Rockaway Borough Board of Education

103 E. Main Street, Rockaway, NJ 07866

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 24, 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: Dahl***	***Seconded by:***	***Hernandez***	***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. Board Committees Reports (as needed):

- Curriculum/Special Education: *Jen Dahl/Vanessa Dorgilles-*
- Finance/Facilities: *Ed Graf/Faride Hernandez-* ***1/29, 2/12***
- Technology: *Michael Dougherty/Vanessa Dorgilles-* ***2/5***
- Negotiations (RBEA): *Ed Graf/Vanessa Dorgilles-* ***2/24 (Board only)***
- Negotiations (RBAA): *Ed Graf/Jennifer Dahl*
- Strategic Planning: *Jennifer Dahl/Faride Hernandez*
- Safety & Security/Policy/Athletics & Activities: *AD HOC*

B. Liaison Reports (as needed)

- NJ School Boards Association- Ms. Hernandez- Shared some webinars with the board- law, cybersecurity, IT managed services, etc.
- Morris County School Boards Association- Mr. Graf
- Rockaway Borough Council- Mr. Graf- Will be sending letters to the state senate, state assembly, and the governor. If any members of the community want to join us, we encourage that. The letters will address budgetary/funding issues.
- Morris County ESC- Ms. Dahl
- Rockaway Borough HSA- Ms. Dorgilles- HSA is doing a great job.
- Rockaway Borough Education Foundation- Mrs. Hernandez- Summer/Fall Reg is open for Boro Kids.
- Rockaway Borough Recreation Committee- Mr. Dougherty- The Rockaway Rowdies registration ends soon and baseball was also discussed.

D. Superintendent's Report: Mr. Grieco

- District Update- SSDS- (Report was given on incidents).
- Be it resolved to accept the SSDS- 25-26- Reporting Period 1- September 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025, as submitted. (Report of incidents of violence, vandalism, weapons, substances, harassment, intimidation and bullying (HIB), restraint, seclusion, and other incidents leading to removal, as well as HIB training and programs conducted to support anti-bullying efforts).

Moved by: Dahl ***Seconded: Hernandez*** ***Voice Vote: ALL***

E. Board Secretary's/Business Office Report:

- Budget Update

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

F. Administration Monthly Reports (as needed):

1. Lincoln
2. Thomas Jefferson
3. Curr., Inst., and Assessment
4. Building & Grounds
5. Technology

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

H.. Board Review of Agenda Items

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.

Ms. Hamilton- **-Comments about Lincoln Concert with sub in place.**

Ms. Langan- **-Comments about Tech ticket process for teachers.**
-Amira training.
Concert communication.
Possession of Electronic Smoking Device

5. Enrollment & Staffing Report:

Grade Level & School	Students June 30, 2025	Students February 12, 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	54	-13	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	268	-11	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	69	+5	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	322	+12	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:

- January 20, 2026, Board of Education Meeting- Regular and Executive Sessions

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: January 21st through February 24th.

  $1,770,125.99

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).

- January 2026

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

- January 2026

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

- January 2026

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*	*Cost to District*	*Justification for the Trip*
Layne, C.	NJIP: All in for Inclusion Education	Virtual	2/5/26	$0	Sub	Move beyond traditional behavior strategies with proactive, inclusive supports for students who needs are met by Tier 1 classroom management plans.
Layne C.	NJIP: All in for Inclusion Education	Virtual	3/12/26	$0	Sub	Learn how to implement IEP accommodations and modifications with fidelity in arts, PE, and elective settings.
Vlacich, R.	Amira Assess: Getting started for Teachers Live	Virtual	2/26/26	$0	Sub	This course prepares educators to confidently administer the Amira ISIP Assessment, covering it's purpose, structure, administration steps, and practical tips for ensuring a smooth testing experience.
Selikoff, S.	NJECC	Montclair State University	3/10/26	Included in annual membership	Sub	This annual conference features sessions on the library and the ed tech coaching role.
Stein, L.	NJECC	Montclair State University	3/10/26	Included in annual membership	Sub	This conference will provide resources and tools on the latest technology and STEM topics to improve student learning and engagement.
Matrisciano, C.	Differentiating Sensory from Behavior	Virtual	TBD	$0	$0	To learn about current strategies and recommendations to differentiate between sensory and behavior.
Holmes, H.	TESOL Trainers' English Learner Institute II	Virtual	3/13/26	$250 Paid by Title III Grant	$0	Learn more about the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol framework, a research-based model designed to make content more accessible to ELLs. Gain insight into proven TESOL strategies
Samuels, L. Skomial, J.	Educational Leadership Inst.	Ramapo College	3/10/26 **Date Change**	$0	N/A	Workforce pipeline retention & union negotiations, emergent technologies, AI, and digital wellness. **(previously app. 1/20/26)**
Samuels Skomial Argenziano	MCAEMSA-Professional Dev.	Hanover Manor, Hanover, NJ	3/19/26	$0	N/A	Leading through change and uncertainty.
Grieco	School Law & Policy Symposium	Ocean County College – Gateway Building Toms River, NJ	3/10/26	$0	NA	Title IX, Religious Opt-Outs, and the Freedom to Read Act

B. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the Extra-Curricular Activity Establishment Proposal submitted by Sandy Gancarcik regarding the initiation of a Thomas Jefferson Middle School "**Crochet Club**". As per the CBA with the teachers' association, the teacher shall not be compensated for the initial year of the program, but upon review by the Superintendent, it may be recommended to establish the program for the following year, following a successful implementation.

C. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to confirm/approve a leave of absence for the following staff member:

Staff #	Location	Position	From	To
394	Thomas Jefferson	Teacher	5/28/26 (utilizing 4 unpaid & 14 sick	11/20/26. Returning 11/23/26

			days: NJFLA. Will claim NJFLI)	
640	Thomas Jefferson	Teacher	6/1/26 (utilizing 15 sick days: NJFLA. Will claim NJFLI)	11/20/26. Returning 11/23/26

D. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to accept and approve the resignation of **Debra Garris**, Bus Aide, for the purpose of retirement, effective June 30, 2026. Please join us in thanking her for 23 years of service, and wishing her well in retirement.

E. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the following Extracurricular / Advisor for the 2025-2026 school year.

Program	Advisor	Stipend
Girls Softball Head Coach	Eric Hedlund	$2,174
Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) **NEW**	Shannan Berhman	$2,000
Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) **NEW**	Iuliia Luchka	$2,000
Girls Basketball Head Coach	Michael Leahey	$2,329 -amended

F. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve **Krista Gore** as a long-term substitute teacher assigned to a temporary instructional vacancy at Lincoln School, effective February 9, 2026, through March 27, 2026, at a daily rate of $175, reflecting responsibilities beyond those of a daily substitute, including planning and instructional continuity. Ms. Gore has successfully completed all required background checks.

G. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve 30 hours field experience for **Abigail Enright**, current district substitute registered nurse, through Caldwell University Instructional & Non-Instructional School Nurse Program, from March 1, 2026 through June 22, 2026.

H. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve **Courtney Rennie**, as a Paraprofessional, effective on or about March 2, 2026 through June 30, 2026. Ms. Rennie will be paid based on Aide/Guide Step-1, at an hourly rate of $17.95, (prorated from actual start date) 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.

I. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve **Scott Schafran**, a current district substitute bus driver, as a substitute custodian, at the hourly rate of $19.42 for the 2025-2026 school year. Mr. Schafran has successfully completed all required background checks.

J. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve an employment contract for **Joseph Bitetto**, as a Non-Tenure track Leave Replacement ELA Teacher, beginning on or about March 16, 2026, through June 30, 2026. Mr. Bitetto will be paid based on Guide-Step BA-1 with an annual salary of $57,915 (to be pro-rated from the actual start date). Mr. Bitetto has completed all required background checks.

K. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve an employment contract for **Allen Kaye**, as a Non-Tenure track Leave Replacement Social Studies Teacher, beginning on or about May 28, 2026 through June 30, 2026. Mr. Kaye will be paid based on Guide-Step BA-1 with an annual salary of $57,915 (to be pro-rated from the actual start date). Mr. Kaye has completed all required background checks.

L. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve **Christina Rawding**, 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.

M. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve **Connor Strapp**, as the Vocal / General Music Teacher, effective on April 7, 2026, or sooner, through June 30, 2026. Mr. Strapp will be paid based on Salary/Guide BA-5, at the 25/26 rate of $59,145, (prorated from actual start date) 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.

N. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the appointment of **Lorraine Pleger** as Transportation Coordinator / Bus Driver / Business Office Secretary effective on or about March 1, 2026 through June 30, 2026. Ms. Pleger shall be compensated at an annual salary of $40,000, prorated from her actual start date. All required background checks have been completed.

O. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve **Janelle Campos** as a substitute teacher for the 2025/2026 school year.

9. Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment:

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

B. Be it resolved to approve the **2026-2027 School District Calendar**, as submitted.

Student Field Trips

GRADE	TEACHERS	DATE	TIME: DEPART /RETURN	DESTINATION	# of Pupils	# of Staff	Cost Per Pupil	District Cost	JUSTIFICATION FOR TRIP
MD	Zangara	2/23/26 **Approved on 9/23/25 as TBD**	10:45 / 12:15	Chick, Wings & 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	Perniciaro	3/24/26 **Approved on 12/9/25 as TBD**	9:00 / 2:00pm	iFly, Paramus, NJ	57	6	$47		The STEM program at iFly is designed to give kids hands-on experience with science, technology, engineering and math principles and get them thinking about how these principles translate to the real world.
7	Perniciaro	4/24/26 **Approved on 12/9/25 as TBD**	9:00 / 2:30pm	Top Golf	65	7	$30		Visiting TopGolf allows students to see real-world applications of physics concepts like force, motion, angles, and energy transfer. This hands-on experience helps them practice designing experiments and makes abstract science ideas more engaging, memorable, and relevant to everyday activities.

