

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Pascack Valley Regional High School District

January 18, 2021

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on Monday,
January 18, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. in the Pascack Valley High School Cafeteria and Zoom
Webinar – <hyperlink to follow>

Special Note: N.J.S.A. 10:4-8b authorizes local units to conduct public hearings through the use of streaming services and other online meeting platforms in certain circumstances. Therefore, in light of the public health emergency, the board of education will hold its regular meeting in a hybrid manner. The district website contains information on public participation.

Meeting Regulations

During this regular meeting, two opportunities are provided for citizens to ask questions and to make comments. During the first opportunity, early on the agenda, comments are invited. The second opportunity will occur just prior to adjournment, when residents may address general comments to the Board with time limits being at the discretion of the President.

Persons wishing to speak must, upon being recognized, rise and state their name and address. The Board reserves the right to establish rules for the conduct of its meetings, including such matters as the time at which the public will be heard, if at all, who may speak, and for how long. All such rules shall be monitored by the President unless the majority of the Board present and voting, rule otherwise.

Comments and questions shall be limited to issues. If personal remarks or discourteous statements are made, the presiding officer shall require the speaker to sit down.

To inspect or obtain a copy of any public record required to be made available under N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, Examination and Copies of Public Records, please contact Mr. Yas Usami, 28 West Grand Avenue, Montvale, NJ 07645.

*Copies of all public meeting agendas are online on the district website:
<http://www.pascack.org>*

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Ms. Tammy Molinelli, President.

Ms. Tammy Molinelli, President

Ms. Janet Bissinger, Vice President

Mr. Joseph Blundo

Dr. Kelly Blundy

Mr. Michael Fronte arrived at 7:55 p.m.

Mrs. Kristin Martin
Mr. James Stankus
Mrs. Gini Varghese
Mr. Michael Weaver
Dr. P. Erik Gundersen, Superintendent
Mr. Yas Usami, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Student Representatives: Aria Chalileh– PHHS; Connor Flinn – PVHS
Ms. Claudia Gibbs, Administrative Assistant to Superintendent

II. FLAG SALUTE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Ms. Molinelli led all those present in a salute to the flag.

III. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRESIDING OFFICER

Both adequate and electronic notice of this meeting has been provided, specifying the time, place, and manner in which such notice was provided and by mailing copies of said notice to The Record, filing copies of said notice with the municipal clerks of Hillsdale, Montvale, River Vale, and Woodcliff Lake, and publishing said notice in The Record on May 29, 2020 and October 23, 2020.

There are two opportunities for the public to make comments, and when meetings are held in a hybrid or remote manner, there are two methods to comment:

1. Persons attending the public meeting, wishing to speak must, upon being recognized, rise, approach the podium and state their name and address.
2. Persons in attendance via the online streaming service, Zoom, may indicate their wish to speak when prompted by clicking the “Raise Hand” button on their screen, or if accessing by phone, by pushing *9. You will need to unmute yourself to speak by clicking the microphone button on the screen.

IV. ROUTINE MATTERS

Monthly Reports

Superintendent’s Report: Dr. P. Erik Gundersen - [Report](#)
Student Reports: Aria Chalileh – Pascack Hills High School – [Report](#)
Connor Flinn – Pascack Valley High School – [Report](#)

One Agenda Item

1. Minutes

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the following Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education minutes:

January 4, 2021	Reorganization and Regular Meeting	7:30 p.m.
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Moved Blundo Seconded by: Martin

VOTE

Bd. Mbr.	Aye	Nay	Abs.	N/P	Bd. Mbr.	Aye	Nay	Abs.	N/P
Bissinger	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Molinelli	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blundo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stankus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blundy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Varghese	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fronte	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Weaver	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Martin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

V. PRESENTATION

Mascot Committees Procedural Update

PHHS – Alexa Sipos and Jacob Levin – [Report](#)

PVHS – Delia Collis and Vasili Karalewich – [Report](#)

Mr. Blundo asked if the selection is determined by a majority.

Vasili indicated that a minimum of 51% of the votes will be required.

Jacob said the mascot determination will be first and then the logo in the future. He added that 11-12 faculty members and 30-40 students are on the selection committee.

Dr. Gundersen responded that if a full majority is not reached among the three choices then there will be a runoff with the two highest vote getters.

Dr. Blundy asked when the committees will meet again.

Dr. Gundersen mentioned that Pascack Valley will meet on January 21 at 3:30 and Pascack Hills will meet on January 21 sometime after school.

