

**RAMAPO INDIAN HILLS REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
Oakland, New Jersey**

ACTION/WORK SESSION MINUTES

March 8, 2021
Electronic Public Meeting

Roll Call – Executive Session

Upon roll call at 7:02 P.M., the Board members responded as follows: Mmes. King, Koulikourdis, Laforgia, and Sullivan. Messrs. Butto, Carolan, Fortunato, Kinney, and Setteducato. Mr. Anthony Riscica, Interim Superintendent of Schools; and Mr. Thomas Lambe, Business Administrator / Board Secretary; were also present.

The meeting was called to order by the Board president at 7:02 P.M. Mrs. Laforgia announced that adequate notice of the meeting has been posted and published as required by law.

A motion was made by Mr. Fortunato and seconded by Mr. Kinney and unanimously carried to move into Closed Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel, litigation, and negotiations. Information from the Closed Executive Session will be made public at the discretion of the Board, as per Board Bylaw 0166, Executive Sessions, or as otherwise authorized by law. The Closed Executive Session was adjourned at 7:52 P.M.

Roll Call – Action / Work Session

Upon roll call at 8:02 P.M., the Board members responded as follows: Mmes. King, Koulikourdis, Laforgia, and Sullivan. Messrs. Butto, Carolan, Fortunato, Kinney, and Setteducato. Mr. Anthony Riscica, Interim Superintendent of Schools; and Mr. Thomas Lambe, Business Administrator / Board Secretary; were also present.

The meeting was called to order by the Board President at 8:02 P.M. Mrs. Laforgia announced that due to the current State of Emergency, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-8(b), and guidance from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, Division of Local Government Services, this Meeting was posted and published as a remote meeting. She read a public statement advising the public to be aware that employees of the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District retain the right of privacy and shall retain all rights regarding defamation and slander according to the laws of New Jersey. Mrs. Laforgia further stated that the Board shall not be held liable for comments made by members of the public and, in order to protect the privacy rights of employees in the District, the Board shall not respond to statements made by the public of or about District employees.

BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Laforgia invited Ms. Patel, IHHS, Student Board Representative, and Ms. Kologrivov, RHS, Student Board Representative, to present their reports as follows: Ms. Kologrivov stated: 1) Sports are doing well; 2) Clubs continue to meet and are busy; 3) College Board is offering students different options in how to take the AP Exams; 4) the Guidance Department continues to host Trade School presentations; 5) Spirit Week will be scheduled the week of March 15; and 6) practices are being held for the Gold Masque Spring musical.

Ms. Patel stated: 1) Sports are doing well; 2) College Board is offering students different options in how to take the AP Exams; 3) the Guidance Department is hosting a webinar on Gap Year options; 4) clubs are meeting and are busy; 5) a DECA fundraiser is scheduled on March 24; 6) members of the DECA Team will be participating in the National Competition; 7) the Academic Decathlon Team placed second in the State Competition and will be participating in the National Competition; 8) Student Council fundraisers are scheduled for the Class of 2022; 9) a fundraiser is scheduled for the Class of 2023; 10) the Class of 2024 is hosting an apparel sale; and 11) a Forever 21 event is scheduled for the Class of 2021.

INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Riscica thanked Ms. Kologrivov and Ms. Patel for their reports.

Mr. Riscica congratulated the members of the DECA Team and the IHHS Academic Decathlon Team.

Mr. Riscica reported on current District initiatives as follows:

- the members of the Restart Committee met on March 2 to discuss current District events; and
- alternate SAT / ACT test dates may be scheduled some time in May.

Mr. Riscica thanked Ms. Browne for her years of service in the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Lambe reported on District capital projects/initiatives as follows: 1) a resolution for Board approval of the preliminary budget for the 2021-22 School Year will be placed on the March 22 Regular Public Meeting Agenda.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

A. Moved by BUTTO Seconded KINNEY to open the meeting to public discussion.

Members of the public addressed the Board regarding their concerns about the recent closure of the athletic program at Ramapo High School due to the number of positive COVID-19 cases.

B. Moved by BUTTO Seconded KINNEY to close public discussion of agenda items and to re-enter the Action/Work Session.

OPEN BOARD DISCUSSION

Members of the Board discussed the COVID-19 Guidelines utilized by the Bergen County Board of Health and the District's contact tracing practices.

ACTION ITEMS - ✓ = Yes

The following motion was approved by roll call vote: P8

Moved by: BUTTO

Seconded: KINNEY

PERSONNEL

P8. To accept, with regret, the retirement effective May 1, 2021, as follows:

WHEREAS, Julie Browne has dedicated herself to the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District for 23 years and 5 months as the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools and Board Recorder; displaying an unselfish commitment to our children; exemplifying the ideals of professionalism and the standard of excellence, and

WHEREAS, the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District Board of Education, together with its citizens, wishes to acknowledge exemplary service that Julie Browne has provided our children,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District Board of Education does hereby extend its appreciation and gratitude to Julie Browne in recognition of her exemplary service to our school district.

Members of the Board expressed their regret and best wishes for Ms. Browne on her retirement.

P8

RC): Carolan ✓, Fortunato ✓, King ✓, Kinney ✓, Koulikourdis ✓, Setteducato ✓, Sullivan ✓, Butto ✓, Laforgia ✓

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **P1 – P7**

Moved by: FORTUNATO

Seconded: KINNEY

- P1. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the request for an unpaid Family Leave of Absence utilizing The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for John Gaccione, RHS, Math, effective on or about April 19 - June 25, 2021.
- P2. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the request for a paid Maternity Leave of Absence (Presumptive Period of Disability), utilizing unused sick leave as allowed by law, for Vanessa Reisinger, RHS, Science, effective on or about May 11 - June 25, 2021.
- P3. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, a sixth period teaching assignment for Daniel D'Amico, RHS, English, Period 2, at the contractual stipend of \$9,530, prorated, effective for the period March 9 - April 1, 2021.
- P4. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the Sidebar Agreement between the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District Board of Education and the Ramapo Indian Hills Education Association.

- P5. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the Sidebar Agreement to the Collective Negotiations Agreement between the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District Board of Education and the Ramapo Indian Hills Education Association.
- P6. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the appointment of an athletic coach, subject to all federal, state, county, and local regulations, governing said employment; and further that the president and secretary, as proper officers of the Board of Education, be authorized and directed to issue the proper contract for the 2020-21 School Year; and move to approve applicant's attestation that she has not been convicted of any disqualifying crime pursuant to the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1 *et seq.*, N.J.S.A. 18A:39-17 *et seq.*, N.J.S.A. 18A:6-4.13 *et seq.*, and N.J.S.A. 18A:12-1 *et seq.*, as follows:

Indian Hills High School

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Certification</u>	<u>Step</u>	<u>Stipend</u>
Lindsay Rock	Asst. Girls' Volleyball	Substitute	4	\$5,871

- P7. To accept the resignation of Matthew O'Neill, RHS, Asst. Boys' Volleyball Coach, effective immediately.

P1 – P7

RC): Carolan ✓, Fortunato ✓, King ✓, Kinney ✓, Koulikourdis ✓, Setteducato ✓, Sullivan ✓, Butto ✓, Laforgia ✓

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **E1 – E4**

Moved by: BUTTO Seconded: KINNEY

EDUCATION

- E1. That, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, home instruction for District students, at the approved hourly rate, be approved as follows:

<u>Student No.</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Grade</u>
424479	IHHS	9
424111	IHHS	9
423107	RHS	10

- E2. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the Agreement between the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District Board of Education and The Parent Train, LLC, for ABA services for District Student No.

422623 as directed by the District Director of Student Personnel Services, effective for the period March 1 - June 30, 2021.

- E3. To approve, in accordance with Chapter 46, Title 18A, New Jersey Statutes, and on the recommendation of the Interim Superintendent of Schools, District Director of Student Personnel Services, and District Child Study Team that tuition and /or related services be paid for the student listed below to attend the school indicated and at the tuition cost indicated for the 2020-21 School Year as follows:

<u>Student No.</u>	<u>Placement</u>	<u>Tuition</u>
120205	Sage Day School	\$26,925.00 ¹

¹Pro-rated for 75 days @ \$359.00

- E4. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the resolution as follows:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District Board of Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") and the terms, stipulations and conditions as established in the Settlement Agreement and Release (hereinafter referred to as "Agreement") between the Board and the parents of a student whose name is on file in the Superintendent's Office, and which Agreement is located in the student's file, are hereby adopted and approved by the Board. The Board President and Business Administrator/Board Secretary are hereby authorized and directed to execute the Settlement Agreement and Release, and any other documents necessary to effectuate the settlement.

E1 – E4

RC): Carolan ✓, Fortunato ✓, King ✓, Kinney ✓, Koulikourdis ✓, Setteducato ✓, Sullivan ✓, Butto ✓, Laforgia ✓

OPERATIONS

Mrs. King read a prepared statement as follows:

I'd like to start my comments by asking that this prepared statement be entered into the Public Record as written and read. This is due to the fact that we do not, as of yet, record our meetings and I wish to make sure there is no doubt in the future what I stated.

When I was first elected to the RIH BOE I was incredibly thankful to the people who elected me and excited to hit the ground running in order to do what is best for our students, staff and of course the tax payers in our district. I knew that the pandemic was going to make this job difficult for everyone but I had visions of working with my fellow Trustees, exchanging ideas and working to bring our students back to school so that we could become the top-notch educational facility I know we can be.

In the last 6 months we have changed Superintendents 3 times. The lack of continuity and consistency for our students and our staff has been felt and it has not been good. Right now, we

have an Interim Superintendent who has taken the reigns and worked diligently to maintain some consistency for our students and our staff. Mr. Riscica has made it very clear, in my opinion, that he would like to see all the students back in school and I believe that we will get there.

At this time, we, the Trustees, are once again tasked with finding a permanent Superintendent who will hopefully remain for years to come and in those years this person will be tasked with making some very big decisions. Decisions that will impact our District for years to come that will also impact our community. I do not take decisions like this lightly and I have taken my time and asked many important questions. Sometimes those questions have been met with appreciation and sometimes they have been met with aggression, nonetheless, I have not backed down and have continued to ask.

Let me be very clear about this: I am not opposed to hiring a consulting firm to assist us in hiring a new permanent Superintendent. What I am opposed to is picking from the pool we have recently been given. I have made my concerns known to the Board and once again I was met with aggression from some because they did not feel I was acting with a sense of unity, while another commented on how I would have been fine as long as they were going along with my pick. Both of those statements could not be further from the truth.

The people who voted me into this seat know me and they know very well that I am a thoughtful, deliberate person who does her homework and rarely speaks without having the facts to back it up. Rest assured I have done my homework here and I am confident that we can do better if given the time, maybe another week or so, to pick from a larger pool of candidates. I believe that finding the right fit with the consultant is tantamount to finding the right fit with the Superintendent. Let us not act in haste but let us be deliberate and thoughtful with our choices. Our children have suffered enough these last 12 months. The next generation is depending on us.

Thank you!

Mrs. Koulikourdis read a prepared statement as follows:

I would like to motion to table indefinitely Operations 1 (approval of search firm HYA) for the following reasons. Ms. Browne, please record my entire statement into the minutes. I will forward you a hard copy of my statement after the meeting.

Here are the points I would like the Board to consider.

My first request is that we press pause. Mr. Riscica is eligible to be our Superintendent for up to two years (November 2022). I would like the Board to consider asking Mr. Riscica to stay on through the next school year. Mr. Riscica already knows our district and its stakeholders. If the Board agrees to this I would support Mr. Riscica conducting the strategic planning process this Board wants to do in a way that a new Superintendent would not be able to do. I fully support inviting Mr. Riscica to stay on and continue the work he has begun here, including beginning the strategic plan process in September which a new superintendent would likely not conduct until after his or her first year.

I have serious concerns with the search firm on tonight's agenda and cannot support hiring them for the following reasons.

1. *The Board did not discuss the selection of search firms in public, which I believe we may be required to do. Therefore the public is not aware of the discussed pros and cons of the different search firms and was not given the opportunity to make public comment on that discussion.*
2. *HYA is located in Illinois but has a local former Bergen County superintendent as our point of contact. I believe using a former local superintendent could bias the search process as they may put forward their current or former colleagues rather than do a complete and unbiased search for the best candidate.*
3. *HYA's process says they will conduct initial interviews. Hiring a superintendent is the single most important task we have and this board should do ALL candidate interviews, NOT a third party. This Board was elected to represent the taxpayers and residents of the FLOW district. HYA was not. I feel VERY STRONGLY that it is OUR job, and ours alone, to vet each resume and do ALL interviews. I am genuinely surprised that any board member at this table would agree to handing over that task to a third party.*
4. *HYA will conduct reference checks and did not include mention of site visits. I believe Board members are the only ones who should conduct reference checks. Also, I believe we should include site visits to final candidates' districts.*
5. *HYA made several statements in their presentation that pointed to a hastened search. That concerns me. The Board is late in getting started on this search, but that is not a reason to rush the process.*

I motion to table this resolution to hire HYA. I would like to point out that New Jersey School Boards Association presented that their search process includes supporting Board members conducting all interviews, reference checks, site visits (which they set up), and supporting the transition after the new superintendent is hired.

Firstly, I ask that the Board consider asking Mr. Riscica to stay on next school year.

Secondly, I ask that the Board seek a proposal from an additional search firm, Sousa & Stern. Sousa & Stern are based in NJ. One is a former school board member and both are former NJSBA representatives. Neither is a former superintendent. I ask that the Board table this motion and invite Sousa and Stern to our next meeting to present.

This Board did not agree to a timeline for when to hire a search firm. It is more important to get this done right than to get this done fast.

The most important thing is to identify the proper candidate to be our permanent Superintendent. I respectfully motion to table Operations 1 indefinitely in order to allow the Board time to request a proposal and presentation from Sousa & Stern.

Thank you.

Upon motion of Mrs. Koulikourdis, seconded by Mrs. King and carried, the Board called for a vote to table Resolution OP1 indefinitely.

RC): Carolan NO, Fortunato NO, King ✓, Kinney NO, Koulikourdis ✓, Setteducato NO, Sullivan NO, Butto NO, Laforgia NO

The following motion was approved by roll call vote: **OP1**

Moved by: BUTTO Seconded: FORTUNATO

OP1. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the Agreement between the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District Board of Education and Hazard Young Attea Associates, Schaumburg, IL, to provide consulting and search services for a permanent Superintendent of Schools in the amount of \$15,500.

RC): Carolan ✓, Fortunato ✓, King NO, Kinney ✓, Koulikourdis NO, Setteducato ✓, Sullivan ✓, Butto ✓, Laforgia ✓

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **OP2 – OP3**

Moved by: BUTTO Seconded: FORTUNATO

OP2. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the resolution as follows:

WHEREAS, the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District Board of Education (“the Board”) advertised for bids for the Partial Roof Restoration (Section 88) at Ramapo High School and Partial Roof Restoration (Section 13) at Indian Hills High School Project (“the Project”); and

WHEREAS, on February 24, 2021, the Board received bids for the Project; and

WHEREAS, the lowest bid for this Project was submitted by JJD Urethane Company Inc. (“JJD”) with a base bid in the amount of \$228,715 together with Alternate No. 95A in the amount of \$2,500, for a total contract sum of \$231,215; and

WHEREAS, the bid submitted by JJD is responsive in all material respects and it is the Board’s desire to award the contract for the Project to JJD.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Board hereby awards the contract for the Project to JJD in a total contract sum of \$231,215.
2. This award is expressly conditioned upon the contractor furnishing the requisite insurance certificate and labor and materials/performance bond as required in the project specifications, together with an AA201-Project Manning Report, and executed AIA Agreements, as prepared by the Board Attorney, within ten (10) days of the date hereof.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Attorney is hereby directed to draft the agreement with the successful bidder consistent with this Resolution and with the terms contained in the bid documents approved by the Board for the Project.

The Board President and the Board Secretary are hereby authorized to execute such agreement and any other documents necessary to effectuate the terms of this Resolution.

OP3. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the resolution as follows:

WHEREAS, the Ramapo Indian Hills Regional High School District Board of Education ("the Board") advertised for bids for the Girls' Bathroom Renovation Project at Ramapo High School ("the Project"); and

WHEREAS, on February 24, 2021, the Board received bids for the Project; and

WHEREAS, the lowest bid for this Project was submitted by Tri-Plex Industries, Inc. ("Tri-Plex") with a base bid in the amount of \$104,000, together with the Alternate 96A in the amount of \$4,000, for a total contract sum of \$108,000; and

WHEREAS, the bid submitted by Tri-Plex is responsive in all materials respects and it is the Board's desire to award the contract for the Project to Tri-Plex.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Board hereby awards the contract for the Project to Tri-Plex in a total contract sum of \$108,000.
2. This award is expressly conditioned upon the contractor furnishing the requisite insurance certificate and labor and materials/performance bond as required in the project specifications, together with the AA201-Project Manning Report, and executed AIA Agreements, as prepared by the Board Attorney, within ten (10) days of the date hereof.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Attorney is hereby directed to draft the agreement with the successful bidder consistent with this Resolution and with the terms contained in the bid documents approved by the Board for the Project. The Board President and the Board Secretary are hereby authorized to execute agreement and any other documents necessary to effectuate the terms of this Resolution.

OP2 – OP3

RC): Carolan ✓, Fortunato ✓, King ✓, Kinney ✓, Koulikourdis ✓, Setteducato ✓, Sullivan ✓, Butto ✓, Laforgia ✓

The following motion was approved by roll call vote: **F1**

Moved by: BUTTO

Seconded: KINNEY

FINANCE

- F1. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the resolution as follows:

WHEREAS, District employees have submitted requests for reimbursement for work-related travel that is directly related to and within the scope of the employees' current work responsibilities; and

WHEREAS, the Board has previously authorized such work-related travel, and the District's school business administrator or designee has reviewed the documentation submitted by the employee and found same to be in compliance with the Board's policy provisions and approval requirements; and

WHEREAS, the travel requests listed below specifies for each item of reimbursement the specific promotion of delivery of instruction or furtherance of the efficient operation of the school district, and the amount of each listed reimbursement does not exceed State travel reimbursement guidelines;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, in accordance with the provisions of Board Policy and *N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1 et seq.*, that the Board of Education hereby approves work-related travel reimbursement to its employees as set forth below:

<u>Req. No.</u>	<u>Employee</u>	<u>Conference</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
IH20-07	Aramburu	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	\$99
IH20-08	Hill	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	99
IH20-09	Koons	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	164
IH20-10	Russo	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	99
IH20-11	Shemon	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	164
R20-13	Anzano	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	99
R20-14	Basilicato	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	99
R20-15	Gordon	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	164
R20-16	Hague	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	164

R20-17	Stephen	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	\$99
R20-18	Szura	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	99
R20-19	Van Hook	NJAHPERD Conference	March 9-10, 2021	164

F1

RC): Carolan ✓, Fortunato ✓, King ✓, Kinney ✓, Koulikourdis ✓,
Setteducato ✓, Sullivan ✓, Butto ✓, Laforgia ✓

The following motions were approved by roll call vote: **PO1 – PO2**

Moved by: FORTUNATO Seconded: KINNEY

POLICY

PO1. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, Bylaw 0164.6, Remote Public Meetings During a Declared Emergency.

PO2. To approve, as recommended by the Interim Superintendent of Schools, the first reading of revised Policy 1648, Restart and Recovery Plan.

PO1 – PO2

RC): Carolan ✓, Fortunato ✓, King ✓, Kinney ✓, Koulikourdis ✓,
Setteducato ✓, Sullivan ✓, Butto ✓, Laforgia ✓

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mrs. King reported that she attended the Return To Learning Committee Meeting held on March 2. She thanked Mr. Riscica for scheduling the Committee Meeting. She also reported that a Facilities/Return To Learning Committee Meeting is scheduled on March 11.

Mr. Kinney reported that a Strategic Plan Committee Meeting is scheduled on March 10.

Mr. Fortunato reported that the members of the Negotiations Committee met on March 1 and will meet again in the near future.

Mr. Carolan reported that the members of the Education Committee met on February 25 to discuss agenda items as follows: 1) Girls' Football Club; 2) Unified Sports; 3) Aviation Program; 4) State requirements for World Languages; and 5) College acceptances.

Ms. Sullivan reported that the members of the Policy Committee met on February 26 to continue its review of Policy 1648 and Bylaw 0164.6.

Mr. Butto reported that the members of the Finance Committee met on March 4 to continued its discussions on the 2021-22 Budget.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

- A. Moved by BUTTO Seconded KINNEY to open the meeting to public discussion.

Members of the public addressed the Board regarding their concerns about the recent closure of the athletic program at Ramapo High School due to the number of positive COVID-19 cases.

A member of the public addressed the Board regarding the cancellation of the SAT test and asked if another test date will be scheduled.

A member of the public addressed the Board asking if parents will be permitted to attend the Spring musical in person.

- B. Moved by BUTTO Seconded KINNEY to re-enter the Action/Work Session.

ANTICIPATED FUTURE MEETING DATES

Mrs. Laforgia announced the anticipated future meeting dates as follows:

Monday, March 22, 2021, Regular Public Meeting, Electronic Meeting, 8 P.M.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by BUTTO Seconded: KINNEY to adjourn at 10:42 P.M.

Filomena Laforgia
Board President

Thomas Lambe
Business Administrator / Board Secretary