

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

MINUTES

**PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING
November 21, 2022
Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School Cafetorium
and Zoom Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Board President, Ms. Colbath.

FLAG SALUTE

The Flag Salute was led by Ms. Stassou.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The Public Announcement was read by Ms. Colbath.

ROLL CALL

Present: Mrs. Kim Curry, Dr. Catherine Golfinopoulos, Mrs. Holly Morell, Mrs. Kristen Richter, Mrs. Candace Romba, Mr. Michael Rubino, Ms. Julene Stassou (left at 7:45 p.m.), Ms. Paula K. Colbath

Also Present: Mr. Robert L. Kravitz, Ms. Haquisha Q. Taylor, Mrs. Diane Collazo-Baker, Mr. Christopher Buggy, Board Attorney

Absent: Ms. Elisa Cho

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mr. Rubino, at 6:30 p.m., to move into Executive Session.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 8-0.

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

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Mr. Kravitz reported that he is diligently working, with the assistance of administrators, to share analyze assessment data with teachers and administrators to drive our academic success moving forward. Mr. Kravitz further shared that School #1 won an award from the Bergen County Utilities Agency with the BCUA Environmental Awareness Challenge grant of \$993.52. Mr. Kravitz introduced two high school representatives, Alexandra Conti and Kevin Rodriguez. Alexandra shared that the FLHS Model UN has an outstanding delegate. Kevin congratulated the FLHS orchestra.

Mr. Kravitz reminded everyone to give thanks for what is important with Thanksgiving coming up.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A Negotiations Committee meeting was held on Thursday, November 17, 2022 and went from 6:00 p.m. – 1:45 a.m. Paula Colbath further shared that we hope to conclude a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Fort Lee Administrators' Group (FLAG) at the next meeting.

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 Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Richter, to open the floor to the public, 7:35 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 7-0.

Public commented about the lack of ethnicity and diversity of the staff and Board members over the last 20 years and how the current representation does not reflect the current population; thanked Mrs. Romba for her years of service on the Board; expressed concern about an African American Speech Therapist at School No. 1; pleasure in seeing young parents attending Board meetings and encouraging diversity; expressed displeasure that School #4 was using lunch items that were expired and that School #1's pizza is often stuck together and not served hot. Community members also expressed concerns about the lack staffing at our schools, in particular, being without a Chemistry teacher for 8 weeks and expressed concerns about the recurring challenge in finding substitute teachers.

MOTION by Mrs. Curry, seconded by Ms. Romba, to close the floor to the public, 7:45 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 7-0.

RESOLUTIONS

BOARD

1B 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.

2B THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves the participation of Board Members for Workshops/Meetings as outlined below:

<u>WORKSHOP/ MEETING</u>	<u>BOARD MEMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>AMOUNT PER PERSON</u>
Garden State Coalition of Schools Meeting	Catherine Golfinopoulos Paula Colbath	Wednesday 11/16/22	Virtual	-0-
Delegate Assembly Hybrid Meeting	Paula Colbath	Saturday 11/19/2022	Conference Center at Mercer (9:00 am - 12:00 pm) or Virtual	-0-

MOTION by Mrs. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Romba, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves item #1B & 2B.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 7-0. Board members abstained on item #2B for their name only.

2CUR THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves **Bergen Promise** as a provider for a parent workshop, to provide a 1-hour virtual Nurtured Heart Approach training, at a cost not to exceed \$150.00, to be charged to Account #11-000-218-600-09-000.

3CUR THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves **OurPact, a Parental Control App**, as a provider for a parent workshop, at no cost to the district. OurPact will present on the importance of monitoring children's internet and social media use and provide information on the application and how to utilize it.

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

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 7-0.

FINANCE

1F 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 \$7,480,452.20 for November 2022 checks**. *Attachment: [2022-11-21 BILLS LIST](#)*

2F 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 \$135,376.61 for November 2022 checks**. *Attachment: [2022-11-21 CAFETERIA BILLS](#)*

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 Athletic bills list in the amount of \$587.00 for November 2022 checks**. *Attachment: [2022-11-21 ATHLETIC BILLS](#)*

4F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, authorizes the **submission of an amendment of the 2022-2023 IDEA (Individual with Disabilities Education Act) application to the New Jersey Department of Education appropriating carryover monies from the 2022-2023 school year as detailed below:**

IDEA Grant			
Grant Class	Original Application	Carryover	Amended 22-23 Application
Basic	\$935,301	\$3,557	\$938,858

5F THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, **accepts the 2022 Bergen County Utilities Authority (BCUA) Environmental Awareness Challenge Grant in the amount of \$993.52 awarded to the Environmental Club at School No. 1. This award will help to advance the BCUA’s mission to improve the environment of Bergen County through the education of Bergen County’s children.**

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

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 7-0.

