers and \$30.00 per hour for paraprofessionals accompanying students to tutoring as per IEPs.

<b>TITLE I TUTORS 2020-2021</b>			
Location	Employees	Subject Areas	Aggregate Total Per Location For <u>All</u> Tutors Not to Exceed Budgeted Amount
School 2	Rachael DiBartolo Clara Min Kristine Rodriguez	All Subject Areas	\$ 5,000 #20-231-100-101-00-002
LFCIS	Maria Rivera Alexandra Motola Angela Moose Shannon McNaughton	English	\$25,000 #20-231-100-101-00-006
	Barrie Kulak	Math	
LFCMS	Michele Sabella Gene Fusco Danielle Hanna	English	
	Elisa Minissale (formerly Cabrera) Steven Choi Majorie O'Connell	Math	
FLHS	Brandon Barron Sophia Karabatsos Ashley Rice Jodi Etra	English	\$13,000 #20-231-100-101-00-007
	Chloe Bass Brittany Butler Angela Johnson Yvette Longobard	Math	

6P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the list of certificated staff members as **ESL Tutors** during the 2020-2021 school year to be paid a stipend of \$45.00 per hour, to be funded by the Title III grant, as outlined below:

<b>ESL TUTORS 2020-2021</b>	
Name	Title III Funding Not to Exceed
Elizabeth Inomata	\$13,000 #20-241-100-101-00-000
Denise Morales	
Lissette Vallejos	
Seara Moon	
Ada Acosta Chehirian	



7P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of **Winter Coaches for the 2020-2021 school year**, as follows. All appointments are subject to completion of all personnel documentation and fingerprinting process, prior to starting of said activities. Board seeks to conditionally appoint winter athletic coaches for the 2020-2021 school year. All appointments and payments of stipends are conditional upon the full operation of school and the corresponding athletic season. In the event of a modified schedule or season, such appointments shall be valid, but the corresponding stipend shall be prorated based upon the portion of the season/schedule completed. The Board will not pay the amount of the stipend associated with the above appointment in the event that the sport is not conducted or cancelled.

<b>WINTER COACHES 2020-2021</b>						
Coach	Sport	Position	Season	Class	Step	Stipend
William Straub	Girls Basketball	Head Coach	Winter	II	2	\$8,975
Brianna Mattessich	Girls Basketball	Assistant Coach	Winter	II	2	\$6,524
Kellie Lane	Girls Basketball	Assistant Coach	Winter	II	2	\$6,524
Adam Shrager	Boys Basketball	Head Coach	Winter	II	2	\$8,975
Sean Scully	Boys Basketball	Assistant Coach	Winter	II	2	\$6,524
Stephen Walsh*	Boys Basketball	Assistant Coach	Winter	II	1	\$5,955
Gerard Carroll*	Wrestling	Head Coach	Winter	II	2	\$8,975
Anthony Raccioppi*	Wrestling	Assistant Coach	Winter	II	2	\$6,524
Michael Raccioppi	Wrestling	Assistant Coach	Winter	II	2	\$6,524
Daniel Cirone	Winter Track	Head Coach	Winter	III	2	\$5,349
Charles Salame	Winter Track	Assistant Coach	Winter	III	2	\$4,785
Nicole Pacciani	Winter Track	Assistant Coach	Winter	III	1	\$4,573
Demba Mane	Winter Track	Assistant Coach	Winter	III	2	\$4,785
Neil Grant*	Bowling	Head Coach	Winter	III	2	\$5,349

\*Non-Staff Member

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of **Volunteer Athletic Coaches for the 2020-2021 Winter Season**, with no compensation, as follows:

<b>VOLUNTEER WINTER COACHES 2020-2021</b>	
Nicole Piccinich - Girls Basketball	Josuwha Ford - Girls Basketball

**8P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of **Co-Curricular Advisors for the 2020-2021 school year**. All appointments are subject to completion of all personnel documentation and fingerprinting process, prior to starting of said activities.

<b>CO-CURRICULAR 2020-2021</b>				
<b>Name</b>	<b>Co-Curricular Activity</b>	<b>Loc</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>20-21 Stipend</b>
Michelle Jackson-Saul	African American Club Co-Advisor (Amended)	HS	A	\$1,063.00
Melissa Rosen	African American Club Co-Advisor	HS	A	\$1,063.00
Calogero Pagano	Asian Club	HS	A	\$2,126.00
Douglas Walden	Camera Club	HS	A	\$2,126.00
Suzanne Elkhechen	Key Club	HS	A	\$2,126.00
Douglas Walden	Chess Club	HS	\$45.00 per hour not to exceed \$2,000	\$2,000.00

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, 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 **first reading of the following policy/regulation updates** listed below: [Click here for 2020-11-16 #1POL Back-up](#)

<b>Policy/Reg No.</b>	<b>Topic</b>
P2464	Gifted And Talented Students (M) (Revised)
P&R 5200	Attendance (M) (Revised)

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

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

**OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Colbath inquired if the administration has analyzed expanding instructional days for the in-person students and/or eliminating virtual Wednesdays. Ms. Colbath then asked if there is an update regarding the in-person and remote teaching status of students since the marking period ended November 12<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Rota reported that the numbers for the elementary schools have remained stable and after detailed evaluation the sections are too large to combine cohorts. The parents of the students attending the Middle School and High School recently received a reminder to inform administration if they will be changing their child’s instructional status. Mr. Rota shared reasons why the District will remain remote on Wednesdays. The administration evaluates the numbers on a weekly basis to determine if it is advisable to expand in-person

instruction and continues to have discussion with Ms. Scarpa regarding this topic. The parents of the elementary students will be reminded to inform the administration if there is a change in their child's instructional status at the beginning of December.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Rota shared the Governor signed a new Executive Order that states a maximum of ten (10) people are permitted at an indoor meeting. The Board meeting structure may need to be re-evaluated, and that there is no mandate for the Board to meet in-person based on a report from the Executive County Superintendent.

Ms. Colbath shared that School 3 PTA distributed to their school building staff chains to affix to their masks. The PTA provided chains to Ms. Colbath to share with the Board members.

Mr. Rota shared the girls soccer team is competing in the state sectional semi-finals which is a great accomplishment.

Mrs. Tuck thanked Mr. Rota for his constant communications with Ms. Scarpa and thanked Ms. Scarpa for attending the Executive meeting this evening to address the Board's questions.

Ms. Cho shared Ms. Scarpa reported the majority of the COVID-19 cases are work related.

Ms. Cho learned at the NJSBA Virtual Conference that if there are twenty (20) English Language Learners (ELL) that speak the same native language, a bilingual program can be established and implemented. Mrs. Baker shared she will obtain the breakdown of ELL data from the Supervisors and report back.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Morell, to adjourn, 8:15 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

*Haquisha Q. Taylor*

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**HAQUISHA Q. TAYLOR**  
SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY

HQT/toc 11/18/2020