

**NORTH CALDWELL BOARD OF EDUCATION
NOTICE OF PUBLIC SESSION**

<https://ncboe.zoom.us/j/98134209455?pwd=aZ12lIwUkoV90PMHjtZmZaAC2Rostw.1>

VIA ZOOM MEETING
GRANDVIEW SCHOOL CAFETERIA

February 19, 2025

7:30 P.M.

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

3. COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting has been properly advertised in the designated newspaper and the agenda has been posted at the appropriate locations.

4. ROLL CALL

5. BOARD PRESIDENT'S REPORT

6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

• Presentation by DiCara Rubino Architects on Grandview School Expansion

7. PUBLIC COMMENT

OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT (Pursuant to Board Policy 0167 – Public Participation in Board Meetings) During this opportunity to comment, district residents and staff are invited to discuss any area of public concern that may be in respect to the operation of the schools. Board Policy 0167 requires that individuals state their name and address of residence and asks that all remarks be directed to the Board as a whole and not to individuals. (All Zoom guests are required to turn their camera on if participating in public comment) The Board asks that members of the public be courteous and mindful of the rights of other individuals when speaking. Although the Board may not respond to items raised during the public forum, all public comments will be considered and may be discussed tonight under "new business" at this meeting, or at subsequent meetings under "old business," or during a Board committee meeting, if appropriate. Each speaker's statement will be limited to three (3) minutes in duration.

8. MOVE TO CONFIDENTIAL SESSION FOR STUDENT MATTER

9. ACTION ITEMS

• General Resolutions

G1. Approve facility use application

G2. Approve the submission of 2025-2026 SEMI waiver

G3. Approve listed field trip locations

G4. Approve Support Staff Agreement and Salary Guides

➤ **G5. Approve settlement agreement**

• Business Resolutions

B1. Approve meeting minutes

B2. Approve payrolls

B3. Approve electronic check registers

B4. Approve bills and claims

- B5. Approve transfers
- B6. Approve Board Secretary Certification for the month of December 2024
- B7. Approve December 2024 Board Secretary & Treasurer Financial reports
- B8. Approve Title one tutoring
- B9. Approve architectural professional services for the Grandview Classroom addition
- B10. Approve withdrawal from Capital Reserve

• Personnel Resolutions

- P1. Approve Summer 2024 Tuition Reimbursement for listed staff
- P2. Approve Fall 2024 Tuition Reimbursement for listed staff
- P3. Approve substitute teacher
- P4. Approve Professional Development for listed staff
- P5. Approve full-time aide
- P6. Approve the retirement of listed administrator

➤ P7. Approve substitute teacher

➤ INDICATES ADDENDUM

10. OLD BUSINESS

11. NEW BUSINESS

12. ADJOURN TO CONFIDENTIAL SESSION (IF NECESSARY)

- Legal Attorney-Client Privilege Personnel
- Negotiations School Security/Public Safety Student Matter

The next scheduled public meetings of the Board will be held on:

Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at 7:30 pm

Posting: Board Members, Principals, NCPE Co-Presidents, NCEA Co-Presidents, Caldwell Progress Press Member, Board Office, Schools, and Town Hall.

The Board of Education of the Borough of North Caldwell in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in public session on February 19, 2025 in person at the Grandview School Cafeteria as well as via an online Zoom Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Michael Halik, Business Administrator, indicated that in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, notice of this meeting had been properly advertised and the agenda had been posted at the appropriate locations.

Roll call by the Business Administrator:

Present: Mr. David Ved, President
Mr. Eric Finkelstein
Mr. Michael DiGirolomo
Mr. Matthew Whitford

Absent: Mrs. Sapna Malige, Vice-President

Also Present: Dr. Linda Freda, Superintendent
Mr. Michael Halik, Business Administrator / Board Secretary
Mr. Chris Checchetto, Principal
Mr. Frank Bifulco, Principal
Mr. Robert Brenneck, Computer Network Systems Technician
Mr. Allen Barnett, Di Cara Rubino Architects
Mr. Eric Ayers, Di Cara Rubino Architects

BOARD PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Mr. Ved reported that twenty-nine (29) people attended the meeting both in person and on zoom. He proceeded to give the following statement:

I want to take a moment to recognize something truly special that happened in our community recently, The Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service.

A huge thank you to Jenny and Scott Daley for organizing such a meaningful event. It was incredible to see so many of our students and families come together to give back whether it was making placemats for Toni’s Soup Kitchen or assembling First Night Kits for those in need. Moments like this remind us that what makes our schools strong isn’t just what happens inside the classroom, but the sense of community and connection we build outside of it.

Our schools are only as strong as the people who support them, and North Caldwell is lucky to have parents, teachers, and students who show up, not just for their own kids, but for each other. When we teach our children the importance of service and kindness, we’re

giving them something that will stay with them long after they leave the hallways of Grandview and Gould.

So, to everyone who played a part, whether you volunteered, donated, or simply encouraged your child to participate, thank you. These small acts of kindness make a big difference, and they are a reflection of what makes this community so special.

I also want to take a minute to acknowledge someone who has been at the heart of our district for more than two decades, Dr. Linda Freda.

After 23 years of dedicated service to North Caldwell and 38 years in education, Dr. Freda has announced her retirement. And while we knew this day would come eventually, it doesn't make it any easier to say.

Dr. Freda has been more than just a superintendent, she has been a mentor, a leader, and an advocate for our students and staff. She has led with wisdom, patience, and an unwavering belief in doing what's best for the kids. Whether navigating challenges, celebrating achievements, or simply being a reassuring presence in our schools, her impact is everywhere.

Her leadership has shaped the district we are so proud of today, and while we will certainly miss her, we are grateful for the foundation she has built. On behalf of the Board, our staff, our families, and most importantly, our students, thank you, Dr. Freda. Your legacy here is undeniable, and we look forward to celebrating all that you have done in the months ahead.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr Freda made the following statement:

The decision to retire is bittersweet, as I love what I do and the people I work with. I would be remiss if I didn't take this time to thank a number of people who have made my tenure in North Caldwell so meaningful.

To our parents and families, thank you for being our partners in education. Your support, involvement, and trust have played a vital role in the success of our schools. This community has demonstrated time and time again that we are strongest when we work together. Thank you for instilling in your children a sense of curiosity and resilience which will enable them to succeed in whatever path they choose to take in life.

To our faculty and staff, it has been a distinct pleasure to work alongside some of the brightest, most compassionate, and highly committed professionals in education. Your commitment to the success and wellbeing of our students has always been an inspiration to me. I take great pride in what we have accomplished as a school community, from fostering a culture of academic excellence, to ensuring a nurturing and inclusive environment for all students.

To our administrative team, I deeply appreciate all the support and assistance you have provided over the years. Your guidance and dedication have helped shape the direction of this district. The collaborative spirit and forward-thinking initiatives you have championed have made a lasting impact on our schools. Your leadership has fostered an environment where educators can thrive, innovate, and make meaningful contributions to our students' lives.

Last, but not least, I want to thank the members of the Board of Education. I have been very fortunate to work with truly dedicated Board members who care deeply about this community and its children. I value the partnerships I have formed with both past and present Board members. I sincerely appreciate your insights, advocacy and support. Any success I have enjoyed is a direct result of the Boards' encouragement, assistance, and guidance. Together we have navigated challenges embraced growth, and worked toward ensuring that North Caldwell continues to provide academic excellence.

It has been a privilege to lead this remarkable district, and I am deeply grateful for the opportunities we've had to innovate, grow, and achieve significant milestones together. I will miss being part of the North Caldwell school community and will always carry the memories of my time here with great fondness.

Mr. Michael Halik made the following statement regarding the retirement of Dr. Freda.

Tonight, the Board will be approving the retirement of Linda Freda, Superintendent of Schools after 23 years of service to our district which is uncommon these days.

First and foremost, I want to wish Linda the best in her well-deserved retirement however it will be very hard to say goodbye. Linda, it has been both an honor and pleasure to work side by side with you for twelve years. You have been an extraordinary Superintendent and a true professional through and through.

You're a wealth of knowledge and you are always looking to share it with others. I'm always amazed by the way you navigate tough decisions with grace.

I appreciate that you were a supervisor that I could have constructive conversation with and freely disagree, but nevertheless have a quality discussion on any topic. This resulted in decisions we both supported because we knew they were in the best interest of the students and residents of North Caldwell. *On a side note, we may need to talk about the budget tomorrow.* Back to a serious note....

I want to say Thank you Linda for all your support and all you have taught me. I will miss your leadership and most of all the partnership we built over the past twelve years. Enjoy your retirement, you deserve it!

Mr. Chris Checchetto made the following statement regarding Dr. Freda’s retirement.

It has been an honor to work for and with you for the past 17 years. Your leadership, vision, and unwavering commitment to our students have made a lasting impact on our school community. The term is often used but you truly were the smartest person in the room, leading with insight, integrity, and a deep understanding of education. Your ability to make tough decisions and think strategically sets you apart. I speak for all of us when I say we are grateful for the incredible foundation you have built and the countless lives you have impacted. Personally, I appreciate the confidence you always showed in me. We have 6 more months together but please know I will continue to lean on you for advice long after as you are a true mentor, colleague and friend.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Arthur Rees, 40 Ferndale – Mr. Rees asked the Board to consider combining both schools into one building to accommodate the Boroughs needs for a new community center, firehouse and updated

Mrs. Deanna Copeland, 26 Windridge- Mrs. Copeland inquired about how much federal funding the district currently receives.

The following resolution was called at approximately 8:05 pm.

RESOLVED that in accordance with section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975, the Board has the authority to adjourn to closed session to discuss matters pertaining to a Student Matter. Said matters will be made public upon their disposition.

Moved: Mr. Whitford Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo
Yes: 4 No: 0

The Board reconvened to public session at 8:18 p.m.

GENERAL RESOLUTIONS

G1. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the following facilities use application as per North Caldwell Board of Education Policy 7510:

Organization:	NCPE
User Class:	Class 1
Activity:	Outdoor Movie night
Facility:	Grandview School field
Dates:	5/16/2025; rain date 5/18/2025
Time:	6:30pm -10:30pm
Fee:	No Fee

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo

Yes: 4 No: 0

G2. WHEREAS, NJAC 6A:23A-5.3 provides that a school district may request a waiver of compliance with respect to the district’s participation in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program for the 2025-2026 school year, and

WHEREAS, the North Caldwell Board of Education desires to apply for this waiver due to the fact that we project having fewer than forty (40) Medicaid eligible classified students;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the North Caldwell Board of Education hereby authorizes the Chief School Administrator to submit to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools in the County of Essex an appropriate waiver of the requirements of NJAC 6A23A-5.3 for the 2025-2026 school year.

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo

Yes: 4 No: 0

G3. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the following field trip Locations:

**The Center for Jewish History
Liberty Hall Museum
New Jersey Hall of Fame**

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo

Yes: 4 No: 0

G4. RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Negotiations Committee, approves the Negotiated Agreement and Salary Guides between the Board and the **North Caldwell Support Education Association – Support Staff** for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2027.

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo
 Yes: 4 No: 0

G5. RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the settlement agreement between the Board and the parent of student # 8006346.

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo
 Yes: 4 No: 0

BUSINESS RESOLUTIONS

B1. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the **Public Minutes of January 24, 2025.**

Moved: Mr. Whitford Seconded: Mr. Finkelstein
 Yes: 4 No: 0

B2. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the following **Payrolls:**

Payroll Date:	Payroll #	Amount:
February 7, 2025	43	\$62,896.84
February 14, 2025	44	\$448,108.41

Moved: Mr. Whitford Seconded: Mr. Finkelstein
 Yes: 4 No: 0

B3. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the following **Electronic Check Register(s):**

Date	Starting check #	Ending Check #	Total Amount
Dec 3, 2024 - Dec 23, 2024	E01494	E01645	\$59,449.37

Moved: Mr. Whitford Seconded: Mr. Finkelstein

Yes: 4 No: 0

B4. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the following **Bills and Claims:**

Date	Starting check #	Ending Check #	Total Amount
January 28 th , 2025	002579	002584	\$270,086.03
February 19 th , 2025	002585	002673	\$305,182.22
February 19 th , 2025	002674	002695	\$81,342.29

Moved: Mr. Whitford Seconded: Mr. Finkelstein

Yes: 4 No: 0

B5. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve attached **Transfers for December 2024:**

Moved: Mr. Whitford Seconded: Mr. Finkelstein

Yes: 4 No: 0

B6. WHEREAS pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(c) 3, the Board Secretary does certify that as of **December 2024**, no budgetary line-item account has encumbrances and expenditures which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district board of education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:22-8 and 18A:22-8.1; therefore, be it

RESOLVED that pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(c) 4, the Board of Education does certify that as of **December 2024**, the revised Board Secretary Monthly Financial Report, did not reflect an over expenditure in any Major Account or Fund, and based on the Appropriation Balances reflected on this report and on the advice of District Officials, that sufficient funds are available to meet the district’s financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Moved: Mr. Whitford Seconded: Mr. Finkelstein

Yes: 4 No: 0

B7. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the attached revised Board Secretary’s and Treasurer’s **Monthly Financial Reports for December 2024.**

Moved:	Mr. Whitford	Seconded:	Mr. Finkelstein
Yes:	4	No:	0

B8. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the **Title I Tutoring Payment:**

January 2025 **\$ 7,200.00**

Moved:	Mr. Whitford	Seconded:	Mr. Finkelstein
Yes:	4	No:	0

B9. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve the fee proposal 24-118 with DiCara/Rubino Architects to provide professional services for the **proposed Classroom Addition Project at the Grandview Elementary School** for the following amount:

Total Cost: \$500,500.00

Additional reimbursable expenses to be invoiced at 1.15 times the expense.

Moved:	Mr. Whitford	Seconded:	Mr. Finkelstein
Yes:	4	No:	0

B10. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approve transferring \$520,500.00 from the Capital Reserve Fund to Fund 30 (Capital Projects) to fund the **Classroom Addition at Grandview School DiCara Rubino Proposal No. 24-118**, with any remaining funds being returned to Capital Reserve at the completion of the project.

Moved:	Mr. Whitford	Seconded:	Mr. Finkelstein
Yes:	4	No:	0

PERSONNEL RESOLUTIONS

P1. WHEREAS the below listed staff members have applied for tuition reimbursement in accordance with Article 6, Section C of the negotiated agreement, and have completed requirements in accordance with the same.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board upon the recommendation of the

Superintendent, approve the reimbursement of tuition in the amounts listed for the courses attended during the **Summer of 2024**:

Name	Course	School	# of Credits	.5 x Eligible Amount
Brady, J.	The Multicultural Classroom	La Verne	3	\$ 420.00
Troiano, J.	Multimedia Project Design	UCSD	3	\$ 341.10
Troiano, J.	Using SEL & Intentional Read Alouds	UCSD	3	\$ 341.10
Gesario, M.	Think Like a Historian	Learners Edge	3	\$ 475.00
DeMartino, A.	Supervised Clinical Practicum I	MSU	3	\$ 1,567.50
DeMartino, A.	Supervised Clinical Practicum II	MSU	3	\$ 1,567.50
Rooney, D.	Advanced Pathopharmacology	NJCU	4	\$ 2,090.00
Worrall, S.	Adaptive Tech Students w/Disabilities	Caldwell Univ	3	\$ 1,567.50
Sponzilli, C.	Mind, Brain & Learning	The Art of Ed Univ	3	\$ 1,197.00

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo

Yes: 4 No: 0

P2. WHEREAS, the below listed staff members have applied for tuition reimbursement in accordance with Article 6, Section C of the negotiated agreement, and have completed requirements in accordance with the same.

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED That the Board upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the reimbursement of tuition in the amounts listed for the courses attended during the **Fall of 2024**:

Name	Course	School	# of Credits	.5 x Eligible Amount
Brady, J.	ADD/ADHD Strategies & Interventions for the Classroom	La Verne	3	\$ 420.00
Rooney, D.	Theory Devel	NJCU	3	\$ 1,567.50
Sponzilli, C.	Mission of Teaching	The Art of Education	3	\$ 1,197.00

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo
 Yes: 4 No: 0

P3. RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve **Gehan Kennedy** as a substitute teacher pending favorable criminal history review for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo
 Yes: 4 No: 0

P4. RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve the Professional Development Workshops/Conferences costs for the following teachers:

Name	Date	Workshop	Cost Not to Exceed
Marlo, R.	5/20	Admin Asst Program	\$ 145.00
Chappell, R.	3/24-3/26	NJSBGA Expo	\$ 1,090.00
Keenan, P.		LifeSavers Online Course and Skills Test	\$ 75.00
Mac Donald, L.	3/27, 3/28	NJSHA Convention	\$ 773.20
Manfra, C.	5/20	NJASBO – Accounts Payable	\$ 145.00
Rooney, D.		LifeSavers Online Course and Skills Test	\$ 75.00
Keating, T.	3/18/2025	<i>The Ethics of School Social Work</i>	\$60.00

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo
 Yes: 4 No: 0

P5. RESOLVED that the Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve **Marissa Foti** as a full-time Aide at a prorated salary of \$28,665.00* (Aide Step 1) effective March 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025.

**Salary to be updated upon completion of NCEA support staff contract.*

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo
 Yes: 4 No: 0

P6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education regrettably accepts the retirement of the Superintendent of Schools, **Dr. Linda Freda** effective August 31, 2025.

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo

Yes: 4 No: 0

P7. **RESOLVED** that the Board of education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approve **Bari Larner** as a substitute teacher for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year.

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. DiGirolomo

Yes: 4 No: 0

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Halik advised the board that 2025-2026 busing preparations are underway and the Transportation Committee will be meeting soon to discuss preliminary information.

The following resolution was called at approximately 8:21 pm.

RESOLVED that in accordance with section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Public Law 1975, the Board has the authority to adjourn to closed session to discuss matters pertaining to: Legal and Student Matter. Said matters will be made public upon their disposition.

Moved: Mr. Finkelstein Seconded: Mr. Whitford

Yes: 4 No: 0

As there was no further business to discuss, the Board adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michael Halik

Michael Halik
Business Administrator / Board Secretary