

DEMAREST BOARD OF EDUCATION
COW and REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
County Road School – Media Center
January 23, 2024
5:30 P.M.

I. OPENING

- A. The meeting was called to order by President Holzberg at 5:30 pm.
B. Present: Brillhart, Cantatore, Choi, Governale, Lee, Holzberg.
Absent: None
Also present: Mr. Fox/ Superintendent and Ms. Kelly Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

II. OPEN PUBLIC MEETING

- A. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Choi to open the Regular Meeting to the public at 5:30 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.

III. FLAG SALUTE

- A. President Holzberg led the flag salute.

IV. ROLL CALL

- Present: Brillhart, Cantatore, Choi, Governale, Lee, Holzberg.
Absent: None
Also present: Mr. Fox, Superintendent and Ms. Kelly Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

V. BOARD VACANCY INTERVIEWS

- The board interviewed the following candidates:
- Fatemah Mamdani
 - Ali Panjwani

VI. ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. The Board determined it will enter into executive session for the following reasons:
1. To discuss board candidate interviews
- B. It was moved by Choi seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to approve the following resolution to enter the executive session at 6:15 P.M.:
- 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 Choi, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to convene executive session at 6:30 P.M and returned to public session. .

VII. BOARD VACANCY INTERVIEWS

The board interviewed the following candidates:

- Julie Fein
- Karen Goldenkranz

VIII. ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. The Board determined it will enter into executive session for the following reasons:

1. To discuss board candidate interviews

- B. It was moved by Choi seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to approve the following resolution to enter the executive session at 7:10 P.M.:

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 Choi, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to convene executive session at 8:00 P.M.

- IX. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Governale, and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to appoint Julie Fein as the new board member to fill the Demarest Board of Education vacancy.

X. 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:

- December 12, 2023 COW and Regular Meeting Minutes
- January 2, 2024 Reorganization Meeting Minutes
- January 2, 2024 Special Meeting/Public Hearing Meeting Minutes

XI. CORRESPONDENCE

None at this time.

XII. BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

- A. Board President Holzberg recognized the board during board member appreciation month and thanked them for their service.

XIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- A. Mr. Fox noted the following:

- Reiterated Ms. Holzberg's appreciation of the board.
- Reviewed next year's calendar and plans to approve it at the February meeting.
- ROD grants and QSAC review:

Our district was approved for two ROD grants. One for DMS for unit ventilators and boiler pump replacement and one for LLE for unit ventilator replacements. On tonight's agenda are the resolutions to execute the grant agreements.

We had our QSAC review by the county DOE staff on January 17, 2024. They reviewed Curriculum and Instruction with Kelly Stevens, Finance and Facilities with Antoinette Kelly and the county superintendent reviewed Personnel and Governance and Operations with Mr. Fox. Mr. Fox wanted to thank Debra Rinaldi, his assistant, for all of the hard work she did to get us all ready for the review. The county superintendent and business administrator were very impressed by our school district.

XIV. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Ms. Kelly spoke on behalf of the Finance Committee and discussed the following:
- We received one bid for the financing of the Middle School Gym Addition Project from TD Equipment Finance for 4.33% over a five-year term. \$3,000,000 will be financed and \$4,500,000 will be from capital reserve.
 - We are recommending that we change our financial institution from Capital One at a 2.85% interest rate and fees to Valley Bank at a 4.75% interest rate and no fees.
 - We are meeting with the administrators to discuss the 2024/2025 budget. We are estimating a 10-11% increase in health benefits. DEA, custodian, and secretarial contracts are already negotiated. The first draft of the budget will be completed by mid to end of February.
- B. The Policy Committee - Ms. Kelly reviewed the recommended changes to Policy 5111 Eligibility of Resident and Non-Resident Students.

XV. OTHER REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Mr. Fox discussed the following school activities:

CRS and LLE

- Preschool registration: twenty-two students registered for preschool age 3, thirty-nine students registered for preschool age 4, and fifty-two for kindergarten.
- CRS and LLE students are working on Valentine's Day cards that Congressman Gottenheimer will share with our Veterans of war.

DMS

- Shrek the musical play rehearsal is underway.

- The Science and Engineering Team participated in the Science Olympiad in January.
 - We implemented Aimsweb (Our literacy progress monitoring system) in January.
 - The basketball teams are both having a great season and demonstrating sportsmanship.
 - DMS hosted a brain busters meet in January.
 - The winter enrichment program is going well. We are thrilled to have brought enrichment to DMS.
- Upcoming events:
Science CRT, Lunar New Year Celebration and Hot Chocolate and Pajamas (Before School on the Blacktop).

XVI. REVIEW OF AGENDA

A. Board members reviewed the items.

XVII. PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

No comments were made.

XVIII. ACTIONS

A. Instruction – Staffing

1. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of Neha Kohli, substitute teacher for the remainder of the 2023/2024 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.

B. Instruction – Pupils/Programs

1. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Governale 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
Carnegie Hall	May 2024	3rd Grade
Whole Foods in Closter	January 2024	LLD class
Garden State Mall	February 2024	LLD class
Lifetown in Livingston	March 2024	LLD class

C. Support Services – Staffing

1. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the resignation of Michelle Whitney, paraprofessional at Luther Lee Emerson School, effective January 6, 2024 as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
2. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the resignation of Gita Verkaria, paraprofessional at County Road School, effective December 22, 2023 as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

3. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the transfer of Jaclyn Higgins, paraprofessional, from County Road School to Luther Lee Emerson School, effective January 8, 2024 as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
4. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of the following paraprofessionals not to exceed 29 hours weekly, according to the paraprofessional hourly guide for the 2023/2024 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator. Employment status would become effective upon the candidate's compliance with P.L. 1986, c.116 (revised 6/30/98) and N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.7.

School/Position	Staff	Step
CRS		
Classroom Aides P3 & P4	Bahrije Rama	3
	Rosemary Kim	8

D. Support Services – Board of Education

1. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee 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 International Heritage Day	3/15/24 4:15 PM -9:00 PM 3/16/24 9:00 AM-6:00 PM	LLE gymnasium and APR
PTO Spring Enrichment	3/11/24-5/3/24* 3:15 PM-4:15 PM	CRS, LLE and DMS rooms as available
PTO Musical set design	2/2/24, 2/9/24, 3/1/24, 3/8/24, 3/15/24 3:15 PM - 6:00 PM 3/9/24 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM	DMS gymnasium, stage, music room
SJ Enrichment	4/2-5/23 Tuesday and Thursday 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM	DMS field

*modified from August 22, 2023 D.3.

2. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve acceptance of the 2022/2023 Comprehensive Annual Finance Report (CAFR) and the Auditor's Management Report on Administrative Findings which

contains no recommendations prepared by Nisivoccia, LLP, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

3. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the in-district tuition rate for Demarest Early Learners preschool at \$12,000.00 for the 2024/2025 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
4. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the in-district rate for Demarest Early Learners preschool aftercare fee of \$65.00 per month on full school days for the 2024/2025 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
5. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the purchase of cafeteria equipment for \$13,777.01 from MAP Restaurant Supplies, through bid #HCEC-Cat-22-08, effective 8/19/2022, cooperative #34HUNCCP, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
6. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve an amendment to the IDEA Basic 2023/2024 grant to include the prior year's carryover funds of \$5,146.00 as follows and as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

Account number	Account name
20-253-200-320-010-00-36	IDEA Basic Non-public Purchased Professional Services

7. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve and submit the bi-annual Statement of Assurance (SOA) for paraprofessional staff for the 2023/2024 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
8. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the revised Memorandum of Agreement with the Demarest Police Department for the 2023/2024 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
9. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following resolution, as approved by the Chief School Administrator:

New Jersey School Board Recognition

WHEREAS, The New Jersey School Boards Association has declared January 2024 to be School Board Recognition Month, a time when all residents can acknowledge the contributions made by our local school board members; and

WHEREAS, The Demarest Board of Education is one of 581 local school boards in New Jersey, which sets policies and oversees operations for public school districts; and

WHEREAS, The Demarest Board of Education embraces the goal of high-quality education for all New Jersey public school students; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's local school boards help determine the educational goals for approximately 1.4 million children in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's 5,000 local school board members, who receive no remuneration for their services, act as advocates for public school students as they work with administrators, teachers and parents for the betterment of public education; and
WHEREAS, School boards strive to provide the resources necessary to meet the needs of all students, including those with special needs; and
WHEREAS, Boards of education provide accountability to the public; they communicate the needs of the school district to the public; and they convey to school administrators the public's expectations for the schools; and
WHEREAS, New Jersey can take pride in its schools, which rank among the nation's best in key achievement indicators such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress scores, and the preparation for college through advanced placement offerings and SAT assessments. Now, therefore, be it
RESOLVED, That the Demarest Board of Education, does hereby recognize the services of local school board members throughout New Jersey as we join communities statewide in observing January 2024 as School Board Recognition Month; and be it further resolved,
RESOLVED, That the Demarest Board of Education urges all New Jersey citizens to work with their local boards of education and public school staff toward the advancement of our children's education.

10. **BE IT RESOLVED** to approve the following resolution:

APPROVAL OF LEGAL DEPOSITORIES – BANK FOR DEPOSITS/WITHDRAWALS

BE IT RESOLVED that the Demarest Board of Education authorizes the Business Administrator to invest school district funds within statutory limitations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Demarest Board of Education designates Valley Bank as the bank for deposits and withdrawals for the General Account, Payroll Account, Payroll Agency Account, Student Activities Account, Lunch Account, Laptop Account, FSA Account, Athletic Account, Capital Projects Fund and Capital Reserve Fund.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Demarest Board of Education approves the authorized signatures on the above accounts of designated administrators, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

11. It was moved by Governale, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the retirement of Marilyn Stankiewicz, lunch coordinator, effective June 30, 2024*, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
 *modified from November 14, 2023 D.6.

E. Support Services—Fiscal Management

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

December 15, 2023	\$547,092.76
December 22, 2023	\$494,798.11

2. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present* to approve January 23, 2024 bill list as follows, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator: Ms. Holzberg abstained to check # 32652

<u>Subtotal Per Fund</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11 General Current Expense	\$1,281,560.20
20 Special Revenue Fund	\$ 222,779.54
21 Student Activity Fund	\$ 10,900.00

22 Athletic Fund	\$ 1,188.00
30 Capital Projects Fund	\$ 23,625.90
60 Cafeteria Fund	\$ 29,012.24
Total Bills:	\$1,569,065.88

3. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee 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 December 31, 2023, 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 Cantatore, seconded by Lee 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 December 31, 2023 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 Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to acknowledge receipt of the December 2023 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 Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to confirm the following budget transfer for December 2023, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

To:

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11-000-230-332	Auditing Services	5,000.00
11-000-251-890	Central Office-Misc Expenditures	650.00
11-000-262-107	Salaries-Lunch Aides	5,000.00
11-000-266-610	Security Supplies	4,009.00

From:

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11-000-230-334	Architect/Engineer Services	5,000.00
11-000-251-610	Central Office-General Supplies	650.00

11-000-262-110	Custodial Substitute Salaries	5,000.00
11-000-266-300	Security-Crossguard Services	2,000.00
11-000-266-420	Security-Repairs and Maintenance	2,009.00

7. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the award of the lease purchase financing for the Demarest Middle School gym addition to TD Equipment Finance, Inc., 12000 Horizon Way, Mount Laurel, N.J. 08054, at an interest rate of 4.33% for a five-year term, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

8. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following:

Approval Authorizing Execution and Delivery of Grant Agreement for School Facilities

Project - Demarest Middle School Replacement of Unit Ventilators and Boiler Pumps.

WHEREAS, based on prior New Jersey Department of Education approvals, by letter dated January 19, 2024, the New Jersey Schools Development Authority ("NJSDA") has offered an Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Section 15 Grant ("the Grant") to the Demarest Board of Education ("the Board"); and

WHEREAS, the Grant is for certain funding of a School Facilities Project at the Demarest Middle School, including the replacement of the Unit Ventilators and Boiler Pumps and

WHEREAS, the Board has received all necessary New Jersey Department of Education ("DOE") approvals, including approval by letter dated December 1, 2023 of the "Final Eligible Cost" ("FEC Letter") for the School Facilities Project; and

WHEREAS, the FEC Letter establishes a maximum dollar amount of eligible costs, meaning that if the local share of the costs of the School Facilities Project is less than the dollar amount stated in the DOE's FEC Letter or if the total cost to complete said Project is less than the total amount in the FEC Letter, the Grant amount shall be decreased proportionally; and

WHEREAS, if there are additional costs for the School Facilities Project resulting in an amount greater than the total FEC amount, said additional costs will be funded through the Board's local share of the cost for said project; and

WHEREAS, in order to receive NJSDA funding, the Board must authorize the execution and delivery of the Grant Agreement.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board is hereby authorizing execution and delivery of the Grant Agreement for SDA Project # 1070-040-23-G5EJ Grant # G5-6517, for NJSDA funding of its School Facilities Project at the Demarest Middle School.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board hereby delegates the Authority to the School Business Administrator for supervision of the School Facilities Project.

9. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following:

Approval Authorizing Execution and Delivery of Grant Agreement for School Facilities

Project - Luther Lee Emerson Elementary School Replacement of Unit Ventilators.

WHEREAS, based on prior New Jersey Department of Education approvals, by letter dated January 19, 2024, the New Jersey Schools Development Authority ("NJSDA") has offered an Educational Facilities Construction and Financing Section 15 Grant ("the Grant") to the Demarest Board of Education ("the Board"); and

WHEREAS, the Grant is for certain funding of a School Facilities Project at the Luther Lee Emerson Elementary School, including the replacement of Unit Ventilators; and
WHEREAS, the Board has received all necessary New Jersey Department of Education (“DOE”) approvals, including approval by letter dated December 1, 2023 of the “Final Eligible Cost” (“FEC Letter”) for the School Facilities Project; and
WHEREAS, the FEC Letter establishes a maximum dollar amount of eligible costs, meaning that if the local share of the costs of the School Facilities Project is less than the dollar amount stated in the DOE’s FEC Letter or if the total cost to complete said Project is less than the total amount in the FEC Letter, the Grant amount shall be decreased proportionally; and
WHEREAS, if there are additional costs for the School Facilities Project resulting in an amount greater than the total FEC amount, said additional costs will be funded through the Board’s local share of the cost for said project; and
WHEREAS, in order to receive NJSDA funding, the Board must authorize the execution and delivery of the Grant Agreement.
NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board is hereby authorizing execution and delivery of the Grant Agreement for SDA Project # 1070-050-23-G5EK Grant # G5-6518, for NJSDA funding of its School Facilities Project at the Luther Lee Emerson Elementary School.
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board hereby delegates the Authority to the School Business Administrator for supervision of the School Facilities Project.

10. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the following:

Approval of Transfer of Capital Reserve Funds to Capital Projects.

WHEREAS, the Demarest Board of Education has established a Capital Reserve Fund, and
WHEREAS, the Demarest Board of Education has a Capital Reserve Fund balance of \$5,979,254.21, and

WHEREAS, the Demarest Board of Education has been offered construction grants through the State of New Jersey Regular Operating District (R.O.D.) Grant Program, and

WHEREAS, the Demarest Board of Education desires to fund its share of the following R.O.D. Grant Projects as follows:

- o Demarest Middle School School SDA Project #1070-040-23-G5EJ Grant # G5-6517
..... \$ 990,768.00
- o Luther Lee Emerson Elementary School SDA Project # 41070-050-23-G5EK Grant # G5-6518
..... \$132,825.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Demarest Board of Education transfer \$ 990,768.00 (Demarest Middle School) and \$132,825.00 (Luther Lee Emerson Elementary School) from its Capital Reserve Fund to the Capital Projects Fund for the purpose of meeting the District’s requirement for funding 60% of the approved capital project cost as delineated in the State of New Jersey’s letter of determination stating the Final Eligible Costs for each project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board hereby delegates the Authority to the School Business Administrator for supervision of the School Facilities Project

XIX. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to open the meeting to public comment.
- B. The following attendees spoke:
 - Fatemah Mamdani of 28 Wellwood Rd., Demarest, suggested making Eid a tentative holiday in lieu of snow days not used.

C. 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.

XX. NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

XXI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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

XXII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Sincerely,

Antoinette Kelly
Business Administrator and Board Secretary

