

PARK RIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

Date: September 27, 2021

Public Started: 6:30 P.M.

Private Started: 8:45 P.M.

Private Ended: 9:35 P.M.

Public Ended: 9:40 P.M.

High School Media Center

I. Roll Call

N. Triano	J. Pierotti	N. Agoos	L. Sum	D. Clare	A. Wagner	D. Bradler
A	X	X	X	A	X	X

Also Present:

R. Gamper R. Wright

II. Pledge of Allegiance – was led by Board President, David Bradler.

III. Open Public Meetings Statement – was read by Board President, David Bradler.

This is to advise the general public and to instruct that it be recorded in the minutes that in compliance with Chapter 231 of the Public Laws of 1975, entitled the "Open Public Meetings Act," the Park Ridge Board of Education on September 17, 2021 caused to be posted at the Office of the Board of Education located at 85 Pascack Road, Park Ridge, New Jersey and on September 17, 2021 sent to The Record, 1 Garret Mountain Plaza, P.O. Box 471, Woodland Park, NJ 07424-0471 and The Ridgewood News, 41 Oak Street, Ridgewood, NJ 07450-3805 and on September 17, 2021 delivered to the Office of the Municipal Clerk of Park Ridge and the Park Ridge Public Library a meeting notice setting forth the time, date and location of this meeting.

IV. SPECIAL PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD

A. Board and District Goal Setting

Mr. Lee from NJSBA led the Board in a discussion on the creation of District and Board goals. He commented that they have chosen four (4) Board goals and six (6) District goals. He recommended that they assign the Board goals to a committee to develop action items at the conclusion, the Board discussed each of the four Board goals and which committee would most likely be assigned to them. They also discussed several possible action items with each of the goals. Mr. Lee then spoke about the District Goals. He indicated that Dr. Gamper would be responsible for developing the action items associated with these goals in conjunction with committees.

Mr. Lee then presented a PowerPoint slide show on Committee Effectiveness and Roles. The Board was given a questionnaire of 21 items to determine what areas they felt needed help. Each Board member gave their responses as follows.

- AW – 3,5,7,12*
- LS – 1,3,5,7,11,16*
- DB – 3,4,6,7,9*
- NA – 3,5,7,9,13,16*
- JP – 1,3,11,16,19*

Mr. Lee then reviewed the general duties of the committees and reviewed the three key committees each Board should have. He recommended having a Chairperson, and discussed their role. He then reviewed the process of getting something from committee discussion to Board vote.

Mr. Lee discussed the concept of “Committee of the whole.” Under this system, every meeting is considered a Public Meeting. He commented that this type of structure could be a barrier as comments made during the meeting can lead to misinformation being spread to the public.

V. EDUCATION RESOLUTIONS

E1. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves the goals set for the Board of Education for the 2021/22 school year.

M: LS S: AW
 NT JP NA LS DC AW DB
 A Y Y Y A Y Y

E2. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves the goals set for the district for the 2021/22 school year.

M: LS S: AW
 NT JP NA LS DC AW DB
 A Y Y Y A Y Y

E3. The Park Ridge Board of Education accepts the Graduation Profile for the Park Ridge School District, 4-year cohort of 2021 as follows:

1. The total number of students graduated: 95 students (95 students were in our cohort: Graduation Rate is 100%)
2. The number of students graduated under the substitute competency test process: 80 students for ELA, and 85 students for Math.
3. The number of students graduated under the portfolio appeals process: 0
4. The number of students receiving State-endorsed high school diplomas as a result of meeting any alternative requirements for graduation as specified in their IEPs: 4 students for ELA, and 8 for Math.
5. The total number of students denied graduation from the 12th grade class: 0
6. The number of students denied graduation from the 12th grade class solely because of failure to pass the high school end-of-course PARCC assessments, substitute competency tests, or portfolio appeals process based on the provisions of this chapter: 0

M: LS S: AW
 NT JP NA LS DC AW DB
 A Y Y Y A Y Y

The Board passed items E1, E2 and E3 as follows:

M: LS S: AW
 NT JP NA LS DC AW DB
 A Y Y Y A Y Y

V. Hearing of Citizens

Ms. Cooper asked several questions about how the Board is planning to handle PTO volunteers. Of concern was how the Board was going to define “regular visits” as it pertains to volunteers, and what will happen on October 18th when the Executive order is put in place. Ms. Agoos responded that the Board has spoken about it but has not acted formerly. Ms. Wagner indicated that there have been conversations among Board members but they have not acted formerly.

The Board Attorney commented that the Board must implement Executive order 253 and have people provide proof of vaccination and/or testing, if they are at the school on a regular basis. She clarified that third-party vendors were exempt from this. The attorney stated that anyone visiting the building on a regular schedule would meet this definition. She further clarified that the term “covered worker” includes volunteers.

Several parents commented that implanting the Executive order would impact the ability of the PTO’s to provide necessary services. They also argued that the other factors should be considered when deciding how to address the issue of vaccination with volunteers. They pointed out that time spent with students should be considered, not just the schedule. Others felt that the PTO was in fact a third party as they are a separate entity from the school and have their own tax id.

SM 092721

Another parent commented that she has lived in Park Ridge her whole life and likes the small-town feel. She felt the decision to be vaccinated should be left to her and not mandated.

Dr. Gamper responded to the concerns by stating that the Board was advised to follow the Executive order by their attorney.

Ms. Wagner asked for clarification on the matter, asking whether this was a Policy issue or an administrative issue.

The Board attorney responded that Executive order 253 states that the Board shall adopt a policy that will provide adequate proof of vaccination or proof of testing.

Ms. Wagner noted that the Policy came from Strauss Esmay, and that other Boards have slightly different wording from the one being proposed for Park Ridge. She wanted to know if that meant there were possible adjustments that could be made.

Several parents asked to see the written analysis of the policy. They commented that the phrase "Recommended" does not mean you must follow them. These parents reiterated that the PTO is a private organization and not volunteers, and that there are other districts who are not following this guideline. They asked the Board to go back to the Attorney and look for options.

A question was asked if the district would offer a way for volunteers to be tested. Dr. Gamper responded that the district is looking into this now and is considering using private labs as well as State designated facilities.

The Board attorney stated that the school must follow the law. They have provided a policy with wording they are recommending based on the interpretation of that law.

Other comments made by parents were that the wording in the Executive order was too vague. They asked the Board if they would rather have random people in the building like contractors or parent volunteers. They also questioned why options like masks were OK last year but not now. They pointed out that without the volunteers, many of the programs offered now like Pizza day, would not be able to run.

Ms. Frank brought up a concern of her child having a difficult time hearing the teacher through the mask. Dr. Gamper responded that he has not heard that concern, but that masks were mandated by executive order 251 and this was not up to Board discretion. He recommended some options such as moving to the front of the room or implementing FM receivers.

Ms. Agoos thanked everyone for coming. She commented that she has also volunteered for many things. She indicated that a decision on this has not been finalized and the Board is still discussing it. She stated that a lot was mentioned today that made sense, and wanted to know that the Board heard them.

Ms. Sum echoed Ms. Agoos sentiments stating that she appreciates all the work of the PTO's. She wanted them to know she has been taking notes and will consider everything said.

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Ms. Wagner thanked everyone for all their volunteer work. She stated she was also a PTO mom. She commented that she hears them asking the Board to look at the full policy and find a balance with what makes sense, and protects children but still adhere to the executive order.

Dr. Gamper indicated that he will be working on this all week. The goal is not to destroy or deter the PTO from volunteering. He thanked them for all they have done. He is hoping to have guidance on this soon and will be looking for some middle ground.

The Board then voted to go into Executive Session to discuss a legal matter at 8:45 pm.

M: LS S: AW
NT JP NA LS DC AW DB
A Y Y Y A Y Y

They returned to Public at 9:35 pm.

VI. Adjournment - 9:40 PM

M: LS S: AW
NT JP NA LS DC AW DB
A Y Y Y A Y Y

Robert Wright
Business Administrator/Board Secretary