8	O'Brien	3/6/26	9:15 / 2:00	Morris Hills High School	36	2	$0		To see a live performance of literature read in class per NJSLA.
MD/LLD	Zangara Ralli	3/18/26 **Approved on 9/23/25 as TBD**	9:00 / 11:15	Pizza Rustica	14	11	$10		To enhance our curriculum with real world connections and interdisciplinary math skills as well as foster growth in college and career readiness.
4-8	DeFelice	5/15/26	10:15 / 1:45	AMC 16 Rockaway "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie"	46	6	$0		The SGO works very hard all year raising funds for students to enjoy their time at TJ. As an end of the year celebration, the SGO would like to attend a movie. This trip will be partly funded by SGO funds. Student cost of $12.36pp funded by SGO.
8	Perniciaro	3/9/26 **Approved on 12/9/25 as TBD**	8:25am-9:35am 9:50am-11:00am 12:05pm-1:15pm (3 Groups)	Blue Titan/ Rockaway	54	2-3 each group	$7		A self-defense class provides a practical, hands-on application of key physics concepts. Students can explore how forces such as push and pull, momentum, and leverage are used in real-world scenarios to enhance safety and self-protection.

District Events List / Miscellaneous

School Activity	Loc./School	Date/Time	Participants	District Cost	Adm./ Teacher/ Coach/ Advisor
Family Literacy Night	Lincoln Cafeteria & Gym	3/2/2026 6:00-7:30 PM	All Lincoln families	N/A	Jennifer Skomial
Art Teacher Visit (Ms. Kovacs -Valleyview School)	Thomas Jefferson	TBD	TJ Art Classes	N/A	Cecilia Isenberg
Read Across America Author Visitation	Thomas Jefferson	2/27/26	TJ Students	N/A	Jen Calonita, Author, Samantha Selikoff & RAA Team
Lincoln School Talent Show	Thomas Jefferson Gym	4/29/26: 2 Shows 9-10am & 5:30-8:30pm	Lincoln Students	N/A	Jennifer Skomial
Lincoln School Spring Concert	Rockaway AOG	3/25/26: 2 performances 9-9:40am & 10-10:40am	Lincoln Students	N/A	Jennifer Skomial
Thomas Jefferson Spring Concert	Rockaway AOG	5/19/26: 7:00-9:00pm- Grades 6-8 5/21/26: 9:00-10:30am- Grades 4-5	TJ Students	N/A	Leon Samuels

10. Technology and Buildings & Grounds:

A. N/A

11. Policy and NJDOE

A. Be it resolved to approve the ***1st 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 Membiolll[]qer 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
P	1110	Organizational Chart	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 302111_TJM_01092026- Conclusion- Founded

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	**Moved**	**Yes**			**11. B.**	
Mrs. Dorgilles	**Seconded**	**Yes**				
Mr. Dougherty		**Yes**				
Ms. Dahl, VP		**Yes**				
Mr. Graf, President		**Yes**				

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

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. Wheelock-	**-Comments about Mind's Eye Technologies. Questions were answered via email after meetings and a general correspondence was also sent out to the community.**
	-Comment about Public Notice should be included with the agenda (OPMA).
Ms. Hamilton-	**-Comment about errors in the contract.**
Ms. DeMiceli-	**-Comment about contracts should be reviewed for errors.**
Ms. Rueda-	**-Comment about Mind's Eye- Political Contribution forms.** **-Comment about "no bid contracts."** **-Comments about why the superintendent has not sent out information or presented more information about Mind's Eye.**
Student-	**-SGO Student reports (Happenings at TJ).**
Ms. Franz-	**-Liaison w/Public Library- student wrote a book** **-Locker Room**
Ms. Langan-	**-Comments about HSA Cookbook** **-Comments about 8th Grade Committee- it should start sooner.**
Ms. Sental-	**-Comments about School Calendar (matching with Morris Hills High School). Childcare concerns.** **-Comments about School Traffic. Lack of staff presence and a Traffic Officer at the front of TJ.**
Ms. Rueda-	**-Comments about traffic and students receiving detentions after a student Reaches a certain number of tardies.**
Mr. Bova-	**-Comments about Traffic/Bell Schedule/Excusal of tardies on specific days (weather related, etc.)**
Ms. Franz-	**-Comments about scheduling concerns and Spanish classes being decreased.**
Ms. Guarino	**-Comments about Study Hall concerns.**

15. Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting:

A. Tuesday, March 17, 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)- N/A~~

~~Be it resolved, that the Board enter into Executive Session (Private) for the purpose of discussing _____, 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 ____ 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 9:03 PM.

Moved by: Dahl ***Seconded by: Hernandez*** ***Voice Vote: ALL***