

Palisades Park Board of Education
Work Session/Special Business Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, August 27, 2025 – 6:30 p.m.
Early Childhood Center, 270 First Street, Palisades Park, NJ

A. CALL TO ORDER: Board President

B. FLAG SALUTE

C. ROLL CALL

	Present	Absent
Ms. Soo Chung (online)	☒	☐
Mr. Anthony Kim	☐	☒
Ms. Rebekah Lee	☒	☐
Ms. Sookyung Park	☐	☒
Ms. Boyoung Yu	☒	☐
Mr. Aaron Pak	☒	☐
Mr. Jun Yim	☒	☐
Mr. Sergio Calle	☒	☐
Mr. Carl Albano	☒	☐
Busch Law Group	☒	☐
Tyler Jung - Student Rep	☐	☒

D. STATEMENT OF PRESIDING OFFICER

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (Chapter 231, P.L. 1975), I hereby state that notice of this **Special Meeting** has been provided to the public by a written notice dated August 22, 2025 (date of published notice)

The Meeting Notice has been:

1. Emailed to all staff members at the district's 3 school locations.
2. Communicated to The Record.
3. Filed with the Borough Clerk of Palisades Park.
4. Posted on District Website.

E. CLOSED SESSION

The Board of Education will convene in Closed Session in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, *N.J.S.A. 10:4-12(b)*, for the purpose of discussing:

- Personnel Matters

No action will be taken in the Closed Session.

Motion to go into Executive Session.

Moved by: Aaron Pak

Seconded by: Soo Chung

All in favor – aye – 6:42 p.m.

F. REVIEW AND DISCUSS RESOLUTIONS TO BE VOTED ON AT THE SPECIAL MEETING

Motion to open work session.

Moved by: Rebekah Lee

Seconded by: Aaron Pak

All in favor – aye – 7:01 p.m.

Buildings and Ground Item #1: Ms. Boyoung Yu asked whether the active shooter training conducted by the Palisades Park Police Department was a new initiative. Mr. Carl Albano explained that the

training is held annually and rotates among district schools. It has not yet taken place at the Early Childhood Center. He explained that the training helps police become familiar with the school layout in case of an emergency.

Personnel Item #1: Ms. Rebekah Lee asked about plans if replacements for resigning teachers aren't found in time. Mr. Albano said the goal is to hire certified teachers, but alternatives include assigning a sixth period to current staff or using retired long-term substitutes.

Ms. Lee expressed concern about the impact on core subjects, noting that in the past, students were left without instruction when a teacher was absent. Mr. Albano assured her that Principal Mr. Cipriano is aware and will ensure instruction continues even during staff absences.

Board Secretary Ms. Grace Lee noted several walk-on items not included in the original agenda: the appointment of teacher Justine Park, the appointment of the middle school soccer coach, and a salary adjustment for Lauren Vivirito.

Ms. Rebekah Lee asked if the middle school soccer coach position includes a stipend. Mr. Carl Albano confirmed that it does and explained the appointment was delayed due to an oversight; it should have been included with the original coaching staff appointments. Mr. Aron Mandel clarified that the stipend amount is in the teachers contract and the new stipend would apply once the new teacher's contract is ratified by the PPEA.

G. ADJOURN WORK SESSION: OPEN SPECIAL MEETING

Motion to adjourn the work session and open the special meeting.

Moved by: Rebekah Lee

Seconded by: Aaron Pak

All in favor – aye – 7:11 p.m.

H. REPORT OF THE BOARD PRESIDENT

I. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Hiring Update:

Mr. Carl Albano reported that there have been 40 staff resignations since June. Following this evening's appointments, 28 positions will have been filled, leaving approximately 11–12 vacancies. The district is actively recruiting, including outreach to teaching colleges, and is considering options such as using permanent substitutes and assigning sixth periods to current teachers. He also noted the possibility of hiring student teachers to help address future staffing needs. Mr. Albano thanked the administrative team for their hard work in filling vacancies and keeping schools stable.

Business Administrator Appointment:

Mr. Albano welcomed Mr. Emidio D'Andrea as the new Business Administrator. Mr. D'Andrea brings nearly 30 years of experience and is currently working in South Hackensack two days per week. After reviewing the district's budget, he is confident in his ability to serve Palisades Park three days per week (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays), with additional days in the beginning, as needed, to address the backlog.

Mr. D'Andrea shared that he is looking forward to working with the district and feels confident managing a district of this size. He expressed his commitment to keep the education moving forward and bring success to everyone.

Facilities Update – HVAC Project:

Mr. Albano provided an update on the \$3.7 million HVAC project at the Junior High School. Heating was completed over a year ago, and the remaining work involves air conditioning. While the rooftop AC unit has been installed, a missealed electric panel required replacement. The part has been shipped, and once received, H&S Mechanical has prioritized the installation. Final payment will be withheld until all work is completed satisfactorily.

Ms. Rebekah Lee inquired about the expected arrival of the replacement part. Mr. Albano responded that it has been

shipped and could be installed by the end of the week but should be completed within the next week or two.

J. REPORT OF THE BOARD ATTORNEY

K. APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES

1. Approval of Minutes

Special Business Meetings – August 12, 2025

Move that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the minutes of the following meetings;

- August 12, 2025 Special Business Meeting Minutes
- August 12, 2025 Executive Meeting Minutes

Moved by: Aaron Pak

Seconded By: Boyoung Yu

VOTE

Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	N/P	Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	N/P
Soo Chung	☒	☐	☐	☐	Jun Yim	☒	☐	☐	☐
Sergio Calle	☒	☐	☐	☐	Boyoung Yu	☒	☐	☐	☐
Rebekah Lee	☐	☐	☒	☐	Sookyung Park	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Kim	☐	☐	☐	☒	Aaron Pak	☒	☐	☐	☐

COMMITTEE REPORTS

L. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Consent agenda for Item 1 – Aaron Pak

1. USE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER - PALISADES PARK POLICE DEPARTMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the use of the Early Childhood Center, located at 270 First Street, Palisades Park, NJ 07650, by the Palisades Park Police Department to conduct Active Shooter Training Drills on November 6, 7, and 8, 2025, provided that:

- No students or staff are present during the drills,
- All safety protocols are followed, and
- The facility is restored to its original condition after use.

Moved by: Aaron Pak Seconded By: Boyoung Yu

VOTE

Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	N/P	Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	N/P
Soo Chung	☒	☐	☐	☐	Jun Yim	☒	☐	☐	☐
Sergio Calle	☒	☐	☐	☐	Boyoung Yu	☒	☐	☐	☐
Rebekah Lee	☒	☐	☐	☐	Sookyung Park	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Kim	☐	☐	☐	☒	Aaron Pak	☒	☐	☐	☐

M. PERSONNEL

Consent agenda for Items 1-10 – Jun Yim

1. RESIGNATION OF STAFF

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education accepts the following resignations:

Employee Name	Position	Effective
Marly Goldring	Preschool Teacher	08/27/2025
Ricky Santana	PPHS Math Teacher	10/14/2025
Ancy Philip	PPHS Science Teacher	09/26/2025
Kenny Gonzalez	Custodian	08/22/2025
Peter Lance Ekelund	Social Studies Teacher	08/27/2025

2. APPOINTMENT OF STAFF

BE IT RESOLVED that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of the following personnel for the 2025-2026 school year:

Employee Name	Position	Salary/Stipend	Start Date	Building
Donald Westcott	Long-Term Substitute Teacher	\$250 per day	09/01/2025	PPHS
Patricia Knodel	Social Studies Teacher	BA+15, Step 1	09/01/2025	PPHS
Diane Jeon	Math Teacher	BA, Step 3	09/01/2025	Lindbergh
Justine Park	1.0 FTE Special Education Teacher	BA, Step 5	09/01/2025	Lindbergh

3. SALARY ADJUSTMENT - OUT OF DISTRICT AIDES

BE IT RESOLVED that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves a salary adjustment for the following out of district aides, increasing their salary, effective retroactively to July 1, 2025 as outlined below:

Staff	Current Salary	New Salary
Joanne Morinhineway	\$40,750	\$41,973
Richard McGaw	\$43,838	\$45,153
Marylynn Maresca	\$22,500	\$23,175
Rosa Sanchez	\$22,500	\$23,175

4. TITLE CHANGE FROM PART-TIME CUSTODIAN TO PART-TIME CLEANER

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the change in job title from Part-Time Custodian to Part-Time Cleaner for the following employees. This change is for title clarification only and does not affect job duties, compensation, or terms of employment.

- Clorinda Belevan
- Belen Alvarado DeGamez
- Edgar Simon
- Luz Perez
- Rufino Perez
- Teresa Gomez
- Hilaria Reyes Cotzalo
- Richard Cruz
- Edwar Alonzo
- Rosemary DaSouza
- Maria Lemos
- Lindon Pinedo
- Johanna Saria
- Hugo Garcia
- Jonathan Simon
- Lee Melara
- Jose Cruz
- Deysi Sutuj

5. SALARY ADJUSTMENT - PART-TIME CUSTODIAN

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves a salary adjustment for Part-Time Custodian, Billy Raimondo, from \$23.50 per hour to \$24.25 per hour.

6. APPOINTMENT OF MIDDLE SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY COACH

BE IT RESOLVED that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of John Wiseman as the Middle School Cross Country coach for the 2025-2026 school year.

7. APPOINTMENT OF MIDDLE SCHOOL SOCCER COACH

BE IT RESOLVED that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the appointment of Edwar Alonzo as the Middle School Soccer coach for the 2025-2026 school year.

8. APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL HOURS FOR STUDENT REGISTRATION

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves up to 20 hours each for three (3) high school guidance counselors and one (1) high school nurse to assist with new student registration during the week of August 25, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM, at their contractual hourly rate, not to exceed the approved hours.

9. APPROVAL OF INTERIM SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves Emidio D’Andrea for the position of Interim School Business Administrator, effective August 27, 2025 through June 30, 2026, upon the terms and at the rate(s) set forth in the employment contracts approved by the Bergen County Executive County Superintendent and executed by the parties, on file with the Board Secretary, and to be posted on the Board’s website, which total annual salary shall not exceed \$120,000.

10. SALARY ADJUSTMENT

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Superintendent, approves the following salary adjustment request:

Employee Name	Present Step	Adjustment	Effective
Lauren Vivirito	BA, Step 3	MA, Step 4	09/01/2025

Moved by: Aaron Pak Seconded By: Boyoung Yu
VOTE

Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	N/P	Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	N/P
Soo Chung	☒	☐	☐	☐	Jun Yim	☒	☐	☐	☐
Sergio Calle	☒	☐	☐	☐	Boyoung Yu	☒	☐	☐	☐
Rebekah Lee	☒	☐	☐	☐	Sookyung Park	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Kim	☐	☐	☐	☒	Aaron Pak	☒	☐	☐	☐

N. FINANCE

Consent agenda for Items 1-5 – Boyoung Yu

1. APPOINTMENT OF SUPERINTENDENT AS AUTHORIZED BANK SIGNER

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education authorizes the appointment of Carl Albano, Superintendent of Schools, and Emidio D'Andrea, Interim School Business Administrator, as authorized signers on behalf of the District for all Board-approved bank accounts, effective immediately.

2. APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT ADDENDUM - ESS NORTHEAST, LLC

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, approves an addendum to extend the agreement with ESS Northeast, LLC to provide substitute staffing to fill positions at the request of the District through June 30, 2026.

3. APPOINTMENT OF QUALIFIED PURCHASING AGENT (QPA)

BE IT RESOLVED that pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-2, the Board, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, hereby appoints Emidio D'Andrea as its duly authorized Qualified Purchasing Agent for the 2025/26 budget year through June 30, 2026.

4. INCREASE BID THRESHOLD

WHEREAS, Emidio D'Andrea, Interim School Business Administrator, possesses a Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA) certificate;

WHEREAS, the State Treasurer, in consultation with the Governor and pursuant to N.J.S.A. 52:34-7 and N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3 (b), has increased the bid threshold amount for school districts with a Qualified Purchasing Agent, from \$44,000.00 to \$53,000.00, effective July 1, 2025;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3 (a), establishes and sets the bid threshold amount of \$53,000.00 for the school district, and further authorizes the Interim School Business Administrator, the Qualified Purchasing Agent, to award contracts, in full accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-3 (a), for those purchases that do not exceed in the aggregate of the newly established bid threshold amount.

Furthermore, for contracts in the aggregate that are less than the bid threshold but fifteen (15%) or more of the amount, the Interim School Business Administrator shall award contracts after soliciting at least two competitive quotations.

The Interim School Business Administrator, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-37 (c), is authorized to award contracts that are in the aggregate less than fifteen (15%) percent of the bid threshold without soliciting competitive quotations.

5. INCREASE THRESHOLD FOR REQUIRED CLAIMANT SIGNATURES

BE IT RESOLVED that the Palisades Park Board of Education, upon recommendation of the Interim School Business Administrator, approves in accord with N.J.A.C. 5:30-9A.6, N.J.A.C 5:30-9A.6(C) and 5:31-4.1 to increase the threshold for required claimant signatures from the party claiming payment to 15% of the Qualified Purchasing Agent's Bid Threshold which is currently \$53,000. Beginning with the 2025/2026 school year, effective immediately, claimant signatures shall be required for all purchases over \$7,950. Excluding employee reimbursements for expense and entirely by an individual (e.g. sole proprietor) which cannot be waived in any circumstances.

Moved by: Aaron Pak Seconded By: Boyoung Yu
VOTE

Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	N/P	Board Member	Yes	No	Abs.	N/P
Soo Chung	☒	☐	☐	☐	Jun Yim	☒	☐	☐	☐
Sergio Calle	☒	☐	☐	☐	Boyoung Yu	☒	☐	☐	☐
Rebekah Lee	☒	☐	☐	☐	Sookyung Park	☐	☐	☐	☒
Anthony Kim	☐	☐	☐	☒	Aaron Pak	☒	☐	☐	☐

O. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

P. NEW BUSINESS

Q. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Motion to open to audience participation

Motion: Aaron Pak

2nd: Rebekah Lee

All in favor – aye – 7:21 p.m.

Anthony Rotundo: Requested the removal of the resigned Board member's name from the agenda and website. He asked about plans to fill the vacant Board seat, referencing the legal requirement for nine members. He also inquired about the status of the Vice Principal positions, noting their absence from the agenda. He asked whether an interim will be appointed or if the roles will be reposted.

Neris Papoters: Asked when the Vice Principal positions will be filled. She expressed concern about relying on substitutes, especially for core subjects like science and math. She questioned whether the Business Administrator role is part-time, given the three-day schedule, and requested background information on Superintendent Carl Albano, along with his plans to address the 40 recent staff resignations

Anthony Rotundo: Asked about the rules regarding Board members' online participation, specifically whether it counts toward quorum and if members are permitted to vote while attending remotely.

Deylis Coba - Parent of two daughters in high school. Asked if there will be a school nurse in the high school, noting that one of her daughters has allergies and asthma. She emphasized how important teachers are and read a note her daughter recently wrote about her Pre-K teacher, showing the lasting impact teachers have. She said that kind of influence is priceless and added that she can't fathom how teachers continue coming to work every day without a contract.

Reina Lopez: (speaking through an audience member that translated for her) A parent expressed concern about her son, who was transferred to the Early Childhood Center (ECC) last year, particularly with school opening soon. Board attorney, Mr. Aron Mandel, advised caution when discussing individual students in a public forum, recommending the matter be addressed privately, though allowing her to continue if she wished. Mr. Carl Albano and Ms. Lopez agreed to speak after the meeting with assistance from Board member, Mr. Sergio Calle.

Rosalina Cavero: (speaking through an audience member that translated for her) Asked what is going on with the child study team in ECC, because her daughter requires their assistance. She last heard there was no child study team and was not able to speak to anyone about her daughter for the upcoming year. Mr. Carl Albano said there is a team and can have the school contact her.

Motion to close audience participation.

Motion: Rebekah Lee

2nd: Aaron Pak

All in favor – aye – 7:38 p.m.

Ms. Rebekah Lee left the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

Mr. Jun Yim addressed Ms. Coba, stating that the teachers' contract was approved by the Board at the last meeting and is now awaiting ratification by the PPEA to be finalized. Board attorney Mr. Aron Mandel added that the expectation is for the contract to be ratified soon after the start of the school year.

Mr. Mandel addressed Mr. Rotundo's question about filling the board seat. He said the seat will be advertised for applicants that want to be considered. There will be public interviews and then voted and appointed.

Mr. Carl Albano agreed with the concern regarding the importance of Vice Principals. He noted that 15% of the district's workforce resigned, which is unprecedented, and explained that hiring has been especially challenging since it typically occurs in March or April. He prioritized filling Principal positions first, and Vice Principal positions have since been posted. Mr. Albano shared that many qualified candidates have applied and, if the process goes well, a recommendation may be presented at the September 17 meeting. However, he emphasized the importance of selecting a competent candidate and not settling, though he remains optimistic based on the current response.

Mr. Carl Albano acknowledged that the district website needs many updates, attributing the delay to staffing shortages. While we have a very competent Webmaster, updates require input from multiple departments, which is challenging when staff are stretched thin. Improving communication and the website is a long-term priority, and efforts will be increased moving forward.

Regarding the part-time Business Administrator role, Mr. Albano admitted initial concerns about the three-day schedule but was reassured by Mr. D'Andrea's 30 years of experience and background with larger school budgets. He also noted several open positions in the central office and said the district is being very selective in filling them.

In response to concerns about district stability, Mr. Albano shared that he has 35 years of experience in public education and is in his 10th year as a superintendent. He emphasized that rebuilding will take time. The first step was resolving the teachers' contract, as strong, stable, and dedicated educators are key. New hires will start the next day and will receive support from veteran teachers. The district's ongoing plan is to continue hiring quality staff and providing professional support and mentoring.

Mr. Carl Albano agreed that having a school nurse is critical and acknowledged the ongoing shortage. He shared that Joshua Altwerger, a registered nurse hired through an agency last year, is currently serving at the high school. Additionally, Susan Cohen has been hired as the new nurse at Lindbergh School.

Mr. Jun Yim noted that Mr Albano only started on July 22nd and is already actively addressing the district's challenges.

Mr. Carl Albano acknowledged that using substitutes is not ideal, but noted that teachers leave strong lesson plans to ensure continuity. With two veteran principals in place, he emphasized that student learning should not be interrupted during teacher absences. He stated that the principals are committed to this, and there should be a noticeable improvement this year.

Mr. Aron Mandel addressed the question about online quorum. He noted that there was an in-person quorum and everything that was voted on today had enough votes. Currently there are no laws regarding online presence and the current Board does not have a policy regarding it.

Ms. Papoters asked where the vacant Board position will be posted. Board attorney Mr. Mandel responded that while he was not certain, it should appear online and in the usual newspaper. He noted that the Board has 65 days to appoint a new member. Superintendent Mr. Albano added that this special meeting was held to ensure staff were hired in time for the school opening and that more information should be available by the next regular meeting.

R. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn meeting.

Motion: Aaron Pak

2nd: Boyoung Yu

All in favor – aye – 7:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Grace Lee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Grace Lee
Board Secretary