

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
FOR THE PURPOSE OF A BOARD RETREAT HELD  
February 29, 2024**

In accordance with the State’s Sunshine Law, adequate notice of this meeting was provided by sending a notice of the time, date, location, and, to the extent known, the agenda of this meeting on January 5, 2024, and February 16, 2024, to the *Home News Tribune* and *The Times*, posted on the district website, placed in the Board Office and in each of the district schools, and sent to Plainsboro and West Windsor Public Libraries and Plainsboro and West Windsor township clerks.

The Special Meeting of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Board of Education was called to order by Board Vice President Juliana at 6:30 p.m. in the multipurpose room at the District Administration Building. The following Board members were present:

Ms. Pooja Bansal	Ms. Rachel Juliana	Ms. Loi Moliga
Ms. Elizabeth George-Cheniara	Ms. Dana Krug	Ms. Shwetha Shetty
Ms. Louisa Ho		Ms. Robin Zovich

Board President Graelynn McKeown was absent. Present also were: Dr. David Aderhold, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Christopher Russo, Assistant Superintendent for Finance/Board Secretary; Dr. Lee McDonald, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Barbara Gould, Chief Academic Officer; Ms. Charity Comella, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel; Ms. Susan Totaro, Chief Equity Officer; Mr. Derek Mead, Assistant Business Administrator, and invited guest, Ms. Jessica Cincotta, Principal at High School South.

**Call to Order and Board President Comments**

Board Vice-President Rachel Juliana read the call to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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Ms. Juliana turned the meeting over to the Superintendent.

**Welcome/Budget Introduction**

Dr. Aderhold welcomed everyone to the meeting to discuss the 2024-2025 Budget. The Superintendent shared information regarding the District’s goals and how they relate to daily operations and the budget. The Superintendent introduced Ms. Charity Comella and Ms. Susan Totaro to discuss the strategic goals.

**Strategic Goals – Goal 4: Inclusion**

Ms. Charity Comella, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, and Ms. Susan Totaro, Chief Equity Officer, presented on the District Strategic Goals and the impact and progress the District has made. The team reviewed the strategic goals and presented a sample of goal work outcomes. Ms. Comella exhibited information surrounding the increase in the diversity of staff members over the years as well as ways in which the District works to retain current staff members. Ms. Totaro revisited the timeline for expanding the Equity Goal, as well as other strategic goal initiatives, like MTSS, Multi-Level classes, DLI, and Full

Day Kindergarten. At the conclusion of the presentation, Board members reflected on ways that they support the District's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusivity, and belonging and on how the budget is a reflection of the District's vision.

### **Budget Considerations & Parameters**

Dr. Aderhold, Dr. Christopher Russo, Assistant Superintendent for Finance, and Mr. Mead, Assistant Business Administrator, shared budget information with the Board. They explained that a school budget is a planning tool that considers contingencies, manages risk, considers safeguards and buffers, reflects district values, and is fiscally responsible. They highlighted the budget drivers, reviewed the budget process and timelines, and reported that the Governor's budget address occurred on Tuesday, February 27, and state aid notices were released earlier today. They reminded the Board that the preliminary budget is scheduled for adoption on March 19, and the public hearing on the budget is scheduled for April 30.

Dr. Aderhold, Dr. Russo, and Mr. Mead continued leading the conversation regarding the 2024-2025 budget. They reported that budget stressors for this budget are typical of years past and include special services, facilities, health care, staffing, transportation and salary increases. Unlike prior years, inflation has played a major role in stressing the budget. Unknown budget contributors include prescription and health care increases, and increases in special education services. The Board discussed the budget parameters and working within an increase of 2% plus the banked cap from the healthcare spending growth limitation adjustment (SGLA).

In conclusion, District Administration recommended using \$1,487,956 of the banked cap and saving the SGLA generated from the 2024-2025 Health Care SGLA for future years (banked cap). The 2% general fund increase allowance, combined with the use of the banked cap, plus the increase of state aid of \$1,651,767 will result in a net budgeted tax levy increase of 2.8%. Board members and administrators discussed the presented budget information and other aspects of the proposed budget.

### **Closing**

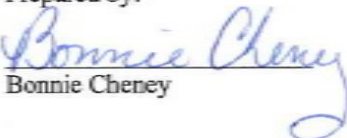
Dr. Aderhold and Ms. Juliana thanked everyone for their participation.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Ms. Ho and seconded by Ms. Krug. All Board members that were present voted in favor of adjourning the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 10:15 p.m.

  
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Dr. Christopher Russo, Board Secretary

Prepared by:

  
Bonnie Cheney

**WEST WINDSOR-PLAINSBORO REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING DATE: February 29, 2024**  
**PLEASE SIGN IN BELOW**

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