

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
MIDLAND PARK, NEW JERSEY  
MAY 19, 2020**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Formicola at 8:00 p.m. and Ms. Garvey read the following statement:

“Adequate notice of this meeting was provided as specified in the Open Meeting Act. Notices of this Meeting were sent to The RECORD, RIDGEWOOD NEWS, and to the Midland Park Borough Clerk for the 2020 elective year. A notice was also posted inside the office of the Midland Park Board of Education in a place reserved for such announcements. The Board announces that under its long-standing policy, it will not discuss in public any comments made by members of the public concerning individual staff members.”

**ROLL CALL**

|          |                      |                  |
|----------|----------------------|------------------|
| Present: | James Canellas       | Sandra Criscenzo |
|          | Christine Dell’Aglia | Nabil Eliya      |
|          | Patricia Fantulin    | Brian McCourt    |
|          | Maryalice Thomas     | Peter Triolo     |

Richard Formicola

**OTHERS PRESENT**

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| Staff: | Marie Cirasella, Superintendent of Schools           |
|        | Stacy Garvey, Business Administrator/Board Secretary |

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

**Mission Statement**

**The Midland Park School District as part of a strong, dedicated community, provides its students with a comprehensive, adaptive education aligned to 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge and skills needed for success in college and career. The district maximizes all resources to empower students to realize their individual worth and responsibility, with the expectation they achieve the New Jersey state standards at all grade levels.**

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT Dr. Marie Cirasella

- Dr. Cirasella spoke to the issue of High School Graduation. The Administration has been proactive in drafting plans both for a virtual ceremony and an in-person event. Dr. Cirasella welcomed hearing from our families with graduation ceremony ideas. Our goal is to strike the proper balance between safety and celebration. The district’s direction is in complete concert with state directives. The vast majority of districts in Bergen County are adhering to virtual graduation directives from state officials. Senior parents have been informed that Administration has been discussing and planning for alternate graduation options and we will communicate further plans and determinations when it is appropriate to do so. There have been several exchanges with concerned senior parents and accusations of insensitivity and transparency and other unfortunate personal and professional attacks. I do not believe it is beneficial to the students to see adults stoop to unprofessional behavior and it is unfair to the efforts of those who remain committed to working together professionally on a resolution. Not a day has gone by with MPHS graduation being discussed and alternate prospective plans considered. I have repeatedly expressed how heartbroken I am for the Class of 2020. We have committed to implementing alternative graduation plans, including a potential July graduation date.

I would like to express a few words to our seniors. Not even a pandemic, can make us stop caring for you and wishing this was not the reality you are facing as you end your senior year. Remember to meet every challenge with optimism and strength. While it is always important to fight for what you believe in, it is unacceptable to displace your anger on those not responsible for your disappointment, doing so will always be counterproductive to you cause.

Open to the Public: **COMMENTS** only for action items on the agenda.

There were no comments from the public.

BOARD MOTIONS

Motion – Ms. Criscenzo, seconded – Mr. Eliya...

1. Approve the minutes of the following regularly scheduled public meeting held on:  
April 14, 2020

Roll Call: All Yes

Motion – Mr. Triolo, seconded – Mr. Canellas...

2. Approve the establishment of Petty Cash funds for the 2020-2021 school year for each of the following locations, as specified in Policy Book Section 6620, as follows:

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Superintendent’s Office           | \$100.00 |
| Business Administrator’s Office   | \$100.00 |
| Midland Park Jr. /Sr. High School | \$200.00 |
| Highland School                   | \$100.00 |
| Godwin School                     | \$100.00 |
| Special Services Department       | \$200.00 |
| Continuing Education              | \$300.00 |
| Curriculum Office                 | \$100.00 |

Roll Call: All Yes

Motion – Mr. Triolo, seconded – Mr. Canellas...

- +3. **Approve the revised School Health Related Closure Plan, which was submitted to the Bergen County Interim Executive County Superintendent on May 18, 2020.**

Roll Call: All Yes

A. Personnel – (M. Cirasella)

Board resolutions related to hiring for the 2020-2021 school year will be on an emergency basis, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1, N.J.S.A. 18A:39-17 and/or N.J.S.A. 18A:6-4.13, as applicable.

Motion – Dr. Thomas, seconded – Mr. Canellas...

1. Approve the non-tenured reappointment of the following individual staff members for the 2020-2021 school year:
  - a. Eurico Antunes            District Technology & Data Coordinator
  - b. Scott Collins            Buildings & Grounds Supervisor
  - c. Ristem Sela            Computer Technician
  - d. Zachary Spadaccini    Computer Media Technician
  
2. Approve the reappointment of the following non-tenured Central Office staff members for the 2020-2021 school year:
  - a. Virginia Calero            Payroll and Benefits Coordinator
  - b. Lisa Green            Confidential Secretary to the Business Administrator
  
3. Approve the reappointment of the following tenured Central Office staff, for the 2020-2021 school year:
  - a. Trina Bradley            Confidential Secretary to Director of Special Education & Child Study Team
  - b. Eileen Pomianek            Assistant to the Business Administrator
  - c. Anne Schaper            Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent of Schools
  
4. Approve the tenured and non-tenured reappointment of all clerk-secretaries for the 2020-2021 school year, as per the attached appendix. A-4
  
5. Approve the reappointment of all non-tenured Instructional Aides for the 2020-2021 school year, as per the attached appendix. A-5
  
6. Approve the reappointment of all non-tenured full-time Custodial/Maintenance personnel for the 2020-2021 school year, as per the attached appendix. A-6
  
7. Approve the non-aligned salary schedule for the 2020-2021 school year, as per the attached appendix. A-7
  
8. Approve the reappointment of all non-aligned staff for the 2020-2021 school year, as per the attached appendix. A-8

Roll Call: All Yes

Motion – Dr. Thomas, seconded – Ms. Criscenzo...

- +9. **Accept with regret, the retirement resignation of Barbara Makela, Basic Skills teacher in the elementary schools, effective June 30, 2020.**
- +10. **Accept with regret, the retirement resignation of Susan Williams, Instructional Aide in the Godwin School, effective June 30, 2020.**

Roll Call: All Yes

Motion – Dr. Thomas, seconded – Ms. Criscenzo...

- +11. **Approve the non-renewal of Employee No. 1857, effective June 30, 2020.**
- +12. **Approve the maternity leave for Employee No. 1887, effective approximately September 8, 2020 through approximately September 17, 2020; a paid child care leave, effective approximately September 18, 2020 through approximately October 14, 2020 and an unpaid family care leave, as per the NJ Family Leave Act, effective October 15, 2020 through January 13, 2021.**

Roll Call: All Yes

B. Finance Committee – (B. McCourt, Chairperson)

Motion – Mr. McCourt, seconded – Mr. Canellas...

- 1. Approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED: That pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.13(e), we certify that as of April 30, 2020, after review of the Secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section), and upon consultation with the appropriate District officials, to the best of our knowledge, no major account or fund has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6:20-2.13 (b), and that sufficient funds are available to meet the District's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year, subject to the conditions of P.L. 1701.

Roll Call: All Yes

Mr. McCourt, seconded – Mr. Triolo...

- 2. Approve the following block motion:
  - a. April 2020 direct pays in the amount of \$99,090.96.
  - b. April 2020 Continuing Education claims in the amount of \$39,694.36.
  - c. April 2020 Cafeteria claims in the amount of \$8,781.87.
  - d. First April 2020 payroll in the amount of \$657,854.03.
  - e. Second April 2020 payroll in the amount of \$607,564.61.
  - f. First May 2020 payroll in the amount of \$621,407.48.

g. May 2020 claims in the amount of \$483,489.70.

3. Approve the cash reports and the Board Secretary's report for the period April 1 – 30, 2020, as per the attached appendix. B-3
4. Approve the transfers between accounts for the period April 1 – 30, 2020, as per the attached appendix. B-4
5. Approve the Cafeteria price list for the 2020-2021 school year, as per the attached appendix. B-5
6. Approve the renewal of the dental plan through Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield of NJ, effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2022 at a 0% increase.

Roll Call: All Yes

Motion – Mr. McCourt, seconded – Mr. Canellas...

- +7. **Approve the schedule of tax payments request from the Borough of Midland Park for the 2020-2021 school year, as per the attached appendix.** B-7

Roll Call: All Yes

Motion – Mr. McCourt, seconded – Mr. Canellas...

- +8. **Approve the following resolution:**  
  
**Pursuant to PL 2015, Chapter 47 the Midland Park Board of Education intends to renew, award, or permit to expire contracts previously awarded by the Board of Education. These contracts are, have been, and will continue to be in full compliance with all state and federal statutes and regulations; in particular, New Jersey Title 18A:18. et seq, NJAC Chapter 23, and Federal Uniform Administrative Requirements 2CFR, Part200, as per the attached appendix.** B-8

Roll Call: All Yes

Motion – Mr. McCourt, seconded – Ms. Dell'Aglio...

- +9. **Approve the list of Educational Data Services vendors for the 2020-2021 school year, as per the attached appendix.** B-9
- +10. **Approve the Annual IDEA Agreement between Bergen County Special Services School District and Midland Park Public School District for the provision of educational services for non-public school students through IDEA funding for the 2020-2021 school year.**
- +11. **Approve the contract for In School Nursing Services between Bayada Home Health Care, Inc. and the Midland Park Board of Education, effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.**

Roll Call: All Yes

Motion – Mr. McCourt, seconded – Mr. Canellas...

**+12. Approve the following resolution:**

**WHEREAS, Senate Bill 2392 and Assembly Bill 3969, currently pending in the state Legislature, would authorize the Department of Community Affairs to permit municipalities to delay or alter the transmission of property tax revenue to school districts during gubernatorial-declared emergencies; and**

**WHEREAS, New Jersey's public schools are highly dependent on property tax revenue to support education programs; and**

**WHEREAS, on average, local property taxes constitute close to 60% of public school revenue, with the percentage even greater in a significant number of districts; and**

**WHEREAS, delaying or altering the transmission of property tax revenue from municipalities would result in a financial crisis for school districts, seriously disrupting the educational process; and**

**WHEREAS, although public school buildings are closed during the current health emergency, the education of our students is taking place through remote instruction and, therefore, continued timely transmission of all property tax revenue due to the school district is critical for the educational process to continue without interruption; and**

**WHEREAS, under our state's current structure, municipalities are designated as the authorities to collect property taxes, but those taxes are levied for specific purposes—e.g., municipal, school, county, fire district—and these obligations must continue to be met; and**

**WHEREAS, municipal governing bodies are empowered under current law to borrow in order to ensure that full payments to school districts are made;**

**WHEREAS, the Midland Park Board of Education recognizes the impact of the current public health emergency on the state and local governments, as well as local school districts, but believes that this legislation would only worsen the situation for our communities; and**

**WHEREAS, while S-2392/A-3969 would require a municipality to pay a percentage of the revenue due to a school district based on consultation between the state Departments of Community Affairs and Education, the amount of taxes collected at the time and the financial condition of the municipality and school district, it does not address subsequent payment to the school district to make up the full shortfall amount; and**

**WHEREAS, as currently written, S-2392/A-3969, which is designed to ease a financial burden on municipalities, would place a severe strain on school districts and the students and families that they serve.**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Midland Park Board of Education urges the State Legislature and Governor to oppose S-2392/A-3969; and be it further**

**RESOLVED, that this resolution be delivered to Governor Philip D. Murphy, State Senate President Stephen M. Sweeney, Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, and the 40th**

**Legislative District's representatives in the state Senate and General Assembly; and be it further**

**RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the New Jersey School Boards Association.**

Roll Call: All Yes

C. Curriculum Committee – (S. Criscenzo, Chairperson)

Motion – Ms. Criscenzo, seconded – Mr. Triolo...

- S-1. Approve the adjustment to the 2019-2020 Academic Calendar to reflect the last day of school to be Friday, June 19, 2020, for the current school year only, reducing the number of required student instructional days to 182, contrary to Board Policy No. 8210, which designates 183 days of instruction.

Roll Call: All Yes

D. Policy Committee – (M. Thomas, Chairperson)

- 5 revised policies were presented to the Policy Committee. They will be approved at the next Board meeting on 6/16
  1. Domestic Violence – Policy Section 1581
  2. Health and Physical Education – Policy Section 2422
  3. Administration of Medication – Policy Section 5330
  4. School Day – Policy Section 8220
  5. Reporting Potentially Missing or Abused Children – Policy Section 8462

E. Legislative Committee – (Administration)

No Report

F. Buildings & Grounds Committee – (P. Fantulin, Chairperson)

No Report

G. Negotiations Committee - (P. Triolo, Chairperson)

- Thanks to the Teachers and Administration to continue to care and educate our students during this time.
- All contract negotiations are complete

H. Technology & Public Relations Committee – (C. Dell'Aglio, Chairperson)

No Report

I. Town Council – (R. Formicola, P. Triolo)

No Report

J. Liaison Committee

High School PTA - (J. Canellas)

No Report

Elementary School PTA- (C. Dell'Aglio)

No Report

Booster Club – (N. Eliya)

No Report

Performing Arts Parents – (P. Fantulin)

- Zoom meeting – 5/18
- It is difficult with fundraisers are on hold
- Doing new and successful fundraisers

Special Education – (P. Triolo)

No Report

Education Foundation – (S. Criscenzo)

- Virtual meeting – 5/11
- 5 new Trustees and new Executive Board
- Next meeting – 6/8

Board of Recreation – (B. McCourt)

No Report

Continuing Education Program – (M. Thomas)

No Report

Student Representative to the Board – (Samantha Padovano)

No Report

K. Old Business

No Report

L. New Business

- Ms. Dell'Aglio asked what would happen if the Administration/Board of Education went against the Governor's orders. Dr. Cirasella responded that it would not be advisable to approve anything against legal compliance or council. Ms. Garvey stated if the board and/or administration knowingly approved an action that contradicted a



regulation, law, or executive order, each could have ethics violations brought against them and the administration could lose their certifications.

Motion – Ms. Criscenzo, seconded – Mr. Canellas...

Motion to go into closed session before the meeting of June 16, 2020, for the purpose of reviewing the hiring of personnel, legal updates and confidential student HIB case reviews.

Roll Call: All Yes

Open to the Public - general **COMMENTS** only at this time are to be directed to the Board President.

Ms. Garvey read the following emails submitted by the public:

In response to Dr. Cirasella's email from May 11th, the class of 2020 would like to ask the Board to look beyond a virtual graduation. We would like for either a social distancing graduation for June 19th or a date set aside in the summer for an in person socially distanced ceremony should the governor lift restrictions. We are starting to see other schools in the area do this and we are only asking that you please keep hope alive for the MP Class of 2020.

Thank you,

Mackenzie Cleary

McKenzie Cieri

Josylin Cancio

Vinz Isaiah Ibalio

Rebecca Caccamo

Nick Schiavo

Lauren Carroll

In regards to the emails that we, as a class, have been receiving it feels as though everyone has forgotten about how important these last couple months are to the seniors. I said this in the survey and I'll reiterate, this pandemic puts a lot of emphasis on physical health (which is extremely important) but fails to recognize the mental health crisis that is on the rise. As a class we understand the severity of the pandemic that is going on but, we believe that we could have an in person graduation while following social distancing guidelines and taking the proper precautions. The senior class at Midland Park only has 72 students. There are so many more options than just a virtual graduation. We have worked so hard as a class for the past 12 years, it is not justifiable to sit in front of a screen to celebrate our collective and personal achievements. We hope you take all of our responses into consideration and find something that is satisfactory for everyone!

Keep the hope alive for the MP class of 2020!

Thank you,

Michelle Mecca

In regards to Dr. Cirasella's email from May 11th, the class of 2020 would really appreciate it if the Board would look beyond a virtual graduation. After these four years everyone has gotten to walk across the field and why are we going to let something that is not our fault change that! Imagine if your child(ren) or even you never got an in-person graduation. I do not want to have to tell my child(ren) that I graduated on a google meets and I know none of my class does. So PLEASE look beyond! Why can we not have our graduation pushed back! We will all be home next May. Couldn't we have it then? Or even just wait until the limit of people is lifted and have a social distancing graduation. My classmates and I will sit six feet apart in the stands and the parents with the limit of two on the field? Is that not possible? The whole class is asking and

begging for an in person graduation because we know we do not deserve to graduate over a computer. I hope you consider these ideas and keep hope alive for the MP class of 2020.

Thank you,  
Gabrielle Esposito

In response to Dr. Cirasella's email from May 11th, the class of 2020 would like to ask the Board to look beyond a virtual graduation. We would like for either a social distancing graduation for June 19th or a date set aside in the summer for an in person socially distanced ceremony should the governor lift restrictions. We are starting to see other schools in the area do this and we are only asking that you please keep hope alive for the MP class of 2020. This graduation means everything to us and we just ask that you do your best to try and give us something close to the normal. You all have kids in the school system or have had kids in the school system. Please think about how they would feel during this, and how you would do anything in your power to give them what they worked so hard for.

Thank you,  
Sean DeMarco

I ask that you reconsider the plan for virtual graduation. Given how the restrictions have been lifted ie. people are able to go to parks, and beaches are open, there are more restrictions being lifted each week towards normalcy. There's no reason that 76 kids can't have an in-person graduation with the restrictions that are even in place now, who knows how many more can be lifted in the next month. There is no reason to decide today about a virtual graduation being our only option, I ask at the very least you put a plan in place for an in-person graduation, because we can with the amount of students this small school has with the current restrictions. Please consider that the Class of 2020 deserves at least the consideration for an in-person graduation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Taylor Carrea

I'm asking you to please present my request to the board of Education during the open public forum at tonight's meeting. I would first like to thank the Board of ED AND THE High school administration for all you do for our kids. It does not go unnoticed how much you support and care for them.

I'm asking that you table the virtual graduation scheduled for June 19<sup>th</sup> until our July Date. I feel by continuing the virtual graduation, you are taking an important moment away from The senior class. There is no reason why we have to jump into a virtual graduation. As you know, several towns have already tabled the virtual graduation and are waiting to the end of July. I'm only asking we do the same and save that special moment for July. If restrictions are not lifted by the governor by the end of July than go ahead with your plan for a virtual graduation.

Thank you,  
*Tony Cieri*

President Formicola made the following statement:

I know that a lot of the seniors are watching tonight and I applaud them for taking the initiative and expressing their opinion in the matters of the school and what effects them. Makenzie Cierio wrote keep hope alive for the MP class of 2020. Mackenzie we never gave up hope. This board and admin has always fought to have the graduation for your class. Dr. Cirasella and Mr. Capuano have been making plans from the start to have a graduation. As time goes by we will be listening to the governor and county exec to see when this restriction will be lifted and when it does, we will communicate it and have a plan to have the graduation that you deserve.

1. With “virtual graduation” being the format the district is following, what exact options are included?
  - Strictly video of graduates being awarded ceremony in small groups pieced together and viewed remotely?
  - Drive through approach
  - Other options
2. Why does the Superintendent insist on extreme conservative interpretation of Orders No. 104 and No 107 when other neighboring districts are seeking to explore creative solutions to celebrating graduates within the confines of the Orders?
3. Why is placing a hold date of 7/29 (rain date 7/30) on the calendar an issue?
4. Has the Superintendent/Board explored insurance options, such as a Rider to the policy, to cover the graduates of the Class of 2020 through 7/30? How much is it to obtain such a Rider to the existing policy?
5. What surveying or communication has the Superintendent’s office conducted within the seniors and MP community in an effort to receive feedback and options?

Thank you,

Kristin Fiore    Linda Herlihy    Laurie Kamp    Trish Olson    Laura Thomas

President Formicola responded:

1. We are grateful to parent Roman Kakowski for his assistance with the virtual graduation. He is collaborating with Mr. Capuano on details for this process and Mr. Capuano will be sharing details with students and parents shortly.

As stated in Mr. Capuano’s letter dated today: If it becomes safe and permitted by the government, we would like to have an in-person graduation. Currently, our plan is to broadcast a virtual graduation for Friday, June 19<sup>th</sup>. If government restrictions change, we can also attempt to have an in-person ceremony on Thursday, July 16<sup>th</sup>, rain date July 17<sup>th</sup>. These plans are subject to change based on official direction.

2. We are grateful the Superintendent insists on legal compliance. However, your question infers that she is not directing personnel to explore other students. As you know and have been informed, that is patently false.

Alternative options are being discuss, planned and shared. At the same time, the Superintendent is following official orders made in the best interests of the safety and well-being of all in our community. She remains in close contact with county districts and the vast majority of them are doing what we are doing—following the virtual graduation mandate and remaining open to other options should the restrictions be lifted.

3. The Curriculum Committee will take it under advisement.

4. Yes; it was confirmed that we can cover our graduates after June 30<sup>th</sup> as long as the event is sanctioned by the Board and we inform the carrier once that occurs.

However, at this time, there is no such coverage, no such rider, for coverage concerning a pandemic through our carrier. It is our understanding that the insurance carriers are putting even stronger language into policies in effect on July 1 against such coverage.

5. We are confident that Mr. Capuano, the administrator in charge of high school graduation, has received and communicated parent and student feedback. In addition, the Superintendent has personally received feedback from those who insists on an in-person ceremony despite the mandate, as well as from those who hold an opposing opinion, requesting she continue to adhere to mandated guidelines, thereby ensuring the health and safety of our students and families.

1. Contrary to everything we have been told up until today, we have now been advised that an alternate date of July 16<sup>th</sup> can be set for a potential in-person graduation if the current restrictions are relaxed. Why was that particular date chosen?
2. Is it possible to choose a date later in July to allow additional time for the possibility of a change in the current restrictions? If not, why not?
3. If the alternate date remains July 16<sup>th</sup>, or even if it is changed to another date, how long before that date do the restrictions need to be relaxed in order to proceed. Do you require a week advanced notice, or something more/less?

Thank you.  
Linda Herlihy

President Formicola responded nothing is set in stone. It is possible to move to a later date. Dr. Cirasella stated those questions should be remanded to MR. Capuano. He would be the appropriate person to answer.

- Is the district considering an adjustment to the current calendar to end the school year early? Neighboring towns have done this already, including Waldwick and Ridgewood. Our original district calendar includes 186 days for students, including 3 emergency days. We used 1 of the emergency day this year. Is it possible to end the school year 5 days earlier given the current circumstances. We would still have 180 student days.

Thank you, Linda Eliya

Ms. Garvey stated the supplemental resolution approved tonight addressed this question, ending school early.

Motion – Mr. Canellas, seconded – Mr. Eliya...  
To adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Stacy Garvey  
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary