



LITTLE EGG HARBOR SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

MARCH 24, 2026

FROG POND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ~ MULTIPURPOSE ROOM

PUBLIC / EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:00PM

MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER** - The public meeting was called to order by Chris Filiciello at 6:07 pm

2. **SUNSHINE STATEMENT**

This is to advise the general public that in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the Little Egg Harbor Board of Education meeting was advertised in the Atlantic City Press and posted at the office of the Board of Education located at 307 Frog Pond Road, Little Egg Harbor, NJ and posted at the office of the Municipal Clerk of Little Egg Harbor.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Mr. Ciccone_Yes_Ms. Erber _Yes_ Mr. Leszega_Yes_Ms. Middlecoop _Yes_
Dr. Snyder _Yes_Mr. O'Keefe_Yes_Mr. Filiciello_Yes_

Also present: Dr. Lisa Antunes, Superintendent
Carl Morelli, Business Administrator
Aron Mandel, Board Attorney

4. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

5. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Motion by G. Leszega. Second by J. Ciccone to approve the agenda as presented.

All AYES

The Board Secretary stated the motion carried.

6. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Motion by G. Leszega. Second by D. O'Keefe.

RESOLUTION OF THE LITTLE EGG HARBOR BOARD OF EDUCATION, AUTHORIZING EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO THE NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, ET SEQ.)

WHEREAS, the Little Egg Harbor Board of Education ("Board") is a public body that is subject to the requirements of the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. (hereinafter referred to as "OPMA"); and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the OPMA, all meetings of public bodies are required to be open to the public, except as provided in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12, where the public body may exclude the public from that portion of a meeting at which the public body discusses certain specific matters; and

WHEREAS, the Board has determined that it is necessary and appropriate to discuss certain matters in private executive session, from which the public shall be excluded.



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NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board enters into executive session, for the purpose(s) as outlined and described below (check all that apply):

___ **1.** Matter(s) which, by express provision of federal law, State statute or rule of court shall be rendered confidential or excluded from the provisions of the OPMA.

___ **2.** Matter(s) in which the release of information would impair a right to receive funds from the Government of the United States.

___ **3.** Material(s) the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy such as any records, data, reports, recommendations, or other personal material of any educational, training, social service, medical, health, custodial, child protection, rehabilitation, legal defense, welfare, housing, relocation, insurance, and similar program or institution operated by a public body pertaining to any specific individual admitted to or served by an institution or program, including but not limited to, information relative to the individual's personal and family circumstances, and any material pertaining to admission, discharge, treatment, progress, or condition of any individual, unless the individual concerned (or, in the case of a minor or an incapacitated individual, the individual's guardian) shall request in writing that the material be disclosed publicly.

___ **4.** Collective Bargaining Agreement(s), or the terms and conditions which are proposed for inclusion in any collective bargaining agreement(s), including the negotiation of the terms and conditions thereof with employees or representatives of employees of the Board.

___ **5.** Matter(s) involving the purchase, lease, or acquisition of real property with public funds, the setting of banking rates, or investment of public funds, if it could adversely affect the public interest if discussion of the matters were disclosed.

___ **6.** Tactics and techniques utilized in protecting the safety and property of the public, provided that their disclosure could impair that protection, or investigations of violations or possible violations of the law.

X **7.** Pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation(s) in which the public body is, or may become, a party, or matters falling within the attorney-client privilege, to the extent that confidentiality is required in order for the attorney to exercise his/her ethical duties as a lawyer.

___ **8.** Matter(s) involving the employment, appointment, termination of employment, terms and conditions of employment, evaluation of the performance of, promotion, or disciplining of any specific prospective public officer or employee or current public officer or employee employed or appointed by the Board, unless all the individual employees or appointees whose rights could be adversely affected request in writing that the matter or matters be discussed at a public meeting.

___ **9.** Deliberations of Board occurring after a public hearing that may result in the imposition of a specific civil penalty upon the responding party or the



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suspension or loss of a license or permit belonging to the responding party as a result of an act or omission for which the responding party bears responsibility.

The minutes of the private executive session shall be available to the public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

It is anticipated that the Board will remain in private executive session for approximately 20 minutes.

Formal action may be taken by the Board upon its return from private executive session.

This Resolution shall take effect immediately.

All AYES

The Board Secretary stated the motion carried.

7. PRESENTATIONS

- A. Initial Adoption/Public Hearing of the 2026-2027 Tentative Budget by Mr. Carl Morelli, School Business Administrator

8. PUBLIC COMMENT 1 - AGENDA ITEMS ONLY

The Board of Education now welcomes the public to comment on the items which are on our agenda tonight. It may not always be possible or appropriate for the Board to directly answer questions during the public comment period. Each speaker is allotted a maximum of five (5) minutes to make their statement. No one may speak more than once on the same topic. You are required to give your name and address before speaking. Please keep your comments respectful and non-defamatory, and maintain the level of decorum appropriate for a public meeting where minors may be in the audience.

Marion Rinaldo, paraprofessional, spoke about the abolishment of the Full Time Paraprofessional position. She felt like this was a blindside to everyone and asked the board to rescind the decision.

Jennifer Lang-Scinico, parent, thanked the 2 board members who voted no to the abolishment of the Full Time Paraprofessionals. She stated that paraprofessionals are not optional but essential. Ms. Scinico asked the board what is the plan if there are not enough paraprofessionals to fulfill the positions needed in the district. She also addressed the board with several questions regarding transportation and the status of the buildings.

Tracey Brown, paraprofessional, resident, grandparent spoke to the board regarding the budget and the 81 Full Time Paraprofessionals. She stated all paraprofessionals are definitely essential and she doesn't care what other districts are doing. She feels the budget discussions are not putting the children first.



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Danielle Townsman, paraprofessional, teacher spoke to the board regarding the need for consistency with the paraprofessionals. She feels that those that have applied will apply and then resign for another position. Ms. Townsman asked the board to reconsider the elimination of Full Time Paraprofessionals.

Mike Fromosky, spouse of a paraprofessional, spoke to the board regarding the OPRA request he submitted asking for information regarding the paraprofessionals. He also gave his opinion on options to look into to help save the paraprofessionals.

Jacob Seeger, student, son of a paraprofessional stated that having a dedicated 1:1 paraprofessional for those that need it is a must to build something powerful "trust". He felt safer, more confident and more willing to try. Mr. Seeger told her personal story in regards to his experience having a paraprofessional.

Lou Randazzo, field representative, NJEA told the board that 56 of the 81 abolished Full Time Paraprofessionals are residents of Little Egg Harbor. He also declared the action that has been taken to abolish the Full Time Paraprofessional is illegal. Mr. Randazzo stated it is highly unlikely that the current full time paraprofessionals will reapply for the part time positions. He thanked the two board members who voted no to the abolishment motion.

Jaclyn Finnigan, speaking on behalf of the Teachers Association stated the association has a profound disappointment and feels it was an unacceptable manner on how the abolishment was carried out. She spoke on the necessity of paraprofessionals and how they provide critical support and are a lifeline for many children. Ms. Finnigan asked the board to reconsider the vote to abolish all Full Time Paraprofessionals.

Jennifer Lutz, paraprofessional, has worked in districts that had both part time and full time paraprofessionals, and questioned the board regarding bussing and transportation.

Tina Konyha, vice president support staff association and a tax payer, told the board the way the decision was made was wrong and everyone deserves respect. She stated everyone is a family that Dr. Antunes has decided to not be a part of and there is no communication. Ms. Konyha spoke about the transportation and stated the district does not need a bus company. She stated that Dr. Antunes has no investment in the community because she doesn't live in Little Egg Harbor.

Alanna Lupo, teacher addressed the board regarding the paraprofessionals and stated they are essential to what she does. These paraprofessionals give small moments that leave lasting impressions. She asked the board to reconsider the vote for Full Time Paraprofessionals.

Sarah Trotta, teacher in special education stated paraprofessionals are not just helpful they are essential. She questioned the board on how the scheduling of part time paraprofessionals would work within the classroom throughout a school day. Ms. Trotta asked the board to reconsider their vote on abolishing Full Time Paraprofessionals. She stated students' needs must come first.



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Colleen Minissale, teacher addressed the board regarding her concern of the abolishment of Full Time Paraprofessionals. She stated the students need a 2nd constant adult that builds trust and familiarity. Ms. Minissale is concerned about compliance. She also asked the board to reconsider their decision, not from a budget perspective but to remember this is people's livelihood and treat them with respect and sensitivity.

Tracey Moyer, health/PE teacher stated she has worked with many paraprofessionals and understands what a good paraprofessional does. She asked the board to reconsider their decision.

Toni-Leigh Chamberlain, teacher, spoke about the necessity of paraprofessionals. She stated students need people to stand by them and to have a consistent presence they don't have at home. It will be hard if the foundation of her classroom is taken away. She urged the board to reconsider their vote.

Samantha Moure, taxpayer and former paraprofessional, asked what will the district do when the paraprofessionals quit. She stated there is inclusion for everyone-be kind.

