

# CLOSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

## *Closter, New Jersey*

### MINUTES

#### REGULAR MEETING

*Tenakill Middle School*

*April 9, 2026 - 7:30 PM*

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The Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Finkelstein at 7:30 PM.

The following Board Members were present:

Ms. Argenziano (Virtual), Mr. Shih, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Ravid, Mr. Paldi, Ms. Lee,  
Mr. Choi (Arrived at 7:45)

The following Board Members were absent:

Ms. Estrems

Also present:

Mr. McHale and Mr. Villanueva

#### *NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ACT STATEMENT - Read by the President:*

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to ensure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meeting of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Secretary to the Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting by having the date, time, and place thereof, posted at each school building within the district, district website, the Board of Education office, the Office of the Borough Clerk, and transmitted to *The Record* and *Northern Valley Suburbanite* newspapers.

#### *PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE*

#### *SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT*

*Mr. Vincent McHale, Superintendent of Schools, shared with the Board and the community his report:*

*On April 8, 189 Tenakill Middle School students delivered an outstanding Spring Concert under the direction of Ms. Riecken (Choral Director) and Ms. Abbey (Band and Orchestra Director). Performing ensembles included the Beginner Band, Beginner Orchestra, Intermediate Band, TMS Orchestra, Percussion Ensemble, Orchestra Gold, Tenakill Players, Concert Band, Junior Chorus, and Tenakill Singers. Approximately 77 students performed in more than one ensemble! The evening concluded with a combined TMS Orchestra and Concert Band finale featuring a medley from the Broadway musical WICKED, a show students will go to see in May. The quality of the performances was a testament to our students, our dedicated directors, and to why Closter Public Schools has been*

*recognized as a Best Community for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation. Congratulations to all involved!*

*We will observe Paraprofessional Appreciation Day tomorrow, Friday, April 10, 2026, and we honor and thank the incredible paraprofessionals who serve our students and schools each day. Their dedication, compassion, and support are essential to the success of our learning community, and we are grateful for everything they do. Please join us in recognizing and celebrating these valued members of the Closter Public Schools family!*

*The Tenakill Middle School Science Olympiad Team is raising funds for their trip to the national competition in Los Angeles, CA. If you would like to support them, please visit their [Spirit Gear Fundraiser](#), which will be available through May 15, 2026, or the [GoFundMe Drive](#). The team is grateful for all the support from our Closter community.*

*The preliminary budget for the 2026-2027 school year, presented at the Board meeting on March 12, 2026, was approved by the Executive County Superintendent and the Executive County Business Official. Thank you to our Business Administrator, Floro Villanueva, his staff, and the Board of Education Finance and Physical Plant Committee for their dedicated work in preparing the budget, which maintains all of our programs and staff so that we can continue the tradition of excellence in Closter Public Schools. The public hearing on the 2026-2027 Closter Public School Budget will take place at the Board of Education meeting on April 30, 2026. We invite all community members to attend.*

*Schools will be closed for spring recess from Monday, April 13, 2026, through Friday, April 17, 2026. Schools will reopen on Monday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. We wished everyone a spring break filled with rest, renewal, and time to recharge for the remaining ten weeks of school!*

### **BOARD COMMITTEES**

*There were no board committee reports. Ms. Finkelstein announced that the Personnel Committee will meet prior to the next board meeting.*

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS**

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾ , seconded by Mr. Paldi ▾ to open the meeting to the public.

*Statements made by individual participants are limited to a duration of three (3) minutes unless otherwise announced at the beginning of the discussion. A maximum of 15 minutes for public input is scheduled as per bylaw 0167. The Board urges large groups to select one person to represent them. The Board reminds those individuals who take the opportunity to speak to please step up, identify themselves by name and address, and to limit their comments to items listed on the agenda.*

Alissa Latner, 32 Hawthorne Terrace, Closter, NJ - Ms. Latner discussed with the Mayor and Council if they can donate money to the science olympiad, and she shared that the council will entertain that and asked when the science olympiad competition is, and if she can share the GoFundMe information on the borough website to get more supporters. Mr. McHale responded that the competition runs from May 21st to May 24th and that the council can post the GoFundMe on its borough website.

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾ , seconded by Mr. Paldi ▾ to resume the regular order of business

## **BOARD OPERATIONS**

Moved by Ms. Ravid ▾ , seconded by Ms. Micera ▾ to approve Motions A - D.

Ms. Ravid thanked the United States Tennis Association for its donation of tennis equipment.

Motions were approved ▾ by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Argenziano, Mr. Shih, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Ravid, Mr. Paldi, Ms. Lee, Mr. Choi

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Board of Education Meeting Minutes**

Motion to approve the March 26, 2026, Board of Education meeting minutes.

B. **APPROVAL - Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB)**

Motion to affirm the decision of the Superintendent of Schools regarding Harassment, Intimidation or Bullying (HIB) incidents TMS-2526-22 and TMS-2526-23 as reported to the Board in Executive Session at the March 26, 2026, meeting.

C. **APPROVAL - Submission and Acceptance of the Funding for Optimal Comprehensive Universal Screeners (FOCUS) Grant**

Motion to approve the application submission and acceptance of the Funding for Optimal Comprehensive Universal Screeners (FOCUS) Grant (25-TL02-G03) for the grant period of June 1, 2026, through May 31, 2027. The grant allocation for Closter Public Schools is \$3,544.00

D. **APPROVAL - Donation of Tennis Equipment to Tenakill Middle School**

Motion to accept the donation of the following tennis equipment to TMS from the United States Tennis Association (Net Generation), valued at \$1,200.00:

- 30 youth tennis rackets
- 15 foam tennis balls
- 15 youth tennis ball carrying cases
- Net tape
- Sidewalk chalk

**CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE**

*Chairperson: Ms. Lee; Members: Ms. Argenziano, Ms. Estrems*

Moved by Ms. Lee ▾ , seconded by Mr. Paldi ▾ to approve Motions A and B.

Motions were approved ▾ by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Argenziano, Mr. Shih, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Ravid, Mr. Paldi, Ms. Lee, Mr. Choi

NAYS: None

**A. APPROVAL - Staff Coursework**

Motion to approve the following courses for the 2025-2026 school year as recommended to the Superintendent by the Principals:

Staff Member: Kaitlyn Yu  
Course No./Title: 1) EDUC 710B I'm So Stressed I Could Scream  
2) EDUC 719P Social and Emotional Learning and Character Development  
Institution: University of LaVerne  
Credits: 6 (3 credits each)

Staff Member: Megan Weis  
Course No./Title: 1) EDUC 710B I'm So Stressed I Could Scream  
2) EDUC 719P Social and Emotional Learning and Character Development  
Institution: University of LaVerne  
Credits: 6 (3 credits each)

Staff Member: Songhee Lee  
Course No./Title: Master's in Teacher Leadership:  
1) Teacher Leadership and Learning Communities  
2) Curriculum Development for Teacher Leaders and Other School Professionals  
3) Teacher Leadership in Practice  
4) Agency in Teacher Leadership  
5) Analysis of Classroom Teacher Behavior  
6) Educational Change  
7) Clinical Self-Study in Teacher Leadership  
8) Issues in Language and Cultural Diversity in ESL/Bilingual Programs  
9) Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition for Teaching Languages  
10) Planning, Teaching, and Assessment in ESL Classrooms  
11) Understanding Immigrant-Origin Students: Language, Culture and Mobility

12) Integrating Language and Content in the ESL/Bilingual Education Classroom

Institution: Rowan University  
Credits: Master's Program

**B. APPROVAL - NJ School Boards Conference 2026**

Motion to approve the attendance of the following trustees and district employees at the NJ School Boards Conference in Atlantic City on October 19-22, 2026:

Trustees: Edmund Choi, Marilyn Estrems, Melody Finkelstein, Cathy Lee, Janine Micera, Gal Paldi, Avishag Ravid, and Gregory Shih  
Staff: Vincent McHale, Floro Villanueva Jr.  
Cost to Board: Group Registration of \$2,300  
Individual Lodging, mileage, meals, and incidentals not to exceed \$831.48 per person, in accordance with GSA-approved travel regulations and applicable OMB New Jersey regulations.

**FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT COMMITTEE**

*Chairperson: Mr. Choi; Members: Ms. Micera, Ms. Ravid, Ms. Finkelstein*

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾, seconded by Mr. Paldi ▾ to approve Motions A - C.

Motions were approved ▾ by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Argenziano, Mr. Shih, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Ravid, Mr. Paldi, Ms. Lee, Mr. Choi

NAYS: None

**A. APPROVAL - Payment of Bills**

Motion to approve payment of bills from April 1, 2026, to April 9, 2026, in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$1,443,884.61
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 2, 275.18
Enterprise (Milk – Fund 60)	\$ 1,108.23
Total	\$1,447,268.02

B. **APPROVAL – Special Education 1:1 Paraprofessional Continuation**

Motion to approve the continuation of a Special Education 1:1 Paraprofessional for Closter Student for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year:

<u>NJSLEDS#</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Placement</u>
5536231421	\$16,555.55	K	Valley Program

C. **APPROVAL – Renewal of Athletic Transportation Contract**

BE IT RESOLVED that the Closter Board of Education approves renewing the athletic transportation contract for the Closter Board of Education Athletics Route with Valley Transportation Co., Inc. for the 2026-2027 school year. The contract renewal is at a 0% increase, or \$425 per trip, with an adjustment of \$50 per ¼ hour for any additional time beyond 2.5 hours.

WHEREAS, this renewal is made in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:39-3, which permits the negotiated renewal of student transportation contracts with current vendors, provided that:

- The terms of the contract remain substantially the same, and
- The increase does not exceed the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI) cap set by the Commissioner of Education;

AND WHEREAS, the proposed renewal reflects no increase in cost, remaining within the allowable CPI cap of 3.58% for the 2026-2027 school year;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board President and the School Business Administrator / Board Secretary are hereby authorized to execute such contract and any other documents necessary to effectuate the terms of this Resolution. The School Business Administrator/Board Secretary shall submit all required documents to the Executive County Superintendent in accordance with the regulations governing student transportation.

**PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

*Chairperson: Mr. Paldi; Members: Mr. Shih, Ms. Finkelstein*

Moved by Mr. Paldi ▾, seconded by Ms. Micera ▾ to approve Motions A - H.

*Mr. McHale further explained item C and read Katelyn Lee's resignation letter. Ms. Lee wrote that she is grateful for the opportunities to work in this great district.*

*For item D, Mr. McHale read Ms. Hedenberg's retirement letter. Ms. Hedenberg expressed her appreciation for 34 years of service and for the support of the TMS administration.*

Motions were approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Argenziano, Mr. Shih, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Ravid, Mr. Paldi, Ms. Lee, Mr. Choi  
NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Revision in Leave of Absence Dates for Ashley Buckley, Hillside Elementary School Special Education Teacher**

Motion to approve Ashley Buckley, HES Special Education teacher, for an FMLA and NJFLA child bonding leave from September 1, 2026, through November 24, 2026, with an anticipated return to work on November 25, 2026.

B. **APPROVAL - Resignation of Michelle Theos, Hillside Elementary School Paraprofessional**  
Motion to accept the resignation of Michelle Theos, HES paraprofessional, effective April 10, 2026.

C. **APPROVAL - Resignation of Katelyn Lee, Hillside Elementary School Grade 2 Teacher**  
Motion to accept the resignation of Katelyn Lee, HES Grade 2 teacher, effective June 30, 2026.

D. **APPROVAL - Retirement of Kathy Hedenberg, Tenakill Middle School Speech Teacher**  
Motion to approve the retirement of Kathy Hedenberg, TMS Speech Teacher, effective June 30, 2026.

E. **APPROVAL - Jenna Komar as Clinical Intern for the 2026-2027 School Year**  
Motion to approve Jenna Komar, Montclair State University clinical intern, to work with Lauren Bulger for the 2026-2027 school year, pending criminal history background check.

F. **APPROVAL - Job Description for Behaviorist**  
Motion to approve the job description for Behaviorist as per Appendix A, attached hereto.

G. **APPROVAL - Termination of Employee #38192724**  
Motion to approve the termination of employee #38192724, effective April 10, 2026.

H. **APPROVAL - Substitute Teachers/Paraprofessionals/Custodians**  
Motion to approve the following substitute teachers/paraprofessionals/custodians for the 2025-2026 school Year:

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Certification</u></b>
Amirah Elayan	Substitute Certificate
Daniel Barbo	Substitute Certificate

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS**

*Mr. Villanueva reminded the trustees to complete the CSA Training and their NJ School Boards Mandated training.*

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾ , seconded by Mr. Paldi ▾ to open the meeting for public comments.

*Alissa Latner, 32 Hawthorne Terrace, Closter, NJ - Ms. Latner said that she has been a substitute teacher in the district for a long time and asked if you need to go through the state now for a substitute certificate. Mr. McHale responded that if you are a substitute teacher, you must hold either a substitute certificate or a standard teacher certificate. Ms. Latner then raised the pay rate for substitutes and whether we can increase it. Mr. McHale responded that, after speaking with other districts in Bergen County, some pay more and some pay less, but those that pay more still struggle to fill their positions.*

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾ , seconded by Mr. Paldi ▾ to close the meeting to public comments.

**CLOSED SESSION MOTION (If required)**

Moved by Mr. Shih ▾ , seconded by Ms. Micera ▾ to approve the following Closed Session Motion.

Motion was approved ▾ by a voice vote of the Board:

YEAS: Ms. Argenziano, Mr. Shih, Ms. Micera, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Ravid, Mr. Paldi, Ms. Lee, Mr. Choi

NAYS: None

BE IT RESOLVED that the Closter Board of Education will adjourn to a Closed Session to discuss the following:

**Personnel Matters  
Legal Matters  
Negotiations**

The matters so discussed will be disclosed to the public as soon as and to the extent that such disclosure can be made without adversely affecting the public.

The Board went into Closed Session at 7:50 PM.

The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 8:04 PM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Ms. Micera ▾, seconded by Mr. Shih ▾ to adjourn the meeting at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Floro M. Villanueva, Jr.", written over the typed name.

Floro M. Villanueva, Jr.  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary

**Closter, NJ 07624**

**TITLE: BEHAVIORIST**

**QUALIFICATIONS:**

1. Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) certification from the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB), including a master's degree from an accredited institution.
2. Active maintenance of BCBA certification, including completion of 32 continuing education units (CEUs) every two years, with a minimum of 4 hours in ethics, per BACB renewal requirements.
3. Note: School district employees providing ABA services within their regular employment duties are exempt from the Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA) licensure requirement per N.J.A.C. 13:42B; however, active BCBA certification from the BACB is required.
4. Valid NJ certification as Teacher of Students with Disabilities, school psychologist, school counselor, or social worker.
5. Knowledge and experience of the diverse needs of children with disabilities and appropriate special education classroom practices.
6. Ability to communicate effectively with students, parents, and school personnel.
7. Required criminal history background check and other required paperwork.
8. Current residency in New Jersey, approved residency waiver, or candidate agrees to obtain residency within one year of employment.

**REPORTS TO:** Director of Special Services

**JOB GOAL:** Develop and implement behavioral interventions with staff assistance to facilitate students' attainment of social and emotional growth consistent with the goals set forth by Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

**PERFORMANCE RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Responsible for generating and implementing programs to remediate behavioral and social problems for students, as well as being available for consultation to school staff and parents.
2. Designs programs for students that are consistent with the total educational philosophy and goals of the School Board.
3. Consults, collaborates, and completes reports as appropriate with/for the Child Study Teams on an ongoing basis.
4. Plans and conducts regularly scheduled consultations with classroom teachers regarding behavioral, social, or personal problems affecting the student.

<b>Board Approval</b>			
Agenda Date:		Resolution No.:	

**Closter, NJ 07624**

- 5. Works in coordination with teachers, related services personnel, and administration in identifying social/behavioral issues, as well as planning and developing programs.
  
- 6. Assists in the design and implementation of professional development related to special education, providing professional development to targeted staff on all aspects of school programming within special education programs:
  - Delivery of instruction;
  - Behavior Management of Students (including techniques for remediating behavioral, social, or personal problems of students);
  - Data Collection (Applied Behavior Analysis).
  
- 7. Leads and/or assists in the development, implementation, and monitoring of Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP) in accordance with NJDOE Best Practices for NJ Public School Behavior Analysts (2024) and N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8.
  
- 8. Develops IEP goals and objectives and uses paraprofessionals to assist with implementing goals, as appropriate.
  
- 9. Provides training for paraprofessionals in the areas of behavior management skills and affective education.
  
- 10. Designs, implements, and follows up on behavioral management programs for students to remediate behavioral and social problems.
  
- 11. Consults with parents regarding students' behavioral goals.
  
- 12. Interprets behavioral assessments for school staff and parents.
  
- 13. Develops home programs and related behavioral goals.
  
- 14. Assists parents in acquiring services from the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and other applicable state and county agencies.
  
- 15. Reports to, consults, and completes reports as requested with/for the Director of Special Services on an ongoing basis.
  
- 16. Provides guidance and professional development to staff regarding the appropriate use of positive behavioral supports and the district's restraint and seclusion policies, in accordance with NJDOE Restraint and Seclusion Guidebook for Students with Disabilities (2025) and N.J.A.C. 6A:16.
  
- 17. Considers the linguistic and cultural needs of multilingual learners when developing behavioral assessments and intervention plans, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7.

<b>Board Approval</b>			
Agenda Date:		Resolution No.:	

**Closter, NJ 07624**

- 18. Collaborates with building administrators and Child Study Team members on matters relating to discipline of students with disabilities, including manifestation determinations and interim alternative educational settings, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-2.8 and NJDOE Discipline Guidebook for Students with Disabilities (2025).
- 19. Participates in transition planning for students with behavioral needs beginning at age 14, in coordination with the IEP team and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, as applicable.
- 20. Continues professional growth through educational meetings, visits to related facilities, attendance at conferences, reading of professional literature, and dialogue/exchanging ideas among staff.
- 21. Performs any other duties as may be assigned.

**TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT:**

Ten-month position. Salary and hours are established within the Agreement between the Closter Board of Education and the Closter Education Association.

**EVALUATION:**

Performance of this job will be evaluated annually in accordance with NJ State law and the provisions of the board's policy on evaluation of certified staff.

<b>Board Approval</b>			
Agenda Date:		Resolution No.:	