

Sussex-Wantage Regional School District  
October 19, 2023  
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 October 19, 2023 at 7:01 p.m. in the Sussex Middle School Auditorium.

**Roll Call**

Roll Call

Members Present: Mrs. Alissa Cecchini, , Mrs. Taylor Dely, Mrs. Stephanie Tortorella (left meeting at 8:50pm), Mrs. Dorothy Witte, Mrs. Danielle Zill-Barry and Mr. Nicholas D'Agostino

Members Absent: Mrs. Kristen Cooper-Trinidad, Ms. Courtney deWaal Malefy, Mrs. Brittney Simmons

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 Mr. D'Agostino**

Open Public Meetings Act

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. Witte 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.

Mission Statement

**Superintendent's Report:**

Superintendent Report

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

- 6<sup>th</sup> grade – Lia Sampson
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade – Logan Byrne
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade – Peter Liotta-LaChance

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.
- Thanks to Mrs. Themelakis for arranging the Pumpkin Patch at Lawrence on the 26<sup>th</sup>. He said that they would be arranging pumpkins on the afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup> and invited anyone free to come and volunteer.
- Drive 4 Your School at Nielsen Ford. Mr. Gall reported that Mr. Terwilliger used to work with them to have at Wantage School and raise money for the district. Nielsen Ford reached out and wanted to do again with our district, but they needed to book rapidly and it was going to be held on November 11<sup>th</sup> at the dealership. Mr. Gall invited anyone that can attend to go and take a test drive. The district will receive \$20 for each test drive that will be split between the three school's Student Activity Accounts.
- Mr. Gall gave a "shout out" to the SMS 7<sup>th</sup> grade team for arranging a Kickball Tournament.
- SMS Activity Night is tomorrow evening at the Middle School.
- Mr. Gall reported that the district has been awarded Pre-K funding for this school year, beginning in January. He thanked the Committee headed by Mrs. Cecchini and all the stakeholders. He said that there will be a pre-registration form. He thanked CEL staff who have ingrained in him that we need earlier intervention. He said that this is a great thing, but will not be without challenges and the first year in particular would be challenging.

**Audience Remarks:**

**Audience  
Remarks**

- Mr. D'Agostino made the following statement to the Board and public:

"Before we proceed with the rest of our meeting, I would like to address the press release that was sent out on behalf of our Board of Education about contract negotiations. Who wrote it? What was the purpose? What did we hope to accomplish?"

We believe that the Board's position in negotiations has been misrepresented to the public and to our school community, and that it is our duty, as stewards of our taxpayers, to be as transparent as possible. After buttons were worn saying "NO CONTRACT," we were asked if our teachers, faculty, and staff are being paid. The answer to this question is YES, they are, as they are working under their previous contract. There was also a rumor spread that we were not offering any raise. Parents AND teachers alike asked us why we are not offering a raise, and they were under the impression that we were offering 0%. The truth is that WE DID OFFER A RAISE- at 3%, per year, over the next three years. To put this into context for everyone, the following districts are receiving the following raises this school year: Fredon 2.75%, Hamburg 3%, High Point 2.8%, Kittatinny 2.65%, Lafayette 2.73%, Lenape Valley 3%, Ogdensburg 2.9%, Sandyston-Walpack 2.75%, Sparta 2.8%, Stillwater 2.8%, Vernon 2.75%. As you can see, the majority of school districts in Sussex County are either at or even below a 3% raise.

Taking all of this into consideration, our negotiations attorney, Matt Giacobbe, wrote the press release and recommended that we release it to the public. The majority of our Board agreed. We did so to show our community that we value our teachers, faculty, and staff, that we are being fair with their tax dollars, and that we are not "lowballing" anyone,

as was being portrayed.

In closing, this economy has been tough for everyone. We want everyone to know that we appreciate and respect our teachers, faculty, and staff very much- which is why we are offering a raise that would place them near the top of all county districts. We look forward to continuing discussions with the Sussex-Wantage Education Association and we are confident we will find a resolution in the near future.”

- Mary Cafarelli, Wantage, wanted to let everyone know that at the Sussex County Library there is a Homework Club for Grades 1 – 4 on select Wednesday afternoons from 4:30 – 5:30 pm.
- Anne Marie Carr, Sussex, wanted to let the public know that Mr. D’Agostino made fun of one of her posts.
- Ms. Febres advised Ms. Carr to address the Board and not the public.
- Anne Marie Carr said she has been emailing the Board for three (3) months, but only heard back today. She distributed copies of the posts by Mr. D’Agostino to the Board.
- Mrs. Lash Lain, read a letter on behalf of Brianne Morville, who said that she is a former Sussex-Wantage student and teacher. She is unhappy with the posts on Facebook from Mr. D’Agostino. She ended by saying that the school community deserves better than what the Board of Education is giving.
- Ms. Febres asked if anyone who has not spoken yet wanted to before repeat speakers.
- Mrs. Lash Lain said that this week is Violence Awareness Week and that the posts by Mr. D’Agostino go against this. She told him that his posts have consequences and hurt people. She asked Mr. D’Agostino to stop posting or resign.
- Ms. Febres said that Mrs. Lash Lain relayed her message and asked her if she had anything new to add.

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

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(a), I certify that as of September 30, 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 Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Dely that the Board approve following minutes:

September 28, 2023 Regular & Executive Session

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 3, Abstain 1 (Tortorella)

Approval of  
Board  
Minutes

**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

Executive  
Session

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 Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Mrs. Cecchini that the Board go into executive session at 7:41 pm. Mr. D'Agostino advised the public that the Board would be in executive session for approximately sixty (60) minutes.

At 8:56 pm, Mr. Gall advised the public that the Board would need another twenty-three (20-30) minutes in Executive Session.

The Board returned to public session at 9:42 pm.

**Personnel:**

Personnel

Moved by Mrs. Witte, 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.\*

Substitute  
Approval

Teacher

Alyssa Brarman  
Rebecca Ost  
Kimberly Zehler

Teacher Assistant

Alyssa Brarman  
Carly Hayzler  
Rebecca Ost  
Dehlila Savo

Nurse

Laurie Knies

Custodian  
Paul Kreczkowski

(\*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 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board accept the retirement of Barbara Duvall, District Transportation Coordinator, effective January 1, 2024 with thanks for over 18 years of service to the District.

Retirement

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board accept the resignation of Joanne Garcia, 3.5 hour Special Education Teacher Assistant, C.E. Lawrence School, effective October 03, 2023.

Resignation

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board accept the resignation of Shaina Liu, 3.5 hour Special Education Teacher Assistant, C.E. Lawrence School, effective October 09, 2023.

Resignation

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Rebecca Ost, 5.5 hour Special Education Teacher Assistant, C.E. Lawrence School, Step 1, \$18.90 per hour, effective October 16, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year. Shift is 9:30am to 3:30pm with ½ hour unpaid lunch.

New Hire –  
5.5 TA CEL

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Carly Hayzler, 3.5 hour Special Education Teacher Assistant, Wantage School, Step 1, \$18.90 per hour, effective October 16, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year. Shift is 12:00pm - 3:30pm.

New Hire –  
3.5 TA WES

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Dehlila Savo, 3.5 hour Special Education Teacher Assistant, Sussex Middle School, Step 1, \$18.90 per hour, effective October 26, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year. Shift is 8:30am to 12:00pm.

New Hire –  
3.5 TA SMS

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Danielle Hanshaw, 5.5 hour Special Education Teacher Assistant, school TBD, Step 1, \$18.90 per hour, effective October 26, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year. Shift is TBD.

New Hire –  
5.5 TA TBD

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Shirley

New Hire  
5.5 TA CEL

Regular Session Meeting – October 19, 2023

Hickey, 5.5 hour Special Education Teacher Assistant, C.E. Lawrence School, Step 1, \$18.90 per hour, effective on or about October 27, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year. Shift is TBD.  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Kimberly Zehler, Long Term Leave Replacement Special Education Teacher, Sussex Middle School, BA, Step 1, \$57,546.00 (prorated) effective October 20, 2023 until on or about April 24, 2024.  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

LT Leave –  
SMS Spec Ed  
Teacher

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Taylor Hemmer, 5th Grade Teacher, Wantage School, for a move on the salary guide from BA+10, Step 1, \$58,296.00 to BA+20, Step 1, \$59,046.00 effective September 01, 2023.  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

New Hire – 5<sup>th</sup>  
Grade  
Teacher WES

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following personnel to fulfill IEP requirements for students participating in field trips as follows below. To be paid at regular hourly rate of pay; additional hours are not paid if activity does not occur or if the student is not present.

Field Trip  
TAs

Date	Name	Additional Hours	Field Trip
10/11/2023	Lisa VanIlderstine	40 minutes	Space Farms

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

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

Additional  
Hours TAs

Name	Date	Add'l Hours Worked	Add'l Time
Jennifer Beco	10/04/23	2:30pm - 3:30pm	1.0 hour
Giovanna Falica	10/06/23	2:30pm - 3:30pm	1.0 hour
Alexa Cunningham	10/11/23	2:30pm - 3:30pm	1.0 hour
Jennifer Beco	10/13/23	2:30pm - 3:30pm	1.0 hour

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following student teacher assignment as follows:

2023-2024  
Student  
Teaching  
Assignments

Student/College	Purpose	Co-op Teacher	Date(s)
Amanda Bakstad Montclair State	300 hours Counseling Practicum	Alicia Citro	February - April 2024

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Regular Session Meeting – October 19, 2023

Moved by Mrs. Witte, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Laurie Knies, Substitute Nurse, for six (6) hours of orientation with the school nurse at C.E. Lawrence and Wantage Schools, not to exceed six (6) hours total at the sub nurse rate of pay (prorated).  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Sub Nurse  
Orientation  
Hours

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following personnel for additional hour(s) of attendance to fulfill IEP requirements as follows at their regular hourly rate of pay unless otherwise noted:

Additional  
Hours TAs

Name	Date	Add'l Hours Worked	Add'l Time
Elizabeth VanHorn	10/05/23	8:30am - 9:30am	1.0 hour
Jennifer Beco	10/16/23	2:30pm - 3:30pm	1.0 hour
Laura Lau	10/16/23	2:20pm - 3:30pm	1 hour, 10 minutes
Linda Kuperus	10/16/23	2:30pm - 3:30pm	1.0 hour
Maureen Ventimiglia	10/16/23	2:30pm - 3:30pm	1.0 hour
Elizabeth VanHorn	10/18/23	9:00am - 9:30am	30 minutes

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following personnel to fulfill IEP requirements for students participating in before/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.

TAs  
Before/After  
School  
Activity Hours

Date(s)	Name	Additional Hours	Before/After School Activity
10/19, 10/26, 11/02, 11/16, 11/30, 12/07, 12/14, 12/21/23, 01/04, 01/11/24	Loriann Clarke	7:25am - 8:25am 1.0 hour	SMS Vintage Gaming
10/20/23	Lisa VanInderstine	7:00pm - 9:00pm 2.0 hours	SMS Activity Night
10/20/23	Loriann Clarke	7:00pm - 9:00pm 2.0 hours	SMS Activity Night

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Diane DeGroat, Play/Cafe Aide, C.E. Lawrence school, \$15.33 per hour for the additional shift of Special Education Teacher Assistant, C.E. Lawrence School, 1:15pm to 3:15pm, \$18.90 per hour, effective October 17, 2023 for the 2023-2024 school year.  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Additional  
Hours as TA  
to Play/Café  
CEL

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the

After School  
Nursing

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.

Hours

Date(s)	Name	Hours	After School Activity
10/20/23	Pamela Flynn	7:00pm - 9:00pm 2.0 hours	SMS Activity Night

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following personnel for one hour and forty minutes (8:30am to 10:10am) of attendance at RTI Data meetings on November 03, 2023 at their regular hourly rate of pay:

Additional  
Hours WES  
BSI Teachers

Lisa Van Wyk  
Danuta Wolak

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

**Policy:**

Policy

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Zill-Barry 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:

CEL #1 2023-2024  
WES #2 2023-2024  
WES #3 2023-2024



WES #4 2023-2024  
 SMS #1 2023-2024  
 SMS #2 2023-2024  
 SMS #3 2023-2024

Presented to the Board for second review/approval:

WES #1 2023-2024

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Zill-Barry that the Board approves on First Reading the following Policies and Regulations:

Policy – First Reading

a	Policy 0168	Recording Board Meetings (Revised)
b	Policy 2270	Religion in the Schools (Revised)
c	Policy and Reg 2419	School Threat Assessment Teams (M) (New)
d	Policy and Reg 3212	Attendance (M) (Revised)
e	Policy 3216	Dress and Grooming (Revised)
f	Policy 3324	Right of Privacy (Revised)
g	Policy and Reg 4212	Attendance (M) (Revised)
h	Policy 4324	Right of Privacy (Revised)
i	Policy and Reg 5116	Education of Homeless Children and Youths (Revised)
j	Policy and Reg 8310	Public Records (Revised)

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Zill-Barry that the Board approves on Second Reading the following Policies and Regulations:

Policy – Second Reading

a	Policy 8505	Wellness Policy/Nutrient Standards (Revised)
b	Policy 5331	Anaphylaxis to Food and Other Substances (Revised)

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

2023-2024

Moved by Mrs. Cecchini, seconded by Mrs. Zill-Barry that the Board approve the Annual Nursing Services Plan for C.E Lawrence Elementary, Wantage Elementary and Sussex Middle Schools for the 2023-2024 school year.  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Annual  
Nursing  
Services Plan

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Zill-Barry 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:

CEL #2 2023-2024  
SMS #4 2023-2024  
SMS #5 2023-2024

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Zill-Barry that the Board approve the job description for Preschool Instructional Coach.

PIC Job  
Description

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

**Finance:**

Finance

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the payment of bills for the end of September 2023 in the amount of \$1,106,214.40 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  
September  
2023

Fixed	\$	0.00
Operating	\$	167,569.66
Salaries	\$	800,056.42
Special	\$	<u>138,588.40</u>

Total \$1,106,214.40  
 Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the payment of bills for October 1 to 18, 2023 in the amount of \$811,623.67 as reviewed and as per the attached check register. Be it further noted that the breakdown by category is as follows: (F2)

Bills List –  
 October 2023

Fixed	\$ 543,470.36
Operating	\$ 227,223.55
Salaries	\$ 0.00
Special	\$ 40,929.76
Total	\$ 811,623.67

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

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 September 30, 2023.

Board  
 Secretary/  
 Treasurer  
 Report  
 September  
 2023

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board accept the Treasurer’s Report and Board Secretary’s Report for the month of September 2023.

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the attached Transfers for the month of September 2023. (F5)

Transfers –  
 September  
 2023

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve professional day travel, pursuant to policies 0147, 0147A, 3440, and 4440 as per the attached. (F6)

PD - Travel

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve a Quote from C & M Door Controls, Inc. to replace the doors and hardware in the Sussex Middle School Auditorium Men’s & Women’s Bathrooms in the amount of \$6,150.00. ***This is a budgeted 2023-2024 item - Account # 11-000-262-420-000-030.***

SMS – Doors  
 & Hardware  
 Auditorium  
 Bathrooms

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following 2023-2024 Joint Transportation Agreement - To and From School with High Point Regional High School for the effective September 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 in the amount of \$83,298.82.00 as follows:

2023-2024  
 Joint Transp.  
 Agreement -  
 High Point  
 Regional

Host District: **High Point Regional HS**

Joiner District: **Sussex Wantage Bd of Ed**

Joiner District To and From Total Route Cost: **\$83,298.82**

Start Date	End Date	Host District's Route #	Destination	Contractor Code	# of Host District's Students	# of Joiner District's Students	Joiner Cost
09/01/23	06/30/24	HP-1	Pope John/Rev Brown, Hilltop/Veritas	9068	14	21	\$22,465.00
09/01/23	06/30/24	HT-1	Sussex Tech/Charter	9068	26	16	\$18,640.00
09/01/23	06/30/24	HT-2	Sussex Tech/Charter	9068	38	10	\$11,650.00
09/01/23	06/30/24	HT-3	Sussex Tech/Charter	9068	24	1	\$ 1,165.00
09/01/23	06/30/24	HT-6	Sussex Tech/Charter	0438	14	7	\$ 7,573.82
09/01/23	06/30/24	HT-7	Sussex Tech/Charter	C958	28	17	\$19,805.00

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve a 2023-2024 Joint Transportation Agreement with the Vernon Township Board of Education, route # G22 & route #L6 effective September 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 in the amount of \$2,330.00 as follows:

2023-2024  
Joint Transp.  
Agreement –  
Vernon BOE

Host District: **Vernon Township**

Joiner District: **Sussex-Wantage Regional**

Joiner District To and From Total Route Cost: **\$2,330.00**

Start Date	End Date	Host District's Route #	Destination	Contractor Code	# of Host District's Students	# of Joiner District's Students	Joiner Cost
9/1/2023	06/30/2024	G22	Lounsberry Hollow/Glen Meadow	9068	49	1	\$1,165.00
9/1/2023	06/30/2024	L6	Lounsberry Hollow/Glen Meadow	C958	40	1	\$1,165.00

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve a

2023-2024  
Bilingual CST

Business Agreement with Dr. Andre J. Francois, dba The Bilingual Child Study Team, effective for the 2023-2024 school year.  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Agreement

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve an Agreement with Garfield Park Academy to provide a Bus Aide for student # [REDACTED] effective September 12, 2023 through June 30, 2024 at a per diem rate of \$170 for a total of 175 days for a total amount of \$29,750.00.  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

OOD –  
Garfield Park  
Academy

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve the following Bus Drill Information:

Bus  
Evacuation  
Drill

**BUS EVACUATION DRILL INFORMATION**

October 12, 2023 8:15 to 9:15 a.m. Conducted at Clifton E. Lawrence, Wantage and Sussex Middle Schools. All routes were involved: 36, 38, 39, 101, 102, 103, 104, 107, 108, 201, 202, 204, 205, 206, 208, 209, 210, 301, 303, 304, 306, 307, 308, 309, 401 and Discovery Years. All children that attend Clifton E. Lawrence School, Wantage Elementary School and Sussex Middle School and are driven to school on a daily basis or walk to school participated in separate drills at their respective schools.

Time: 12:40 p.m. to 12:50 p.m.

Routes: Vans 38 & 39

Drill supervisors: Kayleigh Themelakis, Shane Schwarz, Sam Scocozza, and Christopher Gregory

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

**Special Services:**

Special  
Services

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini 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 5, No 0, Absent 4

OT Eval

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini 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 5, No 0, Absent 4

PT Eval

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini 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 5, No 0, Absent 4

OT Eval

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve an Occupational Therapy Evaluation for student # [REDACTED] to be performed by

OT Eval

Performance Pediatrics for an amount not to exceed \$479.75.  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

PT Eval

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini 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 5, No 0, Absent 4

OT Eval

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini 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 5, No 0, Absent 4

OT Eval

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini 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 5, No 0, Absent 4

PT Eval

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini 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

OT Eval

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini 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 5, No 0, Absent 4

Home  
Instruction

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve home instruction for student # [REDACTED] for a maximum of ten (10) hours per week, effective immediately, duration to be determined.  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Risk  
Assessment

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve a Risk Assessment for student # [REDACTED] to be performed by The Center for Evaluation and Counseling for an amount not to exceed \$750.00.  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Mandarin  
Interpretation  
Services

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve Accurate Language Services, LLC to perform Mandarin Interpretation Services for an upcoming IEP meeting on November 14, 2023 for a minimum charge of \$150.00 plus \$2.50 per minute charge if the meeting exceeds one (1) hour.  
Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Multiple  
Evaluations

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve an Assistive Technology/Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AT/AAC) Evaluation for student # [REDACTED] to be performed by P.G. Chambers School for an amount not to exceed \$1,350.00.

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Dely, seconded by Mrs. Cecchini that the Board approve an Assistive Technology/Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AT/AAC) Evaluation for student # [REDACTED] to be performed by P.G. Chambers School for an amount not to exceed \$1,350.00.

Multiple Evaluations

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

**Curriculum:**

Curriculum

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Dely that the Board approve the following field trips:

Field Trips

<b>Date</b>	<b>Grade Level/Teacher</b>	<b>Destination, Purpose, Cost</b>
10/31/23	3/All Teachers	High Point State Park Reinforce skills from Science Weather Unit. No cost to students.
11/14/23	7&8/Kallimanis	Vernon Township High School Sussex County Junior Honors Band No cost to students
12/01/23	K/All Teachers	Wantage School Scholastic Book Fair No cost to students
12/05/23	4/Felsen	Sussex Middle School Dress rehearsal for 4th grade concert No cost to students
01/11/24	6-8/Westling	High Point High School District Choir Day No cost to students
06/04/24	K/All Teachers	Wantage School Scholastic Book Fair No cost to students
06/06/24	8/All Teachers	Hershey Park 8th Grade Trip Cost to students TBD Cost to District TBD

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Dely that the Board approve the following field trips:

Field Trips

Date	Grade Level/Teacher	Destination, Purpose, Cost
11/02/23	5/All Teachers	High Point State Park Elaborate on science standards With plants and ecosystems No cost to students

Carried; Yes 5, No 0, Absent 4

**Unfinished Business:**

Unfinished Business

- Mrs. Cecchini made the following statement to the Board and public:  
 “I personally feel last month’s meeting did not have the children in mind and certainly did not keep anyone watching thinking a difference opinion is okay. This meeting as well. People standing at the podium getting made at the Board asking for Nick’s resignation, certainly was not caring and child-centered as I would never have allowed my child to attend a meeting like that. A difference of opinion is healthy and the opposite was shown last month. The environment was hostile and not safe as so many parents claim they want for their children, yet can’t demonstrate themselves. You lead by example and I am personally embarrassed by the way many of you acted because a difference of opinion. Our Board President has volunteered seven (7) years of his time while not missing a single meeting to ensure that our mission statement is upheld and parental rights remain. Yet, no one commented on anything positive he has done, it was only negative talk mostly related to social media and politics. One said “How are you for parental rights, when you are not a parent?” I think I have the answer to that one. One does not need to be a parent to believe the government shouldn’t dictate and interfere with how someone chooses to raise their child. We are all adults if we can’t demonstrate being kind and being able to have a difference of opinion, how can you expect your children to? If you don’t like the way the district and community is being served, then you can exercise your right to vote in November and choose another candidate instead of bringing your personal matters to the public. I am against social media for this exact reason. I do want to clarify, I am not against teachers and think a majority of them are doing a fantastic job despite what is being talked around on social media about the Board not caring and causing a divide. As far as the press release, I stand behind the public statement entirely. I saw firsthand several teachers wearing buttons for all children and parents to see and personally was asked by my seven (7) year old why they were being worn. So, if we are pointing fingers at anyone causing this divide, it should be at the person who encouraged teachers to wear the pins in the first place. During my time on the Board, members from the public asked for transparency and they have no contract because they were given no raises. What better way to stock rumors than to throw it all out on the table for everyone to see. This divide that people are saying is caused by the Board is pure nonsense. I stand behind all teachers who are willing to do their job without getting students involved in the politics and show up every day because they care and want to make a



difference. Nick has always been active on social media and if you do not like it you can vote him out in two (2) short weeks. I ask that we place stop wasting time discussing Facebook and other social media platforms and get back to what matters, the children in the district. As far as I am aware, violence is not happening in our schools because of Nick and his social media account. So can everyone come together and agree to disagree for the better of our community? Thank you.”

- Mrs. Witte said that she was unaware that Mrs. Cecchini was going to make a statement, just like she was not aware of the button removals and the press release. She said that she hopes that the Board can continue to work for good and that her prior statement still stands. She said that Board members are held to a higher standard. She wanted it to be known that she did not feel a press release was necessary and if mistakes were made it should have been handled differently. She hopes that once the contract is settled that the staff continues to attend meetings like they are now so that the Students of the Month can enjoy seeing their teachers. Mrs. Witte apologized for not having more of a formal statement.
- Mr. D’Agostino said to Mrs. Witte that he spoke to her five (5) hours before the Board meeting and as she has many times before, she blind-sided the Board.
- Ms. Febres asked Mr. D’Agostino if we could move on with the agenda.

New Business

**New Business:**

- None

Audience  
Remarks

**Audience Remarks:**

- Lisa Fahrenfeld, SWEA President, recent statements on school website and district email statement do not accurately depict the negotiations process and what went down. She said that current settlement rates are at 3.29%. She said that SWEA will continue to negotiate in good faith. She said that we have not been to mediation in twenty (20) years and looks forward to working with everyone to a fair settlement.
- Kathy Gomez, parent, grandparent and staff member, said that it is a sad thing that our community has come to this with Mr. D’Agostino. She said that teachers are not grooming kids to be gay and teachers are not ushering in CRT and are not in favor of taking away parental rights. She said that she hopes her words matter to Mr. D’Agostino but is sad to think they do not. She also said that negotiations information given out is not the full picture. She said that Mr. D’Agostino worried about this wife crying, but he really should worry about the kids crying at home because of him.
- Mary Cafarelli, Wantage, said that at the last meeting Mr. D’Agostino said that he took down his posts and apologized. But she said that she can still see posts, so she is confused.
- Christina Espisito, grew up in Sussex County and has two (2) daughters. She said that she wanted to address the Board President to talk about what he is projecting. She said she follows him on social media. She also

wanted to bring up transportation issue and the turnover of Teacher Assistants. She wants the Board to hire full-time Teacher Assistants.

- Mrs. Gunther, Wantage, asked the Board for an update on the bus stop as she has not heard anything and wants the Board to be transparent.
- Caitlin Space, Wantage, said that on September 19<sup>th</sup> she met with Mr. D'Agostino, Lisa and the Gunthers to discuss bus stop. She drove it herself and it was only nine (9) minutes and fifteen (15) seconds, not thirty (30) minutes. She said that at the September meeting, Mr. D'Agostino stated that the bus stop would change.
- Jenny Craig, Wantage, apologized to all the teachers in the room.
- Ms. Febres asked her to please address the Board.
- Jenny Craig talked about the Code of Ethics and how Mr. D'Agostino violates every day. She asked everyone to talk to their family and friends to show up on Election Day as he is incompetent to run a Board. She apologized to Mrs. Witte who she convinced to support Mr. D'Agostino when she was on the Board. She told him that parental rights are still upheld via federal law. And that he flipped no board as they all walked away.
- Leah Gunther, Wantage, said that at the 9/19 meeting that Mr. D'Agostino lied to her. She said that she did not ask him to sign her petition, but rather he asked her to sign it. She said that everyone in the audience knows the reason why he did that.

Adjourn-  
Ment

Moved by Mrs. Zill-Barry, seconded by Mrs. Dely to adjourn the meeting at 10:23 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Christina M. Riker  
Board Secretary