

# **BLAIRSTOWN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**Blairstown, New Jersey 07825**

**[www.blairstownelem.net](http://www.blairstownelem.net)**

## **MINUTES**

**Thursday, April 27, 2023 Meeting**

**7:00PM**



### **A. CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Cook, Board President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

### **B. FLAG SALUTE**

Mr. Cook, Board Present, led the flag salute.

### **C. ROLL CALL** by René Metzgar, Part-Time Business Administrator

Present: Mr. Cook, Mrs. Sikkes, Mrs. Allison, Mr. Doell, Mrs. Hambos, Mrs. Hawkswell, Ms. Klein, and Mrs. McElroy.

Absent: Mr. Van Valkenburg.

Also Present: Dr. Ketch-Superintendent, Mrs. Metzgar-Part-Time Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, Mrs. Silvestri-Principal, Mr. Andrew Brown-Board Attorney, and members of the public.

### **D. NOTICE OF MEETING**

This is a regular meeting of the Blairstown Township Board of Education. Notice of the time and place of this meeting was provided and copies of that resolution were forwarded to the official newspapers as designated by the Board of Education and to the Township Clerk. A copy of the notice was posted on the bulletin board of the Board of Education offices as well as on the front door of the Blairstown Elementary School in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

## **E. SUPERINTENDENT'S UPDATE**

Dr. Ketch provided the following update:

- Elevator
  - SRO
  - School Violence Prevention Program
  - Strategic Planning
  - Supplemental Aid Application
  - ROD Grants
  - Climate Grant
  - Last Day of School/Promotion Assembly
- Detailed report is attached to the minutes.

## **F. PRINCIPAL'S UPDATE**

Mrs. Silvestri provided the following update:

- Stand Tall Steve Assembly
  - Music Concert
  - Signature Project
  - Science Fair
- Detailed report is attached to the minutes.

## **G. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Curriculum – The committee met to review the language arts curriculum.

Security- The committee met to discuss the use of supplemental aid for security purposes.

Negotiations – The committee met and continues to make progress.

Finance- Committee met and the results will be presented tonight for the Public Hearing on the 23-24 budget.

## **H. PRESENTATIONS**

Budget Hearing Presentation by Dr. Patrick Ketch & Mrs. René Metzgar on the 2023-2024 school budget. Presentation is attached to the minutes.

Ethics Presentation by Kathy Helewa on board member school ethics training. Presentation is attached to the minutes.

**I. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

The Blairstown Township Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on school matters of community interest.

Mrs. O'Connell- Asked if the policies on the agenda every get read out loud to the public?

**J. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

March 16, 2023 – Regular Meeting Minutes

March 31, 2023 – Special Meeting Minutes

**Voice Vote:**

Motion by Mrs. McElroy, second by Ms. Klein.

Against: None            Abstained: Mr. Doell on March 16, 2023 minutes only.

Absent: Mr. Van Valkenburg.

Motion passes.

**K. FINANCE**

*Resolutions R23-145 through R23-154 will be moved in one roll call vote*

**R23-145 Authorization for Payment of Bills (Attached)**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation by the Part-Time School Business Administrator, to approve the bills list as submitted for the dates between March 17, 2023 and April 27, 2023.

<b>Fund 10 – Current Expense</b>	<b>\$892,506.76</b>
<b>Fund 20 – Special Revenue</b>	<b>\$32,332.85</b>
<b>Fund 60 – Food Service</b>	<b>\$30,912.46</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$955,752.07</b>

**R23-146 Approve Line Item Transfers (Attached)**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation by the Part-Time School Business Administrator, to approve the budget line item transfers for February and March 2023.

**R23-147 Reports of the Treasurer and Board Secretary (Attached)**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Treasurer and Board Secretary’s Financial Reports are in agreement for the month of January 2023, approved by the Board as recommended by the Part-Time School Business Administrator.

