

**MINUTES
WORK SESSION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FRANKLIN MIDDLE SCHOOL LIBRARY/CAFETERIA
SEPTEMBER 19, 2013 – 6:13 P.M.**

CALL OF ROLL

Mr. Richard E. Arline
Mr. Delvin Burton – arrived at 7:30 PM
Mr. Thomas J. Lewis – arrived at 7:30 PM
Mrs. Eva M. Nagy, Vice President
Dr. Julia M. Presley, President

Mr. Richard Seamon
Ms. Keisha Smith-Carrington – departed at 6:57 & returned at 7:55 PM
Mr. Robert T. Trautmann–departed at 6:33 & returned at 7:30 PM
Mrs. Betty Whalen

Mr. Edward Q. Seto, Superintendent of Schools – arrived at 7:30 PM
Mr. John Calavano, Assistant Superintendent for Business/Board Secretary
Ms. Eveny Pagán, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction – arrived at 7:30 PM
Mrs. Gail Reicheg, Director of Personnel – arrived at 7:30 PM
Ms. Lynne Crawford, Director of Pupil Personnel Services – arrived at 7:30 PM
Mr. Orvyl Wilson, Director of School Management – arrived at 7:30 PM

David W. Carroll, Esq., Parker McCay, P.A.

And 50 Members of the Public

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Mrs. Nagy led the board in the pledge.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT

Mr. Calavano read the following statement:

In accordance with the "Open Public Meetings Act" P.L. 1975, c. 231 (Sunshine Law), the schedule and notification of this meeting have been provided for on August 23, 2013 and September 12, 2013. Copies of this notice were faxed to the **Courier News**, the **Home News Tribune**, **The Star-Ledger**, **The Trenton Times**, Franklin Township Clerk/Manager, WCTC Radio, District Schools, Offices and Associations, PTO Presidents, and posted on the Central Administration Building notice board.

Mr. Arline read the following statement:

MISSION STATEMENT OF THE FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Mission of the Franklin Township Public Schools is to provide excellent educational opportunities that meet or exceed New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for every student; maintain an environment that engenders an appreciation of the value of every student; develop every student to his/her highest potential; and instill the attitudes, skills, and knowledge necessary to become independent, contributing members of a democratic, multi-cultural society.

DISTRICT GOALS

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION: *To develop and implement a comprehensive assessment program designed to meet the needs of all students through the use of formative and summative assessments aligned to the common core standards and integrated into instruction.*

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: *To promote community engagement and effective communication to and from all stakeholders.*

CULTURE AND CLIMATE: *To continue the District's efforts to safeguard students and staff, enhance the culture and environment of our schools and improve relationships among and between students; staff; parents/guardians; and the community that promote respect, motivation for learning and creativity in and for our students.*

FACILITIES: Utilizing the District's 2011-2021 Long-Range Facilities Plan, finalize a building program (including application for state grants and outside funding sources) that will enhance and improve the District's delivery of education to all students; provide additional classroom space to address the projected enrollment growth over the next several years; address critical maintenance issues in all existing facilities and consider potential changes to the delivery of education.

I. Action to Adopt the Agenda

Moved: Mrs. Whalen Seconded: Mrs. Nagy

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Arline	Burton	Lewis	Nagy	Seamon	Smith-Carrington	Trautmann	Whalen	Dr. Presley

Confidential Session – Library

Moved: Mr. Seamon Seconded: Mrs. Whalen

Motion to adjourn to Confidential Session at 6:15 PM to discuss matters of attorney-client privilege. Minutes of the Confidential Session will be made public when the reason for confidentiality no longer exists.

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Arline	Burton	Lewis	Nagy	Seamon	Smith-Carrington	Trautmann	Whalen	Dr. Presley

Returned to open session at 7:30 pm in the Cafeteria.

Reconvening roll call – All board members were present, with the exception of Ms. Smith-Carrington.

II. Presentations

What We Did This Summer – An Update on Happenings in Franklin Township Public Schools by Mrs. Mary Clark, Coordinator of Policies and Regulations

ESIP (Energy Savings Improvement Program) by Ms. Jeanne Perantoni, SSP Architectural Group, and Mr. Josh Costell, Tozour Energy Services

Freshman Focus by Mr. James Bevere, Principal, and Ms. Dana Karas, Director of Guidance, Franklin High School

MOTION

Moved: Mrs. Nagy Seconded: Mrs. Whalen

Motion to have Administration research the legality of the Freshman Focus program and if it needs board approval by the next meeting.

MOTION TO AMEND (1)

Moved: Mrs. Nagy Seconded: No Second

Motion for the Freshman Focus program to go to the Curriculum Committee for discussion and bring it back to the Board.

MOTION TO AMEND (2)

Moved: Ms. Smith-Carrington

Seconded: No Second

Motion to put a plan in place to ensure students in the Freshman Focus program will receive 2.5 credits by the end of the year.

MOTION TO AMEND (3)

Moved: Mr. Trautmann

Seconded: Mr. Seamon

Motion for the Superintendent to research the legality of the Freshman Focus program and bring it back to the Board at the October 17, 2013 action meeting, *not* the next meeting which is September 26, 2013.

Vote on Motion

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Trautmann	Whalen	Arline	Burton	Lewis	Nagy	Seamon	Smith-Carrington	Dr. Presley

Vote on Original Motion with Amendment (3)

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Whalen	Arline	Burton	Lewis	Nagy	Seamon	Smith-Carrington	Trautmann	Dr. Presley

III. Superintendent's Update

Thank you to all of our administrators who were able to come to this first Board of Education meeting of the school year. Thank you also to the administrators for attending our administrators' institute.

I would like to introduce Lynne Crawford, our new Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

Warrior Football

Last Thursday, September 12th, I had the pleasure of attending this season's home opener of the Franklin Warrior Varsity Football team on the field of the Franklin High School Athletic Complex. Phase II of the project is completed as you heard earlier and the home bleachers and press box are extremely impressive. While we were not triumphant that afternoon, there was a great deal of support for our Warriors from Franklin High School, the district and township communities.

I would like to thank Kim Kenny and Jim Bevere for their leadership. Congratulations and job well done. I would be remiss if I did not thank our district grounds crew and security staff for their hard work and Board of Education Member, Tom Lewis, for his dedication to this project. Congratulations Tom! The official ribbon cutting ceremony for Phase II of the Athletic Complex will take place in a pre-game ceremony on Saturday, October 12th at 12:45 PM. More details on that event will be found on the district website.

Assemblyman Chivukula

Once again our students were the beneficiary of the generosity of Assemblyman Chivukula and those who donated to his school supply backpack drive. This year the Assemblyman's office staff dropped off over 100 backpacks full of school supplies to Elizabeth Avenue and Pine Grove Manor Schools. These were given to some of our third grade students. Thanks again to the Assemblyman and all those who contributed.

Breakfast in the Classroom

I am pleased to announce that on Monday, September 16th, we launched the Breakfast in the Classroom Program in all of our elementary K-4 schools. This program allows us to offer this important meal to all of our students in those schools, in the classroom, before instruction begins. Students who qualify for reduced or free meals will receive breakfast for free. One dollar per breakfast is being deducted from the meal account for those full paid students who participate. More details on the program were sent home to our elementary families and are available on the website.

While there were some expected logistical challenges early on in the week, I am pleased to report that the program is moving along and things are getting better. I spoke with our principals today and was glad to hear that the process is going more smoothly. I am so pleased to report that during these first few days of the program, we have had a district-wide increase of over 200% in the student who are receiving breakfast.

I want to thank all of our elementary school principals for their cooperation and willingness to embrace this worthwhile program. I would also like to thank our custodians and food service staff for their hard work on the Breakfast in the Classroom Program. Finally, thanks to Food Services Director, Joan Novellano. She saw a need to provide a nutritious meal to more of our students so that they could all start the day ready to learn. She researched, planned and championed this program and I am very grateful for her dedication. As the program continues this year, we will track its progress and look for continued feedback from our students, parents and staff. I will provide updates on the program in future reports.

Transportation

The beginning of the school year had its share of transportation challenges. We have experienced a greater than usual amount of transportation concerns, due primarily to the increased use of three school bus service companies who have serviced the district on a much smaller scale in the past. Due to state law governing lowest bids, many of our routes previously handled by another company were given to new companies. While we have provided support to these vendors, the period of adjustment while the drivers become familiar with the routes has caused some delays in pick-up and drop-off times. We are also experiencing increased driver and bus company performance issues involving mechanical breakdowns, driver communication and efficiency issues.

Please be assured that the Transportation Department is working to address each student's issue on a case-by-case basis. I would like to thank the Principals for communicating daily with Transportation Supervisor, Gary Peatick, and myself about their transportation problems. Additionally, when several complaints pertain to the same company, we have been able to address the issue with the bus company and, if the problems continue, to contract out the route to another company. We have been able to quickly seek new quotes and reassign those routes to another bus company. Gary Peatick and his staff have been in constant contact with the bus companies to address the problems. We will continue to address each issue and, when necessary, reassign routes.

Physicals Examinations for Franklin Athletes

I regret to have to report that the district will no longer be able to provide physical examinations for our athletes. The NJ Department of Education physical examination requirements now include a cardiac test. The District Physician has informed us that he will be unable to provide that service to the school district. These examinations should be done by the students' primary care physician. More information will be available on the Franklin High School and Franklin Middle School websites shortly.

Minimum Session Day

There is an upcoming calendar change for students at Franklin Middle School. Monday, September 30, 2013 will now be a minimum session day for students at Franklin Middle School. These students will be dismissed at 12:30 PM to allow our certificated staff at FMS to attend an important professional development session which aligns with increased requirements from the Department of Education.

IV. Comments From The Public *(5 minutes per speaker – agenda items only)*

The meeting was opened for public comment at 9:13 PM on a motion by Mrs. Nagy, seconded by Ms. Smith-Carrington. All board members were in agreement, with the exception of Mr. Burton.

MOTION

Moved: Mr. Burton

Seconded: Mr. Trautmann

Motion to move up the agenda item that involves the board attorney to avoid additional legal costs.

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>
Arline	Burton	Lewis	Nagy	Seamon	Smith-Carrington	Trautmann	Whalen	Dr. Presley

MOTION

Moved: Mrs. Nagy

Seconded: Mr. Arline

Motion to return to the original meeting agenda, as the board attorney offered to stop billing from this point forward.

<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Burton	Lewis	Nagy	Seamon	Smith-Carrington	Trautmann	Whalen	Arline	Dr. Presley

Comments From The Public *(5 minutes per speaker – agenda items only)*

Ilene Rosen described the first two weeks of the Franklin Focus program and requested to know why 9th graders don't have the opportunity to take two electives.

Angela Barkley read a portion of a letter from Community 4 Change and expressed her concerns regarding the continued employment of Mr. Seto. She spoke of a lack of education progress and fiscal accountability.

De Sanders continued reading the letter from Community 4 Change and spoke about public relations and accountability.

Bernadette Kelly spoke about poor leadership management and costly and ineffective management of special education issues.

Theresa Farkas spoke about problems in the district and her non-support of the renewal of Mr. Seto's contract.

Cynthia Burwell expressed her concerns regarding fiscal accountability and working together. She questioned if all board members completed ethics training and requested to know how much the ethics charges are costing the district. She questioned if those that filed the charges request opinions from the Ethics Commission first? Ms. Burwell wanted to know where this is all coming from?

Monica Hines read a letter on behalf of Michelle Saunders, a non-renewed employee. She spoke of Ms. Saunders' situation regarding Mr. Seto and Ms. Pagán.

Linda Powell continued to read the letter.

Myra Mitchell wished everyone a happy new school year. She expressed concern with who is teaching the Franklin Focus program and the curriculum for the program. Ms. Mitchell spoke about the pay rate for substitutes.

De Sanders questioned the Franklin Focus program and the curriculum for the program. She also questioned Breakfast in the Classroom Program and cardiac testing for athletes. Ms. Sanders spoke positively about the counseling department.

Motion to close the public portion of the meeting at 10:14 PM by Mrs. Whalen, seconded by Mr. Burton. All board members were in agreement.

V. Committee/Liaison Reports

Mrs. Nagy, Policy Committee Chair, reported on the September 10th meeting.

Ms. Smith-Carrington, Curriculum Committee Chair, reported on the August 21st meeting.

Mr. Arline, Personnel Committee Chair, reported on the September 9th meeting.

Mr. Lewis, Safety Ad Hoc Committee Chair, reported on the September 17th meeting.

Mrs. Whalen, Communications Ad Hoc Committee Chair, reported on the September 5th meeting.

VI. New Business

1. Review of September 26, 2013 Action Meeting Agenda

MOTION

Moved: Ms. Smith-Carrington Seconded: Mr. Trautmann

Motion to keep Resolution A-07 (Accept District Action Plan) on the September 26, 2013 action meeting agenda.

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Lewis	Nagy	Seamon	Smith-Carrington	Trautmann	Whalen	Arline	Burton	Dr. Presley

To clarify discussions regarding Resolution P-02 (Superintendent's Contract) at the September 26, 2013 action meeting agenda, Dr. Presley explained that the discussion would normally have taken place in confidential session without Mr. Seto in attendance, however, Mr. Seto chose to waive his right to confidentiality. As a result, the meeting will now take place in public session, but Mr. Seto may not participate in the discussion. Also, Messrs. Lewis and Trautmann, under the law, are excluded from this action due to their spouses' employment in the school district.

MOTION

Moved: Mrs. Nagy Seconded: Mr. Arline

Motion to include on the September 26, 2013 agenda a resolution to provide notice to the Superintendent of Schools that his contract will not be renewed beyond June 30, 2014.

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Abstain</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Nagy	Seamon	Smith-Carrington	Trautmann	Whalen	Arline	Burton	Lewis	Dr. Presley

2. Action Items for September 19, 2013

P-01 Personnel Report No. 5, dated September 19, 2013

Moved: Mr. Seamon Seconded: Mrs. Whalen

As recommended by the Superintendent of Schools, approve Personnel Report No. 5 as detailed in the exhibit attached hereto and made a part of the minutes. (Exhibit P-01)

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Seamon	Smith-Carrington	Trautmann	Whalen	Arline	Burton	Lewis	Nagy	Dr. Presley

VIII. Comments From The Public *(5 minutes per speaker – any items)*

The meeting was opened for public comment at 11:00 PM on a motion by Mr. Lewis, seconded by Mr. Seamon. All board members were in agreement. Public comments were heard by the Board of Education. The following is a brief synopsis of comments made by the public.

Skip Schaeffer commented on Ms. Burwell's comments. He spoke about the Donaldson Hearing, the Pine Grove Manor Principal interviews, ethics charges and lack of board leadership. He requested to know from Mr. Arline his plans for his board seat should he win the election for Sheriff. He asked Mrs. Nagy that, in her over two decades of service, has ever experienced ethics charges being filed against board members or the Board President. Mr. Schaeffer requested to know if Mrs. Presley will resign her position on the board if the charges against her are valid.

Bill Connell spoke about credibility and events that occurred last year between him and a board member.

Kim Thorne expressed her embarrassment by the body language of the Board and spoke unfavorably about Mr. Seto.

Leslie Primo expressed concern over lowering the passing grade and questioned how it would benefit our children.

Cynthia Burwell spoke about attorney fees, costs of ethics charges and asked they not be taken lightly. She requested that board members seek other opinions. Ms. Burwell indicated that Mr. Schaeffer's comment was unfortunate.

David Burns is pleased with the on-line news outlet. He indicated that when he was a board member, he voted no for Mr. Seto's renewal because he lost confidence in him. Mr. Burns requested the number of students who do not attend our schools each year.

De Sanders indicated that Mr. Seto's non-renewal at this time makes sense. She questioned why one board member attempted to vote on a matter in which they were not permitted to vote upon. She spoke about Mr. Seamon's response to the election question. Ms. Sanders said it was refreshing to see things being brought forward at this meeting.

Motion to close the public portion of the meeting at 11:30 PM by Ms. Smith-Carrington, seconded by Mrs. Whalen. All board members were in agreement.

Adjournment

Moved: Ms. Smith-Carrington

Seconded: Mrs. Whalen

Action to adjourn at 11:31 PM.

<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>
Arline	Burton	Lewis	Nagy	Seamon	Smith-Carrington	Trautmann	Whalen	Dr. Presley

Respectfully submitted,

John Calavano
Board Secretary