

**SOUTH AMBOY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Business/Public Meeting Minutes**

**October 26, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.**

**Open Meeting & immediately go into Executive/Closed Session**

**Public Meeting Agenda begins at 6:30 P.M.**

**Virtual Meeting using AT&T Conferencing (Call toll free 1-866-390-1828. Enter access code 9392521#. To enter the conference, press #)**

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**Mr. Conrad, Board President called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.**

**Mr. Frascella, called the roll:**

Present: Mr. Albarran, Mr. Conrad, Ms. Conway, Mr. Dragotta (6:07), Ms. Gonzalez, Ms. Kasics, Ms. McLaughlin, Mrs. Taggart, Mr. Walsh

Absent: None

Also Present: Peter Frascella, Board Secretary; Jorge E. Diaz, Superintendent; Mr. Silvestro, Board Attorney

On a motion by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Mr. Walsh that the Board adjourned into Closed Session at 6:07 pm. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**Mr. Frascella read the following Closed Session Notice:**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, pursuant to the Sunshine Act, N.J.S. 10:4-12 and 13, the South Amboy Board of Education will now meet in closed session to discuss items falling under Attorney/Client Privilege, Student Related Matters, Personnel Matters, and negotiations.

The aforesaid subjects are within the exemptions permitted to be discussed in closed session in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-13. Information regarding the Board's closed session discussion will be disclosed to the public as soon as the need for confidentiality no longer exists. The Board will reconvene in public session at the conclusion of the closed session in approximately 30 minutes.

On a motion by Ms. Conway and seconded by Ms. Conway that the Board reconvened into the public portion of the meeting at 6:50 pm. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

**Mr. Frascella read the following Public Notice:**

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

In compliance with the Open Public Meeting Law, the South Amboy Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting setting forth the time, date, and location to be submitted for publication to the Home News Tribune and posted at the Board Office, Middle/High School, Elementary School, City Hall, Library and Senior Citizens Center Bulletin Boards at least 48 hours in advance of this meeting. Members of the public who wish to address the Board will be given the opportunity before the Board adjourns for the evening.

**Mr. Conrad led all assembled in the Flag Salute.**

**Jorge E. Diaz, Superintendent, discussed the first day of hybrid learning and the transition back to school for students and staff.**

Ms. Gonzalez – Asked what happens when a kid is dropped off on the wrong day.

Mr. Walsh – Asked if procedures/FAQ can be updated? Wanted information on food service.

Ms. Kasics – What is the highest/lowest amount of kids in each class?

MINUTES

1. MINUTES

1. **ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES**

September 28, 2020

September 28, 2020

Business-Public Meeting (Attachment)

Closed Session/Business Meeting

**EDUCATION & CURRICULUM**

~None~

**POLICY**

~None~

**PERSONNEL**

2. **APPROVE/IEP TRANSLATOR/NIDIA SANCHEZ**

That the Board of Education approves the appointment of Nidia Sanchez to serve as an IEP Translator, as needed, for the 2020-2021 school year. Services will be compensated at the employee's hourly rate of pay.

3. **APPROVE/TEACHER FOR CURRICULUM REVISION/2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

That the Board of Education approves Debra Rizzo to revise the curriculum, Introduction to Marketing for the 2020-2021 school year, as recommended by the Superintendent.

4. **APPROVE/NURSE/LISA MCALONIE**

That the Board of Education approves the employment of Lisa McAlonie as a Nurse in the Elementary School for the 2020-2021 school year effective October 22, 2020 until June 30, 2020 as recommended by the Superintendent. Her salary (MA, Step 9), with benefits, will be as reflected in the negotiated agreement between the Board of Education and the South Amboy Education Association. Employment is contingent upon completion of the Criminal History Background Check (Policy #4111/4211) and Physicals for Employees (Policy #4212.4).

5. **APPROVE/(FMLA) LEAVE OF ABSENCE/2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR/CATHARINE MOLLIS**

That the Board of Education approves the paid FMLA leave of absence of Catharine Mollis, for a period of November 1, 2020 until January 1, 2021 (Twelve weeks)

**6. RETIREMENT/CATHARINE MOLLIS**

That the Board of Education approves the retirement of Catharine Mollis, Middle School Teacher, effective January 1, 2021, with sincere appreciation for her years of dedicated service to our district as recommended by the Superintendent.

**7. HOMEWORK CLUB ADVISORS/2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

That the Board of Education approves the appointment of the following individuals as Homework Club Advisors (Grades 3-5) for the 2020-2021 school year as recommended by the Superintendent. The hourly rate for these positions will be in accordance with the negotiated agreement between the Board of Education and the South Amboy Education Association:

**GRADE 3 (½ hr/day) Mon.-Thurs. and GRADES 4-5 (1 hr/day) Mon.-Thurs.**

George Harduby

Kimberly Gundrum

Kristen LaMagna

Barbara Falvo

Lindsay DeLucia

Rob Parks

Sarah Dahl

**8. APPROVE/ELEMENTARY VICE PRINCIPAL/2020-2021 School Year**

That the Board of Education approves the employment of Michelle Buchanan as a Vice Principal in the Elementary School for the 2020-2021 school year (Effective date TBD) until June 30, 2021 as recommended by the Superintendent. Salary (VP Step 2), with benefits, will be as reflected in the negotiated agreement between the Board of Education and the South Amboy Administrator Association. Employment is contingent upon completion of the Criminal History Background Check (Policy #4111/4211) and Physicals for Employees (Policy #4212.4)

**9. APPROVE/FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (FFCRA) LEAVE OF ABSENCE/NICOLE PATTERSON**

The Board of Education approves the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) leave of absence request of Nicole Patterson, Grade 3 Teacher at the Elementary School, from November 9, 2020 to December 31, 2020, as recommended by the Superintendent.

**10. APPROVE/(FMLA) LEAVE OF ABSENCE/2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR/KAREN LAINO**

The Board of Education approves the paid FMLA leave of absence of Karen Laino, for a period of September 1, 2020 until November 30, 2020 (Twelve weeks).

**11. APPROVE/LONG-TERM SUB & ELEMENTARY TEACHER/2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

That the Board of Education approves the employment of Marcia Mercado as a Long Term Substitute Teacher at the Elementary School from November 9th until December 23rd, 2020 at a per diem rate of \$130; and as an Elementary Teacher (BA Step 1) starting January 1st, 2021 through June 30th, 2021 Employment is contingent upon completion of the Criminal History Background Check (Policy #4111/4211) and Physicals for Employees (Policy #4212.4)

**12. APPROVE/LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTE TEACHER/2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

That the Board of Education approves the employment of Callan Conklin as a Long Term Substitute Teacher at the Elementary School from November 9, 2020 until December 23, 2020 at a per diem rate of \$130; Employment is contingent upon completion of the Criminal History Background Check (Policy #4111/4211) and Physicals for Employees (Policy #4212.4)

Ms. Kasics – Question on item #9, is there a substitute setup and ready to start?

Ms. Gonzalez – Pleased that Ms. Buchanan was recommend for the Vice Principal position.

Ms. Taggart – Thanked Ms. Mollis for her years of service and feels that Ms. Buchanan will be a great addition to the administration.

**BUDGET AND FINANCE**

**13. BUDGETARY TRANSFERS**

The Board of Education approves the attached transfers for September 2020 in conjunction with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8-1 and N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10. (Attachment)

**14. EXPENDITURES FOR 9/29/2020-10/26/2020 (Attachment)**

The Board of Education approves the following expenditures for 9/29/20-10/26/20

<b>Bills For</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Regular Bills	593,256.34
09/15/20 Payroll	484,239.04
09/30/20 Payroll	482,747.85
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,560,243.23</b>
<b>September Agency</b>	<b>449,836.26</b>

**15. ACCEPT THE SECRETARY AND TREASURER REPORT – SEPT. 2020 (Attachment)**

BE IT RESOLVED that the South Amboy Board Secretary, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10 (c) 3, does hereby certify that as of the date of the reports, no line item account has encumbrances and expenditures, which in total exceed the line item appropriation in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10 (a); the monthly financial reports of the Secretary and the Treasurer; and further recommends, in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10 (c) 4, that the Board of Education certifies that no major account has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10 (b), and that as of this report sufficient funds are available to meet the District’s financial obligations for the remainder of the year.

- 16. ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 2020 ORGANIZATIONAL FUND BALANCES (Attachment)**  
The Board of Education accepts the attached September 2020 Organizational Fund Balances.

- 17. ACCEPT THE SEPTEMBER 2020 ATHLETIC FUND BALANCES (Attachment)**  
The Board of Education accepts the attached September 2020 Athletic Fund Balances.

- 18. APPROVE TRAVEL AND REIMBURSEMENT**  
The Board of Education approves the following under the “Travel and Reimbursement Policy” of the South Amboy - Board of Education as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools:

<b>STAFF/BOARD MEMBER</b>	<b>PROGRAM DATE</b>	<b>PROGRAM TITLE OR EVENT</b>	<b>FEES</b>	<b>GAAP ACCOUNT</b>
MICHELLE MASELLA	DECEMBER 8, 2020	MANAGING FRUSTRATION ANXIETY & TEACHING SOCIAL SKILLS	\$150	20-270-100-300-00-00-00-060
VALERIE MEJIA LISA McALONIE	OCTOBER 5 - DECEMBER 11, 2020	E-MODULE PYRAMID MODULE TRAINING	\$255/ EACH	20-218-100-321-00-00-CO-060

- 19. ACCEPT DIGITAL DIVIDE GRANT ALLOCATIONS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**  
The Board of Education accepts the Digital Divide Grant 2020-2021 allocation as follows:

Digital Divide: \$110,681

- 20. ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVE FOR SUBMISSION – M-1 (Attachment)**  
The Board of Education accepts the Annual Maintenance Budget Summary (M-1) and approves the submission of the M-1, for FY21, to the Middlesex County Department of Education for review.

- 21. PAYMENT OF SUPERINTENDENT MERIT GOAL ACHIEVEMENT/2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR**

WHEREAS, the South Amboy Board of Education (“the Board”) approved Merit Goals for the Superintendent for the 2019-2020 school year consisting of three (3) Quantitative Merit Goals and two (2) Qualitative Merit Goals (collectively referred to as the “Merit Goals”) and submitted the Merit Goals to the Executive County Superintendent for approval in accordance with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-3.1; and

WHEREAS, on or about October 23, 2020, the Executive County Superintendent approved the Merit Goals, thereby authorizing the Board to award to the Superintendent merit pay upon his successful achievement of each Merit Goal; and

WHEREAS, upon the continued evaluation of the Superintendent’s performance, the Board has determined that to date, the Superintendent has successfully achieved completion of two (2) Quantitative Merit Goal, partially achieved, and achieved two (2) Qualitative Merit Goals, one partially completed, thereby entitling the Superintendent to a bonus of 8.781776% of his annual salary,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby certifies that the Superintendent, Jorge E. Diaz, has successfully achieved completion of two (2) Quantitative Merit Goal, partially achieved, and achieved two (2) Qualitative Merit Goals, one partially achieved, for 2019-2020 and approves payment of the merit bonus for achievement as approved by the Executive County Superintendent.

## **OTHER MOTIONS**

### **HIB Reports**

#### **22. AFFIRM HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION & BULLYING (HIB) INCIDENT REPORT 2020**

That the Board of Education affirms the Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying (HIB) Incident Report for HIB incidents reported to the Board of Education. (HIB Report)

Ms. McLaughlin – Discussed the role of the Board Members. She is constantly asked questions by people in the community and directs them to the chain of command. She also relays information to the Board. There is both positive and negative feedback from parents. An email was sent to the Superintendent from parents of a student in the district and the email response from the Superintendent was very disrespectful. She asked the rest of the Board for their feelings on the issue.

Mr. Diaz – Asked Ms. McLaughlin to read the email aloud for the public to hear if she felt it was so egregious.

Ms. Taggart – Said she was flabbergasted that the email was sent to a parent. She is concerned that parents following the chain of command will receive similar responses.

Ms. Gonzalez – Adds that the Board and Administration need to refrain from airing personal grievances to parents.

Mr. Diaz – Stated that he is willing to discuss this in more detail or read the email in public if that is the will of the Board.

Ms. McLaughlin – Thought it was important to discuss in public because it is not a closed session topic.