**R23-148 Certification of Fund Balances**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.11(c) 3, the Board of Education certify that as of January 31, 2023, after review of the Secretary’s monthly financial reports for January (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, Blirstown Township Board of Education is in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(c) 4 and shall certify in the minutes of the Board each month that no major account or fund has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A23A-16:10(b), and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district’s financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year, and we request the Board Secretary to addend a copy of the Secretary’s Report to the minutes.

**R23-149 Approve 2023-2024 School District Budget**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation by the Superintendent, approve the 2023-2024 School District Budget in the amount of \$9,816,024 as approved by the Warren County Office of the Department of Education for approval as follows:

**WHEREAS**, the 2023-2024 budget includes sufficient funds to implement the proposed planning process as described in the district’s Annual Report pursuant to N.J.S.A 18A:7A-11 and to provide curriculum and instructions which will enable all students to achieve the New Jersey Student Learning Standards;

**WHEREAS**, the 2023-2024 budget is in compliance with the requirements set forth in N.J.S.A. 18A and N.J.A.C. Title 6 and 6A;

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Blirstown Township Board of Education approves the 2023-2024 budget in the amount of \$9,816,024 as follows:

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Tax Levy</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>General Fund (10)</b>	\$7,759,915.00	\$9,647,024.00
<b>Special Revenue Fund (20)</b>	\$0	\$169,000.00
<b>Total</b>	\$7,759,915.00	\$9,816,024.00

**R23-150 Approve NJSIG Grant Application**

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Schools Insurance Group (“NJSIG”) is a school board insurance group authorized by N.J.S.A. 18A:18B-1, et seq. to provide insurance coverage and risk management services for its members;

**WHEREAS**, the Blirstown Township Board of Education, hereinafter referred to as the “Educational Institution,” is a member of NJSIG; and,

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with NJSIG Policy 3710, the goal of the safety grant program is to provide members the necessary resources to complete risk reduction projects and improve the safety of the population NJSIG members serve.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The Educational Institution applies for a safety grant through the NJSIG safety grant program for the 2023-2024 fiscal year in the amount of \$2,300.00 for the purposes set forth in their safety grant application, which is attached hereto; and,
- 2) The Part-Time Business Administrator or their designee is hereby authorized to take all action necessary to apply for and receive a safety grant award.

**R23-151 Set Maximum Travel Expense Limit for the 2023-2024 School Year**

**WHEREAS**, N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1 et seq. requires Board members to receive 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**, 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 as noted on the Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; now

**THEREFORE, BE IT 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 noted on the Board of Education Out of District Travel and Reimbursement Forms; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Board of Education approves travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.2(b), to a maximum expenditure of \$6,000 for all staff and board members.

**R23-152 Accept Security Grant Funds Award**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation by the Superintendent to accept the Security Grant Fund Award in the amount of \$23,356.00 (\$4,101.00 for Alyssa’s

Law Compliance Reimbursement and \$19,255.00 for upgrades and replacements for surveillance server and security cameras).

**R23-153 Approve Supplemental Stabilization Grant Application and Award**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation by the Superintendent to approve the submission of the Supplemental Stabilization Aid Grant Application and Award in the amount of \$47,583.00 for the 2023-2024 School Year.

**R23-154 Designate Bank Signatory**

Motion to approve René Metzgar, Part-Time School Business Administrator, as bank signer on the following Blairstown Board of Education Bank Accounts with First Hope Bank to replace prior Business Administrator: Current Expense Fund, Cafeteria Account, Payroll Account, Payroll Agency Account, Flexible Spending Account, Summer Pay Account, ECA Account, SUI Trust Account.

Motion by Mrs. Sikkes, second by Mrs. Hambos.

**Roll Call:** by René Metzgar, Part-Time School Business Administrator

Against: None          Abstained: None          Absent: Mr. Van Valkenburg

Motions pass.

**L. PERSONNEL**

*Resolutions R23-155 through R23-159 will be moved in one roll call vote*

**R23-155 Approve Resignation**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation by the Superintendent, approve the resignation of Thomas Amalfitano, Head Custodian, effective June 30, 2023 for the purpose of retirement.

**R23-156 Approve Resignation**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation by the Superintendent, approve the resignation of Rola Lahoud, Paraprofessional, effective immediately.

**R23-157 Approve Part-Time School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Contract**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation by the Superintendent to approve the contract for René Metzgar, Part-Time School Business Administrator/Board Secretary effective April 24, 2023 to June 30, 2023 at an hourly rate of \$65.00, pending the contract approval of the County Superintendent.

**R23-158 Resolution Appointing Fund Commissioner to the School Health Insurance Fund**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Blairstown Board of Education that René Metzgar, Part-Time School Business Administrator, is hereby appointed as Fund Commissioner to the School Health Insurance Fund, effective April 25, 2023 to represent the Blairstown Board of Education.

**R23-159 Designation of the Following Appointments**

Motion to appoint René Metzgar, Part-Time School Business Administrator, as the Board Secretary, Public Agency Compliance Officer, Custodian of School Records, and Right-to-Know Compliance Officer from April 24, 2023-June 30, 2023.

Motion by Mrs. Sikkes, second by Ms. Klein.

**Roll Call:** by René Metzgar, Part-Time School Business Administrator

Against: None            Abstained: None            Absent: Mr. Van Valkenburg

Motions pass.

**M. POLICY**

*Resolution R23-160 will be moved in one roll call vote.*

**R23-160 Approve First Reading of Policies**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education, upon recommendation by the Superintendent to approve the first reading of the following policies:

P 2423 – Bilingual and ESL Education

P 2425 – Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Program

P 5200 – Attendance

P 8140 – Student Enrollments

P 8330 – Student Records

P 8821 – Outdoor Recess

Motion by Mrs. McElroy, second by Mrs. Sikkes

**Roll Call:** by René Metzgar, Part-Time School Business Administrator

Against: None            Abstained: None            Absent: Mr. Van Valkenburg

Motions pass.

**N. NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **O. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Cluster board services ad-hoc committee
2. Additional Security Measures

## **P. PUBLIC HEARING & PETITION**

Pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, the Board has set aside two portions of this meeting for public comment. Specifically, during both the “Public Comment on Agenda Items” and the “Other Public Comments” sections noted on the agenda, this meeting will be open to members of the public who wish to speak or make comment on agenda items or a school district issue that may be of concern to the residents of the Township of Blirstown. In that respect, please limit your comments or questions during the “Public Comment on Agenda Items” to agenda items only, and save any other questions or comments that you may have for the “Other Public Comments” portion of the meeting. During both portions of the meeting, the Board requests that the following procedures be observed:

1. Any person who wishes to speak must wait until they have been recognized by the presiding Board Officer;
2. Before beginning, each speaker must state their name and address, and, if speaking on behalf of an organization, state the name of that organization;
3. Each speaker is limited to one (1) opportunity to speak during each of the two (2) portions that have been set aside;
4. Each speaker is limited to five (5) minutes in length so that other members of the public who wish to speak may have an opportunity to do so.
5. The presiding Board Officer will advise each speaker when the five (5) minute period has expired;
6. Out of respect for other members of the public that may wish to speak, the Board requests that each speaker cede the floor to the next member of the public as soon as they finish making their respective comment(s) and/or when their allotted time has expired; and
7. If your questions or comments pertain to litigation, student, or personnel matters, the Board asks that you see the Superintendent after the meeting since the Board does not, pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, discuss or respond to these items in public.

Mrs. Christmas- Questioned why a student was being excluded from this school community?  
When does the punishment end?

Mrs. Pelosi- Continued speaking from Mrs. Christmas. How is this student going to be perceived from the school community? Asked to consider the impact on the student.

Mrs. Casey- Asked for the timeline when the policies will be online? Also asked when are they going to post for the BA job? She also asked for the percentage of IEP students for the district. She also told the board that the teachers do not know what is happening in regards to the student, so you cannot be upset with them.

Ms. Sanchez- Thanked the board for passing the early enrollment age so her daughter can go to Kindergarten next year. She also asked on behalf of her daughter why she has not been receiving GATE? Why are there so many rules at recess? Asked if they could get more pork free options at lunch, and asked why we do not serve breakfast?



## **Q. LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Ms. Klein provided the following update:

Governor Murphy announced on March 17th a bill to offer more than \$102 million in additional funding to school districts that would see a reduction under the proposed fiscal 2024 budget from S-2.

Assembly Education committee approved on March 16:

S-528/A2815- Suicide prevention training requires additional personnel to receive this training.

Social media impact study- S-715/A1192 study on effect of social media on adolescents in regard to health and academic performance. This amends the previous 2022 bill by adding smart phone devices.

Lyme Disease Preventions Instruction- S-2563/A-4820 prevention instruction added to comprehensive health and physical education curricula.

Military Impact Aid Reserve Account- S-3089/A4722 Permits school districts that received unanticipated military aid in 2021-2022 year to be able to set up a reserve account in the district's annual budget.

Eliminate high school exit exam A-4639. No more high school proficiency test. Also permits those who have not received a diploma that meet high school equivalency requirement to receive a diploma; adults, out of school youths.

A-1174 security drills and students with disabilities would ensure safe evacuation plans for students with special needs, training for staff in all areas of concern to get students to safety in an emergency.

Senate counterpart, S-2057 was approved in December. A-3334 Expanding Medicaid funded health services. Requires reimbursements to district for covered behavioral health services.

Senate counterpart S-2416 was approved. Heads to senate budget and appropriations committee.

A-4977 school safety and security task force a joint force of teachers, parents, advocacy groups to determine the safest way to keep out students safe.

Assembly Tourism, gaming and the arts committee instruction in compulsive gambling S-5308- high school students to receive teachings on potential risks of gambling. High school teachers would receive a training module.

Senate voting session

Easing state aid cuts in F24. S-3732 passed through both committees same day as introduced.

Survey on holocaust instruction. A-4720/S-3145 requires the NJDOE to issue surveys to determine if instruction on the holocaust is meeting requirements.

Tickets prices on post season athletic event S-2902 revises legislation forming 2007. Ticket prices can only be increased if needed to offset expenses on statewide events.

Compostable food waste S-3153. School may transport its compostable waste to another school that has the facilities to compost it.

Tuition for non-resident students A-3349- schools must offer a uniform amount for tuition for nonresidents.

Assembly Labor Committee- A-5060 approved legislation to expand scope of allowable sick leave for school employees.

Governor signs election transparency into law increases campaign contribution for various elections including school board elections.

Senate and assembly, in addition passing the S-2 relief bill, also passed the Lyme Disease Prevention Instruction S-2463; A-4820 and tuition for nonresident students A-3349/A-5327.

School districts are invited to apply for extraordinary special education aid or EXAID. NJDOE issued a deadline of May 26.

## **R. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**WHEREAS**, the Open Public Meetings Act authorizes Boards of Education to meet in executive session under certain circumstances.

**WHEREAS**, the Open Public Meetings Act requires the Board to adopt a resolution at a public meeting to go into private session; now therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Blirstown Township Board of Education, that it is necessary to meet in executive session to discuss certain items involving:

Attorney-Client Privilege

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that any discussion held by the Board which need not remain confidential will be made public as soon as feasible. The Minutes of the executive session will not be disclosed until the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Education will return to an open session to conduct business at the conclusion of the executive session.

### **Voice Vote:**

Motion by Ms. Klein, second by Mrs. Allison to go into executive session at 8:40 PM

Against: None          Abstained: None          Absent: Mr. Van Valkenburg

Motion Passed.

**S. RECONVENE PUBLIC SESSION**

**Voice Vote:**

Motion by Mrs. Sikkes, second by Mrs. McElroy to leave executive session at 9:43 PM

Against: None          Abstained: None          Absent: Mr. Van Valkenburg

Motion Passed.

**T. ADJOURNMENT**

**Voice Vote:**

Motion by Mrs. McElroy, second by Mrs. Sikkes to leave the meeting at 9:43 PM

Against: None          Abstained: None          Absent: Mr. Van Valkenburg

Motion Passed.

Respectfully submitted,

René Metzgar

Part-Time School Business Administrator/

Board Secretary