

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

Pascack Valley Regional High School District

June 25, 2020

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Education held on Thursday, June 25, 2020 at
9:00 a.m. via Zoom,
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83202443773?pwd=cHdBBeUo0K2FoUHZXNnhES1IyRWtKdz09>

I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Ms. Tammy Molinelli, Board President.

Present: Ms. Tammy Molinelli, President
Ms. Janet Bissinger, Vice President
Mr. Joseph Blundo
Mr. Michael Fronte
Mr. Brian Hallowell
Mr. Kenneth Ralph
Mr. Arnold Scher
Mr. James Stankus
Mr. David Steinberg

Also present: Dr. P. Erik Gundersen, Superintendent
Ms. Pamela Baxley, Business Administrator/Board Secretary
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.

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 entirely online via Zoom. 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 Ms. Pamela Baxley, 28 West Grand Avenue, Montvale, NJ 07645.

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

MOTION TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education will meet via online streaming service, for the purpose of recessing to a closed Executive Meeting.

WHEREAS, the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education has been formed pursuant to applicable New Jersey Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Board is charged with the responsibility of performing all acts and doing all things, consistent with law and the rules of the State Board of Education, necessary for the lawful and proper conduct, equipment and maintenance of the public schools and public school property of the Pascack Valley Regional High School District; and

WHEREAS, Section 7 of the Opening Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10-4-12) permits the exclusion of the public (“Executive Session”) from a meeting of the Board in certain circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that circumstances exist for such an Executive Session; and

WHEREAS, the Board has found the action described below to be necessary and proper;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board on the date indicated above that:

1. The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action on the Executive Session herein set forth.
2. The subject matter to be discussed is as follows:
 1. Personnel matter.
3. The Board will return to the Regular Board Meeting.
4. Official action may or may not be taken when the Board reconvenes to Public Session.

A motion was made by Mr. Hallowell to reconvene into the public meeting at 9:50 a.m. Mr. Scher seconded the motion, which was unanimously carried.

Maria Geanopul from Montvale asked how do you approve the minutes before we can object? What is the procedure to reverse a decision? Dr. Gundersen explained that the minutes are only a reflection of what took place at the meeting. The public can see the meeting on videotape within 48 hours of the meeting.

Peggy Falanga of Woodcliff Lake asked a question about extended school year. Is it planned to run as normal (in person)? She asked about bussing and if safety procedures will be in place. Dr. Bachenheimer commented that the Governor’s office only recently allowed this to take place. Information will be going out regarding procedures as soon as this motion is approved on today’s agenda.

Dana Porrazzo asked if a community member can make a request? Dr. Gundersen explained that only a board member can make a motion. A community member can ask the board but cannot make a motion. If a board members opinion is in the minority, should they be concerned. Dr. Gundersen responded that there is no retaliation from the district or board if a member is against the popular opinion.

Alexis Parsells from Hillsdale asked what is the purpose of the Board of Education. Dr. Gundersen told her how a member can run for the board and that the election information is also posted on the website

IV. POLICY

Consent Agenda for Items 1 – 4

1. BOE Policies and Regulations – Second Reading and Adoption

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, adopt the following policies and regulations:

Name of Policy or Regulation	Policy/ Reg Number
Domestic Violence	<u>P 1581</u>
Health and Physical Education	<u>P 2422</u>
Postnatal Accommodations	<u>P 3421.13</u>
Postnatal Accommodations	<u>P 4421.13</u>
Administration of Medication	<u>P 5330</u>
Honoring Student Achievement	<u>P 5440</u>
Supervision of Construction	<u>P 7243</u>
School Year	<u>P 8210</u>
School Day	<u>P 8220</u>
Reporting Potentially Missing or Abused Children	<u>P 8462</u>
Domestic Violence	<u>R 1581</u>
Administration of Medication	<u>R 5330</u>
School Closings	<u>R 8220</u>

2. Summer Athletic Practice/Training

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve summer athletic practice/training for Pascack Hills High School and Pascack Valley High School during the NJSIAA summer recess period beginning July 13, 2020 through September 1, 2020. During this time period, board-approved coaches may instruct district student athletes that meet all NJSIAA eligibility requirements and have a valid physical. Also, as per NJSIAA guidelines, approve and permit the required pre-season heat acclimatization period to begin prior to the August 10, 2020 start date.

3. Graduation

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve holding in-person outdoor graduation ceremonies for Pascack Hills High School and Pascack Valley High School on July 8, 2020, with a rain date of July 9, 2020, that complies with the State of New Jersey Department of Education's guidance on capacity restrictions and proper social distancing protocols.

4. 2019-2020 Superintendent Merit Goals

WHEREAS, on or about August 26, 2019, the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") approved merit bonus goals for the Superintendent for the 2019-2020 school year consisting of three (3) quantitative merit criteria and two (2) qualitative merit criteria and submitted same to the Executive County Superintendent for approval in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-3.1(e)10-11 (hereinafter referred to as "Merit Bonus Goals"); and

WHEREAS, on or about November 14, 2019, the Executive County Superintendent approved said Merit Bonus Goals, thereby authorizing the Board to evaluate and award merit bonus increases to the Superintendent upon achievement of each objective; and

- a. **WHEREAS**, the Board has evaluated the Superintendent's performance and determined that he achieved the objective to engage 100% of the faculty in some aspect of professional learning / curriculum development around inclusivity and equity. Achieving this goal will thereby entitle him to a merit bonus of 3.33% of his annual salary for a total of \$6,703.26.
- b. **WHEREAS**, the Board has evaluated the Superintendent's performance and determined that he achieved the objective of collaborating with local business leaders to enhance real world learning opportunities for students. Achieving this goal will thereby entitle him to a merit bonus of 3.33% of his annual salary for a total of \$6,703.26.
- c. **WHEREAS**, the Board has evaluated the Superintendent's performance and determined that he achieved the objective expanding his communication to the Board of Education by developing detailed quarterly reports. Achieving this

2. Pascack Valley Regional LLD and Milestones Extended School Year

- a. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve summer employment for the ESY nurse, Andrea Albers, for an additional hour per day to ensure that a nurse is available until all instruction has ended.
- b. **RESOLVED** that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve Tracy Ralph, LDTC, to provide ESY instruction for four students, whose parents have opted out of in-person ESY, for 35 hours at the rate of \$55 per hour.

3. Summer Employment

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve summer employment for the following staff members:

Name	Position	Location	2020
Sue Bolella	Secretary – part-time	PHHS	10
Diane Fallon	Nurse	PVHS	15
Sandy Hroncich	Part-time Nurse	PVHS	6
Steve Papa	Athletic Trainer	PHHS	15
William Reger	Athletic Trainer	PVHS	15
Christie Rossig	SAC	PVHS	15
Rose Welyczko	Nurse	PHHS	10
Tara Wholey new	Part-time Nurse	PHHS	5

4. Service Providers – Region II

RESOLVED that the Pascack Valley Regional High School District Board of Education, at the recommendation of the superintendent, approve the following service providers for the 2020-2021 school year:

Dr. L. Hanes and Associates:

Service	Rates
Psychological Evaluation	\$450
Educational Evaluation	\$450
Speech Evaluation	\$450
Social History	\$375
OT/PT Evaluations	\$400
Spanish Bilingual Evaluations (psychological, social, educational, speech)	\$525
Speech Therapy/Meetings	\$90 per hour
Occupational and Physical Therapy	\$97 per hour/Individual Sessions \$110 per hour/Group Sessions
CST/OT/PT Consultation/Meetings	\$97 per hour

Home Instruction	\$55 per hour
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Med Psych Associates of New Jersey, Inc

Service	Rates
Mental Health Risk Assessment Screenings	\$250
Professional Development	\$500 per workshop