#### **A. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY MOTIONS AND OTHER ITEMS**

Diane Smocovich – Congratulated both Ms. Mollis and Ms. Buchanan.

Sean Dunphy – Wished Ms. Mollis luck in her retirement. Looking forward to working with Michelle. Today, school was a very positive experience. Everyone seemed genuinely excited to be back.

Brian Murphy – Requested a Board Roll Call after closed session. He asked if the Elementary Vice Principal was a new position or a replacement? Asked about committees being posted and student representatives.

Jacob Mercado – Student Representative for the school year. Wanted to introduce himself. No report at this time.

Jennifer Avanski – Marcia Mercado will be an excellent addition to the district. Do students need to bring their laptops for in-school learning.

Michelle Herrera – Asked about the Middle School opening and average class sizes? Asked about a disciplinary plan for breaking Covid-19 protocols.

Nia Newton – Alternate Student Representative for the Board of Education. Thanked everyone and will have a report in the future.

Dave Sorat – What is the plan to get kids back to school full time? Thinks that it is ridiculous that private schools can be back full time but public schools cannot. Kids should be able to eat in school.

Don Newton – Asked about protocols when a teacher is absent to notify students? Is there any anticipation of the Governor changing protocols in December. Is Accelerero handling Pre-K?

Erin Mulligan-Piere – Feels that the teachers are doing a great job and that the children are being well educated. Asked if Early Childhood Director is meeting with Accelerero? What are the Superintendent's merit goals for this year? How does the extra administrative position effect the admin cost per student.

Laurie Guthrie – Voiced support for Ms. Buchanan for Vice Principal.

Carrie Kenny – Congratulated both Ms. Mollis and Ms. Buchanan.

Diane Smocovich – Thanked custodial staff for all of their hard work.

Kim Gundrum – Congratulated Ms. Buchanan and wished Ms. Mollis a happy retirement. She voiced her concern about returning to work because she has many loved ones in her life that could potentially be put in jeopardy if she was or anyone in her family was infected.

Don Newton – Recognized the two student representatives, one of which is his daughter. Asked if there was a plan to use go to meeting for board meetings.

Jacob Mercado – Believes teachers are doing their absolute best to make a great learning environment for the students.

Erin Mulligan-Piere – Her thoughts and concerns were in line with Ms. Gundrum. Teachers asked for cleaning supplies from parents. Are there enough supplies to keep the school clean and students and staff safe?

Ms. Taggart – Did a walkthrough of buildings, we have ample supplies and custodial staff is going above and beyond to insure safety.

Brian Murphy – Stated that staff and administrators did a great job but students need to be applauded.

Jennifer Williams – Congratulated Ms. Buchanan and Ms. Mollis. Empathized with Ms. Gundrum. Asked if pictures will be done regarding yearbook this year?

**APPROVE ALL ITEMS ON THE CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Mr. Conrad and seconded by Mr. Albarran to approve of the consent agenda of the regular public meeting of September 28, 2020 as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Ayes: Albarran, Conrad, Conway, Dragotta, Gonzalez, Kasics, McLaughlin, Taggart, Walsh  
Nays: None  
Abstention: Kasics (#17)  
Absent: None

**B. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

N/A

**C. BOARD OF EDUCATION COMMENTS**

Ms. Conway – Discussed the Curriculum and Instruction Committee Meeting including Naviance, benchmark assessments, Preschool, and tutoring programs.

Mrs. McLaughlin – Congratulated new hires and wished everyone luck. Glad that Board Members are being heard.

Ms. Kasics – Felt it was a good idea for Superintendent to do a return to school video.

Mr. Walsh – Congratulated track team. Welcomed student representatives. Welcomed Ms. Buchanan to the administration. Discussed the need for Board Members and the administration to work together to a common goal. Discussed winter sports.

Mr. Conrad – Thanked staff for continuing to make learning happen during such difficult times. Congratulated Ms. Buchanan, Ms. Mollis, and Ms. Mercado.

**D. ADJOURNMENT**

A motion by Mr. Walsh and seconded by Ms. Conway that there being no further business the meeting be adjourned at 9:00 pm. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully,

Peter Frascella

Peter Frascella  
Board Secretary