Both Vasili and Jacob said that the meeting is closed to the public. They would like a sense of privacy with open discussion. They added that there will be a cross section of students.

Mr. Stankus asked if both schools used a survey.

Delia said a form was sent. Both schools used a survey.

Dr. Gundersen asked what process is used and how do they solicit ideas/mascots.

Vasili indicated that one sport and one club is represented. Discussions are held in groups and then they come together for further discussion.

Jacob said all different extra-curricular activities are represented and not necessarily the leaders.

Mrs. Martin asked if the selection process is student driven and what is the role of the faculty.

Vasili mentioned that the teachers help facilitate discussion and all 68 members have a voice.

Jacob said that there are more students than teachers and all have an equal vote. The teachers participate in the discussions and have a vote, but they do not determine the outcome.

VI. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Citizens are invited to make comments regarding agenda items and are limited to five minutes, according to the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education policy number 0167. Persons wishing to speak must, upon being recognized, rise and state their name and address.

Carolee Adams of Montvale read a quote from Martin Luther King, Jr. She said she never received an answer to what the cost will be for the changes to the mascots. She indicated that cost should be considered by students and taxpayers.

Dr. Gundersen responded that the Board is fully aware of the cost. He added that the students are focused on the mascot selection.

Councilman Roche of Montvale asked how committees operate. He further asked if there is a way to join the two schools and if the mascots will have a connection between the schools.

Dr. Gundersen said there is no directive to have a connection between the schools. He mentioned that joining the schools would be difficult logistically. A district wide mascot for district teams will be discussed with administration. He added that the students rally around a school identity.

Councilman DeRosa of Hillsdale asked why the decision making is internal and not out to the public.

Dr. Gundersen mentioned that the Nyack School District made the Indian mascot change recently. He said it is a rallying cry for students. He said there are logistical challenges involving the public. He added that the public will have an opportunity to comment at the meeting(s).

Mr. Blundo commented that the Board consider not deciding on the mascots the night the selections are brought forward.

Ms. Molinelli said that a decision will not be made until all board members are comfortable.

VII. POLICY

Consent Agenda for Items 1 – 2

1. Travel Pre-Authorizations

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve travel expense pre-authorizations for the following:

Teresa DelGiudice	Noemi Rodriguez	Francesca Silvano
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2. [2021-2022 School Calendar](#)

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the 2021-2022 school calendar.

Moved by: Bissinger Seconded by: Stankus

VOTE

Bd. Mbr.	Aye	Nay	Abs.	N/P	Bd. Mbr.	Aye	Nay	Abs.	N/P
Bissinger	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Molinelli	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blundo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stankus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blundy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Varghese	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fronte	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weaver	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Martin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Mr. Weaver asked about the possibility of pushing back the start of school to September 13 for vaccination consideration. He added that this would push the end of school to June 22.

Dr. Gundersen said many students are back for fall sports in August. He indicated that he hopes staff will be vaccinated by the start of school and students may possibly start to be vaccinated in the summer or fall. He mentioned that the calendar is front loaded for instruction before the big assessment exams like AP. He added that Region II school districts coordinate breaks as best they can.

Mr. Blundo would like the guidelines to return to school to be crystal clear due to states that may be “hot” and the associated quarantine timelines.

Dr. Gundersen acknowledged that this will be done.

Mrs. Martin asked about the faculty professional days of late arrival for students on those half days. Now, it’s the traditional students leaving early half days.

Dr. Gundersen said they did not engage in those half days due to the hybrid learning and then they leave for lunch. Those days are not scheduled at this time; however, they may be added if needed.

Mrs. Martin asked about a workshop taking place on a Friday and Saturday and one of the teachers is staying overnight Saturday. She asked if this is contractual.

Dr. Gundersen said they are being proactive by approving the workshop, however it’s unlikely they will be meeting in person. The teacher is an officer of the organization and its part of the collective bargaining agreement.

VIII. EDUCATION

Consent Agenda for Items 1 – 3

1. Tuition Student

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the following tuition paying student to attend the RISE Program at Pascack Hills High School for the 2020-2021 school year:

Student ID	Sending District	Grade	Start Date
811986	Saddle Brook School District	9	January 11, 2021

2. Out-of-District Placements

- a. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve an out-of-district placement for student ID #809613 to Paradigm Therapeutic School in Midland Park, NJ for the 2020-2021 school year, starting on January 25, 2021, as per the student’s IEP, for the prorated tuition of \$38,729.60.
- b. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve a change of placement for student ID #810069 to Fusion Academy in Englewood, NJ for the 2020-2021 school year, starting on January 11, 2021, as per the student’s IEP, for the prorated tuition of \$36,540.00.
- c. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve a change of placement for student ID #810748 to Paradigm Therapeutic School in Midland Park, NJ for the 2020-2021 school year, starting on January 11, 2021, as per the student’s IEP, for the prorated tuition of \$42,286.40.

3. Bedside/Home/Supplemental Instruction

- a. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve bedside tutoring for student ID #809613 who was admitted to Summit Oaks Hospital, Summit, NJ on January 13, 2021 through a date to be determined. Onsite services will be provided for 10 hours per week at the rate of \$50 per hour.
- b. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve home instruction for student ID #810383 beginning December 18, 2020 through a date to be determined for the following subjects: English, Physics, and Spanish.
- c. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve supplemental instruction provided by a board approved home instructor for student ID #810418, as per their IEP, for the 2020-2021 school year beginning January 11, 2021, for the following subjects and hours.

Subject	Estimated Hours
Algebra II	1 hour per week
Physics	1 hour per week
English	1.5 hours per week

Subject	Estimated Hours
History	1.5 hours per week
Graphic Design	2 hours per week: 1/11 – 2/11 1 hour per week: 2/12 – 6/16

- d. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve supplemental instruction provided by a board approved home instructor for student ID #810734, as per their IEP, for the 2020-2021 school year beginning January 15, 2021, for 2 hours per week in mathematics.
- e. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve home instruction for student ID #810746 beginning December 16, 2020 through a date to be determined for the following subjects: Culinary Arts, Driver’s Education, English, Financial Literacy, History, and Pre-calculus.
- f. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve supplemental instruction provided by a board approved home instructor for student ID #810878, as per their IEP, for the 2020-2021 school year beginning January 5, 2021, for 2 hours per week in mathematics.
- g. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve home instruction for student ID #811558 beginning December 22, 2020 through a date to be determined for the following subjects: Architecture, Chinese, English, Geometry, and World History.
- h. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve bedside tutoring for student ID #811571 who was admitted to Care Point Health Hoboken University Medical Center, Hoboken, NJ on January 9, 2021 through a date to be determined. On-site services will be provided for 10 hours per week at the rate of \$50 per hour.
- i. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve supplemental instruction for the following Pascack Hills High School students, beginning January 6, 2021:

Student ID	Subject
809497, 810059, 810636, 810703, 811254, 811389	Executive functioning

starting **January 7, 2021** for the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year, at an annual salary of \$58,500, prorated, MA, step 1, with health benefits.

4. Athletic Resignation

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, accept the resignation of James Cleary as assistant coach for the girl’s basketball team at Pascack Valley High School effective January 13, 2021 for the 2020-2021 winter season.

5. Athletic Appointment

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve Dana Amato as assistant coach of the girl’s basketball team at Pascack Valley High School for a stipend of \$7,110, Step 2 for the 2020-2021 winter season.

6. Substitute Teacher – Region II

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve Timothy Serbe, substitute teacher, as leave replacement for Elizabeth Rodenberg, Park Academy middle school program instructional aide effective February 18 – April 15, 2021, at the substitute teacher rate of \$100 per day.

Moved by: Fronte Seconded by: Stankus

VOTE

Bd. Mbr.	Aye	Nay	Abs.	N/P	Bd. Mbr.	Aye	Nay	Abs.	N/P
Bissinger	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Molinelli	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blundo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stankus	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Blundy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Varghese	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fronte	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Weaver	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Martin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>					

X. FINANCE

Consent Agenda Items 1 - 5

1. Approval of Bills

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve bills as follows:

Budget Expenditures as of January 18, 2021	\$1,733,950.78
Payroll as of December 31, 2020	\$1,560,119.30
Payroll as of January 15, 2021	\$1,647,723.77
Total	\$4,941,793.85

Mr. Weaver asked if the pool use agreement is for meets or practices and if there are no payment if there is no meet.

Mr. Usami indicated that the agreement is for meets and there are no payments if no meets.

XI. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Blundo complimented the administration for getting ahead of celebrations for students. He is happy to see year end events for seniors are being planned. He understands that plans may change.

Dr. Gundersen responded that building administration is working closely with the PFA and PFO. There will be modified, yet normal year end activities.

Mr. Blundo mentioned that the state science scores have trended downward. He indicated that the 2019 scores were 39% proficient at Pascack Valley and 38% at Pascack Hills. He is aware that the tests were optional which may have affected the scores, however neighboring districts scored in the 50's and 60's. He asked if there is a plan to address this.

Dr. Gundersen mentioned that Dr. Bachenheimer indicated that AP and SAT scores have been improving. The science test did not count for anything and the students were aware of that. The former board president said it was a waste of time and urged students to concentrate on the SAT and AP exams. Dr. Bachenheimer is looking into environmental science. The District has supported educational experience. Dr. Gundersen asked if there should be a focus on preparing for standardized tests.

Mr. Fronte commented that there is a partnership with students, parents, faculty, and the Board. He believes the scores need to improve. When compared to other nearby districts there is a significant difference. He feels strongly about making it better and would like to know how the Board can help.

Ms. Molinelli asked if the curricula is the same as other districts.

Dr. Gundersen mentioned that Dr. Bachenheimer will address this with the Curriculum Committee. They will take a hard look at the curriculum and look at other indices.

Mr. Blundo commented that he is never an advocate of teaching to the test, however there should be an evaluation and see what can be done.

Mr. Stankus who is on the Curriculum Committee mentioned that he has reviewed the data and it appears to be curriculum related. He is encouraged that things are in the works and is looking forward to the meeting and the outcome.

Mr. Fronte suggested a representative from the department could come to the meeting.

Dr. Gundersen said the first step is through the Curriculum Committee.

Mrs. Martin commented that the public was excited by the internship program mentioned in the news brief.

Mr. Weaver said that school board candidates were asked about mascots. He indicated that candidates did not run for office for input about mascots. He read a statement reflecting on the mascot process and the Cowboy mascot. He mentioned that the retirement of the mascots was not discussed with the public prior to the decision. He described what a cowboy is and the different kinds of cowboys representing many different groups. He focused on the positives of cowboys and not what they are not.

Mrs. Martin said that when the Board receives an email that they should respond appropriately, otherwise the public feels that they have not been heard.

Ms. Molinelli indicated that there are 2,000 students and 4,000 parents, so it's not possible to respond to all emails. The Board receives and processes information to make decisions. She along with Dr. Gundersen respond to emails.

Dr. Gundersen said that this topic will be brought up with the Communications Committee.

Mr. Blundo indicated that there are times when Dr. Gundersen's response is not shared with the Board, so they do not know if and how an email was addressed.

Mr. Fronte indicated that he received 500 emails a day during the mascot issue. He read them all. He said that it's not proper for a board member to respond. The superintendent should respond.

Ms. Molinelli said that it should be a collective response since the Board is a team. She indicated that she will not respond for the Board. All members must know the response.

Mr. Weaver said that the Communications Committee was formed due to the mascot issue. He asked if the automated response to emails to the Board has been changed. He sent a test email and did not receive an automated response. He added that he would like to revert to the old message until the Communications Committee's recommendation.

Dr. Gundersen said that this will be reviewed by the Communications Committee and a meeting scheduled for Thursday.

Mr. Blundo requested that the old automated response be used in the meantime. He added that the meeting will need to be moved since he will be on a flight.

Mr. Weaver indicated that the Montvale K-8 has individual email addresses. He encourages people to email the Board address, otherwise he receives texts or calls on his personal phone.

Dr. Gundersen said that a couple of years ago, the Board decided not to publicize individual email addresses due to the public assuming they will receive a response and that response will be from the Board. He indicated that Matt Lee, the School Board rep will present on this subject to the board members. This will be recorded for future reference.

Ms. Molinelli said that this protects the integrity of the Board if a comment is raised at a board meeting.

Mrs. Martin said that members were asked to serve on three committees and would be assigned a fourth. She asked if they could serve on three and some cases four. This provides the ability to jump into a meeting without creating a quorum.

Ms. Molinelli said that the chairs of the committees have experience with the committee and new members received their first choice. It's the Board's decision on the number of committees members will serve.

Dr. Blundy asked how often committees meet and how long are the meetings.

Mr. Blundo said they are typically an hour and meet three times a year. However, the frequency depends on the committee.

Dr. Gundersen said that Health, Wellness and Safety and Post-Secondary Planning Committees meet twice a year and the others 3-4 times.

Mr. Fronte commented that he was the only new member, so he had more experienced members who could provide support. Current members will be able to provide assistance to new members. He said that if he didn't know something he would ask a member or the administrator in charge of the committee.

Ms. Molinelli indicated that they will review the committees and get feedback from members.

Mrs. Martin said that negotiations will be longer in duration.

