

Sussex-Wantage Regional School District  
January 25, 2024  
Regular Session Meeting

The Regular Session Meeting of the Sussex-Wantage Regional School District Board of Education was called to order by Mr. Nick D'Agostino, Board President, on January 25, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Sussex Middle Media Center.

**Roll Call**

Members Present: Mrs. Alissa Cecchini, Mr. Nicholas D'Agostino, Mrs. Brittney Simmons, Mrs. Caitlin Space, Mrs. Stevie Vallone, and Mrs. Stephanie Tortorella

Members Absent: Mrs. Taylor Dely, Mrs. Dorothy Witte, Mrs. Danielle Zill-Barry

Also in attendance were: Mr. Michael Gall, Superintendent of Schools, Mrs. Christina M. Riker, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, and Ms. Frances Febres, Board Attorney

**The following statement was read by Mrs. Tortorella**

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of the Act, the Sussex Wantage Regional School District Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted in the school buildings and notice of said meeting sent to the New Jersey Herald and The Star Ledger.

Mrs. Tortorella read the Sussex Wantage School Mission Statement: The Sussex Wantage Regional School District is a responsive, caring, child-centered community. Our mission is to educate each individual to become a confident, competent, lifelong learner and productive, responsible citizen, by providing challenging opportunities in a safe environment through a partnership of families, schools and communities.

**Superintendent's Report:**

**Sussex Middle School Students of the Month:**

- 6<sup>th</sup> grade – Andrew Huffsmith
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade – Joseph Cosh
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade – Anna Elko

Mr. Schwarz was joined by Mr. Gall. He reported that besides Students of the Month, Sussex Middle School would be looking to also have Students of the Week this school year. Mr. Schwarz gave brief introductions of each of the students, including staff reasons for selection. All students were in attendance and came forward to receive a certificate of recognition.

Mr. Gall reported on the following to the Board and Public:

- Congratulations to all the recipients.

Roll Call

Open Public Meetings Act

Mission Statement

Superintendent Report

SMS Students of the Month

Supt. Report Continued

- Congratulations to Mrs. Witte on the birth of another grandchild. She is not here tonight as she is visiting.
- Reported on Committee Meetings: Community Outreach Committee met with Mrs. Weiss-Connors and the student council. Polity Committee met and reviewed the district approach to head lice along with HIB guidelines. Buildings & Grounds Committee will meet next month. Curriculum and Special Services Committee met. Mrs. Themelakis reviewed that ELA and Math standards are up for revision for implementation in September. Mrs. Maas is helping students via learning pods. Mr. Gall reported that he went with Harriet Anderson, PS Nurse, and Kathy Gomez, PS Instructional Coach, to visit the satellite locations for preschool; Second Home and Norwescap Head Start. Mrs. Hennion is working on CPI training for staff.
- Mrs. Riker introduced Heidi Wohlleb from Nisivoccia, LLP who is here tonight to give the Audit Presentation for the 2022-2023 school year.
  - Ms. Wohlleb reviewed the General Fund Revenue and Expenditures for the 2022-2023 school year. She also reviewed the details in the Fund Balance as of June 30, 2023 and as compared to the Fund Balance as of June 30, 2022.
  - Ms. Wohlleb next went over the details of the two (2) Enterprise Funds: The Food Service Fund and the Care Program Fund, which both saw increases in net position for 2022-2023.
  - Ms. Wohlleb gave details on the calculation of Excess Surplus as well.
  - Ms. Wohlleb stated that the accounting records were in excellent condition and that there were only two (2) minor recommendations for this audit which were balance transfers over 10% that need County Superintendent approval and the records of the Treasurer including reconciling items that were not valid.
  - Finally, Ms. Wohlleb shared some suggestions that they make in most of their audit presentations that included: student activity accounts and sub-balances, COVID money spending, net cash resources in Food Service account, and unemployment trust funding.
  - Ms. Wohlleb thanked Mrs. Riker and her staff for their efforts with the audit.

