

**MERCER COUNTY
SPECIAL SERVICES SCHOOL DISTRICT
MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 10, 2023
4:30 PM**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Board of Education Vice President Lisa Vena called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Notice of this meeting was posted on the main access doors of the Mercer Elementary School and on the website of the Mercer County Special Services School District, and sent by email to the Times, The Trentonian, and the Mercer County Clerk, in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act and Administrative Code. Public attendees may make comments when recognized by the Board President during the appropriate time scheduled on the agenda. Written statements received by 11 AM today will be read aloud by the Board Secretary during the public comment period as well. A time limit of three (3) minutes applies to both oral and written comments. Written statements will be read until the time limit is reached. Duplicative written comments shall be summarized for the record.

ROLL CALL:

Bd. of Ed.	Present	Absent
Ms. Morgan Santo		x
Mr. Stockman	x	
Ms. Lewis	x	
Ms. Vena	x	
Dr. Minus-Vincent	x	
Ms. Smith	x	
Dr. Angwenyi	x	

2. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Led by Zachary Vena (former student)
- 3a. **Executive Session** – None
- 3b. **Public Session** –

Scott Clelland of PK O’Connor Davies presented the audit. Still waiting on the State with information – extended to March 17, 2023. Hoping the final audit report will be in February. Thanked Debbie Donnelly, Ashlee Caldwell, and staff for getting the auditors the information without delay. Audits are back in-person with real time interaction.

Audit Synopsis (handout) – Financial position is in good shape – improved from the previous year. The fund balance is up 10.9M – majority in reserves or allocated back to sending based on State formula. Fund balance details were reviewed. Unassigned 6.8M but much back to sending districts by formula.

Based on internal control testing no exceptions or issues with Federal/State grant programs.

Mr. Stockman – where can we get more money?

Mr. Clelland – students.

Mr. Carey – Enrollment drives revenue.

Mr. Stockman – Any Federal/State money floating around we can get access to?

Mr. Carey – Coming through as grants. We need to take opportunities – see the recreational grant on this agenda. As a county school, we were overlooked, compared to regular school districts. Federal flow to State, then allocated to State recipients.

Mr. Stockman – Should we be lobbying?

Mr. Carey – That falls on me - advocating strongly for our district – local and state legislation. Very strong Mercer group of Superintendents as Dr. Minus-Vincent can attest. We are close to/serve Trenton. Our voice is getting louder.

Mr. Clelland – Special Revenue Fund – ARP and ESSR - \$160K spent in 21-22. If you look at sending districts, much more.

Mr. Carey – Thank you Debbie Donnelly and Board Office for audit work – comforting to get a strong report. Says a lot about our Business Office.

Ms. Donnelly thanked Mr. Clelland and Rachel Kleiman and team for a good transition from Wiss to new audit organization. It was seamless to our office.

Dr. Angwenyi – Good report. Any automatic grants?

Mr. Carey – We are grant hunting to fit our needs.

4a. Approval of the December 6, 2022 Regular Minutes

Board Members	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Ms. Morgan Santo						x
Mr. Stockman					x	
Ms. Lewis					x	
Ms. Vena			x			
Dr. Minus-Vincent					x	
Ms. Smith	x		x			
Dr. Angwenyi		x	x			

4b. Approval of December 6, 2022 Executive Minutes - minutes of the executive session shall be released to the public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists

Board Members	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Ms. Morgan Santo						x
Mr. Stockman					x	
Ms. Lewis					x	
Ms. Vena			x			
Dr. Minus-Vincent					x	
Ms. Smith	x		x			
Dr. Angwenyi		x	x			

5. Bills to be Approved totaling \$4,727,251.30 and authorization of transfers within program areas as approved by the Superintendent.

Board Members	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Ms. Morgan Santo						x
Mr. Stockman		x	x			
Ms. Lewis	x		x			
Ms. Vena			x			
Dr. Minus-Vincent					x	
Ms. Smith			x			
Dr. Angwenyi			x			

6. Board Secretary/Finance Report for November 2022

Board Members	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Ms. Morgan Santo						x
Mr. Stockman		x	x			
Ms. Lewis	x		x			
Ms. Vena			x			
Dr. Minus-Vincent					x	
Ms. Smith			x			
Dr. Angwenyi			x			

7. Correspondence & Communications –

Superintendent Matthew Carey noted that January is School Board Recognition Month. Thank you for all the Board’s service. A certificate will be placed in the Board Room. This is an opportunity for the Superintendent to thank everyone as this is an unpaid position and you volunteering to serve is important as we develop a bond and common mission. Thank you again for all you do.

Deborah Donnelly presented the current year budget review (handout) and Safety Plan update.

Budget review:

- Appropriations are up in most instructional program lines and health and related services to account for the anticipated increase in enrollment post-pandemic and anticipated inflation on goods.
- Facilities relates to anticipated increases in utilities, repair services (plumbing, electric, HVAC), and supplies.
- Capital Outlay relates primarily to the construction of a maintenance garage which has not begun yet.
- Benefits – as noted in previous meetings, we moved to State Health Benefits this school year and while we did not anticipate the extent of the state increase of 15.6%, with changes in employee elections and our conservative budget approach, our current run rate has us meeting budget.

While our budget is much higher than the previous year’s actual expenses, that does not mean that we spend to that level. We continue to watch enrollment and related revenue streams and determine our ongoing needs. We are still on a spending freeze.

The 2nd slide shows that we spent \$18.1M as of December and have an additional \$18.9M encumbered (meaning that we have committed to spend – primarily salary, benefits and facility related expenses) - that leaves us with \$4.8M of uncommitted funds at this time – which when we review revenue you will see is in line with where we are with revenue projections.

Enrollment has been improving while we budgeted at 525, we do not anticipate getting to that level. At this time, we are closing in on 500 students, but we will not realize a full year of tuition revenue on these students as they will only be here for half the school year.

Revenue slide shows that after our committed expenses we have \$4.7M remaining to cover unexpected expenses. I feel we are currently in line to meet our revenue budget projections. Every bit that we can save helps us to maintain a reasonable tuition rate.

Reviewed the budget considerations on slide 5 and noted the county tax levy has been increased 2% each year (except for COVID year) and that it is anticipated that we will request 2% again.

Reviewed proposed rates. Our tuition rates are on this agenda for approval. We kept some rates flat and others are being increased by under 2% so our overall rate increase is under 1%. Our last slide presents rates at private schools in the area that our sending districts also send to – our rates are competitive with those rates and for many much lower – so we hope that we are attractive from a rate standpoint to surrounding districts.

8. Committee Reports - None

9. Superintendent's Agenda

NEW/SPECIAL PROJECTS

Recommend Board approve the following: None

PERSONNEL

Recommend Board approve the following:

- Appointments, Resignations, Leaves, Retirements, etc. (Attachment 9A)
- Professional Employment Agreement between and among the Board of Education of the Mercer County Technical School District and the Board of Education for the Mercer County Special Services School District and Nicholas Sakowski as Community Liaison-Office of Admissions, Curriculum and Instruction for the period January 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023 (Attachment 9B)
- Professional Employment Agreement between and among the Board of Education of the Mercer County Technical School District and the Board of Education for the Mercer County Special Services School District and Anthony Giovannetti as Manager of Technology for the period January 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023 (Attachment 9C)
- Revised job description – Assistant Business Administrator/Board Secretary (Attachment 9D)

Board Members	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Ms. Morgan Santo						x
Mr. Stockman	x		x			
Ms. Lewis		x	x			
Ms. Vena			x			
Dr. Minus-Vincent					x	
Ms. Smith			x			
Dr. Angwenyi			x			

MISCELLANEOUS:

Recommend Board approve the following:

- Shared Services Agreement for Community Liaison – Office of Admissions, Curriculum and Instruction between the Board of Education of Mercer County Technical School District and Board of Education of Mercer County Special Services School District for the period of January 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023 (Attachment 9E)
- Shared Services Agreement for Manager of Technology between the Board of Education of Mercer County Technical School District and Board of Education of Mercer County Special Services School District for the period of January 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023 (Attachment 9F)
- Updated Mercer County Special Services School District Safe Return Plan – December 2022 (Attachment 9G)
- 2022-2023 Statement of Assurance Regarding the Use of Paraprofessional Staff (Attachment 9H)
- Approval to submit HRSA additional funds application for the period April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2023 in the amount of \$12,330 for Special Child Health and Early Intervention Services (SCHEIS) to provide case management services.
- Apply for FY 2023 Capital Maintenance and Emergent Project grant in the amount of \$12,202
- Start Strong Fall 2022 results (Attachment 9I)
- 2022-2023 Governor's Educator and Educational Services Professional of the Year recipients:

Joseph Cappello School-
Teacher: Amanda Harmer
Educational Service Professional: Caitlyn Reardon

Mercer Elementary School-
 Teacher: Carolyn Thomas-Scott
 Educational Service Professional: Chelsea Hrudowsky

Mercer High School-
 Teacher: Sarah Drum
 Educational Service Professional: Karen Burke

- Policies, Regulations, By-Laws (Attachment 9J)

First Reading -- Revised and/or New Policies, Regulations, or By-Laws

BYLAWS - None

POLICIES

0143.2 High School Student Representative to the Board of Education

REGULATIONS - None

Second Reading -- Revised and/or New Policies, Regulations, or By-Laws (no changes)

BYLAWS - None

POLICIES

6470.01 Electronic Funds Transfer and Claimant Certification

8454 Management of Pediculosis

REGULATIONS

6470.01 Electronic Funds Transfer and Claimant Certification

Abolished -- Policies, Regulations, or By-Laws

BYLAWS - None

POLICIES - None

REGULATIONS - None

REPORTS:

Recommend Board approve the following:

- Fire and Security Drill(s) for the month of December 2022

DRILL	MERCER HIGH SCHOOL	MERCER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	JOSEPH F. CAPPELLO SCHOOL	REGIONAL DAY SCHOOL
Fire Drill				
Jul-22	7/28/2022	7/27/2022	7/29/2022	7/28/2022
Aug-22	8/10/2022	n/a	8/12/2022	8/10/2022
Sep-22	9/14/2022	9/19/222	9/15/2022	9/14/2022
Oct-22	10/28/2022	10/21/2022	10/28/2022	10/28/2022
Nov-22	11/22/2022	11/15/2022	11/7/2022	11/22/2022
Dec-22	12/21/2022	12/8/2022	12/12/2022	12/21/2022
Security Drills				
Jul-22	7/29/2022	n/a	7/29/2022	7/29/2022
	Lockdown		Shelter in Place	Lockdown

Aug-22	8/11/2022	n/a	8/12/2022	8/11/2022
	Evacuation		Shelter in Place	Evacuation
Sep-22	9/20/2022	9/23/2022	9/21/2022	9/20/2022
	Lockdown	Lockdown	Shelter in Place	Lockdown
Oct-22	10/25/2022	10/24/2022	10/7/2022	10/25/2022
	Active Shooter	Shelter in Place	Bomb Threat	Active Shooter
Nov-22	11/28/2022	11/21/2022	11/18/2022	11/28/2022
	Shelter in Place	Shelter in Place	Shelter in Place	Shelter in Place
Dec-22	12/16/2022	12/21/2022	12/2/2022	12/16/2022
	Bomb Threat	Lockdown	Shelter in Place	Bomb Threat

• Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying as of December 31, 2022

Month	Investigations	Unfounded	Founded
July	0	0	0
August	0	0	0
September	0	1	0
October	0	1	0
November	0	0	0
December	1	1	0
Total	1	3	0

• Enrollment Data as of December 31, 2022

	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
2021-2022	412*	413	485	493	497	500*	499	504	517	513	517	519
2022-2023	416*	417	464	469*	484	490						

	11/30/2022 (actual)	12/31/2022 (estimated)
Mercer High School	240	240
Mercer Elementary School	151	157
Joseph F. Cappello School	<u>93</u>	<u>93</u>
TOTAL:	<u>484</u>	<u>490</u>

* data updated to reflect actual number

Board Members	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Ms. Morgan Santo						x
Mr. Stockman	x		x			
Ms. Lewis		x	x			
Ms. Vena			x			
Dr. Minus-Vincent					x	
Ms. Smith			x			
Dr. Angwenyi			x			

Mr. Carey noted item 11K on the New Business agenda. We are applying for a DCA grant regarding recreation and fields. Would like to create an adaptive bike path and new fields which will make our district more attractive to potential students.

11. **New Business**

Recommend the Board approve the following:

- A. Closeout documents for McCloskey Mechanical Contractors, Inc. on the HVAC Upgrades at the Alfred Reed School (attachment 11A.)
- B. Lead Agency Resolution for the Renewal of a Cooperative Pricing System (attachment 11B.)
- C. Resolution Authorizing the Use of Competitive Contracting for the Procurement of Labor Attorney Services (attachment 11C.)
- D. Resolution Authorizing the Use of Competitive Contracting for the Procurement of School Physician Services (attachment 11D.)
- E. Proposed Tuition Rates for the 2023-2024 school year (attachment 11E.)
- F. Transportation Contracts, Bids, Renewals and Addendums (attachment 11F.)
- G. Resolution Designating Individuals Authorized to Perform Initiation and Authorization Functions Under Policy 6470.01 Regulating Use of EFT Technology (attachment 11G.)
- H. Designated individuals in accordance with Policy and Regulation 6470.01 (attachment 11H.)
- I. Staff and student travel (attachment 11I.)
- J. Award Bid No. 103-MCSSSDCPS-23-06 Facilities Vehicles & Equipment to Winner Ford based on the attached tabulation (attachment 11J.)
- K. Resolution to apply for the NJ Department of Community Affairs Local Recreation Improvement Grant in the amount of \$273,450 (attachment 11K.)
- L. Revised Budget Planning Schedule for 2023-2024 (attachment 11L.)
- M. Review, accept and approve the June 20, 2022 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, Auditor's Management Report on Administrative Findings – Financial, Compliance and Performance and Synopsis (Summary of Fiscal year 2020-2021 Audit Report) as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:23-4

Board Members	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Ms. Morgan Santo						x
Mr. Stockman	x		x			
Ms. Lewis		x	x			
Ms. Vena			x			
Dr. Minus-Vincent					x	
Ms. Smith			x			
Dr. Angwenyi			x			

12. Public Session - None

13. Executive Session - None

14. Adjournment:

All in Favor:

Time: 5:08 pm

Board Members	Motion	Second	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Absent
Ms. Morgan Santo						x
Mr. Stockman	x		x			
Ms. Lewis		x	x			
Ms. Vena			x			
Dr. Minus-Vincent			x			
Ms. Smith			x			
Dr. Angwenyi			x			

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Donnelly

School Business Administrator/Board Secretary