Dr. Gundersen commented that negotiations is every three years and the PVREA agreement is in its first year. The administrator and supervisor agreement is upcoming, but that typically is not a long process. He said if there are any concerns about committees then members can contact Ms. Molinelli or him.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

Principal Search Timeline

Dr. Gundersen mentioned that the Board received a comprehensive overview of the timeline for the Pascack Valley principal search. He indicated that the position will be advertised in NJ.com and social media this weekend, application deadline is February 12, interviewing begins March 1 with a committee of staff, parents, students, and board members, second round interviews begin March 15 with selected candidates and committee of administrators, supervisors and a board member, two finalist interviews on April 5, and a recommendation to the Board in mid-April.

Ms. Molinelli said that students shared their pain during and after high school regarding the mascots. Students struggled with the mascot in which they were associated. Her decision was based on the students' pain. She mentioned that the fiscal piece is important as well as social change. They must consider the well-being of students.

Mr. Blundo said that he would not have voted for retiring the mascots. He understands the Indians, but he would like to have kept it. He and his family are PV Indians. He does not understand Cowboys. He asked if others agree about keeping Cowboys.

Ms. Bissinger indicated in the past, many young women who played sports did not feel they were a boy. She added that there should be no gender attached to the mascot.

Mr. Fronte responded that he and his family are PV Indians as well. He said that they rushed on the Cowboy vote. However, he felt it was important to support the Board decision and that there was unity on an important social issue. That being said, he was blindsided by the Cowboy decision. He said if the Board is changing their decision on the Cowboy, it should be communicated to the students. He believes a decision was made and they stand by it.

Mrs. Martin said that the students can choose Cowboy or Cowgirl or not. It's their decision. She said to leave it to the students and administration since the decision was made.

Mr. Stankus indicated that each generation identifies itself. He heard from students who visited reservations through their club and saw Native Americans. He said Cowboys is a gender issue and this has come up in letters he has received. He believes the association of Cowboys and Indians were taken into consideration when the mascots were formed a long time ago. Now, this generation should choose.

Mrs. Varghese commented that gender is very important to her as a female. She asked how boys would feel if they were Cowgirls.

Dr. Gundersen indicated that only the Pascack Hills boys' uniforms need to be changed. The girls did not have any reference to Cowboys. He said that the Climate Survey revealed gender inequity whether it was perceived or not.

Mr. Weaver mentioned that he does not think the students believe Cowboys/Cowgirls are an option.

Mr. Blundo said the mascots were retired at the meeting. Can they be considered.

Dr. Gundersen agreed that the students do not believe the former mascots are options. Asked if the Board wants to have them considered.

Dr. Blundy said it's easier to find negatives than positives regarding the mascots. She wished to look at the positives and thanked Mr. Weaver for bringing out the positives of a cowboy.

Mr. Weaver said that he had an issue with a phase-in of the logo due to cost. He would like them replaced and not over time if there is a change in mascots.

Dr. Gundersen indicated that the replacement cost for signage, banners, etc. is about \$31,000 and uniforms around \$53,000 at Pascack Hills. These can be done this year from unexpended athletic funds (transportation, fees). The end zone is about \$75,000 and relatively new, so this would be replaced when the turf is replaced. At Pascack Valley, it's approximately \$29,000 for signage, banners, etc. and \$36,000 for uniforms. The end zone is about \$75,000 and the wrestling mat is about \$15,000. This will be discussed with the Finance Committee on how quickly to move forward.

Mrs. Martin raised an issue that the girls' uniforms will not be replaced since there is no mascot on them and the boys will receive new uniforms.

Dr. Gundersen said that the uniforms will be replaced according to the replacement cycle. He will discuss this with the Athletic Directors about replacing all uniforms.

Mr. Blundo commented that it's approximately \$130,000 to replace, not including the end zones and wrestling mat. He wanted assurances that no trophies will be taken out.

Dr. Gundersen said they will not erase history containing trophies or photos. This is about changing the branding of the schools.

Dr. Blundy asked when the end zones and wrestling mat will be replaced.

Dr. Gundersen and Mr. Usami responded that typically the life span of a turf field is 10 years if well maintained and a wrestling mat will depend on wear and tear. This topic warrants more discussion. This could be a fundraising opportunity.

Dr. Blundy indicated that the old logo will be visible for years while there is a new mascot. This is important for the students and community to understand.

Mr. Weaver responded that the change should take place for September 2021 if there is a change in mascot. There will be many highly visible events including sports and graduation that will see the old logo.

Mr. Blundo asked if Robert, the Director of Facilities has explored painting it or covering it.

