

# HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 29, 2024

**6:00 pm.** Open the Meeting and enter Executive Session in the Administration Building: Room 21  
**Public Portion will begin at 7:00 p.m in the Board Meeting Room**  
2 Windsor Avenue, Hopatcong, NJ 07843

### CALL TO ORDER

Time: 6:02 pm

1. **FLAG SALUTE**

2. **OPENING STATEMENT**

In accordance with Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, this public body, the Hopatcong Board of Education hereby announces that The New Jersey Herald and the Daily Record have been notified by email that this Board of Education Regular Meeting will take place at 7:00 p.m following the Executive Session (in room 21) which starts at 6:00 p.m. on January 29, 2024 at the Hopatcong Board of Education, Board meeting room in the Administration Building.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Present	Joseph Falconi	Present	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Absent	Philip DiStefano
Present	Natalia Cappello	Present	*Jayson Cittrich	Absent	Jayna Gulan
Present	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Alexander McLean	Present	Jennifer Polowchena

\* Arrived 6:02 pm

4. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion will be made that the Hopatcong Board of Education will enter Executive Session in room 21 to discuss personnel and attorney/client privilege, which are exempt from public participation pursuant to New Jersey Public Law 1975, Chapter 231, Open Public Meetings Act. Any discussions held by the Board which need not remain confidential will be made public when appropriate. Minutes of the Executive Session will not be disclosed until the need for confidentiality no longer exists. The Board will reconvene in public session at 7:00 p.m. following the executive session.

**Motion to enter executive session:**

(ACTION) Motion by Falconi-Schubert . seconded by Polowchena

Present	Joseph Falconi	Present	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Absent	Philip DiStefano
Present	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Absent	Jayna Gulan
Present	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Alexander McLean	Present	Jennifer Polowchena

5. **RECONVENE**

**Motion to Reconvene**

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(ACTION) Motion by Falconi seconded by Cittrich

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Absent	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Yes	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Alexander McLean	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

### 6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of the minutes of the following meetings, as reported by the Board Secretary reviewed by the Board President and members of the Board:

- a. December 18, 2023 - Executive Session
- b. December 18, 2023 - Public Meeting

**Motion to approve 6a-6b: Falconi second by Polowchena**

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Absent	Philip DiStefano
Abstain	Natalia Cappello	Yes	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Abstain	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Alexander McLean	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

### 7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND HIB REPORT

- a. Superintendent's Report – **Mr. Arthur DiBenedetto, Interim Superintendent of Schools**
  1. Nisivoccia Audit Presentation - Raymond Sarinelli, Partner
- b. HIB - A second reading and approval of the Superintendent's HIB Report for December 18, 2023 as presented to the Board at the December meeting on December 18, 2023. Approval of the Superintendent's HIB report for January 2024 for first reading and review as presented to the Board at the January meeting on January 29, 2024.
- c. The following students were chosen as Hopatcong High School's Students-of-the-Month for their outstanding performance in December, 2023.  
Grade 8 – **Aaron AJ Francis**  
Honorable Mention - **Katheryn Cruz Canales**  
Grade 9 – **Sara Delurski**  
Honorable Mention - **Cole Arnold**  
Grade 10 - **Georgia Reardon**  
Grade 11 – **Kelsey Weber**  
Grade 12 – **Alexander Syto**

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The following students were chosen as Hopatcong High School's Scholar Athletes of the Month for their outstanding performance in December of 2023:

### ATHLETICS -

Bowling - **Thomas Galvez Perea, Senior**

Ice Hockey - **Ryan Puco, Sophomore**

### Student Representatives

Lana Cocal - Thomas Galvez Perea

#### Motion to approve 7a – 7c:

((ACTION))Motion by Falconi. Seconded by Cittrich

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Absent	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Yes	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
No	James Chaffee, Jr.	Present	Alexander McLean	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

## 8. PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES

## 9. PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL DISCUSSION

Several members spoke about the effort of the Board and administration to continue moving the district.

## 10. FINANCE

Approval of the following Finance items, 10a. – 10h., as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Operations Committee of the Board:

- a. It is recommended by the Superintendent that bills for the General Fund and Special Revenues (Grants) account, December 18, 2023 through January 29, 2024 be approved in the following amounts:

General Fund and Special Revenue (Grants) account - \$1,529,778.23

Cafeteria account - \$ 135,873.89

- b. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Treasurer's Report for the month of December, 2023.
- c. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Board Secretary's Report for the month of December, 2023.
- d. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Transfer Report for the month of December, 2023.
- e. Motion to approve the certification by the Board Secretary that the Account Balance Report, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-9, as of January 29, 2024, no line item account

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- has encumbrances and expenditures, which in total exceed the line item appropriation in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(a).
- f. Motion to certify, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(c), as of January 29, 2024, after review of the Board Secretary's and Treasurer's Monthly Financial Reports and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(b), and sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- g. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the acceptance of the following donations to the Dale Salomone Memorial Scholarship account:

DONOR	CHECK NUMBER	AMOUNT
Gerald Salomone	#8691	\$10,000.00
Richard G. Mannarino	#2111	\$ 75.00
Edward & Carson Remig	#10229	\$ 1,000.00

- h. Acceptance of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and the Auditors' Management Report (AMR) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, as recommended by the Superintendent and as reviewed by the Operations Committee.
- i. Approval of the Corrective Action Plan (Recommendations 2023-01 and 2023-02) in response to the ACFR findings for the period July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, as recommended by the Superintendent and as reviewed by the Operations Committee.

# HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES


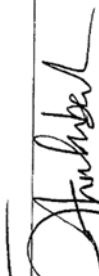
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Corrective Action Plan (CAP)  
 For the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2023  
 Prepare only when there is a finding(s) in the ACFR or AMR  
 Upload to the ACFR Repository with file name: CAP.PDF (within 45 days of Board accepting the Audit)  
 Email a copy of the CAP to: [CAP@ag.nj.gov](mailto:CAP@ag.nj.gov)

School District/Charter/Renaissance School Project : Hopatcong Borough Schools  
 County: Sussex  
 Contact Person: Jeffrey Hallenbeck  
 Type of Audit Annual ACFR  
 Email Address / Telephone Number: [jhallenbeck@hopatcong.k12.nj.us](mailto:jhallenbeck@hopatcong.k12.nj.us); 973-770-8844  
 Date of Board Meeting : January 29, 2024

A ACFR/AMR (1) Finding #	B Finding (Condition) (1)	C Recommendation (1)	D Method of Implementation (2)	E Person Responsible for Implementation	F Implementation Date
2023-01	The number of resident LEP low income and not low income students reported on the A.S.A. was not supported by the District's work papers and related applications and on-roll register.	The District will revise its internal student registration process to regularly update its LEP student data to reflect new enrollments and transfers in its Student Information Systems (SIS).	The District will revise its internal student registration process to regularly update its LEP student data to reflect new enrollments and transfers in its Student Information Systems (SIS). The District will require its vendor to provide original acquisition costs and acquisition dates for all fixed assets in accordance with its contractual obligations.	Superintendent Technology Office Building Principals LEP Program Instructors	January 2024
2023-02	The District request the fixed asset appraisal company to report all assets at their original acquisition cost and actual year acquired and provide a recapitulation of the current year ending balance from the prior year ending balance.	The District will require its vendor to provide original acquisition costs and acquisition dates for all fixed assets in accordance with its contractual obligations.	The District will require its vendor to provide original acquisition costs and acquisition dates for all fixed assets in accordance with its contractual obligations.	Business Administrator	January 2024

Chief School Administrator:   
 Board Secretary/ School Business Administrator:   
 Date: 1/29/24  
 Date: 1/29/24

(1) Columns A, B & C: Please use exact language from ACFR or AMR. If finding(s) is reported in both ACFR & AMR use exact language from ACFR.  
 (2) Column D: Please describe the LEA's Method of Implementation to ensure the finding(s) will not recur.

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### 11. PERSONNEL

Approval of the following personnel items, **11a – 11k**, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

- a. Approval of the employment of **Nicole Finland** as a Paraprofessional at Durban Avenue School retroactively effective January 8, 2024 at a rate of \$16.13 per hour + \$1.00 differential per hour for toileting. This rate is based on Step 1-2 of the 2023 - 2024 HEA Paraprofessional Salary Guide, for 29.75 hours per week (pending Criminal History background check).
- b. Approval of the employment of **Diana Leon** as a Paraprofessional at Durban Avenue School effective February 12, 2024 at a rate of \$16.13 per hour + \$1.00 differential per hour for toileting. This rate is based on Step 1-2 of the 2023 - 2024 HEA Paraprofessional Salary Guide, for 29.75 hours per week (pending Criminal History background check).
- c. Approval to accept the resignation with regret, for the purpose of retirement, of **Doloretta (Dell) Ferrante** from her position as Paraprofessional effective July 1, 2024. Dell has worked for the Hopatcong School District for 27 years.
- d. Approval to accept the resignation of **Olga Fory Caicedo** from her position as Paraprofessional effective January 20, 2024.
- e. Approval of the resignation of employee 80116 effective 6/30/24.
- f. Approval of placing employee 80116 on administrative leave with pay effective Jan. 30, 2024 until June 30, 2024.
- g. Approval of outside contractor, **Debra Gaudio** as Speech Therapist from 3/18/24 until 6/18/24 at \$400 per day, three to five days per week, to be determined.
- h. Approval of **Pam Brennan and Neil Pallotta** as teachers for the Portfolio Assessment process at \$35 per hour. This program allows for students who have not achieved passing grades on the state graduation exam to graduate if they are successful in the portfolio assessment.
- i. Approval of **Stephanie Rochette** as a leave replacement for Employee 80418, Step One of the HEA guide. Ms. Rochette is coming off another leave replacement and will work in this assignment for an unknown period of time. (\$65,755, prorated
- j. Approval of a reduction in time for **Elissa DeRose**, effective February 20, 2024, from 1.0 FTE to .2 FTE. This is at the request of the employee.

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### *Course Approval /Reimbursement Approval*

Name	Course Title	Course Number	Credits	Cost
Heather Bivone	Stage IV CTE	MS-01		\$699.00
Suzanne Annette	LETRS 2	374361	6	\$2399.00
Karen Cubberly	PSi-PMI Field Experience II	MET6104	3	\$432.00
Jaclyn DiBrienza-Cikovic	Leadership in Learning Communities	EDLP6010	3	\$1333.32
Melissa Kennedy	Finance & Facilities	GED680	3	1333.32
Melissa Kennedy	The Principalship	GED660	3	1333.32
Carla Malatesta	Methods for Teaching & Assessing English Language Learners	539	3	1333.32
Carla Malatesta	Principles of Language Learning: Second/World Language	520	3	1333.32
Tracey Talmadge	Cost Accounting	ACC3201	4	2101.00

**\*The maximum rate of reimbursement per credit for the 23-24 school year is \$444.44.**

- k. Approval of the following substitutes for the Hopatcong School District:
1. **Diane Petrock**, Substitute Paraprofessional
  2. **Susan Hill**, Substitute Teacher
  3. **Delaina Predmore**, Substitute Teacher (pending Criminal History background check)
  4. **Mark Gudelski**, Substitute Teacher
  5. **Aleta Eisbacher**, Substitute Teacher

12. **TRAVEL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Resolved, that the Hopatcong Board of Education approve travel costs as related in this resolution which are educationally necessary and fiscally prudent and are related to and within the scope of the employee's current responsibilities and promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district. The reimbursement listed in this resolution are in compliance with the state travel reimbursement guidelines as established by the Department of Treasury and Board of Education policy in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1. seq

***Approval of the following staff to attend Professional Development/Conference\****

Name	Title	Cost	Date
Linda Minervini	Imbedding Explicit Reading Comprehension Strategies into Daily Practice (11-190-100-320-40-00)	\$30.00	2/3/2024

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Linda Minervini	Exploring the Needs of Upper Level Students (11-190-100-320-40-00)	\$30.00	2/3/2024
Austin Brown	JAP03 Assessment-Expert Level Performance Measure Cohort 7 JAP04 Special Education	\$620.00 \$100.00 \$620.00 (20-270-200-300-16)	1/20/24- 5/4/24

*\*Cost will be reimbursed upon completion of attendance and all documentation has been provided.*

### 13. STUDENTS AND SERVICES

Approval of the following items, 13a-13k as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

- a. Approval for educational instruction services for student no. 15798 for 10 hours per week beginning December 6, 2023. Instruction will be provided by CCBH at a rate of \$95.00 per hour.
- b. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 14244. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour beginning 12/15/23 until approximately 12/22/23.
- c. Approval for 1 1/4 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 13271. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the rate of \$40.00 per hour effective 12/21/23 until approximately 1/30/24.
- d. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 13507. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour beginning 1/1/24 until approximately 1/25/24.
- e. Approval for 2 1/2 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 13507. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour beginning 1/25/24 until approximately 6/18/24.
- f. Approval for ten hours per week of educational instruction services for student no. 12710. 1/2/24 until further notice. Instruction will be provided by Learnwell Education at a rate of \$66.00 per hour.
- g. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 12031. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour beginning 1/5/24 until the end of the school year.
- h. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 15059. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the rate of \$40.00 per hour effective 1/10/24 until approximately 2/5/24.
- i. Approval for educational instruction services for student no. 12753 for up to 10 hours per week beginning 1/11/24 until 1/18/24. Instruction will be provided by Learnwell at a rate of \$48.25 per hour.



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- j. Approval for educational instruction services for student no. 12753 for up to 10 hours per week beginning 1/19/24 until further notice. Instruction will be provided by Silvergate Prep at a rate of \$45.00 per hour.
- k. Approval of the following field trip requests:

SCHOOL	DATE	TRIP
High School	2/23/2024 - 2/25/2024	Cheerleading Nationals Ocean City, Md.
High School - Cosmetology	3/05/2024	Jacob Javits Convention Center, NYC
High School - FIT	3/06/2024	Sparta Lanes, Sparta, NJ
High School	2/05/2024	Sussex Cty. Com. College
High School	2/29/2024	Morris County College
High School FIT	6/06/2024	Sandy Hook

#### 14. RESOLUTIONS

Approval of the following resolutions as per the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools.

- a. Approval of settlement agreement with employee 80116 in EDS 13705-23.
- b. Approval of Memorandum of Agreement with HAPS for a new three year contract beginning in the 24-25 school year, at recommendation of the Negotiations Committee and Supt.

#### c. Resolution In Honor Of New Jersey School Board Recognition Month:

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey State Board of Education has established rigorous standards through its promulgation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards, which set the expectations of academic achievement for nearly 1.4 million public schoolchildren and;

**WHEREAS**, New Jersey's locally elected and appointed boards of education play a vital role in ensuring that their local school districts meet state standards and adhere to state and federal education statute and regulations, with the goal of preparing all students for college and the workplace, thereby enabling them to compete in a global economy; and

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**WHEREAS**, New Jersey's 5,000 non-partisan local board of education members and charter school trustees are public servants who dedicate their time, without pay or benefit, to the oversight of school district operations, through sound financial practices and comprehensive policies on curriculum, staffing and other areas to ensure the well-being and academic achievement of all students in the district; and

**WHEREAS**, local boards of education, in conjunction with state education officials and local educators, have built a foundation of success that has led to New Jersey's status as a leader in student achievement, as evidenced by the National Assessment of Educational Progress scores; and

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey School Boards Association has declared January 2024 to be School Board Recognition Month; now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the New Jersey State Board of Education recognizes the contributions of our state's local boards of education to the academic success of its public school students and expresses its sincere appreciation to local board of education members for their continued focus on the achievement of children throughout New Jersey; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the New Jersey State Board of Education encourages qualified New Jersey citizens to consider serving as members of their local school boards.

### 15. SUSSEX COUNTY REGIONAL COOPERATIVE

- a. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of bills** for the Sussex County Regional Cooperative Operating account for December 19, 2023 through January 29, 2024 in the amount of \$ \$226,341.43 for Regular bills and \$5,335,003.85 for Bus Contractors.
- b. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of the following new member district** for the 2023-2024 school year:

#### **Robert Treat Academy Charter School**

- c. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of the Resolution for Participation in Coordinated Transportation** with Warren County Special Services School District for the 2024-2025 school year.
- d. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval to renew the Commodity Resale Agreement for diesel and gasoline fuel** with the Township of Hardyston, a municipal corporation of the State of New Jersey, for a term of two (2) consecutive years, beginning on January 1, 2024 and terminating December 31, 2025.

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- e. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval to hire Jennifer Marrugo** as a Bus Driver for the 2023-2024 school Year for 6.5 hours per day at the hourly rate of \$28.85, start date February 1, 2024.
- f. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **termination** of the at will substitute, Employee #81688.
- g.
- 1. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **acceptance** of student transportation **quotations** for **Special Education School Year Routes** for the 2023-2024 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
- 2. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **award** of student transportation **quotations** for **Special Education School Year Routes** to the lowest, responsible and responsive bus contractor companies for the 2023-2024 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
- 3. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **acceptance** of student transportation **quotations for Athletic/Class/Field Trips** for the 2023-2024 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
- 4. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **award** of student transportation **contracts for quoted Athletic/Class/Field Trips** to the lowest, responsible and responsive bus contractor companies for the 2023-2024 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
- 5. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **route contract addendums for the 2023 -2024** School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
- 16. **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER COMMENTS**

## ADDENDUM

- a. It is recommended by the Superintendent and the Operations Committee that the Hopatcong Board of Education enter into a lease purchase advisory agreement with the Hunterdon County Educational Service Commission for the potential lease purchase acquisition of two maintenance vehicles. Hunterdon ESC will investigate and provide the District with multiple financing options for future vehicle acquisition at no cost to the Board.
- b. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Hopatcong Board of Education approve a maternity/child care leave for **Employee #81057** beginning March 1, 2024 for the duration of the school year.

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- c. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Hopatcong Board of Education approve a leave of absence for **Employee #80277** beginning February 12, 2024 for the purposes of a surgical procedure. Sick days will be used for the duration of the leave lasting approximately two months. The board is asked to approve a thirty-five dollar an hour stipend for this teacher who has agreed to write plans and correct papers during his absence.
- d. Approval for educational instruction services for student no. 13432 for 10 hours per week beginning January 23, 2024. Instruction will be provided by Learnwell at a rate of \$48.25 per hour.
- e. Approval for educational instruction services for student no. 14903 for a maximum of 5 hours per week beginning January 29, 2024. Instruction will be provided by Saint Clare's Hospital at a rate of \$55.00 per hour.

(ACTION)Motion to approve 10a through Addendum item e: Cappello. seconded byGulan

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Absent	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Yes	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	*James Chaffee, Jr.	Abstain	Alexander McLean	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

\*Abstain 11h

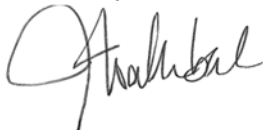
### 17. **ADJOURNMENT**

#### **Motion to adjourn:**

(ACTION)Motion by Cittrich. seconded by Chaffee

All in favor: Yes Time: 7:43 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Hallenbeck, Board Secretary