

Rockaway Borough Board of Education

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 25, 2025, 7:30 PM

Thomas Jefferson School Cafeteria, 95 East Main Street, Rockaway, NJ 07866

Visit us on the Web: rockboro.org

ROCKAWAY BOROUGH SCHOOLS' MISSION STATEMENT:

The mission of the Rockaway Borough School District, a caring and diverse community, is to propel the success of each student by creating an environment that fosters self-confidence and encourages creativity through quality instruction and educational opportunities aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards.

Executive Session I: 6:35 – 7:31 pm

Be it resolved that the Board enters into an Executive Session (Private) to discuss exempt matters pertaining to negotiation matters with the RBAA & RBEA collective bargaining units, the nature of which will be made public only when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Moved by: Mrs. Hernandez

Seconded by: Ms. Dahl

Voice Vote: All Ayes

Moved by: Ms. Dahl

Seconded by: Mrs. Hernandez

Voice Vote: All Ayes

1. Call to Order: 7:31 PM

The public portion of this meeting was called to order at 7:31 p.m. by Mr. Graf, Board President, by reading the following announcement:

"In accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, The Rockaway Borough Board of Education has provided adequate notice of this meeting to the public by having the time, date, and location advertised in The Citizen Newspaper on January 15, 2025, posted on our website and at town hall. Official action will be taken."

2. Board Member Roll Call:

Mrs. Faride Hernandez - Present

Elected 2024 to 1st term (3-year seat to Dec. 31, 2027)

Mrs. Vanessa Dorgilles - Present

Elected 2024 to 1st term (3-year seat to Dec. 31, 2027)

Mr. Brian Riviuccio - Present

Elected 2022 to 1st term (3-year seat to Dec. 31, 2025)

Ms. Jennifer Dahl, VP - Present

Elected 2023 to 1st term (3-year seat to Dec. 31, 2026)

Mr. Edward Graf, President - Present

Elected 2023 to 1st term (3-year seat to Dec. 31, 2026)

Mr. Anthony Grieco, Superintendent - Present

Appointed July 2021 Chief School Administrator & Non-Voting Board Member (CSA/Supt)

Mr. William Stepka, SBA/Board Secretary - Present

Appointed Nov 2017 Business Administrator, Secretary of the Board & Non-Voting Board Member (BA)

The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America was then held.

Two school auditors and approximately fifty employees were also in attendance.

5. Enrollment & Staffing Report:

Grade Level & School	Students June 30, 2024	Students February 21, 2025	Difference from June 30, 2025	Sections (Classes)	Avg. Class Size	Certificated Staff - Teachers	Non-Certificated Staff
Preschool - Lincoln AM/PM & Full Day	29	25	-4	2	13	1	8
Kindergarten - Lincoln	56	67	+11	3	22	3	3
Grade 1 - Lincoln	59	59	0	3	20	3	3
Grade 2 - Lincoln	66	60	-6	3	20	3	2
Grade 3 - Lincoln	59	66	+7	3	22	3	2
Other Staff: (Principal 1, Specials 8, Aides 5, PE 1, Guid 1, Nurse 1, Sec 1, Cust 2.5, Caf 7)	-	-	-	-	-	12	15.5
Total Lincoln School:	269	277	+8	14	20	25	33.5
Grade 4 - TJ	62	65	+3	3	22	3	-
Grade 5 - TJ	56	63	+7	3	21	3	-
Grade 6 - TJ	45	61	+16	3	20	3	-
Grade 7 - TJ	63	52	-11	3	17	3	-
Grade 8 - TJ	58	66	+8	3	22	3	-
Other Staff: (Principal 1, Specials 16, Aides 9, PE 2, Guid 1, Nurse 1, Sec 2, Cust 2.5, Caf 9)	-	-	-	-	-	21	22.5
Total Thomas Jefferson:	284	307	+23	15	20	36	22.5
Shared Staff: (Other Certificated Teachers 4.5, & Part-Time Nurses 2)	-	-	-	-	-	4.5	2
Administrative: (Supt, BA, CIA, CST 1, Sec 4, Maint 2, Bus Drivers 2, Bus Aides 2)	-	-	-	-	-	3	11
Special Ed Out-of-District:	5	6	+1	-	-	-	-
Resident Students:	558	590	+32	29	20	-	-
Charter/Choice Schs Out:	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
Spec. Ed Tuition Incoming:	3	3	0	-	-	-	-
Total Students (593)/ Staff (140) Ratio: 4.25/1	561	593	+32	-	-	66.5	69

6. Meeting Minutes

- A. Be it resolved to approve and accept the following meeting **Minutes**:
 1. January 28, 2025, Regular Meeting, and Executive Sessions One & Two.

7. Finance

- A. Be it resolved to approve the manifest of **Payrolls and Bills & Claims List**, which is on file in the Business Administrator’s Office:
 1. Bills, Claims, and Payrolls List: January 29 to February 25: \$766,136.90

- B. Be it resolved to approve the appropriation of **Emergency Reserve** funds of \$250,000 to the following expense accounts for the 2024-25 District Budget:

11-000-100-561-000-030 Tuition Regular Ed Public	\$18,432
11-000-100-566-000-030 Tuition Special Ed Private Sch Disabilities	\$169,969
11-000-270-517-000-030 Transportation Regular Ed Public	\$35,100
11-000-270-518-000-030 Transportation Special Education	\$20,530
11-000-217-100-000-031 Extra-Ordinary Special Education Aides	\$5,969

- C. Be it resolved to approve the renewal of the inter-local shared services agreement with the Morris Hills Regional Board of Education to provide complete **Child Study Team (CST) Services** for the 2025-26 school year for \$377,294 (+\$369 or <1% from 24-25 - due to the 2nd retirement of the CST Director and an increase in case numbers from 120 to 153) and an additional daily rate of \$533.17 for any summer work needed to review new student referrals.

- D. Be it resolved to approve the following resolution concerning **SEMI Funds** for the 2025-26 Budget:

Whereas, NJAC 6A:23A-5.3(b)1 provides that a school district may request a waiver of compliance with respect to the district’s participation in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program for the 2025-2026 school budget year if there are 40 or fewer Medicaid estimated eligible classified students, and

Whereas, the Rockaway Borough Board of Education desires to apply for this waiver due to the fact that the NJ DOE has furnished a projection that has our district at 39 (last year was 40) Medicaid-eligible classified students,

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Rockaway Borough Board of Education hereby authorizes the Chief School Administrator & Business Administrator to submit to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools in the County of Morris an appropriate waiver request of the requirements of NJAC 6A:23A-5.3(b)1 for the 2025-2026 school budget year.”

8. Personnel

- A. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the attached list of Staff Member **Professional Development Workshops & Travel Expenditure Requests** that have been deemed related to and within the scope of the employee’s current job responsibilities and will enhance the efficient delivery of student instruction and/or furthers the efficient operation of the school district. Reimbursements listed are in accordance with guidelines established by the Dept. of Treasury, BOE Policy, and in accordance with NJAC 6A:23B-1.1., and listed at the end of this agenda.

- B. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to confirm/approve a leave of absence for the following personnel:

Staff #	Location	Position	From	To
142	Lincoln School	Secretary	2/10/25 Utilizing sick days	2/25/25. Returning 2/26/25
625	Lincoln School	Paraprofessional	2/18/25 Utilizing sick days	2/21/25 Returning 2/24/25

- C. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the Extra Curricular Activity Establishment Proposal submitted by **Samantha Selikoff** regarding the initiation of a Thomas Jefferson Middle School “Esports Club.” As per the CBA with the teachers’ association, the teacher shall not be compensated for the program’s initial year, and then, upon review by the Superintendent, it may be recommended that the program be established for the following year after a successful implementation.
- D. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve one (1) transition day for **Sara Beattie**, making her last day in the district March 3, 2025. Her previously approved contract end date was February 28, 2025.
- E. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to accept and approve the resignation of **Jeffrey Burke**, paraprofessional, for the purpose of retirement effective June 30, 2025.
- F. Be it resolved, based on the recommendation of the Superintendent, to approve the following Buddy for the 2024/2025 school year at a rate of \$275.

Buddy	New Hire
Janet Dobbs	Jennifer Bills

9. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

- A. Be it resolved to approve the **Student Field Trip** requests as listed at the end of this agenda.
- B. Be it resolved to approve the **2025-2026 School District Calendar**, as submitted.

10. Technology and Buildings & Grounds

- A. There are none at this time.

11. Policy

- A. Be it resolved to approve and accept the Bus Evacuation Drills for the 2024/2025 School Year.
- B. Motion to table by Ms. Dahl, seconded by Mrs. Hernandez, and unanimously approved by voice vote:
~~Be it resolved to approve the **1st Reading** of the following new and/or updated Board Policies (P) and/or Regulations (R), where applicable: **TABLED**~~

—Policy/Reg	Number	Title	Reason for Update
Policy	5111	Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students	Revised
Policy	5512	Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying	Revised
Policy & Reg.	5533	Student Smoking	Revised
Policy	5704	Academic Integrity	Revised
Policy	5710	Student Grievance	Revised
Policy	8500	Food Services	Revised
Policy	9163	Spectator Code of Conduct for Interscholastic Events	New
Policy & Reg.	9320	Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies	Revised

12. Consent Agenda

- A. Move and Vote on all Agenda Resolutions & Recommendations in One Motion:

Roll Call Vote:	Moved & Seconded By:	Aye	Nay	Abstain	Recuse	Not Present
Mrs. Hernandez	Seconded	Aye				
Mrs. Dorgilles		Aye				
Mr. Rivieccio		Aye		6A: Minutes		
Ms. Dahl, VP	Moved	Aye				
Mr. Graf, President		Aye			7C: CST Agreement	

All resolutions approved: 5 0 1 1 0

13. New Business/Any Other Items/Board Comments for the Good of the Order

- A. None at the time.

14. Public Hearing please state your name and address:

- A. Mrs. Sherry Rich, a former 4th-grade teacher residing at 31 Ann Street in Rockaway Borough, read a statement to the Board regarding her \$12,500 sick-day payout.
- B. Mr. Michael Onischuk, pe teacher, residing at 7 Gerald Place, Rockaway Twsp., supported Mrs. Rich.
- C. Mrs. Mary Leslie, preschool teacher, residing at 68 Hemlock Road, Rockaway Borough, supported Mrs. Rich.
- D. Mr. Nick Bova, music teacher, residing at 6 John Street, Pine Brook, also supported Mrs. Rich.

Background: Mrs. Rich retired on December 31, 2024, and was eligible to receive payment for unused sick days according to the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Article XI, "Sick Leave," paragraph C.4, states: "In either case... severance payment shall be made no later than July 31 following the school year in which the employee retires..." All sick-day payouts would normally be paid by July 31, in full compliance with the CBA. In July 2024, the SBA offered her the option to receive the payout earlier as a professional courtesy, recognizing her 30 years of teaching in the district, which she accepted for January 15, 2025. In September 2024, the district experienced an unexpected influx of 25 new students, some of whom required expensive special education placements outside of the district, resulting in new unbudgeted mandated costs of half a million dollars (\$500,000) to provide their educational programs. The budget underwent significant reallocations to prioritize the needs of the new students, and the payout had to be postponed, along with other discretionary items. Consequently, the SBA regrettably informed Mrs. Rich of the unfortunate financial situation and that her payout would be delayed a few months. He stated that if funds became available toward the end of the school year (May/June), he would process her payment well before the July 31 deadline in the CBA. Mrs. Rich insisted that, according to Article XI of the CBA, payment was due immediately (albeit incorrectly). The justifications for the payment delay were unacceptable to her, which led to her appearance and statement to the Board.

15. Next Regularly Scheduled Meeting:**A. Tuesday, March 18, 2025**

The public portion of the Meeting will begin at 7:30 pm in the Cafeteria of Thomas Jefferson Middle School.

16. Executive Session II: 8:27 – 9:40 pm

Be it resolved that the Board enter into Executive Session (Private) for the purpose of discussing a student HIB matter, the nature of which will be made public only when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

THE BOARD ANTICIPATES BEING IN THE EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR APPROXIMATELY 60 MINUTES.

BOARD ACTION WILL NOT BE TAKEN AFTER THIS SESSION CONCLUDES.

Moved by: Ms. Dahl

Seconded by: Mrs. Hernandez

Voice Vote: All Ayes

Moved by: Mrs. Hernandez

Seconded by: Mrs. Dorgilles

Voice Vote: All Ayes

17. Motion to Adjourn the Meeting: 9:40 PM

With no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:40 pm.

Moved by: Mrs. Hernandez

Seconded by: Mrs. Dorgilles

Voice Vote: All Ayes

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. William Stepka, RSBA
Secretary of the Board/
District Business Administrator

District Events List / Miscellaneous :

School Activity	Loc./School	Date/Time	Participants	Cost to District	Adm./ Teacher/ Coach/ Advisor
TJ School Wide 60's Dance	TJ Gymnasium	2/28/25 / 5:30-9:30 pm	All TJ students	16 Chaperones at double rate \$1,532, Security \$201, Custodial OT \$218	Various
8th Grade Awards	TJ Gymnasium	6/10/25	8th Grade Students	None	Various
8th Grade Field Trip to Pocono Valley Resort	Stroudsburg, PA	6/3/25 8:30 am - 7:30 pm	8th Grade Students	9 Chaperones at double rate = \$865	Various
8th Grade Field Trip to NYC	NYC- Various locations	5/15/25 8:15 am - 7:30 pm	8th Grade Students	9 Chaperones at double rate = \$865	Various
"A Second Chance Project"	TJ Gymnasium	3/12/25 2:15 pm	8th Grade Health Classes	None	Morris Hills High School Students & Vice Principal Mrs. Emily Barkocy
Black History Month Presentation	Lincoln School	Tentative Dates: 2/26 or 2/27 or 2/28.1:00-1:40 pm	2nd Grade Classes	None	Caroline Blackman, Former Dover Mayor
Classroom Instagram Social Media Account	TJ	2/26/25	5th Grade	None	Ms. Mannello

\$3,681

Professional Development/Travel Expenditure Requests:

Staff Member	Workshop Title/Dest.	Dates	Reg & Fees	Cost to District	Justification for the Trip
Lauren Stein Samantha Selikoff	NJ Educational Computing Cooperative- Annual Conference / Montclair State University	3/11/25	Fee included in membership	2 sub teachers: \$230	This conference will provide information, resources, and tools about various STEM topics, including coding and AI, to help incorporate more technology into education and improve student learning and engagement.
Timothy Yobs	Indoor Air Quality/ Bergen County Fire & Law Academy	3/28/25 Date Change	Free	Mileage if submitted or fuel for district truck est \$25	CEUs for CEFM and training on air quality in schools. (Previously approved 10/16/24)
Elizabeth Blake	Elementary World Language Teacher Summit/ ONLINE	1/27-31/2025	\$67 -an all-access pass \$18- session notes & materials	None - attended virtually during prep periods.	This summit had 22 sessions on useful techniques and curriculum for elementary world language applicable to my practice. The all-access pass provides resources and ideas that would benefit the elementary world language program at Lincoln School.
Bryanna Dennison	School Counselors: Better Support Students' Mental Health / ONLINE	4/9/25	\$295	None	This seminar will provide highly practical strategies to better support students' health needs and specific intervention strategies to address depression, anxiety, and disruptive behaviors.
Brianna Rigas	School Counselors: Better Support Students' Mental Health / ONLINE	4/9/25	\$295	None	This seminar will provide highly practical strategies to better support students' health needs and specific intervention strategies to address depression, anxiety, and disruptive behaviors.
Jennifer Skomial	NJ Center for Exceptional Children/ Ramapo College, Mahwah, NJ	3/17/25	\$190 Mileage: \$28.95	Mileage as listed.	This conference will provide insight into high-leverage teaching practices and schoolwide systems that can be implemented for our special education students.

ROCKAWAY BOROUGH BOARD OF EDUCATION

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 25, 2025

Jamie Argenziano Leon Samuels	MCAEMSA Fall Conference/ Hanover Marriott, Whippany, NJ	3/25/25 Date Change	Free	Mileage if submitted est. \$30	School leadership and SEL. Also, support for students with special needs.
Kyrsten Thomas	NJECC25/ Montclair State University, Montclair, NJ	3/11/25	Fee included in membership	Mileage if submitted est \$20	This PD is aimed at transforming tech teaching.
Michael Klein Timothy Yobs	Integrated Pest Management Coordinator Class. Bergen Cty. Fire Academy, Mahwah, NJ	2/21/25	Free	Mileage if submitted or fuel for district truck est \$30	Required for CEUs and IPM certification for pest management.
Jamie Argenziano Jennifer Skomial	Learning Forward NJ Monroe, NJ	3/11/25	Free Mileage for 1 driver \$55.36	Mileage as listed	This conference will provide insight into expanding our expertise, fostering equity in education, and engaging in innovative design. Through collaborative, engaging in conversations, we'll learn how to develop meaningful and impactful professional learning systems that drive growth and success for educators and students alike.
Samantha Selikoff	BELS School Library Consortium/ Bergen Cty. Community College/Paramus, NJ	3/14/25	Free		Mrs. Thomas passed this opportunity along to me and I would like to learn more about resources for the media classes and managing the library.

\$420

Student Field Trip Requests:

GRADE	TEACHERS	DATE	TIME: DEPART/RETURN	DESTINATION	# of Pupils	# of Staff	Cost Per Pupil	Cost to District	JUSTIFICATION FOR TRIP
8	Selikoff	6/3/25	8:30/7:30 pm	Pocono Valley Resort Stroudsburg, PA	64	11	\$130	Sub teacher for those who don't go \$125 Double Chaperone rate for 9 staff \$863 Nurse: \$864	This is a celebratory 8th-grade trip featuring SEL
MD- TJ LLD- Lincoln	Smith Ralli	5/21/25	9:30 am 12:30 pm	LifeTown / Livingston, NJ	15	13	N/A	Bussing and fuel est. \$200 Nurse: \$216	To enhance our social skills curriculum with real-world connections and interdisciplinary math skills and foster growth in college and career readiness.
6	Fleming	4/29/25	8:00 am 3:00 pm	YMCA Camp Bernie/ Port Murray, NJ	66	6	\$75	Sub Teacher \$136	Team Building
8	Perniciaro	3/26/25	8:25 am/9:35 9:50 am/11:00 12:05 am/1:15	Blue Titan Gym / Rockaway Borough, NJ	23 25 14	2-3 each group	\$7	Nurse: \$360	A self-defense class would be an excellent addition to a middle school science curriculum during the force and motion unit because it provides a practical, hands-on application of key physics concepts.
7-8	Leahey O'Brien	2/26/25	8:45 am 2:30 pm	Morris Hills High School/ Rockaway Borough, NJ	28	2	\$0	Bussing and fuel est. \$75	Students will develop their performing arts skills in conjunction with the literature they read in their advanced ELA class.
8	Laura Perniciaro	4/3/25 Date Change.	9:00 am/2:00 pm	iFly- Paramus, NJ	61	6	\$52	2 sub teachers \$272, Bussing and fuel est. \$150 Nurse: \$360	The STEM program at iFly is designed to give kids hands-on experience with science, technology, engineering, and math principles and get them thinking about how these principles translate to the real world.* <i>Applied for a grant to offset the cost.</i>
7	Laura Perniciaro	3/12/25 Date Change Tentative	9:00 am / 1:00 pm	Pyramid Mountain/ Boonton, NJ	49	9	N/A	Bussing and fuel est. \$250 Nurse: \$288	Pyramid Mountain offers a hands-on opportunity to explore real-world geological features and processes. The area is home to fascinating rock formations, such as the famous Tripod Rock, a glacial erratic left behind by ancient glaciers during the Ice Age.
8	Samantha Selikoff	5/15/25	8:15 am / 7:30 pm	Manhattan, NYC Empire State Building, Circle Line Cruise, Tenement Museum & Museum of Ice Cream	65	11	\$190	Sub teacher for \$125 for those who don't go Nurse: \$864 9 Chaperones @ double rate \$865	This is an 8th-grade culminating experience that features many cross-curricular educational aspects.
5	Samantha Mannello	4/10/25	10:30 am / 2:00 pm	Dave & Buster's. Wayne, NJ	57	6	\$48	Sub teacher \$125 for those who don't go Nurse: \$288	Team building in alignment with our curriculum.

\$5,562 (GT all three categories: \$9,663)