



**RIDGEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
PUBLIC MEETING OF THE  
RIDGEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**August 29, 2023**

**Special Public Meeting 4:00 p.m.**

Minutes of the Special Public Meeting of the Ridgewood Board of Education held on August 29, 2023 at 4:00 p.m., at the Education Center.

**I. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

**Present:**

Mr. Michael Lembo, President; Ms. HyunJu Kwak, Vice President; Ms. Sheila Brogan, Mr. Saurabh Dani, Mr. Muhammad Mahmoud

**Also Present:**

Mr. Mark Schwarz, Superintendent of Schools, Ms. Jaime Murphy, Director of Human Resources; Ms. Julie Kot, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; Richard Freedman, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction

**Visitors:** Approximately 4 community members were present in-person..

**II. FLAG SALUTE AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mr. Lembo led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance

**III. OPENING STATEMENT BY PRESIDING OFFICER**

Mr. Lembo announced that pursuant to the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, advance notice of this meeting had been given to The Ridgewood News, The Record, and the Clerk of the Village of Ridgewood. In addition, notices were posted in the office of the Board Secretary and in all school buildings.

**IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

View this portion of the [Ridgewood BOE Special Public Meeting 8/29/2023](#) at **00:09:43**.

Laura McKenna, 861 Bingham Road, commented about late start at the high school and the importance of mental health in education. She hopes we pursue other ideas in addition to late start to help with the mental health concerns. She would like you to look at the different students within the high school and their different experiences and how late start is affecting each type of student. Agrees with the discussion about looking at the college experience of the graduates and how many of them graduate in four years. How prepared are they for college, do college prep classes prepare students? Believes that math should be one of the goals for the coming year.

Ann Loving, 342 South Irving Street, commented that sometimes when Ms. Brogan speaks her microphone is turned off and audience cannot hear. Happy to have met Mr. Schwarz and supports his idea of real time minutes for committee meetings. Commented that she did not like the way

that the president of board trustees spoke and behaved towards another elected person who was asking questions.

Mary Micale, 181 Spencer Place, commented that the special public meetings to discuss the board goals have been very useful, she suggested to Mr. Schwarz if another special public meeting could be scheduled to discuss how the committee structure and the board will work. Respectfully disagreed with Dr. Mckenna regarding late start, Jeff Nyhuis has been a proponent of late start. It has been his initiative almost 12 years ago. She commented on the benefits of later start.

Lynn Benson, 117 John Street, thanked everyone for the collaborative discussions and the presentation regarding later start. Mr. Nyhuis has been a strong supporter of the later start initiatives for decades. Discussed the research supporting later start. Commented on the discussion regarding data and discussed the profound experiences that ordinary surveys may not capture including DEI and social emotional well-being. Hopes that there is a tool to capture qualitative information.

Meghann Bierly, Orchard Place, shared that she is excited to hear about the focus the district is placing on literacy as well as the discussions about data and communication with the community. Thanked everyone who was involved in the initiatives. She focused thoughts on literacy and the great leaps the district has made over the last five or six years. She presented the following questions: Are principals and supervisors participating in these training sessions? Will teachers have access to evidence based training? Are teachers going to be provided with tools to assess and progress monitor students on regular intervals, collect and share valid data?

Mr. Freedman responded that Principals will be involved in the training. This is a multi-year PD program for everyone that's involved. Next year will be the full implementation based on how it goes this fall. Leaders are going to be trained alongside the teachers.

Mr. Schwarz provided an audible about the funding and process of installation of the units that are on the addendum for approval. The resolutions allow the district to move forward with DOE approval and the project. The resolutions include language regarding pending the ability to convert the contract to a 16-month payment plan.

View this portion of the [Ridgewood BOE Special Public Meeting 8/29/2023](#) at 00:33:11

**Addendum:**

**RESOLUTIONS AND MOTIONS NOT INCLUDED IN CONSENT AGENDA**

**i. Approval: Submission of the Project Application for the Ridge Elementary School HVAC Replacement**

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the submission of the project application to the New Jersey Department of Education for the HVAC Unit Replacement Project at Ridge Elementary School. Project pending written documentation from Facilities Solution Group (FSG), the official project management firm for PSE&G's Direct Install Program for Bergen County, and pending the ability to convert contract to a 60-month payment plan.

ii. **Approval: Amendment to the District Long Range Facility Plan for the Ridge Elementary School HVAC Replacement Project**

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the amendment of the District's Long Range Facility Plan (LRFP) to include the HVAC Unit Replacement Projects at Ridge Elementary School.

iii. **Approval: Submission of the Project Application for the Hawes Elementary School HVAC Replacement**

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the submission of the project application to the New Jersey Department of Education for the HVAC Unit Replacement Project at Hawes Elementary School. Project pending written documentation from Facilities Solution Group (FSG), the official project management firm for PSE&G's Direct Install Program for Bergen County, and pending the ability to convert contract to a 60-month payment plan

iv. **Approval: Amendment to the District Long Range Facility Plan for the Hawes Elementary School HVAC Replacement Project**

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the amendment of the District's Long Range Facility Plan (LRFP) to include the HVAC Unit Replacement Projects at Hawes Elementary School.

v. **Approval: Submission of the Project Application for the Ridgewood High School HVAC Replacement Project**

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the submission of the project application to the New Jersey Department of Education for the HVAC Unit Replacement Project at Ridgewood High School. Project pending written documentation from Facilities Solution Group (FSG), the official project management firm for PSE&G's Direct Install Program for Bergen County, and pending the ability to convert contract to a 60-month payment plan.

vi. **Approval: Amendment to the District Long Range Facility Plan for the Ridgewood High School HVAC Replacement Project**

The Ridgewood Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the amendment of the District's Long Range Facility Plan (LRFP) to include the HVAC Unit Replacement Projects at Ridgewood High School.

**MOTION** by: Mr. Lembo

**SECOND** by: Ms. Brogan

**ROLL CALL**

AYES: Ms. Brogan, Mr. Dani, Ms. Kwak, Mr. Lembo, Mr. Mahmoud

NAYS: none

**V. DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**A. District and Board Goals Work Session**

Mr. Schwarz reviewed the previous work session which includes the concept of developing goals in the prior year and using multi-year goals/strategic plan goals. Given the current circumstances there were some specific topics that would be good one-year topics.

View this portion of the [Ridgewood BOE Special Public Meeting 8/29/2023](#) 00:40:51.

Mr. Schwarz's goal for today's meeting is to identify the parts of the items that they feel good about, the general structures of questions and if there is anything that is missing the items will be flagged and represented as a Board interest. Mr. Schwarz will then bring the items to the administrative team for refinement, discuss the goals at the September curriculum meetings and then finalize and approve in October.

Mr. Schwarz presented a draft of the goal topics.

District goal #1 Evaluate and update the district's strategic plan

District goal #2 Ensure an inclusive culture

District goal #3 Promptly evaluate district math and ELA program efficacy

District Goal #4 Reevaluate the district's financial position to ensure sustainable and efficacious support for our schools.

View this portion of the [Ridgewood BOE Special Public Meeting 8/29/2023](#) at 00:46:10

The Board discussed the steps for the development of Board goals.

View this portion of the [Ridgewood BOE Special Public Meeting 8/29/2023](#) at 01:54:01.

## VI. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

View this portion of the [Ridgewood BOE Special Public Meeting 8/29/2023](#) at 01:59:42.

Laura McKenna, 861 Bingham Road, shared that these are fabulous and comprehensive goals. She commented that it may be too soon to know how AI will impact academics. She loves the DEI initiatives discussed and asked the board to get some feedback from parents. Would like to know if there are redundancies in finance between the schools, could activities be centralized. Will curriculum changes lead to savings?

Mary Micale, shared some bullet points she would like considered as goals are being finalized. Agrees with Mr. Schwarz's point regarding mental health and thinks we should keep in mind there will always be something new and different that we can try or implement to protect the kids. Commented on DEI, loves the comment that there is more to teach teenagers than what is going on in Ridgewood.

Jaime Davis, 204 Avondale Road, thanked everyone for making DEI a focus and commented that the LSHSA will be making a concerted effort to work with the HSA's to make the events they plan more accommodating, for example to students who may have sensory or anxiety needs. Ms. Davis provided additional examples for future support.

## VII. MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Not applicable

## VIII. RECONVENED PUBLIC MEETING

Not applicable

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION** by: Mr. Lembo

**SECOND** by: Ms. Brogan

**VOICE VOTE:**

Ms. Brogan, Mr. Dani, Ms. Kwak, Mr. Lembo, Mr. Mahmoud - *ALL AYES*

- **The Meeting was adjourned at 6:09 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Jaime Cangialosi-Murphy  
Director of Human Resources