

**Galloway Township Board of Education Agenda  
Office of the Board Secretary  
101 South Reeds Road  
Galloway, NJ 08205**

**MINUTES**

**February 12, 2024**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**1. MEETING OPENING**

Procedural: 1.1 Call to Order

**Meeting called to order at 6:02 PM**

Procedural: 1.2 Open Public Meeting Statement

In accordance with Public Law 231, both adequate and electronic notice of this meeting was provided to: The Press, the Galloway Township Municipal Building and the District Website on January 13, 2024.

Procedural: 1.3 Roll Call

**Members present**

Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Absent: Ms. Virginia Larrea

Also Present: Mr. Stephen P. Santilli/Superintendent, Mrs. Joy N. Nixon/School Board Administrator/Board Secretary, and Mrs. Amy Houck-Elco/Board Solicitor

Procedural: 1.4 Flag Salute

The flag salute will be led by Dr. Parmenter

**2. MINUTES**

Action, Minutes: 2.1 January 8, 2024 - Reorganization/Regular Meeting Minutes

Action, Minutes: 2.2 January 29, 2024 - Board Institute Meeting Minutes

Action: 2.3 January 29, 2024 - Board Institute Executive Meeting Minutes

Approve Minutes Item #2.1 through #2.3

**Motion by Mr. James Gentile, second by Dr. Sherri Parmenter.**

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Absent: Ms. Virginia Larrea

Abstain: Mrs. Madeline Avery and Dr. Sherri Parmenter from 1/29/2024 Regular and Executive

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

Information: 3.1 Guidelines for Public Comment at the Board of Education Meeting

Fred Schwenger, Jr, Port Republic resident and a Teacher at a private school – do any board members believe objective truth exists? When it comes to transgenderism that was buried in the agenda in 16.1, its subjective no amount of changing minds makes this transgenderism true. All recent mass shootings have to do with mental health issues that stem from body gender dysphoria. Since we can't change biological sex we can change their mental illness. I call on you to recognize that there are only 2 genders male and female. You do not allow students to sign themselves out or take medicine at the nurse without parental permission, how can you do this policy which allows affirming gender dysphoria without parent. If I baptized children without consent, everyone would be all up in arms about parental rights. Reject what the state wants you to do and to listen to your constituents and the people you allegedly serve.

Sheree Kachnic, Galloway resident and her children went through Galloway schools - Not everyone believes or agrees with the comment that was just made by the past speaker. Policy 5756, this is a 10 year old policy that is guided by the schools on how to support transgender and non-gender performing students, and I feel that there are many more people who believe that. I was just at another district Board of Ed meeting supporting this policy where I don't live. She hasn't heard any parent complain that they have some secret kept from them. It's a policy to support the few children that may feel they are transgender. It is there to help those children and guide them. This is not a Christian School, Muslim School, not any particular religion, this is a public school. This is for children that may need guidance and help with talking with their families that is what this policy is for.

Jim Tyree, Galloway resident – Why are we all here if this is not on the agenda? Where is this agenda posted? I wish these things were taken out of schools. Why are we talking about sex in schools, instead of reading, writing and arithmetic? What does this have to do with schools? It is the parent's responsibility to help their child. Don't put it on the agenda, vote against even if you don't get funds from the state. Deny state funds if you have to. The state wants to tell you how to take care of your children when it comes to the education of sex, religion or any of that.

Kelly Grace, Galloway resident - Thank you to the Board for the job that you do. Mission statement says the Board is responsible for connecting school, families and communities. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and you say God, you pull money out of your pocket and it still says God on it. We are still Godly people and put trust in you to vote in the right things and I'd like to make a statement and ask that the board when something is important as the things that affect the child and parent safety and all of that let's put in language that we can understand is something that's possible. Things need to be simplified we're not lawyers, we just are about our children and our grandchildren that are coming to school. I didn't have to worry about this when my daughter went through school it never occurred to me to go to school and ask, hey, what is your sex education program. The learning was all about reading, writing and arithmetic it was things we could use I know we live in a different world. We can't just keep accepting things that damages the family unit and the trust we put in you and all the school officials.

Fred Schwenger, Sr, Port Republic with Galloway grandkids. Apologize for coming here tonight when this item was not on the agenda. However, we came and want to be heard. Make the teachers teach what we pay for them to teach, not all of this extra stuff. The teachers work for us, have the teachers do what we pay them for, period it's common sense you wouldn't do it in any other vocation, there's no reason to do it in this one. Thank you very much.

#### **4. PRESENTATIONS**

Presentations: 4.1 2022-2023 Audit Presentation - Daniel M. DiGangi - Partner Bowman & Company LLP

Presentations: 4.2 Congratulations to the Galloway Elks Lodge Essay Contest Winners

Presentations: 4.3 Congratulations to the GTMS Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest Winners

Presentations: 4.4 Introduction of Aum Patel, Student Council Representative  
Mr. Patel gave an update on recent student council events.

## **5. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Presentations, Reports: 5.1 Superintendent's Report

### Statement by Superintendent:

At this time, I would like to take a few minutes to discuss communication. As superintendent of the Galloway Township school district, I feel it is essential to address a growing concern that has come to my attention. Over the past few weeks and month, there has been an increase in the dissemination of information and concerns through social media platforms. While these platforms can be valuable tools for communication, they can also be breeding grounds for misinformation and rumors.

I urge all members of our community to utilize the proper channels of communication when addressing concerns or seeking information regarding our schools and our district. Our district has established protocols and procedures in place to ensure that all inquiries and feedback are addressed promptly and effectively.

By following the proper chain of command, such as reaching out to your child's teacher, building administration, or district administration directly, we can ensure that accurate information is shared and that any concerns are addressed in a timely manner. This approach not only promotes transparency and accountability but also helps to maintain trust within our community.

It is crucial to recognize the potential harm that misinformation can cause, both to our schools and to the community at large. False information can lead to unnecessary panic, confusion, and discord, ultimately hindering our ability to work together towards our shared goal of providing the best possible education for our students.

I want to reassure you that our district remains committed to open communication and transparency. We are here to address any questions or concerns you may have and are dedicated to providing accurate information to our community.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding as we work together to ensure the well-being and success of all of our students.

Presentations, Reports: 5.2 Attorney's Report

Reports: 5.3 Student Enrollment Report

Reports: 5.4 Out-of-District Suspension Report

Reports: 5.5 Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Report

Information, Reports: 5.6 NO VOTE NEEDED - Informational Items Only

## **6. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION**

Action: 6.1 Fieldwork

Action: 6.2 Field Trips

Action: 6.3 Regional Learning Academy Partnership (Greater Egg Harbor Regional School District)

Approve Curriculum & Instruction Items #6.1 through #6.3

**Motion by Mr. James Gentile, second by Mr. Richard Dase.**

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Absent: Ms. Virginia Larrea

**7. FINANCE**

Information, Reports: 7.1 Finance Committee Update

Chairperson Dr. Beshara-Blauth gave committee report update.

Action, Information, Reports: 7.2 Food Service Reports

Action: 7.3 Investment Report(s) for December 31, 2023

Action: 7.4 Board Secretary's Monthly Certification

Action: 7.5 Financial Report of the Board Secretary

Action: 7.6 Board Report of Receipts & Expenditures

Action: 7.7 Transfers for Ratification

Action: 7.8 Bills for Payment

Action: 7.9 2022-2023 Audit Report

Action: 7.10 Professional Services Contract(s)

Action: 7.11 Accept Gifts, Grants & Donations

Action: 7.12 Trees for Schools Purchase - Sustainable Jersey Grant Funds

Action: 7.13 Submission of Amendment #2 - ARP Homeless Children and Youth (HCY) II Grant

Action: 7.14 Submission of 2023-2024 Preschool Expansion Aid (PEA) Transfer Form

Action: 7.15 Cooperative Purchasing System (MOESC) Member Participant Agreement

Action: 7.16 Disability, Critical Illness, Accident, Hospital, Dental, Life and other available insurance policies

Action: 7.17 Home Instruction

Action: 7.18 Transportation Agreement(s)

Action: 7.19 Out of District Professional Development

Action: 7.20 In-District Professional Development

Action: 7.21 Tuition Receivable for McKinney Vento Student(s)

Approve Finance Items #7.2 through #7.21

**Motion by Mr. James Gentile, second by Mr. Richard Dase.**

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Absent: Ms. Virginia Larrea

**8. FACILITIES**

Information, Reports: 8.1 Facilities Committee Update

Chairperson Dase gave committee report update.

Action: 8.2 Submission of HVAC System Upgrade - Arthur Rann E.S. - Grant #G5-6576

Action: 8.3 Submission of HVAC System Upgrade - Reeds Road E.S. - Grant #G5-6577

Action: 8.4 Submission of HVAC System Upgrades - Roland Rogers E.S. - Grant #G5-6578

Action: 8.5 Submission of HVAC System Upgrades - Smithville E.S. - Grant #G5-6579

Action: 8.6 Authorizing Disposal of Surplus Property

Action: 8.7 Community Use of School Facilities

Approve Facilities Items #8.2 through #8.7

**Motion by Mr. James Gentile, second by Mr. Richard Dase.**

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Absent: Ms. Virginia Larrea

**9. PERSONNEL**

Action: 9.1 Retirement(s)

Approve Agenda Item #9.1

**Motion by Mr. James Gentile, second by Mr. Richard Dase.**

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Action: 9.3 Resignation(s)

Action: 9.4 Termination(s)/Rescission(s)

Action: 9.5 Transfer(s)

Action: 9.6 Appointment(s)

Action: 9.7 Leave(s) of Absence

Action: 9.8 Adjustment(s)

Action: 9.9 Lateral Adjustment(s)

Action: 9.10 Job Description

Approve Personnel Items #9.3 through #9.10

**Motion by Mr. James Gentile, second by Mrs. Madeline Avery.**

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Absent: Ms. Virginia Larrea

Information: 9.12 Introduce and Welcome New Hires

**10. POLICY**

Information, Reports: 10.1 Policy Committee Report

Chairperson Dr. Parmenter gave committee report update.

Action: 10.2 Policy 2361 Acceptable Use of Computer Networks/Computers and Resources

Action: 10.3 Policy 2415 Every Student Succeeds Act

Action: 10.4 Policy 2415.02 Title I - Fiscal Responsibilities

Action: 10.5 Policy 2415.04 Title I - District-Wide Parent and Family Engagement

Action: 10.6 Policy 2415.05 Student Surveys, Analysis, Evaluations, Examinations, Testing or treatment

Action: 10.7 Policy 2415.20 Every Student Succeeds Act Complaints

Action: 10.8 Policy 2415.30 Title I - Educational Stability for Children in Foster Care

Action: 10.9 Policy 2415.50 Title I - School Parent and Family Engagement

Action: 10.10 Policy 2520 Instructional Supplies

Action: 10.11 Policy 2610 Educational Program Evaluation

Action: 10.12 Policy 2622 Student Assessment

Approve Policy Items #10.2 through #10.12

**Motion by Mr. James Gentile, second by Mrs. Belinda Chester.**

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Absent: Ms. Virginia Larrea

Action: 10.14 Policy 1700 Long Range Facilities Planning

Action: 10.15 Policy 7243 Supervision of Construction

Action: 10.16 Policy 7410 Maintenance and Repair

Action: 10.17 Policy 7420 Hygienic Management

Action: 10.18 Policy 7422 School Integrated Pest Management Plan

Action: 10.19 Policy 7425 Lead Testing of Water in Schools

Action: 10.20 Policy 7432 Eye Protection

Action: 10.21 Policy 7434 Smoking in School Buildings and on School Grounds

Action: 10.22 Policy 7436 Drug Free Workplace

Approve Policy Items #10.14 through #10.22

**Motion by Mr. James Gentile, second by Mr. Richard Dase.**

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Absent: Ms. Virginia Larrea

Mr. Rich Dase – Policy 7434 Smoking in School Buildings and on School Grounds - Vaping is included, however parents are seen vaping outside.

**11. BOARD INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

Information: 11.1 Board Calendar

Information: 11.2 Special Events

**12. NEW BUSINESS**

Action: 12.1 2023-2024 Memorandum of Agreement between GTPS and GTPD

Action: 12.2 2023-2024 Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Live Streaming of Video Surveillance between GTPS and GTPD

Approve New Business Items #12.1 through #12.2

**Motion by Mr. James Gentile, second by Mr. Richard Dase.**

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Absent: Ms. Virginia Larrea

**13. OLD BUSINESS**

Action: 13.1 Affirm HIB Determination Reports

Action: 13.2 Revised 2023-2024 School Calendar

Approve Old Business Items #13.1 through #13.2

**Motion by Mr. James Gentile, second by Mrs. Madeline Avery.**

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Absent: Ms. Virginia Larrea

**14. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Information: 14.1 Guidelines for Public Comment at the Board of Education Meeting

None

Discussion: 14.2 Board Members Comments

Mrs. Chester – great job to the essay winners.

Dr. Parmenter – congrats to the students who won.

Mrs. Avery – great job student council

Mrs. Hermenau – congrats to the students who won tonight. She would like to make a statement regarding NJ bill proposed by not Galloway specifically, but by the state.

Representatives in the New Jersey Senate and Assembly have recently proposed new legislation entitled the "Freedom to Read Act. The Bill seeks to "establish requirements for library materials in public school libraries and to protect school "library media specialists against harassment."

However, what the Bill really does is, completely remove local control of school libraries from locally, elected Boards of Education. It strips away parents' and community members constitutional right to express dissatisfaction with decisions made by those, elected officials.

The Bill states that boards of education 'shall adopt a policy on curating library materials. It mandates minimum" requirements, but those "minimum requirements" are so exhaustive (and not minimal) that Board of Educations (BOEs) have no discretion whatsoever in drafting the "mandated" policy.

The Bill mandates that a Board policy give the school's "library media specialist" the sole authority to determine what materials are appropriate for the library and at what grades or ages these materials should be available. The Bill gives librarians absolute civil and criminal immunity. Under this Bill, if you express disagreement with the librarian's choices you are guilty of harassment.

On what basis is this reasonable or lawful?

This Bill also obliterates the State's obscenity statute and allows librarians to decide what is obscene and what is not. If this Bill passes a "library media specialist" in the name of "diversity" can curate library materials that show less than completely covered human body parts including buttocks, all in violation of the obscenity statute and there is nothing anyone can do about it.

BOEs should work with Administrators to decide what library materials will be available to children, with parents and community members having input.

This Bill indefensibly removes this responsibility from local control which is us and you and places it in the total control of the State. It is a clear attempt to intimidate and stop any BOE member parent, or community member who may disagree with the materials in the public school library from participating in the educational process.

We as a Board must take seriously our responsibility to ensure that all diverse viewpoints are expressed in its library's materials. But Board members, parents and community members who want to, express dissatisfaction have a constitutional right to do so. Never forget that. This Bill seeks to restrict and eliminate those rights to the detriment of our democracy and public school system.

A public hearing on the Bill is scheduled for this Thursday Feb. 15th, at 11 am. In Trenton. I urge all community members and our Board to contact the NJ Senate and Assembly Education Committee members tell them we support local control of schools in New Jersey and the right to challenge elected officials and urge them to withdrawal Bill S.2421.

Mr. Gentile – thank you Mrs. Hermenau, your comment was based on an article in the Press, written by attorney Karyn White who represents a Pacific Justice Institute. I would invite the members here to check out what that is, but it is not at least to me it doesn't seem a group that necessarily represents people but it represents issues which I absolutely respect there's no doubt about it. When attorneys write things those things are typically subject to rigorous analysis by adversaries and ultimately interpretation by judges and when attorneys write things in newspapers they're basically just being rhetorical because there's no opportunity for an adversary to respond or what really kicked me in this editorial was there was a citation to a 50 year old Supreme Court case that didn't talk about what this article said. I get that there's a lot of artisanship in Trenton right now. I encourage everyone to be informed by reading the statute, reading the bill, not just the article. School boards are supposed to be nonpartisan and supposed to be nonpartisan for a reason, because kids transcend politics. Schools are not a place for politics. I have never seen this many people at our board meetings in seven years on the board. For some reason you are all here now. Children are not politics. Galloway state aid in a few weeks will fall short of what the budget needs, no one will show up then. I don't know I haven't heard anybody come forward and talk about this in all of these years and I know inequity is a charged word in this culture, unfortunately I don't know why, but the folks in Galloway Township the taxpayers in Galloway Township are being treated inequitable. Galloway has two large "non-profits" that make profits, but do not pay real estate taxes to the schools because of their status. I've been on this board for seven years and I haven't heard a word not a single word from the member of the public with regard to this. We fill up these rooms on the issues that were discussed tonight but when we talk about things that actually impact our kids how many kids are in a classroom because we can't afford more teachers what sort of programs do we have to cut because we can't afford them. Nobody shows up and that troubles me it troubles me so deeply that we let the media pull us into the culture wars at the expense of our children at the expense of our future. With that people should stop worrying about the partisanship stuff and worry about how we're going to educate our kids when the rubber hits the road with the day to day stuff that our teachers deal with. How are we going to do that I don't know the answer to that and it terrorizes me. Thank you.

Mr. Dase – welcome Mr. Patel, congrats to students awarded. I've been saying this for years that nonprofit organizations, we should approach at the government level at the board level and ask for donations at least. All I can say is state and federal mandates and state and federal pay are expensive and maybe these organizations can help us out a little bit maybe through the Ed Foundation if not directly to us.

One more thing, for a school calendar next year, can we have Superbowl Monday off next year?

Dr. Beshara-Blauth – Congratulations to all the students, everyone did a fantastic job speaking up here I know it's not easy getting up in front of everyone and giving your updates. Thank you and thanks to all the student council for all the work that you've been doing in the middle school we love it.

Mrs. Carmen - Thank you everyone for your comments. I want to make sure that it is the understanding that comments made by Board members during the "around the board" section are not the opinions of the board as a whole, but rather each individual board member. In addition, it is also important to note that we have delegates to the County School Board Association. that represent Galloway at the County level to specifically discuss these matters and work with legislators to address concerns. Finally, with respect to the bill that has been discussed, please remember that this is just a bill that will likely go through numerous revisions and re-writes and it is important to let that process occur prior to discussing any actions that we may or may not take as a BOE. As always we welcome feedback and discussion from the community at our meetings so we make the best decisions for ALL students in the district.

## **15. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Action, Procedural: 15.1 Possible Recess to Executive Session  
None

Action: 15.2 Reconvene Open Public Meeting  
None

#### **16. EXECUTIVE SESSION ACTION (IF NEEDED)**

Action: 16.1 Possible Action from Executive Session  
None

#### **17. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion to adjourn the meeting 7:14pm**

**Motion by Mr. James Gentile, second by Dr. Sherri Parmenter.**

Final Resolution: Motion Carries

Yes: Mrs. Belinda Chester, Dr. Sherri Parmenter, Mrs. Madeline Avery, Mr. Richard Dase, Mr. James Gentile, Mrs. Ethel Hermenau, Dr. Alexa Beshara-Blauth, Mrs. Suzette M. Carmen

Absent: Ms. Virginia Larrea

Respectfully Submitted,

Joy N. Nixon, CPA, MBA  
School Board Administrator/Board Secretary