



APPROVED MINUTES

**Tuesday, January 7, 2025
Regular Meeting
7:00 PM
MS/HS Library Presentation Room**

1. Video Conferencing Notice

1.01 Video Conferencing Notice

Shannon Stringer participated via video conference.

2. Proposed Executive Session

2.01 Proposed Executive Session

B. Bass called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

P. Nagarajan was absent.

B. Bass requested a motion to appoint Ken Slentz to serve as clerk pro tem for the executive session.

D. Wood moved and J. Lucasey seconded, that the board appoint K. Slentz as clerk pro tem for the executive session.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

B. Bass requested a motion that the board recess to executive session to discuss the following topics:

1. To discuss the qualifications of candidates for the interim business official position
2. To discuss the employment history of a particular probationary pedagogical employee.

B. Bass requested a motion that the board adjourn the executive session.

Rebecca Hershberg moved and Penny Sullivan-Nunes seconded, that the board move back to public session at 6:52 p.m.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

3. Call to Order - Regular Meeting

B. Bass called the regular meeting to order at 7:06 pm.



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4. Meeting Opening

4.01 Pledge of Allegiance

4.02 Roll Call

Brooke Bass, President; Penny Sullivan-Nunes, Vice President; Jean Lucasey; Shannon Stringer; Darren Wood; Rebecca Hershberg; Kenneth Slentz, Superintendent; Ron Clamser, Jr., Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Facilities, and Operations; Darrell Stinchcomb, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Equity; Elizabeth Saperstein, District Clerk.

Pavithra Nagarajan was absent.

4.03 Acceptance of the Agenda

R. Hershberg moved and D. Wood seconded, that the board accept the January 7, 2025 agenda.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

4.04 Approval of Minutes

J. Lucasey moved and P. Sullivan-Nunes seconded, that the board approve the minutes of the December 10, 2024 meeting.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

5. Citizen Comments

5.01 Notice

The board of education values input from the entire Dobbs Ferry School District community. Although we do not engage in dialogue with the public at our board of education business meetings, we are listening. Members of our school district community may comment on *any matter related to the meeting's approved agenda*. If you wish to address the board, please sign in with the district clerk. Any group or organization wishing to address the board must identify a single spokesperson. Please state your name for the record and keep your remarks to 3 minutes or less. Speakers will conduct themselves in a civil manner and will be ruled out of order for any statement that constitutes a direct threat against officers, employees or students of the school district, or that is obscene. Questions or comments concerning matters that are not on the agenda will be taken under consideration and referred to the superintendent for appropriate action.

None.

6. Correspondence



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The board acknowledged correspondence regarding the senior tax exemption.

7. Announcements

7.01 Private School Transportation Requests

B. Bass read the following announcement:

School bus transportation: Residents of the district whose students will attend a non-public school in 2025-26 and require bus service must submit a request form online by April 1, 2025 (even if placement has not yet been confirmed) to the Ardsley Transportation Department. To be eligible, students must be at least 5 years old, in grades K-12 (not preschool) and the school must be within 15 miles of their home. You must also meet the minimum district mileage requirements. To apply online, visit ardsleyschools.org and click on Departments >Transportation > Transportation To A Non-Public School. Parents should note that a separate request must be submitted for each school being considered. Requests may be withdrawn if a school is not selected, but may not be considered if submitted after the deadline.

The school board has established a firm policy of not considering requests submitted after the deadline.

K. Slentz acknowledged significant accomplishments by two student athletes (varsity basketball):

1. High School senior Ella Moon shot her 100th 3 pointer.
2. High School junior Anthony Ficarrotta scored his 1000th point.

8. Board Committee Reports

8.01 Committee Reports

R. Hershberg reported the following information and updates from the December 12, 2024 meeting of the Board of Education School and Community Relations Committee:

- Potential changes to the student schedule for the 2025-26 school year across all three buildings, and related communications, including K. Slentz's meeting with students for their feedback as well as improvements in the communication process at Springhurst;
- Discussion of next steps for a school public relations audit, now that funding has been secured from New York State to cover the cost of the audit; and
- The committee will meet again in January to discuss the new schedule and again on March 20, 2025 for its next regular meeting.

P. Sullivan-Nunes reported the following information from the December 19, 2024 meeting of the Board of Education Curriculum, Instruction and Equity Committee:

- Update on the K-8 curriculum implementation (Illustrative Math, Bookworms) that will be presented at the January 21, 2025 meeting;
- Discussion of preliminary reading assessments and recommendation that these be included in the aforementioned presentation to the board;
- The Comprehensive ELL Plan (CEEP) was submitted to NYSED on time;
- Overview of the special education plan, to be presented later in tonight's meeting;

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- Overview of the physical education plan including curriculum development next steps;
- Discussion of potential challenges to some elements of the first grade curriculum and the protocols for addressing them;
- Updates on K-12 health curriculum, with anticipated changes to be implemented next school year;
- Discussion on the district's participation in the state regionalization plan, to be presented later in tonight's meeting by K. Slentz; and
- Update on the Springhurst garden program, including intention to integrate the outdoor garden and recycling program into the K-12 curriculum.

K. Slentz clarified the process for parents who wish to address the curriculum.

J. Lucasey reported the following information from the December 18, 2024 meeting of the Board of Education Policy Committee:

- Review and revision of Policy 2342: Agenda Preparation and Dissemination to be presented tonight for a first reading;
- Review of the regional update on cell phone policy and practice indicates that our district's protocols are mostly aligned with other districts' protocols and practices;
- Anticipation of Governor Hochul's plan to take action in January restricting cell phone use in schools;
- Further discussion of Policy 0115 to align with the detailed changes made to regulations for that same policy; and
- Review and revision of Policy 0100: Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity to be presented tonight for a first reading.

Committee minutes are posted on the district website.

9. Superintendent Report

9.01 2025-26 General Fund Budget Goals

K. Slentz reviewed the proposed budget goals for 2025-2026 budget including the strategic points of focus that support the budget goals and the balance between what we want to achieve and the impact of the tax burden on taxpayers, maximizing state aid, managing reserve plans, and consistent communication. Some details include:

- Evidence-based training for faculty and staff in targeted areas of teaching and learning, including improving the expectations for the adults;
- Improving student outcomes by investing in and maintaining rigorous and consistent curriculum across the grade levels and thoughtfully designing assessments;
- Student support services (mental health and related services, expanded participation in sports, clubs and activities);
- Collective bargaining agreements that are supportive of the ongoing improvements in faculty and staff working conditions; and
- Safe, secure, healthy and welcoming building and facilities conditions, including long-range facilities planning.

Next presentation will be January 21, 2025.

The draft budget goals presentation is available on the district website.



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9.02 Participation in NYSED Regionalization

K. Slentz presented the rationale for his recommendation that the district opt-out of the NYSED Regionalization Initiative. Some details include:

- We have very limited time in terms of new state initiatives and our own initiatives and therefore do not have the bandwidth to do additional work at this time;
- We are not sure of what the outcome is going to be;
- The regionalization initiative was put together in hurried fashion out of real concern that districts were going to lose aid;
- We have more flexibility here unlike districts that rely more on state aid;
- There is no penalty for opting-out;
- We will continue to do the work we are already doing (collaboration with BOCES and other rivertown districts);and
- Will keep the board updated in the event there is an incentive or value for the district, our taxpayers, or our students to opt-in.

Regulation requires that the superintendent consult the board. Unless there is an objection to the intention of opting out, K. Slentz will notify the state of the decision not to participate.

B. Bass asked for clarification on what our neighboring districts were doing and K. Slentz indicated that it is “all over the place” for very different reasons.

B. Bass emphasized that we are doing all we can to work with other districts.

There were no objections to opting-out of the NYSED Regionalization Initiative.

10. Board Reports

10.01 Special Education Program Plan Overview

Shari Kaplan and Sarah Grosso presented an overview and highlights of the special education program plan representing a year of work. It is the first update to the district’s special education plan since 2010.

The purpose of the plan is to ensure compliance with law and policy, to provide transparency for the board of education about the program, services, and resources available within the district, and to serve as a communication tool for families, staff and community members to facilitate

S. Kaplan reviewed the continuum of services in our district ranging from our most restrictive program to programs for students pursuing a Regents or Local Diploma; enrollment trends (large increase in preschool students with disabilities and classification of children with behavioral disabilities, requiring out of district placements or teacher assistant support); and the budget process (addressing current and future special education needs, leveraging state 611 and 619 grants).