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: [2022-11-21 STAFF TRIPS](#)*

2P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **resignations:**

RESIGNATIONS			
Employee	Position	Location	Effective Date
Gabrielle Sietsma	Teacher - Special Education	S2	January 14, 2023

3P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **appointments** for the 2022-2023 school year, pending verification of employment:

APPOINTMENTS						
First Name	Last Name	Position	Loc	Position Control #	Annual Salary Prorated	Effective Date
Mark	Bitar	Interim Asst. Principal	LFCMS	N/A	\$2,117.56	9/1/22 to 11/7/22
Michele	Carlor	Interim Asst. Principal	LFCMS	N/A	\$2,288.96	9/1/22 to 11/21/22
Erika	Bright	Paraprofessional	S3	03-9101-82	Step 1/Deg \$24,386.00 (.83)	11/28/22
Vjollca	Iberdemaj	Paraprofessional	S2	02-9101-99	Step 1/Deg \$24,386.00 (.83)	11/17/22 (Amended)
John	Vasquez	Bus Driver	District	00-9402-04	\$31,000.00	11/21/22 (Amended)

4P THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **re-appointment of the following staff member under the Fort Lee Education Association (FLEA) Collective Bargaining Agreements for the 2022-2023 school year.**

First Name	Last Name	Position	Loc	Position Control #	Annual Salary Prorated	Effective Date
Rosalia	Ariza	PT PK 1:1 Paraprofessional	S2	02-9101-124	Step 1/Deg \$24,386.00	9/1/22

5P **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	Unpaid Leave with benefits	Unpaid Leave No Benefits	Return Date
Tracey O'Connell	Confidential Secretary to Business Admin	BO	Medical	New	11/16/22 - 12/2/2022	N/A	N/A	12/5/22
Melanie Catalano	Graphic Arts Teacher	HS	Maternity	Amended	3/14/22 to 4/21/22	4/22/22 to 12/20/22	N/A	12/21/22
Gerald Conway	Security Officer	MS	Medical	New	1/18/23- 3/6/23	3/7/23 - 4/7/23	N/A	4/10/23
Josselyn Cordero	Paraprofessional	S2	Maternity	New	10/17/22 - 11/7/22	N/A	11/8/22 - 3/17/23	3/20/23
Rita Fermano	Grade 5 Teacher Math/Science	IS	Maternity	Amended	9/1/22 - 11/7/22	11/8/22 - 5/18/23	N/A	5/19/23
Anastasia Findanis	Grade 2 Teacher	S1	Maternity	Amended	5/27/20 to 6/30/20	9/1/20 to 2/28/21	3/1/21 to 4/2/23	4/3/23
Stefanie Holman	Grade 2 Teacher	S1	Medical/ Maternity	Amended	1/13/22 - 6/12/22	6/13/22 - 6/30/23	N/A	9/1/23
Elisa Karam	Grade 3 Teacher	S2	Maternity	New	1/12/23 - 2/27/23	2/28/23 - 11/26/23	N/A	11/27/23
AnnMarie LaRusso	Special Ed Teacher	S2	Maternity	New	1/30/23 - 3/30/23	N/A	3/31/23- 6/19/23	06/20/23
Nicole Piccinich	Special Ed Gr 3 Teacher	S2	Maternity	New	2/22/23 - 04/7/23-	4/10/23 - 6/30/23	N/A	9/1/23
Cortney Teitell	Teacher Grade 5 LAL/Social Studies	IS	Maternity	Amended	11/21/22 to 12/21/22	12/22/22 - 9/30/23	N/A	10/1/23
Soo Mee Yoo	Spec Ed Inclusion Teacher	FLHS	Maternity	Amended	5/23/22 - 6/30/22	9/1/22 - 12/16/22	N/A	12/19/22
Cheryl Zoll	Grade 1 Teacher	S2	Medical	Amended	10/17/22 - 12/23/22	N/A	N/A	1/3/23

6P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of **leave replacements** during the 2022-2023 school year, as outlined below:

LEAVE REPLACEMENTS					
Name	Grade/Subject	Loc	Salary	Effective Dates	Reason for opening
Deborah Famiglietti	Library Media Specialist	S1	\$58,875 Step 1 BA: No Benefits (Continuous assignment)	11/3/22 to 6/30/23 (amended)	Erica Cirone (Maternity)
Michelle Lee-Ein	Graphic Art Teacher	HS	\$58,875 Step 1 BA: No Benefits Continuous Assignment	9/1/22 - 12/20/22	Melanie Catalano (Maternity)

7P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of the following **Substitutes** for the 2022-2023 school year:

SUBSTITUTES
Lola Athans-Padin, Aide

8P **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the placement of the following **Internships, Student Teachers or Practicum Candidates** during the 2022-2023 school year:

INTERNSHIPS/STUDENT TEACHERS/PRACTICUM CANDIDATES							
Referring University	Student Name	Type of Placement	Subject Area	Duration	Months From-To	School Placed	Cooperating Staff Member
Seton Hall University	Anthony Medaglia	Internship 2	School Counseling	300 Hours	1/18/2023 – 5/16/2023	School No. 1	Marisa Buonomo

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

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 7-0.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Rubino read a statement for the record sharing his commitment to Fort Lee and the Board of Education. Mr. Rubino further shared that all Board members work towards one goal - to enhance our school. Mr. Rubino further shared that Board Members give up their time as volunteers and that he judges no one based on the color of his skin nor political beliefs. Mr. Rubino ended his statement by sharing that if anyone is interested in running for a Board seat, he would gladly sign the petition.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Rubino seconded by Mrs. Romba, to adjourn, 8:02 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 7-0.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Haquisha Q. Taylor

Haquisha Q. Taylor
SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY

HQT/lmz
11/23/2022