Good Talking People, LLC:

Service	Rate
Speech Evaluation (including Articulation, Oral Motor, Feeding, Voice, or Fluency)	\$400.00
Speech Language Evaluation	\$800.00
Comprehensive Speech Language Evaluation (Speech Language Evaluation, plus deep testing including written language, social communication skills, higher language concepts)	\$2,250.00
Speech Therapy	\$85 per hour/Individual \$95 per hour/Group

Comprehensive Behavioral Healthcare, Inc:

Service	Rates
Mental Health Risk Assessment Screenings	\$250
Psychiatric Evaluations	\$500

J & B Therapy, LLC:

Service	Rates
Occupational, and/or Speech Therapy	\$92.00/hour
Physical Therapy	\$92.00/hour
Educational Support Services (LDTC)	\$92.00/hour
Psychologist Services	\$92.00/hour
Evaluations*	\$405.00/evaluation
Bilingual Evaluations	\$750.00/evaluation
Behavioral Support Services as provided by BCBA/Behavioral Supervisor	\$93.00/hour (3 hours/week minimum)
Behavioral Plans & Functional Behavior Assessments#	\$93.00/hour
Behavioral Support Services as provided by a Behaviorist	\$93.00/hour
Reading Specialist	\$82.50/hour
Home Instruction	\$65.00/hour

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Blundo made a statement. Never in 24 years had he been as disappointed in himself as he was after voting to remove the mascot from Pascack Valley. At the meeting, the board only heard one side and he thought this was a foregone conclusion. He believes there are no ramifications for voting against the popular opinion. However, he understands the merits of changing the mascot and respects the point of view. He voted with the majority but now feels it was a mistake. He should have objected when the motion was made because the board should have waited to vote on this issue in an effort to allow more discussion. He respects the facts and figures that were presented. He went to Pascack Valley and respects the history.

Mr. Ralph commented that everyone has the right to change their mind. However, there are compelling arguments as to why the mascot should be vacated. Overall it was a good thing. Now we can have a discussion going forward. More recently the feelings at the school regarding the Indian has opened his eyes. During this time when there are no mascots, is a good time to review both sides. There needs to be a pause and reflection to determine what is appropriate moving forward. We need to know the merits of why we should have an Indian or cowboy, if it costs money to do the right thing then we should do the right thing. The numbers that have been mentioned are not accurate. We need to hear compelling arguments for the other side.

Mr. Scher, who made the motion to remove the mascot, remembers the rivalry between the Cowboys and Indians. We haven't removed the memories. He believes this is a positive change. It is tradition but this is the right thing to do. His two children had different opinions. When you listen and learn you see that the district is trying to be inclusive. The mascots prevent us from continuing to move forward. The decision was not a knee jerk reaction. We serve the students.

Michael Fronte commented that each of us have our own opinions but we are elected to represent the public. He is a Pascack Valley Indian. It wasn't his opinion but the overwhelming input that we received was that people were against the mascot.

The resolution encourages a dialogue between students, parents, the community, the board and administration to select mascots that are meaningful. We will be establishing work groups for that purpose.

Mr. Stankus did not take this issue lightly. He has read all the emails that he received. Having balanced everything he believes that the students are the key priority here. Making a well environment where there is inclusivity is essential. The decision to go forward with a dialogue regarding the mascots is an opportunity to move forward. No one is saying that this will be a quick decision. We are opening the dialogue. We asked for former alumni to come forward with their input. There is a remarkable level of passion regarding this issue.

Mr. Steinberg is concerned because it was really only the Indian that was discussed. We need to have conversations about both mascots.

Mr. Scher asked if we have communicated out that the tennis courts are open to the public. Dr. Gundersen commented that our tennis courts are on Bergen County land so

they are able to be open. Due to the fact that the campus is closed and because of the upcoming construction, the public will not be able to access the parking lot. The public must use Sapienza Gardens as the access point.

Construction updates were provided by Dr. Gundersen.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

IX. 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.

Doug Katz, from Clifton, an alumnus, applauds the decision to remove the mascot. It needs to be modernized.

Delia Collis, a student, is supportive of the decision to remove the mascot and reflected on points that have been made on social media. The connection is with the school not the mascot. This is a learning institution where we should promote equity.

Madeline Miller hopes that the board upholds their decision to remove the mascot.

Adam Shapiro, a parent, knew about the meeting and what was happening. The process we followed was outstanding. He said for over two hours there were presentations regarding this issue. In the end, the vote was unanimous, there were reasons for this; don't be swayed to reverse your decision. Thick skin is a prerequisite for holding public office.

Beck Kerdman of Woodcliff Lake, believes that the mascots are in contrast to the message of unity. We do not honor Native American Indians using them as a mascot. It is not helpful to criticize the civic process.

Chandni Shah from Hillsdale believes the mascot needs to be removed. Current Pascack Valley students believe this mascot is outdated. She made references to the research regarding derogatory mascots and its impact.

Bill Mulholland thanked Mr. Blundo. We don't want to be judgmental but want to be fair. The board should not decide just because a motion is posted. It was not transparent. There is a lack of knowledge in the community on how the board meetings work. The timing of COVID, and the resulting emotions, make this not the time to decide on such a sensitive issue, especially without haven't given more notice to the public.

Yale Glazer of Montvale, is concerned about the procedures, it appears that the meeting was about the Indian, not much was said about the Cowboy. The method in which it happened was not proper. What is the cost of this? Rebranding costs for the fields, the uniforms, how are we paying for this? That is a process issue. That should have been determined before the vote. What will happen if the students wear the old gear if the mascot is so egregious.

Tirso Ballesteros, from River Vale, believes it is not right to keep this mascot.

Dr. Gundersen addressed the issue about the money to rebrand. Working groups will be established to implement the motion. From a financial standpoint, this will be spread out overtime. In the Fall we will not be changing everything. There will be a phase in process. Level setting will take place.

Abby Lundy, a Hillsdale resident, will read a statement from another resident Tamara Peterson from Hillsdale. They are not insulted to have the Indian. The statement addressed the history of local Indians. She is proud of being a Pascack Valley Indian. Lenape Indians are peacemakers.

Aly Cohen, a resident of Woodcliff Lake, supports the changing of the mascot at Pascack Hills and believes that inclusivity is important.

Kelleigh O'Hara, a California resident and alumnus, thanked the board. Real leadership is having the courage to move forward and not be stuck in the past. We are not replacing history. Removal of the symbols only means our understanding has changed.

Paige Gorman, resident of Hillsdale, thanked the board for allowing the comments. The board made the correct decision regarding removing the mascot.

Jacob Ricco, a River Vale resident, the mascot does not honor Native Americans. These caricatures are harmful.

Allison Toledo, Hillsdale resident, applauds the board's decision to remove the mascots and the transparency in publicizing the meeting. These conversations have been going on for decades. This enables us to grow into the future. Proof for the need of change can be seen from the hateful comments made on the Smokestack page.

Gina Hutchinson asked Dr. Gundersen how he was prepared to handle the students who do not agree with this decision. Will there be repercussions for students who wear their spirit wear? Teachers should not push their beliefs on students. Dr. Gundersen responded that he is fully committed to the leadership abilities of the two principals. As the district heals and rebuilds, there will be no consequences for students who wear their spirit gear.

Jamie Ryu, a River Vale resident, thanked the board for making the decision to remove the mascots. A change in name will not erase the memories that alumni have.

Gabriela Civiletti, a resident of Nutley, thanked the board for the decision to change the mascot. They have given a voice to the oppressed and will be on the right side of history.

Sarah Tamagny thanked the board for making the morally right step in the removal of the mascot. A racist image in a learning environment is upsetting.

Darian Purareno from Hillsdale believes that the mascot hurts everyone on the board because it represents white supremacy. Very proud of the board for the decision.

Dr. Gundersen went over the procedures for voting.

Jennifer Falkoff, a River Vale resident, was disturbed not by the removal of the Indian but by the way that the decision was made. How did the board receive the information other than at the board meeting? Many community members were missing from the discussion. The students were never engaged in any debate on the issue. It missed a large

teachable moment. The students shouldn't know the political viewpoint of the teachers. By taking this decision so lightly the school displayed to the students that they were taking a stand on a political issue which should not have been a political one. More discussion is needed. Being on the right side of history indicates that there is a clear political agenda.

Dr. Gundersen explained that board members are not politically affiliated and teachers do not take political stances.

Robert Smilari, of Montvale, hopes people are mindful not to judge anyone's opinion. We can focus on making change with racism in other ways. The individuals have to change from within. We can't cancel out what we don't like to be politically correct. There are so many larger issues. Curriculum, Covid are at the forefront. Why are we getting angry about a mascot?

Kristen Macmillan, from Seattle Washington, an alumnus, is disgusted with the judgement passed by people who disagree with this motion. Things change, people should not be afraid to change their opinion. Indigenous people have made it clear that this does not honor them. The mascot is shameful. A town that is 93% white should not get to determine what is and is not racist.

Natalia Chinchilla, from Hillsdale, thanked the board for removing the mascot. Teachers are not pushing their agendas on their students.

Jack Byun of Hillsdale thanked the board for removing the Indian. As a Korean American, he believes that racist comments are impactful. We must take this crucial step. Tradition is no excuse for having this mascot.

Kristen Gross, an alumnus from Hillsdale now living in Colorado, is pleasantly surprised and feels it is never too late to create positive change. She thanked the board for voting to remove the mascot.

Ms. Molinelli initiated a break until 12:25.

Mr. Gundersen explained that there will be no vote today.

Howard Megdal is grateful to the board for listening to the students and the community. The board has demonstrated what representative government looks like.

Tessa Beltrano, an alumnus, is grateful of the decision to remove the school mascot. Covid is no reason to delay change.

Benjamin Oosting supports the decision to remove the mascots. It is a small, important step toward anti-racism. We can no longer celebrate genocide.

Maria Geanopul from Montvale, advocated for the Cowboys. Well over 2000 people have indicated that further conversation regarding the Hills mascot are needed. There are so many other issues being dealt with the pandemic, the economy, protests and now this? Can this be voted on?

Katie Shields, from River Vale, thanked the board for the removal of the mascots and is shocked by the social media response. The mascot didn't bring the spirit to Pascack Valley.

Kiera Foster supports the removal of the mascot. Racism is not a political decision.

Diana Weisman, from Hillsdale, commented on the retiring of the school mascot discussion 10 years ago. This change will not affect the memories. Anger from the opposition is not really about costs. It is resistance to change. Bias and political agendas. Do not belittle students who express their opinion. Teachers are not pushing an agenda.

Yevgeny Khanutin from Montvale, an immigrant from the Soviet Union, has seen history erased and monuments destroyed. Do not erase your heritage. Without history there is no future. How is a cowboy racist? Is the flag racist? This reminds him of the USSR.

Enrique Tiburcio from Hillsdale, had teachers who had a hard time pronouncing his name. No one took the effort. It is an issue. The culture at Pascack Valley is terrifying. He was one of fifteen black students. He is Dominican but referred to as black because of the color of his skin.

Ms. Molinelli explained that we could only take one more call. Other comments could be made via email.

Erik Stahl, a graduate, is in favor of keeping the cowboy as a mascot.

Ms. Molinelli expressed her gratitude for all who participated.

X. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Ms. Bissinger to adjourn at 1:00 p.m. Mr. Scher seconded the motion, which was unanimously carried.

Respectfully,



Pamela Baxley
Business Administrator/ Board Secretary

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

