

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

**Committee of the Whole/ Board Retreat Meeting
Wednesday, August 23, 2017 – 6:00 P.M.
South Plainfield High School
200 Lake Street
South Plainfield, NJ 07080**

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Seesselberg called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO FLAG

III. ROLL CALL- James Damato

Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Present: Mrs. Anesh, Mrs. Boyle, Mr. Cassio, Mr. Chapman, Mr. Farinella, Mr. Giannakis, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Glover, Mr. Seesselberg

Also Present: Dr. Noreen Lishak, Superintendent; Ms. Mary Malyska, Assistant Superintendent; James Damato, Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary; Joseph Roselle, Legal Counsel

IV. BOARD PRESIDENT

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.

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 5, 2017.

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.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. Presentation of 2016/2017 District Standardized Scores

Dr. Lishak introduced Ms. Malyska to present the district's New Jersey Standardized Scores as required by the State of New Jersey.

Ms. Malyska presented and overview of the 2016-2017 scores for Advanced Placement Exams, PARCC Mathematics and ELA for grades 3-8 and PARCC Subject Specific Mathematics and ELA for grades 9-11.

Following the presentation, Dr. Lishak said that as a result of the assessment scores, the district has developed a plan of action to address the particular grade spans in academic areas. She said that they will be focusing on a number of the areas as we move forward into the 2017-2018 school year. Targeted professional development will be provided to our teachers in the South Plainfield Middle School, addressing various mathematic instructional strategies designed to present information in various formats to our Middle School students.

We have increased classroom instruction time at the Middle School by nine minutes per course, allowing for an additional 45 minutes of instruction per course each week. In addition, districtwide, we are focused on improving writing and reading skills through increased writing on all grade levels. The district will continue to utilize data collected through student assessments, both general classroom and standardized assessments, using the data to drive instruction in the classroom. The district will also be utilizing RTI, Response to Intervention, in an effort to support students who are falling below grade level expectations.

Dr. Lishak reminded everyone that school begins for all students on September 6th. The parent portal for Grant, Middle School and High School students opened on August 21st. She asked that you go in so that you can complete the forms and see your child's schedule. Any student who has an issue with their schedule must reach out to the guidance department to make arrangements to meet with a guidance counselor. The parent portal for all elementary students will be opened on Monday, May 28th. Any issue or concern a parent might have should be discussed with the principal prior to the start of the school year. As a reminder, most of our forms are now online and parents will have to complete the forms prior to moving into their child's schedule. In addition, we are asking that you please visit our district website. There is a link on the front page that will connect you to the lunch application. If your child hasn't completed their summer reading assignments, there's still a couple of weeks left. All of the summer reading assignments can be located on the district website under summer reading in the link right next to the happy sun icon.

Handbooks can be located under their school link. It is important you familiarize yourself with the handbooks. The handbooks provide information on faculty, important dates, grading, graduation requirements, attendance, dress code and a variety of other important items you will need to reference during the school year.

Next, Dr. Lishak provided a facility project update. She said you'll notice all of the paving and construction work that's taking place. We are working hard with our contractors to ensure the projects are completed prior to the start of the school year, weather permitting. The broadcast room and Phase I of the stem lab at the High School will be ready for our first day of school, along with the continued installation of the security cameras and the new fire alarm at Grant School. We are also looking forward to the unveiling of the South Plainfield High School senior lounge area. All of the tables have been ordered and should be ready for our seniors by the start of the school year as well. Of all of the projects going on in the district, this lounge area seems to be receiving the most buzz among our students. We hear that they are looking forward to spending time in the lounge.

Many of you may have noticed that we have had a new scoreboard installed at Jost Field. Dr. Lishak thanked Investors Bank, the Athletic Booster Club and the Education Foundation for their generous donations. We will be formally unveiling the score board at our first football home opener on September 15th and we've invited representatives from these three groups to attend. In addition, Dr. Lishak said this is normally when she announces what games will be going on and how you can please go out and support these sport teams. There are so many scrimmages listed, that she asked that you go to the South Plainfield High School and South Plainfield Middle School individual school websites to view the schedules. Dr. Lishak is hoping that we have a wonderful turnout for all of the starts of our sports. Thank you so much.

VI. AGENDA ADDITIONS AND/OR DELETIONS

1. Public Comments on Agenda Items Only

None

VII. CURRICULUM/STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Curriculum Update - Administration

Ms. Malyska thanked all of the teachers who wrote curriculum over the summer. She said that we have approximately 77 guides written. This also links back to the data report that was given earlier, aligning instruction to the Common Core Standards and aligning instruction to the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. She said that our teachers worked very hard to do this. They all worked with the supervisors and turned it in on time. She thanked them and said that they did a great job.

VIII FINANCE

Finance Update – Administration

Mr. Damato reported that the transition to Systems 3000 software has been going very well. He thanked Mr. Fried, the Assistant Business Administrator, for taking the lead on that. He said that Mr. Fried is doing a fabulous job with getting that implemented and getting the staff trained.

In the next few months, we'll be having our annual single audit. Auditors will be coming in and they will be spending some time with us to review all of our books and then a report will be generated and presented to the Board sometime in the fall.

The capital projects that Dr. Lishak mentioned around the district are all within the budgeted amounts. He said that is great news for everybody and we are very happy to report that.

IX BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Buildings & Grounds Update – Administration

Mr. Damato said that the capital projects, both budgeted and bond projects for this year, are progressing well and they are all on schedule. He said that we hope and as Dr. Lishak said, weather permitting, that all of the work is going to be 100% complete by the opening of school.

We are currently developing a timeline for the remainder of the bond projects. That work will be over the next two summers so it is three years for all of the bond projects and the Board will be reviewing that timeline in the next few days.

DISCUSSION

Mrs. Boyle asked for copies for the minutes from the Finance Committee and Buildings and Grounds Committee. She said that everyone is entitled to those and asked to please make sure that all of the board members get copies of those minutes.

Mrs. Boyle asked if we have a project manager who oversees all of the projects that we are doing. Mr. Damato said that this year is an interesting year as far as project management goes because he and Mr. Wiggins are managing all of the projects in house.

We have an engineer who is on site but that's just one individual. Mr. Damato and Mr. Wiggins and the project engineer have been out every single day, meeting with the contractors and working out all of the issues that come up during the day. We don't have

a construction manager as we are providing those services in-house to the Board.

Mrs. Boyle said that was good and then asked if the design plans that we have submitted to the State were done by our prior architect.

Mr. Damato said that our past architect prepared very rudimentary drawings only to be used for application to the State for debt service funding and approval of the projects and that's it. For example, the paving project, complete specifications and plans were drawn by our project engineer which were a lot more detailed and are needed when you go out to bid.

Mrs. Boyle asked who was paid for the change orders. Mr. Damato said that he hasn't received any change orders submitted to him on paper yet. He said that he has been out every single day at every single job and he's worked out all these details with the contractor. There are certain changes that had to be made in the field and they had to be made on an expedited basis. For example, we bid these projects without a lot of extras. It's nice to have two or three handicapped ramps but we are only required to have one. In certain circumstances we thought that, based upon the fact that we were under budget, we thought we would add some of the extras and just make it a little more convenient for the students and the staff and the community.

Mrs. Boyle said that she understands that she commends him for going out every day with Mr. Wiggins and overseeing everything to make sure it is done correctly but she means when there is a change order done, which one was just done recently, who gets paid to do that change order.

Mr. Damato said that the change order is submitted by the contractor to the project engineer or the architect, as appropriate. Once it's reviewed, then it gets submitted to the business office. When we put these out to bid on the street, we specify in the bid, for example, if you need additional asphalt or additional concrete, there is a unit price built into the bid that the bidder is locked into. So it's just a matter of doing the math and once it's approved by the architect or the engineer it is submitted to the business office. Mr. Damato then reviews it to make sure it's okay and that the work is properly done. At that point he will present it to the Board.

Mrs. Anesh asked if we were able to expand any of the parking lots beyond the original footprint.

Mr. Damato said that we really didn't expand anything. We did move a lot of spots around, we did get extra spots by changing the striping in some areas but we didn't expand the footprint any more than what was there.

Mr. Seesselberg asked if any sidewalks were added. Mr. Damato said that with regard to the sidewalks, basically, they are the same of what was there. The curbs that were taken out were mostly 6" curbs. The specifications on the new curbs were 8" curbs. They are

much more durable, they take much more abuse from plows and things like that so that is a little bit of an improvement over what was there. With regard to Franklin School, if you walk around over there you will see that there was some extra concrete for a line-up area on the side of the school. That could have been done is asphalt but it's a much better job, it will last a lot longer, it's money well spent to put that little extra bit of concrete there to make the project look good and to get the performance that you are looking to get in the years to come.

Mrs. Miller said that right now it looks like the projects are going well but it is the 23rd and school does open up in two weeks. So if these projects are not completed and the contractors have to work at night or weekends, we are not going to be charged for any extra overtime, correct? Mr. Damato said that they have been working overtime since the project started. They have been working every Saturday. Mr. Damato said he doesn't know about Sundays. He said if they have been there Sunday's it was without his knowledge or approval because the town ordinance says they can work on Saturdays but not on Sundays. He said that he made that clear to them in the preconstruction meetings. He knows that they have been out there until 5 or 6 o'clock. Right now, Diamond Construction is out there working on the High School. When they go past the normal union hours the overtime is all on them.

X PRESENTATION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

Buildings & Grounds

Mr. Giannakis said that he doesn't have anything to add to Mr. Damato's update.

Curriculum

Mrs. Glover said that she included the minutes in the Friday packet. She reported that they had a really nice presentation from Ms. Garcia, our ELA supervisor, on the ELA STEM initiative. She discussed how she has collaborated with the Science Supervisor and the staff in our buildings to infuse Language Arts with Science as per the standards. One component of this initiative is linking informational text to Science Standards. Secondly, in preparation for the opening of the new school year, we also talked about making sure that we had a meet and greet for all elementary and kindergarteners coming in and new students transitioning into the district. Locker Camp and orientation at Grant, orientation at the Middle School and orientation at the High School were held. South Plainfield High School also has some new classes coming for dual credit for the fall of 2017. This means that students can earn high school and college credit at the same time. There are currently six courses aligned with Middlesex County College and five courses aligned through Seton Hall Project Acceleration for dual credit. We also have Project Lead the Way starting up in the fall as our new STEM initiative. The 2017-2018 school year will be offering some parent academies, hopefully to educate our parents in our community on various topics. Each supervisor is responsible for a topic in their content area. Ms. Malyska also provided the committee with the district assessment calendar for

this school year which we will be approving tonight. Also, the committee was afforded a list of appropriate movies that have been reviewed and approved for use in our schools to avoid any problems. The Committee has also requested that the Superintendent do data tracking analysis for this SAT prep course that we offer here at the High School to help determine how effective the SAT course is because the parents do pay for it. Additionally, we talked about information on the high school enrollment numbers in all the courses to ensure we are in compliance with district policies. We also received information regarding our co-op program for the high school of which we have 19 students pre-registered for the fall. The summer curriculum, as you heard from Ms. Malyska, will all be completed by the fall. Also, the PARCC testing has been completed for those students that needed to have that course. We also discussed the LAMP program is now a club because it used to be for G&T previously. Now that we have an official G&T program in our elementary schools, LAMP has now been dissolved. The committee received a preliminary overview of the PARCC but today we got the full presentation.

Finance

Mr. Chapman said that he has nothing additional to what Mr. Damato covered.

Policy

Mrs. Miller said that there are some policies that need to be reviewed so she will be setting up a policy meeting around the third week in September.

Public Relations

Mr. Seesselberg said that they hope to have a meeting next week and try to get some of the good news out to the community before the beginning of school.

Shared Services

Mrs. Boyle said that they just had a meeting two months ago.

Special Education

Mrs. Glover said that we were able to have a nice meet and greet with Ms. Castronovo, our new Special Services Director. She said that she included the notes because she is trying to keep the full board informed as to what's going on in the committees that she chairs. She said that they talked in general about how many students we have currently enrolled in our special education program from elementary to the high school. How many are out of district and how many are speech only. Ms. Castronovo was working the buildings to see if she can become as familiar as she can with the individual buildings and their needs. Mrs. Glover said that she thinks that Mrs. Anesh might remember that we talked about the programs in a different building and why some schools don't have certain programs. She is reassessing how that is working out for this school year. Also,

Mr. Freund is working with the district professionals to do some professional development on a new tool that we have called Goal Book. It's a program focused on instructional best practices in current research and planning systems. Mr. Freund has an intensive professional development day on October 9th with that staff. This summer has been really busy with regard to completing all of the IEP requests and we are working to be within 100% compliance. Our Project Higher program which is our students who are going to be working within the town of South Plainfield is all set for this school year.

Transportation

Mrs. Boyle said that as soon as school starts she'll be calling a meeting to make sure that everything is running smoothly with the drop-off and pick-ups.

Traffic Liaison

Mr. Cassio said that there is nothing to report at this time.

SEPAC Liaison

Mrs. Glover said that she just wants to make the community is aware that the SEPAC executive board did have a chance to have an introduction meeting with Ms. Castronovo.

Legislative Liaison

Mrs. Boyle said that there is nothing to report at this time.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

XII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

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. Glover VOTE: 9-0

Following executive session, the Board began their annual board retreat. Maryanne Friedman of New Jersey School Board Association reviewed the Board's self-evaluation including: an analysis of the specific categories, strengths and opportunities for growth, challenges and solutions, recommendations and reviewed an action plan for creating board goals. Next, Mr. Roselle presented an ethics review to the members of the Board of Education.

The Board re-entered public session at 8:06 p.m.

XIV. AGENDA APPROVAL

RESOLVED, that the agenda for the regular public meeting on August 23, 2017, as may have been modified, is hereby approved.

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

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business of the Board, there was a motion to adjourn.

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

Respectfully submitted,

James J. Damato
Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary