

Mansfield Township Board of Education

50 Port Murray Road, Port Murray, NJ 07865

Phone: 908-689-3212, Ext. 1185

Fax: 908-689-9504

Extract from the Minutes of a Special Board Meeting of the BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF MANSFIELD, WARREN COUNTY, N.J. as recorded in the

The Board of Education of the Township of Mansfield in the County of Warren, N.J. convened the Special Meeting on May 31, 2023 at approximately 7:31 P.M. in the Township of Mansfield New Jersey.

The following Members of the Board of Education were present:

Present:

Ms. Alison Lorentson
Ms. Diane Margolin
Ms. Krysti Mastrolacasa
Ms. Constance Quinn - President
Mr. Joseph Rodriguez
Mr. Jonathan Rood
Mr. James J. Winand
Ms. Linda Watters - Vice President

Absent:

Ms. Annamaria Lalevee (9:10 p.m.)

Also Present:

Administration:

Absent:

Dr. Anthony Giordano, Superintendent
Mr. Paul DeAngelo, Business Administrator
Board Secretary

Others in Attendance: several members of the staff and several members of the public.

Public Comments:

Ms Baker described to the board our longstanding efforts for equity and representation in Mansfield Township School District's Gifted and Talented identification systems, and how Ms. Baker brought the Naglieri3 assessments after learning about them at the NJAGC 2022 annual conference. The Naglieri3 assessment was in the Comprehensive Equity Plan in spring of 2022, it took a year to obtain and implement these assessments due to the NJ licensing concerns. The initial plan had been to implement the Naglieri3 as a Universal screener for two entire grade level cohorts; due to the time pressures and conflicts with NJSLA and annual benchmark testing, the decision was made to pilot the assessments this year with a modified roll-in. Included in the assessments were all currently identified G&T students, all G&T-nominated students, and all enrichment participants - all drawn from grades kindergarten through grade 5.

As of the date of the BOE meeting, nearly 350 Naglieri tests had been administered. Preliminary reports are uncovering strengths among students who had been missed with our previous assessments, such as the dyslexic student with an exceptional score in quantitative reasoning and the EL student who demonstrates exceptional verbal reasoning, although he is still learning English.

Ms. Baker thanked the administration for supporting our continuing efforts to identify and meet the needs of all our students.

Our school webpage shows these words on the home page banner:
Downs Syndrome Day: *We are more alike than different ...* The "Rainbow of Respect"

I hope these apply to **all members** of our school community.

I remind you once more of the Mansfield district BOE policy, adopted 10 June 2019:

The Superintendent or designee will make available to school staff members a variety of resources regarding professional development opportunities as sourced by the NJDOE as well as developmentally appropriate information for students regarding LGBTQ issues.

The Board adopts this Policy to help school and district administrators take steps to create an inclusive environment in which transgender and gender nonconforming students feel safe and supported, and to ensure each school provides equal educational opportunities for all students, in compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:7-1.1 et seq.

We have heard the comment, "*Teachers are not prepared for this, guidance should just handle it.*" First, is one's identity or family structure necessarily a crisis in need of intervention? The suggestion that all such comments or questions be referred to guidance makes a crisis out of what may simply be a reality.

Second, staff of course refer matters of concern to our guidance counselors, yet **we** are the ones in direct connection with our students - every day, sometimes over the course of several years. That teacher who initiated the stickers spoke to the guidance counselors first, in order for that teacher's actions to be guided by best practices. Best practices state that the staff member in whom the child confides is the staff member that the child has chosen to trust.

A colleague said, "*I don't need a sticker to be nice to all of my students.*" Of course not, we are professional and more than that we are dedicated to our students. We are here caring about them, in so many ways as I believe you are already aware.

However, another colleague reminded me of a different student - one we had several years ago, who is no longer here, not just because he grew older and moved on but because he took his own life. She said to me, "*If we had found a way for him to know that he had people he could have turned to, that he could have come back to us, maybe that could have been different.*" This is one more way that we care - we **can't forget** when we think maybe there is one more thing we could have done.

In a recent Court case about LGBTQ symbols in a school environment, : Santangelo &

Ostrander v. O'Donnell, the verdict included these words:

*... In today's culture and climate, it is now more important than ever that all students feel included, and represented....*The tensions we have heard right here surrounding this topic serve to demonstrate why this demonstration of support may be crucial for a child who needs it.

Executive Session - On a motion by Ms. Watters and seconded by Mr. Rodriguez the BOE The board went into executive session at 7:43 PM and adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Ms. Lalavee joined the executive session at 9:10 PM.

New Business: None

Old Business: None

Future BOE Meeting Dates:

June 15, 2023 - Regular Meeting

July 20, 2023

August 17, 2023

September 13, 2023 (Wednesday)

October 19, 2023

November 16, 2023

December 14, 2023

January 4, 2024 - Reorganization


Executive Session - None

Adjournment:

On a motion by Joseph Rodriguez and seconded by Ms. Mastrolacasa the Board adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Mr. Paul DeAngelo
SBA/Board Secretary


Ms. Linda Watters
Vice President