# FORT LEE BOARD OF EDUCATION FORT LEE, NEW JERSEY

## **MINUTES**

PUBLIC BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA Monday, March 4, 2024 Lewis F. Cole Intermediate School Cafetorium and Zoom (virtual) Meeting

## CALL TO ORDER BY THE PRESIDENT

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

# **FLAG SALUTE**

The Flag Salute was led by Mr. Knight.

## **PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**

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

## **ROLL CALL**

Present: Mrs. Tanya Byers-Kang (arrived 7:26 pm), Ms. Paula Colbath, Mrs. Kim Curry (arrived

6:37 pm ), Mr. Kacy Knight, Mrs. Amy Ko-Tang (virtual), Mr. Douglas Lopez, Ms. Holly

Morell, Mr. Michael Rubino (arrived 6:42 pm ), Mrs. Kristen Richter

Also Present: Dr. Robert L. Kravitz, Mrs. Diane Collazo-Baker, Mrs. Lindita Agastra, Mr. Lester Taylor,

**Board Attorney** 

**Absent:** Mrs. Dina Messery

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION #1**

MOTION by Ms. Morell seconded by Mr. Lopez at 6:35 p.m., to move into Executive Session.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

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

MOTION by Ms. Morell seconded by Mrs. Curry at 7:13 p.m.

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

## REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Kravitz reminded everyone that March is Women's History Month. This upcoming week is also read across America week in several of our schools. Reading is an important part of the learning process. It doesn't matter if you read to your child in another language, just keep reading.

Dr. Kravitz introduced two High School Student Representatives, Charisse Jesse-Dodoo and Kate lino to share their respective updates of the activities at Fort Lee High School.

Dr. Kravitz also welcomed the Fort Lee High School Key Club. The Key Club created the Summer Scholars Mentor Program for Elementary, Intermediate, and Middle School Students.

The students have created a book that highlights all of their hard work through the process. It is entitled Tillie and Ellie. The students wanted to showcase this project at our meeting tonight under the direction of Ms. ElKechen. Dr. Kravitz thanked everyone for your continued hard work.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

<u>Policy Committee</u>: Chairperson Ms. Colbath shared that the committee met Monday, February 26, 2024 and discussed the intersections and interrelations between Policy 5756 and Policy 9240.

<u>Communications & Public Relations Committee</u>: Chairperson Mr. Knight shared that the committee met and discussed developing a District newsletter and partnering with our Food Service Company to highlight some of our cultural food initiatives.

<u>Buildings & Grounds Committee</u>: Chairperson Mrs. Byers-Kang shared that the committee met Monday, February 26, 2024 and discussed the High School Shop and Training program, the elementary repairs, elementary bathroom partition repairs, and various other repairs.

# <u>PUBLIC WORK SESSION - QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS ON ITEMS</u> <u>LISTED ON TONIGHT'S AGENDA OR ANY OTHER TOPIC</u>

Ms. Colbath asked if the tuition for the PreK program will remain the same.

Mrs. Ko-Tang asked for an explanation of what the Wingman Leadership team is.

Mrs. Byers-Kang asked for clarification of the Period Wind program that is now being piloted, and discussion regarding standardized testing and benchmark testing.

Dr. Kravitz and Mrs. Collazo-Baker address Board members questions and concerns.

# 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. Morell, seconded by Ms. Colbath to open the floor to the public, 7:54 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

# Fort Lee Board of Education Public Business Meeting

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The majority of the public comments pertained to whether or not to abolish Policy 5756.

Public members shared their comments as to why the Policy **should not** be abolished because it protects the health, safety and civil rights of transgender students. If parents are not supportive of their child changing their identity it can potentially jeopardize the safety and security of transgender students in the home. Nonbinary students believe it is their right to reveal their identity when they are comfortable doing so, and not the decision of school officials to share with parents that their child is transgender. Parents supporting this Policy read excerpts from letters written by Fort Lee transgender students that explains their concerns and fears if the Policy is abolished.

Public members shared their comments as to why the Policy **should be** abolished to include that the Policy hides serious medical information from parents. Several parents strongly expressed that it is the parents right to protect their children, not the State to decide what is best for them. Children should be under the care, love, and guidance of their parents. Parents also shared that concealing gender identity from parents is unethical and undermines parents' parental rights. It is the right of all parents to know what is being discussed with their child especially if it is life changing. Parents then shared that if this Policy is abolished that a policy needs to be written identifying the Fort Lee School District processes of revealing student's identity to parents.

Additional public comments and questions included an update on the Special Ed Parent Advisory Group's objectives and District goals; expressed concern about the condition of School #1 and what is being done to upgrade the building; against item #3CUR on tonight's agenda because the workshop proposal does not clearly define what Nathan Lutz will be teaching the teachers; an inquiry if the administrators discussed how Ramadan can be celebrated and/or recognized at the Fort Lee Schools; unhappy about the school his daughter attends struggles to secure a long term teacher; and need to show humanity and dignity towards the genocide happening around the world; and, recommendation that schools should teach students manners.

Dr. Kravitz addressed all questions and concerns.

MOTION by Ms. Colbath seconded by Ms. Curry to close the floor to the public, 9:43 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

Mrs. Byers-Kang made a MOTION to rescind Policy 5756, seconded by Ms. Colbath.

MOTION carried upon voice vote, 5-4, as Mrs. Ko-Tang, Mr. Lopez, Ms. Morell and Mrs. Richter dissented.

Board members shared their views and opinions regarding Policy 5756.

# **RESOLUTIONS**

BOARI	2									
1B	<b>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED</b> , that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves the following <b>minutes</b> :									
	Public Business Meeting Minutes February 21, 2024 Private Executive Meeting Minutes February 21, 2024									
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									
	<b>WHEREAS</b> , 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:									
	<ol> <li>The nature of the investigation;</li> <li>Whether the District found evidence of HIB;</li> <li>Whether discipline was imposed;</li> <li>Whether services were provided to address the incident of HIB.</li> </ol>									

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>	Board Member	<u>Date</u>	<u>Place</u>	Amount per Person
NJSBA Leadership Series	Kim Curry Amy Ko-Tang Douglas Lopez Holly Morell Kristen Richter	Saturday March 2, 2024	Virtual	-0-
BCSBA Unsung Heroes Awards Ceremony	Paula Colbath Kim Curry Holly Morell Kristen Richter Michael Rubino	Tuesday March 5, 2024	Henry P. Becton Regional High School 120 Paterson Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ	-0-
Governance II	Tanya Byers- Kang	March 20, 2024	Virtual	-0-
Garden State Coalition of Schools meeting	Paula Colbath Amy Ko-Tang Douglas Lopez	Wednesday March 20, 2024	160 West State Street, Trenton, New Jersey	-0-

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

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0, with exception as several Board members abstained on their name on item #3B only.

# **BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS**

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves Karl Environmental Group to conduct an investigation and sampling of suspect materials at the Lewis F. Cole Middle School HVAC Renovation project, at an estimated cost of \$8,310.00.

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

MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0

# 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:* **2024-03-04 CLASS TRIPS** 

2CUR	<b>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED</b> , that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation
	of the Superintendent, approves the following out-of-district placements for the 2023-2024
	school year:

OUT-OF-DISTRICT PLACEMENTS								
Student Placement Dates Tuition/Costs								
#1780027760	Slocum Skewes Learning Center Ridgefield, NJ	3/4/24- 6/30/24	Annual tuition cost of \$56,150.00, prorated to \$22,762.50 (75 days @ \$303.50 per diem). 1:1 Aide: (4 hours per diem), 280 hours @ \$26.90/hour. Total cost: \$21,245.00. Transportation cost prorated to \$12,900.00 (75 days @ \$172.00 per diem).					

# THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approve Nathan Lutz as the provider of a workshop for the new teacher professional development program to explore the principles of culturally responsive teaching. The cost is \$300.00 paid out of account 11-000-221-320-00-000. Attachment: WORKSHOP PROPOSAL

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following teachers for the Wingman leadership team at LFCMS at a rate of \$55.00 per hour, not to exceed 8 hours each. The account code is 20-487-200-100-00-000.

Wingman Leadership Team							
Alden Etra							
Katherine Busch-McArdle							
Stefanie Katic							
Christina Murphy							
Marjorie O'Connell							
Todd Church							
Solanlly Ortega							
Angela Papas							

MOTION by Ms. Morell, seconded by Mrs. Byers-Kang, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves items #1CUR through #4CUR.

MOTION carried upon roll call vote, 9-0 for items #1CUR, #2CUR and #4CUR; and 4-5 for item #3CUR as Mrs. Byers-Kang, Ms. Colbath, Mrs. Curry, Mr. Knight and Mr. Rubino dissented.

FINAN	<u>CE</u>
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 \$9,814,250.44 for March 2024 checks. Attachment: 2024-03-04 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 \$132,281.45 for March 2024 checks. Attachment: 2024-03-04 CAFETERIA BILLS LIST
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 \$987.00 for March 2024 checks. Attachment: 2024-03-04 ATHLETIC BILLS LIST
4F	THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the South Bergen Jointure Commission ("SBJC") and the Fort Lee Board of Education ("the Board") are parties to a 2024-2025 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 2024-2025 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. <i>Attachment:</i> SBJC JOINT TRANSPORTATION 2024-2025
5F	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 Non-Resident Tuition Student Agreements for SS (Student ID 9173382995) whose parent(s) are employed by the district for the 2024-2025 school year. Tuition rates to be determined by the Business Office and according to Board policy.
6F	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 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 2024-2025 school year as follows:  \$1,000.00 per month per student for a full-day program.

	MOTION by Mrs. Curry, seconded by Mrs. Byers-Kang, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, approves items #1F through #6F.									
	MOTION carried upon roll call vote, 8-0-1, with exception as Ms. Colbath abstained on her name on item #1F only.									
PERSO	RSONNEL									
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:  2024-03-04 STAFF TRIPS									
2P	THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the retirement of Kerri-Lynn Maurer, as a Elementary School Teacher at School No. 3, after dedicating 30 years of service to the district, effective July 1, 2024.									
3P	THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the retirement of Mary Rizzo, as a Elementary School Teacher at School No. 4, after dedicating 31 years of service to the district, effective July 1, 2024.									
4P	THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, accepts the retirement of Kathleen Pastena, as a Special Education Paraprofessional at School No. 1, after dedicating 14 years of service to the district, effective July 1, 2024.									
5P	<b>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED</b> , that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following <b>resignations</b> :									
	RESIGNATIONS									
		Employee	Position	Location	Effective Date					
		Jessica Addeo	Occupational Therapist	IS	2/22/2024					

**6P** THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following **appointments** for the 2023-2024 school year, pending verification of employment:

<u>APPOINTMENTS</u>									
First Name	Last Name	Position	Loc	Position Control #	Annual Salary Prorated	Rationale	Effective Date		
Ye Ji	Ferrabolli	Teacher - English Special Education	FLHS	2400-050-1213- 07	\$74,375.00 9/MA	Resignation	5/1/2024 or sooner		
Keziah	Reyes	Paraprofessional K-2 LLD	S4	9151-090-1213- 01	\$21,783.00 (.83) 1/ND	Transfer	3/18/2024 or sooner		
Cynthia	Sanchez	Secretary - Student Registrar	со	9305-000-211- 01	\$50,000	Transfer	4/1/2024		
Iresha	Welikandage	Paraprofessional K 1:1	S1	9101-101-1213- 05	\$21,783.00 (.83) 1/ND	Resignation	3/18/2024 or sooner		

# Fort Lee Board of Education Public Business Meeting

7P 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	Туре	New or Amend	Paid Leave	Unpaid Leave with benefits	Unpaid Leave No Benefits	Return Date
Lauren Abdallah	Gr 4	S1	Maternity	New	N/A	9/1/24 - 1/3/25	N/A	1/6/25
Christina Agrapidis	K Teacher	S1	Maternity	Amend	10/30/22 - 11/30/22	12/1/22 - 6/30/23	N/A	11/25/24 (extending)
Genevieve Callahan	Gr 5-6 IB Physics	IS	Medical	New	2/12/24 - 4/11/24	4/12/24 - 4/19/24	N/A	4/22/24
Kristen Cassavell	Grade 5 Math/Science Teacher	IS	FMLA	Amend	11/13/23 - 1/1/24	1/2/24 - 4/30/24	5/1/24 - 8/31/24	9/1/24
Melanie Catalano	Graphic Arts Teacher	HS	Maternity	Amend	6/12/23 - 6/21/23	N/A	9/1/23 - 6/30/25	9/1/25
Elizabeth Janson	Special Education	S2	Medical	New	2/26/24 - 5/10/24	N/A	N/A	5/13/24
Jaz Ming Mackey	FT Paraprofessional (LLD Gr 4)	S2	Maternity	Amend	2/12/24 - 3/19/24	3/20/24 - 1/1/25	N/A	1/2/25
Janine Mendoza	Grade 2	S1	Maternity	Amend	2/23/24 - 3/28/24	3/29/24 - 9/30/24	10/1/24 - 6/30/25	9/1/25
Margie Price	PT Paraprofessional	S2	Medical	Amend	1/2/24 - 1/16/24	N/A	1/17/24 - 5/3/24	5/6/24
Michelle Rios-Fornes	FT Paraprofessional	S4	Medical	New	3/26/24 - 4/12/24	N/A	N/A	4/15/24
Jaritza Rojas	K-1 BD Special Education Teacher	S2	Maternity	Amend	9/1/24 - 9/20/24	9/23/24 - 11/15/24	N/A	11/18/24
ID# 616*	N/A	N/A	Admin Leave	New	2/27/24	N/A	N/A	3/5/24
ID# 5924	N/A	N/A	Admin Leave	Amend	2/19/24	N/A	N/A	3/5/24

**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			
Seo Jung (Jade) Choi	Grade 3	S4	\$59,875.00 prorated (Leave Replacement Rate)	12/7/22 -6/30/24 Amended	Melanie Orak			
Diane Schustermann Bank	Grade 5-6 BSI Math	IS	\$59,875.00 prorated (Leave Replacement Rate)	3/18/24 - 5/17/24	Genna Kornweiser			
Samantha Sebbio	Gr 5 Math/Science	IS	\$59,875.00 prorated	2/21/24 - 6/30/24	Kristen Cassavell			

**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:

# **SUBSTITUTES**

Lucy Bak - Substitute Teacher Sydney Schramm- Substitute Teacher Beryl Steinbach-Substitute Teacher

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the additional pensionable stipend of \$6,500, for a teaching staff member assigned to **teach a sixth period** at Fort Lee **High School** for the 2023-2024 school year:

6th Period Stipends									
	Fort Lee High School								
First Name Last Name Department Dates									
Andrea	Sarney-Erde	11/20/2023-2/16/2024							
Queen	Beaute	Mathematics	12/11/2023-2/16/2024- Amended						

11P	<b>THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,</b> that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of an additional <b>Home Instructor</b> for the					
	2023-2024 school year as follows:					
	Additional Home Instructor 2023-2024					
	Name Certification Area(s) Rate					
	Marielle Bakian ESL \$45.00 per hour					
12P	THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation					
	of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of 2024 Spring Coaches for the High School, Middle School, and volunteer coaches for the High School. All appointments are					
	subject to completion of all personnel documentation and fingerprinting process, prior to starting					
	of said activities. Attachment: 2024-03-04 SPRING COACHES					
13P	THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation of					
	the Superintendent, approves the approves the Bridgeman Believe Mentor Program, at an					
	hourly rate of \$55.00 for the 2023-2024 school year, using account #20-280-200-100-00-000.					
	<b>year</b> , using account #20-200-100-00-000.					
	Bridgeman Believe Mentor Program					
	Jessica Bijari					
	Ada Acosta Chehirian					
14P	THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation					
	of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of Curriculum Writers for 2023-2024 for services to be performed outside the contractual day, to be paid a stipend at an hourly					
	rate of \$45.00 per hour, for an aggregate total not to exceed \$70,000, to be charged against					
	account # 11-000-221-104-00-000, for the teaching staff members listed below:					
	Content Area Certificated Staff Member					
	Elementary (Multiple Content Areas) Kathleen Vanderslice					
15P	THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recommendation					
10.	of the Superintendent, approves the following teachers to be compensated for attending					
	the Sequoia Con 2024 conference on Artificial Intelligence in K-12 education on 2/29/24 and 3/1/24, outside their contractual work hours, for 9 hours (4.5 hours each day) at a					
	rate of \$45 per hour, not to exceed \$405.00 for each teacher, to be paid out of account 20-					
	488-200-100-00-000.					

		Tead	chers	
		Pricilla Yoon	Jillian Reicherz	
		CJ Turturo	Jessica Bijari	
		Yesenia Jimenez	Marilyn Bryslawskyj	
	THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, upon recomm of the Superintendent, approves the following teachers for ESL Adult Afte Tutoring, at a rate of \$60.00 an hour, not to exceed 70 hours to be paid usin Immigrant funds account 20-243-200-100-00-000.			
		ESL To	eachers	
		Ada Acosta	Anthony Sinacore*	
		Susanne Gelayder*	Natalya Margolina*	-
		Tsayli Lily Chang*	Brenda Linard*	]
	ee Board of Education			
	MOTION by Ms. Morell, seconded by Ms. Colbath, that the Fort Lee Board of Education, a items #1P through #16P.  MOTION carried unanimously upon roll call vote, 9-0.			
	Ms. Colbath and Ms. Morell expressed their gratitude towards Mary Rizzo for her 31 years dedicated service. Mrs. Richter congratulated and thanked all the retires for their dedicated service.			

# Fort Lee Board of Education Public Business Meeting

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# **OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

# **NEW BUSINESS**

Mrs. Byers-Kang congratulated Mr. Joseph Picone and Mr. Harry Welte on their retirement and thanked them for their many years if dedicated service.

# **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Ms. Morell, seconded by Mr. Rubino, to adjourn, 10:15 p.m.

MOTION carried unanimously upon voice vote, 9-0.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

<u>Lindita Agastra</u> Dina Messery

**Business Administrator/Board Secretary** 

LA/toc / 03-14-2024