

**MERCER COUNTY  
SPECIAL SERVICES SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 3, 2023  
4:30 PM**

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Board of Education President Stacy Morgan Santo called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

“Notice of this meeting was posted on the main access door 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 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. A time limit of three (3) minutes applies to public comments.”

**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 Kimberley Smith
- 3a. Executive Session – None
- 3b. Public Comment – Agenda Items Only - None
- 4a. Approval of the September 5, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

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			

5. Bills to be Approved totaling \$4,545,198.93 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 August 2023

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 –

Mr. Carey informed the Board that he received notice from NJDOE that MCSSSD was awarded the SDA grant (ROD). Schools receive approximately 40% of eligible costs DAP %. Our estimate was \$14.6 million and we received \$5.8 million. Money will be used for school facility projects that are eligible for state support and were selected based on the DOE list of priority projects. Mr. Carey thanked Deborah Donnelly for her efforts in applying for the grant.

Ms. Donnelly noted that the ROD grants awarded included roofs at MES, MHS, hot water systems and HVAC (RTU ATU) units. The state awarded on a priority project basis. Those projects not awarded did not meet priority levels 1-5.

8. Committee Reports –

Regional Day School update – Mr. Carey noted physical therapy, yoga, daily living programs would be offered; AC is working; heat exchanger is not repairable, and a replacement unit is approximately \$40K.

Ms. Donnelly noted that there is a need to identify the funding for this unit.

Mr. Carey – So this has been pushed back 6-8 weeks. The good news is that enrollment is at our projection for the opening of school.

Mr. Carey noted updates on the Strategic Plan

- Security guards are hired to provide added security at our buildings,
- Technology is increasing throughout – Promethian boards are in classrooms,
- ROD grant was mentioned.
- A bit of public relations – JFC received NJ Fresh Award from the NJDOA for Best Garden; Mercer County Commissioner Kristin McLaughlin, presented a proclamation.
- I spoke with Madam President on social media; protected under free speech. You can say what you want. Sometimes we receive negative comments, but we will combat with positive feedback rather than respond to negative comments.

9. Superintendent’s Agenda – DLM presentation

Kristen Taylor, Assistant Superintendent presented Dynamic Learning Maps

- Students who take DLM are those that are not provided instruction on grade level.
- Grades 3-8, 11
- Performance varies from approaching to advanced proficiency.
- This year will only be in Spring, ELA, math – some take science; not in fall as they did last year.
- As admins, teachers we compare the individual’s scores over year to year, not against state scores. So teachers can focus on areas of need and work with student on those areas.

Ms. Morgan Santo – So next year, students are compared to what they did this year?

Ms. Taylor – Yes, every student’s assessment is individualized so it is time consuming for teachers.

Ms. Morgan Santo – What percent actually achieve proficiency?

Ms. Taylor – Less than 50% are advanced proficiency. It's only one of the areas of assessment for our students. As goals are achieved, they are put on maintenance and consistently re-visited and reinforced.

Mr. Stockman – Do we have the results for this year?

Ms. Taylor – Yes, it was part of the agenda attachments.

Mr. Stockman – Are we satisfied with the results?

Ms. Taylor – Administration meets as a team and reviews the feedback from the state. We're pleased with the abilities but only a small snapshot of the students' achievement. There are no identified concerns. If we did, we would be targeted there and identify clusters and review curriculum accordingly.

Mr. Carey – Every student in NJ takes NJSLA or DLM but most of our students take DLM. DLM used to be different, but I still feel that a portfolio is the best way to present a student. DLM is approximately 10 years old. We don't teach to the test.

Mr. Stockman – But you're confident with where we're at?

Mr. Carey – As comfortable as I will ever be with state assessments.

Ms. Taylor – Testing is at a point in time; we look at how they perform on a daily basis.

### **NEW/SPECIAL PROJECTS**

Recommend Board approve the following: None

Mr. Stockman asked if the Network Coordinator is a new position.

Mr. Carey – Upon Fredrick (Rick) Hillman's retirement we broke apart certain jobs. Mr. Hillman was a shared position, but now there is a Building and Grounds Manager at each district (MCTS and MCSSSD), Anthony Giovannetti is a shared IT Manager, so this new position creates a layer of support in the IT area and it was budgeted for.

### **PERSONNEL**

Recommend Board approve the following:

- Appointments, Resignations, Leaves, Retirements, etc. (Attachment 9A)
- Employment Contract 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 Matthew Goldstein as Network Coordinator for the period October 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024 (Attachment 9A-1)

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

Recommend Board approve the following:

- 2023-2024 School Safety and Security Plan – Mercer High School/Regional Day School Annual Update (available for review in the Administrative Offices)
- 2023-2024 School Safety and Security Plan – Mercer Elementary School Annual Update (available for review in the Administrative Offices)
- 2023-2024 School Safety and Security Plan – Joseph F. Cappello School Annual Update (available for review in the Administrative Offices)

- Renew the Student Placement Agreement between Mercer County Special Services School District and Mercer County Community College to provide students with practical experience for the term of 07/01/2023–06/30/2024 (Available for review in the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction)
- Renew the Student Placement Agreement between Mercer County Special Services School District and Monmouth University to provide students with practical experience for the term of 07/01/2023–06/30/2024 (Available for review in the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction)
- Renew the Student Placement Agreement between Mercer County Special Services School District and Neuman University to provide students with practical experience for the term of 07/01/2023–06/30/2024 (Available for review in the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction)
- Renew the Student Placement Agreement between Mercer County Special Services School District and The College of New Jersey to provide students with practical experience for the term of 07/01/2023–06/30/2024 (Available for review in the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction)
- Renew the Student Placement Agreement between Mercer County Special Services School District and Widener University to provide students with practical experience for the term of 07/01/2023–06/30/2024 (Available for review in the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction)
- Renew the Student Placement Agreement between Mercer County Special Services School District and Salus University to provide students with practical experience for the term of 07/01/2023–06/30/2024 (Available for review in the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction)
- “Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Spring 2023 Results” (Attachment 9B)
- “New Jersey State Learning Assessment (NJSLA) Spring 2023 Results” (due to 9 students or fewer testing in each grade band/subject area, test results are not reported here due to data suppression rules for purposes of confidentiality)
- Shared Services Agreement for Network Coordinator between the Board of Education of Mercer County Technical School District and Board of Education of Mercer County Special Services School District and for the period of October 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024 (Attachment 9C)
- 2023-2024 Professional Development Plans for Mercer High School, Mercer Elementary School, and Joseph F. Cappello School (Attachment 9D)
- 2023-2024 Statement of Assurance Regarding the Use of Paraprofessional Staff (Attachment 9E)
- Policies, Regulations, By-Laws (Attachment 9F)

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

***BYLAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS***

Policy

P 2270 RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS

P 3161 EXAMINATION FOR CAUSE

P 3212 ATTENDANCE

P 3324 RIGHT OF PRIVACY

P 4161 EXAMINATION FOR CAUSE

P 4212 ATTENDANCE

P 4324 RIGHT OF PRIVACY

P 5116 EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTHS

P 8500 FOOD SERVICES

Regulation

R 3212 ATTENDANCE

R 4212 ATTENDANCE  
R 5116 EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN AND YOUTHS

**Second Reading -- Revised and/or New Policies, Regulations, or By-Laws**  
**BYLAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS**

Policy

- P 1642.01 SICK LEAVE (no changes)
- P 2419 SCHOOL THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS (no changes)

Regulation

- R 1642.01 SICK LEAVE (with changes - attached)
- R 2419 SCHOOL THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS (no changes)

**Abolished -- Policies, Regulations, or By-Laws**  
**BYLAWS, POLICIES, REGULATIONS**

Policy

- P 3432 SICK LEAVE
- P 4432 SICK LEAVE
- P 5460.02 BRIDGE YEAR PILOT PROGRAM
- P 8540 SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS
- P 8550 MEAL CHARGES/OUTSTANDING FOOD SERVICE BILL

Regulation

- R 3432 SICK LEAVE
- R 4432 SICK LEAVE
- R 5460.02 BRIDGE YEAR PILOT PROGRAM

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		x (9D, 9E, 9F)	
Ms. Smith			x			
Dr. Angwenyi			x			

**REPORTS:**

- Enrollment data as of September 21, 2023

	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
2022-2023	416	417	464	469	484	490	496	499	505	512	515	515
2023-2024	414	411	475									

- Harassment, Intimidation & Bullying as of September 21, 2023

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

February			
March			
April			
May			
June			
Total	2	1	1

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		x (HIB)	
Ms. Smith			x			
Dr. Angwenyi			x			

**11. New Business**

Recommend the Board approve the following:

- A. Preliminary Budget Planning Schedule (attachment 11A.)
- B. Transportation Contract(s), Bids, Renewals (attachment 11B.)
- C. Staff travel/professional development/field trips (attachment 11C.)
- D. Agreement with VOYCE for on-demand interpretation services through December 21, 2023, not to exceed \$2,500 (attachment 11D.)
- E. Vehicle Maintenance Proposal for the 2023-2024 school year from E. Windsor Regional School District (attachment 11E.)
- F. Renewal with Backupify (Kaseya) for Outlook 365 and Google Suite at a cost of \$8,100 from October 23, 2023 to October 23, 2024 (Terms and Conditions are available to view in the Business Office)

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		x (11A, 11B, 11E)	
Ms. Smith			x			
Dr. Angwenyi			x			

**12. Public Comment –**

Tina Jablonski, JFC teacher/Union VP – On behalf of the union representatives, we have been receiving complaints from IDS instructors regarding the lack of accessibility for wheelchair students for field trips. Many schoolwide trips exclude these students. At JFC they are trying to bring services into the school. There is one IDS class with 6 wheelchairs and it’s nearly impossible to get multiple runs which limits the locations.

Ms. Donnelly noted that years ago events were brought in for these students.

Ms. Jablonski – I’m not bashing or complaining about it, just bringing the issue to the Board’s attention.

Mr. Carey – Are members being denied due to field trip requests?

Ms. Jablonski – From my experience it’s the classes with 5 or 6 wheelchairs. I was told it’s not possible to go so my class was excluded; not while Clara (Bigos) was principal. I know they are experiencing this at other schools as well. The complaint has been brought to us. At the high school CBI – being that our district bus does not have wheelchair seats.

Tammy Lascar, Director of Student Services – Last year we tried to get outside services and spent hours on the phone.

Ms. Jablonski – We need to continue to work on this and try to get to a resolution.

Mr. Stockman – Do other districts with other children have wheelchair accessible buses?

Mr. Carey – We are unique as other districts would have less of an issue due to wheelchair bound students being more spread out in the district.

Ms. Morgan Santo – It's very difficult to accommodate that many children with wheelchairs.

Ms. Donnelly – The district's bus allows for 2-3 wheelchairs depending on the number of aides needed on the bus.

Ms. Jablonski – We will continue to brainstorm and work with the teachers. Looking for students to truly participate. Students are young in this building.

13. Executive Session – None

14. Adjournment: 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