

Board of Education - Hunterdon County, NJ

**MINUTES
Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.
Meeting Location - District Administration Office
1445 Route 31, Annandale, NJ 08801**

Click [Sept. 24, 2024 BOE Meeting](#) to access the live stream/recording

1. President Glen Farbanish called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and read the Public Meeting notice.

2. Roll Call

<u>Name</u>	<u>Municipalities Represented</u>	<u>Weighted Vote</u>
Kristina Cagno - Present	Califon Borough / Tewksbury Township	0.8
Bryan Chapman - Present	Clinton Township / Lebanon Borough	0.9
Glen Farbanish - Present	Union Township	1.4
Nicole Gallo - Present	High Bridge Borough / Lebanon Township	1.2
Tara Marie Hintz - Present	High Bridge Borough / Lebanon Township	1.2
Beth Kotran - Present	Clinton Township / Lebanon Borough	0.9
Brendan Mclsaac - Present	Town of Clinton / Franklin Township / Glen Gardner Borough	0.9
John Melick - Present	Califon Borough / Tewksbury Township	0.8
Cynthia Reyes - Present	Clinton Township / Lebanon Borough	0.9
Kimberly Solino - Present	Bethlehem Township / Hampton Borough	1.2
Daniel Spanton - Absent	Clinton Township / Lebanon Borough	0.9
Jessica Viotto - Present	Town of Clinton / Franklin Township / Glen Gardner Borough	0.9

Also Present: R. Bergacs - Assistant Superintendent, K. Blew - School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, G. Vargas-Dellacasa - District Technology Coordinator, M. Squarcia - Director of School Counseling Services, R. Broan - Director of Curriculum, Articulation and Student Achievement, G. Cottrell - Principal of North Hunterdon High School, R. Peterson - Principal of Voorhees High School, J. Comegno - School Board Attorney, Comegno Law Group P.C.

3. Flag Salute

4. **Motion by B. Kotran and second by B. Mclsaac** to approve agenda item 4.1. **Motion carried on voice vote**, with abstentions from N. Gallo, and T. Hintz.

4.1. [Minutes - August 13, 2024](#) School Board meeting

N. Gallo asked to provide clarification on the 8/13/24 minutes regarding the MOU for A Tri-County Vicinage 13 initiative. She would like it noted that this is a potential governmental overreach which could impede on parental rights.

Discussion ensued regarding the Minutes from 8/13/24.

5. **Chief School Administrator's Report**

On behalf of the Board of Education as well as the NHV District, R. Bergacs expressed condolences to family and friends of Sophia DeTorres. A moment of silence was held in honor of Sophia DeTorres.

Acting Superintendent, R. Bergacs provided the Chief School Administrator's Report:

- Congratulations to Voorhees High School Senior, Garrett Stem and North Hunterdon High School Seniors, Pranav Shankar and Matthew Strauss, who were named semifinalists in the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Competition.
- Congratulations Olympia Lake (1st place) Lillian Balzer (2nd place) and Ayla Blackenbush (3rd place) in the NAMI Hunterdon County Expressive Arts Contest 2024.
- The College Fair was held for both North Hunterdon and Voorhees on September 18th from 6-8pm with over 100 school representatives in attendance.
- Homecoming dances are coming up. Voorhees - Saturday, 9/18 and North - Saturday, 10/5.

5.1. Report on Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) - (2) incidents reported and investigated (1 founded, 1 unfounded)

5.2. **Motion by J. Viotto and second by B. Kotran** to affirm the determinations on the [HIB Incidents](#) reported at the August 13, 2024 Board meeting. **Motion carried unanimously on voice vote.**

5.3. School Bus Emergency Evacuation Drill Report for [North Hunterdon High School](#) and [Voorhees High School](#)

5.4. Monthly School Reports - [August 2024](#)

6. **G. Farbanish provided the School Board President's Report**

6.1. Introduction of Student Board Representatives:

NHHS - Shivum Patel (representative), Amelia Reitman (alternate)

VHS - Sarah Schwierk (representative), Audrey Devine (alternate)

6.2. Regular Board Meeting - October 15, 2024, 7:00 p.m. at the District Administration Office

6.3. NJSBA's Workshop 2024 - October 21-24, 2024, Atlantic City, NJ

7. **[Presentation of the School and Small Business Ventilation and Energy Efficiency Verification and Repair \(SSB-VEEVR\) Grant](#)** by Kathryn Blew CPA, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

8. **Opportunity for Public Comment**

(1) comment commending the student board representatives

9. **Public Hearing on Contract Amendments to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Richard Bergacs, and the School Business Administrator, Kathryn Blew, as well as the Contract Addendum to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Richard Bergacs**

Statement read by the Board President:

The North Hunterdon-Voorhees Regional High School District Board of Education (hereinafter the "Board") wishes to amend the contracts of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Richard Bergacs, and the School Business Administrator, Kathryn Blew, for the effective period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

The Board also wishes to approve an addendum to the contract for Dr. Richard Bergacs for Acting Superintendent duties for the effective period of July 23, 2024 through June 30, 2025.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7-8(j), a proposed amendment, extension, renegotiation, or alteration to the contract of the Superintendent of Schools, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, and/or School Business Administrator must be reviewed and approved by the Executive County Superintendent.

The proposed amendments to Dr. Bergacs' and Ms. Blew's contracts, and the proposed Addendum to Dr. Bergacs' contract, were submitted to the Interim Executive County Superintendent of the NJ Department of Education, Hunterdon County Office for review and approval.

The amendment to Dr. Bergacs' and Ms. Blew's contracts were reviewed and approved by the Interim Executive County Superintendent of the NJ Department of Education, Hunterdon County Office on August 30, 2024.

The Interim Executive County Superintendent also reviewed and approved the Addendum to Dr. Bergacs' contract on August 30, 2024.

In addition to review and approval by the Executive County Superintendent, the Board is required by N.J.S.A. 18A:11-11 to provide the public with 30 days advance notice of its intent to take action to amend, extend, renegotiate, and/or alter the terms and conditions of the contract with the Superintendent of Schools, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, and/or School Business Administrator. The Board is also required to hold a public hearing regarding the intended amendment, extension, renegotiation, and/or alteration of those contracts, and provide the public with 10 days advance notice that such a hearing will be held, before taking any further action.

Notice of the Board's intent to take action and of tonight's public hearing were provided to the public via publication in the district's official newspaper on August 22, 2024 and September 12, 2024, and publication on the district's public website every day for the period beginning on August 22, 2024 to September 24, 2024.

As such, I would like to open the meeting for a public hearing. This will be an opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed amendments to Dr. Bergacs' and Ms. Blew's contract and the addendum to Dr. Bergacs' contract.

Opportunity for public comment on the amended contracts of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools and the School Business Administrator, as well as the contract addendum for the Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

There were no public comments

G. Farbanish closed the public hearing.

Motion by T. Hintz and second by B. Chapman to approve the amended contract for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 between the Board and Kathryn Blew. **Motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.**

Motion by K. Solino and second by B. Kotran to approve the amended contract for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025 between the Board and Dr. Richard Bergacs. **Motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.**

Motion by B. Chapman and second by J. Viotto to approve the contract addendum for the period of July 23, 2024 through June 30, 2025 between the Board and Dr. Richard Bergacs. **Motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.**

10. **Curriculum, Instruction and Technology** - Committee Report

- Monthly school reports reviewed, as well as Curriculum, Instruction and Technology agenda items.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- Advanced Placement (AP) test data
- Concurrent enrollment and taking the AP exam provide college credits
- Common assessments

Motion by B. McIsaac and second by J. Viotto to approve agenda items 10.1 through 10.3. **Motion carried unanimously on voice vote.**

10.1. [Home Instruction](#)

10.2. [Out of District Placements](#)

10.3. [Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired Service Contract](#)

11. **Policy and School Security - Committee Report**
- Update on the NHV policy manual conversion by NJSBA
 - Roles of student board representatives were discussed
 - NHHS started a school-wide initiative addressing the student cell phone policy
 - NJDOE has provided updated student health forms for student physicals/evaluations

Discussion ensued among board members and student representatives regarding cell phones.

12. **Finance, Facilities and Transportation - Committee Report**
- Capital projects were discussed
 - 2022 Referendum projects were discussed and are being completed well under budget
 - Transportation for 24/25 is more adequately staffed by Hunterdon County ESC
 - Review of Finance, Facilities and Transportation agenda items

Discussion ensued regarding 2025 summer projects, maintenance reserve, the SHIF wellness grant and transportation improvements.

Motion by J. Viotto and second by K. Cagno to approve agenda items 12.1 through 12.13. **Motion carried on voice vote**, with votes of “no” for check #037769 included in item 12.9 from N. Gallo and C. Reyes, and abstention from items 12.9 and 12.13 from B. Chapman.

Further discussion ensued regarding the Monthly Bill’s list, Robert’s Rules of Order and Board member roles. Board member discussion related to staff professional development to be addressed by the Curriculum, Instruction and Technology committee.

- 12.1. Accept the \$12,000 annual Wellness Grant from the Schools Health Insurance Fund for the 2024-2025 school year
- 12.2. Accept the donation of a set of (25) Biology student books and (2) teacher editions from Hunterdon County Vocational School District to Voorhees High School, valued at \$2,125
- 12.3. [Banners](#) for NHHS Booster Club’s Corporate Sponsorship Program to display on property throughout 2024-2025 school year
- 12.4. [Banners](#) for VHS Booster Club’s Corporate Sponsorship Program to display on property throughout 2024-2025 school year
- 12.5. [Purchase\(s\) above \\$44,000](#) for the 2024-2025 school year
- 12.6. [Co-op and State Contract Vendors](#) that exceed the bid threshold for the 2024-2025 school year
- 12.7. Declare [District Property](#) as damaged and/or obsolete and grant authorization for disposal and/or sale by the Business Administrator pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-45
- 12.8. [Staff Training and Travel Requests](#)
- 12.9. [Monthly Bills List](#) for September 2024
- 12.10. [Resolution 092424-1](#) Monthly Financial Reports Certification for August 2024
- 12.11. [Board Secretary Report](#) for month ending August 2024
- 12.12. [Treasurer Report](#) for month ending August 2024
- 12.13. [Transfer of Funds](#) within the 2024-2025 school year budget - August 2024

13. **Community Relations and Student Affairs - Committee Report**
- Community Relations and Student Affairs did not meet this month - no report
- Motion by B. Kotran and second by K. Solino** to approve agenda item 13.1 & 13.2. **Motion carried unanimously on voice vote.**

- 13.1. [Overnight Field Trips](#)
- 13.2. [Proposal for Photography Club at VHS](#)

14. **Delegates' Reports**
 - Meeting for Hunterdon County School Boards - 9/30/24. Option for in-person or virtual
 - NJ State Delegate's meeting - 12/7/24
15. **Personnel - Committee Report**
 - The Personnel Committee met and reviewed the Personnel Agenda
16. **Motion by T. Hintz and second by B. Kotran** to adopt [Resolution 092424-2](#) for executive session to discuss matters falling under categories 4, 7 and 8 as reflected in the attached resolution. **Motion carried unanimously on voice vote** and the Board adjourned to executive session at 8:39 p.m.
17. **Motion by J. Viotto and second by T. Hintz** to reconvene public session. **Motion carried unanimously on voice vote** and the Board reconvened public session at 10:15 p.m.
18. **Motion by T. Hintz and second by B. Kotran** to approve agenda item 18.1 and 18.2, and hand carried item 18.3, as read aloud by G. Farbanish and indicated below. **Motion carried unanimously on roll call vote.**
 - 18.1. [Item P092424](#) - Personnel Agenda September 24, 2024
 - 18.2. Executive Session Minutes August 13, 2024
 - 18.3. Be it resolved, upon the recommendation of the Board's Negotiating Committee and the Acting Superintendent, to approve and adopt the MOA agreed upon between the Board and the NHVRHSDAA, for the period 2024-2025 through 2027-2028.
19. **Old and New Business**
 - NHHS tennis court fencing
 - Board norms to be scheduled with NJSBA
 - Strategic Planning
 - Regionalization Report being discussed by Bethlehem Township, Franklin Township and Union Township communities
 - Polytech construction site tour for BOE members
20. **Motion by J. Viotto and second by K. Cagno** to adjourn. **Motion carried unanimously on voice vote**, and the meeting adjourned at 10:26 p.m.

Submitted by:

Kathryn Blew

Kathryn Blew, CPA

School Business Administrator/Board Secretary