

HARDING TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

Monday, May 1, 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 7:00 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. **PUBLIC HEARING OF THE BUDGET**
Motion presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mrs. Krikos, unanimously approved, to hold a public hearing for the Superintendent to present the 2023-2024 proposed final school budget and answer questions from the Board/Public.

Dr. Matthew Spelker – 2023-2024 public budget presentation

Dr. Matthew Spelker reviewed the 2023-2024 budget presentation with the Board. He noted that the 2023-2024 budget is fiscally conservative that meets all budget guidelines. It maintains staffing configuration, co-curricular activities and small class sizes. It budgets money for professional development and curriculum writing. Inflation had a negative impact on this year's budget – fuel costs, employee benefits and many more expense line items. Dr. Spelker also noted this budget allows for HTS to maintain its position as one of the premier PK-8 public school districts in New Jersey and provides adequate financial resources to meet the soon to be named 2023/2024 district goals.

Mr. Singh commented on the impact of inflation in the Budget and if this continued, what would be the impact on next year's budget? Dr. Spelker and Mr. Jennings noted that if inflation continued at similar levels next year, that it would impact the budget for next year but it was too early to predict at this time. They also mentioned that they were seeing some moderation in inflation and were hopeful that impact would be less than the current year. Mr. Bruno noted that the community understands the reality of inflation and its impact on the budget. Mr. Gjivoje thanked Dr. Spelker and Mr. Jennings on their efforts in providing a fiscally prudent budget. He also mentioned the historical tax levy increases and commended the administration for averaging 1.57% annual increase over the last 5 years. He also commended the negotiations committee and the HTEA representatives for arriving at a new contract that is fair and agreeable to both parties. Mr. Balog inquired about the salary increases and the pending new teacher contract as compared to the County Averages? Dr. Spelker noted that the County Average for salary increases is approximately 3.5%. Mr. Balog asked where the current budget stands? Mr. Jennings noted the current year's budget is in-line with projections. He asked what was the amount Harding pays Madison for tuition for the High School Students. Mr. Jennings noted it was approximately \$1.35 million on an annual basis. George Boyan asked about spending per student? Mr. Jennings noted that the User Friendly Budget would be posted on the Website tomorrow and that information would be available in that report.

MOTION presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Dr. Anastasiou, unanimously approved, to close public hearing regarding the 2023-2024 school budget.

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

MOTION to open public comments regarding agenda items only presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mrs. Krikos, unanimously approved at 8:01 p.m.

No Comments

MOTION to close public comments regarding agenda items only presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Dr. Anastasiou, unanimously at 8:02 p.m.

VII. REPORTS/DISCUSSIONS

a. Superintendent – Dr. Spelker noted that April 26th was the District's Day of Service with various different grades working with different organizations. Dr. Spelker noted that Mrs. Baldassari and Mrs. McDonough will present to the Board on May 22nd regarding this initiative. Mrs. Muench along with some of her 8th grade students, will be presenting a STEM initiative/proposal to the Board on May 22nd. HTS will have Friday May 26th and Monday May 29th off for the Memorial Day Weekend. The Promotion Ceremony for the 8th graders will be held on Thursday June 15th at 6 p.m. The last day of school for 2023 will be Monday June 19th.

b. Business Administrator – Mr. Jennings noted that all the Financial Disclosure forms were

successfully submitted by the Administration and Board by the due date. Mr. Jennings reviewed the Facilities/Finance agenda items with the Board.

c. Madison BOE 4/18/23 – Mr. Bruno noted that the Madison Board was unanimous in their recommendation for a candidate for interim Superintendent with a vote at tomorrow's Madison BOE meeting. He also noted the Board is in the process of selecting a search firm for the purposes of finding a permanent Superintendent. He mentioned that the Assistant Superintendent at Madison recently resigned to take a new position as Superintendent at another District. Mr. Bruno also mentioned the Madison Board discussed a middle school student sensitivity issue.

d. Climate and Culture 4/27/23 – Dr. Anastasiou noted the Day of Service was hugely successful and thanked all for their involvement (especially Mrs. Baldassari and Mrs. McDonough) in the program. He noted the committee was providing snacks for students during NJSLA testing. He also discussed the Walkathon which raised over \$12,000 for St. Jude's.

c. HIB (if necessary) - None

VIII. CORRESPONDENCE

Office of Emergency Management Letter

IX. BOARD BUSINESS

BB-019 Approve Regular and Executive Session Minutes

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

BB-019 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education approve the following minutes:

- Regular Session, April 17, 2023
- Executive Session, April 17, 2023

ROLL CALL:

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

FACILITIES/FINANCE

FF-044 Approve Bills List

FF-045 Approve Financial Reports

FF-046 Approve Bartky HealthCare Center, LCC

FF-047 Approve Education Services, LLC

FF-048 Approve Tri-County Behavioral Care

FF-049 Approve Morris Psychological Group Fee Schedules

FF-050 Approve Nursing Services – Bayada

FF-051 Approve MedPsych Associates

FF-052 Approve Board Attorney

FF-053 Approve The Family Center at Montclair

FF-054 Approve Institute of Neurology & Neurosurgery at Saint Barnabas

FF-055 Approve Medical, Prescription, Dental, LT Disability rates

FF-056 Approve March Budget Transfers

FF-057 Approve Final Budget

FF-058 Approve Final Health Care Budget Adjustment

FF-059 Approve Final Capital Reserve Budget Withdrawal

FF-060 Approve Garden State Environmental

FF-061 Approve LearnWell

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

FF-044 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the bills list dated May 1, 2023 in the amount of \$565,057.02.

FF-045 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the March 2023 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 districts obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

FF-046 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves Bartky HealthCare Center, LLC to provide Psychiatric Evaluation services at a fee of \$1,500.00 per evaluation for the 2023-2024 school year.

FF-047 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves Education Services, LLC to provide Psychological evaluations for the 2023-2024 school year at the rate of \$425.00 per evaluation.

FF-048 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves Tri-County Behavioral Care to provide School Clearance Assessment at \$165 per assessment and Substance Evaluation & Treatment Services at \$215 per assessment for the 2023-2024 school year.

FF-049 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the attached Psychological Services and Testing Fee schedules for Morris Psychological Group for the 2023-2024 school year.

FF-050 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves Bayada Home Health Care, Inc. to supply a RN to school as needed per school's request for the 2023-2024 school year at a rate of \$68 per hour.

FF-051 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves MedPsych Associates to provide Psychiatric Evaluations for the 2023-2024 school year at a cost of \$1,250 to \$1,950 per evaluation.

FF-052 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves Board Attorney/Retainer Agreement for the 2023-2024 School year with Schenck Price Smith & King, LLP. Legal services to be billed at \$200/hour for partners and counsel; \$190/hour for associates; and \$130/hour for law clerks and paralegals.

FF-053 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves The Family Center at Montclair to provide Mental Health Screenings or Psychiatric Evaluations from September 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 at \$150 per Mental Health Screening, \$850 per simple Psychiatric Evaluation and \$1,600 per In Depth Psychiatric Evaluation.

FF-054 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves Dr. Rina Goldberg of the Institute of Neurology and

Neurosurgery at Saint Barnabas to provide neurodevelopmental evaluations for the 2023-2024 school year at a fee of \$725 per evaluation.

FF-055 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the Medical and Prescription Plans for the 2023-2024 school year with Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey which reflects a 7.5% premium increase over 2022-2023 rates, Delta Dental with a renewal increase of 3% for 2023-2024 over 2022-2023 rates and Unum Long Term Disability Plan with a 0% premium increase in 2023-2024 over 2022-2023 rates.

FF-056 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the March 2023 Budget transfers.

FF-057 RESOLVED that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the final budget be approved for the 2023-2024 school year using the 2023-2024 state aid figures and was reviewed and approved by the Executive County Superintendent.

**Harding Township School District
Adoption of the Final Budget for School Year 2023-2024**

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Special Revenues</u>	<u>Total</u>
2023-2024 Total Expenditures	\$13,144,836	\$146,437	\$13,291,273
Less Anticipated Revenue	<u>\$ 1,542,367</u>	<u>\$146,437</u>	<u>\$ 1,688,804</u>
Taxes to be raised	\$11,602,469	\$0	\$11,602,469

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Harding Township Board of Education approves the adoption of the 2023-2024 school district Budget as follows:

General Fund	\$13,064,552
Capital Outlay Fund	80,284
Special Revenue Fund	<u>146,437</u>
TOTAL	\$13,291,273

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Harding Township Board of Education acknowledges that the 2023-2024 school budget described above results in a General Fund Tax Levy in the amount of \$11,602,469 payable from Harding Township Borough to the Harding Township Board of Education according to the following schedule:

Month/Year	Amount	Month/Year	Amount
July 2023	\$966,872.42	Jan 2024	\$966,872.42
Aug 2023	\$966,872.42	Feb 2024	\$966,872.42
Sep 2023	\$966,872.42	Mar 2024	\$966,872.41
Oct 2023	\$966,872.42	Apr 2024	\$966,872.41

Nov 2023	\$966,872.42	May 2024	\$966,872.41
Dec 2023	\$966,872.42	Jun 2024	\$966,872.41
Total	\$5,801,234.52		\$5,801,234.48

FF-058 RESOLVED that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools includes in the 2023-2024 final budget the adjustment for increased health benefits in the amount of \$98,126 to be used to pay for the additional increases in health benefit premiums.

FF-059 RESOLVED that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, includes in the 2023-2024 final budget a capital reserve withdrawal in the amount of \$40,000 for:

- Nurses Room HVAC Replacement

FF-060 RESOLVED that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves Garden State Environmental for the 2023-2024 school year to supply Asbestos, NJ Right to Know, Hazard Communications, Bloodborne Pathogens and Training Services at a cost of \$4,200.

FF-061 RESOLVED that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves LearnWell for the 2023-2024 school year to provide academic tutoring services at a cost of \$57.75 per hour up to 10 hours per week.

ROLL CALL:

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

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

CI-014 Approve Board Training

CI-015 Approve Professional Development

Motion presented by Dr. Anastasiou and seconded by Mr. Singh to approve:

CI-014 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following Board Training:

Mr. Richard Bruno NJSBA School Safety Conference, June 9, 2023, registration at \$99, mileage \$0.47 per mile.

CI-015 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following professional development:

Mrs. Swenor/Perruso/Twynam to attend the CDK Systems year end meeting for Accounting and Personnel Programs, April 26-27, 2023 at Hawk Point Club, Washington, NJ, no registration fee, mileage at \$0.47 per mile.

ROLL CALL:

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

PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT

PM-016 Approve Tenured Faculty, 2023-24

PM-017 Approve Additional Student Support

PM-018 Approve Faculty Leave of Absence, FMLA

PM-019 Approve Replacement Teacher, Gr. 1

PM-020 Approve Faculty Assignment, 2023-24 SY

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

PM-016 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the rehiring of the following tenured certificated faculty assignments/corresponding step on the 2023/24 HTEA guide as negotiated:

Alexander, Patti	Grade 1	MA/Step 19 + Longevity
Alworth, Timothy	Instrumental Music	MA+30/Step 15
Baldassari, Jennifer	MS Language Arts	MA/Step 19 + Longevity
Carleen, Kristin	Speech Language Spec	MA+30/Step 16
Caproni, Michelle	Resource Room	MA/Step 19 + Longevity
Cochran, Carol	MS Math	MA+45/Step 19 + Longevity
Crum, Jennifer	Grade 5	MA+45/Step 10
Daley, Kelly	Resource Room	MA/Step 19 + Longevity
Engelsman, Susan	MS Science	MA+15/Step 19 + Longevity
Frascella, Alexandria	Resource Room	BA+15/Step 8
Fry, Pamela	Elementary Art	MA/Step 19 + Longevity
Gareau, Rachel	Vocal Music	MA/Step 13
Hoffman, Thomas	MS Social Studies	BA+15/Step 19 + Longevity
Hunter, Allison	Resource Room	MA/Step 15 + Longevity
Latzman, Jacqueline	Resource Room/ELA	MA+15/Step 15 + Longevity
LaVecchia, Sarah	MS Math	MA/Step 13
Light, Amy	Kindergarten	BA/Step 11
McDonough	Nurse	BA/Step 10
McGrath, Rachel	Grade 3	MA/Step 7
McPeck, Kevin	Phys. Ed	MA+15/Step 11
Mihaly, Ashley	Resource Room/Math	MA+15/Step 9
Miller, Laurel	Grade 2	MA/Step 13
Nesse, Jennifer	Grade 2	MA/Step 12
Oles, Lauren	Resource Room	MA/Step 17 + Longevity
Paradiso, Jaclyn	Resource Room	BA/Step 7
Rega, Melanie	Social Worker	MA/Step 6
Rosenfeld, Holly	Phy Ed/Health	BA/Step 19 + Longevity
Sapio, Rena	Chinese (0.6 FTE)	BA/Step 14
Schutz, Katrina	Kindergarten	MA/Step 17 + Longevity
Thony, Emily	Guidance Counselor	MA/Step 15
Werner, Lisa	MS Language Arts	MA+45/Step 18 + Longevity
Worley, Brittany	School Psychologist	MA+30/Step 10

PM-017 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves Rena Sapio to provide additional student instructional support at \$50 per session from April 4, 2023 through the end of the school year, not to exceed \$5,000.

PM-018 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following:

Ms. Patti Alexander, Gr. 1 teacher, Family Medical Leave effective May 1 through June 19, 2023, without salary but with employee responsible for mandatory health benefits contributions.

PM-019 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following:

Mrs. Elise Blechner, replacement teacher Grade 1, effective May 1 through June 30, 2023 at an annual salary of \$73,700 MA+30/Step 11 prorated to \$14,740.

PM-020 RESOLVED, that the Harding Township Board of Education, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, approves the following:

Mrs. Lindsay Scheifler, World Language Teacher/French – Middle School, effective September 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, BA/Step 13 FTE (.6) of the HTEA salary guide.

ROLL CALL:

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 to open public comments regarding Agenda and non-Agenda Items presented by Dr. Anastasiou and seconded by Mr. Singh, unanimously approved at 8:20 p.m.

George Boyan inquired about the tuition rates the District charges for out of district students who attend HTS schools, how it compares to levels of surrounding schools and whether raising it would be an additional revenue source to the school? Dr. Spelker noted there are 3-4 out of district students that attend HTS schools and they have done so for some time, and the amount of tuition the school receives is very small relative to the overall Budget. Mr. Gjivoje stated he appreciated Mr. Boyan for bringing this matter up and the Board would review this going forward.

MOTION to close public comments regarding Agenda and non-Agenda Items presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Dr. Anastasiou, unanimously approved at 8:28 p.m.

XI. PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS – Mr. Gjivoje noted it was Mr. Singh's Birthday and wished him a Happy Birthday. He also thanked the administration and the teachers for their efforts on the Day of Service and how it demonstrates to students the importance of community participation.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION – No Executive Session Held

MOTION presented by _____ and seconded by _____ to enter Executive Session at _____.

Be It Resolved, that the Harding Township Board of Education will convene into 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 -None

XV. ADJOURN

MOTION presented by Mr. Bruno and seconded by Mrs. Krikos to adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL:

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

Respectively Submitted



John Jennings
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

