

**PARK RIDGE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

Date: November 1, 2021

Public Started: 7:00 P.M.

Public Ended: 8:33 P.M.

High School Little Theater

**I. Roll Call**

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

Also Present:

R. Gamper	R. Wright
X	X

**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 October 25, 2021 caused to be posted at the Office of the Board of Education located at 85 Pascack Road, Park Ridge, New Jersey and on October 25, 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 October 25, 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. Social/Emotional Wellness Presentation

*Dr. Gamper explained that Board requested a presentation on Social, Emotional Wellness of students in the district. Mr. Fiedeldey began his presentation with a test score slide that summarized the recent ACCESS and DLM scores. He reported that Park Ridge was at or above the target area in 8 out of 12 for DLM and 9 out of 12 for ACCESS.*

*Mr. Fiedeldey commented that he approaches his job by treating students the way he would like his children to be taken care of. Mr. Fiedeldey discussed the process of Design Forward and recommended using a backward design as more effective. This process would start with the outcome that they wanted to achieve, the define the process of how to achieve that outcome, and finally identify the content needed. Mr. Fiedeldey then spoke about four outcomes... Safety, Academic Achievement, Positive Self-Esteem and Connectedness.*

*Safety – Mr. Fiedeldey explained that the goal was to prevent suicides. This would be done through a process of staff training, getting staff to identify when students were in trouble. The content would be the QPR (Question, Persuade and Refer) Suicide Gatekeeper training and using the C SSRS (Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale).*

*Academic Success - Mr. Fiedeldey explained that doing well in school is important for students. The process to achieve this is to provide appropriate evaluations and offer services. The content that is needed is compensatory education, SLD analysis and bilingual services.*

*Positive Self Esteem – Mr. Fiedeldey then spoke about Self Esteem and the use of universal screening. He then stated that Depression screening would require parental consent. Another tool used is identifying adverse childhood experiences (ACES's). This is done through a questionnaire that parents would complete. He reported that ACES's are linked to 8 out of 10 causes for death. Doing this changes the conversation from what is wrong to what happened.*

*Connectedness – Mr. Fiedeldey stated that Building a community of support was in important practice in making students feel connected. He then spoke about implementing restorative practices to accomplish this.*

*Strategic Plan – Mr. Fiedeldey reviewed the way we currently respond to these issues. His analysis revealed that the most support provided in an Elementary setting was from the classroom teacher while at the High School, it was the school Psychologist. Supplementing these services were school social workers and a contracted vendor (West Bergen). Mr. Fiedeldey then reviewed the number of students each of these people see at the Elementary and High School level. He also mentioned that the district has partnered with student interns who were working on their Masters. He commented that he himself worked as an intern at one time.*

*Mr. Fiedeldey then reviewed a survey that was sent to the Staff. The survey showed the number of cases each staff member handled. He contrasted this with the actual staff available at each building. He then recommended adding more staff and relying less on outside support. He based*

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*his request on analyzing correlation data and reviewing the roles that current staff positions could undertake.*

*His conclusion was that doing this would result in:*

- *Quicker evaluations*
- *Greater compliance with State Mandates*
- *More comprehensive testing*
- *Higher completion of SEMI and funding*
- *Maximize support for all students*
- *Become proactive as opposed to reactive*

*Questions were then directed to Mr. Fiedeldey from the Board.*

*Ms. Wagner asked him to discuss the correlation table. Mr. Fiedeldey explained that the chart showed which factors were most influential in causing certain symptoms. An example he used was that depression was most significant in the lower grades with Math.*

*Dr. Gamper asked what happened between Fall and Spring to improve scores. Mr. Fiedeldey responded that there was more support for two groups, Elevated and Highly Elevated.*

*Ms. Agoos asked why Guidance counselors were not part of his breakdown. Mr. Fiedeldey responded that Guidance is separate from the Child Study Team. They report to the Principal.*

*Mr. Periotti asked about the need for the School Psychologist as opposed to another type of staff member. Mr. Fiedeldey replied that it was due to the different types of services the School Psychologist could offer that the other positions could not.*

*Mr. Bradler asked about staff training on Tuesday. Mr. Fiedeldey responded that he will be providing the Elementary school with training in the morning and the High School in the afternoon.*

*Dr. Gamper asked about the assessment screening. Mr. Fiedeldey responded that it took place in grades 4-8 and 95% of parents gave their consent for screening.*

*Ms. Wagner asked if there was a sense of what is needed. Mr. Fiedeldey replied that the next step is deciding where the resources need to go.*

*Ms. Sum asked about the Social Worker. Mr. Fiedeldey responded that the district currently has a .8 person. The person functions more on evaluation side then therapeutic.*

*Mr. Pierotti asked if a Guidance counselor would fit into his model? Mr. Fiedeldey replied that they can handle consultation but they cannot assist in CST duties. He also expressed concern that time would be lost with them traveling between buildings.*

*Ms. Wagner asked what the case load would be for Guidance counselors. Dr. Gamper responded that there were three counselors. One is assigned to the 7/8 grades. The other two are assigned to the rest of the grades and split the alphabet.*

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*Mr. Pierotti asked if a Guidance counselor could run groups that the School Psychologist currently handles. Mr. Fiedeldey said they could but they could not evaluate students.*

*An audience member asked about preschool students. Mr. Fiedeldey stated that the schools responsibility begins at age 3. Identification of students is done through notices and early intervention. The district is ready to provide services. Referrals for such services start at 2.5 years old.*

*Mr. Fiedeldey added that the district needs to work on training staff and getting parental consent. He stated that right now the district is reactive but feels things could change sometime late fall next year.*

*A parent stated that they were surprised to learn about this presentation only a few days before. She expressed commented that she has read that Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is tied to Critical Race Theory (CRT). She stated that this theory speaks about white privilege and promotes police bashing. She then referred to an email sent by the district which contained links to web sites that promoted the Black Lives Matter movement. She asked to see the lessons that were going to be taught and was concerned that the district is opening a back door to teaching CRT.*

*Mr. Fiedeldey responded that today's presentation was on social emotional health not SEL. There are no books and no lessons. Eventually, the process will include parent training. The main message is hope. It is designed to identify and help those who need it. It is not geared towards delivering instruction. The goal is to address mental illness.*

*A Parent asked about the questionnaire and if it would create a stigma for those who participate. Mr. Fiedeldey replied that the process has been around for a long time but the movement is more recent and students were openly talking about it. He did not believe it would create a stigma.*

*A Parent questioned whether students were participating in this process now. Mr. Fiedeldey responded that they were getting it as needed but believes his recommendations are the next step. He also stressed that the presentation was about wellness and not learning.*

*Dr. Gamper added that grades K-5 use the second step in the program now. It focuses on citizenship, how to deal with conflict and their feelings. It is a life skill program and teaches students how to deal with emotions. He offered to email a link that outlines a detailed scope and sequence to the parent.*

*The Parent asked if this process would develop into CRT? Dr. Gamper responded "Absolutely not."*

*A Parent asked if Murphy gets re-elected, if the school would make the pilot program mandatory. Mr. Fiedeldey stated that the process would still require active consent from parents.*

*A Parent commented that resiliency is lacking and the world is not always fair. He wanted to know how this is taught. Mr. Fiedeldey replied that this is a different environment from when they were kids. There are now stresses imposed by social media. Suicide rates of girls 10-14 have tripled. Addressing this requires a different approach.*

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*A Parent asked about universal screening. Mr. Fiedeldey answered that the screening would be done once a year and they would monitor the progress. This would also be done with academics.*

*A Parent asked how this is being presented to students. Mr. Fiedeldey replied that there are 22 Yes/No questions.*

*A Parent asked if the results from the questionnaire would be shared. Mr. Fiedeldey replied that the results are not confidential and may be shared with parents or staff.*

*A Parent commented that this may be a good opportunity to educate parents. Mr. Fiedeldey agreed and said that the idea is to train parents and function as a community.*

*A Parent asked about the timeline for another school psychologist?*

*Dr. Gamper responded that the Board is reviewing the matter in committees. More information will be available at the November Board meeting.*

*Mr. Fiedeldey then thanked everyone for showing up.*

**V. EDUCATION RESOLUTIONS**

E1. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves Axion Healthcare Nursing Services for the 2021/22 school year. **"E1"**

M: S:  
NT JP NA LS DC AW DB

E2. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves Priority Nursing Services for the 2021/22 school year. **"E2"**

M: S:  
NT JP NA LS DC AW DB

E3. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves the submission of the 2021-2022 Park Ridge School District's District Performance Review Documents, for the 2021-2022 NJQSAC monitoring cycle.

M: S:  
NT JP NA LS DC AW DB

**VI. BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS RESOLUTIONS**

BG1. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves the Use of the Building Facilities Application by the Park Ridge Police Department, for use of the East Brook Kindergarten Wing as per Board Policy #7510 "Use of School Facilities," on November 6, 2021 and December 11, 2021, as attached. **"BG1"**

M: S:  
NT JP NA LS DC AW DB

BG2. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves the Use of the Building Facilities Application by the Park Ridge Police Department, for use of the High School 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor as per Board Policy #7510 "Use of School Facilities," on November 6, 2021 and December 11, 2021, as attached. **"BG2"**

M: S:  
NT JP NA LS DC AW DB

BG3. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves payment #3 to Premier Building & Construction Management, Inc., for work on the District Ceiling replacement, in the amount of \$157,043.28. **"BG3"**

M: S:  
NT JP NA LS DC AW DB

**VII. PERSONNEL RESOLUTIONS**

P1. The Park Ridge Board of Education approves and acknowledges the appointment of the following, as indicated in the area and amount listed, for the 2021/22 school year:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>SALARY</u>
Burderi, Phyllis*	Substitute Secretary	\$25.00/hour
Kite-Kim, Amy	FT WR Paraprofessional	\$19,764.00 (prorated)

*\*Completion of state mandated paperwork*

The Board then combined the motions in V, VI & VII into a consent agenda. The motions passed as follows:

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

**VII. Hearing of Citizens -**

*Ms. Ruhle commented that she read an article in the Pascack News about them updating their health and literacy plans. She asked why our Board was not included? She also asked if this was a forced issue from the State and expressed concern about creating a blanket program when communities are different.*

*Dr. Gamper responded that no one from the Pascack News had contacted him about the article. He then said that the State of NJ has a curriculum calendar that we must follow. By September 2022, we need to have this revised curriculum in place. The updated curriculum will incorporate new standards. Park Ridge has just started looking at these standards. He anticipates having the curriculum voted on in August 2022. Once approved, they will look at resources. Some school districts have already approved the curriculum for this school year. He stated that curriculum comes first, then resources.*

*Dr. Gamper stated that districts who have moved forward with the new curriculum have had public feedback. He plans to share the process with parents. There will also be an opportunity to have them not participate. As long as the curriculum is included and offered, the district is not penalized if someone opts out.*

*Ms. Rule commented that children mature at different ages.*

*Dr. Gamper reported that he shared the new standards with Board last week.*

*Ms. Agoos asked Mr. Fiedeldej a question about the percentage of younger students who have been exposed to mature material and if the new curriculum was meant to balance this out. Mr. Fiedeldej did not have a number but agreed that the curriculum update was meant to address a different world.*

*The Board thanked Mr. Fiedeldej for his presentation.*

**VIII. Adjournment – 8:33 p.m.**

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

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Robert Wright  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary