SOUTH BRUNSWICK TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
P. O. Box 181
Monmouth Junction, New Jersey

Minutes of the Board Meeting of September 14, 2023

The South Brunswick Township Board of Education held a meeting on Thursday, September 14, 2023. The meeting was chaired by President, Mrs. Lisa Rodgers.

CALLED TO ORDER – Mrs. Rodgers called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

STATEMENT OF ADVANCE NOTICE – Mrs. Rodgers read a statement in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Mrs. Rodgers asked for a moment of silence in remembrance on the 22nd anniversary of 9/11. She also extended her heartfelt condolences to the families of those affected by the earthquakes in Morocco and floods in Libya.

ROLL CALL - David Pawlowski, SBA, Board Secretary:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mrs. Lisa Rodgers, Dr. Smitha Raj, Mrs. Julie Ferrara, Mrs. Laura Hernandez, Mrs. Deepa Karthik, Ms. Alisha Khan, Mr. Raja Krishna & Mr. Mike Mitchell

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Barry Nathanson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA – There was a motion by Dr. Raj, seconded by Mrs. Hernandez to approve the agenda of September 14, 2023:

Yes: Mrs. Lisa Rodgers, Dr. Smitha Raj, Mrs. Julie Ferrara, Mrs. Laura Hernandez, Mrs. Deepa Karthik, Ms. Alisha Khan, Mr. Raja Krishna & Mr. Mike Mitchell

No: None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – There was a motion to approve the Board Minutes of July 27, 2023 and Executive Minutes of July 27, 2023:

Yes: Mrs. Lisa Rodgers, Dr. Smitha Raj, Mrs. Julie Ferrara, Mrs. Laura Hernandez, Mrs. Deepa Karthik, Mr. Raja Krishna, Mr. Raja Krishna and Mr. Mike Mitchell

No: None

Mrs. Rodgers welcomed new student representative Difan Li. Difan is a junior at the high school. She has a deep passion for arts and loves working with others. Outside of school she participates in various volunteer roles.

REPORT OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE – Difan Li

ACTIVITIES

Next week on September 19th and 20th there will be the annual Club Fair. These are lunch time activities for our students to find out about all things club related. The clubs are excited to be participating in this event again.

Pay to Participate for non-selective clubs will officially open October 1st. We encourage students to attend two meetings to make sure their schedules match and they like the club before registering.

Some other exciting news include the upcoming Spirit Week, on September 26th - September 29th.

Tuesday - Airport Fit Day
Wednesday - Class Color Day
Thursday- Tacky Tourist Day
Friday - Class Flags Day & Homecoming

Save the date for the Homecoming Football Game on Friday, September 29th!

Think Pink Day is Friday, October 13th.

ATHLETICS

The SBHS gymnastics team is off to a great start and had their first meet on Wednesday, September 13th. They are currently fundraising for the Jackie Pang fund, a former South Brunswick teacher and SBHS gymnastics parent alumni. The girls' tennis team is currently 2-0 with wins over Old Bridge and Edison Magnet school. The girls will take on East Brunswick and North Brunswick this week looking to stay undefeated.

The girls' volleyball season has kicked off with tremendous energy and enthusiasm. We invite you to join us in showing your support for the Vikings as they prepare to face the Patriots of Colonia High School on Tuesday. This season, the girls' volleyball program is proudly participating in the *Making Strides Breast Cancer Fundraiser*. If you're eager to contribute and demonstrate your support for this meaningful cause, please don't hesitate to get in touch with Coach Kacy Kelly.

Our upcoming home events include gymnastics vs. St. Thomas Aquinas on September 15th, Girls' Tennis vs. Edison and Girls' Volleyball vs. Colonia on September 19th, Field Hockey vs. North Plainfield on September 20th, Girls' Soccer vs. Edison and Girls' Volleyball vs. Monroe on September 21th, Gymnastics vs. South Plainfield on September 22nd, and Field Hockey vs. South Plainfield on September 23rd.

We will now be accepting sports forms for the winter season tryouts. The deadline to submit winter sports forms is Friday, October 20th. Please refer to the Athletic Handbook for more information. For high school forms, the completed packet goes in the black dropbox outside the gym entrance of the high school. For middle school forms, the completed packet goes in the black dropbox outside the main entrance of the school your child attends.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS – Scott Feder

Mr. Feder welcomed student representative Difan Li to her first meeting of the school year and told her to feel free to come to the meeting with school issues and things the student council is talking about, they would love to hear the student voice.

Mr. Feder commented on the amazing staff and their attitudes at the start of the school year. He started the first day of school at Constable, where they have three preschool classes he spoke of the excitement of the staff and parents. He also talked about dismal time at Cambridge on the second day of school when the skies opened up like a monsoon and everyone was soaking wet. He commended the "amazing" staff and the families for getting through that.

He also spoke about the call he received from Mr. Pawlowski about the same time that lightening had struck the board office, thankfully no one was injured and there was no significant damage.

Mr. Feder announced that there are 280 preschoolers that are free to parents. Parents are saving money for not having to send their kids to preschool which can cost up to $10,000 per kid. He thanked the board for accomplishing that.

National Suicide Prevention Awareness Week

This week is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Week – September 10th through the 16th. A lot is done in the schools to help the community learn about suicide prevention, the District Lead Response Team has been sharing resources with staff through meetings and newsletters.

2023 – 2024 School Calendars

The school calendars for the 2023 – 2024 school year will be distributed to families. Administration is talking about going digital next year with the calendar which will be no cost to the district and will be a live calendar. At the September 28th meeting, the student artists will be recognized for their work. Kudos to Dr. Evelyn Mamman and Administrative Assistant Mrs. Sheila Nazaire for their work on the calendar.

Back to School Night dates will be available on each individual school calendar on the website.

Mrs. Rodgers asked board members to contact Maryann Murphy if they plan on attending back to school nights. She also announced that the NJSBA workshop has been confirmed for everyone and to mark your calendars.

Mr. Feder announced that he and Mr. Pawlowski will be presenting a budget update at the board meeting on October 12th and will reach out to the finance committee prior to the meeting with an update.

COMMITTEES & LIASION REPORTS – None at this time.

Business Operations Chair, Mr. Nathanson was absent and will present his report at the next meeting.

Finance Committee Chair, Mr. Mitchell announced there was no report at this time.

Education Committee Chair, Dr. Raj reported that the committee met on September 7th. Items discussed included field trips and new field trip guidelines; eligibility criteria being worked on for the National Honor Society and using unweighted GPA scores; the 18-21 transition center and extended absences. A detailed report will be available on the board portal.

Mrs. Karthik also spoke of the Education Committee and length of the meeting and commented about the work that goes on behind the scenes for committee meetings.

Mr. Feder also talked about the Education Committee meeting and about the criteria of using unweighted GPA scores for the National Honor Society.

Mrs. Rodgers asked what grades will the unweighted GPA scores for eligibility start. Mr. Feder responded this year incoming freshman. The students that are already in the high school will still use the old criteria.

Mrs. Ferrara asked for clarification on the weighted system. Mr. Feder explained.

Mr. Mitchell asked if this new criteria – unweighted GPA applies to special needs students. Mr. Feder responded yes.

Mrs. Hernandez reported that she attended the Commission of Women meeting yesterday. It is a wonderful opportunity for students' in middle school and high school to get involved. The Domestic Violence Walk will be held on October 15th. Students that participate will earn volunteer hours.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Agenda Items Only – Mrs. Rodgers read a statement in regards to public comments. No one commented on the agenda items.

Old Business – None at this time.

New Business – None at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA REVIEW – Mr. Pawlowski reviewed the consent agenda items.

Mrs. Karthik commented on Item 1.18 that the Board of Education is creating an Advocacy Committee. She asked for the benefit of the community clarification on how this committee will be put together.

Mrs. Rodgers responded the Advocacy Committee is being put together for the South Brunswick Township community to support the efforts and provide information to speak out at Trenton, to get information to the legislatures so they can understand the impact the funding formula has on this district.

Mrs. Rodgers announced over the summer she has been putting together two pieces, the explanation of what S2 is and what has happened over the past 6 or 7 years, how much money we lost and impact of this district as well as other districts. She also put together a Q & A on questions that may be asked. Dr. Raj will review the Q & A to see if anything was missed. Once Dr. Raj completes her review it will be distributed to the whole board to look at the information that will be put out to the community.

Mrs. Rodgers commented that she discussed this with Mr. Feder that the information will be then be posted to a dedicated part of the district website for people to better understand what the advocacy committee is.

Mrs. Karthik thanked Mrs. Rodgers for all the work she has put into creating this committee.

Mr. Hernandez also commented on the work that Mrs. Rodgers does, and the time she spends behind the scenes. Mrs. Rodgers has been the biggest advocate for the community for a long time. She thanked her for all she does.

Dr. Raj commented on A. 1.9, Research Grant offered by MindPrint Learning and Item 1.5, Sick Leave Policy, she commented she doesn't agree with the mandated policy from the State that could cost the district a lot of money. She also commented that mandates from the State take the ability away to make decisions at the local district level. She also commented that the Negotiations Committee spends a lot of time negotiating contracts, which includes sick time.

Mrs. Rodgers and Mrs. Karthik also commented on the Sick Leave policy.

Mrs. Ferrara asked if the Sick Policy is a mandated policy why would it need board approval.

Mr. Feder explained the process that a policy comes through based on law from Strauss Esmay and the district needs to adopt the policy, but there are choices that have to be made and the Policy Committee reviews and makes decisions on the policy based on the law and then it is presented to the entire board for a 1st and 2nd Reading.

Mr. Feder commented on the Stabilization Aid application and they have no idea how much the district will receive. The board has to approve this motion by a certain time. He also commented this year they are using in the budget 4 million dollars of Stabilization Aid that will not be in the budget next year. They will have a meeting soon with the Finance Committee to review the specifics of the Stabilization Aid. He also mentioned that they apply for other grant opportunities when they are available because they don't want to leave money on the table.

APPROVE ACTION ITEMS – There was a motion by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Mrs. Ferrara to approve the Action Items for September 14, 2023:

1.1 Bill List - upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board approve the Warrant List dated September 11, 2023 in the amount of $5,375,356.52 as per the attached.

1.2 Approve Non-Public Technology Order – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the non-public technology order for equipment/supplies for St. Augustine School from the Educational Services Commission:

2023 – 2024 Funding	$13,867.00
P.O. Order #1 Request	($4,830.00)
Remaining Balance	$9,037.00

1.3 Approve Acceptance of Funds – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education accept the following funds from the NJ Department of Education for the 2023 – 2024 school year:

Chapter 192 Non-Public Auxiliary

• Compensatory Education	$30,569.00
• ESL	$3,662.00
• Transportation	$7,339.00
	$41,570.00

Chapter 193 Non-Public Handicapped

• Initial/Annual Exam	$31,650.00
• Corrective Speech	$20,460.00
• Supplementary Instruction	$16,520.00
	$68,630.00

1.4 Approve Contract for Noor-Ul-Iman - Non-Public Security – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the contract between Noor-Il-Iman and the South Brunswick Township for a School Resource Officer (SRO) for the 2023 – 2024 school year.

Noor-Ul-Iman Non-Public Security Allotment -	$104,345.00
SRO Contract Total Cost	($77,044.00)
Balance of Allotment	$27,301.00

1.5 2nd Reading & Adoption – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the 2nd Reading & Adoption of Policy 1642.01 Sick Leave.

1.6 Approve District Local Mentor Plan – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the South Brunswick School District's Local Mentor Plan for the 2023 – 2024 school year.

1.7 Approve Statement of Assurance – District Local Mentor Plan – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the South Brunswick School District Local Mentor Plan Statement of Assurance for the 2023 – 2024 school year.

1.8 Approve Appointment for Professional Development Consulting Services – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the appointment of Dr. Gary Abbamont to provide Professional Development Consultant Services to the district's non-tenured administrative staff during the 2023 – 2024 school year. Dr. Abbamont will support the professional growth of non-tenure administrative staff through online module sessions, Learning Walks, and 1on 1 conferences. These services will not exceed $6,000. Fees for additional services requested by the Board of Education will be mutually agreed upon prior to the commencement of any work.

1.9 Accept Research Grant – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education accept the attached free research grant offered by MindPrint Learning for the 2023 – 2024 school year.

1.10 Approve Updated Pricing Agreement – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the attached updated pricing agreement - Exhibit A - between Kelly Services, Inc. and the South Brunswick Board of Education for the 2023 – 2024 school year.

1.11 Approve Renewal of License – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-5 (a) (19), the provision or performing of goods or services for the support or maintenance of proprietary computer hardware and software is an exception to bidding. Furthermore, the district down not have to solicit formal quotations for the licensing and maintenance support of the software, as it is not practicable, because only QuickBooks can provide this support.

Titan Technologies LLC

Product Description	**Price**
Quickbooks Enterprise Silver – 30 users – 1 year Software License:	$9,226.00

The term of the contract will be from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024.

1.12 Approve License Agreement – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the License Agreement between Global Spectrum, L.P. a Delaware limited partnership, as agent on behalf of the Mercer County Improvement Authority ("Venue"), and the South Brunswick Board of Education for the use of the CURE Insurance Arena ("Facility") for the South Brunswick High School Class of 2024 Graduation Ceremony on June 20, 2024. The cost of the agreement shall not exceed $15,000.

1.13 Approve Resolution for Travel and Related Expense Reimbursement – upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the Travel and Related Expense Reimbursement for the staff listed on the attached sheet.

WHEREAS, the South Brunswick Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1 et seq. requires Board members to receive prior approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

WHEREAS, a Board of Education may establish, for regular district business travel only as described in NJOMB Circular Letter 06-02, including amendments or revisions thereto, a threshold amount below which Board approval is not required; and

WHEREAS, travel and related expenses not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1 et seq., but deemed by the Board of Education to be necessary and unavoidable are excluded from the requirements of N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1 et seq.; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education approves all travel not in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1 et seq. as being necessary and unavoidable as per noted on the attached Board of Education Approval of Travel and Related Expense Reimbursement Form; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Board of Education approves the travel and related expense reimbursements as listed on the attached Board of Education Approval of Travel and Related Expense Reimbursement Form.

Last Name	First Name	School/Bldg.	Date(s)	Name of Conference/ Workshop	Destination (City, State)	Fees	Total Cost
Vildostegui-Cerra	Cristina	Constable	10/11/2023 - 10/13/23	NJPSA/FEA/NJASCD Fall Conference-Making Excellence Happen	Atlantic City, NJ	Lodging, Meals, Mileage, Registration, Parking	744
Pemberton	Christi	Cambridge	10/12/2023-10/13/23	2023 NJPSA/FEA/NJASCD Fall Conference Making Excellence Happen	Atlantic City, NJ	Lodging, Meals, Mileage, Registration	702.22
McManus	Brian	High School	10/20/2023-10/21/2023	The Festival of Education (USA)	Potomac, MD	Lodging, Meals, Mileage, Registration, Tolls, Parking	502
Pawlowski	David	Admin. Office	09/21/2023	NJASBO School Security Creating Safe Schools through Comprehensive Security Strategies	Whippany, NJ	Registration	125

1.14 Approve Student Field Trips – upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the student field trips and destinations as per the following for the 2023 – 2024 school year.

School	Destination - Group or Curriculum Connection	City	State	Date(s)	Grade(s)
Crossroads South	Reichler Park/SEL Team Building	Monmouth Junction	NJ	9/29/23 – 10/6/23 (one unit per day when school is in session)	7/8
Crossroads South	Reichler Park/Team Building	Monmouth Junction	NJ	9/28/23	6

1.15 Approve Extension of Professional Services – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the following extension of services and not to exceed amounts for the 2021 – 2022 school year. These services are necessary for students that are eligible for special education and related services.

Vendor	Service	Previous "Not to Exceed"	Increase Amount	New "Not to Exceed"
Bayada Home Health Care	Nursing Services	$232,925	$30,000	$262,925

1.16 Approve Preschool Education Aid Carryover Funds – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the carryover amount $552,994.43 from Preschool Education Aid (PEA) to be used in the 2023 – 2024 spending plan funds to provide funds for transportation services.

1.17 Approve Stabilization Aide Application – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the Stabilization Aide Application as submitted by the Business Administrator prior to October 6, 2023.

WHEREAS, the South Brunswick Township School District experienced a reduction in state aid;

WHERAS, the South Brunswick Township School District confronts a structural budgetary imbalance;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the South Brunswick Township School District has met both requirements required by the State of New Jersey for said submission.

1.18 Approve Creation of Advocacy Committee – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education create an Advocacy Committee to address the impact of the State of New Jersey's funding formula on the South Brunswick Township School District as well as all other school districts that have been or will be negatively impacted by said formula.

1.19 Approve Emergency Purchase – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the South Brunswick Board of Education approve an emergency purchase of a motor to repair air conditioning units at Cambridge Elementary School. The emergency purchase will be done with Hights Electric Motor Service, Inc. of Hightstown, NJ, as per quotation #091423BS02 in the amount of $3,063.93.

In accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:34-6.1, the following documents must be filed with the County Superintendent within three (3) days after awarding the contract or agreement:

A copy of the contract or agreement.
Nature of the emergency.

2 PERSONNEL – upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools that the Board of Education approve the following personnel items as per the attached spreadsheets:

A. Resignation and Retirement
B. Leave of Absence
C. Certificated
D. Non-Certificated
E. Change
F. Extracurricular/Extra Pay

Yes: Mrs. Lisa Rodgers, Dr. Smitha Raj, Mrs. Julie Ferrara, Mrs. Laura Hernandez, Mrs. Deepa Karthik, Mr. Raja Krishna, Mr. Raja Krishna and Mr. Mike Mitchell

No: None

PUBLIC COMMENT – 2nd Opportunity for any topic.
To view the full public comments visit SBBOE Meeting 2023-09-14

Mukeesh Bhatt, Deans Pond resident, thanked the board for restoring the bus in the Summerfield area. He commented it was restored after a safety study was done and parents came to the meeting with their concerns. He commented a process should have been followed and a safety study should have been done beforehand by bringing everyone together. He also commented on the contract of Mr. Feder and oversight of decisions.

Sastri, resident of Monmouth Junction commented on the loss of courtesy busing and the concerns he has for his daughters walking 45 minutes back and forth to school. He also commented about safety concerns. He requested the board make an assessment of the decision.

Magesh Kamalakannan, resident of Dayton, also commented on the loss of courtesy busing. He requested the Board of Education and administration take the two mile walk with a backpack and music instrument and then expect small children to walk. He commented that a safety study should have been done before the decision was made.

Vivek Kumar, resident of South Brunswick, commented about safety of the children and reiterated the comments about the loss of courtesy busing and the elementary and middle school students walking the two miles back and forth to school. He also commented on the process that was followed.

A Summerfield resident reiterated comments regarding the courtesy busing and the stop on Rt. 522.

Bina Mehta, resident of South Brunswick commented she has been attending board meetings and that the loss of state aid has been discussed over the past couple of years. She announced she hosted a meeting with the legislators along with community members to ask questions regarding the S2 funding. She commented that Senator Zwicker in attendance said the problem with the funding is coming from the Trenton. She commented the funding is going to be worse next year and everyone needs to work together.

Lisa Garwood, Princeton Walk, spoke of a comment made earlier, that the board did reach out to the community when they formed the citizens committee. She said the board did reach out to the community by forming a Citizen's Committee. She also responded that it is the parents' responsibility to get their children to school. She suggested ways they can get their children to school by carpooling and other options. She also commented on the impact of board members attending back to school nights. She thanked the board for all they do.

Christine Resnick, resident of Kendall Park commented that at the last meeting David Carroll, from the League of Women's Voters announced they are hosting a candidate night. She announced she is here to share the information, the forum will be held at Crossroads North on October 11th at 7pm, all South Brunswick residents are invited. All candidates were invited and so far only 4 have responded. They have until September 20th to respond. Residents can also submit questions in advance and will not be shared with the candidates.

Resident of Princeton Gate, asked for clarification of the expenditures for the health care center. She also asked about the percentage of absenteeism for extended leave absences. Mr. Pawlowski asked her to forward her question to Mr. Feder.

Resident of Southridge Community also reiterated comments regarding bus safety and concerns as per the comments from other residents.

Nehal Tanel, resident of Deans Pond, reiterated the comments regarding courtesy busing and the safety of the students and the process and to find other options.

Middle school student Sashura, from Dayton, commented on her 30 minute walk to school which she said that isn't easy and spoke of the curriculum that is being taught that she doesn't understand. She also commented on the temperature being cold in the classroom.

Mr. Feder asked Sashura to email her principal or administration with her concerns.

Mr. Feder responded to comments made and emails he has received. On the website are presentations that exist regarding the information on the healthcare costs. He recommended that residents watch the presentation and then ask questions. He also responded to an email from a resident regarding looking at what is State mandated and what isn't. Mr. Feder commented that courtesy busing is not State mandated. He also responded to comments about budget planning. He has been talking out the budget for years about the funding and what could happen if it doesn't change, specifically this year 2023 – 2024 school year.

ADJOURNMENT – There was a motion by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Mrs. Ferrara to adjourn the meeting to Executive Session at 8:39 pm.

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the Township of South Brunswick hereby moves into an Executive Session, in accordance with Sunshine Law, Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975 (N.J.S.A.) 10:4-6 through 10:4-21), to discuss the following:

X CSA Evaluation

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the discussion conducted in Executive Session can be disclosed to the public at such time as the matters have been resolved. Formal action may be taken at any meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



David Pawlowski
Business Administrator/Board Secretary