Expectation is to update the plan approximately every three years, and the special education handbook, which will be updated annually.



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Enrollment trends date includes the years 2018-2024, and the trends are consistent with other districts in the region.

Hope is to build capacity to keep students in our district in the least restrictive setting, partnering with other organizations - having resources and facilities is one of the biggest challenges, both in-district and out of district.

K. Slentz acknowledged the work that the special education committee is doing to build systems, and the emphasis with staff on the compliance aspect of this plan.

B. Bass thanked both S. Kaplan and S. Grosso for their work on this, including the parent handbook and parent chats.

The Special Education plan will be posted on the district website.

11. Board Actions

11.01 Personnel - Professional/Certificated Staff

BE IT RESOLVED, that the board of education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District moves to approve the professional/certificated personnel actions.

D. Wood moved and J. Lucasey seconded, to approve the personnel actions.

B. Bass acknowledged the retirement of Dr. Park and wished him well.

K. Slentz welcomed Patricia Kelly, math interventionist at Springhurst.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

1. Resignation/Retirement

(a) Maxsim Matranxhi, Permanent Substitute - Resignation

Location: Dobbs Ferry High School

Effective: December 13, 2024

(b) Jin Park, Science Teacher - Retirement

Location: Dobbs Ferry Middle School

Effective: June 30, 2025

2. Leave of Absence

(a) Sheila Sullivan, AIS Teacher

Location: Springhurst Elementary School

Description: FMLA leave of absence

Effective: January 14, 2025 and for up to 12 weeks

(b) KC Gilson, Special Education Teacher



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Location: Springhurst Elementary School

Description: FMLA leave of absence

Effective: Approximately March 30, 2025 and for up to 12 weeks

(c) Lauren Feliciano, Teaching Assistant

Location: Dobbs Ferry High School

Description: FMLA leave of absence; unpaid child care leave of absence

Effective: Approximately March 21, 2025 and for up to 12 weeks (FMLA)

3. Temporary/Seasonal Appointment

(a) Brian Dann, Per Diem Substitute Teacher

Location: Dobbs Ferry Middle School

Effective: January 8, 2025* - June 26, 2025

Compensation: \$125.00 per day; \$62.50 per half-day

*Pending fingerprint clearance

(b) Mia Loran, Per Diem Substitute Teacher (Reappointment)

Location: Dobbs Ferry Middle School

Effective: Retroactive to November 25, 2024 - January 7, 2025

Compensation: \$125.00 per day; \$62.50 per half-day

(c) Julia Bashark,

Position #1: Permanent Substitute (.6)

Location: Springhurst Elementary School

Effective: February 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025

Compensation: \$25,900 per annum, prorated.

Position #2: Temporary (leave replacement) Elementary Art Teacher (.4)

Location: Springhurst Elementary School

Effective: February 1, 2025 through June 30, 2025 or until a replacement is found for Wendi Guagenti whichever is sooner.

Compensation: MA, Step 1 (\$65,331) prorated.

4. Regular Appointment

(a) Mia Loran, K-12 Teaching Assistant

Location: Dobbs Ferry School District

Effective: January 8, 2025

Duration of Probationary Period: January 8, 2025 - January 7, 2029

Tenure Area: K-12 Teaching Assistant

Certification: Childhood Education, Grades 1-6; SWD Grades 1-6

Compensation: Teaching Assistant, Step 1 (\$27,174) prorated.



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Replaces A. Algeri, resigned.

(b) Patricia Kelly, Instructional Support Services Provider (Math Interventionist)

Location: Springhurst Elementary School

Effective: January 27, 2025

Duration of Probationary Period: January 27, 2025 - January 26, 2028

Tenure Area: Elementary Education

Certification: Childhood Education Birth - 6; Students with Disabilities (All Grades)

Compensation: MA +15, Step 20 (\$125,389) prorated

Note: Replaces position held by W. Ferreira

11.02 Personnel - Civil Service Staff

BE IT RESOLVED, that the board of education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District moves to approve the civil service personnel actions.

P. Sullivan-Nunes moved and D. Wood seconded, to approve the civil service personnel recommendations.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

1. Acknowledgement of Completion of Probationary Period

Diana Delnero, Senior Office Assistant (Automated Systems)

Location: Springhurst Elementary School

Effective: December 20, 2024

As required by Westchester County Civil Service rules, it is necessary for employees to serve a probationary period of a minimum of 12 weeks to a maximum of 52 weeks. Ms. Delnero has satisfied the maximum probationary period.

2. Regular Appointment

Amrita Bharat, Office Assistant (Automated Systems) (10-month)

Location: Springhurst Elementary School

Effective: January 8, 2025

Start Date (delayed): January 21, 2025

Status: Contingent Permanent

Compensation: Office Assistant (10-month), Step 6 (\$41,946) prorated.

Pending Fingerprint Clearance

Note: A. Bharat's effective date must be prior to January 10, 2025 per civil service rules due to the expiration of the eligibility list; she may have a delayed start date of up to 30 days.

9.03 CSE/CPSE Recommendations

WHEREAS the Committee on Special Education and Committee on Preschool Special Education had issued to the board by written confidential report dated December 20, 2024, its IEP recommendations for the students who are identified therein; and



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WHEREAS the board is responsible for arranging for appropriate special programs and services to students with IEPs, as recommended by said committee;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the board of education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District hereby authorize and direct the administration to immediately arrange for the special programs and services as set forth in said report dated December 20, 2024.

J. Lucasey moved and D. Wood seconded, to approve the CSE/CPSE Recommendations.

B. Bass noted that the recommendations were reviewed by the Special Education Committee.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

11.04 Policy Revision - First Reading

The board conducted a first reading of the following policies:

1. Policy 0100: Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity

J. Lucasey presented the revisions made to align with new federal requirements, in particular implementation of website accessibility and Title IX issues and grievance procedures.

2. Policy 2160: School District Officer and Employee Code of Ethics

P. Sullivan-Nunes presented the key revisions pertaining to conflict of interests pursuant to clarification from school district counsel.

3. Policy 2342: Agenda Preparation and Dissemination

S. Stringer presented the key revisions and clarifications pertaining to language in the policy regarding “walk-on” resolutions, or the ability to amend the agenda at the beginning of a meeting.

J. Lucasey clarified that walk-on resolutions require all seven members of the board to be unanimous in the vote.

K. Slentz clarified that “walk-on” items are exceptions and are based on reasonable preparation time, i.e., there must be a strong rationale.

These policies will be brought back for a second reading on February 4, 2025.

The policies are available on the district website.

11.05 Budget Goals



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BE IT RESOLVED, that the board of education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District, hereby adopts the proposed goals for the 2025-26 budget development process.

P. Sullivan-Nunes moved and S. Stringer seconded, to adopt the proposed 2025-202 budget goals.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

11.06 Budget Amendment

WHEREAS, the district has received a \$50,000 grant-in-aid from New York State, and

WHEREAS, the board of education may appropriate such funds pursuant to Subdivision 2 of Section 1718 of the Education Law as amended by Chapter 82 of the Laws of 1995,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Dobbs Ferry Union Free School District hereby accepts this grant-in-aid for the purpose of curriculum development and public communications consulting and amends the 2024-25 budget as follows:

Increase budget code A1480-400-00-0000 Public Information Contractual in the amount of \$20,000

Increase budget code A2010-400-04-0000 Curriculum Development Contractual in the amount of \$30,000

J. Lucasey moved and D. Wood seconded, to amend the 2024-25 budget for the communication audit and professional development.

B. Bass clarified that part of this money will be used for the public relations audit and the remaining money will be used for professional development.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

12. Citizens Comments

12.01 Notice

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or that is obscene. Questions or comments concerning matters that are not on the agenda will be taken under consideration and referred to the superintendent for appropriate action.

None.

13. Old Business

None.

14. New Business

None.

15. Acknowledgments

None.

16. Upcoming Meetings

At 6:00 pm on January 21, the board will meet with Denise Connell, internal claims auditor.

16.01 Calendar

- Tuesday, January 21, 2025 - 7:00 p.m. - MS/HS Library Business Meeting
- Tuesday, February 4, 2025 - 7:00 p.m. - MS/HS Library Business Meeting

17. Adjournment

R. Hersberg moved and J. Lucasey seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 pm.

Vote: 6 ayes, 0 nays

Elizabeth Saperstein
District Clerk