

DEMAREST BOARD OF EDUCATION
COW and REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
County Road School – Media Center
November 11, 2025
7:00 P.M.

I. OPENING

- A. The meeting was called to order by President Holzberg at 6:45 pm.
- B. Present: Brillhart, Cantatore, Choi, Fein, Governale, Lee, Holzberg.
Absent: None
Also present: Dr. Cirillo Superintendent and Ms. Kelly Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

II. ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. The Board determined it will enter into executive session for the following reasons:
 - 1. Student discipline
- B. It was moved by Choi seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to approve the following resolution to enter the executive session:

WHEREAS, in order to protect the personal privacy and to avoid situations wherein the public interest might be disserved, the Open Public Meetings Act permits public bodies to exclude the public from that portion of a meeting at which certain matters are discussed;

WHEREAS, the length of the closed executive session is estimated to be thirty minutes, after which the Regular Public Meeting will reconvene and proceed with business where formal action may or may not be taken;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that consistent with the provision of N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b), the Board of Education will now adjourn to executive session to discuss items stated above; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board hereby declares that its discussion of the aforementioned subjects will be made public at a time when the public's interest in disclosure is greater than any privacy or governmental interest being protected from disclosure.

- C. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to convene executive session at 7:00 P.M.

III. REOPEN PUBLIC MEETING

- A. It was moved by Governale , seconded by Lee to reopen the Regular Meeting to the public at 7:00 P.M.
- B. President Holzberg read the following announcement:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Demarest Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time

and place thereof posted at the Borough Hall and at the Middle School and by notifying in writing two newspapers: The Record and The Suburbanite.

IV. FLAG SALUTE

A. President Holzberg led the flag salute.

V. ROLL CALL

Present: Brillhart, Cantatore, Choi, Fein, Governale, Lee, Holzberg.

Absent: None

Also present: Dr. Cirillo, Superintendent and Ms. Kelly Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS

A. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Brillhart and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to approve:

- October 14, 2025 COW and Regular Meeting Minutes
- October 14, 2025 Executive Meeting Minutes
- October 29, 2025 Special Meeting Minutes

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

VIII. BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A. Board President Holzberg wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and a wonderful holiday.

She and Ms. Cantatore attended the AI sessions at the NJSBA conference.

Mrs. Holzberg sat on a panel with other veteran board members to educate new board members.

She thanked Christen Governale for her time, effort, and dedication to the board of education.

IX. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Superintendent Cirillo wished a Happy Thanksgiving to the board members and the community, including staff.

He noted that on December 8th he will attend an AI Summit at the Northern Valley curriculum Center.

Dr. Cirillo congratulated Ms. Fein, Ms. Choi and Mr. Zimbard on their election to the Board of Education.

The boys' volleyball team lost in the championship game, but it was a great event and season. The co-ed soccer team is going to the semi-finals. It has been a great season for fall sports.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Erica Canatore, Chairperson for the Policy Committee, reviewed the policies proposed for approval at tonight's meeting, including:

- SEMI program
- Curriculum requirements
- Notification of promotion
- Student sunscreen procedures

- Abolishment of recordkeeping for healthcare settings (COVID)

XI. OTHER REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Ms. Kelly, Supervisor of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments, reviewed the following:

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XII. REVIEW OF AGENDA

A. Board members reviewed the items.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

- A. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to open the meeting to public comment.
- B. No one from the public spoke at this time.
- C. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to close the meeting to public comment.

XIV. ACTIONS

A. Instruction – Staffing

1. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of the following substitute teacher(s) for the remainder of the 2025/2026 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator. Employment status would become effective upon candidate's compliance with P.L. 1986, c. 116 (revised 6/30/98) and N.J.S.A. 19A:6-7.7.

Jessica Strassberg
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2. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the amended request of Staff ID No: 10312886 for paid sick leave from October 21, 2025 through December 9, 2025 AM only, unpaid leave from December 9, 2025 PM only through to January 29, 2026, FMLA leave from January 30, 2026 to May 8, 2026 and unpaid leave from May 11, 2026 through the end of the school year, returning to work for the 2026-2027 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
3. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of Deborah Carr, MA, Step 2, leave replacement teacher at Demarest Middle School from October 27, 2025 to the end of the 2025/2026 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator. Employment status would become effective upon candidate's compliance with P.L. 1986, c. 116 (revised 6/30/98) and N.J.S.A.
4. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of Jessica Strassberg MA, Step 1, leave replacement teacher at County Road School from January 5, 2026 to March 27, 2026, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator. Employment status would become effective upon candidate's compliance with P.L. 1986, c. 116 (revised 6/30/98) and N.J.S.A.

B. Instruction – Pupils/Programs

1. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following field trip(s), as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Location	Month/Year	Grade/Group
Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty	November 2025	8th grade
Monster Mini Golf, Paramus	November 2025	LLE LLD and ERI classes DMS ERI class

2. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve home instruction for student #4657660955, by staff listed below, not to exceed 10 hours per week beginning on or about October 16, 2025, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

*modified from October 14, 2025 B.2.

- Rocio Martinez
- Gary Rodriguez
- Victoria Zimmerman

C. Support Services – Staffing

D. Support Services – Board of Education

1. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following request for facilities use on the following dates, in accordance with policy 7510, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Event	Date(s) and time	Location
PTO Science Club with Dr. Sydoruk	12/3/25, 12/10/25, 12/17/25, 1/7/26, 1/14/26, 1/21/26 3:15 PM - 4:30 PM	DMS classroom

2. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the attendance of the following workshops, with all hotel, meals and travel reimbursed at the statutory rates per NJ OMB guidelines, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Name/Title	Event	Registration Fee
Kelly Stevens Supervisor Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	TECHSPO Atlantic City 1/28/26-1/30/26	\$610.00
Joseph Cirillo Superintendent	TECHSPO Atlantic City 1/28/26-1/30/26	\$610.00
Franklin Reynoso Information & Technology Coordinator	TECHSPO Atlantic City 1/28/26-1/30/26	\$610.00

3. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to acknowledge that the board accepts the results of the following HIB cases as reported at the October 14, 2025 meeting, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

2526-02
2526-03
2526-04
2526-05

4. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve tuition agreement with the Harrington Park Board of Education for the 2025/2026 school year, plus the cost of related services, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Student ID	School/Program	Tuition	1: 1 Aide*	Transportation	Term
402034	DEL program	\$15,860.08 Pro-rated	No	No	11/3/25-6/30/26

5. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following resolution for submission of the Comprehensive Maintenance Plan to the Executive County Superintendent, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

WHEREAS, the Department of Education requires New Jersey School Districts to submit three-year maintenance plans documenting "required" maintenance activities for each of its public school facilities, and

WHEREAS, the required maintenance activities listed in the attached document for the various school facilities of the Demarest School District are consistent with these requirements, and

WHEREAS, all past and planned activities are reasonable to keep school facilities open and safe for use or in their original condition and to keep their system warranties valid,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Demarest Board of Education hereby authorizes the school business administrator to submit the attached Comprehensive Maintenance Plan for the Demarest School District in compliance with the Department of Education requirements.

6. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following vendor for evaluations for the 2025/2026 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Dr. Asma J. Sadiq	Neurodevelopmental Pediatrician (CST Assessments)
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7. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to acknowledge that the board accepts the following District Goal outcomes for the 2024/2025 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

1. Create an appropriately sized middle school gymnasium to support the health, wellness, and athleticism of our student population.

Update: Completed. Gymnasium was completed in August 2025.

2. District staff will continue to participate in the implementation of the Ruler program. The 2024-2025 school year is year 2 of a three-year plan that includes continued staff training and implementation with students.

Update: Progress was made for year 2. To be continued as a district goal for 2025-2026.

8. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to acknowledge that the board accepts the following Board Goal outcomes for the 2024/2025 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:
 1. To continue to support the Administration in the implementation of the Ruler program.
Update: The Board has been kept updated throughout the year.
 2. To investigate what is needed to become a Certified Board
Update: The Board has taken a preliminary review of the requirements.
9. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following District Goals for the 2025/2026 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:
 1. District staff will continue to participate in the implementation of the Ruler program. The 2025/2026 school year in year 3 of a three-year plan that includes continued staff training and implementation with students.
 2. To ensure a greater level of collaboration, communication and transparency with Northern Valley Demarest to help better prepare our students as they enter high school.
10. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following Board Goals for the 2025/2026 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:
 1. To continue to support the Administration in the implementation of the Ruler program.
 2. To continue pursuing what is needed to become a Certified Board. Determine what the benefits of the program are.
 3. To revisit the district's Mission Statement and consider whether to update it.
11. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the first reading of the following policies and regulations, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

0173 Duties of Public School Accountant – Bylaw
0174 Legal Services – Bylaw (M)
0177 Professional Services – Bylaw (M)
1570 Internal Controls – Policy & Regulation (M)
1620 Administrative Employment Contracts – Policy (M)
6111 Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program – Policy & Regulation (M)
6220 Budget Preparation – Policy (M)
6220 Budget Preparation – Regulation
1636.01 Notification of Promotion, New Job, and Transfer Opportunities – Policy (NEW)
1648.15 Recordkeeping for Healthcare Settings in School Buildings – COVID-19 – Policy (ABOLISHED)
2422 Statutory Curricular Requirements – Policy (M)

12. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to adopt the following resolution to acknowledge the service of Gina Long, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:
WHEREAS, Gina Long dedicated her time and services to the children of Demarest and the Demarest Board of Education, and WHEREAS, her dedication served as a model of service to the community, NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Demarest Board of Education does hereby extend its appreciation and gratitude to Gina Long in recognition of her 31 years of dedicated service to the Demarest Board of Education.
13. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve and authorize the submission of the Health and Safety Evaluation of School Building Checklists and Statement of Assurance for the 2025/2026 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
14. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the addition of a 1:1 aide for the following out-of-district placement, approved August 26, 2025 D.18., for the 2025/2026 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Student ID	School/Program	1: 1 Aide	Term
7358109211	St. Joseph's School for the Blind	\$34,200.00	7/1-6/30

E. Support Services—Fiscal Management

1. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to confirm the October 2025 payrolls as follows, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

October 15, 2025	\$540,910.66
October 31, 2025	\$526,028.79
2. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present* to approve November 11, 2025 bill list as follows, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

<u>Subtotal Per Fund</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11 General Current Expense	\$ 808,691.00
20 Special Revenue Fund	\$ 41,960.30
21 Student Activity Fund	\$ 1,652.00
22 Athletic Fund	\$ 1,434.00
30 Capital Projects Fund	\$ 103,236.82
60 Cafeteria Fund	\$ 43,493.78
Total Bills:	\$1,000,467.90

*Diane Holzberg does hereby abstain as to her own payment (check # 2939) for reimbursement of travel fees. Her vote herein shall constitute a vote as to payment of all other bills.

Erica Cantatore does hereby abstain as to her own payment (check # 2922) for reimbursement of travel fees. Her vote herein shall constitute a vote as to payment of all other bills.

3. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following resolution, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:
Receipt of Certification from Board Secretary
Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.13 (d), I, Antoinette Kelly, certify that as of October 31, 2025, no budgetary line item account has obligations or payments (contractual orders) that, in total, exceed the amount appropriated by the district Board of Education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8 and 18A:22-8.1.
4. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following resolution, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:
Certification of Board of Education
Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.13 (e), we certify that as of October 31, 2025 after review of the secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district official, to the best of our knowledge, no major account or fund has been over-extended in violation of NJAC 6:20-2.13 (b) and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.
5. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to acknowledge receipt of the October 2025 Report of the Board Secretary, A148 and the Report of the Treasurer, A-149, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
6. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to confirm the following budget transfer for October 2025, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

To:

Account Number	Description	Amount
11-000-221-580	Improvement of Instruction-Travel	25.31
11-105-100-101	Preschool-Salaries of Teachers	70,648.80
11-190-100-106	Regular Programs-Other Salaries for Instruction	1,755.00
11-204-100-106	LLD Program-Other Salaries for Instruction	67.10
11-213-100-101	Resource Room-Salaries of Teachers	54,761.39
11-230-100-101	Basic Skills/Remedial Instruction-Salaries of Teachers	110.00
Total Transfers In		127,367.60

From:

Account Number	Description	Amount
11-000-221-610	Improvement of Instruction-General Supplies	25.31
11-130-100-101	Grades 6-8 Salaries of Teachers	70,648.80
11-190-100-610	Regular Programs-General Supplies	1,755.00
11-204-100-610	LLD Program-General Supplies	67.10
11-213-100-106	Resource Room-Other Salaries for Instruction	54,761.39
11-230-100-610	Basic Skills/Remedial-General Supplies	110.00
Total Transfers Out		127,367.60

7. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve payment application #21, in the amount of \$11,270.00 to Daskal LLC for the Demarest Middle School Gymnasium addition, NJDOE Project # 1070-040-23-1000, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

8. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve change order #1 with In-Line Heating & AC Company, for the Luther Lee Emerson School UV/Boiler project, NJDOE Project # 1070-050-23-R501, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Change order to document credit to district for unused contingency allowance.

Original contract sum was	\$288,229.00
Net change by previously authorized change orders	0.00
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$288,229.00
contract sum will be decreased by this change order in the amount of	\$(20,000.00)
New contract sum including this change order will be	\$268,229.00

9. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve change order #1 with In-Line Heating & AC Company, for the Demarest Middle School UV/Boiler project, NJDOE Project # 1070-040-23-R501, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

This change order is the result of: add electrical \$13,850, new fans and duct ext \$15,240, credit for work eliminated from scope (59,687.47) for total net credit of (30,597.47)

Original contract sum was	\$1,166,720.00
Net change by previously authorized change orders	0.00
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$1,166,720.00
contract sum will be decreased by this change order in the amount of	\$(30,597.47)
New contract sum including this change order will be	\$1,136,122.53

10. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve change order #2 with In-Line Heating & AC Company, for the Demarest Middle School UV/Boiler project, NJDOE Project # 1070-040-23-R501, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

This change order is documented as a result of materials and work required for the replacement of three (3) additional pumps not part of the original scope.

Original contract sum was	\$1,166,720.00
Net change by previously authorized change orders	\$(30,597.47)
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$1,136,122.53
contract sum will be increased by this change order in the amount of	\$28,000.00
New contract sum including this change order will be	\$1,164,122.53

11. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve payment application #4, in the amount of \$5,364.58, to In-Line Air Conditioning Co., Inc., for the Luther Lee Emerson School UV/boiler project, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

12. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve acceptance of the 2024/2025 Annual Comprehensive Finance Report

(ACFR) and the Auditor's Management Report on Administrative Findings, which contains no recommendations prepared by Nisivoccia, LLP, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

XV. PUBLIC COMMENT

- D. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to open the meeting to public comment.
- E. The following attendees spoke about their desire to have Eid and Diwali become school holidays. They noted that eighty families in the school system observe the holidays.
 - Raina Khubani, 7th grader
 - Sandhya Nankani, 23 Old Stable Rd.
 - Amrita Kumar, 23 Old Stable Rd.
 - Shreya Iyer, 7th grader
 - Fatemah Mandani, 28 Wellwood Rd.
 - Mikaeel Hussain, 2nd grader
 - Arjun Ajmera, 2nd grader
 - Aarnav Gattani, 7th grader
 - Amayra Gattani, 2nd grader
 - Anglina Katoria, 19 Blanche Ave.
 - Shyam Vadlapatla, 49 Ross Ave.
 - Rohini Khubani, 28 Edward St.
 - Batool Panjwani, 89 Lenox Ave.
- F. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Brillhart and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to close the meeting to public comment.

XVI. NEW BUSINESS

The board discussed the outcomes of the architectural RFP and chose LAN Architects to be the district architect of record.

It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve LAN Associates to provide architectural services as the Architect of Record for the Demarest Public School District, for the 2025/2026 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. There was no motion to enter the executive session.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

- A. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 P.M.

Sincerely,



Antoinette Kelly
Business Administrator and Board Secretary