

March 29, 2016

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SUMMIT, NEW JERSEY**

A special meeting of the Board of Education was held on Tuesday, March 29, 2016, in the City Hall Council Chambers beginning at 6:30 PM. Those present: Ms. Kalin, presiding, Ms. Chang, Ms. Colbert, Mr. Dietze, Mr. Hanley and Ms. McCann. Mr. Freeman was absent.

Also present were Mr. Chang, Superintendent, Mr. Pepe, Assistant Superintendent/Board Secretary, and Ms. Schneider, Assistant Business Administrator. There were 22 people in the audience.

**NOTICE OF CERTIFICATION**

The following notice was presented:

Let the minutes reflect that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in accordance with the regulations of the Open Public Meetings Act.

President Kalin welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Mr. Chang stated the tentative budget was submitted to and approved by the county office – there were no changes – the tax levy remains at 1.95%.

Mr. Pepe stated the tax impact remained the same as it was per the tentative budget.

Ms. Chang made the following statement:

“I would especially like to express my gratitude to the dedication shown by Mr. Pepe, Mrs. Schneider, and the entire business office, Superintendent Chang, members of the Cabinet as well as the Operations Committee throughout this budgetary process.

Despite the clear headwinds of higher healthcare costs, those around the table have been able to develop a budget that adheres to the state-mandated 2% cap while driving increased innovation in our curriculum by bringing 1-to-1 technology initiative to all middle and high school students in the district. Additionally, we were able to add two new AP classes at the high school. We even added gymnastics as a funded sport.

As a first year Board member, I am heartened by the spirit of collaboration across the administration, the Board of Education, and the Board of School Estimates that enables continued fiscal prudence and stability, allowing us to maintain our educational vision for all our constituents – the students, the staff, and the community-at-large.”

Ms. McCann thanked the citizens who participated in this effort, and assured the community that they are being heard. She stated the quality of Summit Schools is a top priority; she supports this budget and feels it is fiscally responsible and sustainable; she appreciates the work of staff, teachers, and principals; and she thanked the Operations Committee, BOE members, Business Office team, Cabinet, principals and Mr. Chang.

Mr. Hanley commended Mr. Chang, Mr. Pepe, Ms. Schneider, Cabinet members, and principals for prioritizing the most important commitment we can make – a high quality educational program. He thanked the Operations Committee for the exemplary work done of reallocating existing resources that was able to expand athletics, guidance, staff, and the capital improvements made over the last three years. Mr. Hanley stated he supports this budget.

Ms. Colbert made the following statement:

“What are we buying? How much does it cost? How much does it cost? What are we buying?”

When it comes to assessing a budget, there really are only two primary questions - what and how much? The order of the questions is more philosophical preference than anything else. At the end of the day, whether you ask “what” first or “how much” first, you’re going to want answers to both questions.

The ultimate limit to “how much” is set by law when considering a public school budget in NJ. However, the “what” question has more possibilities: programs, technology, payroll, facilities, special ed. You think that the list can go on and on. In reality, payroll costs represent the lion’s share of our budget. They should. There is no single budgetary expenditure that brings more value or greater return than the dollars spent on the teachers, administrators, counselors and other professionals who work in our schools and support our students.

When you deduct staff costs and mandated expenses, it quickly becomes clear that your pool of dollars has shrunk – and so have your possibilities. How to spend those dollars – the “what” – can be arrived at only after a series of tough questions and hard choices.

Superintendent Chang leads this process for the district. He and Mr. Pepe ask tough questions of the Cabinet, the principals and supervisors. They in turn ask tough questions of their teachers and staff. I sat on the Ops Committee this year. Over a several month process, we asked tough questions of Superintendent Chang and Mr. Pepe. And my colleagues on the Board who were not on the Ops Committee similarly asked tough questions as they reviewed the proposed budget.

I mentioned that “what” and “how much” are the two most prominent questions in the budget process. “Why” is a close third. We constantly asked why do you prefer this program over that program? Why fund this sport but not that sport? In short, why is there money for this but not that?

I was impressed – and reassured – by Mr. Chang and Mr. Pepe’s ability to answer the “why” questions. They were knowledgeable. They were candid. Most importantly, they were thoughtful. It was clear to me that they had reached their decisions after careful reflection and prioritization.

As we engaged in this process as a board, our obligation was clear. It is our ethical responsibility under the NJ Code of Conduct for School Board Members to ensure the educational welfare of the students in the district. That is the lens through which we must consider and make decisions. I believe that the Board and Administration have crafted a budget that is properly focused on the educational welfare of our students. It funds academic programs that are rigorous, relevant and rich in variety. It supports co-curricular offerings that allow our students to develop their talents and interests beyond academics, whether in the performing arts, sports, a cause or an interest. It allows us to maintain appropriate class sizes. It funds professional development. It ensures access to technology. And, it keeps our buildings and facilities strong, safe and appropriate for students and staff.

Importantly, the programs and services included in the budget are delivered at a cost that is appropriate, affordable and sustainable.

Does the proposed budget deliver every possible thing that we need? Of course not. There is more to do, and as a Board we must challenge ourselves to find ways to do more.

That is an on-going responsibility. Focusing on the budget before us today, I am pleased with both the “what” and the “how much” that is represented. I fully endorse approval of this budget, and I thank Superintendent Chang, Mr. Pepe, Ms. Schneider, the staff of the Business Office and the many other people who contributed their time, creativity and commitment to its development.”

APPROVAL OF THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL BUDGET RESOLUTION

Mr. Dietze moved the following under approval of the 2016-2017 School Budget Resolution:

RESOLVED that the final budget be approved for the 2016-2017 School Year as approved by the Executive County Superintendent of Schools in accordance with the statutory deadline:

	<u>GENERAL FUND</u>	<u>SPECIAL REVENUES</u>	<u>DEBT SERVICE</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<b>2016-17 Total Expenditures</b>	\$67,889,784	\$1,191,085	0	\$69,080,869
<b>Less: Anticipated Revenues</b>	<u>4,920,895</u>	<u>1,191,085</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>6,111,980</u>
<b>Local Tax Levy to be Raised</b>	<u>\$62,968,889</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>\$62,968,889</u>

Motion was seconded by Ms. Colbert. The roll was called and all present voted “Aye.” The motion was declared adopted.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Dietze, seconded by Mr. Hanley, and carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "L. H. [unclear]", written in black ink.

Secretary