

# **KNOWLTON TOWNSHIP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

## **MEETING MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING – March 13, 2023**

### ***Notice of Meeting***

The New Jersey Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend the meetings of, public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Knowlton Township Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted with The Express-Times and The Daily Record and distributed to the Knowlton Township Elementary School, the Delaware Post Office, and the Knowlton Township Municipal Building.

### ***Call to Order***

Mrs. Smith called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

### ***Flag Salute***

Mrs. Smith invited everyone to join her in the flag salute.

### ***Roll Call***

Present: Mrs. Rhonda Moritz, Mrs. Tammy Smith, Mr. Todd Spain (6:49 pm), Mrs. Alison Stiehl, & Mrs. Ronni Wittreich.

Absent: Mr. Matthew Baley & Mrs. Dawn Bates.

Others: Mrs. Jeannine DeFalco, Superintendent, Mr. Michael Brennan, Business Administrator, Mrs. Dana Carroll, Vice Principal, Teachers, Students, & Public.

### ***Mission Statement***

We are committed to provide an engaging, comprehensive education aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in a healthy, safe and nurturing environment in which all students are encouraged to be critical thinkers and self advocates. Instilling a passion for learning will inspire and guide students to become responsible and compassionate citizens in a constantly changing world. Students have the opportunity to achieve their maximum academic potential both here and in their future education while developing confidence, competence, and character.

### ***Correspondence***

None.

### ***Public Participation***

Public participation shall be governed by BOE Policy 1120.1 Public Participation in Board Meetings. Public comments are invited on all matters pertaining to the school district. All participants shall be given three (3) minutes to speak and shall state their name, place of residence, and group affiliation, if appropriate. The Board uses the public comment period as an opportunity to listen to citizen concerns, but please be aware that not all issues brought to a board meeting will be resolved this evening; rather, the Board will, in appropriate cases, delegate the authority to investigate the matter to the Superintendent or their designee.

Please let the record reflect that the BOE does not endorse your comments nor will the BOE be held liable for comments you make about a staff member, or other person, which the staff member, or other person, may consider defamatory and/or libelous, as that individual retains all rights to pursue any legal remedies against you.

Mrs. Kristin Baier spoke about wanting the school district to have a parent paid Preschool.

### ***Superintendent's Report***

Mrs. DeFalco gave the following report:

\* QSAC (Quality Single Accountability Continuum) monitoring took place on Wednesday, March 8th. The Warren County Department was on site on this date to meet with some of the district QSAC committee, tour the classrooms and building and review the different components of the monitoring. Some of the documentation was provided prior to the on-site visit and some items were requested the day of the visit. We should expect the scores to be released shortly.

\* There will be a Sustainable Jersey for Schools ceremony on March 29th to recognize those who applied for the NJEA grants. They will be publicizing the districts who were chosen to receive the \$2000 and \$10000 grants at this time. Allison Bickhardt and I will be attending the luncheon and will report back the following day on if we were chosen. We applied for both a \$2000 and a \$10000 grant. Districts do not receive both.

\* Our Green Team is hard at work examining how we can achieve the silver designation level this round. We need under 150 points to secure it.

\* On the agenda this evening you will see a motion to approve the submission of a grant application. All NJ districts received a Notice of Grant Opportunity with the goal of funding locally focused climate awareness initiatives which design, demonstrate, and /or deploy climate awareness education curricula, activities, practices or strategies based on the NJSLS. If awarded fully, we would receive \$6,660. I will update once I hear if some or all parts of the grant were funded.

\* Dana and I have continued to examine the feasibility of offering tuition based preschool for 23-24. We have been working on how we could accommodate running AM and PM sessions again that are a combination of both regular education and special education students. Interest in the program has increased, so therefore we feel it is important to reexamine. We are positive about the process but still examining the feasibility of it based on staffing, internal schedules throughout the building and budget constraints. We hope to have a final determination by the end of this month.

\* Kudos to Mrs. Allison Bickhardt for getting her Donors Choose request funded. Her request was for a new incubator for the classroom. It was funded very quickly by Kilts Farm and a Knowlton Family.

### ***Vice Principal's Report/Knowlton Knight Presentations***

Mrs. Carroll gave the following report:

- \* Read Across America Week was 2 weeks ago. Mrs. Reber had author Jason Patterson in to present to the students and a book signing. The students also participated with One Book One School with the book *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane*. All families received a copy courtesy of the PTA.
- \* On Friday, the 10th, we conduct front evacuation bus drills.
- \* We currently have 25 kindergarteners registered for kdg.
- \* I have completed the District Test Coordinator Training for the upcoming NJSLA testing in May.
- \* We are scheduled for our infrastructure trial on March 23rd to test our wi-fi capabilities for testing.
- \* I met with Tina Ritchie, the Dean of Students at NW, and Colleen Silvestri, the principal from Blairstown. The purpose of our meeting was to discuss behavioral concerns NW is currently having in comparison with each of the elementary schools. We also discussed our discipline policies.

### ***Presentations – Knowlton Knights & Spelling Bee Winners***

#### ***Knowlton Knight Awards, Mrs. Carroll***

Mrs. Carroll presented a citizenship awards to Ethan Clark and Stella Krieger. Congratulations to Ethan & Stella. Great job!

#### ***Spelling Bee Winners, Mrs. Carroll***

Mrs. Carroll recognized Alessandra Suarez as our spelling bee winner. Lucy Pearson was our runner-up. Congratulations to Alessandra & Lucy. Great job!

### ***Board Secretary's Report***

Mr. Brennan gave the following report:

- \* NJSBA board census was updated to reflect our new board structure post our January 5<sup>th</sup> reorganization meeting.
- \* A reminder to please complete your 2023 School Ethics Personal/Relative & Financial Disclosure Statements as soon as possible.
- \* For 2022 tax year, 1099s (Misc. Income) were compiled and sent out to individuals and our vendors.
- \* Completed a 2022 tax levy receipt confirmation form from the auditing firm (Nisivoccia) for Knowlton Township.

#### **Facilities:**

See Facility Committee notes.

## ***Board President's Report***

Mrs. Smith gave the following report:

\* Recently Enacted Legislation (Signed Bills): Eliminating edTPA Requirement for Certification (P.L.2022, c.129) – State prohibited from requiring completion of a Commissioner-approved performance-based assessment (including edTPA) for certification. Responsibility for designating a performance assessment shifted to EPPs, beginning with spring 2024 completers

\* Information Literacy Instruction (P.L.2022, c.138) – Information Literacy defined as “set of skills that enables an individual to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy”. Requires school districts to incorporate instruction on information literacy in appropriate place in K-12 curriculum as part of NJSLS. Requires NJDOE to develop information literacy standards in the next update of NJSLS.

\* Signed Bills: Gun Safety – Additional Restrictions on Concealed Carry (P.L.2022, c.131) Establishes a list of “sensitive places” where concealed carry is not permissible (with some exceptions for certain law enforcement or private security guards), including but not limited to schools and school buses. • Longstanding law already made it a third degree crime to knowingly carry any firearm on school grounds without written authorization of the governing officer. This new law builds on those protections. Expands ineligibility for a carry permit to include persons with an outstanding arrest warrant for an indictable offense, persons subject to certain restraining orders, and other groups

\* \$14 Million Federal Grant for Youth Mental Health – On Jan 11, NJDOE announced that it received a \$14 million five-year federal “School Based Mental Health Services Grant.” Funding will be used to expand the number of and diversify psychologists, counselors, and social workers in New Jersey schools with the greatest need – \$3.2 million in the first year; at least \$2.7 million annually over next four years. New Jersey will match with \$1 million annually in State funds. – Funds will be distributed via a competitive grant targeting communities with “higher levels of poverty and the greatest need.”

\* Academic Recovery Initiatives – New Jersey Partnership for Student Success: NJDOE effort to recruit, train, screen, and support volunteers to provide tutoring, mentorship, student success coaching, wraparound service coordination, and postsecondary transition coaching. Goal is to recruit 5,000 volunteers. Funding Opportunities:  
At least \$10 million for a statewide High Impact Tutoring Program  
\$2 million Reading Acceleration Professional Integrated Development (RAPID) program  
\$3 million for literacy PD in upper elementary grades

\* Upcoming Program Highlights NJSBA will be hosting a School Finance Conference on Wednesday, March 1, 2023, at the Conference Center at Mercer County Community College. Registration is now open.

\* New Board Member Orientation Weekend - The next New Board Member Orientation weekend will take place on March 10 through March 12 at the Crowne Plaza Princeton Conference Center.

\* Upcoming Webinars - NJSBA has a slate of engaging, timely webinars going on the next couple of months with more being added soon. Topics include technology, negotiations, and data. More information can be found by clicking on the “Training” tab on the NJSBA website homepage, then scroll down to “Webinars.”

\* Spring Training Programs – Planning for NJSBA’s spring one-day conferences has begun. All programs will be held in-person, with the exception of the Spring Symposium, which will be virtual.

Finance Conference – March 1

Spring Symposium – April 25

Leadership Conference – May 17

School Public Relations Conference – June 2

School Safety and Security – June 9

### ***Committee Reports***

Community Outreach report:

\* None.

Mr. Brennan provided the following Facilities report:

\*Boiler: Jason Mazzer Plumbing & Heating installed a new burner motor in boiler #1. Repair is complete and boiler is once again functioning properly.

\* Fire Inspection Follow up: Following our first fire inspection from the State of NJ on January 10<sup>th</sup>, our district was been completing the items Mr. Hayes requested be addressed. They include signage, relocation of items, fire retardant material in ceiling, ceiling tiles above freezer, and East Wing emergency sign (Wire’s Electric repair completed).

\*Grease & Septic Tanks: I contacted Russell Reid to request a pump out of our grease tank in the kitchen as well as cleanout of our district’s septic tanks.

\*Review of Administrative Meeting: We reviewed the facility items that Mrs. DeFalco asked about at our most recent administrative meeting. These items included OT for installation of Smart boards, modular door repair, and ladies staff bathroom upgrades.

Mrs. Smith provided the following Finance report:

\*Provided a financial overview of the budget.

Mrs. Wittreich provided the following Policy report:

\* Provided an update on the policy changes up for approval at tonight’s meeting

Mrs. Stiehl provided the following Instructional report:

\* Incoming KDG is 25 students

\* Update to move forward with Wonders for new reading program for 23-24

\* One book, one school

\* Field Trip discussion

## MOTIONS

### ***1. 2023-2024 Preliminary Budget Adoption***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Stiehl and carried unanimously by roll call vote to submit the 2023-24 proposed budget to the Warren County Department of Education for review and approval. The proposed budget includes sufficient funds to provide curriculum compliance with N.J.S.A. and N.J.A.C. Title 6 and 6A. The preliminary budget for the 2023/24 school year includes the use of banked cap in the amount of \$242,296. The need for banked cap will be completed by the end of the budget year and will not be deferred or incrementally completed over a longer period of time. The proposed budget includes the following revenues and expenditures:

#### **Revenues:**

##### **General Fund**

Local Tax Levy	\$3,455,105
Tuition	-
Miscellaneous Revenue	18,744
Cap Reserve Interest	300
State Aid	337,872
Budgeted Fund Balance	443,279
Withdrawal from Capital Reserve	150,000
Federal Revenue-Special Projects	74,190
 Total Revenues	 \$4,479,490

#### **Expenditures:**

Fund 10 Transfer to Charter School	131,300
Fund 11 Current Expense	4,123,700
Fund 12 Capital Outlay	150,300
 General Fund Total	 \$4,405,300
Fund 20 Special Revenue	74,190
Total Expenditures	\$4,479,490

### ***2. Mileage Reimbursement***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Moritz and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve the mileage reimbursement at a rate equal to the current OMB circular rate for all contracts pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-7.3 (maximum travel expenditure amount of \$1,500 per employee).

### ***3. SEMI Waiver***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Stiehl and carried unanimously by roll call vote to apply to the Executive County Superintendent for a SEMI Waiver for the 2023-2024 school year based upon the fact that the district will have 10 Medicaid eligible

classified students, based on the revenue projections provided by the Department of Education.

#### ***4. Approve Audit and Management Report***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Stiehl and carried unanimously by roll call vote to accept the 2021-22 Audit and Management Report and the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report:

##### Audit for Year Ending June 30, 2022

<b>Administrative Practices and Procedures</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Financial Planning, Accounting, and Reporting</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>School Purchasing Programs</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>School Food Service</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Student Body Activities</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Application for State School Aid</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Pupil Transportation</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Facilities and Capital Assets</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Follow-up on prior year findings</b>	<b>Not Applicable</b>

#### ***5. Approve Tri-County Behavioral Care Agreement***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Stiehl and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve a contractual agreement between Knowlton Township School District and Tri-County Behavioral Care, LLC for referring and providing School Clearance Assessment services.

#### ***6. Approve Hire***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Moritz and carried unanimously by roll call vote to offer an employment contract to Sandra Johnston as a leave replacement teacher with a salary of \$24,802.40 through the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

#### ***7. Approve Merit Goal***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Moritz and carried unanimously by roll call vote to recognize the designated quantitative Merit Goal #2 for the Superintendent, as stated in the county approval letter dated September 29, 2022 has been achieved and to authorize submission to the Executive County Superintendent for approval and authorization of payment.

#### ***8. Approve Field Trips***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Wittreich and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve the following 2022-2023 field trip contracts.

Q-FT-07	DaVinci Science Center	B&K Dalrymple
Q-FT-08	Imagi Nation	B&K Dalrymple
Q-FT-09	Sandy Hook	Snyder Bus Co.
Q-FT-10	Holocaust Museum	Snyder Bus Co.

#### ***9. Approve Submission of Grant Application***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Wittreich and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve the submission of the available Climate Awareness Education Grant in the amount of \$6,660.00 to the NJDOE.

***10. Approve Preliminary Calendar***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Wittreich and carried unanimously to approve the 2023-2024 preliminary calendar.

***11. Approve Policy 5131.6***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Stiehl and carried unanimously to approve revisions to Policy 5131.6 – Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco.

***12. Approve Policy 5131.7***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Wittreich and carried unanimously to approve revisions to Policy 5131.7 – Weapons and Dangerous Instruments.

***13. Approve Minutes – January 24, 2023***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Wittreich and carried unanimously to approve the Regular Session Minutes of January 24, 2023.

AYES: 5

NOES: 0

ABST: 0

***14. Approve Transfers***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Wittreich and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve the attached 2022-2023 budget line-item transfers for the time period of January 25, 2023 through February 28, 2023 with a total of \$8,535.00 for Fund 11.

***15. Approve Bills***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Moritz and carried unanimously by roll call vote to approve the bills for payment as follows from January 25, 2023 through February 28, 2023 General Fund bill list of \$645,534.43 and Cafeteria Bill \$6,948.44.

***Monthly Certification***

Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(c)3, I certify that no budgetary line item account has been overexpended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(a) as of January 31, 2023 (Policy 6820).

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Board Secretary

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Date

***16. Accept Report of the Secretary and Report of the Treasurer***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Wittreich and carried unanimously to accept the monthly A-148 Secretary's Report for the month ended January 31, 2023 and the A-149 Treasurer's of School Monies Report for the month ended January 31, 2023 in compliance with the NJAC 6A:23A-16.10(c). The Board of Education, after review of the Secretary's monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, certifies that no major account or fund has been overexpended in violation of NJAC 6A:23A-16.10(c).

***Old Business***

None.



***New Business***

None.

***Upcoming Meetings***

Regular Board Meeting, Tuesday, March 28, 2023, 7 pm.

Board Committee Meetings, Monday, April 3, 2023, 6 pm.

***Adjournment***

A motion was made by Mrs. Smith seconded by Mrs. Moritz and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Brennan, MBA  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Approved: