

**SOUTH PLAINFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

125 Jackson Avenue  
South Plainfield, NJ 07080  
Telephone: 908-754-4620

**Committee of the Whole Meeting – Wednesday, November 8, 2017 – 6:30 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 6:38 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO FLAG

III. ROLL CALL- James Damato

Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary

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

Absent: Mr. Cassio, Mr. Chapman

Also Present: Dr. Noreen Lishak, Superintendent: Ms. Mary Malyska, Assistant Superintendent: Mr. James Damato, Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary: Mr. Joseph Roselle, Legal Counsel: Mr. Thomas Wiggins, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds; Mr. Stephen Fried, Assistant Business Administrator

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

Dr. Lishak said that American Education Week begins November 13<sup>th</sup>. Each school will have activities in the buildings for parents to participate in during the week. Elementary schools have scheduled classroom visitation on various days. Grant School will hold a principal roundtable discussion on Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>. Middle School will hold a coffee chat with Mr. Vroom on Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup> and the High School will hold a principal chat on Tuesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>. A reminder e-mail will be sent from each of the school buildings.

Today, South Plainfield Middle School, Kennedy School and Roosevelt School held Veteran's Day Programs honoring the brave men and women who served our country. The presentations were beautiful and many of our South Plainfield retired veterans, as well as veterans from Menlo Park Veteran's Home, joined us this morning for the touching celebration. Thank you to all of them for their service and to our South Plainfield students for their participation through music, song and poetry.

Dr. Lishak reminded everyone that elementary school conferences are scheduled for November 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>, High School conferences are scheduled for November 16<sup>th</sup>, Grant School conferences are scheduled for December 1<sup>st</sup> and Middle School conferences are scheduled for December 7<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Lishak congratulated South Plainfield High School senior, Ria Soni, as the commended student in the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program. Commended students place among the top five percent of more than 1.6 Million students who entered the 2018 competition by taking the 2016 PSATs.

Congratulations to the following Edison Rotary Seniors of the Month:

September – Donia Mohtadi and Parth Patel

October – Jackie Battista and Joseph Kelly

November – Ria Soni and Brandon Wizda

Dr. Lishak said that the fall sports season is coming to an end. The football team has a consolation State game this Thursday at 6:00 p.m. at Jost Field. It is the final game of the season prior to the away game on Thanksgiving Day. The winter season will officially begin on November 20<sup>th</sup>, with the exception of swimming which started on November 6<sup>th</sup> and bowling starts on November 13<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Lishak congratulated our student athletes from South Plainfield High School who signed on to continue playing their sport in college:

Joseph Heilemann, North Carolina University for Wrestling  
Aubrey Marish, Stoneybrook University for Swimming  
Michael Stanczak, King University of Tennessee for Baseball.

Dr. Lishak reminded everyone that the South Plainfield Education Foundation is sponsoring the following events:

Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> is vendor day at Roosevelt School. The event runs from 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. with more than 50 vendors on hand.

The South Plainfield Education Foundation telethon will be held on Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. Letters will be sent to Borough residents asking for their support.

The South Plainfield Education Foundation Book Fair at Barnes and Noble will be held on Saturday, November 25<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Please come out and support these great events.

## VI. AGENDA ADDITIONS AND/OR DELETIONS

### 1. Public Comments on Agenda Items Only

Mrs. Boyle asked if that is just for the Committee of the Whole agenda. Mr. Seesselberg confirmed, yes, this is for the Committee of the Whole agenda.

## VII. CURRICULUM/STUDENT ACTIVITIES

### Curriculum Update – Administration

Ms. Malyska said that the STEM Parent Academy will take place on December 6<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. in the High School Information Center. This year's academy will feature teachers and their students demonstrating the new coding robots that are used in grades K-6, as well as, a demonstration of the Lego EV3 robots and programs that are used in the Middle School. The High School Robotics Team will be there and will be featuring their robot as well. In addition, students will be sharing information on the new Project Lead the Way computer programming course, Computer Programming Essentials. This is our first of many parent academies so it is great if parents can come out to learn more about the curriculum going on at the high school.

Ms. Malyska reported that there was a great professional development day for the teachers yesterday. Some of the topics included: project based learning, best practices,

preventative strategies for HIB, data driven instruction and differentiation for small group instruction. Also, everyone is being asked to approve the curriculum guides here. She said that she has all of the guides if anyone would like to see them. These are essentially alignment documents so they are not full written curriculum. Those guides will be written over the summer and approved next year.

1. Approve Curriculum Guides – 2017/2018

Approve the following Curriculum Guides:

English K – 12 Curriculum Alignment Course Guides shown in Tab VII.1

2. Approval of 2017/2018 NJQSAC Statement of Assurance

Approve the 2017/2018 NJQSAC Statement of Assurance shown in Tab VII.2

3. Approve the Designation of “American Education Week”

Acknowledge the designation of the week of November 13 – 17, 2017 as “American Education Week” to celebrate public education and honor individuals who are making a difference in ensuring that every child receives a quality education.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Seesselberg said that he thinks that every week should be American Education Week and that there are some events planned in the schools and it is very good to acknowledge all of the work that everybody does for education in America.

RESOLVED, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the foregoing resolutions.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis

SECOND: Mrs. Miller

VOTE: 7-0

VIII. PERSONNEL

Motion by Member Mr. Giannakis, seconded by Member Mrs. Miller, to accept the recommendation of the superintendent and adopt the following:

RESOLVED, that the South Plainfield Board of Education approve the following:

(NOTE: Approval of this resolution authorizes the superintendent to submit to the county superintendent applications for emergent hiring and the applicant’s attestation and proof that he/she has not been convicted of any disqualifying crime pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1 et. seq., N.J.S.A. 18A:39-17 et. seq., or N.J.S.A. 18A:6-4.13 et. seq. This includes background checks and fingerprinting for those employees listed below: (All appointments are contingent upon receipt of proper teaching certification, and all salary placements are pending receipt of college transcripts verifying degree status and letter stating years of service in other districts, \*denotes mentoring required.) **\*Indicates subject to change contingent upon contract settlement.**

**VIII.A Appointments, Transfers**

Code	Name	Action	Position	Deg /Step	Salary/ Hrly. Rate	Location	Date Effective	Date Term.	Discussion
1	Patullo, Jessica	Approve	BCBA	1 MA	\$54,405	District	11/09/2017	06/30/2018	Acct#:11-000-216-101-18

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis

SECOND: Mrs. Miller

VOTE: 7-0

IX. FINANCE

**Finance Update – Administration**

Mr. Damato reported that budget preparations have begun. Information will be sent to the schools so that they can complete their part. They are awaiting state aid figures that which won't come for another couple of months. On the expenditure side, they are putting the budget together so that they can do some real planning this year, as far as programs go and initiatives that Dr. Lishak has started. In addition, we are scheduling an audit exit conference for this upcoming week. We are going to be meeting with the auditors to go over their audit findings and we will have a presentation by the auditors, as required by law, to the full board in next month's meeting. We will hear all their findings and their full report at the December meeting.

DISCUSSION

Mrs. Boyle asked if everyone will receive a copy when the audit findings and report are done. Mr. Damato said that all board members will be able to review copies in the Business office and a copy will be given to each board member.

X BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

**Buildings & Grounds Update – Administration**

Mr. Damato said that they have been finalizing plans, timelines, and job details for all of the bond projects for the upcoming year. There is a great deal of effort going into this, including many meetings with Mr. Wiggins, the architects and Dr. Lishak to come up with the best possible scenario for our given budget for each project. There will be more to report in the next couple of weeks as we finalize these projects. We have a fixed amount of money to work with and we want to get the best possible product for South Plainfield.

Mr. Damato said that if you have been over to Jost Field, you maybe have noticed that there is some environmental sampling being done. They will be over there for the next couple of days so the track and bleacher complex will be temporarily closed. Mr. Damato

said that he is aware that there is a football game and he was assured that everything is going to be made safe for the players and the spectators in that area. If you see a drill rig over there, they are doing the core sampling to determine the soil bearing capacity as well as what is actually contained in the soils in that entire complex.

## DISCUSSION

Mrs. Boyle said that the gravel at Grant School in the big lot to the left is starting to break apart and come up. Mr. Damato asked Mrs. Boyle to confirm which lot she is talking about. Mrs. Boyle said it is Grant School, when you first pull in, the lot to the left. They paved over gravel and the gravel is starting to come up. Mr. Damato said that this is the first he is hearing about it and he will look into it. Mr. Damato said that we have a performance and maintenance bond, as well as retainage on all of the paving jobs. Mrs. Boyle said that it is crumbling and it shouldn't be.

## XI. PRESENTATION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

### Buildings & Grounds

Mr. Giannakis reported that the Buildings and Grounds committee is meeting on Monday of next week.

### Curriculum

Mrs. Glover said that there was a curriculum meeting on Monday. She thanked Ms. Malyska for the presentations that were given by two of our supervisors and two of our teachers. Mr. Goszewski and Dr. Weiner provided information on the Project Lead the Way course that we are now offering at the high school.

Mrs. Glover said that they also talked about the curriculum alignment documents that are being approved this evening. They also discussed dual credit courses and that our Interim Guidance Counselor was able to approve additional courses for dual credit. South Plainfield High School offers about 12 credits where student can receive credit through Middlesex County College or Seton Hall University.

Also discussed at the curriculum meeting was the overnight trip as well as new course proposals for next year. Mrs. Glover reported that Ms. Malyska had the staff do new course proposals for next year for the High School and Middle School.

### Finance

Mr. Seesselberg said that there is a meeting scheduled for Tuesday. Mr. Chapman is not here tonight to report.

## Policy

Mrs. Miller said that there is a meeting scheduled for next Thursday and she asked if she can talk about the county meeting that just occurred.

There was a county meeting held last week. They reported that there were over 3,000 attendees at the convention. They also reported that some Boards have not completed their superintendent evaluation and that all records will be purged from school board's system in December. Mrs. Miller said that we already did ours. There will be a new Superintendent evaluation process coming forward that will be mandatory in 2018-2019.

Mrs. Miller said that Patrick Duncan, New Jersey School Board's Labor Relations Manager, discussed that as of October 20, 2017, the statewide average settlement for schools in 2017-2018 is 2.74 percent. 42% of contract settled helped achieve health care cost containment with 37% moving to Direct 15 or higher. He discussed the school employees' health benefit programs and there is going to be a 13% increase for 2018 and he talked a little bit about Municipalities and what they get when they are in that program.

Mrs. Miller said that there was also a presentation from James Flynn from Brown and Brown and he discussed the current trends and health benefits. He basically said that Direct 10 has become unsustainable for school districts. They also talked about looking at other healthcare carriers to try to lower premiums. They discussed the school health insurance funds, the HIF and the public employee trust funds which is a shared service. Basically, there is a lot of risk to the HIF but trust seems to be something that maybe we can take a look at. The insurance company holds all of the risk, it's a grouping of school districts joining together and it's been stable since its inception in 1986.

Mrs. Miller said that they were also advised that with self-insuring in August, the NJDOE established a rule change, permitting employers to self-insure medical plans with only ten percent risk between the expected claims and maximum liability at which a stop loss umbrella policy would then kick in. Previously, it was a 25% risk so they are advising that self-insurance might be a way to go with districts that have 300 or more employees. They also said that when we are self-insured that we are exempt from New Jersey State premium tax, the ACA health insurer fee as well as the carrier profit margin.

Also discussed was the Cadillac Tax happening in 2020 and urged us and said we can't think it won't happen. The highest area for healthcare is in the Northeast. We will be hit the hardest and there will be quite a tax put on districts once this comes about.

## Public Relations

Mr. Seesselberg said that there was not a specific Public Relations Committee meeting but the referendum review committee met on November 1<sup>st</sup>. It went well and Mr. English will report to the community here at the meeting next Wednesday.

Shared Services

Mrs. Boyle said that there is a Shared Services meeting scheduled for November 28<sup>th</sup>.

Special Education

Mrs. Glover said that their meeting this month was cancelled. The next meeting is December 5<sup>th</sup>.

Transportation

Mrs. Boyle said that they had a meeting and reported on it last month.

Traffic Liaison

Mr. Seesselberg said that Mr. Cassio is not here but that he understands that there has been some progress in the crosswalks, working with DPW and Councilman Vesce. Mr. Cassio will report on that next week.

SEPAC Liaison

Mrs. Glover said that SEPAC had a guest speaker on October 25<sup>th</sup>. The topic was working with students who were diagnosed with ADHD and how behaviorists can support those students.

Legislative Liaison

Mrs. Boyle said that right now, because of the elections, and getting settled into their new positions, there are no new bills. She said they are waiting to see if Governor Christie is going to sign off on anything.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

XIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Seesselberg said that he went to the Middle School and Kennedy School Veteran's Day programs and they were both very inspiring. The Middle School had Veteran's from the Menlo Park Veteran's Home. The respect of the students and the staff was just phenomenal.

Kennedy School had the VFW, American Legion and their relatives. He said that Mr. Both was there in his fatigues, the students sang a few songs and it was really impressive. Mr. Seesselberg said that he is sure the veterans were thrilled. The students were dressed in red, white and blue and were respectful. Mr. Hajduk did a nice video presentation. Dr. Lishak attended Roosevelt's program. Franklin School will hold their Veteran's Day

assembly on Tuesday. Also, the American Legion and the VFW will have their Veteran's Day ceremony this Saturday at 11:00 a.m. over at the American Legion on Oak Tree Road.

Mr. Seesselberg wished the football team good luck at their game tomorrow night at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Seesselberg congratulated Pio Pennisi, Stephanie Wolak and Keith Both on their election last night to join us up here. He said that he is looking forward to working with them in the coming years.

Mr. Seesselberg said that there isn't a policy as to how groups are vetted to put information on the signs outside of the schools. Right now it should only be things that are related to the school but there is no policy or guidance for the schools to go by to post things. Mr. Seesselberg said that there are two things he would like to discuss with the Board.

Mr. Seesselberg said that the vendor sale is this Saturday and the book sale is in two weeks. He said if we can let the Education Foundation put up information about the vendor sale on the electronic sign at the High School for this year and then ask the policy committee to come up with some type of guidance for the schools to make sure that anybody who is going to publicize any event on the board that it has something to do with the school, the student achievement within the schools, student benefit, something like that so that it doesn't become a public sign. He believes that anything that is related to the students and the school operations should be available to go up on those signs.

Mrs. Boyle said that in past practice, if you wanted something on the sign, Debbie Czech would post it up there. There were no rules or regulations.

Mr. Seesselberg said that is fine but going forward there needs to be some mechanism to say yes or no. Mr. Seesselberg asked for a quick straw poll for all those in favor of the policy committee coming up with something. The Board all agreed. The Board also agreed to allow the Education Foundation to publicize the Book Fair on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

#### XIV. 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.

Mr. Seesselberg said that action will be taken afterwards.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis                      SECOND: Mrs. Miller                      VOTE: 7-0

The Board returned to public session at 9:00 p.m. Mr. Farinella did not return to public session.

The following resolutions were added to the agenda following executive session:

RESOLVED, that after consideration of the information presented by the parents during this evening executive session, the board of Education hereby affirms the administration's decision in H.I.B. Appeal matter #Grant No. 1, pursuant to Board Policy and applicable law; and

Be if further RESOLVED, that the Superintendent is hereby directed to provide written notification to the parent of the Board's decision.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis                      SECOND: Mrs. Miller                      VOTE: 4-0-2  
Mrs. Boyle abstained.  
Mr. Giannakis abstained.

Be it RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the settlement agreement with employee #1647 and the South Plainfield Education Association, in accordance with the terms therein, and be it resolved that the Administration is authorized to take any and all action required to effectuate the settlement in accordance with its terms.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis                      SECOND: Mrs. Miller                      VOTE: 6-0

XV. AGENDA APPROVAL

RESOLVED, that the agenda for the regular public meeting on November 15, 2017, as may have been modified, is hereby approved.

Mrs. Boyle said with the change. Mr. Giannakis asked what the change was and Mr. Roselle responded that number seven on page three was Approval of the Following Parent Organizations and Organizations that Fundraise for Student.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis                      SECOND: Mrs. Miller                      VOTE: 6-0

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

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

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis                      SECOND: Mrs. Miller                      VOTE: 6-0

Respectfully submitted,

James Damato  
Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary