

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

**MINUTES**

**PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA  
Monday, March 6, 2023  
Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School Cafetorium  
and Zoom (virtual) Meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT**

The meeting was called to order AT 6:40 p.m. by Board President, Ms. Colbath

**FLAG SALUTE**

The Flag Salute was led by Dr. Golfinopoulos

**PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Open Public Meeting announcement was read by Board President, Ms. Colbath

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Ms. Elisa Cho (*arrived 7:00 p.m.*), Mrs. Kim Curry, Dr. Golfinopoulos, Mr. Kacy Knight, Mrs. Holly Morell, Mrs. Kristen Richter, Mr. Michael Rubino, Ms. Julene Stassou, Ms. Paula K. Colbath

**Also Present:** Mr. Robert L. Kravitz, Dr. Vincent Occhino, Mrs. Diane Collazo-Baker, Mr. Robert Devaney, Board Attorney

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION by Mrs. Morell seconded by Ms. Stassou at 6:45 p.m., to move into Executive Session.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

President Colbath asked for a MOTION to adjourn the Executive Session.

MOTION by Mrs. Stassou moved the resolution and it was seconded Mr. Rubino at 7:30 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

**HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT**

Ms. Colbath welcomed the High School Student Representatives. The Student Representatives shared a detailed report of student activities at the High School to include March testing; District Orchestra to perform at Carnegie Hall; and a report on a number of sports events.

**REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Mr. Kravitz began the discussion on the 2023-2024 school calendar by taking comments from the Board members to be used to modify the distributed calendar. Mr. Kravitz will collect the comments and report back for further discussion.

Mr. Kravitz shared that there were eight (8) HIB investigations. Three (3) were founded.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Athletic & Activities Committee: Mr. Rubino shared recent athletic updates.

Curriculum & Student Achievement Committee: Ms. Stassou shared the Committee reviewed policies on student achievement.

Finance Committee: Mrs. Curry reported that the Committee met prior to this evening's meeting to discuss the status of the 2023-2024 Budget.

Ms. Colbath informed the Board that she attended the NJSBA's Legislative Committee meeting this past Saturday. Among the topics presented were the important developments in the State Legislature. Senator Andrew Zwicker and Assemblywoman Sadaf F. Jaffer participated in the meeting.

**WALK-IN RESOLUTION**

Ms. Colbath read Walk-in item #5B pertaining to a HIB issue.

**PUBLIC WORK SESSION - QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS ON ITEMS LISTED ON TONIGHT'S AGENDA OR ANY OTHER TOPIC**

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 Mrs. Curry, seconded by Mr. Rubino to open the floor to the public, 8:00 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Public comments included if any progress was made on organizing a parent committee, she addressed at the February 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting; if the list of items of concern in a community member's report presented at the February 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting were being addressed; the parent of student #9296498709 thanked the Board for their consideration of her HIB appeal; and Bus Drivers who service the district students shared their message for the Board to consider their excellent service during salary negotiations.

Mr. Kravitz and Mrs. Collazo-Baker addressed all questions and concerns.

MOTION by Mr. Rubino seconded by Mrs. Stassou to close the floor to the public, 8:23 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

**RESOLUTIONS**

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

Public Business Meeting Minutes    February 22, 2023  
Private Executive Meeting Minutes    February 22, 2023

**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 for Workshops** as outlined below:

<u>WORKSHOP</u>	<u>BOARD MEMBER</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>AMOUNT PER PERSON</u>
NJSBA Spring Education Symposium	Paula Colbath Holly Morell	Tuesday, April 25, 2023	Virtual	\$99

**4B** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves the revised **2023 Board of Education Meeting Schedule**. The **March 20, 2023 meeting is rescheduled for Thursday, March 16, 2023**.

*Attachment:* [REVISED 2023 BOE MEETING SCHEDULE](#)

**5B** **Walk-in** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, hereby:

- **reverses the findings of HIB Investigation #241580\_LFC\_01262023, (Custom ID #MS-13) for the following student, with consequences.**

<b>Student ID #</b>
<b>#9296498709</b>

MOTION by Mrs. Richter, seconded by Mr. Rubino, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1B through #4B.

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0, with the exception Mrs. Morell and Ms. Colbath abstained on their own names on item #3B.

MOTION by Mrs. Curry, seconded by Mrs. Stassou, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves item #5B.

MOTION carried upon roll call vote, 5-3-1, with the exception Mrs. Richter, Mrs. Morell and Mrs. Curry dissented and Ms. Cho abstained.

**BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

**1B&G      THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following change order:**

<b>CHANGE ORDER SUMMARY SHEET</b>	<b>OWNER:</b>	<b>Fort Lee Board of Education</b>
<b>PROJECT NO.: 21061</b>	<b>ARCHITECT:</b>	<b>ENV</b>
<b>PROJECT: Fort Lee Board of Education VRF HVAC Elementary School #1</b>	<b>CONTRACTOR:</b>	<b>AMCO Enterprises</b>
	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>March 1, 2022</b>

CONTRACTOR	C.O. NO.	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	ALLOWANCE
AMCO Enterprises	CO-2	Electrical shut down to install new electrical gear. This change order is for the cost difference to perform this work on a Saturday. Weekday work couldn't be done as this would require a half day shut down and that would conflict and disrupt the school day.	\$2,886.26	-0-
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,886.26</b>	<b>-0-</b>

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

MOTION carried upon roll call vote, 8-0-1, with exception, Mrs. Morell abstained.

**CURRICULUM**

**1CUR** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves **class trips listed on the attached summary**. *Attachment: [CLASS TRIPS](#)*

**2CUR** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, **approves the following program for the 2023 Wellness Assembly Program at the Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School** to focus on providing strategies for students to maximize their skills during upcoming standardized testing.  
To provide 5.5 hours on-site, with 45 minute travel at \$200 per hour, for a total not to exceed \$1,275.00. Funded from Account 20-484-100-300-00-000.

**3CUR** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **out-of-district placements** for the 2022-2023 school year:

<b><u>OUT-OF-DISTRICT PLACEMENTS</u></b>			
<b>Student</b>	<b>Placement</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Tuition/Costs</b>
#8864958670	Windsor Bergen Academy	2/22/2023 - 6/30/2023	Annual tuition cost of \$69,097.20, prorated to \$24,654.40 (76 days @ \$324.40 per diem). Transportation cost prorated to \$4,696.80 (76 days @ \$61.80 per diem).

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

MOTION carried upon roll call vote, 8-0-1, with exception Mrs. Morell abstained on items #1CUR through #3CUR.

**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 January 2023** 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 - JANUARY 2023](#); [TREASURER'S REPORT-JANUARY 2023](#)*

**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 January 2023**. 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- JANUARY 2023](#)

**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 \$428,297.74 for March 2023 checks**. *Attachment:* [2023-03-06 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 **Cafeteria bills list in the amount of \$130,440.64 for March 2023 checks**. *Attachment:* [2023-03-06 CAFETERIA BILLS](#)

**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 Athletic bills list in the amount of \$1,360.00 for March 2022 checks**. *Attachment:* [2023-03-06 ATHLETIC BILLS](#)

**6F** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the following **donations**:

<b><u>DONATIONS</u></b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Amount/ Estimated Value</b>	<b>Donor</b>	<b>On Behalf Of</b>
18 Books	\$306.00	Lynn Hunter, Ed. D. Educational Media Enterprises	Pre-K, Kindergarten, and First Grade Classes

**7F** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, **authorizes the Board Secretary to advertise the General Education Preschool Lottery Program in all designated newspapers**.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education **approves the tuition rates for the General Education Preschool Program for the 2023-2024 school year as follows:**

**\$1,000.00 per month per student for full-day program**

**8F**     **WHEREAS**, the Audit Report for the year ending June 30, 2022 as prepared by Wielkotz & Company, LLP, Certified Public Accountants, was accepted by this Board on February 22, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, the Audit contains recommendations which were read and discussed at the public meeting as indicated on the Corrective Action Plan attached to this resolution.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the **Business Administrator/Board Secretary** of this Board is hereby directed to proceed as indicated in said **Corrective Action Plan**; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that a **copy of this resolution, together with a copy of the synopsis of the Audit Report and the Corrective Action Plan, will be filed with the County Superintendent of Schools.** *Attachment: [AUDIT CAP FY22](#)*

**9F**     **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, authorizes the execution of an **Interlocal Services Agreement** between the Fort Lee Board of Education and the Borough of Fort Lee for the **assignment of one Class III Special Law Enforcement Officer (“SLEO III”)** according to the terms and condition of the attached agreement. *Attachment: [INTERLOCAL SERVICES AGREEMENT-SLEO III](#)*

**10F**    **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the South Bergen Jointure Commission (“SBJC”) and the Fort Lee Board of Education (“the Board”) are parties to a 2023-2024 agreement for SBJC, an approved Coordinated Transportation Service Agency, for the purposes of transporting students in accordance with Chapter 53, P.L. 1997 for the time period 2023-2024 school year. The services to be provided include, but are not limited to, the Coordinated Transportation of nonpublic, out of district special education, vocational and summer programs.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, agrees to abide by the Transportation Services Agreement as published by the South Bergen Jointure Commission and attached to this resolution. *Attachment: [SBJC JOINT TRANSPORTATION 2023-2024](#)*

**11F**    **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent **authorizes Dr. Vincent Occhino to invest Fort Lee Public Schools District Funds in the New Jersey Asset & Rebate Management (NJ/ARM) District account** effective February 7, 2023.

**12F**    **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent **suspends Haquisha Q. Taylor, effective February 7, 2023, and Irene Gray, effective March 15, 2023, from investing Fort Lee Public Schools District Funds in the New Jersey Asset & Rebate Management (NJ/ARM) District account.**

- 13F** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, **approves the contract with the DoubleTree by Hilton for the Fort Lee High School 2023 Performing Arts Awards Banquet to be held on Wednesday, June 7, 2023 at a price not to exceed \$45.00 per person.** *Attachment:* [DOUBLETREE CONTRACT](#)

MOTION by Mrs. Curry, seconded by Mr. Rubino, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1F through #13F.

MOTION carried upon roll call vote, 8-0-1, with exception, Mrs. Morell abstained on items #1F through #13F.

**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 Kathleen Ryan Larson, as a Teacher - Computer Literacy at LFCMS, after dedicating 35 years of service to the district, effective July 1, 2023.**
- 3P** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts, with regret, the **retirement of Janet LaRusso, as a Teacher - Elementary at School #4, after dedicating 35 years of service to the district, effective July 1, 2023.**
- 4P** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts, with regret, the **retirement of Mark Oberkehr, as a Teacher - Math at the High School, after dedicating 20 years of service to the district, effective July 1, 2023.**
- 5P** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts, with regret, the **retirement of Adrian Rodriguez, as a Teacher - Social Studies at the High School, after dedicating 15 years of service to the district, effective March 1, 2023.**



**6P** 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
John Vasquez	Bus Driver	CO	03/01/23

**7P** 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:

<u>APPOINTMENTS</u>						
First Name	Last Name	Position	Loc	Position Control #	Annual Salary Prorated	Effective Date
Alejandra	Limonos	Paraprofessional	S1	01-9101-29	\$24,386.00 (.83)	3/27/23 or sooner
Gloria	Vargas	Bus Driver	CO	00-9402-04	\$31,000.00	3/21/23 or sooner

**8P** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following additional **staff transfers** during the 2022-2023 school year.

<u>TRANSFERS</u>						
Name	From Location	From Position	To Location	To Position	Salary Change	Effective Date
Megan Cooper	S1	Teacher	S2	Teacher - Special Education	N/A	3/1/23

**9P** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **leaves**:

<b>LEAVES OF ABSENCES</b>								
<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Loc</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>New or Amend</b>	<b>Paid Leave</b>	<b>Unpaid Leave with benefits</b>	<b>Unpaid Leave No Benefits</b>	<b>Return Date</b>
Laura Caddell	School Counselor	HS	Medical	Amend	1/11/2023 - 2/24/23	N/A	N/A	2/27/23
Melanie Catalano	Graphic Design Teacher	HS	Maternity	New	6/12/23 - 6/21/23	N/A	9/1/23 - 6/30/24	9/1/24
Erica Cirone	Media Specialist	S1	Maternity	Amend	9/1/21 - 10/6/21	N/A	10/7/21 - 6/30/24	9/1/24
Gina DeMartino	Grade 4 Teacher	S4	Maternity	Amend	11/21/22 - 1/5/23	1/6/23 - 6/30/23	N/A	9/1/23
Anastasia Findanis	Grade 2 Teacher	S1	Maternity	Amend	5/27/20 to 6/30/20	9/1/20 to 2/28/21	3/1/21 to 6/30/23	9/1/23
Karen Lallo	3rd Grade Teacher	S3	Medical	New	3/14/23- 4/14/23	N/A	N/A	4/17/23
Tracey O'Connell	Conf Secretary to the Business Administrator	CO	Medical	New	3/21/23 - 3/28/23(½)	N/A	3/28/23(½) - 4/14/23	4/14/23
Ashley Rice	Teacher - BSI	FLHS	Maternity	Amend	N/A	9/1/21 to 12/1/21	12/2/21 to 3/7/23	3/8/23
ID#6719			Admin Leave	New	3/6/23 - TBD	N/A	N/A	TBD

**10P** **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:

<b><u>SUBSTITUTES</u></b>
Seham Ibrahim, Teacher Winnie Yau, Teacher

- 11P** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the amended compensation for the staff members for **After-School Tutoring Program during the 2022-2023 school year**. Rates were \$45.00 per hour and will now be \$55.00 per hour, effective January 3, 2023. This compensation is **funded by ESSER II Learning Acceleration and ARP ESSER funds. Account codes #20-484-100-100-00-000 and #20-487-100-100-00-000.**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Compensation</u>
Dawn McKenzie	After-School Tutoring Program	IS	\$55.00 per hour
Barrie Kulak	After-School Tutoring Program	IS	\$55.00 per hour
Lina Giraldo	After School Tutoring Program	S4	\$55.00 per hour

- 12P** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the amended **reimbursement of substitute teacher certification fees** funded from account #20-487-200-300-00-000 for the employees listed below:

<u>SUBSTITUTE TEACHER CERTIFICATION FEE REIMBURSEMENT</u>		
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Tiffany	Phinazee	\$128.38

- 13P** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **appointment of a Co-Curricular Advisor** for the 2022-2023 school year. All appointments are subject to completion of all personnel documentation and fingerprinting process, prior to starting of said activities. **Payable through ESSER II Learning Acceleration grant fund. The account code is 20-484-100-101-00-000.**

<u>CO-CURRICULAR 2022-2023</u>				
<u>Name</u>	<u>Co-Curricular Activity</u>			<u>22-23 Stipend</u>
Tahreen Chowdhury	STEAM Advisor	HS	C	\$4,754.00

**14P** **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the **Sidebar Agreement between Fort Lee Board of Education and the Fort Lee Education Association for an Employee Workday Modification for Employee #6181 from March 8, 2023 to June 30, 2023.**

MOTION by Mrs. Stassou, seconded by Mr. Rubino, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1P through 14P.

MOTION carried upon roll call vote, 8-1, with the exception, Mrs. Morell dissented on items #2P through 5P and abstained on items #1P and items #6P through #14P.

**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:  
*Attachment: [FIRST READING](#)*

Policy/Reg No.	Topic
P 6471	School District Travel (M) (Revised)
R 6471	School District Travel (M) (Revised)
P 8140	Student Enrollments (M) (Revised)
R 8140	Enrollment Accounting (M) (Revised)
P 8330	Student Records (M) (Revised)
R 8330	Student Records (M) (Revised)

**2POL** **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: *Attachment: [SECOND READING](#)*

Policy/Reg No.	Topic
R 5751	Sexual Harassment of Students (M)
P 0152	Board Officers

MOTION by Mr. Rubino seconded by Mrs. Richter, to approve items #1POL and #2POL.

MOTION carried upon roll call, 8-1-0, with exception, Mrs. Morell dissented on items #1POL and #2POL.

**OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Mrs. Curry, to adjourn, 9:00 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,**

***Dr. Vincent Occhino***

**Dr. Vincent Occhino  
Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary**

**VO/toc  
Attachments  
03-13-23**