



Board of Education COMMITTEE REPORT

February 9, 2023

Fiscal Planning and Operations

The Fiscal Planning and Operations Committee met on Feb. 1, 2023, to discuss the 2023-24 budget, capital projects, the Energy Savings Improvement Program, and more

2023-2024 Budget

- The Committee reviewed the 2023-2024 Preliminary Budget-Draft Information worksheet. The Committee discussed the proposed tax levy including the health care cost waiver, increases in expenses, potential expenditure reductions, and the availability of funds for one-time expenditures.

Facility Capital Projects

- HVAC Upgrades – Unit ventilators in the media centers and faculty rooms at Knollwood and Randolphville elementary schools are working, with the exception of one unit that is awaiting a replacement part. Installation of the remaining units is expected during Spring Break.
- NJSDA ROD Grants – The Department of Education and Schools Development Authority announced the availability of \$350 million of Regular Operating District (ROD) grants. The application deadline is May 1, 2023. Projects will be prioritized based on categories provided by the SDA. The District expects to apply for ADA bathroom upgrades in the K-8 schools.
- Five-Year Capital Project Plan – Administration has prioritized projects for use of capital reserve funds. The Committee will review the projects at its next meeting.

Energy Savings Improvement Program (ESIP) update

- Solar PPA – All schools have received permission to operate (PTO). Mr. Oliveira is negotiating a termination settlement for Quibbletown Middle School.
- Honeywell Projects – Transformer replacements and Siemens building management system upgrades are ongoing. Rooftop unit replacements are delayed until the next school closure; however, the contractor is still waiting for delivery on some of these units. Installation will continue into Summer 2023. The PHS window-replacement project is out for bid.

New Jersey School Business Legislative update

- Dr. Connors discussed the Senate Education Committee's approval of legislation regarding school lunches, including S530, S531, and S1222.

Policy and Legislative

The Policy/Legislative Committee met on Feb. 2, 2023, to discuss policies regarding ESL education, emergency remote instruction, attendances, and more.

The Committee updated the following existing policies and accompanying regulations and approved them to be included on the next available Board of Education agenda:

- Policy and Regulation 2423, "Bilingual and ESL Education," containing language changes to reflect current terminology and code citations.
- Policy and Regulation 2425, "Emergency Virtual or Remote Instruction Program," implementing current law on providing remote instruction when schools must close due to a declared health emergency.
- Policy and Regulation 8140, "Student Enrollments," implementing current law regarding student enrollment and various record-keeping responsibilities.
- Policy and Regulation 8330, "Student Records," implementing current law regarding student records.

The Committee approved the following to be included on the next available Board of Education agenda:

- Regulations 8420.2, "Bomb Threats," 8420.7, "Lock-down Procedures," and 8420.10, "Active Shooter," incorporating current legal requirements for crisis preparedness, while assuring that sensitive security information is not publicly accessible. The Committee approved all to be included on the next available Board of Education agenda.

Mr. Rubin updated the Committee on pending legislation, including S3440, which would drastically expand sick leave rights for school district employees, and S2256, which would establish criteria for determining whether students have a specific learning disability.

The committee will continue to review Policy and Regulation 5200, "Attendance," regarding current law on student attendance. Ms. Corradino recommended that "excused absences" be added to the list of reasons that could not be used to adversely affect a student's grade. Ms. Rashid suggested that, aside from this policy and regulation, the Administration consider making the procedures for reporting students absent more uniform throughout the district.

Curriculum

The Curriculum Committee met on February 6, 2023, to discuss Response to Intervention, Gifted and Talented, parent workshops, and more.

Response to Intervention – Courtney Angiuli reviewed the district’s Response to Intervention (RTI) program in the district – including defining RTI; the process used in each building; screeners; resources; and a focus on individualization. Ms. Angiuli also discussed academic and behavioral interventions; how data is collected; how interventions may be put into place; and the communication process. Dr. Baskerville commended Courtney Angiuli for her work; explained the three-tiered approach of RTI in an effort to support students; and spoke on the percentage of students in each tier. Most fall into Tier 1.

Workshop approach in reading and writing – Janine Albanese shared information about the district’s workshop approach. Ms. Albanese explained that the workshop is an approach and not a program. The sections are: mini lesson, active engagement (assessment), work session (independent reading and writing – customized for students), and a share (lots of assessment).

Strengthening Gifted and Talented education – Rebecca Dayton spoke about the structure of our G&T program and the goal of supporting students at a level that is challenging for them. The state says that frequency is important and that students should not be limited to grade level, rather to their learning level. Project-based learning could supplement this.

PHS Academies – Dr. Baskerville shared the application numbers and acceptance rate for all Piscataway High School academies. Demographic data will be shared as needed. Mrs. Edmondson will join the next committee meeting.

Parent workshops – Three curriculum workshops for parents will offer information on English language arts; math; social studies; science; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; internet safety; and social emotional learning. The Grades K-3 workshop had a great turnout on January 19. The next workshop is February 16 for Grades 4-5. The final workshop is February 23 for Grades 6-8.

State assessments – Dr. Baskerville shared data from the fall Start Strong assessment. This data shows us where interventions are needed, where trends are, and how to shape instruction moving forward. This information has been included into the district accelerated learning plan to help teachers plan for instruction. NJSLA testing is May 1-26. NJGPA testing is March 13-17. ACCESS testing began February 6 and will close March 31.

Additional Questions – Nancy Salgado-Cowan suggested the 6 p.m. start time for meetings be pushed back. Dr. Baskerville shared that content presentations begin at 6:45 p.m. Committee Q&A sessions are included at the end of the meeting and this information will be included in future communications with families.

Ms. Salgado-Cowan also suggested earlier communication about PHS Academies.

Culture, Climate & Community Relations

The Culture, Climate and Community Relations Committee met on January 17, 2023, to discuss committee goals of positive messaging, community partnerships, and wellness services.

Positive messaging

- The Committee viewed displays that were shared on school marquees, highlighting themes such as Generosity and Giving, New Beginnings, Veterans Day, and National Gratitude Month.
- The Committee viewed student-to-student mentoring videos from Piscataway High School. Committee members were pleased and look forward to future videos.
- An updated marketing brochure was dropped off to local libraries, community center, and senior center, and made available to all schools. The Committee recommended updates to photos in the brochure.

Community Partnerships

- Administrators met with the Rutgers Business School to plan a mentoring program for our Business Academy and our NSBE Jr. Club has elected its student officers. Dr. Gray and Ms. Pongratz collaborated and attended a community connections program that was sponsored by the Rutgers DICE coordinator.
- Mr. Miller reported on connecting with Jersey Cares, which hosted a workshop on "Diversity in STEM" in January for our high school students. Jersey Cares says that project-based support will continue in the spring.

Wellness Services

- Mrs. Pongratz shared the history of delayed school start times. Administration plans to present new surveys on delayed school start times for stakeholders and community members.
- "Parent Night @ the Haven" was planned and advertised by Dr. Connolly and the Haven counselors for our families on February 2, 2023. The focus of the meeting will be managing screen time, dealing with sibling rivalry, getting your child to cooperate, and cultivating good homework habits.

New Business

- Ms. Salgado-Cowan requested that Committee members be surveyed to determine if they would like to change the start time of Committee meetings from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
- Ms. Cherry requested that the administration explore parent volunteers serving as translators for families at events such as Back to School Night.
- Mrs. Pongratz requested that the next meeting be moved from March 21, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. to March 14, 2023, at 7 p.m., and the Committee agreed to this change.