

READINGTON TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

Holland Brook School
Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.
March 11, 2025

AGENDA

Mission Statement: We empower members of our community to lead purposeful lives with integrity, to cultivate a spirit of discovery, and to embrace connections in our diverse, global society.

I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD PRESIDENT – OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT

Mr. Rizza called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and announce that the meeting was being held in compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A. 10:4-6-21) and was open to the media and public. Notices were duly posted, and the meeting was advertised in the Hunterdon County Democrat and Courier News. Formal action was taken.

Present: Mrs. Cassidy, Mrs. Fiore, Mr. Lopes, Mrs. Ryan, Mrs. Rad, Mrs. DePinto, Mr. Rizza

Also Present: Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent, Jason M. Bohm, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Absent: Mrs. Mencer, Mrs. Podgorski

Mrs. Podgorski arrived at 7:01 p.m.

II. FLAG SALUTE

III. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Patricia Rees, NJSBA Field Service Representative, presented on Roberts Rules of Order parliamentary procedures and board best practices.
- Dr. Hart and Mr. Bohm presented the draft 2025-2026 budget to be voted upon this evening to send to the State of New Jersey for review. The budget contains a potential 3.2% tax levy increase and highlights shared included, but were not limited to, staffing modifications, programming supports, continued preschool expansion, proactive energy savings measures, among more. The vote to finalize the 2025-2026 budget shall occur at the April 29, 2025 board meeting, with another opportunity for public input then as well as at the April 8, 2025 board meeting.
- Dr. Hart and Mr. Bohm presented options regarding a fall ballot for a public vote on the referendum, highlighting a preference for a November date as opposed to September for a variety of reasons. A vote appears on tonight's agenda to vote on a November ballot date, which if passed shall be included in the architect of record's submission at the end of March to the State of New Jersey.

IV. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC (LIMITED TO ACTION ITEMS ON THE AGENDA)

- None

V. CORRESPONDENCE

- None

VI. BOARD ACTION

A. APPROVAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

1. Motion to adopt 1.01 - 1.02
Motion: Mrs. DePinto 2nd: Mr. Lopes Roll Call Vote: Carried 8 Yes
- 1.01 Motion to approve the Enrollment and Drill Reports February 2025.
(Attachment 1.01)
- 1.02 Motion to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Readington Township Board of Education conducted a long term suspension hearing for student, whose name is on file, on November 12, 2024 in accordance with the NJ Administrative Code and Regulations, Board Policy and the Student Handbook, and

WHEREAS, the Readington Township Board of Education approved the suspension for the balance of the 2024-2025 school year on November 12, 2024 and alternative placement for the student's educational programming on December 10, 2024; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Board hereby approves the continued suspension of the student and current placement with no modification for the 2024-2025 school year, pursuant to NJ Administrative code and regulations. The Board shall review this matter at each subsequent regular Board meeting for appropriateness.

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2. Motion to adopt 2.01
Motion: Mrs. DePinto **2nd: Mr. Lopes** **Roll Call Vote: Carried 7 Yes**
(Mrs. Fiore abstained)
- 2.01 Motion to approve the Meeting Minutes February 25, 2025.

C. FINANCE/FACILITIES

Committee Report: None

3. Motion to adopt 3.01 - 3.20
Motion: Mrs. DePinto **2nd: Mr. Lopes** **Roll Call Vote: Carried 8 Yes**
(Mrs. Ryan abstained from check #065087 from motion 3.01)
- 3.01 Motion to approve the **Bill List** for the period from **February 26, 2025 through March 12, 2025** for a total amount of **\$2,249,112.04**.
(Attachment 3.01)
- 3.02 Motion to approve **Travel Expenditures March 11, 2025** In the amount of **\$872.86**.
(Attachment 3.02)
- 3.03 Motion to ratify and approve **Payroll and Agency** for the month of **February 2025** for a total amount of **\$2,497,515.21**.
(Attachment 3.03)
- 3.04 Motion to ratify and approve the following **Account Transfers for February 1, 2025 through February 28, 2025**.
(Attachment 3.04-3.04a)
- 3.05 Motion to ratify and approve the **Student Activities Account for February 28, 2025 through February 28, 2025**.
(Attachment 3.05)
- 3.06 Motion to accept the FINANCIAL REPORT CERTIFICATION OF BOARD SECRETARY'S MONTHLY CERTIFICATION BUDGETARY LINE ITEM STATUS February 28, 2025 pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.11(c) 3, the Business Administrator/Board Secretary certifies that as of February 28, 2025 no budgetary line item account has obligations and payments which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the district Board of Education pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-9 and 18A:22-8.1.

Jason M. Bohm, Board Secretary

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-16.10(c)3 and 4, we certify that as of February 28, 2025 after review of the Secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials that, to the best of our knowledge, no major account or fund has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A23A-16.10(a)1 and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year, and further, that we approve the Board Secretary and Treasurer's Reports subject to audit for the period ending February 28, 2025.
(Attachment 3.06-3.06a)

3.07 **Tentative Budget Adoption 2025-2026**

BE IT RESOLVED that the tentative budget be approved for the 2025-2026 school year and that the Business Administrator/Board Secretary be authorized to submit the following tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools in accordance with N.J.S.A.18A:7F-5 and 18A:7F-6 for approval in accordance with the statutory deadline of March 20, 2025 as follows:

General Fund Current Expense	\$38,569,446.00
General Fund Capital Outlay	\$ 234,211.00
Transfer of Funds to Charter Schools	\$ 17,860.00
Special Revenue Fund	\$ 4,236,310.00
<u>Debt Service Fund</u>	<u>\$ 2,066,125.00</u>
Total Tentative Budget	\$45,123,952.00

(Attachment 3.07-3.07a)

3.08 **Amount to be Raised for Taxes**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education acknowledge that the following amounts be raised in local taxes to support these funds included in the tentative budget:

General Fund	\$34,364,000.00
<u>Debt Service Fund</u>	<u>\$ 2,059,048.00</u>
Total Local Taxes Required	\$36,423,048.00

3.09 **Advertise Tentative Budget for Public Hearing**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education authorize the advertisement of the tentative budget in the Courier News in accordance with the form as provided by the State Department of Education and according to law and establish that the public hearing be held in the Holland Brook School, 52 Readington Road, Whitehouse, NJ on April 29, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget for the 2025-2026 school year.

3.10 Motion to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Readington Township Board of Education qualified for health benefit adjustments, enrollment adjustments, or utilized less than 2% of allowable tax levy in prior budget cycles; and

WHEREAS, the Readington Township Board of Education currently has an accumulated balance of \$221,509.00 in banked cap from the 2022-2023 school year and \$3,820.00 from the 2023-2024 school year; and

WHEREAS, the Readington Township Board of Education generated an additional balance of \$199,165.00 in banked cap in the 2025-2026 school year; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education includes in the tentative budget no adjustment for banked cap, and in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-10.3(b), the district has fully exhausted all eligible statutory spending authority by utilizing an adjustment in health care costs of \$679,080.00. Being fiscally conservative and due to the district not raising taxes to the maximum allowable limit for the 2025-2026 school year, \$221,509.00 in banked cap from the 2022-2023 school year shall expire and not be eligible for use in future budget cycles. The Board of Education will still carry over banked cap of \$199,165.00 in the 2025-2026 school year and \$3,820.00 from the 2023-2024 school year, or a grand total of \$202,985.00 for use in the 2026-2027 budget cycle. The district acknowledges banked cap cannot be deferred or incrementally completed over a longer period of time than law allows.

3.11 Motion to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Readington Township Board of Education qualified for a health benefit adjustment due to the significant health benefit cost increase of the State Health Benefit Plan run by the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, based on budgeted health costs increases, the Readington Township Board of Education qualified for an amount of \$679,080.00 for potential use on the 2026-2027 budget and plans to keep \$199,165.00 as banked cap; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the use of the health benefit adjustment in the budget is intended to be used to pay for the increased costs of health benefit premiums.

3.12 Motion to approve the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Readington Township Board of Education (the “Board”) has established a capital reserve account pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:21-2 and N.J.S.A.18A:7G-31 in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, which is subject to an annual audit; and

WHEREAS, the Board may use the capital reserve account to implement a capital project or referendum in the Readington Township School District’s (“District”) Long Range Facility Plan (“LRFP”) as required pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7G-4(a) and N.J.A.C. 6A:26-2; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-14.1, the Board may, by resolution, transfer funds from the capital reserve account to the line items in the capital outlay major account/fund to fund the total costs, less any excess costs, of a school facilities project or referendum; and

WHEREAS, the Readington Township Board of Education (the “Board”) has previously approved holding a referendum lowering current taxes at its February 25, 2025 board meeting for 83 capital projects at 4 school buildings at a cost of \$38,047,000.00, offset by state aid in the approximate amount of \$10,437,423.00, resulting in a net cost to the local taxpayers of \$27,609,577.00, and potential costs for holding a referendum are required to be built into the 2025-2026 budget; and

WHEREAS, the Board previously approved at its February 11, 2025 board meeting the architect of record to submit all projects in the referendum to the State of New Jersey for amendment and inclusion in the District’s long-range facilities plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board authorizes in the 2025-2026 budget a capital reserve withdrawal in the amount of \$70,000.00 for referendum legal and ballot costs should any be incurred, which shall be refunded in entirety if the referendum passes, or returned to the general fund should no costs be incurred.

3.13 **Approval of Resolution – School District Accountability – A-5**

WHEREAS, the State of New Jersey has enacted P.L. 2007, An Act Concerning School District Accountability (A-5) requiring boards of education to annually approve the total amount of funds budgeted for travel and conferences for all faculty, staff, administration and board members, and

WHEREAS, A-5 became effective on March 15, 2007 and requires prior approval of all travel and conference costs with registration costs in excess of \$200.00 before they are incurred, and

WHEREAS, such travel expenditures shall include, but not limited to, all costs for transportation, meals lodging and registration and conference fees to and for the travel event, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education must establish an annual maximum per employee for regular business travel and that annual maximum, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education elects to exclude travel expenditures by federal funds from the maximum travel expenditure amount and acknowledges the following travel costs for federal programs:

2024-2025 Maximum Travel Budget \$50,000.00
2024-2025 Expenditures through 3/10/2025 \$14,465.23
2025-2026 Maximum Travel Budget \$50,000.00

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the following budget and expended amounts are acknowledged and costs of travel and conferences through the use of local and state funds are approved for the 2024-2025 school year and the 2025-2026 school year:

2024-2025 Maximum Travel Budget \$100,000.00
2024-2025 Expenditures through 03/10/2025 \$40,007.51
2025-2026 Maximum Travel Budget \$100,000.00

- Policy 5516.01 - Student Use of Wireless Communication Devices Including Cell Phones

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- None

VIII. NEW BUSINESS FROM BOARD

- Mr. Rizza and Dr. Hart shared the board self evaluation process, which is an optional best practice for the board to review its own governance and processes to finetune, identify strengths and weaknesses to improve upon. Timelines are not defined so the board can determine what works best to achieve its own objectives for the process. After some discussion between the board and Superintendent, the board decided to undergo the self evaluation process in June given there are 3 new board members who have only served for approximately two months and to not conflict with the Superintendent evaluation process that occurs between late April and early June before the statutory deadline of June 30. The board decided to use the NJSBA tool format. Mr. Rizza shall share more details after consulting with Patricia Rees, NJSBA.
- Mrs. Cassidy provided minutes of a Garden State Coalition of Schools meeting in February. An attorney present at the meeting discussed federal grants and funding.

IX. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

- None

X. EXECUTIVE SESSION - 8:43 p.m.

Motion: Mrs. Ryan

2nd: Mrs. DePinto

Roll Call Vote: Carried 8 Yes

Motion to adopt the following resolution: Resolved to adjourn to Executive Session in accordance with the Sunshine Law, Chapter 321, P.L. 1975, to discuss HIBs for approximately 30 minutes at which time the Board expects to return to Public Session where action shall be taken. The matters discussed will be made public if and when the circumstances requiring confidentiality no longer exist; however, it is not presently known when such circumstances will exist.

Mr. Lopes left the meeting at 9:07 p.m.

XI. RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION - 9:18 p.m.

Motion: Mrs. Cassidy

2nd: Mrs. DePinto

Roll Call Vote: Carried 7 Yes

XII. ADJOURNMENT – 9:19 p.m.

Motion: Mrs. Cassidy

2nd: Mrs. DePinto

Roll Call Vote: Carried 7 Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Jason M. Bohm
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Mr. David Rizza
President, Board of Education