

BOARD RETREAT

April 3, 2025

The Retreat Meeting of the Stafford Township Board of Education was held on April 3, 2025 at 5:30pm at the Oxycocus Elementary School.

CALL TO ORDER

The Stafford Township Board of Education is called to order in compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act Law - 1975 Chapter 231 (P.L. 1975-231C). This meeting was advertised in the Atlantic City Press. Notice has been posted in the office of the Stafford Township Clerk, all school buildings and the district website.

ROLL CALL

Brian Fenlon	Member
Gregory Gioe	Member
Robert Morello	Member
Matthew Regulski	Member (via telephone)
Christopher Smith	Member
Bonnie Strouse	Member
Joseph Washco	Member
Kevin Cooney	Vice President
Tammy Wagner	President

ALSO PRESENT

George J. Chidiac	Superintendent
Lourdes LaGuardia	Business Administrator/Board of Education Secretary
Martin J. Buckley, Esq.	Board of Education Attorney

FLAG SALUTE

A. RECOGNITION/PRESENTATIONS

- Personnel and Fiscal Overview – Mr. Chidiac, Mrs. Bush and Mrs. LaGuardia

B. CLOSED SESSION – Board Matters

Whereas Section 8 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting under certain circumstances; and

Whereas, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist;

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Stafford Township Board of Education, County of Ocean, State of New Jersey, as follows:

The public shall be excluded from discussion of and action of the hereinafter specified subject matters.

The general nature of the subject matter to be discussed is as follows:

Board Matters

It is anticipated at this time that the above-stated subject matters shall be made public at such time as the reasons for non-disclosure no longer exists.

A motion was made by Mr. Washco and seconded by Mr. Morello to move on the above Resolution. Voice vote: All members present voted yes (9-0); motion passed.

A motion was made by Mr. Morello and seconded by Mr. Gioe to exit closed session. Voice vote: All members present voted yes (9-0); motion passed.

TIME IN: 5:38pm

TIME AT CONCLUSION OF CLOSED SESSION: 6:20pm

C. COMMUNICATION FROM THE PUBLIC (AGENDA ITEMS ONLY)

None

Dr. Regulski left early.

D. BOARD BUSINESS

1. To rescind the Tentative Budget for FY 2025-2026 that was approved at the March 18, 2025 Special Meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Morello and seconded by Mr. Cooney to approve Board Business item(s) #1. Roll call vote: eight (8) members present voted yes; motion passed.

A motion was made by Mr. Morello and seconded by Mrs. Strouse to Amend Board Business item(s) #2. Roll call vote: eight (8) members present voted yes; motion passed.

2. The Superintendent recommends approval to adopt the Tentative Budget for FY 2025-2026.

BE IT RESOLVED that the tentative budget be approved for the 2025-2026 school year using the 2025-2026 state aid figures and the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline:

		General Fund	Special Revenue	Debt Service	TOTAL
2025-2026 Total Expenditures		\$48,510,094	\$8,017,179	\$ 682,800	\$57,210,073
Less: Anticipated Revenues		\$48,510,094	\$8,017,179	\$ 682,800	\$57,210,073
Taxes to be Raised		\$35,612,850	- 0 -	\$ 450,648	\$36,063,498

And to advertise said tentative budget in the Atlantic City Press in accordance with the form required by the State Department of Education and according to law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a public hearing be held at the Stafford Township Arts Center (STAC) located at 1000 McKinley Avenue, Manahawkin, NJ on April 30, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2025-2026 school year.

Adjustment for ENROLLMENT

BE IT RESOLVED that the Stafford Township Board of Education includes in the final budget the adjustment for enrollment in the amount of \$174,780. The district intends to utilize this adjustment for supplies and materials necessary for the additional students.

Adjustment for HEALTH CARE COSTS

BE IT RESOLVED that the Stafford Township Board of Education includes in the final budget the adjustment for increased costs of health benefits in the amount of \$1,116,968. The additional funds will be used to pay for the additional increases in health benefit premiums.

Use of BANKED CAP

BE IT RESOLVED that the Stafford Township Board of Education includes in the proposed budget the adjustment for banked cap in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-10.1(b). The district has fully exhausted all eligible statutory spending authority and must increase the base budget in the amount of \$580,076 for the purpose of maintaining programs. The district intends to complete said purposes by June 2026.

Maintenance Reserve Withdrawal

BE IT RESOLVED that as per N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.2(d) the general fund appropriations include a \$200,000 withdrawal from the Maintenance Reserve Account for use on required maintenance activities for a school facility as reported in the comprehensive maintenance plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:26-20.5.

Emergency Reserve Withdrawal

BE IT RESOLVED that the general fund appropriations include a \$40,000 withdrawal from the Emergency Reserve Account for the 2025-2026 school year to improve school security in the district.

Travel and Related Expense Reimbursement 2025-2026

WHEREAS, the Stafford Township Board of Education recognizes school staff and Board members will incur travel expenses related to and within the scope of their current responsibilities and for travel that promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district; and

WHEREAS, N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3 et seq. requires Board members to receive approval of these expenses by a majority of the full voting membership of the Board and staff members to receive prior approval of these expenses by the Superintendent of Schools and a majority of the full voting membership of the Board; and

WHEREAS, the Stafford Township Board of Education established \$50,000 as the maximum travel amount for the current school year and has expended \$16,000 as of this date; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education approves travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3, to a maximum expenditure of \$50,000 for the 2025-2026 school year.

A motion was made by Mr. Morello and seconded by Mr. Smith to approve Board Business item(s) #2: Roll call vote: eight (8) members present voted yes; motion passed.

A motion was made by Mr. Morello and seconded by Mr. Smith to Amend Board Business item(s) #3 in paragraph 4. Roll call vote: eight (8) members present voted yes; motion passed.

3. To approve the following Resolution:

Application Submission – Additional Expenditures and Tax Incentive Aid

Whereas, in the proposed FY2026 State Budget, certain districts have the opportunity to apply to the Commission of Education to increase expenditures, including an allocation of Tax Levy Incentive Aid, in order to satisfy the thoroughness and efficiency standards established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7F-46.

Whereas, Stafford Township School District is below local fair share and spending below adequacy to be eligible to participate in this program.

Whereas, Stafford Township School District is eligible to increase expenditures by \$10,860,991 and qualify for Tax Levy Incentive Aid in the amount of \$542,050.

Whereas, Stafford Township School District is requesting to increase expenditures by \$1,044,135 and qualify for Tax Levy Incentive Aid in the amount of \$52,207, and

Whereas, the Stafford Township School District is requesting the approval to increase expenditures based on the following reasons: to maintain teaching positions and programs due to continuing increase in enrollment growth, purchase additional textbooks for language arts, to purchase chrome book computers and classroom projectors for teaching and students for its 1:1 initiative, and to maintain indoor air quality and rising costs associated with heating and cooling. (As per attached summary)

Therefore, the Stafford Township School District Board of Education is approving the submission of this application to the Commissioner of Education.

A motion was made by Mr. Morello and seconded by Mr. Smith to approve Board Business item(s) #3. Roll call vote: eight (8) members present voted yes; motion passed.

E. CLOSED SESSION

None

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Gioe and seconded by Mr. Morello to adjourn the meeting at 6:35pm. Voice vote: All members present voted yes (8-0); motion passed.

Lourdes LaGuardia
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

LL/km/4-10-2025