

The meeting of the Harding Township Board of Education held on Monday October 17, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.,  
Harding Township School.  
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 NJSLS 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 Dr. Anastasiou at 7:02 p.m. from the Harding Township 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 6, 2022.
- III. **Pledge of Allegiance**
- IV. **ROLL CALL**  
**Present:** Mr. Davor Gjivoje, Dr. Alex Anastasiou, Mr. Abi Singh, Mr. Richard Bruno, Mrs. Melissa Krikos,  
**Also Present:** Superintendent, Dr. Matthew Spelker, Business Administrator, Mr. John Jennings  
**Note:** Mr. Gjivoje was present via teleconference
- V. **PRESENTATION**  
**NJ Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) Update - Dr. Matthew A. Spelker, Superintendent -** Dr. Spelker reviewed the NJSLA Spring 2022 results with the Board. He noted that despite numerous obstacles over the past two to three years, Harding students have performed extremely well on the 2022 Spring Assessments. He mentioned that the faculty and staff have done an amazing job with the students over the course of the last several years. He thanked the parents for partnering with

the Board, faculty and administration to help the children be as successful as possible. Harding Township School increased the performance gap with the State average to 33% higher than the State in Language Arts as compared to 2019. Harding Township School also increased the performance gap with the State average in Math to 38% as compared to 2019. The Board commented on the outstanding results. They asked Dr. Spelker what he thought were the reasons that led to these results? Dr. Spelker commented that the great teachers and staff were the vast majority of the reason. He also mentioned that getting back to full-time in person classes earlier than most districts also contributed.

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

**MOTION** presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mrs. Krikos, unanimously approved to open public comment regarding agenda items only at 7:35 p.m.

No public comments

**MOTION** presented by Mrs. Krikos and seconded by Mr. Gjivoje, unanimously approved to close public comment regarding agenda items only at 7:36 p.m.

**VII. REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS**

- a. Superintendent – Dr. Spelker mentioned the HTS Trunk or Treat celebration is scheduled Friday Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. The rain date is Sunday Oct 30<sup>th</sup> from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m. The HTS Halloween parade is scheduled for 1:45 p.m. in the elementary circle. The HVAC project is almost complete with final inspections scheduled over the next few weeks. The PTO and HTEF held membership meetings this month and Dr. Spelker attended both meetings to update both groups on the school and to answer any and all questions. Dates to remember; ES Play Friday Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m., BOE Meeting Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> Budget Guidelines and District Goals, BOE Meeting Nov. 21<sup>st</sup> Auditor’s presentation
- b. Business Administrator – John Jennings noted that the Audit Presentation was moved from December 19<sup>th</sup> to November 21<sup>st</sup> to comply with NJ DOE December 5<sup>th</sup> filing of the Audit report.
- c. Facilities and Finance, 10/12/22 - Mr. Singh noted the Committee met on Oct. 12th with Mr. Sing, Mr. Bruno and Mr. Spelker present. They discussed the HVAC project update, continued exploration of acquiring generators for the school as part of the facility plans, teacher negotiations and budget guidelines
- d. Personnel and Management, 10/12/22 – Dr. Anastasiou noted the committee met on Oct. 12th with Dr. Anastasiou, Mrs. Krikos and Dr. Spelker present. They discussed a maternity leave extension, in class teaching observations, Dean of Students position, differentiated instruction, Harding Academy, NJSLA results. Dr. Anastasiou thanked the teachers for their participation in the Harding Academy program.
- e. Madison Board of Education – No Update

**VIII. CORRESPONDENCE**

Nursing Services Plan, SY 2022-23  
Nurse’s Report, September 2022

**IX. BOARD BUSINESS**

**Motion** Presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mr. Gjivoje to approve:

**BB-008 RESOLVED**, that the Harding Township Board of Education approves the following minutes:

- Regular Session, September 26, 2022
- No Executive Session held on September 26, 2022

Board unanimously approved the 9/26/22 Minutes

**FACILITIES AND FINANCE**

**FF-048 Approve Bills List**

**FF-049 Approve Financial Reports – August & September**

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

**FF-048 RESOLVED**, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the attached bills list dated October 17, 2022 in the amount of \$835,386.26.

**FF-049 RESOLVED**, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of School, approves the August and September 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.

Roll call vote:

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

**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

**CI-009 Approve Field Trips**

**CI-010 Approve Professional Development**

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

**CI-009 RESOLVED**, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of schools approves the following field trips:

Ms. Alexander/Kemner, Grade 1, Turtle Back Zoo, October 26, 2022, to support studies on living things in science.

Mrs. Rosenfeld/Mr. McPeek, Grade 6, NJ Jets Training Facility, Florham Park, November 1, 2022.

Mrs. Werner/Baldassari and Mr. Hoffman, Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 27, 2022, to support studies on Greek Mythology, and Ancient Cultures.

Mrs. Crum/Mr. Jones, Grade 5, Buehler Challenger/Science Center, March 8, 2023, to support studies in science exploration.

Mrs. McGrath/Volz, Grade 3, Ellis Island, March 31, 2023 to support studies on Immigration.

Ms. Gareau/Mrs. Thony, Grade 8 class trip to Washington DC Tour, June 6-8, 2023

**CI-010 RESOLVED**, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of schools approves the following professional development:  
Mrs. Friedman, NY Atlas Regional Workshop, NYC, October 27-28, 2022 to support the district's curriculum mapping process. Registration at \$299, mileage at \$0.47 per mile.

Mrs Cochran, Annual Association of Math Teachers Conference, October 20, 2022, registration at \$209, mileage at \$0.47 per mile.

Roll call vote:

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

#### **PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT**

**PM-021 Approve Leave of Absence Extension Request**

**PM-022 Approve Leave of Absence Contract Extension**

**PM-023 Approve Harding Academy Faculty, After School Supplemental Math Instruction**

**PM-024 Approve Extracurricular Stipend**

**PM-025 Approve Dean of Students Position and Salary**

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

**PM-021 RESOLVED**, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following leave of absence extension request:  
Mrs. Jaclyn Paradiso, from November 28, 2022 thru January 2, 2023, with a return to work on Tuesday, January 3, 2023.

**PM-022 RESOLVED**, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following leave of absence contract extension:  
Mrs. Elise Blechner, Special Education teacher from November 28, 2022 thru January 2, 2023 with the total additional prorated salary of \$8,475.50.

**PM-023 RESOLVED**, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the Harding Academy - After School Supplemental Math Instruction at \$75/hour for one hour per week effective November 1, 2022 thru May 31, 2023:  
Ms. Conti/Mrs. McGrath, Grade 3; Ms. Duggan/Ms. Volz, Grade 4; Ms. Tsai/Mrs. Nedick, Grade 5

**PM-024 RESOLVED**, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following faculty extracurricular position as per the HTEA contract:  
Mr. Jones, Overnight Chaperone, Grade 8 Trip, at \$328/night.

**PM-025 RESOLVED**, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following faculty member:  
Mrs. Baldassari, Dean of Students, effective September 1, 2022- June 30, 2023, at an annual stipend of \$10,000.

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. Gjivoje, unanimously approved to open public comment at 7:50 p.m.

Stephen Balog from the Harding Civic Association asked the Board whether they would participate in an informal meeting with the community similar to one that the Harding Township Committee has annually? Dr. Anastasiou stated that if the BOE participated in such a meeting the OPRA laws would require public advertisement/notice as well as minutes essentially formalizing an informal meeting. He also stated if 3 members of the BOE attended it would be a quorum which would invoke the OPRA requirements. Dr. Spelker mentioned that he was still considering having an informal meeting with the community and noted he has recently met with the PTO and parents in a similar format. Mr. Bruno noted that the current law does not allow for the types of conversations that Mr. Balog proposes. Mr. Singh asked Mr. Balog why such a meeting would get a larger participation from the community than the monthly BOE meetings? Mr. Balog noted that some do not want to sit through an hour before they can ask a question and that some in the community feel the BOE meetings are intimidating. Mr. Gjivoje noted the BOE has meetings once or twice per month where the public can comment twice during the meeting on agenda and non-agenda items. He also noted the BOE encourages community feedback at the meetings.

**MOTION** presented by Mr. Singh and seconded by Mr. Gjivoje, unanimously approved to close public comment at 8:13 p.m.

**XI. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS – No comments**

**XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – No Executive Session Called**

**MOTION** presented by \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ to enter Executive Session at \_\_\_\_\_.

**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.

Mr. Davor Gjivoje \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Alex Anastasiou \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Abi Singh \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Richard Bruno \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Melissa Krikos \_\_\_\_\_

**XIII. RETURN to PUBLIC SESSION**

**MOTION** presented by \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ to return to Public Session at \_\_\_\_\_.

Mr. Davor Gjivoje \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Alex Anastasiou \_\_\_\_\_ Mr. Abi Singh \_\_\_\_\_  
Mr. Richard Bruno \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Melissa Krikos \_\_\_\_\_

**XIV. OTHER BOARD BUSINESS – Dr. Anastasiou thanked Dr. Spelker and the teachers for the excellent results on the NJSLA.**

**XV. ADJOURN**

**MOTION** presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mrs. Krikos, unanimously approved to adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

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

**Respectfully Submitted**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Jennings". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**John Jennings**  
**Business Administrator/Board Secretary**