Tyler Carlson, paraprofessional stated that paraprofessionals are priceless and can not be replaced because of the connection they make with students.

Barbara Rheault, Atlantic County NJEA President, addressed the board regarding the need for Full Time Paraprofessionals. She stated paraprofessionals should be respected and treated with dignity. Ms. Rheault asked the board who will support the students. She requested that the students deserve Full Time Paraprofessionals.

Jon Miller, resident, parent gave his feelings towards the vote to abolish Full Time Paraprofessionals. He made comments toward Mr. Morelli. Mr. Miller feels the board did not think this decision through. He reminded the audience that the board is voted in and there is another election to make a change.

Angela Guedes, resident addressed the board regarding the decision to abolish the Full Time Paraprofessionals. She addressed her concerns and feels there was a misjudgement.

Parent spoke regarding the Full Time Paraprofessional decision. She feels that discipline will be an issue if letting go of 81 Full Time Paraprofessionals. She spoke about the roof leaks and stated her child came home with headaches. She asked the board to reconsider their decision.

Brittany Rosell, parent feels the abolishment of Full Time Paraprofessionals are a direct hit to the critical support staff. Her child connects with her Preschool paraprofessional and would like the board to reconsider their decision.

Jen Sulzmann, paraprofessional addressed the abolishment of Full Time Paraprofessionals. She stated that paraprofessionals are committed to the care and trust



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of students. Ms. Sulzmann said that paraprofessionals are the safety and love in the classroom. There is a true team centered around student success. If not a full time position there will be a lack of continuity, communication and collaboration.

John Baker is not comfortable, but he feels due to Mr. Morelli's condescending presentation he needed to speak. He feels the only thing that makes it livable for his student is the consistency of the paraprofessionals. Mr. Baker said this decision is going to turn his son's little world upside down.

Meghan Gunsten, PIRS Specialist stated a consistent person is so important. She asked the board to look at the decision for the Preschool Teachers Assistant as the budget is different for Preschool.

Lisa Mitchell, is an advocate for paraprofessionals and urged the board to keep them as permanent school employees who have built relationships with students. She feels the part time status is the first step towards privatization.

Amy English, retired educator addressed Ms. Erber to see if she was still on the call for the meeting. Ms. English asked the Paraprofessionals in the audience to stand. She thanked the two board members who voted no to the abolishment motion. Ms. English spoke to the board regarding topics of transportation. She addressed the discarding of ceiling tiles in the dumpsters.

Sarai Mendoza, social worker, stated that she has been in many districts and has never seen a district with more hardworking then Little Egg Harbor. She is privileged and honored to work beside the CST team.

Julianna Halleran, paraprofessional addressed the board regarding the abolishment of Full Time Paraprofessionals. She stated the paraprofessionals are the first person students see. She feels it might look like a financial solution on paper but these are 81 human beings.

Rhonda Simat-Sharkey, paraprofessional, read a poem from the Lorax.

Erica Baker, parent addressed the board regarding the paraprofessionals stating they are an essential, consistent structure for the students. She feels that paraprofessionals are not optional, that they are her son's life.

Jason Baker took his hat off for those board members that voted no to the abolishment of Full Time Paraprofessionals. He understands that there are difficult decisions to be made.

Cyndy Castaldo read responses from Dr. Antunes, stating there was a whole lot of nothing. She feels there is no communication with this school district. Ms. Castaldo spoke about the mold issue in the schools and stated the school is falling apart.



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Tracy, parent of three children in the district, asked the board to please reconsider the decision to reduce Full Time Paraprofessionals. She feels the long term impact can negate short term decisions

Marc Sink resident, formal employee asked the board respectfully, but firmly to rescind the decision to abolish the Full Time Paraprofessionals. He stated the board/administrators are not being seen as leadership, but did not include the two board members who voted no to the motion. Mr. Sink stated how you treat people matters, be human.

Raquel Selander, parent is concerned about the school because of her student coming home in hives. She didn't get any answers from school so she did. Ms. Selander said the classroom with the problem was not tested. She asked for the date the roof will be replaced.

Rick Mellerup asked the board if they would increase the tax increase to save the Full Time Paraprofessional jobs.

Mallorie Figueiras, paraprofessional, asked the board to reconsider their vote because the paraprofessionals feel that this is their second home and it's more than a job, it's their livelihood and they deserve better.

Scott Campbell, President Toms River Educ Assoc., addressed the board regarding the Full Time Paraprofessionals. He stated it is hard to find and retain good people.

Haidy Soliman, parent, taxpayer, substitute teacher addressed the Full Time Paraprofessional abolishment. She spoke about the music teacher that was let go last year. Ms. Soliman speaks to the paraprofessionals and says "you are in charge", "you matter".

Eileen Carpenter, paraprofessional stated the paraprofessionals have love for their jobs, patience and show up every single day. She urged the board to please rethink the vote because it is more than a job, it is their purpose.

Victoria Ricci, daughter of a paraprofessional, substitute paraprofessional and former student stated that paraprofessionals are the backbone of the classroom. She felt the way this was done was a blatant disrespect and she urged the board to change their decision.

Kate Sanchez, parent, told the board she has seen a life changing impact due to the paraprofessionals. She feels her children had the steady trust of paraprofessionals. Ms. Sanchez asked to please not reduce these rolls because they are an essential part of the team.

Kristen Beeker, parent stated having the paraprofessionals are part of the family. She is also representing a friend of hers who has a special education student. Ms. Beeker asked the board to please reconsider the vote.



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Ron Donderstack, President of the Central Regional School District addressed the board regarding the abolishment of Full Time Paraprofessionals. He asked for other creative ways to handle this situation. Mr. Donderstack said to ask more questions before making a decision.

Sabina Martin, resident, understands that the board is not a paid position and understands the budget decision needing to be made. She mentioned that another district had their administration take a freeze in salaries. Ms. Martin understands both sides of the situation. She stated everyone should sit down and figure this out together.

Monica Frazer, resident, addressed the board regarding Full Time Paraprofessional motion. She stated she does not want paraprofessionals to leave. She mentioned her son that has had perfect attendance has been ill. Ms. Frazer said her son can't wash her hands at school because of no soap in the bathrooms. She commented on the condition of the school.

Amanda Hand, teacher, parent, taxpayer told the board Full Time Paraprofessionals are not an extra person, they are an essential part of the team. She expressed there is not a time during the day where they are not needed. Paraprofessionals are an invaluable asset to the district not a luxury, they are a necessity. Ms. Hand urged the board to reconsider their decision.

Amy Lucas, bus driver stated her passion is being a bus driver of special education students. She commends the bus aides for everything they do. Ms. Lucas stated it has been a privilege to drive the bus for Little Egg Harbor.

Gauri Ford, parent addressed the board regarding the Full Time Paraprofessional decision. She feels there has been no emotion. Ms. Ford questioned the board and asked what other options were considered. She asked what plan is in place? Ms. Ford asked the board to rescind the vote to abolish Full Time Paraprofessionals.

Chris Cittadino, parent expressed his appreciation for the paraprofessional that helped his student.

Catalina McDowel, parent expressed her concerns regarding the abolishment of the Full Time Paraprofessionals. She is concerned about her child that has allergies. The paraprofessionals are there to help with her children. She wants her children to have the same experience she has. Ms. McDowel stated the paraprofessionals are amazing people. She felt the email that was sent to the Paraprofessionals to fire them was so disrespectful. She pleaded with the board to put some emotion into the decision.

Cheryl Post, paraprofessional stated it is not just a job, it is her passion. She has built strong relations with her students and staff members. She understands the decisions need to be made due to budgetary reasons but respectfully asking to consider the human



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side of the decision. Ms. Post expressed her concern with taking away the health insurance.

Amy English, stated she is inundated with emails while sitting in the audience. Ms. English addressed the following issued brought to her: 1)solar panels, 2)Is Mr. O'Keefe still a union member at another district, 3) District policy 0145

Angela Guedes addressed the audience stating she is there to give support and she will happily stand next to everyone. She talked about the healthcare cost. There are other ways to reduce costs. Ms. Guedes stated you have a voice, use it.

Valerie Hambly, stated that she is hoping that the board and everyone at the table is taking everyone's comments into consideration. She thanked Dr. Snyder and Tiffany Middlecoop for their vote no. Ms. Hambly felt the way the decision was made was so abrupt. She asked the audience for names of other districts who follow the part time model. Ms. Hambly just asked the board to be human.

Dr. Snyder addressed the audience stating it takes a lot of courage to speak. She addressed her decision regarding the Full Time Paraprofessional vote. Dr. Snyder stated she questioned the health insurance options. Thanked Jon Miller for giving the number of part time paraprofessionals to cover full time paraprofessionals. She felt this could have been handled better.

Mr. O'Keefe thanked everyone for coming out and stated that he hears everyone loud and clear. He felt everyone's speech tonight has been inspiring. Mr. O'Keefe stated the board is operating in fiscal reality that can not be ignored. He welcomes additional discourse if there are other ways. Mr. O'Keefe believes we can move forward together.

Ms. Middlecoop stated that every person who spoke, she knows your student from either worked as a paraprofessional, was taught how to be a paraprofessional or you are one of my students paraprofessional or teacher and she looks forward to advocating for students and staff of the district.

9. ACTION ITEMS:

Motion by D. O'Keefe. Second by G. Leszega to approve Finance Items A and B
Time was allotted for questions.

A. SCHOOL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR/BOARD SECRETARY

1. Finance

- a. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accept the Corrective Action Plan for the year ending June 30, 2025. ([Attachment](#))
- b. **RESOLVED** that the Superintendent recommends approval to adopt the Tentative Budget for FY 2026-2027:
BE IT RESOLVED that the tentative budget be approved for the 2026-2027 School Year using the 2026-2027 state aid figures and School Business Administrator/Board Secretary be authorized to submit the



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following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline:

Little Egg Harbor	<u>GENERAL</u> <u>FUND</u>	<u>SPECIAL REVENUES</u>	<u>DEBT</u> <u>SERVICE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
2026-2027 TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$31,681,758.00	\$6,386,030.00	-0-	\$38,067,788.00
LESS: ANTICIPATED REVENUES	\$10,205,570.00	\$6,386,030.00	\$646,482.00	\$17,238,082.00
TAXES TO BE RAISED	\$19,761,316.00	-0-	\$1,131,390.00	\$20,892,706.00

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;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a public hearing be held at the Little Egg Harbor Board of Education located at the Frog Pond Elementary School Multi-Purpose Room, Little Egg Harbor, New Jersey on April 28, 2026 at 6:00pm for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2026-2027 School Year.

WHEREAS, the Little Egg Harbor 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

And, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED to acknowledge that the 2026-2027 budget as described above results in a tax levy of \$20,892,706.00.

WHEREAS, the Little Egg Harbor Board of Education established \$35,000.00 as the maximum travel amount for the current school year and has expended \$24,726.16 as of this date; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Education approved travel and related expense reimbursements in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3, to a maximum expenditure of \$35,000.00 for the 2026-2027 school year.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Ciccone_Yes_Ms. Erber _Yes_ Mr. Leszega_Yes_Ms. Middlecoop _Yes_



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Dr. Snyder _Abstain_Mr. O'Keefe_Yes_Mr. Filiciello_Yes_

The Board Secretary stated the motion carried.

10. NEW BUSINESS

Motion by Dr. Snyder. Second by T. Middlecoop to amend the motion on the floor to include the board review to be completed by April 21, 2026.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Ciccone_Abstain_Ms. Erber _No(corrected)_ Mr. Leszega_No_Ms. Middlecoop _Yes_
Dr. Snyder _Yes_Mr. O'Keefe_No_Mr. Filiciello_No_

The Board Secretary stated the motion does not carry.

Motion by T. Middlecoop. Second by Dr. Snyder to amend the March 10th resolution abolishing Full Time Paraprofessionals to require board review of final staffing plan, financial impact and student impact analysis prior to implementation. The board review is to be completed by April 21, 2026.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Ciccone_Abstain_Ms. Erber _No(corrected)_Mr. Leszega_No_Ms. Middlecoop _Yes_
Dr. Snyder _Yes_Mr. O'Keefe_No_Mr. Filiciello_Yes_

The Board Secretary stated the motion does not carry.(corrected)

11. PUBLIC COMMENT

The floor is now open to members of the public. The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues. The Board requests that each statement made by a participant is limited to five minutes as cited in Policy No. 0167. There is a sign-in sheet located on the podium. Please sign in before you speak.

Cheryl Post, paraprofessional invited the board to come in and see what we do before you make a judgement.

Marc Sink, addressed the board again regarding the way the Full Time Paraprofessionals abolishment motion. He encouraged paraprofessionals to find an advocate and know the law and use it.

A parent thanked the two board members for standing up for the children.

Jon Miller thanked the board for taking the time to hear everyone. He owns a local business and understands the budgeting perspective. Mr. Miller stated-do not underestimate the retention problem the district is going to have with part time staff that will be hired with no incentive to stay. He invites the board to embrace the concept



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of retaining employees with respect and understand that a little sacrifice to get health insurance for those paraprofessional will pay off exponentially.

12. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Dr. Snyder. Second by J.Ciccone.

The board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

To adjourn at 11:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carl Morelli

Board Secretary/School Business Administrator