

Minutes of the Board Retreat Meeting  
of the Tenafly Board of Education  
Wednesday, September 14, 2022  
Board of Education Hegelein Building

**Open Session**

The public meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by Board President Jocelyn Schwarz

**Call to Order/Adequate Notice Statement/Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance**

Board President Jocelyn Schwarz read the following statement:

In accordance with the Open Public Meetings, *N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et. seq.* adequate notification of this meeting has been provided by having the date, time and place thereof posted in the Board of Education Hegelein Building, the Borough office, Tenafly Public Library, the local press and on the district's website.

The following Board members were present:

<i>Board Member</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Igor Frid	X	
Michelle Harris	X	
Inbal Israeli Miller	X	
Michelle Merchant		X
Yelena Meytes	X	
Edward J. Salaski	X	
Michael Wilderman		X
Paula Newman, Vice President	X	
Jocelyn Schwarz, President	X	

The following staff members were present:

- Ms. Shauna DeMarco, Superintendent
- Dr. Evelyn Mamman, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
- Ms. Danielle Diaz, Human Resources Manager
- Dr. Victor Anaya, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

**Open to the Public**

All board members present

- JS shared procedure on public comment.
- AS to board members and Bryan Rudolph regarding comments working session comments on data comments shared. Asked if board proxy for the board, was the document shared. Had problems with how resources were shared so context can be taken out of content. AS has additional questions about security measures in home, armed police officers, etc. as risk to safety for students. AS wonders how SRO and armed security not work. Request open dialogue about public comments.
  - JS commented about Bryan Rudolph's presentation and AS concerns.

0 in Person, 10 board/administrators, 13 virtual person – Total (23) (Dr. Michael Wilderman absent)

### **Superintendent Welcome-**

- SD welcomed all for retreat.
- Agenda items were shared with board leadership, and felt topics shared on things with the community like district calendar.
- Also, strengthen board goals and updates of committees for year ahead.

### **Overview of Retreat by Board President & Vice President –**

- Ms. Jocelyn Schwarz opened the meeting.
- Provided an overview of the evening's meeting.
- Also, wanted to share order of agenda items.
- JS indicated need to follow 30 minute rule and pay respect for those who speak. Also do in an orderly fashion while being respectful.
- Board self-evaluation was discussed, but never done. Explore doing one.
- Professional development for the board. Takes time and challenges there in making time for.
- If board members want to take notes, JS has paper for note taking.
  - Board members offered their opinions on above.

### **Discussion Topics –**

- District Calendar Assessment
  - Holiday/School Breaks
    - Communications committee was supposed to perform this work.
    - SD shared the items the committee would be looking at considering the contracts of labor. Items were discussed Monday night, but work had to be assigned to committee members. There is work still to be done.
    - JS felt discussions by board should be had now since time was allotted.
    - YM shared what other districts were doing for holidays on the calendar.
      - YM brought up district communication regarding recognizing holidays and acknowledgment what district takes.
    - MM inquired if the goal was to increase or change the holidays.
      - SD responded on district holidays that have been questions whether to take those holidays or not.
      - SD thought create a calendar committee so stakeholders are involved.
      - SD shared questions received from parents on holidays shared on social media while other holidays are lesser shared from a particular group. Those holidays were not intended to not be observed so wonder if those holidays that are more generic be observed and recognized. SD share the queries from the community generate the discussion on holidays.

- IIM shared her concern about type of districts compare to and felt Tenafly was unique on cultures to compare to. Felt holidays based on community should be recognized.
- MH indicated clarity is needed on holidays taken. Students have at min. 180 days and teacher contracts have specified number of days. MH feels holidays can be celebrated without days off.
  - SD responded to agenda items of Holidays vs. School Breaks. What is being sought is “Rationale.”
- JS commented on holidays vs. school breaks.
- ES shared summer camps were a problem if school year is extended in June.
- ES shared public wants everything, but problematic if calendar is changed to start earlier or later.
- YM shared her comments Monday on Listening Sessions regarding diversity, equity and inclusion, questions popped up regarding calendar concerns.
- Board members shared thoughts on days of the calendar.
- JS recommended a committee be formed to review the calendar. JS also felt a community survey be generated.
- SD responded about the demographics and rationale board has to be looked at regarding this topic. Data on this topic would also assist in looking at this topic.
  - Board members responded to data vs. survey responses.
  - Ad hoc committee be formed but communication committee take on the overall work on reviewing the calendar.
  - Board took a vote on the organization of communication committee take on survey and ad hoc committee be formed about the calendar.
  - November 14<sup>th</sup> is next communication committee meeting date.
- Communication Committee
  - Possibly take on the calendar study and review the overall process/data.
- October retreat moved to November due to having an interim superintendent in place related to budget. November 16<sup>th</sup> tentative date for budget retreat meeting.

### **2022-2023 Benchmarks for Board Goal**

- Ms. Jocelyn Schwarz discussed if priorities be established for accomplished for this and with the new superintendent being hired.
- YM indicated district goals are different than board goals, and wondered how it impact 2023-2024 year.
- SD responded that board set board goals, then the district set district goals, and then administration and staff establish goals of a pyramid effect based on board goals.
- JS indicated board goals are established, but bench marks should be developed for improved direction to the district. Bench marks are for one year in duration so the team has direction.
- JS shared the board goals and each board member commented about having a bench mark for each goal.

- PN shared her opinion on bench mark related to for example a lenses like curriculum cycle with the community.
- IF shared key results should be measured on bench marks. Also, what does specific items in the goals mean if the goals don't have measurable items? Felt have to measure the output. Feels goals don't have measurability.
- MH also feels goals don't have measurability. But having benchmarks, goals can be measurable around specific things within the goal.
- JS suggested a small change to the first goal that she read where the change in wording would suggest measurable items.
- YM provided her opinion on the other board members shared.
- PN responded that maybe the goal is extremely vague, and maybe review programs after a year to see how the goals would be measurable with benchmarks.
- Evelyn Mamman responded goals are broad, and shared how different lenses could be used for benchmarks based on questions asked of the goals. She also provided examples on different programs being measured for students.
  - Board members responded to Evelyn's information shared, and thoughts related to goals.
- YM shared that the board's goals should be completed changed when looking at other districts. The board goals should be district goals. YM would rather change the board goals rather than working on bench marks for existing board goals.
- SD provided commentary about the reasoning behind the goals and how the board goals provide purpose to the work SD does. SD expanded on her visit with Milburn with the superintendent and board room set up with having goals which may be strategic on how developed. SD thought it was a practice to keep goals in check with board members.
- IF also commented about Milburn's board and district goals, and how the superintendent shares the priorities and hierarchy of the goals and achievements. IF felt goals are good but possibly be changed for evaluation at the end of year.
- JS felt the board can come up with bench marks on existing goals for the upcoming year, and when new administrators are present then can change the goals.
- Board members commented on board broad goals the district has, and the examples of the administrators shared regarding about measuring and tracking the work related to the goals.
- SD shared board needs to decide evidence needed to share to each board member of what information is shared to measure if the superintendent is doing their job and administrators. Specifics expected regarding information from the administration is demonstrating how the goals are being met.
- Board members have different opinions and interpretations of the board goal meaning and purpose on how the goals were put together.

### **TBOE Committee work: Updates and the 2022-2023 School Year**

- Discussions were included with prior agenda item.

### **Closing – Board Leadership – 8:59 pm**

- JS closed with comments regarding bench marks not reached as different opinions were shared.

### **Adjournment – 9:00 pm**

#### Motion

- 1<sup>st</sup> Ms. Yelena Meytes
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Ms. Inbal Israeli Miller