

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

Committee of the Whole Meeting – Wednesday, February 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 6:30 p.m.

II. SALUTE TO FLAG

III. ROLL CALL- James Damato
Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary

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

Mr. Farinella arrived at 6:53 p.m.

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. Steven Fried, Assistant Business Administrator; Mr. Thomas Wiggins, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds; Mr. Marc Zitomer, 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 NJCCCS and the Common Core 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. 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. Miller

VOTE: 7-0

VI. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

1. Good News and Progress in our Schools

Dr. Lishak provided an update on the proposed referendum scheduled for March 14, 2017. There are a number of documents with important information listed on the district website as well as the district Facebook page. In-person meetings are scheduled throughout the months of February and March. There is an on-line question and answer session scheduled for Wednesday, February 22, 2017. This

format will not be open to the public to attend, however, you will have the opportunity to watch from your homes and send in questions in real-time during the live event. Dr. Lishak and Mr. Damato will answer the questions in regards to the referendum. In addition, there is an open house scheduled in all of our district schools on Monday, February 13, 2017. The public can go in and take a look at the projects that we have proposed for the referendum.

Today, there was a safety and security drill at South Plainfield High School. Our district, along with the South Plainfield Police Department, conducted a drill that proved to be very successful. Our district administration, teachers, staff and students reacted to the drill in an appropriate manner. It is our intention to continue to drill throughout the school year.

Happenings in our school include: Daddy/Daughter Dance at Franklin School on February 10th, Designer Bag Bingo at Roosevelt School also on February 10th at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are \$10.00 and there are just a few left. Grant School Students of the Month for the responsibility character trait are: Fifth Grade - Kaitlyn Pascale, Katherine Marin and Gavin Alessi and Sixth Grade - Izabel Diaz and Johnson Nguyen.

Dr. Lishak shared important information regarding South Plainfield High School sports. Our wrestling team is in the State Sectional Wrestling Championship. Tonight, sectional semis are taking place here at the high school. The finals will take place in the high school on Friday evening. Fingers crossed we will be at the Group State Championship this coming Sunday in Toms River in the Pine Belt Arena.

South Plainfield High School student, Lanasia Neal, bowled a 300 last weekend. Boys bowling is competing in the team State Championship this weekend on Saturday. Individual bowling States start next week.

Our co-ed swim team made the State sectionals for the first time in the programs history, however, we lost to Bayonne on Tuesday.

Our boys and girls basketball will be starting their GMC tournament next week. Dates will be posted on our website.

Due to the impending snow storm and the predicted snowfall accumulations, the South Plainfield School District will be closed tomorrow, all activities are also cancelled.

2. Budget Development Update – 2017/2018

The budget development update was given under Finance, section IX.

3. Presentation of Violence and Vandalism/HIB Report for Period 1
July 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016

Dr. Lishak read the HIB investigation and outcomes from July 1, 2016 through December 31, 2016. The High School had three reported cases. Two were reported by staff and one was reported by a student. Two cases were founded and one was unfounded. The Middle School had two cases reported by students. One was founded and one was not founded. Grant School had one unfounded case that was reported by a parent. Franklin School had two unfounded cases reported by parents.

Dr. Lishak reported the information from the violence and vandalism report that was submitted to the State. In our school district we had eleven reported incidents of violence and one of vandalism. There were two of weapons, two of substance abuse, one of HIB. We had fifteen student offenders, we had five student victims, eleven assignments to educational programs, and eleven home assignments. We had twelve out-of-school suspensions, one in-school suspension and the police were notified six times.

VII. AGENDA ADDITIONS AND/OR DELETIONS

1. Public Comments on Agenda Items Only

Mr. Seesselberg said that there are two agenda additions under Finance that he would like to read in. The first is to accept the gift donation of marketing services and/or all materials for publication of the referendum from Wealth Management, LLC at no cost to the district.

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

The second agenda addition is to accept the gift donation from the New Jersey Department of State for the South Plainfield Middle School students, grade 7 and 8, up to 100 students to attend the screening of the movie, Hidden Figures, as part of Black History month. The cost per student is \$10.20 to be paid by the Department of State, in addition to, as many chaperones as needed. The cost to the District is for transportation only. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, February 21, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

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

VIII. CURRICULUM/STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Curriculum Update – Administration

Ms. Malyska said that she is excited to announce that this is the first year the New Jersey Department of Education has offered up extra seats at their Statewide PARCC trainings. We will have all building representatives attending PARCC trainings this upcoming week so this is a great time for building administrators to get more comfortable with the technology and turnkey this to their staffs. In addition, we've been working hard to prepare our students for PARCC, focusing specifically on areas of weakness from last year. The district has been working very hard with the research simulation task as well as all of the informational texts and pairing throughout the different subject areas. The teachers and the building administrators have been doing an excellent job with that.

IX. FINANCE

Finance Update – Administration

Mr. Damato said that the Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for next Monday.

Mr. Damato, Mr. Fried and Dr. Lishak have been in the process of putting the budget together and making sure all of the appropriations are in the right place.

The district is waiting for state aid figures to come in. Once the state aid figures are received, the completed package with tax increase information, personnel counts and all of the programs that will be included in the budget can be presented to the Board. Until the state aid numbers are received, it is difficult to put together a true picture without making assumptions on what the state aid might be.

There are rumors about getting the same as we got last year and there are also rumors that we are going to get a different amount so we are not quite sure how that is going to come out. The governor is expected to release those state aid figures in about two or three weeks. As soon as that comes out we will communicate that information to the Board and complete our budget process.

Mrs. Boyle asked if every member will get a copy of the budget so that they can all review it as it needs to be voted on in March. Mr. Damato said that is correct.

Mrs. Boyle asked for an explanation on Systems 3000 and if you move to Systems 3000, will every person that's employed here have to then be trained on that system?

Mr. Damato that the secretaries in the offices will need to be trained on entering purchase orders and things of that nature, however, that is a very limited aspect of the systems. The Business Office is the primary user and the primary group that would need to be trained if the Board wanted to initiate that change to a new software vendor.

Mrs. Boyle said when she reviewed this program, it said “stand alone” or “network” and asked for clarification on which it would be.

Mr. Damato said that he would have to discuss the details with Michael Estrada to make sure but as far as he was told, all of our hardware meets the requirements of Systems 3000 so it would run on our network.

Mrs. Miller asked about how long after the state figures come in will the Board get the preliminary budget to review.

Mr. Damato said that should only take a week to put together, barring any emergencies or any unforeseen circumstances. He said that Steven Fried has done a great job of putting all the numbers in the appropriations side and proving out those numbers, which involved a great deal of effort.

In regards to the revenue side of the budget, there are about a half a dozen numbers that need to be plugged in so it’s not an enormous amount of work but it’s critical to the process and critical to get to the bottom line of how much we are going to appropriate as a tax levy and what programs are going to be affected, if any.

Mrs. Miller asked if they are going to have to approve the preliminary budget in March because if they do that is not going to give the Board enough time to review the budget.

Mr. Damato said that the Board will have plenty of time to review the budget. He said that they plan to present it to the Board well in advance of the meeting where you are going to be asked to approve it. Mr. Damato said that they can’t give a preliminary budget until the State provides our numbers so our hands are tied. It would be great if the State gave us our numbers in November or December but they do it when they adopt their budget so we are kind of at their mercy because a large portion of our budget is made up of state aid.

Mrs. Miller asked if he could also explain what IC2 computers is. We have to vote on that for next week. It says it’s for technology support but what exactly is that?

Mr. Damato said that he will follow up with Michael Estrada, who is handling that and provide a memorandum in the Friday packet.

Mrs. Miller said that there is a placeholder for internet provider and asked if we are changing providers.

Mr. Damato said that Mike Estrada is in the process of obtaining and second quote. He would have liked to have had that information for tonight but it was unavailable as late as this afternoon. He said that he is hopeful that the information for that can go home in the Friday packet as well.

Mr. Giannakis asked if changing the internet provider would help with the unavailable or restricted calls that are sometimes still coming up. Mrs. Boyle said that she has Verizon and it used to come up as “no caller” but in the past two weeks it has been coming up as “school”.

1. Approval of Lease Agreements with Atlantic Tomorrow’s Office for Two (2) Copiers - State Contract A40467

RESOLVED, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the five-year lease agreements in accordance with the terms and conditions contained therein, through NJ State Contract #A40467 with Atlantic Tomorrows Office for the following two copiers:

- a. Model MP3554SP Savin Copier with quoted accessories for the Transportation Department @ \$223.84 per month
- b. Model MP2554SP Savin Copier with quoted accessories for the High School B& G Department @ \$99.65 per month

2. Board Member/Staff Member Conference/Travel

The following individuals have registered for conferences, seminars, etc., which are compliant with State payment guidelines; with Board Bylaw 0147; employee/Board Member job responsibilities and critical to the needs of the school district. (Account 11.000.230.585.12)

| <u>Participant</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>Date and Location</u> | <u>Cost/Mileage</u> |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Deborah Boyle | NJSBA Legislative Committee Meeting | February 11, 2017 NJSBA Trenton, NJ | Cost: \$ 00.00 Mileage: \$23.56 |

3. Accept Gift Donation

Accept the donation of marketing services and/or all materials for publication of the Referendum from Wealth Management, LLC at no cost to the district.

4. Accept Gift Donation

Accept the donation from NJ of State for South Plainfield Middle School students, grades 7 and 8, up to 100 students, to attend the screening of the movie Hidden Figures as part of Black History month. The cost per student is \$10.20 to be paid by the Lt. Governor’s office in addition to as many chaperones as needed. The cost to the district is transportation only. The event is scheduled for Tuesday, February 21, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Giannakis said that it is nice that these people donate their time and their energies

and their equipment.

MOTION: Mr. Giannakis

SECOND: Mrs. Boyle

VOTE: 7-0

Mrs. Boyle abstained on the marketing. She said absolutely, yes, under the Hidden Figures. The Lieutenant Governor had reached out to herself and Councilman White regarding the movie.

X. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Buildings & Grounds Update – Administration

Mr. Damato said that we had a window fall out of our building when someone tried to open it today. He predicted that the windows were installed in 1962. When the new addition was added to Roosevelt School, the windows in the old section were replaced. They are about 54 years old. The windows before that, in the old section, lasted for 34 years from 1928 until 1962 but we currently have 55 year old windows in the administration building. They are just like the windows in Kennedy and Riley and Franklin that we are replacing in this bond referendum. They are very difficult to repair and right now we have plywood in the window and that's the best we can do for now. It was unfortunate but someone just tried to open a window on a warm day and the window fell out.

Mr. Damato said that the district is ready for the snow. Mr. Wiggins, his team and all of our equipment are all ready for the snow. We fully expect that there won't be a snow day on Friday. That's one of the things that Mr. Wiggins prides himself in and his workers have been very diligent and very helpful whenever we've had situations like this in the past. This is a little bit bigger of a snowfall so it's a little bit more of a challenge for them and the winds are going to create a lot of problems because they are going to cover up areas that were plowed almost immediately after. We are going to continue working on it all day tomorrow and Mr. Damato thinks that by Friday morning they will be safe to open.

Mr. Damato said that as Dr. Lishak pointed out earlier, we're doing a lot of town hall meetings to try to education the public on the bond referendum and he thinks that all of those projects have been well received. A lot of questions have been asked and if anybody else has any questions about the bond referendum, please call our offices or ask Dr. Lishak's secretary to schedule a time to meet with your group.

Mr. Damato said that Mr. Wiggins is, again, working on a variety of issues. We have heat issues in this building that we really would like to address. This year we have some plans to take care of issues outside of the bond referendum so those projects will also be done in the next few months. The Buildings and Grounds Committee will be meeting in the next couple of weeks and there will be more to report to the Board at a future date.

DISCUSSION

Dr. Lishak thanked the Board for allowing the District to order the equipment that, on Mr. Wiggins' recommendation, we so desperately needed for our snowstorm. She said she feels a lot better this evening, compared to the way she had been feeling. We now are fully equipped to handle a snowstorm of this magnitude that we are receiving tomorrow.

Mrs. Anesh said that she doesn't remember if she brought this up or not but wanted to ask if there is anything that can be done with the snow along Morris Avenue at Riley School. The snow gets piled up against the curb and there is nowhere for the kids to get out and it forces them to go into the street. She said she doesn't know if there is a better way to do things but she wanted to make sure everyone was aware of that.

In the Middle School teacher's lot, a lot of times they push all the snow up against the back fence, which takes a quarter of the parking spaces away and makes it very difficult for cars to drive through.

XI. PRESENTATION OF COMMITTEE REPORTS

Buildings & Grounds

Mr. Giannakis said that the Buildings and Grounds committee plans to meet in the next two weeks

Curriculum/Student Activities

Mr. Farinella said that their meeting is scheduled for February.

Finance

Mr. Damato said that the meeting is scheduled for Monday.

Policy

Mrs. Miller said that they had a very brief emergency policy meeting. The committee reviewed the policy and regulation 9270 – Homeschooling and Equivalent Education Outside of the Schools. After discussing, the committee decided to leave the policy as is and not to make any changes at this time.

Public Relations

Mr. Seesselberg said that there hasn't been a meeting. He commended Dr. Lishak and Mr. Damato for their diligence in going around and getting the word out about the referendum and said that they've probably met a lot more people in this town

that a lot of us have. He said that he has heard good things about the reports coming back and the Facebook feed was about 700 views.

Dr. Lishak said that they've had just about 1,000 views now. She said that they produced eight videos and are releasing them, one by one, on Facebook so that they don't overwhelm the public. If you do not want to wait to see all of the videos on Facebook as they are released, they are up on the district website for review. Dr. Lishak said that we are asking that the public share them, put it anywhere that you would like on Facebook, they are looking for comments, feedback and for everyone to let their friends and neighbors and everyone know the importance of the referendum.

Shared Services

Mrs. Boyle reported that they are waiting for the referendum.

Special Education

Mrs. Glover said that they met on Monday. They talked with Mrs. Dalrymple regarding the number of students in out-of-district placements. We have four students that are graduating and aging out. They also discussed the financials and it costs \$3.1 Million for out-of-district placements and transportation.

The INRS regarding the preschool was discussed. According to the information received, there are not as many referrals coming into INRS regarding preschool.

In regards to the job coaching and the assignments, they learned that there are five students in placement, two are in need of a job coach, which is forthcoming and of the three students that are currently in a job placement, two were offered positions where they would be paid. Mrs. Glover said she believes those positions are at Mohn's florist and at the Auto Parts Store.

Also discussed was the upcoming PARCC assessment with regard to special needs students and the personal needs profiles that are done on each student. They discussed the accessibility features that will help them. The accessibility features are implemented year-long in their IEP and once the PARCC is given the students are already used to working with those accessibility features.

We have 26 students that take the Dynamic Learning Maps as an alternative test for the PARCC.

This year the district has had 66 referrals and 12 came through early intervention.

One of the things that the committee wants to discuss going forward is the district supporting the general education teachers in getting more training, specifically in

how to support students who might be presenting with special needs in their class, prior to them going into a testing phase if that's necessary.

We also received information that the behaviorist has been out and about doing the crisis prevention intervention training for the paraprofessionals.

Transportation

Mrs. Boyle said that there has been no transportation meeting yet.

Traffic Liaison

Mrs. Boyle said that at the council meeting on Monday night, she discussed the fact that in 2009, she, Jose Negron and the borough engineer walked Hamilton Boulevard. The Board of Education wanted to put a flashing light before you get to Belmont so that the trucks could see that there was a school there because trucks, hardly any, still come down the wrong path. In order to put that flashing light there we would have had to have approval from the county as it is a county road. The same thing with Maple Ave. Glenn Miller, who was the borough engineer at the time and is part of DPW now, worked on a grant for Safe and Secure Schools to have a flashing light on Maple Avenue near the PAL and also to have lighting run, actually in the street, from curb to curb. Again, that is county road so you have to have approval from the county to do that. Mrs. Boyle said that she and Glenn Miller worked on that twice for the Safe and Secure Schools. She said that she believed that councilman Vesce, who works for the county, is going to look into why we never got permission to do that.

SEPAC Liaison

Mrs. Boyle said that she went to the meeting where they talked about aging out where students can go. Dr. Lishak and Mr. Damato did a presentation on the referendum. There were about 18-20 people who were there. Somebody's walkie talkie kept going off which was kind of disruptive but that person left and she thinks it was well-received. Mrs. Boyle said that she always thinks that you do such a great job. They are very informative, she thinks they bring out the points and the safety of not only the buildings, but the students. There was only one person that really had a lot of questions who was kind of negative, other than that, she thinks they did a great job.

Legislative Liaison

Mrs. Boyle said that the governor signed some bills into law on February 6, 2017.

Bus Driver Testing Pilot Program establishes a "Commercial Driver License Testing Pilot Program" to provide for commercial driver license (CDL) testing by

private third-party vendors, and request the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission to authorize third-party administration of commercial testing on a more permanent basis on an evaluation of the program. The law aims to reduce the backlog of people seeking to obtain a CDL, which all New Jersey school bus drivers must possess.

New Lead-Screening Standards amends the state statutes related to childhood lead poisoning to require that New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) regulations regarding testing for, and responses to, elevated blood levels in children be consistent with the most recent recommendations of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The law also requires NJDOH to promulgate regulations concerning the responsive action to be taken when a child's blood level tests above the CDC benchmark, including performing environmental follow-up, providing notice to the child's family, performing additional screening of the family members and providing case management service.

Mrs. Boyle asked Mr. Damato what has been spent on the lead testing to date.

Mr. Damato said that all the lead testing was completed. We had two locations that came up high on the lead count so they were blocked off so that no one can use those sources until they were remedied. Mr. Wiggins is in the process of correcting those deficiencies now with putting in new pipes and new fixtures.

Mrs. Boyle said that originally, anybody that was tested before July 13th didn't get a reimbursement, but now they're looking to change that even if it was done after, the money be made available. That's in a proposed bill.

Special Education Prep Now Required provides that the State Board of Education must require that the preparation program for an instructional certificate include a minimum of 6 semester credit hours of classroom instruction or clinical experience in special education. The new law also requires the preparation program for an instructional certificate for a teacher of students with disabilities endorsement include credit hours in autism spectrum disorder, to address the educational needs of students with autism.

There is a bill before the legislators to pay the different districts funds for doing the lead testing. Originally the state made \$10M available.

Chronic Absenteeism requires that the State Department of Education will determine the definition of chronic absenteeism through regulations. The bill now goes to the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee.

Superintendent Salary Caps could prohibit the NJDOE from regulating the maximum salary amount a board of education could provide to a superintendent. They are renewing this with some modifications by the commissioner of

education. The controls include 2% tax-levy cap and statutory limits on the annual growth of a school district for administrative expenditures.

Textbooks for Every Child requires a board of education to provide an individual textbook for each student enrolled in a class. "Textbook" means books, workbooks or manuals, whether bound or in a loose-leaf form, or electronic textbooks, intended as the principal source of study materials for a given class. This bill is now primed for the Senate floor vote.

Computer Science Endorsement directs the State Board of Education to authorize a computer science education endorsement to the instructional certificate. The endorsement would authorize the holder to teach computer science classes in grades 7 through 12 beginning at such time as the State Board determines that there are a sufficient number of teachers holding the computer science education endorsement to make the requirement feasible.

School Bus Aides requires the minimum of one school bus aide for every 15 special needs students on a school bus. New Jersey School Boards Association opposed this bill because it mandates the aides without providing funding for the initiative.

Recovery School Admissions requires sending district to enter into an agreement with the school district that has established the recovery high school if a student from the sending district seeks admittance into the recovery high school and the placement is considered clinically appropriate by a certified alcohol and drug counselor or a licensed clinical alcohol and drug counselor. The bill eliminates the input of district boards of education and superintendents in these situations.

Schools as Immigrant Safety Zones is a resolution which also passed full Senate, it expressed that the legislative intent of the school district and public institution of higher education continue to serve a safe zone and resource center for students and families threatened by immigration or a discrimination to the fullest extent provided by the law.

The hearings on school funding continue. The senate select committee is also working on the school funding fairness formula.

Right now there are resolutions being passed by surrounding towns to educate every child no matter what their religion, race or country of origin is. There is also a resolution being passed by surrounding towns regarding rules and regulations for charter schools. Mrs. Boyle said that she has copies of these if the Board would like to review

At the county board of education meeting last week, Jonathan Bush, who is an attorney for the Bush Law Firm, presented on First Amendment Rights for

students and staff.

The student recognition dinner is March 1st at Old Bridge High School. Any board members that wants to attend can register through the business office. Dr. Lishak said that Mrs. Veirs is actually sending that information out on Friday about who would like to attend and those spaces are available.

Mrs. Boyle said that we usually have 360 plus people that attend the Student Recognition Dinner. She said the letter came from her as County Board President. Also, Kevin Ciak, who is the National School Boards President was honored by Middlesex County School Boards, along with Mark Biedron, who is the State Board of Education President and Don Webster who is School Board of State President. Mr. Ciak started when he was elected at age nineteen. He served for 23 years and was County School Board President and now is National School Board President.

Mrs. Boyle said that we also toured the JA Biz and Junior Achievement building where our meeting was hosted and she said she knows that Ms. Malyska is following through with that.

Ms. Malyska thanked Mrs. Boyle for the contact information. She said she has a meeting scheduled for Wednesday of next week. She will be going to their center in Edison to see how the program runs and she knows that we've had the program here in the past and she is looking to implement that for September.

Mrs. Boyle thanked Ms. Malyska for following through. She said that program is amazing. The students, starting in fifth grade, learn the ropes of owning a business.

XII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

XIII. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Miller said that she has a few additions regarding the county meeting that Mrs. Boyle just referred to. Attorney John Bush did a presentation of first amendment rights of students and staff. Students and staff have some first amendment rights while in school, although free speech cannot interfere with the main mission of the public school. A thorough and efficient education for all students is to be educated in a safe and secure environment.

The courts have ultimately held that learning is more important in the classroom than free speech. The main question that districts have to ask themselves is their disruption to the school. He went over a large number of cases involving both students and staff and some of the results were quite surprising and shocking.

Mrs. Miller reported that there was another school district that went over the charter school. Information was provided. There are currently five charter schools in Middlesex and Somerset counties, two were looking to expand, one currently in Franklin is looking to expand to Perth Amboy and to Old Bridge. Each would hold 360 students. There is another charter school in East Brunswick which is looking to expand their size by 25 seats per grade, K-8, which would be another 225 seats. Another charter school has been approved to open in Franklin in September of 2018. Many of them can't fill seats from students in their current town district so they are recruiting students from other towns. Districts from these two counties are calling for a moratorium on adding and expanding new charter school seats. Not that they want to get rid of the charter schools that already exist but prevent them from expanding. Highland Park had a resolution written and are asking districts to adopt it and Mrs. Miller said she believe Mrs. Boyle, who is the president of the county organization has that information.

Mrs. Glover echoed what Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Boyle spoke about in regard to the county meeting. She said she thinks that adopting that resolution is something that we should seriously consider because of the importance of it. The President of the school board in Highland Park went in detail explaining to us how it effects the public school funding.

Mrs. Glover thanked Ms. Malyska for following through with JA Biz. She said that is a very nice program. Mrs. Glover thanked the administrative team for their support. Six months ago she didn't know where this was going to be and now she sleeps well at night. She said that she appreciates not just what Dr. Lishak, Mr. Damato and Ms. Malyska does, but the entire team.

Mrs. Glover said that Dr. Lishak and Mr. Damato continually sing their praises about the support and she hopes that the community really hears what is happening in our district. It is on the road, it is on Facebook Live, it is on our website. She asked for the community to please be informed about this referendum so that an educated decision can be made for our students.

Mr. Giannakis said that he agrees on that. A window fell out of a building today and that tells you everything you need to know. Mr. Giannakis urged everyone to please go to the referendum meetings and ask questions. He also told everybody to enjoy their snow day tomorrow and to be safe.

Mrs. Boyle said that there were three winners at last night's spelling bee. One fifth grade student and two fourth grade students received gift cards. The robotics reveal will be held on February 21st at 6:30 p.m. in room 102. Yesterday's blood drive, hosted by the Middle School PTO with assistance from the High School Student Council and Mr. Encinas, brought in 56 units of blood plus 18 units from the ALEX machine. Mrs. Boyle said, while we discussed the calendar tonight, thank you Dr. Lishak for sharing that with the association. She congratulated the swim team for reaching their milestone.

Mr. Giannakis congratulated the competition cheering team as they took first place.

Mr. Farinella said that it is National School Counselor Week and there are unsung heroes in our schools. He gave a shout out and thanks to all of our counselors in the district for the services that they provide for our kids.

Mr. Seesselberg said, going back to the referendum, he thinks that Dr. Lishak and Mr. Damato are doing a very good job with the use of technology. You don't necessarily have to go to the meetings, although we'd like you to, since they are pushing it out through Facebook, videos, livestreaming, and the website so everybody can see it

Mr. Seesselberg said he had the opportunity to attend the Roosevelt School Multicultural Day assembly which was great. Parking was at a premium. The police were parking on the sidewalks and it was fully-attended. They really did a wonderful job.

Last Thursday, Mr. Seesselberg had the opportunity to attend the Senate Committee on School Funding Hearing at Middlesex County College, chaired by Senator President Steve Sweeney. It was a bipartisan committee that was put together by the Senate to take testimony and work on a school funding formula that works. Senate President Sweeney wants to get a solution in for the 2017/2018 budget cycle. They have a plan but it seems the problem is in the assembly. There was testimony by Senator Diegnan, superintendents and business administrators from Woodbridge, Highland Park, North Brunswick, Monroe, Freehold, Edison and a few others. If they had stuck with the school funding format of 2008 and actually fully funded it, South Plainfield would have received over \$2.2 Million in additional aid and there are some towns like Monroe who received \$31 Million dollars less than they should have. As enrollment goes up, the funding goes down. It's a big issue and the Senate is working on it.

Mr. Seesselberg announced that our board member, John Farinella, who is Principal of Rahway High School was named Secondary Principal of the Year on Monday.

XIV. AGENDA APPROVAL

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

MOTION: Mrs. Giannakis SECOND: Mrs. Glover VOTE: 7-0

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business of the Board, there was a motion to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Committee of the Whole Meeting
February 8, 2017

James Damato
Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary