

# Transcript of the August 16, 2022 BOE Meeting

0:00

2 and the burlington county times july 1st 2022

0:05

like to ask at this time if we could have a moment of silence please

0:22

thank you please rise for the pledge of allegiance

0:28

i pledge allegiance to the flag of the united states of america and to the republic for which it stands one nation

0:36

under god indivisible with liberty and justice for all

0:42

[Music] hey mr heiser could you please do the roll call

0:48

dr alberti mrs arcara burns

0:53

mrs fallows macaluso here miss mikopoulos

0:59

mrs morano miss romano mr villanueva here

1:05

dr schneider here mr weeks president thank you thank you mr heiser

1:11

okay we already conducted our executive session and again i apologize for that taking a little bit longer than we had

1:18

expected um and to my fellow board members who came in as we were starting i'm sorry we were just trying to get it

1:23

going to uh not continue to delay our our audience here so um i will move

1:29

forward and ask for an approval of the minutes uh for the following meetings that are attached to exhibit 23-1

1:37

the may 17th executive session and regular meeting the june 14th exec session and regular meeting

1:44

june 29th same and july 6th may i have a motion

1:49

to approve those minutes second thank you any

1:56

comments questions okay hearing none i'll call for a vote

2:04

all in favor of approving those minutes i any opposed

2:10

abstentions um i have to abstain from the one meeting i wasn't here i can't

2:16

remember i'm sorry i think it was uh

2:23

okay

2:36

okay give mr heiser a moment to note those all right moving on any communications for members

2:44

from members of the board no okay

2:50

uh president's remarks uh this is where we'll make up some of the time um welcome again everybody i hope

2:57

everybody's having an enjoyable uh happy and healthy summer uh

3:02

realize just this week i think we have less than a month until school starts again

3:08

i i was not going to share that sentiment mr eagles but i'll i'll leave that there um but but it's

3:15

also a very exciting time um you know as things get ramped back up um we're looking forward to uh

3:21

getting back in i was surprised uh our family went on a bike ride the other day we rode over to the us or my son is a

3:27

rising fifth grader and he actually said he's he's ready he's ready to come back to school so hopefully um that persists

3:36

and uh hopefully that it's the same for everybody else we're ready to get back into the flow of things so um with that

3:42

i will conclude my remarks and turn it over to mr volpe

3:48

thank you mr president i will add a little bit to the meeting because my comments today are going to be a little bit longer than usual so my apologies if

3:55

you're looking forward to something short but as mr week said as the last weeks of summer come to a close i hope

4:00

that you've had some time to relax and connect with your family uh throughout the course of this summer our administrative team and many of our

4:06

teachers were still interacting with students as well as preparing for the new school year during the month of July

4:12

the day was a buzz with student activity as both our extended school year program and other grant funded programs were in

4:18

full swing for four days a week where students were able to have some fun and work on their school skills

4:24

I had the opportunity to spend three full days at UES during that time as well as checking on some other days and

4:29

was great to see our teachers continuing to engage our students in July I was also thankful to Brian

4:35

Freeze Ice Cream Parlor right here in Morristown on Main Street as they allowed me to host an ice cream with the superintendent at their business that

4:42

afternoon I had the pleasure of engaging with about a dozen parents many of whom I bought ice cream uh who wanted to get to know me a bit and had some questions

4:48

about the school district I also got to meet our senior class president who went out of his way to meet the superintendent Adam Connor

4:55

who wanted to meet with me it was great interacting with the community in such an informal setting and I look forward to doing more such

5:01

events in the future the 22-23 school year continues further steps along the way of our return to

5:08

normal in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic essentially where we left off with our protocols will be where we pick up the

5:14

start of this school year to be clear we will be mass optional we'll follow CDC guidance pertaining to positive cases

5:21

needing to isolate for five days we will not be doing contact tracing but will inform classes as a whole with the

5:26

generic letter of a positive case and that parents should monitor their children for symptoms as there will not be any identified

5:32

close contacts no close contact contacts will need to quarantine these are all things that we did last

5:38

year when we made some changes in this area a few months after my arrival the area of change will be an

5:43

instruction studies are starting to show that hybrid and virtual learning they were not was not good for anyone

5:50

knowing this if a student needs to isolate it'll be treated like any other illness schools can and will provide

5:56

work to be done at home as we do for any illness consistent with our procedures and if those aren't clear or known we'll

6:01

make sure that parents know what those are when students return teachers will also work hard to catch them up as

6:07

there's no substitute for being in classroom with a teacher however it's my belief that virtual and hybrid learning does a disservice to all teachers

6:14

students in the classroom and students at home the bottom line is that i believe kids need to be in school for effective

6:20

learning to take place indeed this should be the year that students have more in-person learning

6:25

days than they have had since the start of the pandemic let's all take this as an opportunity to take advantage of this

6:30

and be in school in front of the teachers unless you are sick along those lines please consider taking

6:36

family vacations outside of our school calendar to maximize that time you may also remember that this past

6:42

spring the curriculum committee of the board reviewed our current health curriculum guides posted online and

6:47

found them to be a bit lacking this was reported out to the public in the full board during our board committee reports

6:53

the guides when reviewed included the state standards unit topics and then stated see your supervisor for details

7:00

in the light of the new health standards released by the state in 2020 dr benton our director of curriculum instruction

7:06

and i prepared a sample guide that is more specific and included more details pertaining to the units the big ideas

7:12

being covered in those units as well as the specific learning objectives the curriculum committee was unanimous

7:18

in support of our guides being updated with such a scope and sequence as promised all updated health curriculum

7:24

guides will be posted on our website before the end of the month any parents who wish to review these guides will be able to do so before the

7:30

start of the school year if there are any areas of the health curriculum that you would not want your child to participate in you can contact

7:37

your child's principal who can inform you of how to do so to be clear though as i had stated in

7:42

the spring my teaching staff does a great job and teaches appropriate health curriculum lessons in a developmentally

7:47

appropriate manner the fact that we have updated our curriculum guides before the start of the school year is only going

7:52

to help validate that fact however health education is the one academic area in which parents can

7:59

choose to exclude their children if they wish to have such conversations as a family so i'll send out a message before

8:05

those are updated so that people can know speaking of teachers i would like to make sure that during

8:11

the course of this year we celebrate teachers and other staff members and morristown's teaching staff specifically

8:17

i'm not sure what it's going to look like and i'm not sure when it's going to happen but it needs to be done

8:22

recruiting new teachers is getting harder and harder each year right now we still have some openings

8:28

that our director of human resources ms butler is looking to fill and it's not due to a lack of effort

8:33

young people are not going into this profession in the numbers that they used to there just aren't the numbers of

8:38

people out there that all the schools in new jersey need this highlights the need to focus not just on recruitment but the retention of

8:45

our current teaching staff with so many vacancies out in the state all school districts are starting to

8:51

find that experienced teachers are starting to compare contracts from district to district and decide if they

8:56

want to stay where they currently are and perhaps have tenure or make a jump for potential higher pay

9:01

as superintendent i am committed to making sure that morristown is a place where people feel included and want to

9:07

stay for a myriad of reasons additionally when it comes to my work in advocacy i would love to see the state

9:13

of new jersey take some pressure off local tax bases and incentivize stability in school districts

9:20

one way they could do that in populations uh in school populations is through creative ideas such as potentially setting up a sliding scale

9:27

of state tax credits based on years in education as well as years in one particular district

9:33

working together we can indeed find solutions to the teacher shortage which has now been declared a crisis by some

9:39

i want to let people know i've had success in the area of advocacy advocacy recently this past year as the

9:44

legislative chairperson for cj pride it's a human resources organization i'm

9:50

a part of i was part of a team of many organizations that focused on eliminating an unnecessary certification

9:55

requirement for teachers my work in this area was covered both by new jersey 101.5 and the njea review

10:02

not two outlets that you would normally assume are on the same page when it comes to education but i'm happy to note that after a year

10:08

of advocacy every assembly person and every senator in the state of new jersey  
10:14  
republican and democrat voted to repeal this requirement known as edtpa there  
10:19  
were no dissenting votes we look forward to the governor signing this bill hopefully soon  
10:25  
and my point in telling you this story is there are some legislative solutions to our  
problems not just here in  
10:30  
morristown but in all new jersey school districts and in time everybody is on the same  
page it can be done and i won't  
10:36  
stop my work in this area to make sure we are fully staffed for our students finally  
10:42  
at the end of the 21 22 school year i promised to make a presentation to the board as to  
some of our ongoing efforts  
10:48  
in school safety and security this is one of my own personal goals for this year and will  
become some building level  
10:54  
goals too for obvious reasons i can't tell you and the public everything we do to ensure  
10:59  
safety and security and the fact that i cannot do that hopefully makes you feel more  
assured however there are some  
11:05  
efforts that you should and need to know about and that will be part of my presentation  
tonight and i am going to  
11:11  
get up uh and go over to the microphone because i don't know how to do the  
presentation and turn around and speak  
11:17  
in the microphone here at the same time  
11:40  
we're almost there  
11:54  
okay yeah okay you can go to the next slide  
12:00  
never mind i can i can do that thank you i want to let you know how important that safety  
and security in our schools  
12:07  
is to me for the board members who i'm so thankful for who hired me uh you may  
remember this from my presentation to  
12:14  
you i literally took this on there that one thing i was going to stress to the people in the  
community of morristown is  
12:19

that providing an outstanding academic education for their children is not my top priority and usually there's some

12:25

heads that come up and eyebrows my first priority is to ensure that there's a safe and comfortable environment in which that outstanding education can

12:32

take place and that means psychologically safe it also means our building in our facilities and making sure that we are we are safe uh from the

12:39

outside world as well not that there's things to fear but we always want to make sure we are doing our best for students so that has been a priority of

12:45

mine since i've been an administrator and it continues to be here in morristown so here are some of the things that

12:51

we're going to be doing this year that i want the community as well as the public to know about

12:56

we are going to make sure that we are implementing the standard response protocol across all buildings consistently

13:03

this little pamphlet right here we are eventually going to have a copy of that in every classroom in the entire

13:11

district as well as a grab and go for evacuation procedures that will help

13:16

teachers signal if they need help if everything's okay or immediate triage is needed so the standard response protocol

13:22

is common language that's used among law enforcement uh they can be used with parents it can be used with staff

13:28

there's essentially four different drills and we had a presentation on that for my administrative staff today

13:35

who's going to turn key this to all staff so we're going to make sure we have common training and common language use throughout the district and we're

13:41

going to train on this annually moving forward i know the district has been trained in this in the past

13:47

kovi got in the way of a whole bunch of different things but we are going to annually train our safety and security

13:52

measures until my teachers are like my gosh we have to do this again yes we are going to have to do this



13:57

again because we want everybody to be safe and secure the state also requires that every school district has one school safety

14:04

specialist someone who coordinates with law enforcement and makes sure practices and procedures that are up to date are implemented in schools we have three uh

14:11

one is brian carter our principal at robert school one is yours truly i'm a certified

14:16

school safety specialist and gavin quinn our supervisor of science uh took the training this year so we have three

14:22

school safety specialists who will be meeting on a regular basis to make sure our security procedures are updated i

14:28

also want to stress too to my staff to my administrators that the most important thing when it comes to school

14:33

safety are our habits of the mind i don't want our schools looking like

14:38

you know prisons with walls and gates and barbed wire and those kinds of things but i do want to make sure

14:45

they're secure sometimes believe it or not in our school buildings perhaps doors don't close the whole way

14:51

i want my staff in the habit of the mind is when i let a door close behind me do i look and see if it actually closed

14:58

do i pull it to see if it's locked automaticity is good but habits of the mind are very important too so that's

15:04

something that's going to be really newly stressed this year we're also going to update and improve our drilling and i want to let you know

15:11

what that means we have already uh the school safety special specialists have gotten together we've assigned all

15:16

of our drills for the year we know which drills we're doing every month uh principals will know that and staff can

15:21

know that right away too we've also included a drill it's not required by the state with an internal

15:26

communications breakdown we're going to pretend our pa system doesn't work and then we're going to pretend our phone

15:31

system doesn't work and how do we execute a drill because that could happen um we are inviting the office of

15:38

emergency management uh to all of emergency drills not fire drills but our emergency drills i think that position

15:44

um in the town is still vacant at this time so as soon as chief wall zach has it filled that person will be invited

15:52

the morristown police are going to be invited to all drills a school safety specialist one of the three of us will

15:57

be invited and should be on site for all emergency drills now i want to make it clear um we're going to invite all three

16:03

of those people they may not show up all the time but it's going to be our intent to have another set of eyes outside of the school on at all of our drills

16:09

because immediately after each drill the crisis teams are going to meet immediately we do a lockdown drill after

16:16

the lock town drill crisis team is getting together in the main office we do a lockout drill crisis team is getting together in the main office so

16:23

that may involve principals getting some coverage some meetings being delayed but we are prioritizing our drilling and our

16:30

safety and our security if something went wrong in that drill we don't want to wait till the next month's faculty

16:35

meeting to say hey what about that we want immediate results and my principals are prepared to do that

16:41

we're going to improve our internal communications for a potential crisis situation and i had mentioned this

16:46

main way we communicate is with our pa system and it's something i'm going to have to look at over time uh in replacing some of our pa systems here

16:53

but if our pa system goes down how do we communicate with everyone well although it's new it says new right

17:00

there we don't have new phones what we have new is a a detailed procedure uh from our director of technology mr jeff

17:07

harry here uh that can let administrators know how to dial into the phones uh very easily and then broadcast

17:14

into each individual classroom and use that as a pa system it was kind of hidden it wasn't really known jeff has

17:20

made that very clear and that can be used so next question is what if our pa system goes down and what if our phone

17:26

system goes down i want to make sure we have a third way of communicating and what i've done is i have looked for

17:32

reasonably priced walkie-talkies that are for internal building communications

17:38

i ordered 200 and i'm disbursing them amongst the schools with the goal over the next couple years of having a

17:43

walkie-talkie available for each room in every school if needed now teachers may

17:48

not be having these all of the time but in an emergency situation i expect that my principals will have some kind of

17:54

incident command where they tell a guidance counselor and a secretary and their vice principal you hand out these

18:00

walkie-talkies to these rooms you hand out these walkie-talkies to these rooms etc so that if all communications go

18:06

down within minutes we have a way to communicate with everybody and we'll make sure that everybody isn't on the same channel because if you've ever used

18:12

a walkie-talkie and if i got 80 people on channel one in on the walkie-talkie and you press the button

18:17

well you just took out all 79 other walkie-talkies because you can only speak and listen to one person so if you

18:23

have 10 people on one channel and 10 people on another channel and 10 people on another channel you can be communicating with each other up the up

18:29

the chain of command so that's something that's going to be worked on this year so i want the public to know that if our

18:35

pa system goes down and if our phone system goes down we are still going to have ways to communicate in the event of

18:40

an emergency i'm going to really oversimplify building based teams that we have in  
18:46

here that are going to help out with all emergency type situations we have crisis teams  
which are what you traditionally

18:53

think of these are the people who will be debriefing after emergency drills if there's a  
crisis in the building these

18:59

are the people who are activated and they oversee the drilling in emergency situations  
there is some overlap in

19:04

these teams some people will serve in multiple roles we are putting together threat  
assessment teams to identify students of

19:10

concern assess them and see what next steps may be able to take with them

19:16

i don't want to recount stories in the media or or throughout this country we know  
sometimes there are troubled

19:21

students who have caused uh damage in our schools we want to be able to make sure  
that we attend to those and deal

19:28

with those we also have a school safety and climate teams this addresses climate  
issues such

19:33

as harassment intimidation and bullying which sometimes can lead to dangerous  
situations so we have all three of these

19:39

teams active during the course of this year uh all with a little bit of a different role but all  
focused on school

19:44

safety and security if you're really interested i'm going to make this uh presentation  
available on

19:50

our website for anybody to look so while i oversimplified that if you want to look at more  
specifically what a crisis

19:56

team does and who is on that we have that on here too i'm not going to read that to you  
because it'll be available

20:01

to you and i know you can uh you can read through that when it comes to the threat  
assessment teams what i wanted to point out

20:08

is obviously much more detailed for you to take a look at it's new this was signed into  
law on uh august 1st

20:16

uh so just a couple of weeks ago and just to show you sometimes in dealing with the state the state said uh

20:22

it is implemented immediately for the next full school year we're like okay you passed a law on august 1st

20:27

immediately for the next we've got to get all this training and we have to do that well through translation eventually we

20:34

learned that the next full school year means next july 1st but i am very happy to say that dr tate has been one of the

20:41

leaders along with some other people uh in our administrative team and our other staff members that we started putting

20:46

together a threat assessment team this past spring before it was a law we're also not putting it off because it's not

20:52

doesn't need to be implemented till next year we are moving forward with this to have threat assessment teams in our

20:57

school to make sure that students who need help or maybe need some other kind of resource we'll have access to that

21:04

and we'll be talking about that with our staff over time again this will be available to you school safety and climate teams are

21:11

required by state code again these are people who are anti-bullying specialists who

21:16

need to look at building wide practices uh speaking of things like inclusivity does every student feel like they are

21:22

involved do we have people who feel like they are outsiders who are being picked on we need to make sure that all

21:28

students feel comfortable and safe so again without going into extreme detail i want to let you know we have three

21:34

different uh teams at our schools all with a different charge but all who are somehow connected to

21:40

school safety and security and they will be implemented there this year we're also a member of the burlington

21:46

county school crisis response team this is a service that some of our staff

21:51

members participate on and if there is something um involving a tragedy at a  
21:57

school for any reason we don't only mobilize our staff members to deal with students  
who may be in crisis we can

22:04

mobilize uh resources throughout the county to get them over here now this is  
something that many some staff members may not

22:11

know we're a part of this and some members of the public may not know but i want to let  
you know in addition to our

22:16

mental health professionals who can help students we have access to the burlington  
county schools crisis response team and again this will all be

22:23

available for the for the public to look at a little bit deeper one of the things i'm really  
proud about

22:29

uh so far this summer is when i reached out to uh police chief walzac i'd ask if he has  
any if he's had any new police

22:35

officers in the uh in the squad over the past couple years and apparently he has  
because what i have had is i've had our

22:41

school resource officer brian wright uh take them on a tour throughout the buildings you  
can see here that they've

22:47

been out of well they've been right there because we have whams right there they've  
been a baker in the high school and we are rotating all of our local pd

22:55

who are relatively new to the force uh to walk throughs in our schools this is outside of  
school hours you know right

23:01

now we're doing it in the summer so they become more familiar with the building so that  
if they ever needed to respond

23:06

to an emergency event in a building it's not the first time they've been there they at least  
will have some kind of familiarity

23:13

along the lines of law enforcement i've been in touch with the new jersey regional  
operations and intelligence center

23:19

they are a group of offshoot of the new jersey state police but they also work

23:25

with the office of homeland security and preparedness and they are willing to come out  
at no cost to the district for

23:30

100 free to come and assess our buildings to see safety and security

23:36

threats and make not threats necessarily potential issues there's no direct threats

23:42

and give us a list of recommendations these recommendations can then become part of our budgetary process they will

23:48

recommend everything they're looking at it from a law enforcement perspective and they'll recommend hey you can do all

23:54

of this stuff but rather than us just take hit or miss hey i think we should put this kind of lock over there i think

23:59

we should we should close these doors during these certain times why not bring in the professionals who do this on a

24:04

regular basis especially since i made contact with them and this is a free service a lot of times school districts

24:10

will contract with an outside private uh firm who will come in and will charge you an arm and a leg and give you some

24:16

recommendations of things that aren't necessarily something that you may want to do the roic has no financial interest

24:23

other than helping us out and they're even willing to train morristown police department members to do the kind of

24:29

work that they do the first step in this will be that my principals will all have to submit a self-assessment of what they

24:34

see in their buildings to the roic uh and then that will start and i'm happy to say that our first roic uh walk i'm

24:42

not gonna say which building right now uh but it's gonna be on thursday midday so it's my hope that over the next

24:47

couple months we have an assessment from the roic for all of our buildings so i think that's pretty big too

24:53

lastly one of the things that i want to stress too is we are again

24:58

bringing in the stop it anonymous reporting app i again want to say too and looking to be fiscally responsible for the district

25:06

this is at zero cost to the district our insurance carrier is picking it up because quite frankly it makes us safer

25:12

and they want us to be using it too right now the stop it app is an anonymous way that a student a

25:18

parent a teacher can report something that they see and then it goes through a chain of

25:24

command right now i am we're going through administrative training on this and we're going to roll

25:29

this out to staff upon their return we're going to start to inform the community about this during back to

25:35

school nights and is my hope that we have this operational by october but i love to stat my fingers right now and

25:40

have it ready to go yes i would but it does take time to do things correctly i'd rather take my time and get it done

25:46

right than roll it out in a sloppy manner and essentially what the stop it app is it's an

25:52

anonymous reporting system someone sees uh another student post a picture of of a

25:58

weapon on social media and doesn't know what to do you know i don't do i talk to account do

26:05

i do do i do this do i do that they can go in the stop it app they they don't have to say who they are and they could

26:10

say hey i saw this on social media and i'm concerned about this and and one of two things is going to happen if it

26:16

happens during the hours that we set for our administrative team let's just make making this up off the top of my head

26:22

from seven to five um our administrators will get like an immediate notification that hey this is going on this has been

26:28

reported and what can happen then sorry skip that what can happen then is in the

26:33

app and on a computer they can dialogue with this anonymous person back and forth

26:39

what did you see what's going on i mean the person can reveal who they are too um but can can get to some help

26:46



so we know that these things happen easy question is well what happens after my administrators go home or are in bed

26:53

uh what happens when it's a weekend or it's the summer the stop it app has an incident response

26:59

center 24 7 365 days a year if it's outside of the

27:04

hours we set where our administration is notified the notification goes to them

27:09

and if it's a threat of a serious nature they have signed a memorandum of understanding with morristown police

27:15

department and they will contact the morristown police department for anything that they think is an imminent threat uh just like any concerned

27:21

citizen would but the stop it app will will do that so it doesn't just sit there and wait until an administrator

27:27

you know checks back in on monday the administrator can also be notified but they are not you know at one o'clock in

27:32

the morning expected to be monitoring the stop it app so 24 7 365 days a year

27:39

then if it is something of perhaps a lesser nature a bullying issue something that is a code of conduct violation

27:46

the incident response center will not send that to the police but we'll have that forwarded to the administrator for

27:52

when they're back in working hours to address it from there if it escalates for whatever reason it can get directly

27:57

in contact with that administrator but i don't have an expectation that my administrators are on the clock 24 7

28:03

monitoring this just in case these people are at their incident response center so again just to give

28:09

you a little a little sense of this i'm oversimplifying it because i'm taking much longer than i normally do

28:15

for my superintendent's report there's uh we can get it on phones we can also

28:20

through technology push it out to our students one to one devices i'm not sure every one to one device mr aries so i

28:25

don't want to speak okay we can push it out to every one to one device but we know that most of our older kids carry

28:31

around their phones i have the stop it app on my phone so if somebody has their phone

28:36

they can uh put in you know i saw this happening it goes to emergency monitoring which goes

28:42

through incident management and then can have a two-way anonymous chat either with emergency monitoring or one of our

28:48

administrators until we get that job done um and anything that is of a serious nature we certainly could

28:53

escalate uh to the police so i want to let you know a couple things uh if there's any takeaways that you have from

28:59

the safety and security we're improving our drilling we're increasing our leadership capacity

29:04

by having more school safety specialists we are improving our internal communications by making sure we have a

29:10

working pa systems of process to access our phones and walkie-talkies we have three different teams of people who can

29:17

respond to situations we work with the burlington county crisis response team we have our police coming through our

29:23

schools we have the roics coming to assess our schools and give us a report that this board can include as part of

29:29

its budget and we're going to be rolling out the stop it app where students parents or staff can report anything of

29:35

a critical nature these aren't the only things that we're doing for school safety and security but what i hope you

29:41

can respect uh if you really want school safety and security is i'm not going to tell you every single thing that we are

29:47

doing in the realm of school safety and security but a lot of this is going to be delivered this year so we're making

29:53

sure we're making schools that very safe and comfortable place where outstanding education can take place

29:59

and that's my promise to you moving forward i would be happy to entertain any questions from the board

30:05

at this time if we do have any but for the members of the public i know i went through that quickly it will be posted

30:11

on the website it will go out with my superintendent's message it will be available for you to look through

30:19

hey thank you mr volpe any questions or comments

30:26

yes sure um i just first wanted to say thank you

30:32

very much for this comprehensive review and for um just

30:37

making this a priority for our schools i think all of us can appreciate that um and

30:43

it's it's it was very comprehensive and very much appreciated um i think the

30:48

stop it app is a fantastic idea i do see potential for abuse

30:55

um and so i'm just wondering what type of experience we know about that other districts have had and what

31:02

guard rails we can put around it um to avoid that type of abuse as much

31:07

as possible that's a very very good question um a couple of things what the stop it app

31:14

when they gave us our initial administrative training in my previous experience too in helping bring this into another school district is when it

31:20

was rolled out there were a series of incidents hey kids have a

31:26

new app a new toy and i can't tell you how many times something was reported that i didn't get enough pepperoni on my

31:32

pizza at school and i want somebody to be dealing with this unfortunately in our world we even hear sometimes people

31:38

make ridiculous 9-1-1 calls like that so to to answer your question most succinctly what i think we need to do

31:44

with our students is really educate them as to why this is used and what the importance of it is do i expect that

31:50

there's going to be some funny business going on in the beginning probably

31:56

but what stop it has shown us through the data that they have is over time that wanes very quickly it's like a new

32:01

toy to some people at first and then it goes uh it goes back to what its original intent was for but i want to

32:07

stress to our students that um it's not a toy and certainly if

32:12

someone said something um you know that's a complete fabrication uh there

32:18

there are ways that we could try to figure out who that person was um but

32:23

it's generally designed to be an anonymous reporting app so the more we educate the students about this the better

32:35

you're good oh that turned green you're good now thank you so much i really appreciate this i know you said you're going to put it on the website can you

32:41

also consider a different uh putting on our social media or doing one of your email superintendents so that you know

32:47

some of the parents that aren't checking the website yep i'm probably going to do all that but those are good ideas thank you

32:56

my my only comment was um and again thank you very much for for all the information it was about the drilling

33:02

and just being mindful of the double-edged sword in terms of the cost of increased

33:10

drilling especially for certain populations of kids um so i don't have

33:15

an answer or what i would do i just i'm very mindful of of that cost in addition to the obvious

33:23

benefits yeah i think i think it's very important that we're developmentally appropriate but that we use common

33:29

language and that's what's important in that training that i talked about is there there's nothing that we're putting

33:35

in there that's scary although the fact that we're drilling could be scary for some students particularly at certain

33:41

ages so we want to have common plain language that is not scary and my principles need to make sure that we're

33:46

doing things in a developmentally appropriate manner which uh i don't have any doubt that we will be to your one

33:52

comment mark about doing more drilling we actually aren't doing more drilling i just want to to make that clear we're

33:57

doing what's required we're doing one uh fire drill a month and we're also doing one emergency drill a month the

34:02

difference this year is we already have them set we know which is going to be which month you you know my principals don't have to scramble what are we doing

34:08

like it's already set for the year and the second thing that's a big change in the drilling is that our crisis teams

34:13

are going to immediately re immediately debrief afterwards so if there was a problem during the lockout hey because

34:20

this door didn't lock we're going to find out about that immediately if during an evacuation hey you know what

34:25

these fire doors didn't close or something fell over and we had to go a different way and we're not aware of

34:31

that those are the things that we're going to get immediate information for that we can address which typically

34:36

happened like okay we had a drill there were some problems talk about the next faculty meeting like see what's going on no we want to deal with this right now

34:42

so it doesn't happen again so that's a big change no thanks for clarifying i definitely got the impression that

34:48

they'll be increased but okay so i think that that last point is a

34:54

good one the immediate debriefing um you know hopefully that will allow you

34:59

to find those things so you're not finding them at the wrong time right but i could think of something like you know

35:04

the walkie-talkies are great and i know they're tertiary systems however

35:10

um when you do go to that and they've been sitting for a while you know kind of figure out the battery isn't working

35:15

then it's probably not the best time so you know i guess you're already thinking ahead to all those things like

35:21

you know how do we replace batteries on a regular basis and or test them at least

35:26

um so yeah exactly and and to be perfectly honest too i am no well let's

35:32

put it this way i'm a school safety specialist as designated by the state but i am not a school safety expert by

35:37

any degree and what i really like too and i'm going to be focusing on some of my comments um at convocation this year

35:44

is how we collectively work together as a team yeah i have ideas so do you people so do you people and

35:49

i'm gonna listen to everybody who's got an idea uh and see if we can make improvements in any way shape or form

35:56

these are some ideas that came from me from a whole bunch of different avenues so if we need we have other things that

36:01

that come up along the way i'm more than willing to to listen and assume somebody's right and check out

36:07

what we can do hey any other comments questions go ahead

36:13

just one more question you mentioned at the outset you drew the distinction between physical safety which this was

36:19

very much importantly focused on and i thought it was great but you also mentioned psychological safety and when

36:25

you're talking about the app for example stop it a big piece of it is kids feeling comfortable even though it's

36:31

anonymous and that being in that psychologically safe space to actually report something when they see it i know

36:37

that you have a lot of passion around psychological safety and you have some goals in the appendix of the agenda

36:43

around inclusion is there plans to do anything to focus on psychological safety within the student body and

36:50

perhaps with the staff to foster that culture of psychological safety sure

36:55

there's multiple that i'm not i'm not going to be able to give you specifics right now but yes that certainly is a goal of ours and one of the things too

37:01

that i'm pointing out about the school safety and climate teams we we do have teams at our buildings now again i don't

37:07

want to it it explains it but it doesn't excuse it and i use that all the time kova got in the way of a whole lot of

37:14

things and there may have been very active school safety and climate teams going on in all of our buildings looking at this all the time but what i want to

37:20

do is i want to make sure that i'm on top of that for verification and that that is important to us that people are

37:26

feeling included and that we are doing what we're supposed to legally be doing by looking into these things surveying

37:31

our our staff and students and making adjustments accordingly so so yes that is that is very important to me

37:37

and should become part of our typical processes and procedures

37:43

again the only thing that i would like to say whether it's my pie in the sky ideas about how to recruit and retain

37:49

new teachers or it's about school safety and security i would love to be able to snap my fingers and say yes we can get

37:55

it done all these things take time and i appreciate your patience with that and i appreciate you believing in my

38:00

leadership so that we can make these things uh come to fruition so if there's no other questions i know i've spoken in

38:07

a whole lot longer than the board president did so i'll i'll take my seat at this time and just thank you for your

38:12

support thank you mr volpe definitely appreciate you prioritizing the security and safety

38:18

of our students okay

38:26

don't see any students to give board student board reports so we will move

38:32

past that uh did any committees meet are there any committee reports

38:38

i didn't think so i know maybe you guys snuck around and did it on your own just because you missed each other

38:44

all right we'll move past that one all right we're to our first uh public

38:50

comment section so as usual with uh public comment we please ask that you come up to the

38:56

microphone state your name and as much of your address as you're comfortable with you'll have up to three minutes to speak

39:03

it's not necessarily a question and answer period um but please we're eager to hear your input as we

39:10

listen and make decisions and and take action in our board meeting please don't address any individual

39:16

board members and uh be respectful when you make your public comment and uh this

39:22

first one is about uh agenda items so if there's anybody who'd like to make a

39:27

comment about public agenda items you can do that in this period so i'll ask for a motion to open

39:33

public comment on agenda items second all in favor

39:40

aye me opposed extensions okay thank you

39:50

good evening everyone billy danielle thomas 539

39:56

north church street happy to see everyone

40:03

i hope everyone's having a great summer in light of the statewide teacher

40:09

shortage perhaps the district might consider special initiatives such as the men of color hope achievers

40:16

also known as moca out of rowan university which focuses on recruiting

40:22

preparing supporting and retaining males of color to earn certification through an



40:28

alternate route program the mocha program provides placements for men of color to be classroom teachers in

40:35

new jersey the mocha program aims to attract 25 men of color

40:40

into the college of education's alternate route program aspire to teach

40:45

moca is funded through a 475 000

40:50

dollar grant from the new jersey department of education and i might add that the benefits of

40:57

participating in this or a similar program would be of twofold and also addressing the district's goals

41:05

towards diversity equity and inclusion one of the districts that i've been

41:10

working with this summer which is bridgeton is actively participating and

41:16

that information was shared with me by a colleague so i thought it would be beneficial for our district to be aware

41:23

of thank you thank you for your comments

41:36

okay would anyone else like an opportunity to speak in this public comment period

41:43

right i think we're good um i'll entertain a motion to close public comment

41:49

so moved thank you second all in favor

41:55

aye any opposed abstentions okay

42:00

move it on all right um so now we are in the reports the board

42:07

section uh we have reports uh under letter a from the business administrator board secretary

42:13

um let's see the financial reports treasurer's report cafeteria report

42:20

the approval of budget transfers and the approval of bills total of 13 million 167 493 dollars and

42:27

39 cents um for the bills uh so approval of mo of

42:32

items one through five i'll entertain motion to approve those items

42:39

all right any questions comments

42:44

okay hearing and seeing none um all in favor hi

42:50

any opposed extensions

42:56

okay moving on uh letter nine uh

43:02

letter a the 20 22 23 revised school calendar letter b

43:08

we're not going to include that we're removing that right now the superintendent's goals are

43:14

listed in the agenda attachments and those are available for the public to review

43:20

the board is going to take some more time to look at those and talk about that before bringing it back potentially for a

43:26

discussion at a board meeting so just uh let's see so letter a we'll go

43:33

back to that one uh the revised school calendar i'll entertain a motion to approve that

43:38

calendar okay thank you any questions or comments about the calendar

43:53

i would um ask the committee moving forward i do think there needs to be more discussion about

43:58

how our calendar can um you know probably look to have that day off if you know with labor day if it's late um

44:15

so thanks for that let me i'll mention uh i apologize lauren i saw your email and

44:21

didn't get a chance to get back to you um when that was discussed and actually i was of the same mind of advocating for

44:28

that um if i could kind of put her on the spot uh dr benton

44:34

or mr volpe if one of you wants to speak to kind of the thought process behind that because

44:39

it was a deliberate choice

44:48

um so i think part of the conversation um that we had was

44:53

that it was also an opportunity on that day to [Music]

44:59

create education and instruction around june 19th um

45:04

within maybe not just that day and if you know the conflict i think is that it happens right usually within the last

45:11

couple of days of school and so all of the end-of-school activities are kind of

45:17

competing with that one day and so um we put forward an idea that i think we need

45:23

to develop about how we could incorporate um within you know the appropriate curricula social

45:29

studies within our sel curricula within our character development curricula our

45:36

english you know like you could do it across several curriculum over the course of per instead of just one day

45:42

but several weeks so that it is not this kind of standalone it's you know it's a holiday that has a lot of historical

45:48

connections um as well as opportunities to to you know discuss things that have

45:54

happened and how we treat each other and just just a whole you know it's a very rich topic so i think that that was one

46:00

of the things that we did consider um and i know that you know mr weeks also

46:06

brought up kind of an another thought was that there it has um when you kind of look across

46:12

the country it also has been a day for community celebration um and so i think we would want to strike a balance

46:18

between that um i know this year um just personally my family there were

46:24

celebrations throughout that whole weekend um so i think we can find strike a balance um i know that a lot of our

46:30

clubs and activity uh you know and groups um also participate in many

46:36

community you know day celebrations and i think it would be an opportunity for that as well

46:41

um where morristown could represent um well within the community as well

46:46

yes absolutely yeah dr ben uh articulated that perfectly what our thoughts were but  
46:52  
also to the board members points um you know this is something that we can revisit into  
the future and i think we  
46:58  
have a good plan uh to celebrate it to acknowledge it uh to stress the importance of it  
but at some point if  
47:05  
it's more um befitting of this community more respectful of the day that we recognize  
47:10  
it as a day that you know we don't have school we can do that too so all options  
47:15  
are on the table but i would just want to make it clear that what dr benton said uh you  
know so clearly there was  
47:21  
that we do intend to recognize that day and its importance and in the future maybe  
there's a  
47:27  
different way that we do that so all options are on the table  
47:34  
so thank you and that's i think  
47:42  
and that's what i appreciate i think that's what you know more not looking so much at  
this year because i also know  
47:48  
with the federal holiday that was kind of just enacted but moving forward looking at how  
the community overall you  
47:55  
know looks to kind of you know mark that day so thank you  
48:01  
yes and just kind of come back on that i was of a similar mind lauren that this  
48:07  
you know could be a day for for students to celebrate with their families or participate in  
community celebrations  
48:13  
but i was also compelled by the idea that as a learning institution we could help set that  
understanding set those  
48:18  
norms um and and further that goal so that's how i evolved on it  
48:27  
okay any other comments or questions about the calendar  
48:32  
okay um so we have a motion uh all in favor  
48:38  
aye any opposed extensions okay thank you all right as i mentioned  
48:45

before we're skipping uh b for now so the next section is educational

48:50

programs numbers 1 through 5.

48:57

so we'll entertain a motion to approve those five items

49:06

okay thank you any questions or comments about any of these

49:15

nope okay uh all in favor aye any opposed

49:20

extensions hey thank you all right moving on letter d

49:25

uh items one through

49:30

11. okay and there are several in there so we'll entertain a motion to approve

49:37

items one through 11. second

49:43

thank you any comments or questions that dig deeper into any of these

49:51

okay all right all in favor aye

49:57

any opposed extensions okay thanks moving on uh letter e employee

50:04

relations um this one one through twenty seven i'm glad i set the precedent of not reading all these

50:09

anymore um it's kind of on purpose so items 1 through 27 i'll entertain a

50:16

motion to approve all of these yes

50:23

and which one did we amend executive [Music]

50:33

okay so as mr heiser noted uh the amendment we made an executive

50:42

okay thank you second all right

50:47

um any questions or comments and i'll start by just i don't know mr volvo do you want to

50:53

comment or mr heiser about why we have so many here just to give some context

51:00

sure you can have that one one of the reasons why we have such a long list in our essential human

51:07

resources portion right here is that uh the contract was thankfully ratified um

51:13

and it was ratified after our june meeting where we reappointed everyone for the following school year so

51:20

everybody in june was appointed at their old salaries before the contract was ratified and to make sure my teachers

51:27

are getting teachers and staff members are getting paid what they should be getting paid this year uh we had to

51:32

re-list all of that and that is one two three four five six seven eight nine that is like 10 items of of the 27 or

51:40

simply reappointments of something we did already last year but now with the new salaries and the other things are

51:46

more typical thank you not only do we think that was

51:51

important we thought it was important to have that context there so everybody knows um what's going on

51:57

so all right any other comments or questions mr heiser could you please do a roll

52:03

call vote dr alberti mrs arcara burns yes

52:09

miss fowls macaluso yeah miss mikopoulos

52:14

yes mrs morano mr romano yeah mr villanueva

52:20

yes dr schneider yes mr weeks yes thank you

52:27

hey thank you motion carries okay now we're to the informational

52:32

uh section um under letter a old business i believe we do have one thing

52:40

who's do i mention that or okay

52:46

yeah under old business it was accidentally removed by me during our agenda review but we should have uh a

52:51

motion to affirm the superintendent's finding of a hib for item ues number 14. again this is to

52:58

affirm the superintendent's uh decision on this is that a roll call vote

53:08

i just want to clarify something i think you said confirm the superintendent's finding of

53:16

the firm of ahib yeah

53:21

okay yeah the hip finding thank you mr villanueva the hip finding was non-hip

53:26

so if for the the purposes of our uh executive session discussion if you are

53:32

voting to affirm my finding in this hib situation

53:38

okay thank of the you as reported

53:43

thank you thank you for calling me back on that okay

53:49

so uh i'll entertain a motion for that so moved

53:55

okay any other comments or questions okay is this a roll call vote i don't

54:01

believe we have to do that okay all right so then uh all in favor

54:06

aye any opposed abstentions

54:12

i have understanding okay one objection seven in favor is that correct

54:22

okay thank you any other old business okay any new business

54:31

nope okay we are to our second public comment period this is uh for agenda items that

54:37

may not necessarily be on the agenda same parameters as before i'll entertain

54:42

a motion to open public comment thank you

54:49

second thank you all in favor

54:55

aye opposed abstentions thank you all right uh would anybody like to

55:00

comment okay i'm not going to linger on that one uh entertain a motion to close public

55:07

comment all right thank you all in favor aye any opposed extensions okay

55:13

all right uh is there anything else for the good of the order [Music]

55:19

uh miss uh president i don't know if it necessarily is gonna be order but um i just i did

wanna

55:25

um before the school year starts uh as the liaison to speak i really just wanted to remind

55:31

everybody that the first meeting is september 22nd it's at 9 30 um and it is scheduled to be in the star

55:38

center which is by attached to the high school or it'll be online and a zoom link will be available

55:44

if you are interested in joining speak i would encourage you to go on the facebook page

55:51

and find contact info it's a great organization find a lot of resources for

55:57

yourself as a parent of a child with special needs and also as

56:03

well an advocate for them and a really great support system um

56:08

and we always have dr tate at our meetings which is a great resource so i would encourage everyone to come out for it if

56:16

you're interested that's it okay thank you mr sakara burns anybody

56:23

else for the good of the order okay hearing nothing else entertain a

56:29

motion for adjournment removed right all in favor

56:36

aye opposed extensions all right we're all good thank you

56:46

you