

The special meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence was called to order at 7:05 on April 2, 2020 by the Board President, Mrs. Cuccaro.

Present on roll call were Rebecca Coniglio, Bernadette Cuccaro, Robert Dinerman, Mary Misiukiewicz, Adam Smith and Joseph Walsh. Also present were Dr. David Miceli, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Scott Hough, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services; James Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary; John Richter, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Supervision and 54 members of the public.

Mrs. Cuccaro led in the salute to the flag.

Mrs. Cuccaro read the following statement:

**Opening Statement by the President:**

This is a special meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with PL 1975, Chapter 231.

The following notice was posted on March 30, 2020:

The New Providence Board of Education will hold a **Special Meeting** on Thursday, April 2, 2020, beginning at 7:00 p.m. to discuss school matters related to COVID-19. In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, and in consideration of Executive Order No. 107, issued by Governor Murphy, the New Providence Board of Education does hereby notify the public that to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community while ensuring the continued functioning of the Board, this meeting will be held telephonically. One member of the Board will be at the New Providence High/Middle School Media Center, located at 35 Pioneer Drive, New Providence, New Jersey, 07974. Members of the public will not be allowed in the Media Center. Members of the public who wish to participate in the meeting may call (908) 464-9053, at 7:00 p.m. Callers will hear, "Press 1 for the New Providence School District Board Meeting". When prompted, enter pin, **1664**, and you will be connected to the meeting. Individuals calling into this number should mute their handsets until the public comment portion of the meeting should they decide to offer a public comment.

**President's Comments**

Mrs. Cuccaro, Board President, welcomed everyone. She commented that holding a virtual Board of Education meeting is certainly a first for New Providence, but she for one is looking forward to getting back to our normal way of doing business as soon as it is safe to do so. She commented that she would like to take this opportunity to thank our amazing teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and of course, the students for making the transition to distance learning so quickly. She commented that she was not sure anyone could have imagined how different things would look in three weeks, but our community, like we so often do, rose to the occasion and has made this work. While all are missing some aspect of being together as a school community, she is confident that together we will come out of this stronger than ever.

Mrs. Cuccaro commented that she would also like to say a special thanks to Alissa Rust and Card

My Yard of Chatham for the incredible display on the lawn of the Presbyterian Church honoring our teachers – NP does Love Our Teachers.

Joining us tonight on the phone is Dr. Miceli, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Hough, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, Mr. Richter, Director of Curriculum, Mr. Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Mrs. Drexinger, Salt Brook Principal, Mrs. Hansen, Allen W. Roberts Principal, Mr. Keaney, Middle School Assistant Principal, Mr. Carangelo, Athletic Director, Mrs. Zirpoli, High/Middle School Principal, and members of the Board of Education. If you have not already done so, please mute your phones until the public comment portion of the meeting.

Mr. Krauss joined the meeting at 7:13 p.m.

### **Report of the Superintendent of Schools**

Dr. Miceli welcomed everyone. He echoed Mrs. Cuccaro's comments, especially thanking the students and teachers for their incredible work that they have done for the past three weeks. He thanked the parents for all their support and the administrators for all their support, as well, and specifically thanked each of our principals to facilitate this process in a very short period of time. He thanked and commended the Board and the community for all their support for many years in providing us with all resources that we have to be able to seamlessly transition into an online learning period. Without all of the work, effort, and collaboration over the many years, we would not be able to do this. Dr. Miceli congratulated and thanked the technology team. Without their support behind the scenes, we would have not been able to get to this place in such a quick period of time and support each of the students and staff without their ongoing guidance and advice. He appreciated everything everyone has done.

Dr. Miceli commented that from the health perspective, fortunately, from what has been reported, our staff and students have been relatively healthy over the past three weeks. We have had very minimal absences on the student front as well as our staff and hoped that we can remain healthy.

Dr. Miceli commented on enrollment for next year. At AWR, for kindergarten we have 49 students registered and an additional 27 students registered for first grade. At Salt Brook school, we have 48 students who have registered for kindergarten and an additional 14 students registered for first grade with two additional students pending.

Dr. Miceli commented on the proposed District Calendar. He thanked the community and staff for participating in the survey. Eighty percent of parents and ninety percent of staff were in favor of the proposed revised calendar. The revised calendar is on the agenda tonight for approval and, once approved, it will be disseminated tomorrow to the entire community.

Dr. Miceli commented that the online learning for the past three weeks has been a tremendous experience for all of us. Everyday and every week, we are all learning together. He appreciated

everyone's efforts on the home front. He appreciates the teachers and administrators with all the work that they continue to do throughout the day, evenings, and weekends to keep this platform going. This week we added Zoom to help connect with our students. We are also in the process of purchasing additional iPads for our third and fourth graders to help facilitate this process. We came to realize that with the upgrade of the iPads for our students, some of our staff at the elementary schools were having some challenges with their relatively older devices. We will also be purchasing new devices for our elementary teachers, so that they can continue to progress with their curriculum over the next few weeks. Those items are on the agenda this evening for approval by the Board.

Dr. Miceli thanked Mr. Testa and the administrators for working towards that end, as well as the tech staff, Mr. Menard, Manager of Information Systems, for pulling the information together. Not only can we provide these devices, but also disseminate the devices via Apple and maintain social distancing, a very creative solution.

Dr. Miceli commented on the end of the year events. At this time, we are hoping that we will be able to gather before the school year is over and continue to support the events and traditions of the past. At this time, we don't know that we will be able to return. We are optimistic. If we are able to return, we intend to have as many of these events as possible. In the event that we are not able to return before the end of this year, we have begun to think about alternative ways of providing those events to our students, particularly our senior class, to celebrate their successes over the past thirteen years here in the New Providence School District. Yesterday, some of the senior students gathered with Mrs. Zirpoli, High School Principal, through Zoom, to talk about some of those issues. We continue to talk and work with our students to find a path so that we can celebrate their successes. We look forward to the days ahead and hopefully we will know a little bit more and we can begin to plan some of those events in the near future.

Dr. Miceli commented on the school budget. Good news from the County Office. Mr. Testa received approval of our 2020/2021 School Budget from the County Office.

Mr. Smith commended everyone who was involved in this one-to-one iPad initiative to be able to do what we are doing now. We were the first disof New Jersey to close our schools trict in the State for the safety of our children and town. Other districts soon followed and eventually the State. He commented for himself he knew we were prepared to make that decision and were prepared to go to an online learning platform. We were ahead of the curve from the technology standpoint. I want to thank the administration for giving the Board an easy decision to make for the community.

### **Student Report- Sadie Miller and Kylie Burton, Student Representatives**

Sadie first commented that she wanted to open up and start by thanking the administration and the Board. All of you are really doing all you can given the current circumstances. She knows it's not easy what we are all going through, but along with Kylie, and the rest of the student body,

they truly appreciate the constant effort that you put in even while we are all at home. In terms of all the craziness and what it looks like for us students, they know the new green and gold schedule has been well liked and zooming with teachers gives them a good opportunity to see their familiar faces and have that option to ask those harder questions. Sadie commented that the students think the workload has been good and they are all still learning a lot even remotely. She commented that AP students have been super stressed out regarding the AP tests, but a solution has been found to take them at home. They are glad they still have the ability to showcase what has been learned. She commented that all in all, it's definitely weird and she's sad to be home finishing out her senior year, but she knows that the District will come out stronger than ever.

Kylie commented that as Sadie was saying, everyone is trying their best to figure out creative solutions to every event. The spring musical *Little Shop of Horrors* had three chances to perform before school closed. The cast and crew including Sadie, did an amazing job! The number of audience members was limited but there are plenty of videos, so make sure to check them out if you have time and have not seen it. All spring athletes are hopeful to return to play again. A lot of them are continuing to practice individually at home and keeping in touch with their coaches and teammates. Graduation is a huge milestone for not only the students but their families and teachers, who are hoping that the students can walk across the stage in June or another date, in July. As for the rest of the end of the year events, like prom, recitals, and other events, we, the students, are looking for creative solutions to have the best experience possible. Thank you and

be well everyone!

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mrs. Cuccaro opened the meeting for opportunity for the Public to be heard (on specific agenda items).

### **Jennifer Neiderhoffer, Resident**

Mrs. Neiderhoffer asked about the iPad purchases. She inquired about the pricing and value of spending that exorbitant amount renting the iPads, not even owning them.

Dr. Miceli commented that this is a two-year lease purchase. Instead of buying them outright, we agreed to a two year lease at 0% interest, inclusive of the device, the case, as well as the four year Apple Care+ plan. After the two years, the District will own all the iPads.

Mrs. Neiderhoffer asked if we received any discount?

