Rockaway Borough Board of Education

103 E. Main Street, Rockaway, NJ 07866

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 7:30 PM

Thomas Jefferson School Cafeteria, 95 E. Main Street, Rockaway, NJ 07866

Visit us on the Web: rockboro.org

ROCKAWAY BOROUGH SCHOOLS' MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Rockaway Borough School District, a caring and diverse community, is to propel the success of each student by creating an environment that fosters self-confidence and encourages creativity through quality instruction and educational opportunities aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

Executive Session I: 6:30-7:30 pm (Closed to the Public)

Be it Resolved, that the Board enters into an Executive Session (Private) to discuss exempt matters pertaining to personnel and legal matters; the nature of which will be made public only when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Motion to Enter:	***Moved by:***	***Hernandez***	***Seconded by: Dahl***	***Voice Vote: ALL***
Motion to Adjourn:	***Moved by:***	***Hernandez***	***Seconded by: Dahl***	***Voice Vote: ALL***

1. Call to Order: 7:30 PM

The public portion of this meeting will be called to order at approximately 7:30 p.m. by Mr. Graf, Board President, by reading the following announcement:

"In accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, The Rockaway Borough Board of Education has provided adequate notice of this meeting to the public by having the time, date, and location advertised in The Citizen Newspaper, posted on our website and at town hall. Official action will be taken."

2. Board Member Roll Call:

Mr. Michael Dougherty

Elected 2025 to 1st term (3-year seat to Dec. 31, 2028)

Mrs. Faride Hernandez

Elected 2024 to 1st term (3-year seat to Dec. 31, 2027)

Mrs. Vanessa Dorgilles

Elected 2024 to 1st term (3-year seat to Dec. 31, 2027)

Ms. Jennifer Dahl, VP

Elected 2023 to 1st term (3-year seat to Dec. 31, 2026)

Mr. Edward Graf, President

Elected 2023 to 1st term (3-year seat to Dec. 31, 2026)

Pledge of Allegiance

3. Reports & Updates:

A. SGO Student Reports

-Students updated the board on recent happenings at TJ.

B. Superintendent's Report: Mr. Grieco

-Student Recognition

-District Update

-State Assessement

-Tricky Tray

-Wizard of Oz

-Spring Sports

-Budget Resolution

C. Board Reports:

- **Mr. Dougherty-** Rec Liaison Report, Tech Report/Committee
- **Ms. Dorgilles-** HSA Liaison Report, TJ Report
- **Ms. Dahl-** Curriculum Report/Committee
- **Ms. Hernandez-** Lincoln Report, Education Foundation Liaison Report
- **Mr. Graf-** Unsung Hero Award, Appreciation to Officer Scott/Parents, Wizard of Oz, Read Across America, Facilities Report, Board Retreat, Letters to Elected Officials

D. Board Secretary's/Business Office Report:

1. **Board Correspondence:** *Received (R) or Sent (S) since our last meeting:*

N/A

E. Any Other Items/Comments for the Good of the Order

F. Board Review of Agenda Items

- Preliminary Budget Resolution

4. Public Hearing:

Agenda items only: limited to 3 minutes each. Please state your name.

The President will open the floor for the Board to hear the public and then close the floor.

Please direct all dialogue to the President. Board replies are not required.

During the board meeting, the Board offers members of the public an opportunity to comment on issues regarding the operation of our schools. If you wish to speak, please raise your hand and proceed to the podium. When called on by the President, state your first name, last name, and municipality of residence. The President may limit each statement made by a participant to three (3) minutes in duration. The President may also interrupt, warn, and/or terminate a participant's statement, question, or inquiry when it is too lengthy or the inquiry is abusive, obscene, or may be defamatory. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic until all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard.

Our goal is to maintain the formality, decorum, and efficiency of our meetings according to District Policies and state law. Issues raised by members of the public may or may not be responded to by the Board, and the President may direct a response after the public comment session.