Dr. Gundersen said it's not a simple solution. Not that there isn't a viable solution.

Mr. Weaver indicated that the Cowboy Country sign (approximately \$5,000) was donated by a graduating class. He has an issue taking down a donation. However, if it needs to be taken down then it needs to be taken down. If the mascot change goes forward then cost should not be an issue.

XIII. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Citizens are invited to make comments and are limited to five minutes, according to the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education policy number 0167. Persons wishing to speak must, upon being recognized, rise and state their name and address.

Allison Varghese, student at Pascack Valley said that students are not aware that the old mascots may be considered. She said both mascots are offensive. She is aware that change takes time, but it needs to be initiated, otherwise change won't start. She said that the budget should not matter. People do not want to represent something they do not believe in.

Carolee Adams of Montvale said that she believes the assessments have been stopped due to the pandemic. She mentioned that the Montvale K-8 and mayor and council have email addresses, so why not copy or 'cc to all board members. She mentioned the importance of the volunteer ambulance corps and the need for more volunteers especially with several thousand new residents coming into the community. She indicated that that there are not enough courses for certification and that perhaps more can be offered at schools. She commented that she has met many young women who had no issue being a

Cowboy. She suggested fiscal strength and being careful about adding costs. She mentioned how people are out of a job and cannot afford to send kids to college. This is leading to wellness issues.

Shirell Gross of River Vale read a quote regarding an individual starting to live when the individual takes the broader concern of all humanity over individualism. Her regret is not spending enough time to support her kids and other students during the mascot issue. There is need to make students feel included. She said we must prepare students with coping skills, globalization, soft skills, and resilience. The need to empower students will make them successful.

Kristie Levine of River Vale thanked Mr. Blundo for raising the academic performance and assessment. She said that science is not the only area that the district has not scored well. Some of the math scores reflected 45% proficiency while other districts scored 61-65% proficiency. Academics is top priority aside from health and safety. She added that politics should be kept out. There is a place for that.

Councilman Roche of Montvale asked how the 30-40% of the students who felt there was inequity were treated. He asked if this is how they felt at that time or if this was constant. He mentioned inequity of the softball field issue that was eventually resolved. He cited that football receives priority for the turf field even if it's for practice. He mentioned that the Pascack Hills boys received gaiters while the girls did not receive them.

Ms. Molinelli commented that this is an on-going survey/feedback.

Dr. Gundersen mentioned that the old Board had the response available and that the new Board will have access.

Laura Pieratos of Montvale asked how the students were selected for the mascot selection committee. She said it was disappointing to hear a friend's group was surveyed. She added that all students vote when there are three choices, however they are not part of the selection process to get to three choices.

Dr. Gundersen indicated that the athletic directors reached out to the coaches and advisors. The coaches and advisors selected representatives covering a cross section of grades, gender and most sports and clubs. Students can reach out to the athletic directors about being part of the committee. Ms. Pieratos asked if the students are aware that they may do that. Dr. Gundersen said he could put her in touch with the athletic director or principal, or she can speak to her offline tomorrow.

Councilman DeRosa of Hillsdale said that he responds if a resident emails or calls. He mentioned that elected officials should respond since it's their obligation. He didn't know if it's different for the Board of Education. He added that there should at the least be a response that the email is passed onto the superintendent.

Dr. Gundersen said that it's different for a Board of Education. They are governed by New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA). A board member notifies the board president and superintendent. The superintendent can respond or have the appropriate administrator respond. He added that the Communications Committee will receive best practices from the NJSBA rep.

Yale Glazer of Montvale said that it's disheartening to hear that the mascot may be kept. It's confusing to the students to decide on Cowboy/Cowgirl. He responded that there is gender inequity in sports. It's always boys and always football regarding recognition. He added that personal emails for board members is an issue. An internal district email address is needed.

Mr. Blundo asked if only students vote for the mascot.

Dr. Gundersen indicated that only students vote.

Mr. Blundo commented that he agrees with youth participation in the EMT. He and his wife have seen a lot of time invested in training students only to have them leave for college. He does not know if expanding courses in schools will solve the problem.

Dr. Gundersen mentioned that Dr. Bachenheimer is an EMT and he started a program to have all students learn CPR. He advocates volunteerism.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ms. Bissinger to adjourn the public meeting at 10:24 p.m. Mr. Fronte seconded the motion, which was unanimously carried.

Respectfully,



Yas Usami
Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

Notice: With advance notice we can provide personal assistance for the disabled. Please contact 201-358-7005.

