

**MIDDLE TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING**

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2015
6:00 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 Anne Haig

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
- A Christian Paskalides, Principal, Elementary #1
- A Douglas Penkethman, Principal, Elementary #2
- A Dr. Toni Lehman, Principal, Middle School
- P Frank Riggitano, Principal, High School
- P William Donio, Board Solicitor
- A Amy Houck, 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. The purpose of this special meeting is to conduct a hearing as required by the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, N.J.S.A. 18A:37-13.2, et seq.

The Board may consider any other matters which are not known at this time but which may subsequently be determined to require its attention at these meetings. Formal action may be taken on such matters.

V. RECESS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion to move to closed session at 6:01 p.m. for approximately 60 minutes for

1. H.I.B. Hearing

Motion:	Mr. DeLollis	Second:	Ms. Haig
Vote:	Voice	Carried:	Yes

VI. RECONVENE TO REGULAR SESSION

Motion to reconvene to regular session at 8:26 p.m.

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

1. Motion was made to affirm the H.I.B. as documented in the resolution attached.

Motion:	Mr. Roberts	Second:	Mr. Dagney
Vote:	Roll Call	Carried:	Yes

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

VII. RECESS INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion to move to closed session at 8:35 p.m. for approximately 30 minutes for

1. Personnel

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

VIII. RECONVENE TO REGULAR SESSION

Motion to reconvene to regular session at 9:06 p.m.

Motion:	Ms. Haig	Second:	Mr. Back
Vote:	Voice	Carried:	Yes

(Ms. Haig left meeting at 9:10 p.m.)

IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Victoria Shappell, graduated senior Middle Township High School, spoke on behalf of the graduated seniors and as a former band student read a statement in which they spoke about Mr. Sterling and his whole hearted involvement with the band, he was devoted to enhancing the band experience, and the many memories they had of their band experiences. They were saddened by his not being able to attend their culminating functions as seniors.

Taylor Schad, Student, stated how Mr. Sterling gave her a passion for something and that was the band and losing him is losing the band.

Melissa Stahler, student, read a statement in support of Mr. Sterling and the involvement with the band. She can't imagine a Middle Township without him.

Tom Schad, Cape May Court House, spoke by saying that he and Mr. Sterling have had their differences but his daughter continued on. Mr. Sterling got the best out of the kids and he should be commended for it.

Gabriella Green, Student, spoke about being a quiet girl and how Mr. Sterling taught her how to talk to people and speak up. She has been with the band for four years and expressed concern about him not coming back.

Suzanne Bowen, Cape May Court House, the band is going down the tubes without him give him (Mr. Sterling) back to us.

John McNulty, Lower Township, has known Mr. Sterling personally and has helped him in many ways. Middle Township has a great reputation. You need to forgive and focus on what a good human being he is.

Donna McDevitt, parent, spoke regarding her daughter and how she hated school in 6th grade but Mr. Sterling has given her a positive attitude and love for school. He has so much love for his kids.

Sherry Peteani, Cape May court House, spoke about how her daughter is has an extreme issue with change and Mr. Sterling was her go to person, she felt secure with him, he looked out for her. The band is a huge family and it is being plucked apart. There is a huge group of kids that he shows love and respect for and they in turn show respect back. Wouldn't you rather have respectful students? It is disheartening having him taken away after 36 years, what has he done? You are destroying the band program.

Merideth Fiorucci, Cape May Court House, about Mr. Sterling and how he has been a friend for over ten years. He helped her daughter start a bible study program club before school at the Middle school. This is her only experience with Mr. Sterling as she has not had any children in the band program. She also, spoke about the Music in the Parks event that Mr. Sterling arranges in conjunction with Morey's Piers where she works. The event coordinators speak about the amazing job that he does with this event.

David Haines, Seaville, former Middle School teacher, read a written statement in which he expressed the following:

- Mr. Sterling's character and professionalism beyond reproach
- He is a role model and innovator
- Always wants the best for his students
- He creates a non-threatening learning environment
- Comforting demeanor at concerts
- Easy to talk to
- Many acts of kindness this man has shown.

Finally, this is a crucifixion of a good man and it will have a shameful impact on the community.

Joe Springer, Lower Township, is a 30 year church member and spoke about how Mr. Sterling relates to people, he has never seen him unprofessional, always under control. It is hard work being a band director, and he is a humble man. The band plays for their congregation at church as practice for their concerts. Mr. Sterling exhibits qualities of a godly man. He studied to be a pastor and is now the pastor of their church. He goes the extra mile. God has blessed that band because Dick Sterling is there.

Brenda Flannery, Cape May Court House, read a statement from her daughter in support of Mr. Sterling. He is our missing member, bring him home. He has given my daughter self-respect. He loves the band. He is a father to most of these kids, encourages them to be the best. This is not fair to the kids.

Holly Nelson, unknown, being a former school board member from another district she understands the difficult job the board has. Mr. Sterling has a servant's heart. This is about being held accountable. You are all voted in to this position and must do the best for Middle Township as you will be held accountable for your decisions.

Tom Stahler, Student, spoke regarding Mr. Sterling and about how he has never been in band but Mr. Sterling has been an influence on his life as he has always been around.

Kelly Sincavage, Cape May County, Peachtree Lane, Mr. Sterling has been like a father to her. There is no question about the job that he has done or the love of his students as you can see by the testimony tonight. You spoke at length during the board meeting about your bullying policy and what it means. This incident is clearly about him protecting a student and since most of you are parents here, that could have been your daughter. This is a clear attack on him and I urge you to reconsider your votes tonight because you would be losing a wonderful man of integrity.

Sherry Peteani, Cape May Court House, the students are respectful, they knew what was expected of them and he reciprocates respect back to them. He has a major impact on children.

X. BOARD COMMENT

Mr. Roberts thanked the board for their time tonight and the public for their patience with the process tonight.

Mr. Bakley thanked Mr. Haines for his comments, they were appreciated.

Mr. Hamer thanked everyone for coming out tonight and told the public that we are doing the best that we can do for Middle Township.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board of Education meeting at 9:57 p.m.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane S. Fox
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary