

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

MINUTES

**PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA
Wednesday, February 21, 2024
Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School Cafetorium
and Zoom (virtual) Meeting**

CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Board President, Mrs. Richter

FLAG SALUTE

The Flag Salute was led by Ms. Colbath.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

The Open Public Meeting announcement was read by Board President, Mrs. Richter

ROLL CALL

Present: Ms. Paula Colbath, Mrs. Kim Curry, Mr. Kacy Knight (*virtual*), Mrs. Amy Ko-Tang, Mr. Douglas Lopez, Ms. Holly Morell, Mr. Michael Rubino, Mrs. Kristen Richter

Also Present: Dr. Robert L. Kravitz, Mrs. Dina Messery, Mrs. Diane Collazo-Baker, Mr. Lester Taylor, Board Attorney

Absent: Mrs. Tanya Byers-Kang

EXECUTIVE SESSION #1

MOTION by Mr. Rubino seconded by Mrs. Curry at 6:35 p.m., to move into Executive Session.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 8-0.

Board President, Mrs. Richter asked for a MOTION to adjourn the Executive Session.

MOTION by Ms. Colbath seconded by Mrs. Curry at 7:33 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously upon voice vote, 8-0.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Kravitz shared that on Thursday, March 14, 2024 is the Harlem Wizards basketball tournament to be held at the Fort Lee High School from 5-9 pm. As we move into the month of March it is one of the most difficult months as we have no breaks during this month. We are beginning to build our calendar for next year and we will have it available at the next Board of Education meeting.

Dr. Kravitz introduced two High School Student Representatives, Kate Iino and Sophie Reijmers to share their respective updates of the activities at Fort Lee High School.

Dr. Kravitz shared that there were seven (7) HIB investigations. Two (2) were founded.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Committee: Chairperson Ms. Colbath shared that the committee met and discussed Policy 5111 relating to Eligibility Resident/Non-Resident Students and Policy 2431 relating to participating in our sports if the child is homeschooled.

Athletics Committee: Chairperson Mr. Lopez shared that the committee met and discussed the Town taking ownership of the National Field behind the Intermediate School to provide the necessary support and attention the field.

Ad Hoc Legal Committee: Chairperson Ms. Colbath shared that the walk-in resolution item #3B relating to Dobco v. Fort Lee Board of Education, Arbitration Case should be resolved after tonight's vote.

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, 7:45 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 8-0.

Public comments and questions included an email that was sent to the Fort Lee Board of Education by a resident that still has not been addressed; District's procedure relating to Policy 5756 if a student does not want their parents to know of their transgender status; if the Board honors Policy 5756 when do they plan to rescind Policy 9240; expressed extreme gratitude toward our teachers for teaching students with love, tenderness and understanding regardless of their ethnicity and who they are; Ramadan begins in fifteen days and inquired the status of displaying a crescent moon; parent expressed deep concern of how students are being protected from bullies while attending school; thanked Mr. Wolf and many people of the public for the support they provide to the Fort Lee Education Association; shared that NorthJersey.com published a wonderful article about our wrestling coach and how well the team works together despite the student diversity, and highly recommends that the article be published on our website.

Dr. Kravitz addressed all questions and concerns.

MOTION by Ms. Morell seconded by Mr. Rubino to close the floor to the public, 8:00 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 8-0.

WALK-IN RESOLUTION:

Mrs. Richter shared that there were two Walk-in Resolutions item #3B relating to a litigation matter and item #4B relating to residency ineligibility. Mr. Taylor read item #3B and Mrs. Richter read item #4B.

RESOLUTIONS

<u>BOARD</u>	
1B	<p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves the following minutes:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Public Business Meeting Minutes February 5, 2024 Private Executive Meeting Minutes February 5, 2024</p>
2B	<p>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</p> <p>WHEREAS, the Board has had the opportunity to review the Superintendent’s recommendations with respect to the incident(s) of HIB.</p> <p>NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board accepts the Superintendent’s recommendations.</p> <p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

<p>3B Walk-in</p>	<p>WHEREAS the Fort Lee Board of Education is involved in a litigation matter bearing caption Dobco v. Fort Lee Board of Education, Arbitration Case No.: 01-22-0003-7543, involving claims of delay damages which discovery demonstrated to be the consequence of the failure of a steel structure that was designed by SSP Architect; and</p> <p>WHEREAS the failed steel structure was subsequently replaced by an alternate structure based on a new design provided by SSP; and</p> <p>WHEREAS in order to forego the time, expense and uncertainty of continued and protracted litigation the parties have agreed to amicably resolve the matter in difference,</p> <p>NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Fort Lee Board of Education hereby agrees to settle this matter in accordance with the terms and conditions of the settlement agreement as proposed by its litigation counsel, and</p> <p>BE IF FURTHER RESOLVED that the Superintendent, Business Administrator and/or Board President are hereby authorized to execute any documents in furtherance of finalizing the within settlement agreement.</p>		
<p>4B Walk-in</p>	<p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education hereby:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> permits the following non-resident student(s) to continue enrollment at the Fort Lee Public Schools and waives tuition costs for the 2023-2024 school year. <table border="1" data-bbox="597 1220 1157 1341" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">STUDENT ID #</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">26050272</td> </tr> </table>	STUDENT ID #	26050272
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	<p>MOTION by Mrs. Curry, seconded by Ms. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1B through #4B.</p> <p>MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 8-0.</p>		
<p><u>CURRICULUM</u></p>			
<p>1CUR</p>	<p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves class trips listed on the attached summary. <i>Attachment:</i> <u>CLASS TRIPS</u></p>		

2CUR	<p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves High Impact Youth Training Solutions to provide a Parent University workshop for all parents/guardians in the district. The presentation will focus on Internet Safety, Social Media Awareness & Cyberbullying. The cost of the presentation is \$1100.00 to be charged to account #20-010-200-320-00-000. <i>Attachment: HIGH IMPACT YOUTH TRAINING SOLUTIONS</i></p>
3CUR	<p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves Elevate Education, Inc. to provide the Student and Parent Study Skills Workshop Series outlined below for eligible Title I students and families, for the amounts specified below, using the attached accounts. <i>Attachment: ELEVATE EDUCATION WORKSHOP ACCOUNTS</i></p>
	<p>MOTION by Ms. Morell, seconded by Ms. Colbath, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1CUR through #3CUR.</p> <p>MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 8-0.</p>
<p><u>FINANCE</u></p>	
1F	<p>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. <i>Attachment: TREASURER'S REPORT JANUARY 2024, SECRETARY'S REPORT JANUARY 2024</i></p>
2F	<p>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 2024. 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. <i>Attachment: JANUARY 2024 TRANSFERS</i></p>
3F	<p>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 \$6,555,097.06 for February 21, 2024 checks. <i>Attachment: 2024-02-21 BILLS LIST</i></p>
4F	<p>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 \$103,079.86 for February 21, 2024 checks. <i>Attachment: 2024-02-21 CAFETERIA BILLS LIST</i></p>

<p>5F</p>	<p>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 \$4,521.00 for February 21, 2024 checks. <i>Attachment: 2024-02-21 ATHLETIC BILLS LIST</i></p>
<p>6F</p>	<p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, hereby authorizes the cancellation of the attached stale dated checks with funds from the canceled outstanding checks being realized to the appropriate account(s). <i>Attachment: STALE DATED CHECKS</i></p>
<p>7F</p>	<p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, does hereby approve an agreement with Region V, an approved Coordinated Transportation Service Agency, for the purposes of transporting students in accordance with Chapter 53, P.L. 1997 for the time period July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. The services to be provided include, but are not limited to, the Coordinated Transportation of non-public, <i>Attachment: JOINT TRANSPORTATION AGREEMENT</i></p>
<p>8F</p>	<p>WHEREAS, N.J.S.A. 18A:39-11 and N.J.S.A. specifically authorizes two (2) or more school districts to enter into a joint agreement for providing transportation for special education students; and</p> <p>WHEREAS, the Parties thereto have approved the within Agreement by Resolution; and WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Parties to enter into such Agreement for said purposes;</p> <p>NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the promises, covenants, terms, and conditions hereinafter set forth; it is mutually agreed by the Parties.</p> <p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, does hereby approve the Joint Purchasing Agreement for providing transportation for special education students. <i>Attachment: JOINT PURCHASING AGREEMENT</i></p>
<p>9F</p>	<p>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 a Non-Resident Tuition Agreement for MA (ID#5653929842) and MA (ID#5056715445) to attend Fort Lee High School for the 2023-2024 school year. Tuition rates to be determined by the Business Office and according to Board policy.</p>
	<p>MOTION by Mrs. Curry, seconded by Ms. Morell, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1F through #9F.</p> <p>MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 8-0.</p>

<u>PERSONNEL</u>																																															
1P	<p>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. <i>Attachment:</i> <u>STAFF TRIPS</u></p>																																														
2P	<p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following resignations:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4" style="text-align: center;"><u>RESIGNATIONS</u></th> </tr> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Employee</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Position</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Location</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Effective Date</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Andrea Nunez</td> <td style="text-align: center;">LR Elementary Teacher</td> <td style="text-align: center;">S2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Declined Position</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small;">Effective date indicates first day off payroll</p>							<u>RESIGNATIONS</u>				Employee	Position	Location	Effective Date	Andrea Nunez	LR Elementary Teacher	S2	Declined Position																												
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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
Alexandra Infante	Gr 6 ELA/SS	IS	Maternity	Amend	4/24/23 - 6/15/23	6/16/23 - 2/29/24	3/1/24 - 6/30/24	9/1/24
Jessica Karoutsos	Gr 1	S1	Maternity	Amend	N/A	9/12/22 - 3/31/23	4/1/23 - 6/30/25	9/1/25
Jaritza Rojas	Special Education Teacher Gr 2 BD	S2	Maternity	New	2/7/24 - 4/5/24	4/8/24 - 5/3/24	N/A	5/6/24
ID# 5924	N/A	N/A	Admin Leave	New	2/19/24	N/A	N/A	TBD

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 2023-2024 school year, as outlined below:

LEAVE REPLACEMENTS					
Name	Grade/Subject	Loc	Salary	Effective Dates	Reason for opening
Natalie Khatchadorian	Social Worker	MS	\$63,275.00 prorated	3/5/24 - 4/8/24	Christina Ranaudo
Sara Rho	Grade 4	S2	\$59,875.00 prorated	2/21/24 - 6/30/24 Amended	Clara Walden
Sara Rho	Grade 5 Math/Science	IS	\$59,875.00 prorated	11/29/23 - 2/20/24 Amended	Kristen Cassavell
Samantha Sebbio	Gr 5 BSI Math	IS	\$59,875.00 prorated	9/1/23 - 2/20/24 Amended	Genna Kornweiser

	Samantha Sebbio	Gr 5 Math/Science	IS	\$59,875.00 prorated	2/21/24 - 4/9/24 Amended	Kristen Cassavell		
7P	<p>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 2023-2024 school year:</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><u>SUBSTITUTES</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"> Jennifer Pena - Substitute Teacher David Blake Hendricks - Substitute Teacher Mackenzie Szabo - Substitute Teacher </td> </tr> </table>						<u>SUBSTITUTES</u>	Jennifer Pena - Substitute Teacher David Blake Hendricks - Substitute Teacher Mackenzie Szabo - Substitute Teacher
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8P	<p>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the additional athletic officials for the 2023-2024 school year:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Eyad Abdelaziz</p>							
	<p>MOTION by Ms. Morell, seconded by Mr. Lopez, that the Fort Lee Board of Education approves items #1P through #8P.</p> <p>MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 8-0.</p>							

OLD BUSINESS:

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Colbath shared that she believes there should be a public discussion about Policy 5756 because it is frequently brought up by the public at Board meetings. Board conversation ensued to include Policy 5756 should not be the Board’s main focus and we should freely and openly share with the public how we abide by the Policy.

EXECUTIVE SESSION #2

MOTION by Ms. Colbath, seconded by Ms. Morell, at 8:15 p.m., to reconvene into Executive Session to discuss legal and confidential matters.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 8-0.

Board President, Mrs. Richter asked for a MOTION to adjourn the Executive Session.

MOTION by Ms. Morell seconded by Mr. Rubino at 7:15 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously upon voice vote, 8-0.

The Board reconvened into the Public Meeting at 8: 46 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Mr. Rubino, seconded by Ms. Colbath, to adjourn, 8:47 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 8-0.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Dina Messery

**Dina Messery
Business Administrator/Board Secretary**

DM/toc / 02-26-2024