

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD RETREAT
OF THE
BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Pascack Valley Regional High School District

March 22, 2021

Minutes of the Board of Education Retreat held on Monday, March 22, 2021
at 4:30 p.m. via online streaming service

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Ms. Tammy Molinelli, Board President.

Present: Ms. Tammy Molinelli, President
Mr. Joseph Blundo
Mr. Michael Fronte
Mrs. Kristin Martin
Mr. James Stankus
Mrs. Gini Varghese
Mr. Michael Weaver
Dr. P. Erik Gundersen, Superintendent
Mr. Yas Usami, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Ms. Claudia Gibbs, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

Absent: Ms. Janet Bissinger, Vice President
Dr. Kelly Blundy

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

Adequate notice of this meeting has been provided 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, November 28, 2020, and March 18, 2021.

IV. PRESENTATIONS

1. Welcome
2. Review and Discussion of District Goals

2020-2021 District Goals

Goal 1: Advance the work of inclusivity and equity throughout the district. Incorporating data-driven research into equity education for faculty, collaborative efforts with community and regional partners, curriculum development, and leadership and goal setting.

- a. Dr. Erik Gundersen: Overview
- b. Dr. Barry Bachenheimer: Introduction to the focus on Academic Equity: providing opportunity and support to learners/groups who need it
- c. Dr. Mark Russo: Update on Climate survey; Instrument, what we do with data, preliminary findings [Report](#)

Mr. Weaver asked if there was data that compares the two schools.

Dr. Russo said they will gather the data.

- d. Dr. Barry Bachenheimer, Ms. Alyssa Merritt & Ms. Eva Merk: Discuss current Tier II supports and subgroup performance and academic supports; present intent to offer Summer Acceleration plan for rising 9th graders and Fall plan to help SEL, Academics, and Executive Function – [Report](#)

Mr. Blundo complimented the administration for being proactive by getting this information on the incoming 9th graders from the sending districts. He asked if the need for help is similar for students in the classroom and in remote learning.

Dr. Bachenheimer mentioned that students in both platforms have experienced the need for assistance. He cited that teachers have reached out to ensure that remote learners join.

Ms. Merk commented that students who struggled with remote learning have done well in the hybrid environment. Results have been good all across the board. She mentioned that it's been good for special education students since they are in every day.

Mrs. Martin commended the teachers, nurses and case managers. She commented that most students are thriving.

Mrs. Varghese asked if the summer program is every day, in-person, hybrid or remote. She asked when the information will be sent to the parents.

Dr. Bachenheimer said they are working on the details. He mentioned that initially they envision one to two hours a day for one to two weeks. It's to bolster the students' skills and give them a head start to high school.

Mr. Weaver asked if it will be in-person, hybrid or remote. He added what is the focus.

Dr. Bachenheimer indicated that the intent is in-person with occasional hybrid. They will focus mainly on ELA and math. He mentioned other areas that need support may be addressed.

Ms. Molinelli mentioned a review and analysis of what worked and what didn't.

Dr. Bachenheimer indicated that it will be an on-going process.

Ms. Molinelli suggested getting feedback from the community.

Mr. Blundo commented that remote/online learning may be the best platform for some students or subjects.

Dr. Gundersen said there could be remote learning and that this would be discussed with the sending districts.

- e. Ms. Noemi Rodriguez: Programs to support ELL students and their families – [Report](#)
- f. Dr. Barry Bachenheimer: Discuss Regional District Equity Collaboration with Northern Valley Regional, Northern Highlands Regional, and Ramapo Indian Hills Regional.

Dr. Bachenheimer indicated that they are having ongoing monthly meetings with administrative teams from Northern Highlands, Northern Valley, and Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High Schools to work on common academic equity issues by having a regional approach to supplement their internal district work.

Ms. Molinelli asked why fewer students and more parents took the survey than in previous year(s).

Dr. Russo said it's speculative, but it could be due to all students not being in. Participation was high last year and it was administered in English class. He believed that a couple of more years will give a good baseline.

Mr. Blundo indicated that more parents may be more engaged with the high school.

Mrs. Martin mentioned that the decrease in student participation could be that they have seen it year after year. She asked how many freshmen took the survey.

Mr. Stankus asked how much class time it takes to administer the survey. He added if it could be done during English year after year.

Dr. Russo indicated that data analysis team will identify strengths and weaknesses in the survey to keep it fresh. He said it takes about 20 minutes and English is asked to do things like this, so they wanted to spread it out to other subjects/departments.

Goal 2: Facilitate the reopening and restarting of the school year. While fully incorporating health, safety and security concerns, maintain high academic expectations, deepen connections with students, and continue frequent communications with the community.

- g. Dr. Barry Bachenheimer- Briefly reviews the report given at the 3.8.21 BOE meeting
- h. Mr. Tim Wieland: Spring plans on behalf of both schools (Prom, Trips, Graduation, etc.) and also speak in detail about the nursing challenges and how our nurses have worked hard to handle and/or overcome those challenges.
[Outline](#)

Mrs. Martin commented that Senior Prom and Graduation are close together.

Mr. Wieland acknowledged that they are and it may affect graduation in some way if there are COVID positive cases. He mentioned that the PFA and PFO are scheduling the Fashion Shows. He added that Project Graduation is in discussion at Pascack Hills and he is not aware of the status at Pascack Valley.

Mr. Blundo asked if he has heard anything or communicated information about the events.

Mr. Wieland indicated that outside of dates he has not seen or heard anything.

Dr. Gundersen said that the administration is working with the venues to make senior events as normal as possible.

Dr. Bachenheimer thanked the nurses for their diligence and time to keep the schools open.

Goal 3: Build upon the district's student wellness program with a greater emphasis on freshmen transitions and collaboration with partnering districts.

- i. Wellness Committee and Wellness Center Summary (From Committee Presentation on 3/16/21): Dr. Sean Struncis: update and summarize meeting. [Summary](#)
- j. Regional Wellness Program (Ms. Alyssa Merritt & Ms. Jen Zimmermann): Collaborations with the K-8 sending districts. [Regional Wellness](#)

Ms. Molinelli asked what the professionals are seeing as trends that educators should be aware.

Ms. Zimmermann indicated that they are seeing students overcompensating. She said kids need a routine and rules, otherwise anxiety manifests.

Goal 4: Expand upon the district's efforts to create systemic authentic, real-world learning experiences in an in-person, hybrid, and remote learning environment.

- k. Mr. Joe Orlak; Review progress on current goal and talk about newer interdisciplinary approaches. Highlight Internship successes. Discuss Civics initiative for next year.

Mr. Orlak spoke about real world learning goal. He said it's to provide all students the opportunity to develop real world/professional skills. He mentioned data analysis, real world application and resume writing. He indicated communication (phone, email) skills. He spoke about organization and planning such as asking the right questions and how to ask them. He commented that despite COVID the internship program has done well and the numbers for next year are up at both schools. He added that Park Ridge who participates in the program has 40% of their seniors interested in the program and that Emerson will be returning to the program. He indicated that there has been a drop off in the medical field, but interest in businesses has increased. He commented that students in the trade sector have not missed a day unless there was a closure. Mr. Orlak said there has been a greater emphasis on civics, specifically engagement with the community. He said it's about civic value and community citizenship.

Mrs. Martin commented that 40% of Park Ridge seniors interested in the program is outstanding. She asked about the percentage in the district and if the education program with the preschoolers will be returning.

Mr. Orlak indicated that Park Ridge has a relatively small senior class, but 40% is great. He noted that there are 161 Valley and Hills students which also includes job shadowing with special education students and the student cadet program. He

mentioned that the program is unique from other internship programs since it runs half of the day for 9 ½ months of the school year.

Dr. Gundersen said that Mr. Wieland is meeting with Ms. Rodriguez about what can be done with the pre-school program.

1. Dr. Sean Struncis & Dr. Barry Bachenheimer: Reviewed SAT/PSAT offerings as well as steps the district is taking to better prepare students for standardized testing.

Dr. Struncis mentioned that there are more than 250 juniors from both schools who will be taking the SAT on Wednesday. He indicated that the ACT will take place in April on a Saturday, AP exams will take place in May, the SAT in May and June, NJSLS assessments are still on for now, and the PSAT has 600 sophomores who will take the exam in the fall.

Dr. Gundersen indicated that at Pascack Valley a SAT prep class is being offered at a significantly reduced cost than private sessions.

Dr. Bachenheimer mentioned that there is a college essay boot camp.

Mr. Blundo asked if the 8th period offering will affect the internship program.

Mr. Orlak said that the program started when the district had an 8th period. He indicated that scheduling can be reworked and the program will continue.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Fronte to adjourn at 6:20 p.m. Mr. Weaver seconded the motion, which was unanimously carried.

Respectfully,



Yas Usami
Business Administrator/ Board Secretary