Members of the public should be courteous and aware of others' rights when speaking. Families and employees have specific legal rights afforded by the laws of New Jersey and therefore be advised:

- *The Board bears no responsibility nor will it be liable for any comments made by members of the public.*
- *Members of the public should consider their comments in light of the legal rights of those affected by or identified in their comments.*
- *Members of the public should be aware that they are legally responsible and liable for their comments.*

The Board also encourages community members to follow the chain of command—beginning with the classroom teacher and progressing through the Administrative hierarchy. When the chain of command is used properly, it improves communication and permits the Board to act as the final arbiter on issues that have not been resolved at other steps in the chain.

Katie Clark-

Comments about 9.6% increase
Comments about Budget Presentation Suggestions
Comments about Banked Cap
Comments about Webmaster suggestions- Faculty Directory, Architecture
Comments about facilities

Danielle Wheelock-

Budget Presentation Suggestions

Leah Rueda-

Concerns with future budgets and plans

5. Enrollment & Staffing Report:

Grade Level & School	Students June 30, 2025	Students March 10, 2026	Difference from June 30, 2025	Sections (Classes)	Avg. Class Size	Certificated Staff - Teachers	Non-Certificated Staff
Preschool - Lincoln AM/PM & Full Day	26	27	+1	2	14	1	8
Kindergarten - Lincoln	67	55	-12	3	18	3	3
Grade 1 - Lincoln	58	67	+9	3	22	3	3
Grade 2 - Lincoln	62	58	-4	3	19	3	2
Grade 3 - Lincoln	66	62	-4	3	21	3	2
Other Staff: (Principal 1, Specials 8, Aides 5, PE 1, Guide 1, Nurse 1, Sec 1, Cust 2.5, Caf 7)	-	-	-	-	-	12	15.5
Total Lincoln School:	279	269	-10	14	19	25	33.5
Grade 4 - TJ	63	64	+1	3	21	3	-

Grade 5 - TJ	**65**	**66**	**+1**	**3**	**22**	**3**	-
Grade 6 - TJ	**64**	**68**	**+4**	**3**	**23**	**3**	-
Grade 7 - TJ	**54**	**66**	**+12**	**3**	**22**	**3**	-
Grade 8 - TJ	**65**	**57**	**-8**	**3**	**19**	**3**	-
Other Staff: (Principal 1, Specials 16, Aides 9, PE 2, Guide 1,Nurse 1, Sec 2, Cust 2.5, Caf 9)	-	-	-	-	-	**21**	**22.5**
Total Thomas Jefferson:	**311**	**321**	**+10**	**15**	**21**	**36**	**22.5**
Shared Staff: (Other Certificated Teachers 4.5, & Part-Time Nurses 2)	-	-	-	-	-	**4.5**	**2**
Administrative: (Supt, BA, CIA, CST 1, Sec 4, Maint 2, Bus Drivers 2, Bus Aides 2)	-	-	-	-	-	**3**	**11**
Special/Reg Ed Out-of-District:	**8**	**8**	**-**	**-**	**-**	-	-
Resident Students:	***598***	***598***	***0***	***29***	***21***	-	-
Charter/Choice Schs Out:	**0**	**0**	0	-	-	-	-
Spec. Ed Tuition Incoming:	**3**	**3**	0	-	-	-	-
Total Students (593)/ Staff (140) Ratio: 4.25/1	**601**	**601**	**0**	**-**	**-**	**66.5**	**69**

6. Meeting Minutes:

A. Be it resolved to approve and accept the following meeting Minutes:

- February 24, 2026, Board of Education Meeting- Regular and Executive Sessions
- February 28, 2026, Board of Education Retreat Meeting- Regular Session

7. Finance:

A. Be it resolved to approve the manifest of Payrolls and Bills & Claims Lists, which are on file in the Business Office:

- Bills, Claims, and Payrolls List: February 25th through March 17th. **$744,396.41**

B. Be it resolved to approve and accept the Board Secretary's Financial Report(s) for the months listed below, as submitted. Be it further resolved, pursuant to NJAC 6A:23A2.3(e), that as of the dates listed on the monthly reports, no budgetary line item(s) have been over-expended in violation of NJAC 6:23-2.11(a).

- February 2026

C. Be it resolved to approve and accept the Treasurer of School Monies Financial Reports for the months listed below, as submitted:

- February 2026

D. Be it resolved to approve the Budgetary Transfer Reports for the following months, as submitted:

- February 2026

E. Be it resolved to approve the following resolution concerning SEMI Funds for the 2025-26 Budget: Whereas, NJAC 6A:23A-5.3(b)1 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 2026-2027 school budget year if there are 40 or fewer Medicaid estimated eligible classified students, and Whereas, the Rockaway Borough Board of Education desires to apply for this waiver due to the fact that the NJ DOE has furnished a projection that has our district at 32. Medicaid-eligible classified students, Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Rockaway Borough Board of Education hereby authorizes the Chief School Administrator & Business Administrator to submit to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools in the County of Morris an appropriate waiver request of the requirements of NJAC 6A:23A-5.3(b)1 for the 2026-2027 school budget year.

F. RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUBMISSION OF FY2026 LOCAL RECREATION IMPROVEMENT GRANT (LRIG) APPLICATION NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, the Rockaway Borough Board of Education seeks to apply for funding under the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs FY2026 Local Recreation Improvement Grant (LRIG) Program; and

WHEREAS, the proposed project entitled **"Rockaway Borough School District Baseball and Softball Field Rehabilitation Project"** consists of the rehabilitation of the district-owned baseball and softball fields located at Thomas Jefferson Middle School; and

WHEREAS, the project will improve the safety, accessibility, drainage, grading, and overall usability of the baseball and softball fields through removal and replacement of infield materials, professional grading and leveling, reconstruction of pitching areas, repair of transition areas, and replacement of bases and related equipment; and

WHEREAS, the total project cost is **$80,000**, consisting of a **$75,000 grant request** from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs and **$5,000 in local in-kind staff support** for project oversight and follow-up; and

WHEREAS, the Rockaway Borough Board of Education certifies that the project will be completed on district-owned property and that the Board has the administrative and fiscal capacity to comply with all applicable state regulations, reporting requirements, and grant conditions; and

WHEREAS, the Rockaway Borough Board of Education commits to providing the required local share and to ensuring that no duplication of funding occurs;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rockaway Borough Board of Education hereby authorizes the submission of the FY2026 Local Recreation Improvement Grant application to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in the amount of **$75,000**; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board authorizes the Superintendent of Schools and the School Business Administrator to execute all documents necessary for the submission of the

application and, if awarded, to execute any grant agreements and related documents required to implement the project in accordance with grant guidelines; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

G. Be It Resolved, that the Rockaway Borough Board of Education, County of Morris, Approves the Preliminary 2026-2027 School Year Budget to be submitted to the county office for review and approval:

Current General Expense (Fund 11)	$14,576,702
Capital Outlay (Fund 12)	$0
TOTAL GENERAL FUND	$14,576,702
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	$474,000
Debt Service (Fund 40)	$755,175
TOTAL EXPENDITURE/APPROPRIATIONS	$15,805,877

Be It Further Resolved, that the Rockaway Borough Board of Education approves this budget which includes **$200**,**000** from surplus, for the General Fund, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-10.3(b), the need for and the amount of the unused spending authority be included in the base budget; and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Rockaway Borough Board of Education approves the use of the Prebudget Year Enrollment Adjustment of **$205,337** as well as the Banked Cap for Healthcare cost increase of **$592,330**, and Regular Banked Cap of **$18,238** Totaling **$815,905,** and

Be It Further Resolved, that the Budget includes District Travel for the 2026-2027 School Year be approved for **$48,000.00**, and

Be It Further Resolved, that the **GENERAL FUND** tax levy **$11,825,552** is approved to support Current General Expense for the 2026-2027 school year budget.

8. Personnel:

A. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the attached list of Staff Member **Professional Development Workshops & Travel Expenditure Requests** that have been deemed related to and within the scope of the employee's current job responsibilities and will enhance the efficient delivery of student instruction and/or furthers the efficient operation of the school district. Reimbursements listed are in accordance with guidelines established by the Dept. of Treasury, BOE Policy, and in accordance with NJAC 6A:23B-1.1., listed below.

Professional Development/Travel Expenditure Requests:

Staff Member	*Workshop Title*	*Workshop Location*	*Dates*	*Reg & Fees*	*Additional Cost to District*	*Justification for the Trip*
Cusmano, G	NJASBO 64thAnnual Conf.	Ocean Resort, Atlantic City, NJ	6/2/26-6/5/26	Fee: $0 Hotel: $358.26		Relevance to improving instruction or operation of school. Many different areas are covered and presented by a multitude of professionals.
Chandler, W	NJASBO 64thAnnual Conf.	Ocean Resort, Atlantic City, NJ	6/2/26 - 6/5/26	Fee: $500 Meals: $238 Hotel: $358.26 Mileage: $132.54		Relevance to improving instruction or operation of school. Many different areas are covered and presented by a multitude of professionals.
Cusmano, G	56th Annual Rutgers University Public Purchasing Educational Forum	Resorts Casino Hotel, Atlantic City, NJ	4/26/26-4/30/26	Fee: $450 Hotel: $210.86		The annual conference is sponsored by the Rutgers Center for Government Services, the Governmental Purchasing Association of NJ and the NJ Association of County Purchasing Officials and provides expert training in the area of School Purchasing.
Zangara, A	Windsor Learning Center- Ukeru Training	Pompton Lakes, NJ	3/6/26	No Cost	Sub	To gain knowledge of Ukeru which is a restraint free crisis management training program.
Samuels, L.	Windsor Learning Center-Ukeru Training	Pompton Lakes, NJ	3/6/26	No Cost		To gain knowledge of Ukeru which is a restraint free crisis management training program.
Yobs, T.	NJBGA 2026 Annual Conference/Expo "Learning, Leading, Legacy"	Atlantic City Expo	3/24/26 - 3/25/26	Fee:$350 Hotel: $100 Mileage:$127.84 Tolls & Parking Est. $25		CEFM, CEU's classes for grounds, QSAC drinking water.
Staropoli, M	Algebra for All Learners	Virtual	4/28/26	$150	Sub	Workshop focuses on instructional strategies that increase access to rigorous math for all learners through differentiation, inclusive lesson structures and formative assessment.
Pleger. L.	Criminal History & School Bus Safety Training	Morris Cty. Public Safety Training Academy, Morris Plains, NJ	4/10/26	No Fee Mileage: $9.72		Required Criminal History and School Bus Safety Training Program.

B. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to rescind an employment contract for Courtney Rennie, Paraprofessional, previously approved on February 24, 2026.

C. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve a medical leave of absence for the following staff members.

Staff#	Location	Position	From	To
649	Lincoln School	Lunch Aide	4/13/26- utilizing sick days	5/14/26
221	Lincoln School	Paraprofessional	4/7/26- utilizing sick days	5/15/26

D. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve **Paige Lucas**, as a leave replacement long-term substitute teacher, effective on or about May 28, 2026 through June 30, 2026, at a daily rate of $175 reflecting responsibilities beyond those of a daily substitute, pending successful completion of Criminal History background check required by P.L. 1986 c.116 and Sexual Misconduct/Child Abuse Disclosure required by P.L. 2018 c.5.

E. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve **Michael Stockstill,** as a Substitute Paraprofessional for the 2025/2026 school year, at a per diem rate of $90, (as needed) pending successful completion of Criminal History background check required by P.L. 1986 c.116 and Sexual Misconduct/Child Abuse Disclosure required by P.L. 2018 c.5.

F. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve and accept the resignation of **Nadine Morgenland**, Payroll/Benefit Coordinator, effective November 1, 2026 for the purpose of retirement.

9. Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment:

A. Be it resolved to approve the **Student Field Trip/District Events/Miscellaneous** requests as listed below.

Student Field Trips

GRADE	TEACHERS	DATE	TIME: DEPART/RETURN	DESTINATION	# of Pupils	# of Staff	Cost Per Pupil	District Cost	JUSTIFICATION FOR TRIP
MD	Zangara	3/23/26- Date Change	10:45 / 12:15	Chick, Wings and Things	7	6	$20		To enhance our curriculum with real world connections and interdisciplinary math skills as well as foster growth in college and career readiness.
8	Onischuk Bogart	3/24/26 Snow:3/25/26	10am-1:30pm	Wellness Fair/ Morris Knolls HS	15	2	$0		Expose students to a regional district event related to health; attend Part 2 of our Health Articulation.

District Events List / Miscellaneous

School Activity	Loc./School	Date/Time	Participants	District Cost	Adm./ Teacher/ Coach/ Advisor
N/A					

10. Technology and Buildings & Grounds:

A. N/A

11. Policy and NJDOE

A. Be it resolved to approve the ***2nd and Final Reading*** of the following new and/or updated Board Policies (P) and/or Regulations (R), where applicable:

Pol. & Reg.	Number	Title	Reason for Update
P	0143	Board Member Election and Appointment	Revised
P	0173	Duties of Public School Accountant	Revised

P	0174	Legal Services	Mandated/Revised
P	0177	Professional Services	Mandated/Revised
P & R	1552	Sexual Harassment	Mandated/ NEW
P & R	1570	Internal Controls	Mandated/Revised
P	1620	Administrative Employment Contracts	Mandated/Revised
P	1636.01	Notification of Promotion-New Job-Transfer Opportunities	NEW
P	2422	Statutory Curricular Requirements	Mandated/Revised
P & R	2530	Resource Materials	Revised
P & R	2535	Library Materials	Mandated/NEW
P	5339.01	Student Sun Protection	Mandated/NEW
P & R	6111	Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI)	Mandated/Revised
P & R	6220	Budget Preparation	P: Mandated/Revised R: Revised
P & R	9130	Public Complaints	Revised

B. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to accept and approve the following Superintendent's HIB decision(s) in the following instances as numbered:
-Tracking Number 302194_TJM_01122026- Conclusion- Founded
-Tracking Number 302822_TJM_01212026- Conclusion- Founded
-Tracking Number 302394_TJM_01142026- Conclusion- Unfounded

12. Consent Agenda:

A. Move and Vote on all Agenda Resolutions & Recommendations in One Motion:

Roll Call Vote:	Moved & Seconded By:	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Not Present
Mrs. Hernandez	**Seconded**	X				
Mrs. Dorgilles		X				
Mr. Dougherty		X				
Ms. Dahl, VP	**Moved**	X				
Mr. Graf, President		X				

ALL PASSED

13. New Business/Any Other Items/Board Comments for the Good of the Order:

-Ms. Dahl encouraged parents to write to elected officials.

14. Public Hearing: Limited to 3 minutes each.

Please state your name.

The President will open the floor for the Board to hear the public and then close the floor.
Please direct all dialogue to the President. Board replies are not required.

Ms. Francis

-Comments about with cuts
-Comments about student support (services, programs, etc.)

Ms. Clark

-Comments about travel resolution on agenda
-Comments about Mind's Eye budget
-Comments about 8th Grade Trip to Washington
-Comments about Use of Facilities by Sports Camp not run by the district
-Comments about potential meeting with Tom Haynes
-Comments about changing procedure for PE
-Comments about Media Specialist consultant
-Comments about Social Media consistency amongst the district

15. Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting:

A. Tuesday, April 7, 2026

The public portion of the Meeting will begin at 7:30 pm in the Cafeteria of Thomas Jefferson Middle School.

16. Executive Session II (if necessary)

Be it resolved, that the Board enter into Executive Session (Private) for the purpose of discussing contractual matters, the nature of which will be made public only when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Moved by: ***Seconded by:*** ***Voice Vote:***

THE BOARD ANTICIPATES BEING IN THE EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR APPROXIMATELY 15 MINUTES.
BOARD ACTION _____ BE TAKEN AFTER THIS SESSION CONCLUDES.

17. Motion to Adjourn the Meeting:

With no further business before the Board, the meeting is hereby adjourned at _____ pm.

Moved by: ***Jen*** ***Seconded by:*** ***Vanessa*** ***Voice Vote:***