

**FLEMINGTON-RARITAN REGIONAL BOARD OF EDUCATION  
BUDGET WORK SESSION/REGULAR MEETING  
MARCH 8, 2010  
MINUTES**

The regular session of the Flemington-Raritan Regional Board of Education was called to order in conformance with the "Sunshine Law" by Julie Bell at 7:05 p.m. in the theatre of the J. P. Case Middle School.

**Members Present**

Michael Bonieski                      Dennis Copeland  
Janine Foreman                        Patrick Larmore  
Laurie Markowski\*                    Doris McGivney  
Christopher Murdock                 Joseph Zarish  
Julie Bell

**Members Absent**

\*Ms. Markowski arrived at 7:08 p.m.

**PERSONNEL**

**THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS RECOMMENDS THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS FOR APPROVAL:**

**Certified Staff – Appointments, Resignations and Leaves of Absence**

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given of the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Barbara **Bevis**, Grade 4 Teacher at Barley Sheaf School, effective June 30, 2010.

Aye: Dr. Bonieski            Dr. Copeland            Nay: 0    Abstain: 0  
      Ms. Foreman            Mr. Larmore  
      Ms. Markowski        Ms. McGivney  
      Dr. Murdock            Mr. Zarish  
      Ms. Bell

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given of the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Patricia **Frank**, Grade 4 Teacher at Barley Sheaf School, effective June 30, 2010.

Aye: Dr. Bonieski            Dr. Copeland            Nay: 0    Abstain: 0  
      Ms. Foreman            Mr. Larmore  
      Ms. Markowski        Ms. McGivney  
      Dr. Murdock            Mr. Zarish  
      Ms. Bell

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given of the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Carl **Cimino**, Resource Center Teacher at J. P. Case Middle School, effective June 30, 2010.

Aye: Dr. Bonieski            Dr. Copeland            Nay: 0    Abstain: 0  
      Ms. Foreman            Mr. Larmore  
      Ms. Markowski        Ms. McGivney  
      Dr. Murdock            Mr. Zarish  
      Ms. Bell

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given of the resignation for the purpose of retirement of Richard **Tormey**, Grade 8 Science Teacher at J. P. Case Middle School, effective June 30, 2010.

Aye: Dr. Bonieski      Dr. Copeland      Nay: 0   Abstain: 0  
      Ms. Foreman      Mr. Larmore  
      Ms. Markowski    Ms. McGivney  
      Dr. Murdock      Mr. Zarish  
      Ms. Bell

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given to amend the 2009-2010 salary of Cara **Calderone**, Grade 2 Teacher at Francis A. Desmares School, from \$46,898 to \$47,898 to reflect the attainment of a bachelor’s degree plus fifteen credits, effective December 31, 2009.

Aye: Dr. Bonieski      Dr. Copeland      Nay: 0   Abstain: 0  
      Ms. Foreman      Mr. Larmore  
      Ms. Markowski    Ms. McGivney  
      Dr. Murdock      Mr. Zarish  
      Ms. Bell

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given to amend the 2009-2010 salary of Wanda **Smith**, Grade 3 Teacher at Copper Hill School, from \$77,758 to \$79,958 to reflect the attainment of a master’s degree, effective November 1, 2009.

Aye: Dr. Bonieski      Dr. Copeland      Nay: 0   Abstain: 0  
      Ms. Foreman      Mr. Larmore  
      Ms. Markowski    Ms. McGivney  
      Dr. Murdock      Mr. Zarish  
      Ms. Bell

**All Staff - Additional Compensation**

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given to employ the following staff members for additional compensation during the 2009-2010 school year:

Item	Last Name	First Name	Loc.	Purpose	Max. # of Hours	Rate
a.	Alsop	Linda	CH	K-6 Math Curriculum	15	\$32
b.	Cagenello	Stacey	RFIS	K-6 Math Curriculum	15	\$32
c.	Ricard	Deborah	RH	K-6 Math Curriculum	15	\$32
d.	Strunk	Carri	RFIS	K-6 Math Curriculum	15	\$32
d.	Tonge	Michele	FAD	K-6 Math Curriculum	25	\$32

Aye: Dr. Bonieski      Dr. Copeland      Nay: 0   Abstain: 0  
      Ms. Foreman      Mr. Larmore  
      Ms. Markowski    Ms. McGivney  
      Dr. Murdock      Mr. Zarish  
      Ms. Bell

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given to amend the motion 10.qq. of December 7, 2009:

to employ the following staff members for additional compensation during the 2009-2010 school year:

Item	Last Name	First Name	Loc.	Purpose	Max. # of Hours	Rate
qq.	Wright	Ameloisa	RFIS	RFIS ESL Learning Lab Supervisor	24	\$32

to read:

to employ the following staff members for additional compensation during the 2009-2010 school year:

Item	Last Name	First Name	Loc.	Purpose	Max. # of Hours	Rate
qq.	Wright	Ameloisa	RFIS	RFIS ESL Learning Lab Supervisor	<b>40</b>	<b>\$29</b>

Aye: Dr. Bonieski      Dr. Copeland      Nay: 0    Abstain: 0  
 Ms. Foreman      Mr. Larmore  
 Ms. Markowski      Ms. McGivney  
 Dr. Murdock      Mr. Zarish  
 Ms. Bell

### Field Placements

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given for the following field placements for the 2009-2010 school year:

Candidate College/Univ.	Cooperating Teacher	Loc./Position	Dates
Amanda Blaisdell, Colleen Magnuson/TCNJ	Cate Sewall	RFIS/Art	March 8, 2010-April 29, 2010
Megan Houck, Kathleen Moore/ TCNJ	Laura McConnell	FAD/Art	March 8, 2010-April 29, 2010

Aye: Dr. Bonieski      Dr. Copeland      Nay: 0    Abstain: 0  
 Ms. Foreman      Mr. Larmore  
 Ms. Markowski      Ms. McGivney  
 Dr. Murdock      Mr. Zarish  
 Ms. Bell

### Professional Development/Travel

On motion of Dr. Bonieski, seconded by Ms. Foreman, approval was given of the following travel expenditures for staff members or their designated alternate to attend professional development conferences/workshops. This travel is deemed educationally necessary and fiscally prudent and all travel expenditures shall be directly related to and within the scope of the staff member's current responsibilities and the district's professional development plan.

Item	Last Name	First Name	Workshop/ Conference	Dates	Includes (See Below)	Max. Amt.
a.	Ashey	Elizabeth	Working with Struggling Readers, Grades 3+, Union, NJ	Mar. 23, 2010	M	\$50
b.	Drew	Amy	Working with Struggling Readers, Grades 3+, Union, NJ	Mar. 23, 2010	M	\$50
c.	Heierling	Kimberly	Getting Comfortable Teaching Sex Ed – Skills for Teachers & their Students, Union, NJ	April 14, 2010	R, M	\$155
d.	Loreti	Daniel	Getting Comfortable Teaching Sex Ed – Skills for Teachers & their Students, Union, NJ	April 14, 2010	R	\$100
e.	O'Brien	Megan	"Dealing with the Most Difficult Issues for School Leaders & Counselors," Monroe Township, NJ	Mar. 12, 2010	R, M	\$200
f.	O'Brien	Megan	HCSCA Bi-Annual Meeting & Teaching Resiliency to Students, Whitehouse Station, NJ	April 16, 2010	R, M	\$35
g.	Spencer	Jesse	Getting Comfortable Teaching Sex Ed – Skills for Teachers & Their Students, Union, NJ	April 14, 2010	R	\$100

**R = Registration Fee; M = Mileage; L = Lodging; F = Food; O = Other**

Aye: Dr. Bonieski      Dr. Copeland      Nay: 0    Abstain: 0  
       Ms. Foreman        Mr. Larmore  
       Ms. Markowski     Ms. McGivney  
       Dr. Murdock        Mr. Zarish  
       Ms. Bell

**MISCELLANEOUS**

On motion of Ms. McGivney, seconded by Ms. Markowski, approval was given to receive the following homeless students:

Item	Student ID	School	Effective Date	Previous School District
a.	2002242	RH	3/2/2010	Perkasie, PA
b.	2002243	RH	3/2/2010	Perkasie, PA

Aye: Dr. Bonieski      Dr. Copeland      Nay: 0    Abstain: 0  
       Ms. Foreman        Mr. Larmore  
       Ms. Markowski     Ms. McGivney  
       Dr. Murdock        Mr. Zarish  
       Ms. Bell

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Many emails were received from the community.

**OLD BUSINESS**

No comments were made on correspondence from Cynthia Yard regarding a resolution in support of Governor Christie in his efforts to reduce State spending.

**BUDGET WORK SESSION**

Mr. Nolan gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the 2010-2011 district preliminary budget.

The meeting was opened to questions from the Board.

Dr. Bonieski asked when the board needs to approve the budget.

Ms. Hope responded March 22.

Dr. Copeland commented on slide 17 the words “less reduction” could possibly result in the same or more reductions. It is an unknown at this time.

**CITIZENS ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Diane Potash, Raritan Township, asked if subscription busing is the same as courtesy busing. Ms. Hope noted that, if this were implemented, students living within two miles of their school would not be bused. Ms. Potash asked if our first priority is student safety then shouldn't the board revisit the idea of eliminating courtesy busing. The \$200 estimate for charging for this service is an extra charge above and beyond the normal tax bill. Mr. Nolan remarked that these safety issues would be looked at on a case by case basis.

Deb Luccaro, Raritan Township and teacher, asked if the \$40,000 projected childcare revenue includes the YMCA K-Wrap Program? Ms. Hope replied that the child care program numbers were done with a broad stroke and would need to be refined if the board chooses to charge fees.

Allen Biltman, Raritan Township, inquired if the issue regarding the massive reduction in state aid has ever happened before? Ms. Hope responded that this has never happened before. The state is doing it to balance the state budget.

Ron Tonge, Raritan Township, stated that the facility use policy needs to be adjusted according to what best benefits the children. This should be evaluated before broad changes are made. Facility users are generating significant profit while our

district is bearing all of the expense. Some members of the board should reclude themselves when there are discussions about facility use and the YMCA before and after care programs.

Bruce Davidson, Raritan Township, enjoyed the presentation. He would like the list of reductions to be regrouped by category (Maintenance, Library etc.) and the effect on education listed for each reduction. What is the impact on students and class size if we reduce teachers? Mr. Davidson also suggested the district present it in three columns to allow choices for the public.

Stephanie Pierle, Raritan Township, is disheartened to see one team at J. P. Case on the reduction list as she feels we have already lost valuable core curriculum time in math and language arts. She feels that the projected class sizes, after these changes occur, are not realistic. She suggested a Reading-Fleming Intermediate School like schedule for J. P. Case. Ms. Pierle also remarked that she believes that the enrollment at J. P. Case is only going to increase.

Paul Price, Raritan Township, said if this were a business, we would be having a 6.7% shortfall. He remarked that he believes that the administrative costs are high and most businesses would look there for cuts. In regards to generating income, Mr. Price thought our projections were very low and not believable. Mr. Nolan responded that the board used very conservative estimates. Mr. Price was glad to know we are less in the hole this week.

Gary Marconi, Raritan Township, asked if the board anticipated a typical increase in health benefits? Ms. Hope responded that 12% health, 15% prescription and 0% dental were used in the calculations. Mr. Marconi estimated that this represents over a million dollar increase in the budget. He asked if teachers and administrators contribute to these costs. Mr. Nolan responded that only the superintendent's contract has this requirement. Mr. Marconi also stated that 80% of the district projected budget is represented by salaries and benefits. He said that every 2% increase in salary amounts to over \$600,000.00.

Stacy Colon, Raritan Township, said we are already charging a student activity fee, what about charging per event or club. She inquired about the status of the possible cuts at central office and the human resources audit. Mr. Nolan said that the results of the audit would be presented to the board at our next meeting. Ms. Colon mentioned that three bids are required for all PTO purchases and all the money earned goes back to the children. Does the district use the three bid policy for facility use? She wants to see other childcare options explored. She mentioned the YMCA conflict of interest. Mr. Nolan responded that these options must go to committee first and a policy must be generated before the district can explore other childcare options.

Judy St. Angel, Raritan Township, wanted to know why the YMCA was brought in without 3 bids. Ms Hope responded that this is done through facility use and no other group inquired about providing childcare. Dr. Copeland asked if this would be an annual contract and are there any county policies governing this? Ms. Hope responded that there is no county requirement. It is a district to district decision.

Ron Tonge, Raritan Township, brought up the subject of the YMCA facility use and asked if the district insurance covers district liability. Ms. Hope replied that every facility user is required to have their own insurance.

Linda Pizzico, Raritan Township, asked when the final reduction list will be completed and published. Mr. Nolan responded that the final list will be available on March 15<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Pizzico asked what school has the most facility usage and which school has the greatest opportunity to bring in income. Ms Hope responded that she believes J. P. Case is used most and has the greatest potential for revenue. More analysis needs to be done.

Joanne Elaqua, Raritan Township, asked if positions can be reduced by attrition and what is the district doing to prevent this issue from happening next year. Mr. Nolan said that due the scope of the budget cuts the district is now in a reactive mode. The board will strive to be more proactive in the future. She stated that the district has been reacting for five years. Dr. Copeland remarked that school budgets are a democratic process. It is important to contact your elected officials and state your opinion.

Karin Alexanderson, Raritan Township and teacher, discussed the importance of the art and music teachers. Special area teachers have a special connection with their students. She asked Mr. Nolan to reconsider eliminating the one art and one music teacher.

Sandra Gong, Raritan Township, asked if teachers contribute to benefits. Mr. Nolan responded no. Ms. Gong asked if benefit cuts, salary cuts and freezes are being discussed in negotiations. Would the union and administrators be willing to cut

pay and benefits to save teacher positions? She also emphasized the need for library clerks to allow the librarians to do their job. Dr. Copeland reminded everyone that the district administrators took a zero percentage increase for 2009-2010.

Phil Patrick, Raritan Township, questioned slide 19, is the district still \$900,000.00 short after all these reductions? Ms. Hope replied that the additional \$900,000.00 was not needed because a \$1.2 million reduction has been returned to us. Mr. Patrick further asked if the revenue generating items are just cost shifting in regards to the taxpayer. He also requested class size cost modeling to determine cost savings. Mr. Nolan responded that the current reductions will not increase class size.

Joanne Elacqua, Raritan Township, said that every area must make cuts.

Marie Corfield, Raritan Township and teacher, asked how our district budget compares to other districts. Ms. Hope and Mr. Nolan responded that reductions are proportional to other budgets. Ms. Corfield also asked what will happen if the charter school opens in September? Mr. Nolan said the school will receive close to one million dollars from our budget if they enroll approximately 100 students.

Diana Kelly, Raritan Township, questioned the potential conflict of interest with the YMCA and members of the board. She is also against charging non-profit entities for facility use. She believes the class sizes here are very low and inquired about the number of students the classrooms can hold. She recommends we look at administrative cuts and keep the teachers. She wants the board to consider eliminating in-service days for the staff. Ms. Kelly asked about not being able to charge for courtesy busing in past years. Ms. Hope responded that Ms. Kelly may be thinking about hazardous busing. Ms. Kelly encouraged the board to look at what public employees have given up.

David Johnston, Raritan Township, remarked that the board assumes that the budget will go to 4% cap. He wants to know what cuts would need to be made to go lower than 4% or not use the cap at all. Mr. Johnston also agrees with the facility use fees and considers it a use tax. He also would like to see more dialogue on the YMCA conflict of interest issue.

Joe Infante, Raritan Township, asked what kind of contracts the district has with outside vendors. Can fees be renegotiated? Ms. Hope responded that by law the current contract renewals are all at 0%. Mr. Infante asked what shared services does the district participate in. Ms. Hope listed them. Mr. Infante asked if there are others we can explore. Ms. Hope said that we are looking into other possibilities. He also asked how often the teachers renew their contract. Ms. Foreman replied that every three years the contract is negotiated. It was also noted that the current contract expires on June 30, 2010.

Dr. Copeland asked if the district's debt restructuring has been explored. Ms. Hope said yes, there are no bonds callable at this time.

Stacy Colon, Raritan Township, remarked on the importance of contacting your district assemblyman. She remarked on the need for two VPs at J. P. Case.

Liz Rugg, Raritan Township, expressed her desire for JV Sports and intramurals to be changed to pay to play rather than being eliminated. She also asked for a task force to examine revenue enhancement options like summer school.

Lisa Klemens, Raritan Township, expressed that her son's self esteem has increased due to the art and music program and does not want it cut. Mr. Nolan remarked that we are not eliminating art and music.

Karin Alexanderson, Raritan Township and teacher, remarked that music and art teachers work very hard. Why is this area being questioned?

Laurie Gorman, Raritan Township, asked what the actual cost for non-mandated transportation is. She would like to know what the real core class sizes will be (not average) with these reductions. She believes that education must come first over extras.

Kitty Ward, Raritan Township, asked if class sizes at J. P. Case are on the web site. Mr. Nolan read a list of class sizes by subject. Ms. Ward believes that large class sizes are possible but not desirable.

Melissa France, Raritan Township, remarked that class sizes are higher than listed due to the inclusion of special services children. The incoming J. P. Case class is larger than the out-going class for 2010-2011. She is against eliminating core teachers and believes that will effect test scores. She believes that cutting library aides will not allow the librarians to teach

the skills needed for higher education. Ms. France agrees with pay to play for extra-curricular activities rather than eliminating them altogether.

Jen Marino, Raritan Township and teacher, asked about the tennis courts at Robert Hunter. She emphasized that Robert Hunter uses the courts for an extra teaching surface. She requests that the district take a second look at repair rather than removal. Mr. Nolan said he will take a second look at the Robert Hunter tennis courts.

The Board recessed at 9:26 p.m.

The Board returned to public session at 9:40 p.m.

The Board discussed revenue generating ideas. Ms. Foreman thanked everyone for coming. She explained that it was necessary to get a sense from the Board on how they felt about:

1. Subscription busing
2. Facility use
3. Student fees.

Ms. McGivney expressed concern with children walking on our roads to school.

Mr. Larmore stated that as a father of three children, he would not let his children walk to school.

Ms. Markowski requested more information on how Hopewell Township works.

Ms. Bell shared the history of conversations with the Board. She also shared other schools' experiences that we are aware of.

Dr. Bonieski shared he has many questions. He shared many of them and acknowledged that it is not an easy issue. An in-depth investigation needs to be done.

Dr. Copeland said that he did not have enough time to make a proper decision for the 2010-2011 but he felt we should investigate the issue further for the 2011-2012 school year. He suggested we consult with our insurance carrier, obtain legal opinions and communicate with the police department regarding additional walkers or cars.

It was the consensus of the Board that they did not want to pursue subscription busing as a way to increase revenue for the 2010-2011 school year. Mr. Nolan will begin the investigation.

Dr. Copeland asked that this topic be brought up at the Steering Committee. Mr. Larmore responded that this committee is not the right venue for this topic. He suggested the appropriate place may be at the action team level.

The Board next discussed facility use. It was the consensus of the Board that we charge groups requesting to use our facilities. Ms. Foreman would like to see a breakdown by school of the usage. Mr. Nolan asked if we should develop a budget using fees. Ms. Foreman was not sure. Dr. Bonieski said we should craft a plan for charging usage fees. Mr. Nolan will work on a framework and present potential revenue for 2010-2011. Mr. Zarish does not want to charge PTOs. Ms. Markowski said it needs to be discussed in the Non-instructional Committee and the Policy Committee.

Mr. Nolan explained that we will make an assumption for the 2010-2011 school year and then deal with them in the committees.

Dr. Murdock agrees that we need to be consistent within the district and with surrounding districts.

Mr. Larmore suggested that we consider charging less for non-profit organizations.

Dr. Copeland suggested that we share this decision with the public as soon as possible.

The Board next discussed student activity fees.

Ms. Foreman stated that we pilot piloted a program this year. She outlined costs. She asked if we wanted to continue this for next year. She asked if we wanted to increase them. A discussion ensued.

Dr. Copeland noted that he does not support a fee to PTOs but would like to get a value of what PTOs give to our school.

It was the consensus of the Board to continue to charging student activity fees and continue investigating the appropriate amount.

Mr. Nolan thanked the Board for their guidance.

**CITIZENS ADDRESS THE BOARD**

Sue Vala, FREA representative and district teacher, suggested a summer enrichment program for generating programs. She also thanked the Board for their openness and time.

Lizz Rugg asked for coach's information in the minutes. Ms. Hope said there are many more costs involved.

Paul Price said there is a lot of money to be gained in the rental of the J. P. Case theatre.

**ADJOURN**

On motion of Ms. McGivney, seconded by Ms. Markowski, the meeting was adjourned, unanimously viva voce, at 10:41 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Stephanie Hope

Upcoming Board Meetings – J. P. Case Middle School

March 15 - Budget Work Session/Regular Meeting

March 22 - Budget Work Session/Regular Meeting

March 29 - Budget Work Session/Regular Meeting

QSAC Resolution

April 12 - Budget Work Session/Regular Meeting

April 20 - School Elections