Mr. Testa commented that we are buying them through a co-op agreement that is approved by the State, so we are receiving the best pricing possible through Apple.

Mrs. Neiderhoffer thanked everyone. She commented that the students and the administration

are all doing a great job getting through this trying period.

**Zoya Annenkova, Resident**

Mrs. Annenkova commented that she has two questions about the iPads. 1--Do we know the timing of the delivery of the iPads? 2--What items in the budget do we have to give up in order to purchase the iPads?

Dr. Miceli commented that the purchase order went out and we are hoping to receive the ipads in the next two weeks, delivered directly to your homes. We have submitted the individual addresses directly to Apple, so that we do not have to gather to disseminate the devices. Once you receive the device, turn it on, and have it connected to your local internet within your home. The District's information systems will be able to remotely upload all the application and software onto the device. Apple will provide a pin number for each device. As for funds in the budget, we are not giving up anything in the budget. These were funds we would have likely expended on supplies or curriculum and materials if we were in district for the remainder of the school year. We are not continuing to make purchases, so these are the supplies we would be providing our students at this time.

Mr. Testa commented that as far as iPads for the teachers at the elementary level, we had already planned on replacing the teacher iPads at the elementary level, so this was a budgeted item in the 2020/2021 proposed budget. This amount along with other technology funds in the proposed budget will be used to cover the year two lease payments. This is why we took advantage of a zero percent two year lease.

Mrs. Cuccaro commented that these iPads will become classroom iPads on carts.

Public portion of the meeting was declared closed.

**ACTION ITEMS**  
**FINANCE ACTION**

Mr. Walsh, Committee Chairperson, moved to approve Items 1 through 3 as listed below:

**March 2020 Bill's List Approved**

1. Approve the payment of bills for March 2020 in the amount of \$3,331,227.14.

**Transfers for the 2019/2020 School Year Approved**

2. Ratify the action of the Superintendent in making the following transfers for the 2019/2020 school year.

February 2020

From:		
<u>Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11-000-219-320	Purchased Professional Services	\$13,000.00
11-000-251-100	Business Dept. – Salaries	1,570.73
11-000-261-420	Repair & Maintenance	2,000.00
11-000-262-420	Repair & Maintenance	13,000.00
11-000-291-241	Other Retirement Contributions	<u>30,000.00</u>

Total: \$59,570.73

To:		
<u>Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11-000-252-199	Unused Vacation Payments	\$ 1,570.73
11-000-261-610	Maintenance – General Supplies	15,000.00
11-000-291-280	Tuition Reimbursement	30,000.00
11-150-100-320	Purchased Professional Services	<u>13,000.00</u>

Total: \$59,570.73

March 2020

From:		
<u>Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11-000-216-320	Purchased Professional Services	\$ 8,000.00
11-000-262-420	Repair & Maintenance	12,000.00
11-190-100-610	General Supplies	129,975.00
11-213-100-101	Resource - Teacher Salaries	18,600.00
11-213-100-106	Resource – Aides Salaries	<u>65,000.00</u>

Total: \$233,575.00

To:		
<u>Account</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
11-000-261-610	Maintenance – General Supplies	\$ 6,000.00
11-000-262-610	Custodial – General Supplies	6,000.00
11-150-100-101	Home Instruction – Salaries	3,000.00
11-150-100-320	Purchased Professional Services	5,000.00
11-190-100-500	Purchased Services – Leases	129,975.00
11-204-100-106	LLD - Aides Salaries	54,300.00
11-216-100-106	Preschool – Aides Salaries	<u>29,300.00</u>

Total: \$233,575.00

**ESCNJ Resolution Approved**

3. Approve the following resolution:

**WHEREAS**, the Educational Services Commission of New Jersey("ESCNJ"), as Lead Agency for the ESCNJ cooperative pricing system (system identifier #65MCESCCPS), has awarded a contract for proprietary Apple technology products (bid number ESCNJ 18/19-67), effective May 13, 2019 following the public solicitation of sealed bids pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-15, N.J.S.A. 40A:11-13 and N.J.A.C. 5:34-9.1; and

**WHEREAS**, the New Providence Board of Education is a member of the ESCNJ cooperative pricing system and is authorized to make purchases from contracts awarded by the ESCNJ pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:34-7.1 et seq.; and

**WHEREAS**, the Apple technology products covered by the ESCNJ contract sought by the New Providence Board of Education are of such a specialized nature that only such products will meet the needs of the New Providence Board of Education; and

**WHEREAS**, the New Providence Board of Education has heavily invested time and funds into the acquisition and integration of Apple products in local operations; and

**WHEREAS**, it's not feasible to use non-Apple products to supplement the existing technology initiative; and

**WHEREAS**, the use of non-Apple products would require either the wholesale replacement of the technology currently used by the New Providence Board of Education or an unsupportable level of training, support and maintenance services that would utterly defeat the purpose of the public contracting laws;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the New Providence Board of Education hereby authorizes the purchase of proprietary Apple technology products through ESCNJ contract (Co-op # 65MCESCCPS) from *Apple, Inc. 5505 W. Parmer Lane, MS 578-ROA Austin, TX 78727-6524*, for the following:

- Two (2) year lease agreement for four hundred twenty (420) 10.2" iPads, WiFi, 32GB, Silver with Logitech case and four (4) year Apple Care+ in the total amount of \$188,580.00 at 0% interest.
- Two (2) year lease agreement for one hundred thirty (130) 10.2" iPads, WiFi 128GB, Silver with Logitech case and four (4) year Applecare+ in the total amount of \$71,370.00 at 0% interest.

Seconded by: Mr. Dinerman

## Roll Call Vote:

<u>Yea</u> Mrs. Coniglio	<u>Yea</u> Mr. Krauss
<u>Yea</u> Mrs. Cuccaro	<u>Yea</u> Mrs. Misiukiewicz
<u>Yea</u> Mr. Dinerman	<u>Yea</u> Mrs. Smith
<u>Yea</u> Mr. Walsh	

**EDUCATION ACTION**

Mr. Dinerman, Committee Chairperson, moved to approve item 1 as listed below:

1. Revised 2019/2020 school calendar.

Seconded by: Mrs. Misiukiewicz

Dr. Miceli commented that the changes to the calendar are the following:

1. Modifying Spring Break from April 10-17 to April 10-13 (4 day weekend)
2. Snow days (3) that were not used give back.

This is a total of seven days given back, so June 12th would be the last day of school. High School graduation will be June 12th, and Middle School promotion on June 11th, assuming we will resume school before those dates.

Mr. Dinerman thanked Dr. Miceli for the survey that was sent out to the staff and community.

Dr. Miceli commented that we had over 80% of our parents in favor of the proposal and over 90% of staff in agreement with the proposal. We had 1,188 parents respond and 257 staff respond.

## Roll Call Vote:

<u>Yea</u> Mrs. Coniglio	<u>Yea</u> Mr. Krauss
<u>Yea</u> Mrs. Cuccaro	<u>Yea</u> Mrs. Misiukiewicz
<u>Yea</u> Mr. Dinerman	<u>Yea</u> Mrs. Smith
<u>Yea</u> Mr. Walsh	

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mrs. Cuccaro opened the meeting to the public for comments at 8:12 p.m.

**Jeanne Pate, Resident**

Mrs. Pate commented that she is a parent of a kindergartener and second grader. She thanked everyone for all that they are doing and she knows everyone is trying really hard to make things work. She expressed that there can be some improvements especially in kindergarten. She said fifteen minutes, two times a week on Zoom, being able to see their teachers is great, but maybe there can be more time. She feels that maybe the lower grades can use some tools from the upper grades. There are some challenges with the technology for the lower grades. She commented that there is so much concentration in the upper grades and the lower grades seem to have more busy work than actual learning. She doesn't know how to address that.

Mrs. Drexinger commented that teachers are working hard at learning some of the new technologies. There is new technology coming out called Seesaw. The training is tomorrow that is geared toward kindergarten, first and second grade teachers. Because we do not have Google Drive and Google Classroom set up in the primary grades, this is a platform where students will be able to upload work and teachers will be able to upload their work onto that site. Students, instead of using Google, will use Seesaw. She commented that she sat through a tutorial and conference on it yesterday and it is very easy to use. Once the teachers get their training tomorrow, hopefully, they will be able to roll it out to the students next week or shortly after. All of these technologies for the elementary teachers are fairly new, especially to the primary grades. It is hard to make up for that face-to-face interaction, and we understand the importance of that and how critical it is for them. This is why Zoom was the brand new platform to the teachers that we unveiled this weekend. We are trying not to overwhelm our staff, but also teach them new technology. Being that it is the third week of online learning, they are doing a great job. They are trying to learn as quickly as they can.

Mrs. Hansen commented that there is also a new software, Lexia, another reading and vocabulary program, for the elementary grades to be able to use. We are rolling them out one at a time, so that we do not overwhelm parents and teachers and most of all our students.

Mrs. Pate asked if this is something they can do themselves? For the younger grades, it's a lot of assistance. We have to support our children, but it's a lot of time. We have a lot of work on our end as well with our jobs, it's a lot of struggle.

Dr. Miceli commented that we all went into this knowing that the primary grades will be the greatest challenge in online learning for all the things you are saying. The teachers went into this worried, it is not easy, and it is certainly recognized from the beginning that the challenges were most significant at the primary grades.

Mrs. Pate commented that she had talked about her concerns at the last Board meeting, and she felt like everyone was concentrating on the upper grades that have all the technology, devices, and software. She commented that she is thinking that we will be in this in June,

maybe Memorial weekend. We need the support for the lower grades because they are missing out.

**Glen Robertson, NPEA President**

Mr. Robertson commented that he has been asked by some of his members to come and say a couple of words. He commented that he likes to attend the meetings, but does not usually speak at them. He wanted to let the administrators, Board, and especially Dr. Miceli know how much the teachers appreciate the support they have received from everyone, including the community. He commented that everytime he talked to the administration, they were re-assessing constantly. The one thing that is consistent throughout all this is the support the teachers have gotten from the Board, administration, and the parents. He commented that they understand that they are all doing their best. One thing we don't have to worry about is that we will always have your support, so on behalf of the association, we appreciate everything you are doing.

Dr. Miceli and Mrs. Cuccaro thanked Mr. Robertson for his comments.

**Zoya Annenkova, Resident**

Mrs. Annenkova asked about grading for the elementary grades. She commented that there was some conflicting information when the new marking period will start.

Dr. Miceli commented that grading is a constant conversation between the principals and himself. He commented that they do not want to impact the kids in a negative way. They want to capture all the great work that the students are doing. Obviously, it is a very different sentiment at each grade level, depending upon how we grade, report card structure, timing, marking period, tri-mester, everyone is working very hard toward that end.

Mrs. Drexinger commented that the elementary administrators had a meeting today and a proposal was put together. This proposal will be shared with the staff at the faculty meeting on Monday. We will share this with Dr. Miceli after. Once we have it finalized, we will then unveil it to the parents, sometime next week. Mrs. Drexinger commented that rest assured, like Dr. Miceli said, we are not here to penalize the children. We understand that today there are many variables going on in all different homes and the children just need to do their work as best they can.

Mrs. Annenkova asked if grading will be a schoolwide mechanism for each grade, or if it's going to be determined by individual teachers.

Mrs. Hansen commented that it will be determined by teachers and administration, not individual teachers.

Mrs. Drexinger commented that they will be looking and talking to our teachers constantly, between both schools, at each grade level.

**Resident (did not give name)**

Resident commented that she has daughters at the high school and she thanked everyone for all the great communication from everybody. She commented that she knows that everyone is doing their best under the circumstances. She hopes that there are efforts made to have some kind of end-of-year celebration, with all the hard work they have done. She hopes they are trying to figure out ways to make it work.

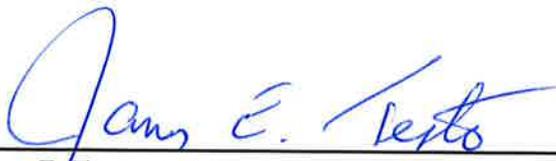
Dr. Miceli commented that they are certainly going to do that. Mrs. Zirpoli had a Zoom call with the students yesterday. He commented that we are willing to go into July, to have a special event in July, and believes that the Board is willing to do that as well.

Mrs. Zirpoli commented that we are willing to do whatever we can so that the seniors can fulfill the end-of-year celebration. Administrators wanted to reassure the students about that. The students expressed their concerns and made comments during their Zoom conference. The feedback was they enjoyed the call. We will frequently hold a Zoom conference call with the senior class as information becomes more available and be able to make plans in June or July. We are open to doing something in July, if that is what our students and our families want to do.

There being no other comments from the public, Mrs. Cuccaro declared the meeting closed at 8:12 p.m.

**Adjournment**

There being no other business before the Board, on a motion by Mr. Krauss, seconded by Mr. Walsh, and carried unanimously, Mrs. Cuccaro declared the meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.



---

James E. Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary  
April 2, 2020