

**DEMAREST BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**COW and REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES**  
**County Road School – Media Center**  
**December 17, 2024**  
**7:00 P.M.**

I. OPENING

- A. The meeting was called to order by President Holzberg at 6:30 pm.
- B. Present: Brillhart, Cantatore, Choi, Fein, Governale, Lee, Holzberg.  
Absent: None  
Also present: Mr. Fox/ 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. Legal matter
- B. It was moved by Lee seconded by Governale 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 Lee, seconded by Governale 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 Choi 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: Mr. Fox, Superintendent and Ms. Kelly Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS

A. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by xLee and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to approve:

- November 12, 2024 Executive Session Meeting Minutes
- November 12, 2024 COW and Regular Meeting Minutes

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

VIII. BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A. Board President Holzberg wished everyone a happy holiday and new year.

IX. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Fox reported on the following:

- Thanked Business Administrator Kelly and her staff for a clean audit.
- Reviewed the proposed calendar for the 2025/2026 school year with the board.
- The student council and PTO had a coffee cart for the teachers.
- Winter concerts were amazing at each school. The orchestra was fantastic. Luther Lee had the largest crowd we have ever seen.
- DMS gymnasium update: the roof is almost done. It is a great construction crew and we are in good shape.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None at this time.

XI. OTHER REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Brian Ko of Nisivoccia, district auditors presented the results of the 2023/2024 audit.

XII. REVIEW OF AGENDA

A. Board members reviewed the items.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

There was no motion for public comment being no one from the public was present.

XIV. ACTIONS

**Brillhart left the meeting at 7:30 PM**

A. Instruction – Staffing

1. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of the following substitute teachers for the remainder of the 2024/2025 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.

First Name	Last Name
Jennifer	Fernandez
Shweta	Malhotra

2. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of Kathleen Heckel, BA, Step 9, School Nurse at Luther Lee Emerson School from April 1, 2025 to the remainder of the 2024/2025 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.
3. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the request of Staff ID No.:10312850 for an extended unpaid leave of absence from December 2, 2024 through January 31, 2025 returning to work on February 3, 2025 as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
4. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the request of Staff ID No.:10313087 for paid sick leave from February 24, 2025 through March 14, 2025, unpaid FMLA/NJFLA and extended leave from March 17, 2025 through June 20, 2025, returning to work on the first day of the 2025/2026 school year as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
5. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the request of Staff ID No.:10312797 for paid sick leave from January 20, 2025 through March 21, 2025, unpaid FMLA from March 24, 2025 through June 20, 2025, returning to work on the first day of the 2025/2026 school year as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
6. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the request of Staff Id No.:10313013 for paid sick leave from January 13, 2025 through February 14, 2025, unpaid FMLA/NJFLA and extended leave from February 24, 2025 through June 20, 2025, returning to work on the first day of the 2025/2026 school year as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
7. It was moved by Fein, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the request of Staff ID No.:10312746 for paid holiday, personal, vacation and sick leave from January 13, 2025 through March 14, 2025, unpaid FMLA and NJFLA from March 17, 2025 through June 6, 2025, returning to work on June 9, 2025 as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

B. Instruction – Pupils/Programs

1. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Lee 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
Washington DC	May 2025	Eighth-grade class
NVOT Old Tappan	December 2024	LLD Class
YMCA New Milford	January 2025	Fifth Grade
Carnegie Hall New York, NY	May 2025	Third Grade
National Constitution Center/Amer. History of the Revolution Philadelphia, PA	May 2025	Seventh Grade
Valley Program Northvale	December 2024	LLE ERI and LLD classes

**C. Support Services – Staffing**

1. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the retirement of Gina Peter, Payroll and Benefits Specialist/Bookkeeper, effective January 1, 2025, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
2. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with Patricia Brennan, Payroll/Benefits Specialist, commencing January 2, 2025, 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
3. It was moved by Lee, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the resignation of Jackie Higgins, Paraprofessional at Luther Lee Emerson School, effective December 20, 2024, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

**D. Support Services – Board of Education**

1. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Choi 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
AlphaBEST Education Open house	12/18/24 4:00 PM - 6:30 PM	CRS gymnasium
Mamanet	1/11/25-1/12/25 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM	LLE or DMS gymnasium
PTO Spring Fundraiser meeting	12/5/24 7:45 PM - 9:00 PM	LLE media center
DAA Food trucks	1/4/25-3/31/25 (Saturdays) 8:30 AM - 5:30 PM 1/3/25-3/31/25 (Fridays) 4:30 PM - 9:00 PM	LLE upper parking lot

Vikings Spring field use	3/31/25-6/20/25 4:00 PM - 8:00 PM	LLE field
PTO Musical - stage crew	1/17/25, 1/24/25, 1/31/25, 2/7/25, 2/28/25, 3/14/25, 3/17/25 3:15 PM - 5:15 PM	DMS gym floor and stage
PTO Musical - stage crew	3/1/25 and or 3/8/25 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM	DMS gym floor and stage

2. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Choi 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
Michael Fox Superintendent	Techspo January 29-31, 2025 Atlantic City	\$590.00

3. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Choi 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:

0141 - Board Member Number and Term - Policy
*0164.6 - Remote Public Board Meetings During a Declared Emergency - Policy (M) (ABOLISHED)
2200 - Curriculum Content - Policy (M)
3160 - Physical Examination - Policy & Regulation (M)
4160 - Physical Examination - Policy & Regulation (M)
5200 - Attendance - Regulation (M)
5337 - Service Animals - Policy (M)
5350 - Student Suicide Prevention Policy (M)
*7231 - Gifts From Vendors - Policy (M) (ABOLISHED)
8420 - Emergency and Crisis Situations Policy (M)
8467 - Firearms and Weapons Policy & Regulation (M)
5751 - Sexual Harassment of Students - Policy (M)
5751 - Sexual Harassment of Students - Regulation (M)
*8500 - Food service -- Regulation (ABOLISHED)
2365 - Acceptable Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)
*Abolishments are finalized in one reading.

4. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to adopt the following resolution to acknowledge the service of Gina Peter, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

**WHEREAS**, Gina Peter dedicated her time and services to the staff 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 Peter in recognition of her 25 years of dedicated service to the Demarest Board of Education.

5. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the payment of accumulated sick time for Gina Peter for 150 days in the amount of \$4,500 as per Policy 1620, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
6. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve agreement with Jump Ahead Pediatric Therapy, for occupational therapy services, at a rate of \$87.50 per hour from January 13, 2025, through the remainder of the school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
7. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Choi and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve contract with Leadline Software Platform for human resource platform from January 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025 at a cost of \$4,000.00, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

**E. Support Services—Fiscal Management**

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

November 15	\$ 526,513.83
November 27	\$ 517,560.78

2. It was moved by Governale seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve December 17, 2024 bill list as follows, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

<u>Subtotal Per Fund</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11 General Current Expense	\$ 619,796.06
20 Special Revenue Fund	\$ 39,219.73
21 Student Activity Fund	\$ 21,133.00
22 Athletic Fund	\$ 132.00
30 Capital Projects Fund	\$ 4,654.65
60 Cafeteria Fund	<u>\$ 22,018.89</u>
Total Bills:	\$706,954.33

3. It was moved by Governale 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 November 30, 2024, 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 Governale 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 November 30, 2024 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 Governale seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to acknowledge receipt of the November 2024 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 Governale seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to confirm the following budget transfer for November 2024, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

**To:**

Account Number	Description	Amount
11-000-219-600	Child Study Team-General Supplies	\$300.00
11-000-221-500	Improvement of Instruction Services-Other Purch. Services	75.00
11-000-270-890	Student Transportation Services-Misc Expenditures	150.00
11-213-100-106	Resource Room-Other Salaries for Instruction	50.00
<b>Total Transfers In</b>		<b>\$575.00</b>

**From:**

Account Number	Description	Amount
11-000-219-890	Child Study Team-Misc Expenditures	\$ 300.00
11-000-221-800	Improvement of Instruction Services-Other Objects	75.00
11-000-270-610	Student Transportation Services-General Supplies	150.00
11-213-100-610	Resource Room-General Supplies	50.00
<b>Total Transfers Out</b>		<b>\$575.00</b>

7. It was moved by Governale seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the amendment to the 2024/2025 IDEA Basic grant application to include the 2023/2024 carryover as follows:

Account	Original	Carryover adjustment	Revised
100-500 Other purchase services tuition	\$182,068.00	\$2,131.00	\$184,199.00
200-300 Professional services related services	\$ 9,103.00	\$3,569.00	\$ 12,672.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$191,171.00</b>	<b>\$5,700.00</b>	<b>\$196,871.00</b>

8. It was moved by Governale seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve change order #4 with EI Associates., for the Demarest Middle School Gymnasium, NJDOE Project # 1070-040-23-1000, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

This change order is the result of additional work for external connection for generator.
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Previous fee (CO3)	\$479,965.00
This change	\$ 9,500.00
Current fee	\$489,465.00

9. It was moved by Governale seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve payment application #9, in the amount of \$621,903.26 to Daskal LLC for the Demarest Middle School Gymnasium addition, NJDOE Project # 1070-040-23-1000, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

10. It was moved by Governale seconded by Lee and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve acceptance of the 2023/2024 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

There was no motion for public comment being no one from the public was present.

XVI. NEW BUSINESS

None at this time.

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 7:40 P.M.

Sincerely,



Antoinette Kelly  
Business Administrator and Board Secretary