

**MIDDLE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2016  
7:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

The Middle Township School Board has a clearly articulated district mission statement incorporating the expectation that all students achieve the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) at all grade levels.

Also, the mission of the Middle Township School District is to provide excellence in education while celebrating the strength of its diversity and upholding the values and traditions of the community in order to produce graduates who possess a love of learning and a sense of responsibility. This education aims to enable all students to reach their potential and become active, productive members of a dynamic, global society.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The New Jersey Open Public Meeting Law was enacted to ensure the rights of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of the Act, public notice of the meeting has been given by the Board Secretary in the following manner: Posting written notice to the Atlantic City Press, the Middle Township Gazette, written notice with the Clerk of the Township of Middle and posted on the Board Secretary's bulletin board.

**II. ROLL CALL**

  P   Dennis Roberts  
  P   George DeLollis  
  P   Calvin Back  
  P   Robert Bakley II  
  P   Edward Dagney  
  P   Burgess Hamer  
  P   Gloria Hodges  
  P   Patricia Taylor  
  P   Stephanie Thomas  
  P   Jeffrey Trout

## ATTENDANCE

- P Dr. David Salvo, Superintendent of Schools
- P Diane Fox, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- P Kathleen McDonald, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- P Robert F. Johnson, Director of Special Education
- P Christian Paskalides, Principal, Elementary #1
- P Douglas Penkethman, Principal, Elementary #2
- P Dr. Toni Lehman, Principal, Middle School
- P Frank Riggitano, Principal, High School
- A William Donio, Board Solicitor
- P Amy Elco, Board Solicitor

## OTHERS

### III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE FOLLOWED BY A MOMENT OF SILENCE

Led by the President of the Middle Township Board of Education and followed by a moment of silence.

### IV. INFORMATIONAL

- A. Sunshine Moments  
**Exhibit I 16:09:3/17/16**
- B. Student Council – Hannah and Emma Carlson

Hannah Catanoso and Emma Carlson spoke representing the High School student council. They spoke about the various events that were held in February and March, highlighting the Winter Spirit Week with the Thursday Purple Dress Down Day and the Coaches vs. Cancer game held before the St. Augustine basketball game. These were held as fundraisers for the *Relay for Life* event and earned \$3,000. They outlined the other fundraisers coming up: March 29<sup>th</sup> –Five Guys fundraiser, April 8<sup>th</sup> Volleyball tournament, April 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> –Stick a fork in Cancer restaurant week, and May 21<sup>st</sup> Kick ball tournament.

### V. PRESENTATIONS

Dave Goldstein – Maxwell Club

The Maxwell Club is a national organization that honors the best college football players in the country. David Goldstein donated the membership for Middle Township High School to be a member of the club.

Susan Blood – Sustainable School Grants  
**Exhibit P 16:04:3/17/16**

Susan Blood gave a PowerPoint presentation highlighting the Sustainable Schools Grants that the Middle School received this past year.

**VI. PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Doniger, Rio Grande, questioned the maintenance reserve withdrawal for Brinkerhoff, parent pick up area, carpeting and locker renovations. He believes that they should be capital withdrawals and maintenance reserve should be used for other projects.

Mr. Roberts responded that the board is aware and believes these to be maintenance items.

Rosie Jefferson, Cape May Court House, asked that when the school calendar is posted to please indicate the time of the board meetings on the calendar. She also, questioned the UNThink grant and what the grant was for and why middle school boys were specifically targeted in this grant.

Dr. Lehman and Ms. Blood explained that the grant was written for this group, as they felt they could benefit from a similar experience that they hold for the girls such as the overnight Lock in and other afterschool activities.

**VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of minutes of previous meeting(s):

- A. Regular Meeting Minutes – February 18, 2016  
**Exhibit M 16:22:3/17/16**
- B. Special Meeting Minutes – March 9, 2016  
**Exhibit M 16:23:3/17/16**
- C. Special Closed Meeting Minutes – March 9, 2016  
**Exhibit M 16:24:3/17/16**

**MOTION TO ACCEPT THE PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Motion:	Mr. DeLollis	Second:	Mr. Bakley
Vote:	Voice	Carried:	Yes

**VIII. CORRESPONDENCE**

- 1. Vote Results – Ms. Fox read results and gave statement.  
**Exhibit C 16:01:3/17/16**
- 2. Petition – Ms. Sterling, letters from community members.

**IX. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

- A. Use of Facilities Report  
**Exhibit S 16:28:3/17/16**
- B. Trip List  
**Exhibit S 16:29:3/17/16**
- C. Discipline Report  
**Exhibit S 16:30:3/17/16**
- D. Attendance Report  
**Exhibit S 16:31:3/17/16**
- E. H.I.B. Report - Confidential

**X. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- A. Curriculum Committee
- B. Discipline Committee
- C. Equity/Affirmative Action Committee – March 2, 2016

*Ms. Thomas reported that the Equity Committee met on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and discussed the following: PARCC Demographic Results, Comprehensive Equity Plan, ESEA 2015 Accountability Results, and Minority Teacher Recruitment.*

Motion:	Ms. Hodges	Second:	Mr. Trout
Vote:	Voice	Carried:	Yes

- D. Extra-Curricular Committee
- E. Facilities/Grounds/Real Estate Committee – March 10, 2016

*Mr. Bakley reported that the Facilities Committee met on March 10<sup>th</sup> and discussed the referendum, update on chiller and controls, spring season preparation, Brinkerhoff remediation, property near Riggins Oil, and personnel.*

Motion:	Mr. Roberts	Second:	Ms. Thomas
Vote:	Voice	Carried:	Yes

- F. Finance Committee – March 1, 2016

*Mr. DeLollis reported that the Finance Committee met on March 1<sup>st</sup> and discussed the 2016-17 Budget, as well as the Affordable Housing Project and its effect on the district.*

Motion:	Mr. Bakley	Second:	Mr. Trout
Vote:	Voice	Carried:	Yes

- G. Performing Arts Committee
- H. Policy Committee
- I. Staff Relations/Negotiations Committee
- J. Transportation Committee

**XI. CERTIFICATION AND APPROVAL OF REPORTS**

Be it resolved that the Board of Education approves:

- A. The Monthly Budget Reports for the 2015-2016 school year through February 29, 2016, pending audit. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.12 (c) the Secretary certifies that as of February 29, 2016, no budgetary line item account has encumbrances and expenditures which in total exceed the line item appropriation in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.12 (c).
- B. The February 29, 2016, Report of the Secretary for the 2015-2016 school year, pending audit. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.12 (c), the Board certifies that as of February 29, 2016, after review of the Secretary’s Monthly Financial Report (appropriations section), 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:23-2.12 (c), and that sufficient funds are available to meet the District’s financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- C. That the Board approve the February 29, 2016, Report of Cash Funds for the 2015-2016 school year. It is in agreement with the February 29, 2016, Report of the Secretary, pending audit.

Report of the Secretary – February 29, 2016

**Exhibit B 16:19:3/17/16**

Report of Cash – February 29, 2016

**Exhibit B 16:20:3/17/16**

Motion:	Mr. Back	Second:	Ms. Thomas
Vote:	Roll Call	Carried:	Yes

- Y Dennis Roberts
- Y George DeLollis
- Y Calvin Back
- Y Robert Bakley II
- Y Edward Dagney
- Y Burgess Hamer
- Y Gloria Hodges
- Y Patricia Taylor
- Y Stephanie Thomas
- Y Jeffrey Trout

**XII. FINANCIAL**

Be it resolved that the Board of Education approves:

- A. Transfer of Funds  
**Exhibit F 16:36:3/17/16**

- B. Bill List/Additional Bill List/PAC Bill List  
**Exhibit F 16:37:3/17/16**
- C. PAC Contracts  
**Exhibit F 16:38:3/17/16**
- D. The withdrawal of \$97,054 from Maintenance Reserve for the following:
  - H.S. Band Room Carpet \$12,994
  - H.S. Lockers 400 wing \$28,365
  - M.S. Parent Pick-Up \$13,785
  - Brinkerhoff Remediation \$41,910
- E. A resolution that, for the 2016-2017 school year, Middle Township Board of Education does not require Pineland Learning Center, Inc. to charge their students for a reduced and/or paid meal, pursuant to NJ Department of Education code 6A:23-4.5iii.
- F. Resolution authorizing the Middle Township Board of Education to renew service contract for employee assistance with RPK & Associates t/a EmployeeCare for the school year 2016-2017. Renewal right was reserved in the contract for the 2015-2016 school year with identical fee and length of period of service.
- G. **Resolved** to approve the 2016/2017 preliminary school district budget for submission to the County Office as follows:

		Local Tax Levy
General Fund	\$ 42,202,781	\$ 25,011,366
Special Revenue Fund	\$ 2,288,153	
Debt Service	\$ 1,602,250	\$ 1,602,250
Total Budget	\$ 46,093,184	

**And** to set the General Fund tax levy at \$ 25,011,366.

- H. The Cape May County Special Services School District tuition rate/contract for 2016-17 school year.
- I. Resolution to approve 2015-2016 NCLB Amendment as Follows:
  - Title I \$746,152
  - Title IIA \$128,907
  - Title III \$22,373
  - Amended for Carryover funds from 2014-2015.
- J. The amended 2015-2016 IDEA Grant as follows:
  - Basic Amended \$ 635,668

- K. The following individuals as Driver’s Education Instructors at \$30 per hour:
  - 1. Robert Ridgway
  - 2. Megan Russ
  
- L. To accept the terms of the settlement agreement with W. O. in regards to Arbitration-Docket No. AR-2015-701.
  
- M. Authorize the board secretary to issue and renew temporary notes not to exceed \$12,000,000 to finance the start of the referendum project authorized by the voters on March 8, 2016.  
**Exhibit F 16:39:3/17/16**

Motion:	Mr. Hamer	Second:	Ms. Taylor
Vote:	Roll Call	Carried:	Yes

- Y Dennis Roberts
- Y George DeLollis
- Y Calvin Back
- Y Robert Bakley II
- Y Edward Dagney
- Y Burgess Hamer
- Y Gloria Hodges
- Y Patricia Taylor
- Y Stephanie Thomas
- Y Jeffrey Trout

**XIII. ADMINISTRATION**

Be it resolved that the Board of Education approves:

- A. The tentative 2016-2017 Middle Township School District Calendar.  
**Exhibit A 16:36:3/17/16**
  
- B. A motion to approve the waiver of a discipline hearing for student, D.H. (2015—16) – 15, in accordance with the recommendation of the Superintendent and as consented to by the parent.  
**Exhibit A 16:37:1/21/16**
  
- C. A motion to approve the waiver of a discipline hearing for student, D.H. (2015—16) – 16, in accordance with the recommendation of the Superintendent and as consented to by the parent.  
**Exhibit A 16:38:1/21/16**
  
- D. A motion to approve the waiver of a discipline hearing for student, D.H. (2015—16) – 20, in accordance with the recommendation of the Superintendent and as consented to by the parent.  
**Exhibit A 16:39:1/21/16**

E. The following fieldwork experience:

School: Bay Path University  
Dates: Spring Semester 2016  
Student: Maya McKnight  
Cooperating Staff: Paula Berrodin – District, Occupational Therapist

F. Resolution authorizing the submission of the proposed Comprehensive Equity Plan (CEP) for 2016-2019 **Exhibit A 16:40:1/21/16**

G. Resolution to approve the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Accountability Action Plan 2015- Participation Rate **Exhibit A 16:41:1/21/16**

H. The application for UNThink Grant in the amount of \$20,000 to empower at-risk male students at MTMS.

I. The application for McCarthy Dressman Education Foundation’s Education Enrichment Grant in the amount of \$10,000 to replace industrial arts equipment.

J. A motion to approve the waiver of a discipline hearing for student, D.H. (2015—16) – 17, in accordance with the recommendation of the Superintendent and as consented to by the parent.  
**Exhibit A 16:42:1/21/16**

K. A motion to approve the waiver of a discipline hearing for student, D.H. (2015—16) – 18, in accordance with the recommendation of the Superintendent and as consented to by the parent.  
**Exhibit A 16:43:1/21/16**

L. A motion to approve the waiver of a discipline hearing for student, D.H. (2015—16) – 19, in accordance with the recommendation of the Superintendent and as consented to by the parent.  
**Exhibit A 16:44:1/21/16**

Motion: Mr. Roberts Second: Ms. Hodges  
Vote: Roll Call Carried: Yes

- Y Dennis Roberts
- Y George DeLollis
- Y Calvin Back
- Y Robert Bakley II
- Y Edward Dagney
- Y Burgess Hamer
- Y Gloria Hodges
- Y Patricia Taylor
- Y Stephanie Thomas
- Y Jeffrey Trout

**XIV. PERSONNEL**

Be it resolved that the Board of Education accepts the Superintendent’s recommendation to approve:

A. The following leaves of absence:

Malcolm Talton – On FMLA from 2/16/16 through **4/18/16**; paid using sick days through ½ day 3/3/16; then remainder unpaid.

Robert Bethel – On FMLA from 4/4/16 through 4/29/16 using 20 sick days.

Charles Berrian – On FMLA from 3/14/16 through 6/7/16, (paid through 3/24, remainder unpaid).

Jennifer Heun – On FMLA from 6/1/16 through end of school year 15/16; paid using sick days. Then on FMLA/FLA beginning of school year 16/17; return to work 1/3/17.

Cheryl Tolan – *Amended* - board approved leave through end of school year 15/16.

Crystine Whitaker – On FMLA/FLA from 4/18/16 through 9/1/16; paid through 6/30/16 using days (subject to change)

Donna Ewing – On FMLA paid using sick days from 4/4/16 to end of school year.

B. Employment of the following substitute teachers:

Tamara Boyle	Sub Cert.	\$85
Christopher Eaves	Sub Cert.	\$85
Rachel Fleishcher	Sub Cert.	\$85

C. Employment of the following substitute PAC technical assistant: Jasen Mitchell

D. The following Schedule B Positions:

Name: Shannon Hunsicker  
 Position: Cheerleading Coach  
 Building: Middle School  
 Stipend: \$3,933.00

Name: Kay Aspell  
 Position: Shore Production Theater Director  
 Building: High School  
 Stipend: \$2,000

Name: Will (Bud) Morey  
 Position: Shore Production Theater Director  
 Building: High School  
 Stipend: \$2,000

Name: Jay Wynn  
Position: Shore Production Theater Director  
Building: High School  
Stipend: \$2,000

Name: Andrew Bongiovanni  
Position: Shore Production Theater Director  
Building: High School  
Stipend: \$2,000

E. The following teachers as high school grant writers @ \$21.00 per hour:

1. Robert Heck – 4 hours
2. Michael Capito – 8 hours
3. Laura Lambert – 7 hours

F. Employment of the following Certified Staff:

Name: Janina Perna  
Position: Physical Education Teacher  
Status: Long-Term Substitute  
Building: Middle School  
Effective: February 25, 2016 – April 18, 2016  
Salary: \$50 Upgrade from Teacher's Aide Salary  
Account: 11-130-100-101-00-04  
Replacing: Malcolm Talton

Name: Kevin Poltorak  
Position: Science Teacher  
Status: Long-Term Substitute  
Building: Middle School  
Effective: April 4, 2016 – June 14, 2016  
Salary: \$50 Upgrade from Teacher's Aide Salary  
Account: 11-130-100-101-00-04  
Replacing: Tracey Vanderhoff

G. Employment of the following Non-Certified Staff:

Name: Deborah Daubert  
Position: Bus Aide  
Status: Part-Time  
Building: Transportation  
Effective: March 18, 2016  
Step/Salary: \$16.10 per hour  
Account: 11-000-270-161-99-12

Name: Mary Morrell  
Position: Bus Aide  
Status: Part-Time  
Building: Transportation  
Effective: March 18, 2016

Step/Salary: \$16.10 per hour  
Account: 11-000-270-161-99-12

Name: Betty Pollanti  
Position: Bus Aide  
Status: Part-Time  
Building: Transportation  
Effective: March 18, 2016  
Step/Salary: \$16.10 per hour  
Account: 11-000-270-161-99-12

- H. The following staff members to work at the Martin Luther King Center After-School Program at \$30.00 per hour:

**Teachers:**

Kevin Poltorak  
Randi Ziring

Account #: 20-231-100-101-30-01 Title 1

- I. The following volunteers:

Name: Allison Pfander  
Position: Softball Volunteer  
Building: High School

Name: Ed Letts  
Position: Track Volunteer  
Building: High School

Name: Mike Wilson  
Position: Track Volunteer  
Building: High School

Name: Erica Bader  
Position: Track Volunteer  
Building: High School

Name: Judi Richardson  
Position: Track Volunteer  
Building: High School

Name: Frank Scaltrito  
Position: Track Volunteer  
Building: High School

Name: Dave Joslin  
Position: Golf Volunteer  
Building: High School

Name: Jon Gansert, Jr.  
 Position: Baseball Volunteer  
 Building: High School

J. The following Resignations/Retirements:

Name: Harold Hearon  
 Position: Bus Driver  
 Building: Transportation  
 Type: Resignation  
 Effective: April 29, 2016

Name: William Stahl  
 Position: Teacher's Aide  
 Building: Elementary #1  
 Type: Resignation  
 Effective: March 28, 2016

Name: Nancy Pitman  
 Position: Teacher's Aide  
 Building: Elementary #1  
 Type: Resignation  
 Effective: April 15, 2016

Motion: Mr. DeLollis                      Second: Ms. Thomas  
 Vote: Roll Call                              Carried: Yes

- Y Dennis Roberts
- Y George DeLollis
- Y Calvin Back
- Y Robert Bakley II
- Y Edward Dagney
- Y Burgess Hamer
- Y Gloria Hodges
- Y Patricia Taylor
- Y Stephanie Thomas
- Y Jeffrey Trout

**XV. STUDENT PLACEMENT**

A. The placement of student listed below as tuition student at Out of District location for the 2015-2016 school year. Names on file in the Office of the Superintendent.

<u>School Name</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>Tuition</u>
East Mountain School	1 (BG)	\$71,691.90

B. Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired Request to Provide Services  
Contract for the 2015- 2016 school year:

<u>Level of Service</u>	<u>Students</u>	<u>Cost</u>
1	student (VA )	\$1,050.00

Motion: Mr. Back Second: Mr. Trout  
Vote: Roll Call Carried: Yes

- Y Dennis Roberts
- Y George DeLollis
- Y Calvin Back
- Y Robert Bakley II
- Y Edward Dagney
- Y Burgess Hamer
- Y Gloria Hodges
- Y Patricia Taylor
- Y Stephanie Thomas
- Y Jeffrey Trout

**XVI. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS:**

Dr. Salvo read a prepared statement regarding the play *Pippin* for which a petition was received earlier in the week. The statement is as follows:

**STATEMENT FOR DR. SALVO REGARDING THE PETITION SUBMITTED TO THE  
MIDDLE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION REGARDING THE  
HIGH SCHOOL PLAY “PIPPIN”**

Before we have what I anticipate to be a number of comments regarding the play Pippin that was performed by our High School students, I want to address the petition that I received, some communications that I received and some conversations that I have had with Board members, community members, teachers, staff, parents and students. First, I am very proud of our students. I think our musicals and plays are second to none at all levels of our school. I want to applaud our students and staff who put so much time and effort into the plays. While I appreciate that not every play will be of interest to everyone in our community, I believe a Tony Award winning play, ably performed by our school students and directed by our school staff which was modified for the age appropriateness of the players and the audience, is not only perfectly appropriate but provides a real and meaningful learning opportunity to our students. I am very confident that not only did the students do a great job but that important educational goals were achieved through this production.

Second, I first heard about a possible petition and complaints regarding the play, I went and reviewed the process. We have never as a Board gotten involved in overseeing the selection of the works of our arts department, performing arts or our BAND or visual arts. We have always ensured that they have the independence within appropriate contours to express and to learn. I am confident that the staff appropriately picked a musical, and while it might not be everyone’s favorite musical, it is considered a classic and performed by numerous other schools including Williamstown, Camden Catholic, Holy Cross, Hopewell Valley, Ocean Township, Matawan, Montclair, Montville, Paramus. And while the fact that

other districts previously presented this musical, does not mean necessarily that Middle Township must do so, it nevertheless, demonstrates that this musical is routinely performed in High Schools through the State.

Third, I understand that there are some people who have also raised concerns with regards to the subject matter as well as the performance itself, including the costumes worn by the students. The costumes were age appropriate, sufficiently modest and nevertheless demonstrated a keen artistic expression. We have routinely had students wear costumes or outfits that would not be appropriate to wear at a school but nonetheless are appropriate for what they are doing. I mean for goodness sake take a look at a wrestling singlet.

With regards to the subject matter, I believe that it was sufficiently clear that this subject matter had adult themes. In reviewing our musicals, they almost always have mature themes – its professional drama. Here we actually advised the audience in the press release.

I appreciate that others may disagree. Everyone is entitled to an opinion with regards to this or any performance. I do not believe that we need to take any further action, adopt any additional policies or really conduct any inquiry. I am confident that my inquiry has been sufficient and as a Chief School Administrator, I do not recommend any additional action.

I want to thank the students and staff who have shown up in support of the musical. I also welcome concerns and have always had an open door policy. I do not believe anyone who signed this petition has actually reached out directly to me; I wish you had. Nonetheless, we have our public portion I anticipate comments though I do believe we should put a reasonable time limit on it and we will go from there.

Mr. Doniger, Rio Grande, held up the postcard mailed by the district regarding the referendum vote and questioned how much it cost the district and why we felt it was necessary to do the mailing.

Mr. Roberts replied that is was part of the marketing campaign, the district spent just over \$3,000 for printing and postage for the card.

Kathryn Wynn, Cape May Court House, read from a prepared statement concerning the play *Pippin* and her son Connor Wynn. It was as follows:

As the school website states “ diversity is our strength” That diversity, not just of the students in our district, but of the diverse experiences given to the student is what has made not only our school district, but the Theater Arts program in the district as strong as it is. My son, Conner, has been involved with the theater arts in the school district since Middle school, but it is what he has been taught and exposed to in the High School Musical that has made him the success he has become. The musical director has chosen shows of varying genres that have helped my son expand his theater repertoire and have helped him grow as a performer. Her guidance and mentorship and pride in her students have made it possible for Conner to be accepted into a Theater Arts program in college. Conner auditioned for Wagner College’s prestigious musical theater major. The School has 500 applicants this year. 265 were granted an audition that took place the day after *Pippin*. Conner was chosen to be one of the 35 students who were given admission to the Musical theater program and because of his grades and theater experiences here at Middle township public schools, he was given a scholarship of \$64,000 over four years. That would not have been possible were it not for the dedication and caring of his musical director/music teacher and the strong diverse program that this district offers to its students.

Robert Cline, Dennis Township, who is a senior attending the high school made a statement regarding the play. He was not in the musical, but recalls as a junior reading *Catcher in the Rye*, the teacher trusted us as students to handle the content of the book and it was presented in a way the students could handle the content. He paralleled this to the musical; he felt it was presented in a way to learn the lessons and how to cope with different life problems. Parents have to understand that the presentations are challenging, but they have to trust their children to accept them as learning lessons.

