

SOUTH PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
125 Jackson Avenue
South Plainfield, NJ 07080
Telephone: 908-754-4620

Committee of the Whole Meeting– Wednesday, April 10, 2019 - 6:00 P.M.
South Plainfield High School
200 Lake Street
South Plainfield, NJ 07080

South Plainfield Public Schools Mission Statement:

Students are the focus of the South Plainfield Public Schools. We will provide a dynamic, rigorous, relevant and technology-enriched curriculum, guided by the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Our mission is to develop life-long learners who are prepared to succeed in a global and diverse society. We are resolved to educate the whole child, instilling the desire within our students to question and to become divergent thinkers who can achieve their fullest potential.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Chapman called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO FLAG

III. ROLL CALL- Alex Benanti
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Present: Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Farinella, Mr. Giannakis, Mrs. Miller,
Mr. Pennisi, Mrs. Wolak, Mr. Chapman

Mr. Both arrived at 6:15 p.m.
Mr. Cassio arrived at 6:25 p.m.

Also Present: Dr. Noreen Lishak, Superintendent; Ms. Mary Malyska, Assistant
Superintendent; Mr. Alex Benanti, Business Administrator/Board
Secretary; Mr. Joseph Roselle, Legal Counsel

IV. BOARD PRESIDENT

In accordance with the terms of the Sunshine Law, adequate notice of this meeting was posted in all school buildings, the Administration Building, Borough Clerk's office, Police Headquarters, Public Library, four newspapers, and W.C.T.C. on January 3, 2019.

Please be advised:

- There is no smoking on school grounds - inside or outside - at any time.
- Please silence all electronic devices.

- Pursuant to District Policy #0167, each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three minutes' duration and no participant may speak more than once on the same topic.

The Board went into Executive Session at 6:03 p.m.

The Board returned from Executive Session at 6:21 p.m.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. South Plainfield High School "Be Kind" Presentation

Mr. Spring and high school student representatives presented their "Be Kind" initiative.

B. Recognition of Student/Staff Winter Sports Awards – 2018/2019

The Board of Education wishes to acknowledge the following students and staff for Winter Sports Awards:

Girls Basketball

Mackenzie O'Brien- All White Division/All Conference

Boys Basketball

Dondre Tate – All Blue Division

Boys Bowling

Shaun Boffard – All Blue Division

Girls Bowling

Hallie Bisgaard – All Blue Division

Comp Cheering

Team – NJCDCA Group II State Champions/ Medium Division Champions

Rebecca Bloch

Brianna Crenshaw

Jennifer Giannakis

Xenia Lambert

Zoe Lambert

Katelyn Luster

Danielle McParland

Brianna Padovano

Isabella Saffold

Brianna Slover- All State Cheer & Dance Team

Jenna Slover

Mackenzie Surowiec

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Alicia Vazquez
Alyssa Vella
Angelique Weaver

Coaches:

Jaime Giannakis – Head Coach
Erin Klimchak – Assistant Coach
Gina Durso – Volunteer Coach

Swimming

Ward Al-Ktaish – All White Division
Tyson Nguyen – All White Division
Alyzah Ziga – All White Division/All Conference
Katie Ziga – All White Division/All Conference

Winter Track

Girls Team: Blue Division Champions/ Blue Division Relay Champions

Sarai Adams
Jessica Andrade
Kaziah Betts
Melissa Calderon – All Blue Division
Alexis Curtis
Jileah DeNapoli
Rachel Ann Fallet
Lynda Farinella
Alexiana Gomez
Gabriella Gonzalez
McKayla Grabinsky
Keiana Green
Jordan Lovett
Lauryn McMillan – All Blue Division
Alyssa Moffitt
Isabella Mont
Hailey Palmer – All Blue Division
Tiffany Parajon – All Blue Division
Jasmine Patel – All Blue Division
Samantha Pullen – All Blue Division
Sofia Watson – All Blue Division
Ashley Wyber

Boys Team: Blue Division Champions/Blue Division Relay Champions

Nicholas Aiello - All Blue Division
Justin Billich
Abdul Cokley
Ashwin deGroot – All Blue Division
Jose Delgado – All Blue Division
Braedon Dobrynio

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Brian Gallagher
Wyatt Gerber
Jeffrey Heine
Dylan Kolvites
Anthony Laudani
Michael Lawrence- All Blue Division
Keith Lehman- All Blue Division
Joshua Ng
John Padovano
Brandon Pascale
Alexander Pear
Everette Pfeiffer – All Blue Division
Robert Rivera – All Blue Division

Coaches:

Christopher Fish – Head Coach: Blue Division Coach of the Year
Bryan Holt – Assistant Coach
Stephen Balzer – Volunteer Coach

Wrestling

Team: GMC Red Division Champions, GMC Conference Champions, District XVII Champions, Central Jersey Group II Sectional Champions, Group II State Champions

Alexander Amato – 138lbs. Individual GMC Champion/All Red Division/All Conference
Tyler Balent
Jacob DelVecchio – 106 lbs. Individual District XVII/113lbs. Individual GMC Champion/All Red Division/All Conference
Zachary DelVecchio – 220lbs. Individual NJSIAA State Tournament Champion/220lbs. Individual Region 5 Champion/220lbs. Individual District XVII Champion/220lbs. Individual GMC Champion/All Red Division/ All Conference
Thomas Fierro – 132lbs. Individual Region 5 Champion/132lb. Individual District XVII Champion/132lbs. Individual GMC Champion/All Red Division/All Conference
Marc Giordano – 152lbs. Individual District XVII Champion
Brenden Hedden – All Red Division/All Conference
Julian Irizarry – All Red Division
Jeffrey Jacome
Makhi Lemond
David Loniewski – 126lb. Individual District XVII Champion/All Red Division/All Conference
Julian Medina – All Red Division
Luke Niemeyer – 195lbs. 3rd NJSIAA Individual State Tournament/195lbs. Individual Region 5 Champion/195lbs. Individual District XVII Champion/195lbs. Individual GMC Champion/All Red Division/ All Conference
Divon Pender
Joseph Sacco – 145lbs. 6th NJSIAA Individual State Tournament/145lbs. Individual Region 5 Champion/145lbs. Individual District XVII Champion/145lbs. Individual GMC Champion/All Red Division/ All Conference

Sebastian Santos – 160 lbs. Individual District XVII Champion/All Red Division

Xavier Santos

Austin Scott

Anthony White – 120lbs. Individual Region 5 Champion/120lb. Individual District XVII

Champion/120lbs. Individual GMC Champion/All Red Division/All Conference

Madison Geis, Manager

Nicolette Massaro, Manager

Nicole Mehl, Manager

Jocelyn Mortensen, Manager

Coaches:

Steven Johnston – Head Coach: District XVII Coach of the Year, GMC Conference Coach of the Year, Red Division Coach of the Year

Michael Jakubik – Assistant Coach: District XVII Assistant Coach of the Year

John Nye – Assistant Coach

Craig Salvatore – Volunteer Coach

Tyler Hunt – Volunteer Coach

William Hamilton – Volunteer Coach

Daniel Hedden – Volunteer Coach

C. Presentation of Tenure Certificate

The following staff member has been recommended to receive tenure:

| <u>Name</u> | <u>School</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|-----------------|---------------|-------------|
| Kathleen Benton | High School | 2/3/19 |

D. Good News in our Schools

Dr. Lishak said that Riley School wanted her to let everyone know that Student Council is planning activities for Autism Awareness Month and they will have a number of events going on throughout the week of April 15th.

Dr. Lishak said that on behalf of Roosevelt, Franklin, Kennedy, Riley and Grant Schools, Mr. Diehl thanked everyone who came out to the Wizards vs. South Plainfield Teaching Tiger basketball game. She said he wanted to make sure to let everyone know that it was really close this year with a score of 84-82.

Grant School 6th Grade Science Department has been earning a lot of press. The latest article in TAP outlines the 6th grade students visiting Franklin and Roosevelt schools's 4th grade students to teach them about the endangered species.

The Middle school will be engaging in the Battle of the Teams next week.

This afternoon at the High School, our juniors and seniors were presented with a play on the effects of opioids on the addict, along with those around them, the opioid crisis we are facing here in the state and in our county. The program is just one of a number of

presentations we are providing our students with in grades 5-12 on addiction. Other presentations that are given range from vaping presentations at Grant School to vaping, opioids, and alcohol abuse and addiction in grades 7 – 12.

Dr. Lishak said that this past March we had 12 students from our Student Government and Law class as well as Careers participate in the Middlesex County program entitled, Drug Court. This program, started by Judge Robert Jones, focused on the pre-trial intervention program for convicted drug offenders. The offenders, as part of their recovery and pre-trial program, addressed the students with their real life experiences with drugs and the effects the drugs have had on their lives. Students attended the sessions at the Middlesex County Court House and watched as the offenders experienced court and received their sentencing. The students said that the experience was very eye-opening and as the program continues to grow, we are hoping to have more of our students participate next year. Dr. Lishak thanked Judge Jones and Middlesex County for putting that together, as well as to our amazing guidance director who is able to figure out how to get all of our students everywhere they need to go.

VI. AGENDA ADDITIONS AND/OR DELETIONS

1. Public Comments on Agenda Items Only

VII. CURRICULUM & STUDENT ACTIVITIES

DISCUSSION

VIII. FINANCE

DISCUSSION

IX. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

DISCUSSION

X. PRESENTATION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

Buildings & Grounds

Mr. Chapman reported that Buildings and Grounds Committee met at the high school on April 3rd. In attendance was himself, Mr. Cassio, Mr. Pennisi, and Mr. Giannakis. They discussed the status of the referendum projects, they observed the food lab and discussed the exciting renovations that are coming up. They also discussed the status of the maintenance contract.

Mrs. Boyle said that over a year ago, Stephanie Wolak, herself, and Kim Anesh asked about the equipment in the food lab, the possibility of replacing it, and asked if they could go through Amazon without doing a purchase order. She said that they were told they

couldn't do it that way and that's okay but they needed the new equipment and the cabinets and other things were falling apart. Mrs. Boyle said that they were told that there was no funding to be able to do that project. She said that she was told that it was discussed in Buildings and Grounds but that it was never brought to the entire board. Mrs. Boyd asked what happened with that.

Dr. Lishak said that it is listed as coming out of capital funds in next year's budget and was presented before the budget went to the County. She said that in order for us to move forward they had to get the architect involved because once the budget goes through, hopefully on May 1st, it would be impossible for us to then begin the process. So in the conversations we were all discussing the condition of the foods lab and really can't go one more year with broken cabinets and appliances that need to be replaced so we are actually funding that through our capital project so it is listed in the coming year's budget.

Mrs. Boyle asked why that whole discussion wasn't brought forward. Dr. Lishak said that she is confused because we all talked about it. Mrs. Boyle said that she didn't know that we were actually going to do that with next year's budget but as long as the County Superintendent approved it. Dr. Lishak said that we actually spoke to the County this afternoon. Mr. Benanti said that he spoke to the Interim County Business Administrator this afternoon. He said that he told him that the budget was tentatively approved on their end but there was one change with charter schools that will hopefully be finalized in a few days

Mrs. Miller asked what the cost of the project is. Dr. Lishak said that they have \$250,000.00 listed in the budget. Dr. Lishak said that is a stretch. She said that they are looking at a total redo of the room from ceiling to floor, a teacher station, and all new equipment.

Curriculum

Mr. Pennisi said that the committee did not meet. He said that Ms. Malyska reached out with two items that are on the agenda for next week. One is a Grant School trip and the other is an administrative review of the music curriculum.

Finance

Mr. Cassio reported that there was a meeting on April 5th. In attendance was himself, Mr. Chapman, Mr. Both, Mr. Benanti, Mr. Giannakis, Mr. Yazici and Dr. Lishak. The committee discussed the bills list and legal invoices. They also discussed the legal bill for the current lawsuit. The cost is currently exceeding \$10,000.00 with about another \$5,000 until the deductible is met. Mr. Cassio said that the committee also discussed the current food service situation, year-to-date revenue, and future projections.

Policy

Mr. Pennisi reported that the committee did not meet.

Public Relations

Mr. Chapman reported that the Public Relations Committee did not meet.

Shared Services

No Report

Special Education

The Special Education committee met last Wednesday at Grant School. He said that himself, Mrs. Boyle, Mrs. Wolak, and Mr. Pennisi met with Mr. Andrew Brandon, the Director of Special Services. He said that they visited the MD class and got to see the LD class. They also got to meet with some of the teachers which was a good experience. That school will be dropping the MD program next year due to student population, which is expected. He said that next month they will arrange to go to Kennedy School.

Traffic Liaison

No Report

SEPAC Liaison

Last Wednesday, SEPAC had a meeting with POAC (Parents of Autistic Children). They met at the library and made a presentation on Hidden Dangers. It was a very good program. He said that as a parent of a child with special needs and having a brother with adult special needs, he was astounded by one specific fact: the average life expectancy of a typical person is about 78 years old. The average life expectancy of someone with autism is 36. The chance of hurting themselves is 70% higher than a typical person. The biggest thing that gets them is drowning. He said that a lot of the things that they spoke about were very good for all of the attendees. He said that one thing that he was able to take away from it was that there were two nurses from South Brunswick and they made it very clear that when they do Professional Development in their district, they are the presenters and not the receivers of the education. They thought that it was great that they were there to learn it. Mr. Both said that he is going to get that information and pass it on to Dr. Lishak so that the district can look into doing it for our nurses.

This past Sunday, SEPAC had their fundraiser for SEPAC and Special Services. They served over 100 meals at Applebee's for breakfast. It was greatly attended. It was a great experience for the athletes and the students that helped out as well as the volunteers.

Next month SEPAC will be meeting with the Director of Special Services so there will not be a public meeting.

Legislative Liaison

Mrs. Boyle said that the Governor signed a bill into law requiring ID's for all of the students who go on trips, athletic events, and bus transportation. Each school district has to create their own policy. They also want a list of students who ride on the buses to all of these events so that they can take attendance to make sure that nobody is missing.

Mrs. Boyle said that her County team met with Senator Diegnan on Monday. She said that she invited Dr. Lishak but she wasn't in district. Mr. Jones from the State NJSBA was also there. She said that they discussed the funding formula; they know that it is based on resident amounts, student enrollment and taxes and our taxes have not gone up, our student enrollment has dropped and so has the amount of residents. She said that Senator Diegnan is going to try to bring this forward to have an equal funding formula because there are other towns who receive so much more money than us, who are bigger than some of those towns.

We also talked about extraordinary aid for Special Education. The cost to send students out of district and also the cost to pay for transportation. She said that transportation costs vary on where we send our students. Some of them start at \$45,000 and they go up to \$100,000 plus. Mrs. Boyle said that should not be on the school district. That extraordinary aid it supposed to come from the Federal Government and Senator Diegnan asked us to put together a report outlining all of the things that we would like to discuss and also, the IDEA is not fully funded so we are looking to include that into our report.

Mrs. Boyle said that the State will be paying for the installation and cost of the panic button for all of our schools. Mr. Chapman asked if we will be reimbursed for ourse and Mrs. Boyle said, yes.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Giannakis congratulated Mrs. Benton on receiving tenure. Mr. Giannakis also said that board members listen to a lot of things and they hear a lot of negativity out there all of the time but what he saw tonight makes it so worthwhile to be a board member. Between the "Be Kind" presentation and all the athletes that we recognized, this is what it's all about. It's about the kids and we always have to remember to bring it back to the kids and it was great thing to see tonight.

Mr. Farinella said that he would like to echo Mr. Giannakis' comments. He said that we have congratulated our coaches and athletes but he would also like to congratulate our teachers and thank them because every kid that is on an athletic team or in a play or other activities has a teacher that somehow had to do something different to allow that kid to

get a to a match or a game. Mr. Farinella thanked the teachers.

Mrs. Miller congratulated Mrs. Benton on her tenure. She congratulated all of the athletes and their coaches who were honored tonight. They should be proud of their accomplishments; they are all part of what makes our school district so special. Mrs. Miller said that the Random Acts of Kindness Club is a wonderful idea. She said that she doesn't know whose idea it was but it is absolutely wonderful. She said that it is inspiring to see the enthusiasm that this club has instilled in others in the high school and throughout the district.

Mrs. Miller said, to add on to Mrs. Boyle's earlier comments about the meeting with Senator Diegnan, they discussed Special Education and he asked Chris Jones from NJSBA to write a policy and recommendation for him regarding getting funding based on the headcount rather than the 15.2% which every district gets. If you have more than 15.2 % you are losing funding and if you have less then that you are gaining funding. Mrs. Boyle said that Senator Diegnan did ask Mr. Jones to please write a recommendation that he can bring forward and start some legislative initiatives and perhaps even bring it to a bill.

Mrs. Boyle congratulated the athletes, Mrs. Benton, and the teachers who all support the extracurricular clubs and activities. She said that she knows they are the first ones to come out and buy the t-shirts and support all the different drives. Thank you for being there for our students, as always.

Mrs. Boyle said that our Unsung Heroes dinner was held on March 26th. That is sponsored by the Middlesex County School Boards Association. She said that they had over 400 guests and honored 69 students who have met and overcame challenges in their lives.

Mrs. Boyle also said, with regard to the drug court, the Mayor's Wellness Committee hosted that drug court on December 5, 2017. Bob Jones, who is the Superior Court Judge for the drug court, Mrs. Doyan, Mayor Anesh, Prosecutor Kubriet, and two recovering addicts, along with Carrier Clinic and JFK's program. Mrs. Boyle says she thinks it is fantastic. Prosecutor Kubriet, Judge Jones, Mrs. Doyan and herself all hope that this will continue on in the school districts where the students will be able to go and see these programs, actually witness the drug court ongoing. Mrs. Boyle thanked Sam Fierra for arranging that. We are hoping to continue that for next year.

Mrs. Boyle said that the high school musical was exceptional. They did such a great job with the scenery and it was one of the best plays that she has seen. Also, Grandparents Day at Roosevelt school was an exciting event for the kindergarten students, Mr. Diehl, and his staff.

The Mayor's Autism Awareness event took place on Sunday at the Senior Center. We had parents bring their children. There were all kinds of crafts. Mrs. Boyle thanked Danielle Staunton for authoring her book and reading it to the students. She thanked

Jessica Spina for helping to arrange the crafts and Mayor Anesh and Mrs. Doyan who came out to be a part of that event. Also, Dr. Merola was there from St. Peters. She is in charge of childhood development and David Japersaud who is the director of the children's hospital at St. Peters.

Mr. Both said he was not able to attend the Unsung Heroes dinner and asked who the unsung heroes for our district were. Mrs. Boyle responded to say Matthew Cassio and Alana Essien-Applewhite.

Mr. Cassio congratulated Mrs. Benton for receiving tenure. Mr. Cassio said that he visited a few events over the past few weeks. The Wizards game was a great fundraiser. He said that he hopes that they made a lot of money to get things that they need for the schools that they sponsored.

Mr. Cassio said that he attended the Unsung Heroes County Awards Dinner and said that the kids really appreciated being recognized. He said he knows that his son and Alana did. He said that in the future, for an event like that, he would like to see more promotion of the children and less of promoting who was involved with it. Mr. Cassio said that he was disappointed to see how it was projected. It seems they have gotten away from talking about the children, whether it is autism or unsung heroes or any other event and we kind of went toward self-promotion. Mr. Cassio said that he is getting tired of it. The focus needs to be on the children, that is why we are here. He said that he is tired of naming names of who is involved. He said that he would like the focus to stay on the kids.

Mrs. Wolak said that she really appreciates what the kids did with the "Be Kind" program and she hopes that in the future, maybe next year, the high school kids can bring that down to the other schools and have the cards available for the teachers and the whole system that they are setting up. She said that she thinks that would be wonderful.

Mr. Chapman said that we honored our athletes who had a tremendous season. He said that also has a list of all of the colleges that our students have been accepted to. Mr. Chapman said that he loves to see our athletes do well but he also loves to see our students do well. Mr. Chapman also said that we have a lot of kids that are going into the trade unions as well. He said that you don't have to go to college to be a success. He said that some of his richest clients are tradespeople. Mr. Chapman said that we have a great group of kids and a great group of teachers and things are really going in the right direction in this district right now.

Mr. Chapman said that the yearbook is asking the Board if we will take out a full page add in the years' book. It's \$280.00 and is up to the pleasure of the Board. He said he thinks that it is a good thing and we should do that.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

RESOLVED, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 47-:1A-1 *et. seq.*) that the Board meets in closed session at this time to discuss confidential matters pertaining to: (select one or more)

1. a matter rendered confidential by federal or state law
2. a matter in which release of information would impair the right to receive government funds
3. material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy
4. a collective bargaining agreement and/or negotiations related to it
5. a matter involving the purchase, lease, or acquisition of real property with public funds
6. protection of public safety and property and/or investigations of possible violations or violations of law
7. pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation and/or matters of attorney-client privilege
8. specific prospective or current employees unless all who could be adversely affected request an open session.
9. deliberation after a public hearing that could result in a civil penalty or other loss

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the matters discussed in closed session shall be made public as soon as the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mrs. Wolak VOTE: 9-0

XIV. AGENDA APPROVAL

RESOLVED, that the agenda for the regular public meeting on April 17, 2019, as may have been modified, is hereby approved.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mrs. Miller VOTE: 9-0

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business of the Board, there was a motion to adjourn at 6:48 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis SECOND: Mr. Farinella VOTE: 9-0

Respectfully submitted,

Alex Benanti
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

