

VOORHEES TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
329 ROUTE 73, VOORHEES, NJ 08043

The Special Board Meeting of the Voorhees Township Board of Education was held on Thursday, July 30, 2020 at 5:00 PM, Dawn Wallace, President, presiding.

STATEMENT

In accordance with Executive Order No. 104 and 107, signed by Governor Murphy in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Voorhees Township Board of Education is conducting this meeting through video/tele-conferencing. Board members are asked to please state their name prior to making or seconding a motion or making a statement. The public is invited to attend the meeting remotely– please visit <https://www.voorhees.k12.nj.us/Page/94340> for instructions.

The Voorhees Township Board of Education uses a Rolling Agenda concept. Items that are listed for a vote on the public board agenda are sent to the Board of Education members weekly as information items. Each member has the ability to request topics to be discussed in Committee meetings as needed.

I. PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice of this meeting pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act has been given by the Board Secretary in the following manner:

1. Posting written notice on the official bulletin board at the Voorhees Township Public Schools Administrative Building on July 27, 2020.
2. Sending written notice to the Courier Post on July 27, 2020.
3. Filing written notice with the Clerk of Voorhees Township on July 27, 2020.
4. Publishing written notice on the District website on July 27, 2020.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

III. ROLL CALLPresent

Dana Galiano

Dr. Marissa Levy

Richard Nelson

John Schmus

Rachel van Aken

Monica Watson (5:05 PM)

Bruce Karpf, Vice-President

Dawn Wallace, President

Dr. David Gentile, Superintendent

Helen G. Haley, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Howard Mendelson, Solicitor

Andrew Parsinitz, Solicitor

Absent

Barbara Dunleavy

IV. MINUTESV. INFORMATION ITEMSVI. COMMUNICATIONSVII. BOARD SECRETARY REPORTVIII. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

1. Presentation: "The Road Back" Tentative Plan – Dr. David Gentile

IX. COMMITTEE REPORTX. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The public made comments and asked questions relating to the Presentation: "The Road Back" Tentative Plan. The Superintendent responded to questions and addressed concerns.

XI. BOARD COMMENTS

Mrs. Watson

Statement read into the record on Attachment "A".

Mr. Schmus

Stated there is no way he could express his feeling more eloquently than Mrs. Watson. He feels the Board needs much more information so they can make the best decision possible for staff, students and families.

Dr. Levy

Thanked Dr. Gentile for the presentation. She has dealt with many of the same issues in her job; she understands the breadth of the undertaking before the District. The Board needs to take into consideration all of the public comments and feedback before making a decision. She stated that she is glad to have more time before voting on the plan.

Mrs. Wallace

Thanked Dr. Gentile and stated that rules and regulations from the NJ Department of Education, the Governor's office and the CDC are changing daily.

Mr. Karpf

Suggested that a live Q & A section be added to the District website.

Mr. Nelson

Agreed with suggestion of a live Q & A and stated that it should be easy to add to the website. The Board needs to keep communicating with all the stakeholders.

Ms. Galiano

Thanked Dr. Gentile and all who participated in creating the plan. Reminded the Board that this is a first draft and is also a fluid document and changes will be made as necessary and/or mandated by higher authority.

Mr. Nelson

Congratulated Constance Ginion and Janice Bonventure on their retirement.

XII. TRANSPORTATION

XIII. POLICY

XIV. PERSONNEL

Motion by Mr. Nelson, seconded by Mr. Karpf to approve:

1. extra-duty pay for 2020-2021 as shown on Attachment "B":
 - a. Additional Summer Employment 2020
2. the retirement of Constance Ginion, secretary, effective September 30, 2020.
3. the retirement of Christina Miller, teacher, effective October 31, 2020.

Motion carried, 8 ayes: Ms. Galiano, AYE; Dr. Levy, AYE; Mr. Nelson, AYE; Mr. Schmus, AYE; Mrs. van Aken, AYE; Mrs. Watson, AYE; Mr. Karpf, AYE; Mrs. Wallace, AYE

XV. DEFERRED ACTION

XVI. NEW BUSINESS

XVII. MEETING DATES

August 26, 2020	7:30 PM	Board Meeting Administration Building/Remote to the Public
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XVIII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

(The Board is limited in its ability to respond in public on the following matters: personnel, litigation, negotiations, attorney-client privilege.)

NONE

XIX. BOARD COMMENTS

XX. FINANCE

Dear Voorhees Community, Superintendent, and my Fellow Board Members:

We learned this afternoon that we will no longer be voting on this Plan today. I am thankful for this brief reprieve as I believe we need more time to construct a Plan that is more thorough and fully incorporates proper feedback and expertise. That said I want to share my perspective.

As an initial matter, let me say that this decision is probably one of the most important decisions we will make as a Board. Therefore, it is critical that our approach is thoughtful and fully informed. Under the Code of Ethics, we are required to make decisions “in terms of the educational welfare of children” and “to support and protect personnel in the proper performance of their duties.” Additionally, we are supposed to “confine Board action to policy making, planning and appraisal, and help frame policies and plans only after we have consulted those who will be affected by them.” I want to stress that last part — “to frame policies and plans” because our role is often misinterpreted and, recently, we were wrongly advised that we were only a policy making body and that getting into the weeds of the Reopening Plan was not our jobs. NOT SO.

The Board was provided the final 60-page Reopening Plan at 1:52pm Tuesday, knowing full well we all have full-time jobs and families to tend to. While input was provided in various subcommittees — nothing holistic was presented to the entire Board or the Community at large to react to. As far as I know, this Plan has not been reviewed by Board Legal Counsel to determine our exposure to liability provided the safety measures and protocols herein, or lack thereof, fail and a child or Staff is exposed to COVID-19. Similarly, I do not believe this Plan was reviewed by the District Physician to determine whether the measures suggested are appropriate, medically advisable or safe for our Staff and children.

I have two small children — a daughter that is supposed to enter Kindergarten and a son going into Second Grade at Signal Hill. I, like all of you, stay awake at night worried about their safety, the damage this virus is doing to them emotionally, socially, and educationally. But one thing is certain — I will not send them back to school unless it is safe to do so. I fully appreciate we have Staff and parents that strongly support schools reopening in September. I hear you. I also fully appreciate we have Staff and parents that strongly support a fully remote reopening in September. I hear you too. I would love nothing more than to offer all of you a Plan that makes sense — and keeps you safe. A thorough Plan that I can defend because it took into consideration valuable feedback and input from the Board, Staff, the Community and subject matter experts. This Plan falls short of that standard.

For the same reasons we are all meeting over Google, for the same reasons our children have missed momentous occasions in their lives and for the same reasons we are not eating indoors at our favorite restaurants, IT IS NOT SAFE. How can we apply a different standard for our children and Staff. For all of these reasons, tonight I would not have been voting in support of this Plan. More importantly, I want to make very clear to this Community, to the Superintendent and to the Board President, I will NOT be bullied or pressured into approving something that I do not feel will appropriately protect our children and Staff.

July 30, 2020

Summer Employment 2020

Name of Program		Summer Employment								
Administrator		Diane K. Young								
Location		Voorhees Township Public Schools								
Period		Start: 07/01/2020						End: 09/01/2020		
Emp #	Last Name	First Name	Position	Work Completed	Student Name (Hide Column)	Amount	Units	Units Worked	Total	Funding Account Number
244	Canfield	Kimberly	Tech Specialist	Summer Employment			Days	10		11-000-223-110-00
899	Carroll	Andrea	Tech Specialist	Summer Employment			Days	10		11-000-223-110-00
2713	Kauffman	Shari	Tech Specialist	Summer Employment			Days	10		11-000-223-110-00
3016	Morgan	Lisa	Tech Specialist	Summer Employment			Days	10		11-000-223-110-00
3081	Patullo	Jamie	Tech Specialist	Summer Employment			Days	10		11-000-223-110-00

XXI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion by Dr. Levy, seconded by Mrs. van Aken, to approve:

1. adjourning to Executive Session:

BE IT RESOLVED That pursuant to Section 8 of the Open Public Meeting Act the public shall be excluded from that portion of the meeting involving discussion of personnel.

FURTHER RESOLVED That the discussion of such matter in Executive Session can be disclosed to the public at such time as the Board takes formal action.

Motion carried, 9 ayes: Mrs. Dunleavy, AYE; Ms. Galiano, AYE; Dr. Levy, AYE; Mr. Nelson, AYE; Mr. Schmus, AYE; Mrs. van Aken, AYE; Mrs. Watson, AYE; Mr. Karpf, AYE; Mrs. Wallace, AYE

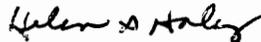
2. Returned from Executive Session at 7:51 PM.

XXII. ADJOURNMENT

1. Motion by Mrs. Watson, seconded by Mrs. van Aken, to approve adjourning the meeting at 7:51 PM.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Helen G. Haley, CPA
Board Secretary/Board Secretary