Amy Anderson, Cape May Court House, read from a prepared statement concerning her son Jordan who was in the play as a middle schooler. The letter is entered under correspondence to these minutes.

Greta Schwartz, Seaville, spoke as an educator with deep moral values who has raised her children in a religious environment who feels that plays speak for themselves. Art is a form for the children to relate to, the play was a great story for teenagers—its life and life is full of evil things, how will they relate to anything if we shield them. Art, books matter, they have to touch the heart that is how to teach so children understand and relate.

Hannah Catanoso, Cape May Court House, a senior attending the high school spoke about how excited she was to get a lead role in the play, that when she hurt her leg and had to have surgery, she thought she would have to drop out of the play. Ms. Dalfonso found a way for her to still participate in the play in her role even in her wheelchair. The play and the cast speak about compassion and resilience in the face of adversity.

Sherry Peteani, Cape May Court House, spoke regarding the play and stated that her daughter has been in all the musicals and they do a fabulous job. She is just concerned about the procedures for the choice of the play and how the shows are picked. What is the policy on the language and content for the play? They should be for all audiences; she did not think to research the show and was surprised by the language and content when she went to see the play.

Dr. Salvo responded that the director picks a play based on the talents of the students and further repeated his statement regarding the choice of plays.

Mr. Roberts stated it was not the board's job to pick plays and that is why we hire a superintendent and we trust in his judgment.

Alana Graves, Cape May County Library employee, stated that in this day and age, if parents are concerned they should just Google it to find out what the play is about and express their concerns before the fact.

Kaitlyn Bailey, Avalon, senior attending the high school stated that she started participating in the musical when she was a sophomore. They are known for doing out of the box shows, it exposes the students to other cultures and she has made awesome friends in the process.

Richard Sterling, Cape May Court House, stated that he has been the pastor of his church for the last four years and relayed a story about his daughter's wedding and the promise ring that he gave to her when she was fourteen. He also, spoke about the marching band in 1984 at a competition and the respect and reputation that the district had. He questioned, where is the line with the plays that the school produces?

Rosie Jefferson, Cape May Court House, stated that her son was in the play and felt that it was presented in an appropriate way.

Greg Dragon, Seaville, questioned what is the best musical for a high school to present and stated that there is no neat clean musical that everyone is going to like. Music Man is about a con artist, Oklahoma has a murder in it, there is something someone will object to in every play. He thanked the teacher and board for keeping it interesting.

Don Toll, Ocean City, stated that art evokes an emotional response; it allows the audience to discuss situations that are not always easy to talk about.

Tom Griffin, Coach, stated that many of the recent alumni of the high school are upset by the questioning of Debbie Dalfonso's character and integrity. She is passionate about what she does and has her kid's interests at heart and can't imagine her doing anything that would jeopardize the students. The kids have been on the internet defending her.

Karen Buckingham, Cape May Court House, spoke about her daughter who is now a theatre teacher because of Debbie Dalfonso. She also, performs with the Jersey Shore Pops because of the education and encouragement that she received from her. Thank you Debbie.

Susan Sterling, Cape May Court House, stated that the petition she delivered to the board was started by Barbara Kraemer after she took her 7<sup>th</sup> grade granddaughter to the play. Her granddaughter questioned her why they were saying bad words in the play. She wanted to know the purpose of the profanity. Four area churches put the petition together. Ms. Sterling further stated that she never said a bad word in her life and that she knows her husband never has said a bad word either. I am here about the profanity in the play, taxpayers do not enjoy profanity and they should not have to hear it. She is a Conservative Christian woman who believes in the Bible and you are degrading me by not answering my questions and respecting my beliefs. Because I follow the scriptures, you treat me as uneducated and are hostile towards me. It is not wrong of me to be horrified of what was said.

Brinley Edwards, graduate of the high school, she attends college now. The plays immerse you in the culture; it is all put out on stage and has been in the past. She questions that why is it now an issue?

Ted Bryan, Cape May Court House, grew up in a ministers home, was part of the faculty for 37 years teaching Social Studies at the high school. We cannot as communities do anything that prevents the free flow of ideas.

Marshall Brown, Avalon, has been in the musical –the play last year moved him so much he shed a tear. They taught him so much about life and himself.

Thomas Jefferson, freshman at the high school, this is his first year in the play and they have their ups and down but Ms. Dalfonso treats us like her own children. It's an educational process. Whatever happens the man upstairs has plans for us.

Anika Buchanan, junior at the high school, had the chance to play a more mature role with mature content this year. It gave her new experiences to the diversity of performing in different

roles. She will be performing in St. Louis this summer. If I played the nice girl every year, it wouldn't have expanded me on how to handle the content on stage.

Josh Rhile, Cape May Court House, as for the school having class, they keep the performances mature and handle the content in a way that is appropriate.

Dave Bollinger, Cape May Court House, fought for freedom of speech. The purpose of the petition was for oversight in the schools. Just because it is acceptable to majority the others should not be made to feel like a left out citizen.

Rob Klein spoke again about being Jewish and participating in the Christmas concerts where they never sang Jewish songs or spoke about Jewish values, yet he performed because it was his expression as an artist not about his faith. He said it is not right to filter art.

Kaitlyn Bailey, spoke again in defense of Ms. Dalfonso stating that she know her kids and no one knows them better than her.

## **XVII. BOARD COMMENT**

Mr. Roberts thanked everyone who came to the board meeting and a thank you to the staff and board, we wanted everyone to be heard and exercise their right to free speech, this is not an easy job that you to the board for hearing everyone. We need to remember that the high school play is for high school students to perform at a high school level, not a grade school or middle school level, but a high school level. It is our job as a board to see that they are given the opportunity; while it may ruffle some feathers along the way, it is our responsibility to think of the students first and give them every opportunity to gain scholarships through these processes.

Ms. Hodges informed everyone that Mr. Bryan is her brother and she too was raised in a Christian home with Christian values. I did not have the opportunity to see the play in person but I googled the reviews concerning the play that received Four Tony awards and it said, "You, your children and grandchildren are going to love the performance." I worked in the high school for twenty-one years and during that time I got to know the director and the outstanding and extraordinary job she does with the performances. My children and grandchildren have participated and they learned and grew from the experiences, but they worked hard at it too. The director always worked to pull everyone into the performance, those with special talents, special needs, disabilities; everyone had a part in the show. As our mission statement says, "we believe in diversity", the director embraced it and made everyone feel important. I applaud her and her students and thank you for the outstanding productions.

Mr. Bakley read from the high school student handbook stating that students must refrain from profanity at any time and continued to quote from a policy in the policy manual that states profanity will not be tolerated at any time. He asked the board if they were going to violate policy and allow this to happen.

Dr. Salvo explained that within the context of a theatre production it models and mimics life and restated parts of his earlier statement that we would continue to give challenges to students. To which Mr. Bakley restated but the policy says at any time! Mr. Dagney stated that in the context of the stage, they are performing and we need to trust in the administration to make the decisions for the students. Ms. Elco, board solicitor, tried to clarify that profanity as part of the

structured curriculum is outside of the policy. You need to evaluate the context of the profanity and if it is within the curriculum, it is acceptable.

Ms. Hodges asked to speak again and questioned why it is a problem this year? I have witnessed other plays that have been performed with profanity in them and there are people in this room that were involved in those plays before. They have heard bad words before, so why is it a problem this year? Why now?

Mr. Bakley kept asking the question if the board was going to allow them to violate policy and refused to accept the explanations by Mr. Dagney, Dr. Salvo, Mr. Roberts and Ms. Elco as to the context of the books and plays. He stated that we are to have two policies for two different groups, so we are back to slavery and women not voting because we have two policies one for each group. We are violating policy.

Mr. Roberts closed board comment and asked for adjournment of the meeting.

## **XX. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education meeting at 9:11 p.m.

Motion:	Mr. Hamer	Second:	Mr. Dagney
Vote:	Voice	Carried:	Yes

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane S. Fox  
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary