

PUBLIC SESSION

JANUARY 4, 2022

The Board of Education of the Borough of North Caldwell in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in executive session on January 4, 2022 in person at the Grandview School Cafeteria as well as via an online Zoom Meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Mr. Michael Halik, Business Administrator, indicated that in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting had been properly advertised and the agenda had been posted at the appropriate locations.

Mr. Halik reported on the annual school election which occurred on November 2, 2021, stating Mrs. Opper received 1,567 votes, Mrs. Stroever received 1,526 votes, Mr. Formosa received 967 votes and Ms. Mendez received 849 votes.

Mr. Halik then held the swearing in of the two new Board Members Mrs. Opper and Mrs. Stroever followed by the Roll call.

Roll call by the Business Administrator:

Present: Mr. Robert Projansky, President
 Mrs. Mindy Opper, Vice President (via zoom)
 Mrs. Jordan Shumofsky
 Mrs. Sapna Malige
 Mrs. Johanna Stroever

Absent: None

Also Present: Dr. Linda Freda, Superintendent
 Mr. Michael Halik, Business Administrator / Board Secretary
 Mr. Chris Checchetto, Principal - Gould School
 Mr. Michael Stefanelli, Principal - Grandview School
 Mr. Ian Adlon, Computer Technician

ACTION ITEM

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOLUTION

O1. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the use of the Zoom Online Meeting Platform, to conduct the January 4, 2022, Board Meeting in compliance with A-3850 which was signed by Governor Murphy on March 20, 2020, so that Board of Education business

can continue, during the State of Emergency for the COVID-19 crisis.

Moved: Mr. Projansky Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky

Yes: 5 No: 0

Mr. Halik then called for Nominations for President.

Motion to nominate Robert Projansky to be approved as President.

Moved: Mrs. Shumofsky Seconded: Mrs. Stroever

Yes: 5 No: 0

Once approved, Mr. Projansky, as president, assumed the position of chairperson calling for nominations for Vice-President.

Motion to nominate Melinda Opper to be approved as Vice President.

Moved: Mrs. Shumofsky Seconded: Mrs. Malige

Yes: 5 No: 0

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Projansky reported that one hundred seventeen (117) people were attending the meeting via zoom.

Mr. Projansky read the following statement.

I want to welcome everyone back from winter break. I hope people found it restful and enjoyed some family time.

I want to take a moment to thank the administration for your hard work in designing a structure that tries to balance all of the difficult considerations you have to balance in order to keep the school functioning appropriately and meeting our core educational goals.

This weekend I was reading about the different approaches school districts – more broadly, not just ours in North Caldwell – are taking to this new and different COVID wave. Some districts were taking extremely cautious approaches, and you could read criticisms from those who questioned whether the omicron variant's effects really warranted that. Some districts were far less cautious, and you could read criticisms from those who questioned whether that was risking student's health or school closures.

As I was reading all of this, it struck me that it is incredibly easy to deal in absolutes when we are talking with friends about a letter we just got from our superintendent or commenting on social media about the steps our schools are taking.

The reality is that our administration has to balance many different considerations when it is making decisions about how to proceed. There are people who wanted us to close after break, to move back to half days with a remote afternoon, or just adopt a remote option. You thought about that, but you also had to take into account the downside to remote learning, especially at this age level, including for the children who remain in person when you have a remote option. Coming from another perspective, there are also parents who questioned some of the mitigation procedures you put in place. You thought about that as well, but you also took into account the risk that the health department could force us to close if COVID spread in school without those procedures in place.

I don't want to belabor the point and talk about every single issue or every single view. I don't even want to stand here and say every decision that's ever been made from the start was absolutely perfect. I just want to focus on the bigger picture that there are many different considerations about how best to face the challenges presented by our current environment. It's not just different considerations but also different community perspectives. You know I try to read everything and look at every angle, so it is very easy for me to see that there are a lot very different perspectives among parents in the community about what we should be doing.

Taking that all into account and coming up with a reasoned approach requires you to balance all of these considerations and perspectives, and that is not an easy job at all. I know our superintendent, principals, nurses, and teachers sometimes hear expressions of frustration from people who disagree with one decision or another. What can be lost is how much the overwhelming majority of this community appreciates everything that you are doing to weigh all of the considerations and perspectives while keeping our schools open for high quality in-person learning. I often say the district can't do it without our incredible teachers and staff, and that's definitely true. But equally true is that we can't do it without the consistent support from our superintendent, BA, principals, and nurses.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Freda wished everyone a happy and healthy New Year. She also stated that it may not have been as relaxing as most would hope for as many worried about the high rate of transmission of the omicron variant and how this would effect their children when they returned to school on January 3rd. She also stated that The Covid Committee, Administration and School Nurses, were in constant communication to determine if we could open for in-person instruction and if so, what procedures would need to be put into place to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff. Our children learn best when they are in-school so every effort has been made to ensure that we can continue to provide in-person instruction. Dr. Freda also mentioned that the NCPE will be canceling their Preschool Program for the month of January, but it will resume next month.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Mary Mokris, 89 Grandview Ave.- Mrs. Mokris thanked the board for their commitment to in person learning.

Brian Donnelly, 3 Highland Drive- Mr. Donnelly asked why students can not eat in the classroom. Dr. Stefanelli stated that due to contractual issues, he can not staff lunch in the classroom. Mr. Projansky replied that parents can request that their child only eat inside during winter months.

Kerry Howe, 7 Rose Ave.- Mrs. Howe thanked the board for keeping the students in school all day and asked if there will be a presentation on the impact of remote learning. Dr. Freda stated that at a future Board of Ed meeting she will discuss the results of the standardized test given in October, Start Strong, and any remediation strategies that have been put into place.

Ankur Jetley, 19 Amelia Street- Mr. Jetley inquired about why COVID testing was not administered prior to coming back to school and for extra curricular activities. He also asked about lunch indoors and if it was social distanced? Dr. Freda explained why testing could not done and also responded that students are social distanced at lunch.

Victoria Kahn, 17 Shenendoah Drive- Mrs. Kahn explained that she is a parent of a student who was remote last year and has a preschool child who cannot get vaccinated. She asked the Board to offer an option for children to go remote during the surge in COVID cases to protect younger children who cannot get vaccinated.

Elona Diamond, 7 Canterbury Drive- Mrs. Diamond state that she respects others' opinions however her children feel the students on remote instruction take away instructional time from the other kids in the classroom.

Michael Ciano, 36 Fox Run- Mr. Ciano spoke about Covid statistics and how covid currently affects children and questioned what direction we are going in as a town. Mrs. Opper stated that the goal has been and will remain to keep schools open for education.

Teresa Mendez, 7 Soder Road- Ms. Mendez inquired if there was a vaccination poll that occurred in the classrooms. Dr. Freda responded and clarified that there was a miscommunication about a vaccination conversation with the school nurse in which students started to volunteer their vaccination status and apologized for it. Mr. Projansky reiterated that it is not the policy of the Board to ask that question. Ms. Mendez also inquired if the district is just collecting data on vaccination statistics or if they are collecting data on people who get covid and recover. Dr Freda responded that we also note individuals who have tested positive and recovered who are not vaccinated for the purpose of contact tracing.

Laura Krinsky, 1 Overlook Court- Mrs. Krinsky inquired if the windows in the classrooms are open and if so, are we monitoring the room temperatures? Dr. Freda responded that at a minimum 2 windows are kept open in each classroom and we monitor conditions and modify as needed.

Amie Luers Franco, 3 Timber Drive- Mrs. Luers Franco mentioned that the data shows a very large surge in the pediatric population hospitalizations with non-vaccinated children. She urged the Board to reassess policies and procedures as new data becomes available.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOLUTIONS

O2. RESOLVED that the Board of Education adopt all existing bylaws and policies of the Board and approve existing administrative rules and regulations, subject to revision, for the forthcoming fiscal school year.

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky

Yes: 5 No: 0

O3. RESOLVED that all meetings of the Board of Education be conducted according to Robert Rules of Order and Board Policy.

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky
Yes: 5 No: 0

O4. RESOLVED that the Board of Education appoint **Mrs. Sapna Malige** as Delegate to the New Jersey School Boards Association for one (1) year, beginning immediately and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the policy authorizing the duties of the delegate to the New Jersey School Board Association be approved as follows:

1. Represent the Board at meetings of the New Jersey School Boards Association.
2. Study and report to the Board all proposed State and Federal Legislature of interest and relevance.
3. At the direction of the Board, prepare proposed resolutions for submission to the State School Boards Association.

The policy shall not prohibit or discourage other Board members from active participation in legislative affairs.

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky
Yes: 5 No: 0

O5. RESOLVED that the Board of Education re-adopt **Code of Ethics**, attached.

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky
Yes: 5 No: 0

O6. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the attached list of Committees and Membership for the 2022-2023 school year.

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky
Yes: 5 No: 0

O7. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the attached schedule of public and confidential meetings for 2022.

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky

Yes: 5 No: 0

08. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the attached Rates of Pay for 2021-2022 school year. (Revised January 1, 2022.)

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky

Yes: 5 No: 0

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

G1. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the facilities use application submitted for the 2nd grade Brownies.

Moved: Mrs. Shumofsky Seconded: Mrs. Stroever

Yes: 5 No: 0

G2. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the facilities use application submitted for the NCPE After School Enrichment.

Moved: Mrs. Shumofsky Seconded: Mrs. Stroever

Yes: 4 No: 0

Abstain: Mrs. Stroever

G3. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the side bar agreement Between North Caldwell Board of Education and the North Caldwell Education Association Support Staff unit adjusting the rate of pay during the Extended School Year for Aides.

Moved: Mrs. Shumofsky Seconded: Mrs. Stroever

Yes: 5 No: 0

G4. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the side bar agreement Between North Caldwell Board of Education and the North

Caldwell Education Association Teachers' unit adjusting rate of pay during the Extended School Year for Teachers.

Moved: Mrs. Shumofsky Seconded: Mrs. Stroever

Yes: 5 No: 0

G5. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the side bar agreement Between North Caldwell Board of Education and the North Caldwell Education Association Teachers' unit creating the position and stipend for an Extended School Year Nurse.

Moved: Mrs. Shumofsky Seconded: Mrs. Stroever

Yes: 5 No: 0

BUSINESS RESOLUTIONS

B1. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the **Public & Confidential Minutes of December 14, 2021**.

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky

Yes: 5 No: 0

B2. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the following **Payroll(s)**:

December 15, 2021	\$388,670.04
December 23, 2021	\$361,764.09

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky

Yes: 5 No: 0

B3. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the following **Hand Check Register(s)**:

December 23, 2021	\$ 639.51
December 23, 2021	\$50,692.82

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky

Yes: 5 No: 0

B4. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the following **Bills and Claims**:

December 20, 2021	\$47,751.88
January 4, 2022	\$432,005.80
Moved: Mrs. Malige	Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky
Yes: 5	No: 0

PERSONNEL RESOLUTIONS

P1. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the Professional Development Workshops/Conferences costs for the following staff member:

Name	Date	Workshop	Cost	Travel
Laurenzano, D.	3/9, 3/16	NJSHA	\$115.00	
Freda, L.	3/9, 3/16	NJSHA	\$115.00	
Falco, T.	3/20-24	NJSBGA	\$300.00	\$400.00 + \$105.00
	2/11, 2/18	Indoor Air Quality Training	N/A	N/A
Halik, M.	1/26-1/28	Techspo	\$490.00	\$357.00 + \$98.00
Adlon, I.	1/26-1/28	Techspo	\$490.00	\$357.00 + \$98.00
Shay, K.	2/5	Winter Inst Food For Thought	\$90.00	

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Stroever

Yes: 5 No: 0

P2. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve **Jeffrey Sefjack** as an hourly custodian for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of \$18.50 per hour not to exceed twenty (20) hours per week effective January 10, 2022.

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Stroever

Yes: 5 No: 0

P3. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the extension of Child Rearing Leave for **Rebecca Jones** from January 27, 2022, to June 22, 2022.

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Stroever

Yes: 5 No: 0

P4. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve **Marissa Foti** as a lunch aide at a rate of \$13.00 per hour effective January 1, 2022, to June 20, 2022.

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Stroever

Yes: 5 No: 0

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

The Board discussed the calendar for the upcoming school year. The calendar is aligned with West Essex for all major school breaks. The calendar would be put on the next meeting agenda for approval.

The Board discussed an option to have Covid Testing performed at our School Site. The Board felt this would be a good option for the community, so the Board proceeded to call the following resolution:

RESOLVED that the Board of Education authorize Dr. Freda and Mr. Halik to execute all paperwork required to implement onsite Covid Testing.

Moved: Mrs. Shumofsky Seconded: Mrs. Malige

Yes: 5 No: 0

The following resolution was called at approximately 8:35 p.m.

RESOLVED that in accordance with section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975, the Board has the authority to adjourn to closed session to discuss matters pertaining to: Personnel/Legal/Negotiations. Said matters will be made public upon their disposition.

Moved: Mrs. Malige Seconded: Mrs. Shumofsky

Yes: 5 No: 0

As there was no further business to discuss, the Board adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Halik
Business Administrator / Board Secretary