

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
RETREAT MEETING MINUTES  
September 29, 2014**

The meeting of the Plainsboro Board of Education was called to order by Vice President Richard Kaye at 5:30 p.m. at the Village Elementary School construction site; after the inspection and a short break, the Board Members will reconvene at 6:30 p.m. in the media center at High School South for the retreat. The following board members were present:

Ms. Rachelle Feldman Hurwitz	Ms. Michele Kaish	Ms. Dana Krug
Ms. Louisa Ho	Mr. Richard Kaye	Mr. Scott Powell
Ms. Rachel Juliana		

Board Members Fleres and Zhong were absent for the construction site visit. Present also were: Dr. David Aderhold, Superintendent; Mr. Larry Shanok, Assistant Superintendent for Finance/Board Secretary; Mr. Martin Smith, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction; and Mr. Gerard Dalton, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services/Planning.

**CONVENE**

In accordance with the State's Sunshine Law, adequate notice of this meeting was provided by mailing a notice of the time, date, location and, to the extent known, the agenda of this meeting to the PRINCETON PACKET, THE TIMES, THE TRENTONIAN, THE HOME NEWS TRIBUNE, AND WEST WINDSOR and PLAINSBORO PUBLIC LIBRARIES. Copies of the notice have also been posted in the board office and filed with Plainsboro's and West Windsor's township clerks and in each of the district schools.

A short walk-through of the Village School new construction started the meeting. After the inspection and a brief progress report, the meeting adjourned to High School South media center at 6:15 p.m. and the board meeting reconvened at 6:30 p.m. Board Members Fleres and Zhong joined the meeting at 6:30 p.m. at High School South.

**PUBLIC COMMENT** (No members of the public were present.)

**BOARD PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

Mr. Fleres welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their participation. He commented that the main purpose of this retreat is to discuss the Village Expansion Project and discuss the financial impacts of moving, staffing, etc.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS**

Dr. Aderhold also welcomed the Board to the retreat. Besides the discussion about the Village Expansion Project, tonight we will also develop broad "big picture" themes and explore deeper understanding of potential budget concerns for the 2015-2016 school year.

Mr. Smith led a teambuilding exercise with the group.

**DISCUSSION**

Overview and Naming:

The Superintendent led the discussion for the designation of the new construction at Village. Another name is useful to distinguish between those that will want the school versus those coming to the offices. A consensus emerged to continue with the wording presently used at the existing board offices.

2015-16 Budget - Overview of the “usual suspects” – Financial Risks – Village Expansion:

The Superintendent led a summary discussion of the factors that each year can vary by a lot – making a budget challenging. Among such topics are: health benefits; impact of the Affordable Care Act; liability and workers compensation insurance; utility bills; special education costs (instruction, tuition and transportation); transportation; noncertified personnel pensions; and, the growing risk of inflation due to these and other factors in coming years.

The Board of Education broke up into groups of three for thirty minute round robin discussions with each of the three assistant superintendents. Mr. Dalton’s centered on future use/expense associated with the current district office building; the future use of the current special services building; the aging and coming need for replacement of turf fields and high school tracks; school security issues; and, district enrollment.

Mr. Smith focused on the 1:1 program expansion and other technology needs; program review recommendations; efforts targeting struggling learners; PARCC; and, Title I, II, and III issues.

Mr. Shanok concentrated on negotiations; the aging bus fleet; the likely loss of the present transportation area; the upcoming building and grounds contract process; and the broad issue of HVAC controls in the district.

After these lively discussions, the Superintendent brought the group together again. He then led a discussion covering the variety of happenings that will result from the central office move, including school related moves and furniture issues. He outlined likely staffing increases associated with these actions. Moving costs associated with the schools, both contractually required stipends and actual moving costs will be needed in the budget

**RECOMMENDATION TO ENTER INTO CLOSED EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Motion for Closed Session**

Mr. Fleres noted the need for a closed session immediately in order to discuss matters involving personnel and litigation.

Upon motion by Mr. Kaye, seconded by Ms. Kaish, and by unanimous voice vote the Board moved into closed session at 10:06 p.m.

Upon motion by Mr. Kaye, seconded by Ms. Kaish, and by unanimous voice vote, the meeting reconvened to open session at 10:18 p.m.

There was a general conversation on tonight’s discussion and on likely future steps. Another retreat is intended for November. Getting priorities from the committee process was one avenue for surfacing thoughts about the budget.

Superintendent Aderhold and Board President Fleres thanked everyone for their participation.

Upon motion by Mr. Kaye, seconded by Ms. Kaish, and by unanimous voice vote, the meeting adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

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Larry Shanok, Board Secretary

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
RETREAT MEETING MINUTES  
December 10, 2014**

The meeting of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Board of Education was called to order by President Anthony Fleres at 6:05 p.m. at the Village Elementary School media center. The following board members were present:

Mr. Anthony Fleres  
Ms. Louisa Ho

Ms. Rachel Juliana  
Ms. Michele Kaish

Ms. Dana Krug  
Mr. Scott Powell  
Mr. Yu "Taylor" Zhong

Board Members Feldman Hurwitz and Kaye were absent. Present also were: Dr. David Aderhold, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Larry Shanok, Assistant Superintendent for Finance/Board Secretary; Mr. Martin Smith, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction; and, Mr. Gerard Dalton, Assistant Superintendent, Pupil Services/Planning. Guest attending was: Yingchao Zhang.

**CONVENE**

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one from the public was present at the meeting.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMENTS**

Dr. Aderhold welcomed the Board to the retreat. Tonight will be a wide ranging discussion on the topics that impact our thinking about the 2015-2016 budget.

**CHECK IN**

Mr. Dalton led an exercise to begin the evening. Breaking into two groups, each was to develop a board logo while using a fixed set of materials. After a brief but lively interaction within each group, the two teams displayed and interpreted their logo to the other group.

**DISCUSSION**

The Superintendent noted that the purpose of tonight's effort was to develop consensus around the fiscal parameters and the associated actions for the 2015-16 budget

The Superintendent reviewed the District Goals and the nearly yearlong schedule of milestones associated with the budget process. Those present were divided into pairs and set off on a "Gallery Walk" around charts depicting key financial and operating parameters of the budget. In this process, members could ask questions and provide background to other participants, aiding in the financial comprehension of

everyone involved. The administrators also participated in the give and take around these charts. This allowed the implications associated with these concepts to be better understood. After the walk, the groups combined to discuss any remaining questions raised by the exercise.

Next the superintendent reviewed the general fund tax levy cap. While popularly known as the “2% cap,” it in fact allows some specific adjustments. Since the district did not use all dollars allowed in past years, the district can utilize banked cap this year. In addition, if the State of New Jersey follows past practice, high increases in health premiums will result in allowable adjustments to the general fund tax levy. While a 2% general fund tax levy dollar amount is about \$2.9 million, full utilization of the cap law would allow about a \$4.0 million increase.

While there are many budget areas under increasing cost pressure, the superintendent focused on five areas under particularly strong pressure for the 2015-16 budget cycle: these include: transportation, special services tuition, health care premiums, building & grounds and salary adjustments. If present service levels are maintained, these areas call for at least \$4 million of additional support. The other areas of the budget also have need of additional dollars. Either some current services are reduced or dollars need to be added to the budget.

To provide perspective, a discussion of class sizes were reviewed at several grade levels. While the size of a class varies, most classes are at a level that suggests additional students being added would be less than ideal. The district has squeezed out the instances of small class sizes; for example some types of classes that are small are combined with others so that the combined class size is of a reasonable size.

Additional discussions dealt with technology build-outs, implications of the upcoming moves of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and elementary special services students. Addition of third grade at Millstone suggests that changes be made to bell schedules and to grade 4/5 school start and finish times. The recent addition of security activities at our schools has been reviewed and revisions are under consideration. Steps to serve struggling learners, PARCC, and negotiations all have budget implications. Capital outlay needs are many, including an array of projects that will have to be dealt with over the next few years: turf fields, tracks, pools and HVAC controls are significant ones

Upon motion by Ms. Juliana at 10:30 pm, seconded by Ms. Krug, and by unanimous voice vote of all members present, it was agreed to continue the meeting of the board of education for one hour.

The Superintendent next discussed the areas in which various principals and directors have requested additional staff. In all, about sixteen positions have been identified and discussed. Three or four might be done as substitutions of existing staff – taking advantage of enrollment shifts or program changes to downsize in areas of small impact. That still leaves a choice of adding considerable additional funds to the next budget or not acting on some or all of these programmatic requests.

As the budget is discussed, it must be recognized that there are many unknowns. Among them are: state aid, health premium increases, negotiations, implications that surface from the current technology review and the GT program Review. Some shifts are possible to husband district resources, but after years of squeezing costs, most remaining options have serious implications.

At 11:30 pm Mr. Powell, seconded by Ms. Ho, and by unanimous voice vote of all members present, it was agreed to continue the meeting by 30 minutes.

With the pressures on costs discussed tonight, there was little support for the number of reductions that would be needed to have a zero increase budget for 2015-16. To enhance board of education discussion, three levels of budget increases were sketched, as well as what impacts on the status quo or on adding

services would result. The highest of the three levels potentially had provisional support from two board members and strong objection by one. The second level, utilizing the full cap law provisions, had the provisional support of a majority of the board and objection by one member. The lowest level of increase had the support of one board member who indicated that it could be done by increasing class size across the district. Other board members were not enthusiastic about raising class size.

At midnight Mr. Powell, seconded by Ms. Ho, and by the unanimous voice vote of all members present, all agreed to extend the meeting by 30 minutes.

Further discussion on the budget concluded that the administration had sufficient board guidance so as to be able to move forward with the budget preparation cycle. The Superintendent noted that the indicated level implied that sought after additions for struggling learners would either not move forward at this time or be done by substituting dollars from some staffing moves that may be possible due to shifts in enrollment and programs.

Superintendent Aderhold and Board President Fleres thanked everyone for their participation and perseverance. A lot of ground was covered tonight.

Upon motion by Mr. Powell, seconded by Ms. Ho, and by unanimous voice vote, the meeting adjourned at 12:10 a.m.

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Larry Shanok, Board Secretary

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
RETREAT MEETING MINUTES  
February 2, 2015**

The meeting of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Board of Education was called to order by President Fleres at 6:00 p.m. at the Village Elementary School media center. The following board members were present:

Mr. Anthony Fleres  
Ms. Louisa Ho

Ms. Rachel Juliana  
Ms. Michele Kaish

Ms. Dana Krug  
Mr. Scott Powell  
Mr. Yingchao “YZ” Zhang

Board Member Cheng was absent. Board member Zhong arrived at 7:05 p.m. Present also were: Dr. David Aderhold, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Larry Shanok, Assistant Superintendent for Finance/Board Secretary; Mr. Martin Smith, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction; and, Mr. Gerard Dalton, Assistant Superintendent, Pupil Services/Planning.

**CONVENE**

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No one from the public was present at the meeting.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S COMMENTS**

Dr. Aderhold welcomed the Board to the retreat. Tonight will be a wide ranging discussion on the topics that impact our thinking about the 2015-2016 school budget.

**CHECK IN**

Mr. Smith noted the substance within the whole child/every child phrasing of the district mission. Among the important elements are the depth and breadth of district programs and the consistency in evaluation discipline supported by the use of the Danielson framework. He then moved to the full mission statement: “The mission of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District, valuing our tradition of excellence, is to develop all of our children as passionate, confident, lifelong learners who have competence and strength of character to realize their aspirations and thoughtfully contribute to a diverse and changing world.”

Board members broke-up into small groups to discuss what resonates with them within either the “shorthand” mission statement or the full statement. After some discussion, the Board exchanged what resonates: that the whole child/every child keeps things front and foremost in mind as decisions are made; the developing of children across a range of areas; “contribute,” “character,” “passionate,” and “lifelong” all resonated among the board members.

## DISCUSSION

The Superintendent noted that the purpose of tonight's effort was to engage in extensive conversations and thus develop consensus around the fiscal parameters and the associated actions for the 2015-2016 school budget. He began the discussion with a review of the district strategic goals. He noted three options outlined at the previous retreat. He believes that the administration has responded to those discussions and has evolved an approach that accomplishes the target – and perhaps a bit better.

Mr. Shanok reviewed the allocation of expenditures. While maintaining and building momentum, this allocation keeps the budget-to-budget growth to about \$3.4 million; a 2.1% budget increase. Larger increases are seen in the following areas: special education tuition; improvement in instruction; operations; transportation; and employee benefits. While many other areas are relatively flat, these areas do imply an increase in spending next year. Much of the increase in improvement of instruction is in fact a redistribution of costs as an individual was moved into the newly created data administration position. The district is in the final year of its contract for Buildings & Grounds services; five years ago, the second lowest bid was a million dollars higher than the lowest responsible bidder. What may occur this round? Health benefits continue to increase: the January 1, 2015 increase in the NJDirect10 employee/child medical premium was 15.1% while the family premium increased 12.6%.

The Superintendent discussed a variety of other cost topics and then discussed enrollment projections in some detail. Shifting enrollment calls for staff increases in some areas, but creates opportunity to shave staffing in some others while largely maintaining class sizes around the district. The move to a grade 3-5 configuration at Village brings a variety of issues to the fore: the bell schedule, 34 versus 29 periods for teachers, consistency across the district and bussing. While moderate, some staffing increases are necessary – in some cases, having previously squeezed staffing in earlier years and enjoying the cost savings, some of that needs to be given back as circumstances change.

The Superintendent, with contributions from his staff, discussed the potential of some redesign efforts in the areas of in-class resource student support, basic skills, and technology. A lively discussion evolved as the Board gained insight in the value and trade-offs associated with the redesign of each area. The consensus of the Board was in support of the redesign efforts.

While a number of areas are tackled in the budget, some cannot without greater spending or reductions in areas currently being supported. Significant changes to Read 180, G&T, and some other areas will have to wait for now.

The Superintendent and Mr. Shanok reviewed the capital projects and transportation. With one million dollars of the capital outlay budget targeting technology acquisition this year and next, the importance of continuing to raise the capital outlay budget in the future is seen clearly. Until then continuing to add and use capital reserve will keep the district's facilities in satisfactory shape. With a flat \$2.2 million in capital outlay, the capital expenditures needed associated with the Town Center, Village, High School North, and Millstone River construction will be supported with capital reserve dollars. While some steps are being taken in transportation, larger actions need much thought and time: aging bus fleet, pending loss of bus garage area, rising costs associated with health and pension benefits, crossing guard issues, and bus transport and hazardous road board policies that impact a lot of the existing bussing. With the imminent retirement of the transportation coordinator and the many changes in bussing associated with the Village/Town Center/Millstone River moves, it will take time to address these broader issues, both by transportation and the Board of Education.

By motion of Mr. Powell, seconded by Ms. Ho, and by unanimous voice vote of all members present, the board meeting was extended by one hour at 10:30 p.m.

The Superintendent reviewed the budget unknowns. A major one is the level of state-aid; it will still be more than three weeks until aid is announced. The district has little idea of the likely July 1, 2015, prescription plan increase much less the January 1, 2016, increase in the state medical plan.

The Superintendent encouraged the Board to speak about where they would see more or less spending. While everyone noted the pressure to not let spending and taxes increase too much, there developed a consensus to add \$20,000 to the non-athletic co-curricular spending for the grade 6-12 schools. The administration promised to set those dollars into the budget and initiate a discussion of what the impact will be at the four schools.

Finally, the Superintendent noted the progress made tonight in the wide-ranging conversations. The discussions appeared to evolve into a budget with a \$3.4 million budget-to-budget increase and a general fund tax levy increase that is within the tax cap rules. The Board agreed that that consensus had been reached around the ideas spoken tonight by the Superintendent and that the administration could begin the process of finalizing and implementing the 2015-2016 school budget.

Superintendent Aderhold and Board President Fleres thanked everyone for their participation and perseverance; and, urged them to be careful on the way home in the below freezing temperature outside.

Upon motion by Ms. Kaish, seconded by Mr. Zhong, and by unanimous voice vote, the meeting adjourned at 11:08 p.m.

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Larry Shanok, Board Secretary



**MINUTES OF BOARD RETREAT HELD  
June 25, 2015**

The Board Retreat of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Board of Education was called to order by Board President Fleres at 6:30 p.m. in the in the media center at Village Elementary School. The following Board members were present:

Mr. Anthony Fleres	Ms. Rachel Juliana	Mr. Scott Powell
Mr. Isaac Cheng	Ms. Michele Kaish	Mr. Yingchao “YZ” Zhang
Ms. Louisa Ho	Ms. Dana Krug	

Board Member Zhong was absent. Present also were: Dr. David Aderhold, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Larry Shanok, Assistant Superintendent for Finance/Board Secretary; Mr. Martin Smith, Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction; and Mr. Gerard Dalton, Assistant Superintendent, Pupil Services/Planning.

**CONVENE**

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**PUBLIC COMMENT**

No members of the public were present.

**BOARD PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS**

Mr. Fleres welcomed everyone to the retreat. The Superintendent led an inspection tour of the Village Addition construction site. Everyone was impressed at the progress made to date.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S COMMENTS**

Dr. Aderhold thanked everyone for participating tonight. Once again the subjects are the “District Strategic Goals” for the year. This year, a slightly different approach to the discussion will be taken.

Strategic Goal #1: To work toward continuous improvement of instructional programs with a focus on the developmental needs of and the social/emotional impacts on students.

Strategic Goal #2: We will continue to ensure that the budget provides for the achievement of all students and that we maintain safe, healthy and clean facilities that reflect high standards for learning while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Strategic Goal #3: To continue to develop the professional growth and capacity of district leadership.

**Welcome/Review Purpose and Outcomes**

The Superintendent led a team building exercise utilizing the Continuum Dialogue Protocol: a provocative, but non-threatening way to explore perspectives, beliefs, and opinions on difficult issues. Using a line on the floor with each end representing the far, extreme positions, the Superintendent encouraged folks to take their place on the line that reflected where they place themselves relative to the two opposing statements. A lively discussion ensued as combinations of statements led to an active shift of positions as the statements were explored.

**District Strategic Goals**

Mr. Smith described the Tuning Protocol a sequence of steps by which goals can be explored. After outlining the protocol, he proceeded to describe Strategic Goal #1 and the tasks and measurable indicators associated with it. After an opportunity for clarifying questions, a period of reflection followed. Reflection was followed by “warm” feedback and “cool” feedback addressing the essential qualities of the tasks/indicators. A variety of feedback was collected to be integrated into the final product.

Mr. Zhong arrived at 9:21 PM.

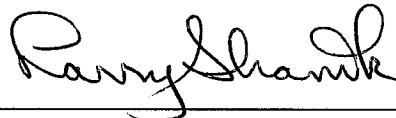
Mr. Dalton and Mr. Shanok followed a similar process for Strategic Goal #2 and its tasks and measurable indicators. Once again a variety of feedback provided a basis for adjusting the tasks/indicators. One consistent suggestion by the Board of Education was that abbreviations be avoided whenever possible in this process.

The Superintendent led a similar discussion of Strategic Goal #3’s tasks and indicators.

A few minutes were spent getting everyone’s impression of tonight’s approach; the Board of Education generally found the approach useful and engaging.

The Superintendent and Board President Fleres thanked everyone for their participation.

Upon motion by Mr. Zhong, seconded by Mr. Powell, and by unanimous voice vote of all present, the meeting adjourned at 10:38 p.m.



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Larry Shanok, Board Secretary

Prepared by:



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Kathleen M. Bertram