

HARDING TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

34 Lee's Hill Road, New Vernon, NJ 07976

Monday, January 23, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Regular Session Minutes

Mission Statement

The Harding Township School provides a strong educational foundation which inspires students to achieve academic excellence. Our dedicated faculty stimulates intellectual growth using a challenging curriculum within a supportive learning environment. We encourage students to become self-directed, lifelong learners who are well prepared for the academic and social challenges of the future.

The 2022-2023 Harding Township School District goals are inspired by and connected to the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan that was developed by key stakeholders.

District Goal 1: Strategic Plan Goal Area: Identify Needs/Personalized Learning

To identify learning gaps and measure the academic progress of our students through the administration of pre- and post-grade-level assessments in Reading, Math, and Writing that correlate with the NJSL standards and Reader's/Writer's Workshop.

District Goal 2: Strategic Plan Goal Areas: Future-Ready Instruction and Curriculum and Well-Rounded Student

Continue to expand student exploration opportunities, such as (examples) the Performing Arts, Husky TV, debate, a student newsletter, and other feasible collaborative projects that empower students to become active participants in their learning.

District Goal 3: Strategic Plan Goal Areas: Facilities and Safety

Work with the appropriate local, county, and state authorities to assess the safety/security of the district's buildings/grounds, protocols/guidelines/practices, and continue to foster a safe learning environment.

District Goal 4: Strategic Plan Goal Area: Identify Needs/Personalized Learning

To articulate student learning differentiation strategies currently utilized, and to further challenge and enhance learning for each student based on their individual needs, strengths, and interests.

- I. **Call to Order** – The regular session of the Harding Board of Education is called to order by Mr. Gjivoje at 7:01 p.m. in the Library of the Harding Township Middle School, 34 Lee's Hill Road, New Vernon, NJ 07976.
- II. **Presiding Officers Statement/Sunshine Statement:**
In accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act, *N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.*, adequate notification of this meeting has been provided to the Daily Record, Observer Tribune and posted on the bulletin boards of the New Vernon Post Office, Green Village Post Office, Harding Township Municipal Building, Harding Township Elementary School and Harding Township Middle School on January 12, 2023.
- III. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- IV. **ROLL CALL**
AYES: Mr. Davor Gjivoje, Dr. Alex Anastasiou, Mr. Abi Singh, Mr. Richard Bruno, Mrs. Melissa Krikos
Also Present: Superintendent, Dr. Matthew Spelker; Board Secretary, Mr. John Jennings
- V. **PRESENTATION**
Patriot Pen Essay Award, Mr. John Titterton, Commander Watnong VFW
**Henry Humphreys, Sophie Jarbath, Francesca Rosato*

Dr. Spelker introduced Mr. Titterton. Mr. Titterton spoke about his naval service and how he became involved in the Watnong VFW. He discussed the Patriots Pen and Voice of Democracy programs where he hoped to get more students, specifically high school students involved. He introduced the

three winners of the Patriot Pen Program; Francesca Rosato third place, Sophie Jarbath second place and Henry Humphreys first place. He read and presented the awards to Francesca and Sophie. Mr. Gjivoje thanked Mr. Titterton for his service to the country.

START Strong Results – 2022, Mrs. April Friedman, Principal/Dir. Of Curriculum

Mrs. April Friedman, Principal and Director of Curriculum presented the Harding Township School Start Strong Assessment (SSA) results for 2022 to the Board. She noted the primary purpose of the SSA was to provide instructional information about students' needs for additional support following the disruption to education due to the Covid-19 pandemic. She also mentioned that because the SSA was administered at the beginning of the year to provide rapid feedback to schools and because it is based on a subset of student learning standards, SSA only includes machine-scored selected responses. SSA is meant to reveal conceptual or skill gaps that can be addressed moving forward. Mrs. Friedman then reviewed the results with the Board, comparing the 2022 results to the 2021 results. She noted the 2022 SSA results saw a marked improvement across grade levels and subject levels for both regular education and special education students. She also mentioned that most of the data revealed was information Administration/Teachers already knew about our students' abilities. Focus continues to be on academic stamina, independence, problem solving abilities and strong academic habits. Mr. Gjivoje commented on the strong results of the District and noted they were way ahead of the overall State results. Mrs. Krikos asked how these results compare to the NJSLA test results? Dr. Spelker mentioned the District began using the Link-it program that draws information from their test results to provide detail assessment information on a student level. Mr. Gjivoje and Mr. Bruno thanked the faculty and administration for the strong results.

HIB Report (if necessary) – None Reported

VI. HEARING OF PUBLIC REGARDING AGENDA ITEMS (Policy 0167)

MOTION presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mr. Singh, unanimously approved to open public comment regarding agenda items only at 7:45 p.m.

No Comments

MOTION presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mrs. Krikos to close public comment regarding agenda items only at 7:46 p.m.

VII. REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS

a. Superintendent – Dr. Spelker noted the proposed calendar for the BOE to approve will be placed on the 2/13/23 agenda. Madison's referendum committee met Thursday, January 19th. Play practice for "Newsies" has begun. An update on the long-range facility plan will be given by Dr. Spelker at the April 17th BOE meeting. The boys' and girls' basketball seasons will be ending this week and both teams will begin the playoffs. Monday February 13th BOE meeting will provide updates on District Goals and Student Safety Data System Report. Monday March 13th BOE meeting will provide the Tentative Budget Presentation. April 17th BOE meeting provide and update on the Long-Range Facility Plan.

b. Business Administrator – John Jennings reviewed the items on the Board Business and Facilities and Finance section of the Agenda.

c. Facilities and Finance, 1/18/23 – Mr. Singh noted the committee discussed the following topics at their meeting:

- Middle School HVAC Status

- Long Range Facility Plan
 - Contract Negotiations
 - Budget Presentations on March 13th and May 1st.
 - Roof project at the elementary school
 - Middle School ADA access ramp
 - 23-24 School Calendar
- d. Curriculum and Instruction, 1/18/23 – Dr. Anastasiou noted the committee discussed the following topics at their meeting:
- Harding Academy participation
 - Start Strong Results
 - Future Cities Competition
 - Link-It assessments
- e. Personnel and Management, 1/18/23 – Mrs. Krikos noted the committee discussed the following topics at their meeting:
- Maternity Leaves and Returns
 - Teacher Observations
 - Start Strong Results
 - Christine Mulligan Plaque
 - Negotiations Committee has meetings scheduled on Jan 25th and February 7th
- f. Madison Board of Education, 1/17/23 – Mr. Bruno noted that at the Madison Reorganization meeting, the vote for Board President ended in a tie. The Morris County Executive Superintendent interviewed 3 candidates and selected Sarah Fischer as the Madison BOE President. Mr. Bruno mentioned he brought up the calendar anomaly (Harding and Madison both holding their 2024 BOE reorganization dates on the same day/time). He stated this topic was tabled by the Madison Board. He also mentioned that there has been continued focus by the Madison BOE on Transgender Education. Dr. Spelker speaking on his own accord as a Madison, NJ resident, mentioned that what happened to Mr. Bruno at the Madison Reorganization BOE meeting on January 3, 2023 was unacceptable. He noted Mr. Bruno handled it with class and he thanked Mr. Bruno for his continued support of the Harding School District. Mr. Gjivoje echoed Dr. Spelker's comments. He also noted he found it peculiar that the Madison BOE challenged Mr. Bruno's right to vote at the Madison Reorganization meeting this year even though Mr. Bruno previously voted as Harding's representative in both of the last two years (as did prior HTS representatives, in prior years). Mr. Gjivoje mentioned that the send/receive relationship with the Madison School District is by mutual consent, made every 5 years or so per contract.
- g. Climate and Culture – Dr. Anastasiou noted that the Family Game Night event was well attended and approximately \$1,000 was raised. He also mentioned that he hoped for more future events/participation as the pandemic restrictions have loosened.

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE

Proposed Board of Education Committee Representative
School Nurses Report, December 2022
Fire Drill Log, January 2023
Proposed School Calendar, 2023-24

IX. BOARD BUSINESS

BB-011 Approve Regular and Executive Session Minutes
BB-012 Approve Public Agency Compliance Officer (PACO) appointment
MOTION presented by Dr. Anastasiou and seconded by Mr. Singh to approve:

BB-011 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education approve the following minutes:

- Reorganization Regular Session, January 3, 2023
- Executive Session Minutes, January 3, 2023

BB-012 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, appoints John Jennings as the Public Agency Compliance Officer (P.A.C.O) for calendar year 2023.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: *Mr. Davor Gjivoje, Dr. Alex Anastasiou, Mr. Abi Singh, Mrs. Krikos*

ABSTAIN: *Mr. Richard Bruno*

FACILITIES/FINANCE

FF-003 Approve Bills List

FF-004 Approve December Transfer Report

FF-005 Approve December Financial Reports

FF-006 Approve Submission of Regular Operating Districts (ROD) Grant

FF-007 Approve Purchase Agreement/Equipment and Software

FF-008 Approve Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Waiver

FF-009 Approve Future Cities Competition Teacher Compensation

MOTION presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mrs. Krikos to approve:

FF-003 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the bills listed dated January 23 2022 in the amount of \$1,148,592.64.

FF-004 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the December 2022 Transfer Report.

FF-005 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the December Secretary and Treasurer reports certifying that no major appropriation or account or fund has been over-extended and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

FF-006 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the submission of the Regular Operating Districts (ROD) grant for the Harding Elementary School Roof Replacement project by Parette Somjen, District Architect.

FF-007 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the Purchase Agreement/Equipment and Software Maintenance Agreement with Pitney Bowes for new Postage Stamp Meters.

FF-008 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves submission to the Executive County Superintendent of a request for a waiver of compliance for the 2023-2024 year regarding participation in the Special Education Program due to the district having fewer than 40 eligible participants.

FF-009 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education upon the recommendation of the

Superintendent of Schools, approves compensation for teacher to attend Future Cities Competition on Saturday, January 14, 2023 for 10 hours at hourly rate.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: *Mr. Davor Gjivoje, Dr. Alex Anastasiou, Mr. Abi Singh, Mr. Richard Bruno, Mrs. Melissa Krikos*

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

CI-001 Approve Field Trip

MOTION presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mr. Singh to approve:

CI-001 Resolved, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following Field trip:

Ms. Light/Mrs. Schutz, Kindergarten, Morris Museum March 3, 2023

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: *Mr. Davor Gjivoje, Dr. Alex Anastasiou, Mr. Abi Singh, Mr. Richard Bruno, Mrs. Melissa Krikos*

PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT

PM-003 Approve Extracurricular Assignments

MOTION presented by Dr. Anastasiou and seconded by Mrs. Krikos to approve:

PM-003 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools approves the following extracurricular assignments salary as per the HTEA Contract agreement:

Mr. Todd Jones, Jr. TSA Advisor, at a stipend of \$2,619

Ms. Lauren Oles, Jr. TSA Assistant Advisor, at a stipend of \$2,519

Mr. Todd Jones, Overnight Chaperone, at a stipend of \$328 per night

Mrs. Jennifer Baldassari, Homework Helper (Peer Tutor), at a stipend of \$2,619 prorated to \$1,309.50

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: *Mr. Davor Gjivoje, Dr. Alex Anastasiou, Mr. Abi Singh, Mr. Richard Bruno, Mrs. Melissa Krikos*

X. HEARING OF PUBLIC REGARDING (Agenda and non-Agenda Items- Policy 0167)

MOTION presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mr. Singh to open public comment regarding agenda and non-agenda items only at 8:30 p.m.

Johanna Habib of Madison, NJ commented that she was a previous member of the Madison BOE. She mentioned she had disdain for the events at the January 3rd Madison BOE reorganization meeting and is concerned with the Long-Term relationship between Harding and Madison School Districts and she hopes it remains in good shape. She asked that the Harding BOE be open-minded about the events that happened. She noted that, while Harding has the right to maintain a seat on the Madison Board, the Harding representative has limited experience/information regarding the Madison School District, he does not walk the hallways of the school, he does not shop in the stores in Madison, he does not sit on Committees and he was not elected by the residents of Madison. She apologized to Mr. Bruno for her comments at the January 3rd Madison BOE meeting, and she hoped that the Harding BOE could move past the events of January 3rd. Dr. Spelker, speaking for himself, noted that he grew up in Madison, currently resides in Madison, shops in Madison, graduated from

Madison High School and has a very good working relationship with the Madison Superintendent. He noted that Mr. Gjivoje, Harding's BOE President, graduated from Madison High School and was, to his recollection, the Salutatorian. Mr. Gjivoje thanked Johanna Habib for her comments. He stated that it is very clear, via NJ Statue, that Harding Township has a right to have a representative on the Madison BOE and that this same representative has the right to vote for the Madison Board President, and all other Officers of the Madison BOE. Mr. Gjivoje also highlighted and re-iterated that the HTS-Madison "Send-Receive Relationship" is a relationship of "mutual choice"; neither party is obligated to "send" or to "receive", unless the parties agree by mutual written consent.

MOTION presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mr. Singh to close public comment regarding agenda and non-agenda items at 8:48 p.m.

- XI. **PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS** – Mr. Gjivoje emphasized the dates of the future board meetings. Dr. Anastasiou commented on the strong student participation of the Harding Academy as well as the positive progress on the Link-it program.

XII. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

MOTION presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mrs. Krikos to enter Executive Session at 8:52 p.m.

Be It Resolved, that the Harding Township Board of Education convenes Executive Session in full compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq.; and the minutes of the discussion of any of these items will be available to the public when such minutes have been approved by the Board pursuant to N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1.1.

Topics: Personnel matters, no action will be taken.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Davor Gjivoje, Dr. Alex Anastasiou, Mr. Abi Singh, Mr. Richard Bruno, Mrs. Melissa Krikos

XIII. **RETURN to PUBLIC SESSION**

MOTION presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mr. Singh to return to Public Session at 9:40 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Davor Gjivoje, Dr. Alex Anastasiou, Mr. Abi Singh, Mr. Richard Bruno, Mrs. Melissa Krikos

XIV. **OTHER BOARD BUSINESS** - None

XV. **ADJOURN**

MOTION presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mrs. Krikos to adjourn at 9:41 p.m.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Mr. Davor Gjivoje, Dr. Alex Anastasiou, Mr. Abi Singh, Mr. Richard Bruno, Mrs. Melissa Krikos

Respectfully submitted,



John Jennings

Business Administrator/Board Secretary