

**Rochelle Park Board of Education
Caucus Meeting Minutes– 7:00 P.M.
July 15, 2013**

- I. Call to Order and Flag Salute**
- II. Roll Call**

Board Members	Present	Absent
Mr. Jay Esposito, Vice President	X	
Mr. Sam Allos	X arrived 7:14	
Mrs. Teresa Cravello	X	
Mrs. Maria Lauerman	X	
Mrs. Dimitria Leakas	X	
Mr. Mark Scully		X
Mrs. Patricia Bilka, President	X	

Others Present:

Bert Ammerman Interim Superintendent,
Vincent Occhino, Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary
Cara Hurd, Principal
Ellen Kobylarz, Board Recording Secretary

III. Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P. L. 1975 Announcement – by Board President

In accordance with the requirements of the Open Public Meetings Act, I wish to announce that:

“The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meeting of bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. Notices announcing the date, time and place for this Caucus Meeting were sent to all concerned individuals, associations and sent to the The Record and Our Town, in accordance with Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

IV. Superintendent’s Report

- Ms. Jennifer O’Brien presented an update on the 5K run/walk scheduled for September 29, 2013. Ms. O’Brien and Mrs. Leakas recently attended a meeting with the Chief of Police, DPW, and EMS. All township departments have been very supportive and willing to help. There has been some fine tuning to the course which will start at the back of the school to Central Ave, proceed to Lincoln to Peek and then follow the original course back to Midland. Ms. O’Brien has a meeting scheduled this week with the USATF course certification personnel. That certification will be good for 10 years. The website is up www.rochellepark5K.com. The township has posted it on their website. The DPW offered to post the route on the road. July 30th is the next meeting with the Police department.
Mr. Ammerman commended Mrs. O’Brien and Mrs. Leakas on a fantastic job.
Mrs. Cravello asked if there was a rain date.
Ms. O’Brien stated there was no rain date.
Mr. Ammerman asked if the fun run for the students would have a rain date.
Ms. O’Brien stated it would be held the following Friday, October 4.
Mr. Esposito commented on the great job with the website.

President Bilka asked if the volunteers can register through the website.

Ms. O'Brien said no and added that an e-mail will be sent to staff and parents once we are back in school.

- Mr. Ammerman continued with his Superintendent's report informing the board that on this month's agenda we will be approving the out of District special education placements. At this point Mrs. Kobylarz advised the board that case# 99-01 should state \$56,086.72. Mr. Ammerman stated that, the board received school district annual reports for review. Mr. Ammerman pointed out the graph on technology and how many visits the website receives on a month to month basis. He was very impressed with the progress on the new website.

President Bilka commented on the nurse's report, the wellness committee that was formed, and the work that they are doing, such as the healthy snacks letter, meeting with parents and the food service company.

- At this point Mr. Ammerman turned the meeting over to Mrs. Hurd to present 2 important presentations to the board.

V. Principal's Report Mrs. Hurd gave the following presentations:

- School improvement plan- this plan is required by the RAC due to our classification as a focus school. It identifies goals and interventions that will be used to improve student achievement. As a focus school, we need to close the gap in achievement. Part of the problem is attendance by both staff and students. If you're not in school, then you're not there to learn .
- NJDOE School Self-Assessment for Determining Grades under the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act summary report. The district must submit a HIB report to the department of education each year. The School Self-Assessment gives the district a direction toward achieving that goal. She explained the summary report and the score 54/75 that the school district received. Every eight weeks the RAC personnel will visit the school to see the progress and will be checking attendance rates.

President Bilka asked who drafted the goals.

Mrs. Hurd: RAC determined the goals.

Mr. Allos stated that the impact is significant and the parents need to know, they are state mandated.

Mrs. Hurd agreed.

Mr. Ammerman stated the goals to the state will be presented to the parents and staff, Excessive absences will not be tolerated and will need to go to court. The message is clear to parents. Provisions will be made for extenuating circumstances provided theirs a doctor's note. When it comes to next August, if the school doesn't improve, it's going to be a bigger problem. In a small school, 1 or 2 students can drastically change the numbers. We are also accountable for outside student placements.

Mrs. Hurd, we put interventions in place this year.

Mr. Ammerman then added that we don't know how well we did until these scores come in August. Next year the district's focus will be on students 3rd to 8th grade, math and lang. arts. 3rd and 4th grade teachers will loop. Mr. Ammerman explained the idea of looping.

President Bilka, added, going forward we will have pre and post data.

Mrs. Hurd agreed, and added RAC will be coming in 1st day of school to work with Teacher.

Some of the positive things the district was able to put in the report was the new go math series and reading street for lang. arts. Teachers attended 3 days of training on closing the achievement gap. Family/community section: the district had the Michael Fallon workshop.

President Bilka- stated that the district in the past held math night for parents. The way the math is taught now is not the way the parents learned it, even some of the terms have changed. President Bilka specified that you knew how to get to the answer but it's not the way it's being taught now.

Mrs. Hurd agreed that the parents need to be engaged.

Mrs. Hurd expressed that each time RAC comes in the meeting is 2 to 2 1/2 hours long. She is required to do 7 classroom walk troughs a week for 15 minutes each. Then within one or two days, is required to meet with that teacher to discuss what was done and do a write up. That will require 3 hours a week, 210 walk troughs a year.

Mr. Ammerman interjected that this is important, RAC comes first. Before teachers, parents, this has to take priority- RAC comes in unannounced.

Mrs. Hurd pointed out page 7 which is a walk through form that must be completed with each visit. Every marking period, (no names) the state can look at the forms.

President Bilka asked who gave the rating.

Mrs. Hurd sated it came from RAC

Mrs. Cravello asked if only Mrs. Hurd could do this.

Mr. Ammerman stated the superintendent can help but RAC makes the principal accountable. The principal is the key to the success of the school. Majority has to be done by Mrs. Hurd, 120, superintended 60.

Mrs. Hurd moved on to school climate. She will be sending a letter home mapping out the expectations- with regard to lockers, locks, and will also meet with students.

Mr. Ammerman added that the hallway will be swept and parents must support this effort.

Mrs. Hurd stated another initiative the district put in place is that all grade levels have common planning time. The teacher's will be held accountable; minutes will be taken.

Mrs. Leakas asked what grade level

Mrs. Hurd stated k-8

Mrs. Cravello asked when they will take place

Mrs. Hurd stated during the day. In addition, we are looking into parent meetings, open forum, and line of communication. We will have a science fair this year.

President Bilka- asked if open school visitation is considered for the report as a family involvement program.

Mrs. Hurd replied yes, RAC wants more.

Mr. Esposito- thanks Mrs. Hurd stating that she inherited this mess.

Mrs. Leakas asked what if we don't meet the goals

Mr. Ammerman explained the worst case scenario is the state can come in and take over. If you don't meet the benchmark they will increase their involvement. Five teachers over the summer will spend a week at a workshop conducted by RAC. One of the problems with the teacher evaluation is you evaluate in March and April but the test scores don't come in until August.

Mrs. Lauerma asked grade level planning meetings how often did they meet.

Mrs. Hurd stated once a week- however, no documentation was required now it will be.

Mrs. Vladyka from the audience asked the % of students in school group.

Mr. Ammerman said 10% special, free and reduced 18%-20%

President Bilka asked if there were students in both categories.

Mr. Ammerman said yes, some in both. Thanks Mrs. Hurd for her presentation.

Mrs. Hurd now continued with the HIB report. It consists of 8 core elements. A few of the elements were a surprise. The district received the assessment to complete in May 2013. Certain items that were included in the report we were not aware of until the report came out. An example would be that the district has programs in character education but they may not have been coordinated to be held during the week of respect. Training on Suicide prevention was also something that was included but the district was unaware it would be.

President Bilka asked if there was an age limit on suicide presentation.

Mrs. Hurd stated no, continued with an overview of the report, stated now for next year we will know what they are asking for.

Mr. Ammerman stated in sections 5-6-7-8 the highest number you could receive was a 30 and the district received 29; we need to work on the initiatives programs. We didn't know that training was included.

Mr. Esposito asked how many hours spent on HIB

Mr. Ammerman relayed that Mrs. Oles needed to come in for an extra day to complete the report. 20 HIB cases over the year, an exorbitant amount of time, as this progresses we have case law to back up decisions and in the future it should get better. Half could have been eliminated due to code of conduct violations and not HIB.

Mr. Esposito asked how the Principal has the time to do all of this and does it have to be the Principal.

Mr. Ammerman explained that the Principal must call the parents; school has 10 school days to complete the investigation. Parents don't understand the 10 day rule; you have to go through the process.

VI. Business Administrator's Report Dr. Occhino reported the following.

- This month the agenda contains resolutions to approve, bills, payroll, transfers, NCLB grants. Mrs. Werner found a consortium to join in order to claim title funds the district would have to otherwise return.

President Bilka commented that the district for many years has tried to pair up with another district and not turn back this money. She commended Mrs. Werner's accomplishment.

VII. Reports – Committee Action Items

Finance – President Bilka- reported that a referendum committee was formed and had a meeting last Thursday. A report will be given to the board on July 29, 2013 at a special public board meeting. The board will then vote on the submission of a referendum for building repairs. The building is in need of repairs and the state is offering 40% grants for level one improvements. The building improvements that the committee is looking at are considered level one improvements. If the district doesn't receive the money and the boilers go, the taxpayers are looking at funding the cost 100% instead of the 60% with the grant covering 40% of the cost. The building is 90 years old and this is a good opportunity for the district to move forward and improve the building. All repairs are necessary repairs.

VIII. Public Questions on the Resolutions (Agenda Items Only)

During this portion of the meeting, the residents are invited to address the Board regarding agenda items only.

Motion by Mr. Allos, seconded by Mrs. Lauerman, to open public comment at 8:35 p.m.

Roll Call 6-0 Motion Carried

Mrs. Kral- 189 W. Oldis St- asked if there were still only 2 second grades, feels the need to focus on younger children, concerned.

Mr. Ammerman stated only two and when he came here there were problems in all grades. Cannot solve everything, at once. Second grade has two veteran teachers and he believes there will be no problems.

Motion by Mrs. Leakas, seconded by Mrs. Cravello, to close public comment at 8:45 p.m.

Roll Call 6-0 Motion Carried

IX. Items for Board Action - Resolutions (If needed)

Note: Resolutions marked with an asterisk are as a result of Executive Session Discussion.

X. Other Business:

XI. Open to the Public (Any Item)

During this portion of the meeting, the residents are invited to address the Board with any questions, comments or concerns that may be in respect to the operation of their school.

Motion by Mrs. Cravello, seconded by Mr. Allos, to open public comment at 8:50 p.m.

Roll Call 6-0 Motion Carried

Motion by Mr. Allos, seconded by Mr. Esposito, to close public comment at 8:59 p.m.

Roll Call 6-0 Motion Carried

XII. Announcements

A Special Board Meeting will be held on July 18, 2013, 6:00 pm for the annual Board Retreat. A Special Public Meeting will be held on July 29, 2013 at 7:00P.M. The next Caucus Meeting and Regular Meeting will be held on Monday, August 12, 2013, at 7:00 P.M. with the regular meeting immediately following respectively in the Media Center.

XIII. Executive Session Announcement (if needed)

WHEREAS, the Rochelle Park Board of Education (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") will convene in Executive Session to discuss confidential matters which include:

Personnel

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Board shall move into Executive Session to discuss the above referenced matter(s).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the minutes of the executive session will provide as much information as possible without violating any applicable privilege or confidentiality so that the public can understand what was discussed and when available what the Board decision was.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the minutes of the executive session will be released to the public in an appropriately redacted form within a reasonable period of time after the privilege or confidentiality is no longer applicable to such minutes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the redacted portion of the executive session minutes will not be released until such time as the privilege or confidentiality is no longer applicable.

Motion by Mrs. Lauerman, seconded by Mrs. Leakas, to open Executive Session at 9:00 p.m.

Roll Call 6-0 Motion Carried

Motion by Mrs. Lauerman, seconded by Mr. Esposito, to close Executive Session at 9:05 p.m.

Roll Call 6-0 Motion Carried

Motion by Mrs. Lauerman, seconded by Mrs. Leakas, to resume Regular Meeting Agenda at 9:06 p.m.

Roll Call 6-0 Motion Carried