

DEMAREST BOARD OF EDUCATION
COW and REGULAR SESSION MEETING MINUTES
County Road School – Media Center
January 21, 2025
7:00 P.M.

I. OPENING

- A. The meeting was called to order by President Holzberg at 6:30 pm.
- B. Present: Brillhart (arrived 6:20 PM), 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. Student Discipline
 - 2. Legal Matter
- 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:

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 Cantatore, seconded by Governale and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to convene executive session at 6:50 P.M.

III. REOPEN PUBLIC MEETING

- A. It was moved by Cantatore , seconded by Governale 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 Lee and approved by unanimous voice vote of those present to approve:

- December 17, 2024 COW and Regular Meeting Minutes
- December 17, 2024 Executive Session Meeting Minutes
- January 7, 2025 Reorganization Meeting Minutes

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

Letter of retirement for Superintendent Fox.

VIII. BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

A. Board President Holzberg wanted to recognize all of the school boards in the state, the county as well as this board. She appreciates all the work they do.

Ms. Holzberg stated the following:

Tonight, it's with mixed emotions that the Demarest Board of Education accepts retirement from Mr. Fox our Superintendent of schools.

I've been honored to serve on the Demarest Board of Education for several years. During my term, I've had the opportunity to work with several Demarest Superintendents. I can say Mr. Fox is at the top of those who lead our schools.

As Superintendent his accomplishments over 15 years are numerous. I would like to touch on a few.

Foremost, "children first" led his recommendations to the BOE. He believes all students can succeed and he demonstrated this belief to personnel. He is skilled in recognizing and recruiting talented well-qualified applicants with most achieving tenure.

With his skillful financial management and careful planning, we were able to complete building improvements for CRS and LLE. Soon a long-held goal for our middle school students and community will be a regulation size DMS gymnasium. Physical safety of students and staff required him to tackle a multiprong approach with upgraded security equipment and policies while working closely with our police partners. Playground improvements with PTO support for equipment in all buildings provided positive opportunities for student interactions.

These building recommendations were always connected to curriculum enhancements, safety and communication for our students. Some initiatives were the pre-K program, expanded music and performing arts program, upgraded media center, improved technology

equipment and programs, new science lab, economics and financial literacy programs to name a few. His recommendation for a health and wellness center and additional guidance staff demonstrates his concern for student and staff stress today.

Mr. Fox has been an excellent communicator for building engagement with our residents and families. He established a social media presence, an improved website, student newspaper and improved school newsletter.

Then there was an extraordinary pandemic in 2020. While we were in uncharted waters, Mr. Fox lead the Demarest schools forward. His calm and systematic approach implemented procedures including but not limited to, in-person and virtual programs with professional development to train staff. Frequent meetings with district nurses, establishing procedures with NJ Department of Education, BC Department of Health, and keeping parents and community informed to name a few. Following up with response to intervention in all schools he worked to identify gaps in learning from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Michael has made countless contributions to the Demarest school district. The Demarest Board of Education is proud to have Mr. Fox as the dedicated, innovative education leader of the Demarest School District. You will be missed, but your legacy will be remembered for years to come.

On behalf of the Demarest BOE, I want to express my gratitude for his commitment to the children and families of Demarest. While we are sad to see him leave, we are happy for him to embark on a new and exciting new path in his life.

Thank you for everything you've given to Demarest, and we wish you all the best in your new choice of career.

IX. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

A. Mr. Fox thanked the board for all of their years of support and thanked Ms. Holzberg for her kind comments.

X. COMMITTEE REPORTS

None at this time.

XI. OTHER REPORTS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Principal Regan reviewed the following:

- Holiday Boutique
- School musical rehearsals
- Basketball has started
- 5th-grade writers celebration
- KARE club donated to Susan Komen
- Floor hockey in gym class
- Visitor from computational biologist for 7th grade
- Competition in the Science Olympiad

B. Principal Mazzini reviewed the following:

- Polar Express event
- PTO holiday boutique
- PTO sponsored Read-A-Thon
- Character Counts Club made cards for Veterans
- Upcoming: no homework night January 23rd, Lunar New Year celebration, 100 day celebrations

XII. REVIEW OF AGENDA

A. Board members reviewed the items.

XIII. PUBLIC COMMENT (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

- A. It was moved by Brillhart, seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to open the meeting to public comment.
- B. The following attendee spoke:
 - Councilman David Jiang, 16 Academy Lane, asked a question about the change orders and the allocation for the contract allowance.
- C. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Brillhart 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 Cantatore 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 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.
 - Haley Larsen
- 2. It was moved by Fein seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Maureen Betz, Demarest Middle School Art teacher, effective June 30, 2025, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
- 3. It was moved by Fein seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to modify December 17, 2024 resolution A.5. approving the request of Staff ID No.:10312797 for paid sick leave from January 10, 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.
- 4. It was moved by Fein seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the request of Staff ID # 10312754 for paid sick leave from February 26, 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.

B. Instruction – Pupils/Programs

- 1. It was moved by Brillhart 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
Bricks 4 Kidz Closter	January 2025	DMS ERI/LLD program
Bricks 4 Kidz Closter	January 2025	LLE ERI/LLD program

Stop & Shop Closter	January 2025	DMS LLD program
JCC Tenafly	February 2025	LLE ERI/ LLD program
JCC Tenafly	February 2025	DMS ERI program
Stop & Shop Closter	April & May 2025	DMS LLD program
Bergen PAC Englewood	March & April 2025	DMS LLD program
Target Closter	February 2025	DMS LLD program
Closter Nature Center Closter	May 2025	First grade
The Valley Program Norwood	March 2025	DMS ERI program
Abmas Farm Wyckoff	April 2025	DMS ERI program
Dwight-Englewood School Englewood	February 2025	DMS Math team

C. Support Services – Staffing

1. It was moved by Choi seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the provisional employment of the following paraprofessional not to exceed 29 hours per week, according to the paraprofessional hourly guide, for 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

School/Position	Staff Name	Step
CRS/paraprofessional PK classroom aide	Eunhwa Choi	1

D. Support Services – Board of Education

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

WHEREAS, The New Jersey School Boards Association has declared January 2025 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 2025 as SCHOOL BOARD RECOGNITION MONTH; and be it further

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.

2. It was moved by Lee 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
Demarest Scout Troops 163/63	2/13/25, 3/13/25, 4/10/25 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	County Road School All Purpose Room
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 and lobby*

*modified from 12/17/24 D. 1

3. It was moved by Lee 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
Resat Cazimoski/ Facility Manager	NJSBGA Conference Atlantic City 3/23/25-3/26/25	\$350.00
Franklin Reynoso Information Technology Coordinator	Techspo Conference Atlantic City 1/29/2025 - 1/31/2025	\$590.00

4. It was moved by Lee seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the second reading and adoption of the following policies and regulations, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

0141 - Board Member Number and Term - Policy
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)
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)
2365 - Acceptable Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)
*Abolishments are finalized in one reading.

5. It was moved by Lee seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the 2025/2026 school year calendar, [as attached](#), as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
6. It was moved by Lee seconded by Cantatore 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 2024/2025 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
7. It was moved by Lee seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve a sidebar agreement between the Demarest Board of Education and the Demarest Education Association for the Demarest Middle School Secondary Supervisor of DMS School Play stipend in the amount of \$1,500 for the 2024/2025 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
8. It was moved by Lee seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve the job description for Secondary Supervisor of DMS School Play stipend, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
9. It was moved by Lee seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve Antoinette Kelly as ESEA Coordinator for the remainder of the 2024/2025 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
10. It was moved by Lee seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to appoint Sherri Rinckhoff as McKinney – Vento Homeless Education Liaison for the remainder of the 2024/2025 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
11. It was moved by Lee seconded by Cantatore and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to accept the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Michael Fox, Superintendent, effective August 1, 2025, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

E. Support Services—Fiscal Management

1. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale 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 13	\$ 566,034.28
December 23	\$ 560,634.38

2. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve January 21, 2025 bill list as follows, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

3.

<u>Subtotal Per Fund</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11 General Current Expense	\$ 596,617.91
12 Capital Outlay	\$2,450,000.01
20 Special Revenue Fund	\$ 116,827.07
21 Student Activity Fund	\$ 3,898.48
22 Athletic Fund	\$ 1,395.00
30 Capital Projects Fund	\$1,084,353.83
60 Cafeteria Fund	\$ 19,753.44
Total Bills:	\$4,272,845.74

4. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale 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, 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.

5. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale 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, 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.

6. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to acknowledge receipt of the December 2024 Report of the Board Secretary, A148 and the Report of the Treasurer, A-149, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

7. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to confirm the following budget transfer for December 2024, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator:

To:

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11-000-211-300	Attendance and Social Work-Contracted Services	\$2,200.00
11-000-219-610	Child Study Team-General Supplies	368.07
11-000-261-330	Required Maintenance-Professional Services	1,782.50
11-401-100-890	School Sponsored Co-Curricular Activities-Misc.Expend	400.00
12-120-100-730	Equipment-Regular Programs Grades 1-5	2,778.00
Total Transfers In		\$7,528.57

From:

Account Number	Description	Amount
11-000-213-110	Health Services-Substitute Salaries	\$2,200.00
11-000-219-890	Child Study Team-Miscellaneous Expenditures	368.07
11-000-261-610	Required Maintenance-General Supplies	1,782.50
11-401-100-610	School Sponsored Co-Curricular Activities-Gen Supplies	400.00
11-190-100-610	Regular Programs Instruction-General Supplies	2,778.00
Total Transfers Out		\$7,528.57

8. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve change order #5 with Daskal, LLC., 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 block base, exhaust fans, sheathing infill and enlargement of firewall opening

Original contract contingency sum	\$250,000.00
Net change of previously authorized change orders	\$47,506.52
Contract contingency sum will be decreased by this change order in the amount of	\$35,755.94
New remaining contingency sum including this change order will be	\$166,737.54

Original contract sum was	\$7,161,000.00
Net change by previously authorized change orders	0.00
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$7,161,000.00
contract sum will be increased by this change order in the amount of	0.00
New contract sum including this change order will be	\$7,161,000.00

9. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve payment application #10, in the amount of \$449,795.92 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 Cantatore seconded by Govnerale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve agreement with Open Systems Integrators, Inc. for burglar alarm system replacement at Demarest Middle School, at a cost of \$39,949.10, through #65-MCESCCPS, Bid# ESCNJ 23/24-32 cooperative, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
11. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve agreement with Open Systems Integrators, Inc. for fire alarm system replacement at Demarest Middle School including the new addition, at a cost of \$424,692.38, through #65-MCESCCPS, Bid# ESCNJ 21/22-41 cooperative, for the 2025/2026 school year, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
12. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve agreement with Eastern Datacomm for district-wide

security cameras, at a cost of \$56,238.10, through PEPPM #533902-155 cooperative, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.

13. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve agreement with Eastern Datacomm for wiring, public announcement system and LENS system installation at the new Demarest Middle School gymnasium, at a cost of \$40,078.00, Through PEPPM #533902-155 cooperative, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
14. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve agreement with Eastern Datacomm for district- wide access control installation, at a cost of \$60,668.26, PEPPM #533902-155 cooperative, as recommended by the Chief School Administrator.
15. It was moved by Cantatore seconded by Govnerale and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to approve change order #6 with Daskal, LLC., 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 enlargement of firewall and adjustment of electrical conduit for gas line

Original contract contingency sum	\$250,000.00
Net change of previously authorized change orders	\$ 83,262.46
Contract contingency sum will be decreased by this change order in the amount of	\$ 2,519.61
New remaining contingency sum including this change order will be	\$164,217.93

Original contract sum was	\$7,161,000.00
Net change by previously authorized change orders	0.00
Contract sum prior to this change order	\$7,161,000.00
contract sum will be increased by this change order in the amount of	0.00
New contract sum including this change order will be	\$7,161,000.00

XV. PUBLIC COMMENT

- A. It was moved by Choi, seconded by Brillhart and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to open the meeting to public comment.
- B. There were no comments
- C. It was moved by Cantatore, seconded by Brillhart and approved by unanimous roll call vote of those present to close the meeting to public comment.

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 Governale and approved by unanimous voice vote to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 P.M.

Sincerely,

Antoinette Kelly
Business Administrator and Board Secretary