

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

MINUTES

**PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING
April 12, 2021
Zoom Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by Board President, Ms. Colbath.

FLAG SALUTE

The Flag Salute was led by Mrs. Han Silver.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The Public Announcement was read by Ms. Colbath.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mrs. Byers-Kang, Ms. Elisa Cho, Mrs. Esther Han Silver, Mrs. Holly Morell, Mrs. Kristen Richter, Mrs. Candace Romba, Mr. Michael Rubino, Ms. Julene Stassou, Ms. Paula K. Colbath

Also Present: Mr. Kenneth Rota, Ms. Haquisha Q. Taylor, Mrs. Diane Collazo-Baker, Frances Febres, Board Attorney

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mr. Rubino, 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 7:37 p.m.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Mr. Rota shared that there were two (2) HIB investigations. One was founded and the investigation and results were discussed in the Executive Session.

Mr. Rota shared that schools are operating five (5) days a week with combined cohorts and all is going well, and the plan is to continue operating in this instructional method.

Mr. Rota shared the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) testing has officially been cancelled for the Spring and the State is looking at alternate assessments for testing in the Fall.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mrs. Morell shared that the Personnel & Interview Committee met Wednesday, April 7th, and discussed recommendations of an RFP for the Superintendent's replacement and investigating Superintendent interims. Ms. Colbath clarified the RFP would be for search firms, and further shared that Ms. Taylor provided the Board with a list of recommended interims.

Ms. Stassou shared that the Curriculum Committee met Wednesday, April 7th and the topics discussed included: presenting diversity topics in the curriculum; honor roll recognition; standardized testing in the Spring; curriculum and textbook links available on the district website; learning loss determination and remediation; high school courses added to the 2021-2022 curriculum; SAT preparation and testing; and lastly, high school finals.

Mrs. Byers-Kang shared that the Ad Hoc Pandemic Committee met Thursday, April 8th and the topics discussed included: percentage of in-person vs hybrid and the next goal is to have full day of instruction; teachers' vaccinations; prom/moving up; and lastly, there have been no in-school transmissions.

PUBLIC WORK SESSION

Mrs. Byers-Kang inquired if she needs to abstain on her name for item #3B. Ms. Colbath confirmed that she will need to abstain.

Ms. Cho inquired how the hiring process works when searching for a new or interim Superintendent. Mrs. Morell clarified that the Personnel Committee will conduct the legwork and share their findings and recommendation to the Board Members in order for the Board to make a collaborative decision. Board conversation ensued to include placing an RFP for search firms and/or the Board drafting an ad to solicit a new Superintendent and simultaneously pursuing a search for an interim Superintendent. Ms. Frebes, Board Attorney, expressed her opinion proceeding with both search options and the potential influential impact on the Board's decision making.

Mrs. Han Silver asked to not only discuss the 2020 – 2021 district calendar appearing on tonight's Agenda but to also engage in conversation regarding the 2021 – 2022 district calendar. Board conversation ensued.

MOTION by Mrs. Han Silver, seconded by Mrs. Richter, to add September 8th the second day of Rosh Hashanah with June 22, 2022 being the last day of school for the 2021 – 2022 district calendar.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Ms. Stassou strongly recommended to change the school start date on the 2021 – 2022 district calendar to commence on September 9, 2021 after the Labor Day weekend. Board conversation ensued to include the 2021 - 2022 school year end dates for students, teachers and staff, and the impact on graduation date.

MOTION reintroduced by Ms. Stassou, seconded by Mrs. Byers-Kang, to commence school September 9, 2021 and extend the last day of school to June 23, 2022 for students and the last day for teachers and staff June 24, 2022 on the 2021 – 2022 district calendar.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0, with exception Mrs. Morell and Mrs. Han

Silver abstained.

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

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mr. Rubino, to open the floor to the public, 8:20 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Ms. Antic expressed her concerns that grades 2nd through 6th will continue to be taught full time utilizing computers in the 2021 – 2022 school year.

Mr. Lipoff, Treasurer of Fort Lee Education Association (FLEA), congratulated Mr. Rota on his retirement and wished him the best of luck. He then inquired if the Conference registration fee appearing under item #3B on tonight's Agenda is a discounted cost since it is virtual. Mr. Lipoff shared that he believes the fee is expensive for a virtual meeting.

Mr. Sanford expressed his gratitude to the Board for all their hard work, and shared his strong appeal for the students to return to full time traditional in-person instruction in the 2021 – 2022 school year.

Ms. Colbath recognized Mr. Rota's retirement noted on #item 2P. Ms. Colbath shared that the Board will plan a special event at the end of the 2020 – 2021 school year to acknowledge all Mr. Rota's extraordinary contributions to the Fort Lee Board of Education and Community.

Mr. Rota and Ms. Taylor responded to the community members' comments.

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, to close the floor to the public, 8:31 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously 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 March 22, 2021
Private Executive Meeting Minutes March 22, 2021

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.

3B THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves the participation of **Board Members at the NSBA 2021 Conference for Public Education Leaders** as outlined below:

WORKSHOP	BOARD MEMBER	DATE	PLACE	AMOUNT PER PERSON
NSBA 2021 Conference	Tanya Byers-Kang Kristen Richter	Thursday 4/8/2021 thru Saturday 4/10/2021	Virtual	\$750.00 for 2 attendees

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

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0, with exception, Mrs. Byers-Kang and Mrs. Richter abstained on own names on item #3B.

CURRICULUM

1CUR THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves amending the **2020-2021 District Calendar**, as per the attached. *Attachment:* [DISTRICT CALENDAR 2020-2021](#)

2CUR THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following program for Summer 2021:

- **Summer 2021 Math Advancement Program** for students from Tuesday, July 6th, 2021 through Friday, August 6th, 2021 to be held virtually.

3CUR THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following program for Summer 2021:

- **Extended School Year (ESY) 2021 Program** for Special Education students from Tuesday, July 6, 2021 through Friday, July 30, 2021 at School No. 2 for elementary students and Lewis F. Cole Intermediate/Middle School for intermediate and secondary students, to be funded by the general education fund.

4CUR THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **NJDOE accredited public school academic program providers that offers courses for advancement and credit recovery**, to be delivered in either traditional or online format, for the 2021 Summer Session and the 2021-2022 school year at no cost to the district. Advancement and credit recovery will be granted only with written consent from the Guidance Department. Students are responsible for all fees associated with these programs.

Bergen Community College - High School Program
Dwight Englewood High School
Educere Online
PAMOJA Online
Leonia High School
Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission (MOECS)/NJ Virtual School
The Virtual High School
Ridgewood High School

5CUR **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, **approves amending the 2021-2022 District Calendar**, as per the attached. *Attachment: [DISTRICT CALENDAR 2021-2022](#)*
[Motion moved from the floor]

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Han Silver, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1CUR through #4CUR.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0, with exception. Mrs. Byers-Kang voted no on #1CUR only, and voted yes on the rest.

MOTION moved from the floor by Ms. Stassou, seconded by Mrs. Byers-Kang, [#5CUR] to approve the amended District Calendar for 2021-2022 to commence school September 9, 2021 and extend the last day of school to June 23, 2022 for students and the last day for teachers and staff June 24, 2022.

MOTION carried upon roll call vote, 7-0-2. Mrs. Han-Silver and Mrs. Morell abstained. Motion passed.

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 February 2021** 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. *Attachment: [BOARD SECRETARY REPORT - FEB 2021; TREASURER'S REPORT - FEB 2021](#)*
- 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 February 2021**. 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. *Attachment: [LINE ITEM TRANSFERS - FEB 2021](#)*
- 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 \$1,336,177.20 for April 2021 checks**. *Attachment: [BILLS LIST](#)*
- 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 Athletic bills list in the amount of \$3,968.00 for April 2021 checks**. *Attachment: [ATHLETIC BILLS](#)*
- 5F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the following **donations**:

<u>DONATIONS</u>			
Item	Amount/ Estimated Value	Donor	On Behalf Of
Check	\$100.00	AXA Equitable Cyber Grant Program	FLHS's Academy of Finance_(AOF) Scholarship Fund
School supplies, hand sanitizer, gift sets	\$800.00	Staples Fort Lee, NJ	Students

MOTION by Mrs. Romba, seconded by Mrs. Han Silver, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1F through #5F.

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. **Attachment: STAFF TRIPS**

2P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts, with regret, the **retirement** of Kenneth Rota, as Superintendent for Fort Lee Public Schools, after dedicating 6 years of service to the district, effective July 1, 2021.

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

<u>RESIGNATIONS</u>			
Employee	Position	Location	Effective Date
Marta Ortiz	School Secretary	LFC	5-1-2021
Silvia Alfaro	Bookkeeper	CO	5-20-2021

4P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, authorizes **creation of the position for Part-Time ESL Assistant** (Position Control #00-9500-01) - Account #11-190-100-106-00-000.

5P 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:

<u>APPOINTMENTS</u>						
First Name	Last Name	Position	Loc	Position Control #	Annual Salary Prorated	Effective Date
Irene	Gray	Assistant Business Administrator	CO	00-0122-01	\$105,000.00	4-6-21 Amended
Silvia	Alfaro	PT ESL Assistant	CO	00-9500-01	\$30.00/hour	5-20-21
Christine	Lee	Personal Aide Grade 7 1:1	LFCMS	06-9101-66	Step 1/ Degree \$21,976.00	4-16-21

6P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **leaves**:

LEAVES OF ABSENCES									
Name	Position	Loc	Type	New or Amend	Paid Leave	Paid FFCRA Leave Full Salary up to \$511.00/day	Unpaid Leave with benefits	Unpaid Leave No Benefits	Return Date
Amy Patterson	Grade 4 Teacher	S1	Maternity	New	9/1/21 to 10/6/21	N/A	10/7/21 to 1/2/22	N/A	1/3/22
Debra Colosimo	Paraprofessional	S2	Medical	Amend	3/12/21 to 4/19/21	N/A	N/A	N/A	4/20/21
Melanie Catalano	Graphic DesignTeacher	HS	Maternity/ Medical	Amend	3/18/21 to 5/2/21	N/A	N/A	N/A	5/3/21
Sarah Levy	LDTTC	S4 /IS /MS	Maternity	Amend	2/26/21 to 4/12/21	N/A	4/13/21 to 4/28/21	N/A	4/29/21

7P **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:

LEAVE REPLACEMENTS					
Nam	Grade/ Subject	Loc	Salary	Effective Dates	Reason for opening
Maria Faia	School Counselor	S4	Continuous Assignment	1/4/21 to 5/31/21 Amended	Andria Fusco (Medical)

8P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves up to 4 hours per week (amended) for the approved ESL teacher to work for the **Employee ESL program**, during the 2020-2021 school year February 23, 2021 through June 30, 2021, not to exceed \$4,590.00.

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1P and 3P through #8P.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0 for items #1P and 3P through #8P, with the exception of #2P with a vote of 6-3. Motion passed. Ms. Cho, Mrs. Byers-Kang and Ms. Colbath voted no on item #2P only. Board members expressed their approval on item #2P with regret.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Mrs. Richter shared that Seara Moon, a Fort Lee High School teacher, was nominated by The League of Women's Voters of Northern Valley to participate in Harvard University's Civic Education Project. Mrs. Richter congratulated Ms. Moon for being selected to participate in this nationwide program.

Ms. Cho shared that the Borough of Fort Lee has established/proclaimed Namyangju in Korea as our "sister" city. As an extension to this project, we are exploring the possibility of establishing a Sister School Program between the schools in both cities. Ms. Monique Kim, Supervisor, is taking the lead in this project and Ms. Cho should have additional information in the upcoming weeks. Mr. Rota shared that the Mayor signed a proclamation to make a commitment on an educational level.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Morell, to adjourn, 8:39 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 04/15/2021