2022-2023  
Audit  
Presentation

**Audience Remarks:**

- Mary Cafarelli, Wantage, wanted to ask about the Preschool program: how many kids are participating. Mr. Gall said that there were about seventy (70) students. Five (5) classrooms here at Lawrence Elementary School and two (2) classrooms at Second Home and one (1) classroom at Norwescap Head Start. Ms. Cafarelli asked if they were bussed. Mr. Gall answered that some are bussed and some are driven by parents. Ms. Cafarelli asked about the hours and Mr. Gall answered that it was the same as other students in the district. Ms. Cafarelli asked if staff was employed by us and Mr. Gall answered that for the district classrooms they are our staff, the outside providers employ their staff directly. Ms. Cafarelli said she looked forward to hearing about it more in the future.
- Mary Cafarelli, Wantage, asked about the Learning Acceleration Program on the agenda. Mr. Gall said it was for Middle School Students with our existing staff for before or after school programs.

Audience  
Remarks

**Board Secretary Certification** – read by Mrs. Riker

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(a), I certify that as of December 31, 2023 no line item account has encumbrances and expenditures, which in total exceed the line item appropriation in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(a).

Board Secretary Certification

**Approval of Board Minutes:**

Moved by Mr. D’Agostino, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve following minutes:

Approval of Board Minutes

December 21, 2023 Regular Session  
January 4, 2024 Annual Reorganization

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

**Personnel:**

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following substitute teachers, nurses, teacher assistants, secretaries, bus drivers, and custodians as listed for the 2023-2024 school year.\*

Personnel

Substitute Approval

Secretary  
Nicole Caldwell

Custodian  
Raquel Leftwich

(\*All new substitutes and appointments are required to comply with State Statute regarding fingerprinting, security checks and appropriate legal agency clearance, and also Federal Employment)

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board accept the retirement of Ruth Mason, District Bus Driver, effective July 1, 2024, with thanks for over 22 years of service to the District.

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Retirement – Bus Driver

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board accept the retirement of Susan Winfield, Teacher, Sussex Middle School, effective July 1, 2024 with thanks for over 25 years of service to the District.

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Retirement - Teacher

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board accept the resignation of Margaret Saalfield, Special Education Teacher, C.E. Lawrence School, effective January 09, 2024.

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Resignation – CEL Spec Ed Teacher

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Brianna DeAngelo, 5.5 hour Special Education Teacher Assistant, Wantage

New Hire – WES 5.5 TA

Regular Session Meeting – January 25, 2024

School, Step 1, \$19.43 per hour, effective January 02, 2024. Shift is 8:15am to 2:15pm with a ½ hour unpaid lunch.

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Bernadette Angolemmo, for a transfer from a 3.5 hour Special Education Teacher Assistant, Wantage School, to a 5.5 hour Special Education Teacher Assistant, Wantage School, effective January 03, 2024 at no change in rate of pay. Shift is 9:30am to 3:30pm with a ½ hour unpaid lunch.

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

WES TA  
increase  
hours to 5.5

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Heidi Riker, for a transfer from 3.5 hour Kindergarten Aide, C.E. Lawrence School, to a 5.5 hour Kindergarten Aide/ Teacher Assistant, C. E. Lawrence School, effective January 16, 2024 at no change in rate of pay. Ms. Riker will work 3.5 hours per day as a Kindergarten Aide and 2.0 hours per day as a Teacher Assistant working directly with a student at C. E. Lawrence School.

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

CEL TA  
increase  
hours to 5.5

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following personnel for co-curricular and extracurricular activities at Sussex Middle School for the 2023-2024 school year as follows:

SMS Co-  
Curricular  
2023-2024

<u>Name</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Stipend</u>
Marina Adamo-Morris	Track Coach - Girls	\$3,010
Aaron Watson	Track Coach - Boys	\$3,010

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following personnel for additional hours of attendance to fulfill IEP requirements as follows at their regular hourly rate of pay, unless otherwise noted:

Additional TA  
Hours

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Add'l Hours Worked</u>	<u>Add'l Time</u>
Melissa Stoll	01/04/24	8:30am - 9:30am	1.0 hour
Linda Kuperus	01/04/24	2:30pm - 3:30pm	1.0 hour
Ashley Yanish	01/06/24	3:30pm - 3:45pm	15 minutes
Melissa Stoll	01/10/24	8:30am - 9:30am	1.0 hour
Ashley Yanish	01/11/24	3:30pm - 3:45pm	15 minutes

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following personnel to fulfill IEP requirements for students participating in after school activities as follows below. Stipend rate is \$16.00 per hour. No stipend is paid if activity does not occur or if the student is not present.

Afterschool  
TA Hours

<u>Date(s)</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Additional Hours</u>	<u>After School Activity</u>
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01/11/24	Sarah Bakonyi	9:00am - 9:30am 30 minutes	District Choir Day at HPRHS
01/18/24	Sarah Bakonyi	6:15pm - 8:15pm 2.0 hours	District Music Celebration at HPRHS
01/09, 01/11, 01/16, 01/17, 01/18, 01/24, 01/29, 01/30/24	Jennifer Beco	3:30pm - 5:30pm 2.0 hours	SMS Basketball games
02/01/24	Jennifer Beco	3:30pm - 5:00pm 1.5 hours	SMS End of Season Basketball Party

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following personnel to provide nursing services for a student participating in after school activities at their regular hourly rate of pay as follows below. No stipend is paid if activity does not occur or if the student is not present.

After school  
Nursing  
Hours

Date(s)	Name	Hours	After School Activity
01/05, 01/08, 01/10, 01/16, 01/17, 01/19, 01/22, 01/23, 01/31, 02/12, 02/13, 02/21, 02/22, 02/26, 02/29, 03/04, 03/07, 03/11, 03/14, 03/18, 03/20, 03/21, 03/25, 03/27/24	Pamela Flynn	3:30pm - 5:30pm 2.0 hours	SMS Play Practices
04/09, 04/10, 04/11/24	Pamela Flynn	3:30pm - 6:00pm 2.5 hours	SMS Play Practices
04/15, 04/16, 04/17/24	Pamela Flynn	3:30pm - 7:00pm 3.5 hours	SMS Play Practices
04/18, 04/19/24	Pamela Flynn	6:00pm - 9:00pm 3.0 hours	SMS Play Performances
04/20/24	Pamela Flynn	12:00pm - 3:00pm	SMS Play Performances
02/06, 02/20, 02/27/24	Pamela Flynn	3:40pm - 4:40pm 1.0 hour	WES Reading Program

Regular Session Meeting – January 25, 2024

All of the above dates, as needed	Angela Silletti-Cayer	Only as needed	All of the above dates, only as needed for back-up.
02/13/24	Angela Silletti-Cayer	3:40pm - 4:40pm 1.0 hour	WES Reading Program

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following teachers for the Learning/School Culture Acceleration Program “Achievement Academy” at the rate of \$40.00/hour. Maximum hours and compensation listed below. The program begins approximately February 05, 2024 and concludes approximately May 28, 2024. **To be funded by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 - Elementary and Secondary Schools Emergency Relief Fund (ARP ESSER).**

Learning/ School Culture Acceleration Program

Academic

Name	Max # of Hours	Max Compensation
Susan Winfield	18	\$720.00
Kristy Hums	18	\$720.00

Enrichment

Name	Max # of Hours	Max Compensation
Janell Kallimanis	18	\$720.00
Jade McCarthy	18	\$720.00
Jennifer Apolito	18	\$720.00
Theresa Whitty	18	\$720.00
Alexandra Fairweather	18	\$720.00
Laura Aroune	18	\$720.00
Douglas Vince	18	\$720.00
Angela Silletti-Cayer	22	\$880.00
Tracy Ison	18	\$720.00
Kimberly Oliveria	18	\$720.00
Julie Vysotsky	18	\$720.00

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve employee # [REDACTED] for a non-FMLA/NJFLA leave of absence utilizing accumulated leave from February 09, 2024 to February 23, 2024. Anticipated return to work is February 26, 2024.

Non-FMLA/NJFLA LOA

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

**Policy:**

Policy

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mr. D’Agostino that the Board approve the following resolution:

HIB Approval

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Education has received the Superintendent’s report of incident(s) of Harassment/Intimidation/Bullying (“HIB”) within the District; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board has had the opportunity to review the Superintendent’s recommendations with respect to the incident(s) of HIB on this report;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board accepts the Superintendent’s recommendations as presented on the report.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:37-15(d), the Superintendent of Schools, and/or his designee, has informed the applicable parents/guardians of the students involved in these incidents with the following information within five (5) days of this Board meeting:

- The nature of the investigation;
- Whether the District found evidence of HIB;
- Whether discipline was imposed;
- Whether services were provided to address the incident of HIB.

Presented to the Board for first review:

WES #22

Presented to the Board for second review/approval:

WES #14  
 WES #15  
 WES #16  
 WES #17  
 WES #18  
 WES #19  
 WES #20  
 WES #21  
 SMS #12

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mr. D’Agostino that the Board approves on Second Reading the following Policies and Regulations:

Policy –  
 Second  
 Reading

a	Policy 5512	Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (M) (Revised)
b	Policy 6311	Contracts for Goods or Services Funded by Federal Grants (M) (Revised)
c	Policy 8454	Management of Pediculosis

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mr. D’Agostino that in accordance

with Board of Education Policy 9550 - Educational Research Projects, it is recommended that the Board of Education approve the research request by Erin Amantia, Doctor of Nursing Practice student at Rutgers. The main research purpose: *Improving childhood obesity rates in Sussex County by educating preschool students and their families about healthy nutrition.*  
 Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Research  
Project

**Finance:**

Finance

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Simmons that the Board approve the payment of bills for December 22 to 31, 2023 in the amount of \$850,009.63 as reviewed and as per the attached check register. Be it further noted that the breakdown by category is as follows: (F1)

Bills List –  
End of  
December  
2023

Fixed	\$	21,644.11
Operating	\$	9,433.05
Salaries	\$	818,889.38
Special	\$	<u>43.09</u>
Total	\$	850,009.63

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Simmons that the Board approve the payment of bills for January 1 to January 25, 2024 in the amount of \$1,747,938.50 as reviewed and as per the attached check register. Be it further noted that the breakdown by category is as follows: (F2)

Bills List –  
January 2024

Fixed	\$	543,858.44
Operating	\$	299,458.43
Salaries	\$	838,744.81
Special	\$	<u>65,876.82</u>
Total	\$	1,747,938.50

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 3, Abstain 1(D'Agostino ck#45409, Space ck#4312, Vallone ck#45411)

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(c)3, we the Trustees of the Sussex-Wantage Regional Board of Education, having reviewed the reports of the Board Secretary and the Treasurer of Monies, certify that no major account has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(c)3, for the period ending December 31, 2023.

Board  
Secretary/  
Treasurer  
Report  
December  
2023

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Simmons that the Board accept the Treasurer's Report and Board Secretary's Report for the month of December 2023.

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Simmons that the Board approve the attached Transfers for the month of December 2023. (F5)

Transfers –  
December  
2023

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3



It is recommended that the Board approve professional day travel, pursuant to policies 0147, 0147A, 3440, and 4440 as per the attached. (F6)  
Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

PD - Travel

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Simmons that the Board approve a 2023-2024 Out of District Tuition Contract for student # [REDACTED] with Northern Hills Academy (SCESC) effective January 10, 2024 through June 30, 2024 in the amount of \$53,945.00 for tuition (prorated) and \$29,055.00 for a paraprofessional (prorated).  
Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

OOD Tuition  
– Northern  
Hills Academy

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Simmons that the Board approve a 2023-2024 Out of District Tuition Contract for student # [REDACTED] with Shepard School effective January 22, 2024 through June 30, 2024 in the amount of \$315.18 per diem for a total of ninety-five (95) days for a total contract amount of \$29,942.10.  
Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

OOD Tuition  
– Shepard  
School

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Simmons that the Board accept the 2022-2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (AFCR) including the Synopsis of Audit and Corrective Action Plan (CAP). (F9)  
Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

2022-2023  
AFCR and  
CAP

**Special Services:**

Special  
Services

Moved by Mr. D'Agostino, seconded by Mrs. Space that the Board approve home instruction for student # [REDACTED] for a maximum of ten (10) hours per week, effective immediately, duration TBD.  
Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Home  
Instruction

Moved by Mr. D'Agostino, seconded by Mrs. Space that the Board approve a Physical Therapy Evaluation for student # [REDACTED] to be performed by Performance Pediatrics for an amount not to exceed \$479.75.  
Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

PT Eval

Moved by Mr. D'Agostino, seconded by Mrs. Space that the Board approve an Occupational Therapy Evaluation for student # [REDACTED] to be performed by Performance Pediatrics for an amount not to exceed \$479.75.  
Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

OT Eval

Moved by Mr. D'Agostino, seconded by Mrs. Space that the Board approve a Physical Therapy Evaluation for student # [REDACTED] to be performed by Performance Pediatrics for an amount not to exceed \$479.75.  
Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

PT Eval

Moved by Mr. D'Agostino, seconded by Mrs. Space that the Board approve an Occupational Therapy Evaluation for student # [REDACTED] to be performed by Performance Pediatrics for an amount not to exceed \$479.75.  
Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

OT Eval

Moved by Mr. D’Agostino, seconded by Mrs. Space that the Board approve a Psychiatric Evaluation for student # [REDACTED] to be performed by Dr. Bryan Fennelly for an amount not to exceed \$765.00.  
Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

Psychiatric  
Eval

**Curriculum:**

Curriculum

Moved by Mrs. Vallone, seconded by Mrs. Simmons that the Board approve the following field trips:

Field Trips

<b>Date</b>	<b>Grade Level/Teacher</b>	<b>Destination, Purpose, Cost</b>
03/12/24	7-8/Treiber	Sussex County Community College Teen Arts Festival Cost \$375 participation fee Paid from Student Activity Fund
03/20/24	1/Churchill, King, VandenHeuval, Talmadge	Sussex County Fairgrounds Agricultural Learning Center Study of Life Cycles and Plant Parts Cost to students \$3.00 - paid by BOE
03/26/24	1/Schneider, Moscaritolo, Harper	Sussex County Fairgrounds Agricultural Learning Center Study of Life Cycles and Plant Parts Cost to students \$3.00 - paid by BOE
05/09/24	7/All Teachers	Bronx Zoo Incorporates many science and geography concepts Cost to students \$15 plus bussing Cost to BOE \$20

Carried; Yes 6, No 0, Absent 3

**Unfinished Business**

Unfinished  
Business

- None.

**New Business:**

New Business

- Mrs. Cecchini wanted to follow up on the status of the younger grades being able to go outside. Mr. Gall said that School Administration collaborates with security and custodial staff to assess the outside conditions to see if safe. Mr. Gall said that they are trying to get out as much as possible.

Audience  
Remarks

**Audience Remarks:**

Tara, Wantage, wanted to follow up on Mrs. Cecchini's comments on going outside. She asked if they could not go outside can they use the gymnasium instead. Mr. Gall said that could happen at Wantage, but at Lawrence it is a multi-purpose room that is used for lunch and gym and that could conflict with recess time.

Executive  
Session

**Executive Session:**

WHEREAS, this Board is authorized, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 to exclude the public from that portion of this meeting for purposes of discussing specific matters as permitted by N.J.S.A. 10:4-12; and,

WHEREAS, this Board intends to discuss certain matters which are deemed confidential pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12, in Executive Session,

WHEREAS, at this time the Board cannot determine the time when the discussion to be held in Executive Session will be made public, but will disclose the minutes of the Executive Session when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Sussex Wantage Regional Board of Education that this meeting shall be adjourned to an Executive Session (closed session) and the public will be excluded in order that the Board may discuss the items listed below, and upon reconvening this public meeting the Board President will announce, if possible, the time when and the circumstances under which the discussion conducted in Executive Session will be disclosed to the public. This resolution is authorized and allowed by and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-13.

The general nature of the subject to be discussed per N.J.S.A. 10:4-13 (a):

Legal & Personnel Matters

Moved by Mr. D'Agostino, seconded by Mrs. Vallone that the Board go into executive session at 7:37 pm. Mrs. Tortorella advised the public that the Board would be in executive session for approximately thirty (30) minutes and that no action would be taken afterwards.

At 8:15 pm, Mr. Gall advised the public that the Board would need an additional twenty (20) minutes in Executive Session.

At 8:35 pm, Mr. Gall advised the public that the Board required an additional twenty-five (25) minutes in Executive Session.

Adjourn-  
Ment

The Board returned to public session at 8:54 pm.

Moved by Mrs. Simmons, seconded by Mrs. Vallone to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Christina M. Riker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Christina M. Riker  
Board Secretary