

CLOSTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Closter, New Jersey

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

Tenakill Middle School

May 13, 2021 - 7:00 PM

The Board meeting was called to order by Ms. Finkelstein at 7:01 PM

The following Board members were present:

Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

The following Board members were absent:

Ms. Kwon

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, remote access information, 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

CLOSED SESSION #1 MOTION

Moved by Dr. Puttannah, seconded by Mr. Linn to approve the following Closed Session Motion.

Motion was approved by a voice vote of the Board:

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

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

Personnel Matters

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 7:05 PM.

The Board reconvened from Closed Session at 7:37 PM and resumed the public session.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

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

- *Many of our school families, teachers, staff and administrators attended the Stop Asian Hate Rally on Sunday, May 2, 2021, at 2:00 p.m. in Memorial Park. The speeches by all of the speakers were outstanding and were a call for everyone to speak out against hatred. There will be another opportunity for our community to Unite Against Racial Violence on Sunday, May 16, 2021, at 3:00 p.m. at the Overpeck County Park in Leonia. All are invited to attend to stand in solidarity with Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.*
- *The Closter PTO is sponsoring a fund-raiser tomorrow evening, May 14, 2021. It is a virtual event with wine tasting and auction. If you haven't signed up for the wine tasting program, you can still participate in the virtual auction. There are amazing experiences and baskets from local restaurants, classes, camps, health & beauty, and so much more! We encourage you to participate, as this is the PTO's major fundraiser. All the information is on the Closter PTO webpage, <https://www.closterpto.org/>.*
- *As reported at the April 29th Board meeting, we have been working diligently to transition to a full day schedule before the end of the school year for both our in-person and virtual students. We have been encouraged by Governor Murphy to have schools reopen as fully as possible. The American Academy of Pediatrics has offered guidance that says school plans should start with a goal of having students physically present in school and that the importance of in-person learning is well-documented. The Closter Restart and Recovery Plan has recognized the overall goal of the phase-in scheduling plan was always to increase classroom occupancy and in-person instructional time. He acknowledged, as the district leader, that he has full responsibility to return students and staff to the normal school schedule as soon as we are able. Our biggest obstacle was how to provide coverage for students to eat lunch in school, while maintaining six feet of social distance. He is happy to share with our Board of Education and the school community that our administrators have determined that we can accommodate grade level classes of students in the gym for lunch, while being supervised by certificated staff. This would require adding lunch periods to our schedule, with some students eating earlier and others later, but we would be able now to return to a full day schedule. Students would have to bring their own lunch.*
- *Hillside School students would arrive between 8:30 and 8:45 a.m. and would dismiss at 3:05 p.m. Tenakill Middle School students would arrive between 8:25 a.m. and would dismiss at 2:22 p.m. Fully virtual students would follow the same daily schedule, with offline time for lunch and some learning activities off-line to reduce screen time. The student schedules, for the most part, would remain the same, with some alterations to the time that specials would meet. There are some adjustments being made to the times that students would receive related services, ELL and middle school band, with the goal of having those finalized by Monday, May 17, 2021. We could implement*

this expanded day schedule on May 24, 2021. While the amount of instructional time in the day would be increased only by about 30 minutes, this return to a full day schedule would allow four weeks of a return to the traditional school day, allowing students to have more time in school and more time to participate in end-of-year activities. Further, the four weeks of a full day schedule will also inform us about how we could best arrange lunch and recess for the 2021-2022 academic year – which will be offered in-person and full day. He strongly believes that having information about how lunch might work will better prepare us for a stronger opening in September. He welcomes Board discussion on this matter and he is prepared to recommend adding a motion to the agenda to update our Closter Public Schools Restart and Recovery Plan to include a Phase V, in which the school day is returned to the regular hours at each school.

Ms. Finkelstein asked the Board if they had any questions or comments:

- *Ms. Micera stated she was excited that the students, teachers and administration would be able to experience a normal school. This is an achievement and a goal that we have been trying to do since last March.*
- *Ms. Bhagat thanked the staff and the administration for all their hard work in moving forward to bring normalcy back for our children*

PUBLIC DISCUSSION ON AGENDA ITEMS

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Kothari 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 policy 1120. 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.

Mr. Villanueva advised the Board that letters were received this morning from the Kindergarten, First, Second, Third, Fourth Grade Teams, the Hillside Elementary Special Education Staff, and the Student Support Staff; signed by Dr. Joan Romo, School Psychologist, Ms. Dara Weiss, Hillside Elementary School Counselor and Ms. Alexandra Earle, Tenakill Middle School Counselor. They expressed their concerns and opposition to return to a full school day prior to September for various reasons, included but not limited to:

- *Social and emotional impact of extended screen time*
- *Disruption to children and schedules is a major concern*
- *Any types of transition and challenges on keeping their masks on*
- *Students and staff have dealt with so many changes this year*
- *Negative effects of another schedule change on all learned including special education and special need students*
- *Staggering lunch times will mean that some students could be forced to eat as early as 10:30 AM*
- *Mental health professionals of the district are concerned with the social and emotional well being of staff and the ability to sustain another change in a year.*

- *This time of the year, teachers, staff and students are wrapping things up and working towards preparing for the transition to the next grade. Changing the schedule will interrupt a lot of these healthy closure and transition processes.*

Copies of each letter will be included in the official minutes.

Mr. Villanueva read a letter from Ms. Amy Goldstein, 226 Cedar Lane

- *Ms. Goldstein expressed her concerns and opposition with the full day schedule.*

A copy of her letter will be included in the official minutes.

Ms. Dara Weiss, Hillside Elementary School Counselor

- *Ms. Weiss read the letter from the Student Support Staff.*

Ms. Basile asked the board when the change would begin and wanted to thank Mr. McHale and the Board. They are grateful for all the hard work to get the students back to school. Mr. McHale advised Ms. Basile the return to full day would start May 24.

Ms. Bajakian, Hillside Elementary School First Grade Teacher

- *Ms. Bajakian read the letter from the First Grade Team expressing their concerns and oppositions for the full day schedule*

Ms. Jodi Belnick, Hillside Elementary Third Grade Teacher

- *Ms. Belnick read the letter from the Third Grade Team expressing their concerns and oppositions for the full day schedule*

Ms. Frieda Topalian, 93 Venus Drive

- *Ms. Topalian expressed her concerns and agreed with Ms. Belnick's thorough research. Ms Topalian does not want her child to spend any additional screen time for her daughter.*

Mr. Larry Reines 290 Demarest Avenue

- *Mr. Reines would like to thank the Board, Superintendent and all the Professionals for putting in the hard work to have the students go into a full day of school. His children are excited and looking forward to starting a full day of school.*

Ms. Kari Corcoran McPartland spoke on behalf of the Special Education Department

- *Ms. Corcoran read a letter from the Special Education Department expressing their concerns and oppositions for the full day schedule.*

Mr. Villanueva advised Ms. Finkelstein that the public discussion exceeded the 15 minute time limit and she allowed the additional time for those waiting in the queue to be heard.

Ms. Schwartz, 12 McCain Court

- Ms. Schwartz questioned what the virtual schedule would look like. Will it also be 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.? What will happen from 12:40 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.? She does not understand why the change is being made for the last three remaining weeks of school as the change will not really show any benefit. Mr. McHale responded that the virtual schedule will be the same time as the in person schedule. We realize it is an increase in screen time and we have ideas to rectify this concern.

Ms. Lauren Engle, Hillside Elementary Kindergarten Teacher

- Ms. Engle read a letter from the Kindergarten Team expressing their concerns and oppositions for the full day schedule

Ms. Finkelstein wanted clarification with regards to the comments mentioned about fatigue and the inability to sit still for a full day. Is there something specific with our school versus other schools who were able to implement the change?

Ms. Bajakian was able to speak on behalf of her classroom. She reported that when half the class was in during the cohorts, students were able to move around more. Currently with a full class the students are limited in moving around their desk. They move by row when they need to leave the classroom. It's a sedentary day, with some breaks in between. Thankfully the weather has been nice and they are able to stagger their recess time outside.

Ms. Levy, Hillside Elementary Second Grade Teacher

- Ms. Levy read a letter from the Second Grade Team expressing their concerns and oppositions for the full day schedule

Ms. Lee wanted to comment to the public and the teachers. Everyone has worked so hard this year, and this has been a big struggle for all of us. We have put a lot of thought into the various options. Come September this will not change, we will be in school full time as virtual will not be an option, and wearing masks. If there is ever a time to try things out and see what works, this is the time. We could reconvene and see what doesn't work and figure out what does work. Not all change is negative, some change could be positive and we could show our children a taste of what it will be like come September.

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Dr. Puttannah to resume the regular order of business.

BOARD OPERATIONS

Moved by Dr. Puttannah, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motion A - C.

Dr. Puttannah wanted to second the comment Ms. Finkelstein mentioned with regards to the importance of structure and social interaction for mental and physical health.

Ms. Finkelstein also thanked the CEA and teachers for sharing their opinions. The board continues to hear their concerns and have conversations with them. Administrators have made accommodations with

teachers needing to work virtually, delaying the start of the school year by one (1) day to allow teachers to prepare, and providing additional technology. The board is aware it has been a challenging year and appreciate all the efforts made by the staff.

Motion was approved by a roll call vote of the Board as follows:

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms.Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Cross, Ms. Finkelstein
NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Minutes**

Motion to approve the April 29, 2021 minutes.

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

Motion to affirm the decision of the Superintendent of Schools regarding Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) incident(s) reported to the Board in Executive Session at the April 29, 2021, meeting.

C. **APPROVAL - Revision of Restart and Recovery Plan**

Based on our ability to have inperson students spaced six (6) feet apart for lunch in the gymnasium at each school, we will implement and expanded day of school for in person and fully virtual students (HES: 8:30 a.m. to 3:05 p.m.; and TMS 8:25 a.m. to 2:22 p.m.) to begin on May 24 and continue through June 22, 202.

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

Chairperson Ms. Lee, Ms. Cross, Ms. Puttannah

Moved by Ms. Lee, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motions A - B

Ms. Kothari wanted clarification on item B. Mr. McHale explained the Consortium Memorandum of Agreement through the NVRHS. The high school district handles the grant funds for us. This motion allows them to do this for us. For each PreK through 8 districts that approve the resolution, the high school will be able to apply for the grants next month.

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms.Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Cross, Ms. Finkelstein
NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Staff Coursework**

Motion to approve the following courses for 2020-2021 as recommended to the Superintendent by the Principals:

Staff Member: Andrea Watkins
Course No./Title: EDUC 7620.82 Diagnosis of Dyslexia
Institution: Fairleigh Dickinson University
Credits: 2

Staff Member: Andrea Watkins
Course No./Title: EDUC 6610.82 History of Multisensory Instructional Methods for Students with Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia
Institution: Fairleigh Dickinson University
Credits: 1

Staff Member: Leigh Bomzer
Course No./Title: MAT 932 Rich Math Tasks in the Classroom
Institution: Fresno Pacific University
Credits: 3

B. APPROVAL - Consortium Memorandum of Agreement - NVRHS

Motion to approve the Title IIA, III, III-Immigrant, and IV-Part A Consortium Memorandum of Agreement between the Northern Valley Regional High School Board of Education, as Lead Applicant, and the Closter Public Schools for the 2021-2022 school year.

FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT COMMITTEE

Chairperson Ms. Kwon, Ms. Finkelstein, Ms. Kothari

Moved by Ms. Kothari, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motions A - E.

Ms. Kothari wanted clarification on item E. Mr. McHale explained that this is for the federal government grants related to the pandemic and this is to approve the application for the grant and to accept it once the funds are offered. We need to meet all the requirements for the federal grant in order to receive these funds.

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. APPROVAL - Monthly Bills

Motion to approve payment of bills from April 30, 2021 to May 13, 2021 in the amount of:

General Fund (Fund 10)	\$786,989.49
Special Revenue (Fund 20)	\$ 4,503.79

Total	\$791,493.28
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B. APPROVAL – Tax Levy Payment Schedule – SY 2021-2022

Motion to approve the tax levy payment schedule in support of the 2021-2022 school year budget:

<u>Payment</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>General Fund Amount</u>	<u>Debt Service Amount</u>	<u>Tax Payment Amount</u>
1	July 9, 2021	\$ 1,753,478.33	\$ 144,518.00	\$ 1,897,996.33
2	August 9, 2021	\$ 1,753,478.33	\$ -	\$ 1,753,478.33
3	September 10, 2021	\$ 1,753,478.33	\$ -	\$ 1,753,478.33
4	October 11, 2021	\$ 1,753,478.33	\$ -	\$ 1,753,478.33
5	November 10, 2021	\$ 1,753,478.33	\$ -	\$ 1,753,478.33
6	December 10, 2021	\$ 1,753,478.33	\$ -	\$ 1,753,478.33
7	January 10, 2022	\$ 1,753,478.33	\$ 144,517.00	\$ 1,897,995.33
8	February 10, 2022	\$ 1,753,478.33	\$ -	\$ 1,753,478.33
9	March 10, 2022	\$ 1,753,478.33	\$ -	\$ 1,753,478.33
10	April 11, 2022	\$ 1,753,478.33	\$ -	\$ 1,753,478.33
11	May 10, 2022	\$ 1,753,478.33	\$ -	\$ 1,753,478.33
12	June 10, 2022	\$ 1,753,478.37	\$ -	\$ 1,753,478.37
TOTAL		\$ 21,041,740.00	\$ 289,035.00	\$ 21,330,775.00

C. APPROVAL - Purchase of Four (4) Promethean Boards

Motion to approve the purchase of four (4) Promethean Boards from Keyboard Consultants in the amount of \$19,632 through the Educational Data Services (EDS) Bid #10437 MSRP Tech/AV/Computer/Interactive Whiteboards.

D. APPROVAL - Award of Contract to Drill Construction Co., Inc.

WHEREAS, the Closter Board of Education (“the Board”) advertised for bids for Classroom Renovations at Hillside Elementary School Phase IV Project (the “Project”);

WHEREAS, on April 20, 2021, the Board received bids for the Project;

WHEREAS, the lowest bid for the Project was submitted by Drill Construction Co., Inc. (“Drill”), which submitted a base bid price in the amount of \$315,500, together with Alternate No. 1 in the amount of \$74,000, for a total contract sum of \$389,500; and

WHEREAS, the bid submitted by Drill is responsive in all material respects and it is the Board’s desire to award the contract for the Project to Drill as the lowest responsible bidder.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

1. The Board hereby awards the contract for the Project to Drill for a total contract sum of \$389,500.

2. This award is expressly conditioned upon the contractor furnishing the requisite insurance certificate and labor and materials/performance bond as required in the project specifications, together with an AA201-Project Manning Report, and an
3. executed AIA Agreement, as prepared by the Board Attorney, within ten (10) days of the date hereof.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board Attorney is hereby directed to draft the agreement with the successful bidder consistent with this Resolution and with the terms contained in the bid documents approved by the Board for the Project. The Board President and the Board Secretary are hereby authorized to execute such agreement and any other documents necessary to effectuate the terms of this Resolution.

E. **APPROVAL – Application & Acceptance of CRRSA and ESSER II Grants**

Motion to approve the application and acceptance of CRRSA and ESSER II grants in the following amounts:

ESSER II	\$ 340,742
Learning Acceleration	\$ 25,000
Mental Health Support	\$ 45,000

PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Finkelstein, Mr. Linn

Moved by Ms. Bhagat, seconded by Ms. Micera to approve Motions A - F.

Mr. McHale read Ms. Licameli letter of resignation. She was thankful for her time and opportunity for working with a supportive staff and administration. Mr. McHale wished her all the best in the future.

Mr. McHale advised the board regarding the rescinding of Paraprofessional, Ms. Binal Mistry who was approved at the last board meeting. Due to some personal issues she needs to rescind her position.

Ms. Kothari wanted to know if item E was for this school year. Mr. McHale explained it was for this year. Students are back in school and the drama club is able to meet safely.

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

YEAS: Ms. Bhagat, Ms. Kothari, Ms. Lee, Mr. Linn, Ms. Micera, Dr. Puttannah, Ms. Cross, Ms. Finkelstein

NAYS: None

A. **APPROVAL - Resignation of Lisa Licameli**

Motion to accept, with regrets, Lisa Licameli's resignation as Middle School Science Teacher as of June 30, 2021.

- B. **APPROVAL - Leave Extension for Katrina Vastano**
Motion to approve the discretionary leave of absence extension for Katrina Vastano until February 7, 2022.
- C. **APPROVAL - Leave Extension for Brianna Kehoe**
Motion to approve the discretionary leave of absence extension for Brianna Kehoe for the 2021-2022 school year.
- D. **APPROVAL - SY 2021 - 2022 Personnel**
Motion to approve, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following personnel for SY 2021-2022, attached hereto as Appendices A - E
- Non-Tenured Teachers - Appendix A
 - Tenured Teachers - Appendix B
 - Secretarial Staff - Appendix C
 - Custodial and Maintenance Staff - Appendix D
 - Paraprofessionals - Appendix E
- E. **APPROVAL - Maria Lagomarsino as Drama Club Coach**
Motion to approve Maria Lagomarsino as Drama Club Coach for the 2020-2021 school year (Schedule F).
- F. **APPROVAL - Rescindment of Paraprofessional Position to Binal Mistry**
Motion to rescind paraprofessional position to Binal Mistry for the 2020-2021 school year.

BOARD COMMITTEES

Ms. Bhagat reported that the Personal Committee met on Tuesday to discuss the non-tenured status of staff and if they are recommended for renewal for next school year. Mr. McHale is happy to report that all of our non-tenured staff are approved as mentioned in item D in the Personal and Management portion of the agenda.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

No Old/New Business

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Kothari to open the meeting to public discussion.

Ms. Schwartz, asked if the virtual families have the option to go back to school now that it has been changed to full day since they didn't know this arrangement when they made their decision for the third semester?

Ms. Topalian echoed the same questions asked by Ms. Shwartz. To please allow virtual students to come in for full days. She thanked Mr. McHale; however she does not want her daughter to spend any additional time on the screen. She is hoping something can be done to have the virtual students come in to spend at least the last few weeks especially for the fourth grade students who will be leaving Hillside this year.

Mr. McHale responded to Ms. Schwartz and Ms. Tapolian. Mr. McHale reminded parents when the option was given for semester 3 to choose either Hybrid or Virtual that they would not be able to change if more in person time was added. This would only be for the students who were in person. Mr. McHale reported that Ms. Smith is planning to have the virtual students come in for small events during the last 2 weeks of school. He understands this will help with closure for those students who will be moving on from Hillside. He also mentioned that they will work on opportunities for the virtual students not to be on screen the entire day. Ms. Smith and Mr. Tantum are looking into this along with the CEA on the best way to do this. Unfortunately at this time, we can not accommodate all the fully virtual students to come in person.

Ms. Moshkovich spoke and said that her child has been virtual all year and will remain virtual. She informed the board to have the virtual students schedule not to be changed. They have to engage and re-engage online. While they have a break they need to login in, but they don't have a teacher telling them to log back in. It is very hard to manage such a day. Now it is planned to make it a longer day, this will cause more engagement and reengagement of the day which falls on the home teacher which is the parent. She appreciates the complexities of the changes of the schedules but she is asking not to extend the day for virtual students.

Ms. Maher, Preschool Teacher of Hillside Elementary

Speaking on behalf of herself and not the Pre-K team. She is proud of everyone this year and agrees change could be positive. Consistency is a gift and a gift we could have provided without making any more changes. She understands the rush to get back to normal. She said that teachers are doing the best they can but the feeling is different and the reality school does not have the same access as meaningful age appropriate learning due to the restrictions they must follow. The teachers want what is best for their students. They are proud educators especially in a district as wonderful as this. As inquired about what other districts are doing they have outside tented spaces, smaller class sizes and abbreviated days. She hopes to spend this summer brainstorming and plan to accommodate full day masked learning. By moving so quickly the district is not laying out the best plans.

Ms. Weiss, School Counselor Hillside Elementary

It was mentioned about the social aspect with being in school, it is not the same socially for kids being in school with being socially distanced and in masks. It is different when you are in school. She also mentioned coming and seeing some of the classrooms. She agreed that next year will have longer days and possible masks but there will be more opportunities for parent plans and protocols to be in place. Trial and error is not a way to approach children who are already under stress.

Mr. McHale wanted to clarify that the Pre-K schedule will not be extended beyond the current schedule. PreK will remain the same.

Mr. McHale commented to Ms. Weiss that this is not a trial and error period, it is a practice period . He believes having a practice period in school will let us know how this extended day will work and practicing the lunch procedure will make our start of the year stronger.

Moved by Ms. Micera, seconded by Ms. Bhagat to close the meeting to public discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved by Mr. Linn, seconded by to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



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

**CLOSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2021-2022 PERSONNEL APPROVAL - NON-TENURED TEACHERS**

LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	SALARY	LONGEVITY	STIPEND	TOTAL SALARY	PLACEMENT	STEP	FTE
ANDERSON	BRITTANY	\$65,639.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$65,639.00	MA	3	1.00
BARBATO	JENNIFER	\$66,376.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$66,376.00	BA 30	5	1.00
BROWN	ELIZABETH L	\$70,664.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$70,664.00	MA	5	1.00
CARUSO	JAIME	\$69,852.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$69,852.00	BA	8	1.00
COMSTOCK	SARAH	\$65,639.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$65,639.00	MA	3	1.00
EARLE	ALEXANDRA G	\$68,139.00	\$0.00	\$1,703.48	\$69,842.48	MA	4	1.00
ESPOSITO	ALLISON M	\$73,237.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$73,237.00	MA	6	1.00
HAENELT	KRISTEN LEE	\$92,980.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$92,980.00	BA 15	17	1.00
HUNT	JOSEPHINE V	\$88,958.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$88,958.00	MA 15	12	1.00
IANNI	CATHERINE A	\$81,240.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$81,240.00	MA 15	9	1.00
KANG	SARAH S	\$64,707.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$64,707.00	BA	6	1.00
KEHOE (LOA for SY 21-22)	BRIANNA E	\$80,955.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$80,955.00	MA	10	1.00
KIM	SARA S	\$75,809.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$75,809.00	MA	7	1.00
KLINK	ELIZABETH A	\$63,944.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$63,944.00	BA 15	5	1.00
LEE	KATHY	\$83,813.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$83,813.00	MA 15	10	1.00
LEIBOWITZ	JULIA	\$57,109.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$57,109.00	BA	3	1.00
LOTITO	MARY L	\$62,134.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$62,134.00	BA	5	1.00
MANDAL	LAUREN	\$74,997.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$74,997.00	BA	11	1.00
MAROTTI	JAMIE L	\$76,095.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$76,095.00	MA 15	6	1.00
MENCHISE	SARAH	\$66,567.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$66,567.00	BA 15	6	1.00
MEYERS	KATHARINE	\$65,639.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$65,639.00	MA	3	1.00
MOIDU	SHIREEN	\$62,134.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$62,134.00	BA	5	1.00
RICCA	CATHERINE A	\$68,139.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$68,139.00	MA	4	1.00
RIVELLINI	FRANCESCA M	\$80,955.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$80,955.00	MA	10	1.00
SADARANGANI	PAYAL	\$70,664.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$70,664.00	MA	5	1.00
SHI	DIFEI	\$78,382.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$78,382.00	MA	9	1.00
WHITCHURCH	THERESA	\$58,969.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$58,969.00	BA 15	3	1.00
ZUKOFSKY	DEVIN	\$63,639.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$63,639.00	MA	2	1.00

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**CLOSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2021-2022 PERSONNEL APPROVAL - TENURED TEACHERS**

LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	SALARY	LONGEVITY	STIPEND	TOTAL SALARY	PLACEMENT	STEP	FTE
ABBEY	LAURA J	\$83,527.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$83,527.00	MA	11	1.00
AGUIRRE	PAUL M	\$89,244.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$89,244.00	MA 30	11	1.00
ALPERN	NICOLE C	\$95,362.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$97,362.00	BA 30	17	1.00
ANNESE	JENNIFER L	\$91,300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$91,300.00	MA	14	1.00
AURITI	MARY M	\$102,508.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$102,508.00	MA 15	17	1.00
BACHMANN	ALLISON	\$88,958.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$88,958.00	MA 15	12	1.00
BAJAKIAN	WENDY	\$80,170.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$80,170.00	BA	13	1.00
BANTA	ANGELA M	\$73,237.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$73,237.00	MA	6	1.00
BARRY	CYNTHIA S	\$93,900.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$93,900.00	MA	15	1.00
BELNICK	JODI M	\$105,367.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$107,367.00	MA 30	17	1.00
BOMZER	LEIGH D	\$102,508.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$102,508.00	MA 15	17	1.00
BRETT	PATRICIA M	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
BUCKLEY	ASHLEY S	\$81,240.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$81,240.00	MA 15	9	1.00
CAMILIERI	CARMELO JOSEPH	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
CAPPARELLI	SOFIA V	\$80,170.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$80,170.00	BA	13	1.00
CARPENTER	SUSAN E	\$105,367.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$106,367.00	MA 30	17	1.00
CARUSO	KAREN T	\$99,650.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$100,650.00	MA	17	1.00
CHO	ERICA	\$102,508.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$102,508.00	MA 15	17	1.00
CHURCHILL	MARGARET R	\$111,084.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$112,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
COHEN	LEAH B	\$91,300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$91,300.00	MA	14	1.00
CORCORAN-MC PARTLAND	KARI A	\$88,700.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$88,700.00	MA	13	1.00
CORIO	KERRA	\$96,700.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$97,700.00	MA	16	1.00
CUMMINGS	AMANDA T	\$83,527.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$83,527.00	MA	11	1.00
DEVINE	SHEILA	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
DIPPOLITO	REBECCA	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
DUNN	ERIKA F	\$78,382.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$78,382.00	MA	8	1.00
EDDY	TARA	\$86,100.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$86,100.00	MA	12	1.00
ENGLE	LAUREN S	\$105,367.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$107,367.00	MA 30	17	1.00
FALKENSTERN	LEANNE J	\$75,809.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$75,809.00	MA	7	1.00
FELICE	JANET	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00

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**CLOSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2021-2022 PERSONNEL APPROVAL - TENURED TEACHERS**

LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	SALARY	LONGEVITY	STIPEND	TOTAL SALARY	PLACEMENT	STEP	FTE
FINEMAN	RACHEL L	\$108,134.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$108,134.00	MA 60	16	1.00
FINNEGAN	KATHLEEN	\$90,030.00	\$900.00	\$0.00	\$90,930.00	BA 15	16	1.00
FRIEL	AUDREY	\$105,367.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$107,367.00	MA 30	17	1.00
GERBIG	CHARLENE E	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
GREENE	SCOTT I	\$95,362.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$97,362.00	BA 30	17	1.00
HAARMANN	ANNE M	\$99,650.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$100,650.00	MA	17	1.00
HEDENBERG	KATHY M	\$92,980.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$93,980.00	BA 15	17	1.00
HERNANDEZ	KEVIN N	\$69,852.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$69,852.00	BA	9	1.00
IYO	JOANNE L	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,758.00	\$115,842.00	MA 60	17	1.00
JOST	SILVIA C	\$93,900.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$94,900.00	MA	15	1.00
KAHN	BRENDA M	\$105,367.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$105,367.00	MA 30	17	1.00
KENNEDY	EILEEN C	\$102,508.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$102,508.00	MA 15	17	1.00
KENNEDY	JENNIFER	\$105,367.00	\$1,800.00	\$0.00	\$107,167.00	MA 30	17	1.00
KENNY-WHITENOUR	AMY	\$111,084.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$112,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
KIM	MIN JEONG	\$78,667.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$78,667.00	MA 15	7	1.00
KLIKA	JAMES J	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
LAGOMARSINO	JUDITH	\$105,367.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$107,367.00	MA 30	17	1.00
LEE	KATELYN	\$75,809.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$75,809.00	MA	7	1.00
LEVY	ALYSSA J	\$111,084.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$112,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
LEVY	JENNIFER	\$105,367.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$105,367.00	MA 30	17	1.00
LEWIS	SCOTT M	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
MAHER	KATE E	\$81,240.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$81,240.00	MA 15	8	1.00
MARTINO	MARY JO	\$95,362.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$96,362.00	BA 30	17	1.00
MONAGHAN	ELLEN B	\$111,084.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$112,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
NEBLUNG	ROBERT D	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
PANTALEO	LISA	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
PESCE	REGINA	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
PIDI	CLAIRE	\$102,508.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$103,508.00	MA 15	17	1.00
PLEUS	MEGHAN M	\$80,955.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$80,955.00	MA	10	1.00

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CLOSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2021-2022 PERSONNEL APPROVAL - TENURED TEACHERS

LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	SALARY	LONGEVITY	STIPEND	TOTAL SALARY	PLACEMENT	STEP	FTE
POTKULSKI JR	WILLIAM J	\$102,417.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$103,417.00	MA 30	16	1.00
RACHLIN	GILAE	\$91,300.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$91,300.00	MA	14	1.00
RAMM	KIMBERLY A	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
RIECKEN	DANIELLA M	\$99,650.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$100,650.00	MA	17	1.00
ROCHLIN	LAURIE G	\$111,084.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$111,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
ROEM	JEFFREY C	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
ROMO	JOAN M	\$108,134.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$109,134.00	MA 60	16	1.00
SACCOCCIO	NANCY A	\$92,980.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$92,980.00	BA 15	17	1.00
SCALERA	LORIAN N	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
SHAPIRO	NICHOLAS C	\$73,237.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$73,237.00	MA	6	1.00
SIDROW	ADAM D	\$92,412.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$93,412.00	BA 30	16	1.00
SIDROW	KERRY L	\$96,700.00	\$1,000.00	\$0.00	\$97,700.00	MA	16	1.00
STEELE	BRITTANY A	\$64,707.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$64,707.00	BA	6	1.00
SUNSHINE	JODI	\$91,558.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$91,558.00	MA 15	13	1.00
TACCONI	BRIELLE A	\$83,070.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$83,070.00	BA	14	1.00
TALTY	KRISTIN	\$105,367.00	\$1,900.00	\$0.00	\$107,267.00	MA 30	17	1.00
VASTANO (LOA until 2/22)	KATRINA D	\$73,237.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$73,237.00	MA	6	1.00
VOGEL	KERRY N	\$69,139.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$69,139.00	BA 15	7	1.00
WATKINS	ANDREA	\$105,367.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$105,367.00	MA 30	17	1.00
WEISS	DARA R	\$111,084.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$111,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00
WOWKUN	MICHAEL G	\$111,084.00	\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$113,084.00	MA 60	17	1.00

**CLOSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2021-2022 PERSONNEL APPROVAL - SECRETARIAL STAFF**

LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	SALARY	LONGEVITY	STIPEND	TOTAL SALARY	STEP	FTE
BOEHM	CHERYL A	\$60,238.00	\$2,000.00	\$6,223.80	\$68,461.80	10	1.00
DUBERT	LYNNE	\$60,238.00	\$2,000.00	\$6,223.80	\$68,461.80	10	1.00
LUZZI	CONNIE	\$60,238.00	\$2,000.00	\$6,223.80	\$68,461.80	10	1.00

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CLOSTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2021-2022 PERSONNEL APPROVAL - CUSTODIAL & MAINTENANCE STAFF

LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	POSITION	SALARY	LONGEVITY	BLACK SEAL	TOTAL SALARY	STEP	FTE
ABALLI	MATTHEW G	CUSTODIAN	\$52,625.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$52,725.00	9	1.00
CASTRILLON	GILDARDO A	MAINTENANCE	\$63,694.00	\$569.00	\$100.00	\$64,363.00	7	1.00
GALINAC	ANDREW	CUSTODIAN	\$56,065.00	\$650.00	\$100.00	\$56,815.00	11	1.00
GIOFFRE	VINCENT	CUSTODIAN	\$56,065.00	\$1,500.00	\$100.00	\$57,665.00	11	1.00
GUILLON	AGUSTINA	CUSTODIAN	\$40,950.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$40,950.00	1	1.00
MOLINA	GILDARDO	CUSTODIAN	\$56,065.00	\$1,500.00	\$100.00	\$57,665.00	11	1.00
MORALES	LUZ STELLA	CUSTODIAN	\$56,065.00	\$1,500.00	\$100.00	\$57,665.00	11	1.00
RAUDALES	JOSE	CUSTODIAN	\$56,065.00	\$650.00	\$100.00	\$56,815.00	11	1.00
SANCHEZ	YUDELKA	CUSTODIAN	\$56,065.00	\$1,500.00	\$100.00	\$57,665.00	11	1.00
SMITH	GENE M	CUSTODIAN	\$56,065.00	\$0.00	\$100.00	\$56,165.00	11	1.00

CLOSURE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2021-2022 PERSONNEL APPROVAL - PARAPROFESSIONALS

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LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	RATE	LONGEVITY	STEP
AGRAMONTE	JULISSA	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
AHEARN	DONNA	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
APONTE-SOLOMON	VICKIE	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
BELVEDERE	CATERINA	\$19.73	\$0.00	2
BONASORTE	JOSEPH	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
CHEN	SHUCHUN	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
CHOW	CATHERINE	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
COMER	TERESE	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
CONTRACTOR	TARANNUMGAR	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
COPELAND	MAYULI	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
DHORAJIA	NAYNABEN	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
DOMINIQUE	PINEROSE	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
ELLER	JUDITH	\$21.41	\$700.00	5
FERRARO	DIANE	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
FINAN	KAREN	\$21.41	\$450.00	5
FRANCAVILLA	PATRICIA	\$21.41	\$700.00	5
FRIEDRICH	CHERYL	\$21.41	\$700.00	5
GARZA	VESNA	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
GJATA	EDLIRA	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
GRONEK	NANCY	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
HANS	SUSAN	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
HO	MEYLEN	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
IAFRATE	JAMES	\$19.73	\$0.00	2
KIM	JIYEON	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
LAZZARI	DAWN	\$21.41	\$500.00	5
LIM	HANNAH	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
MARKGRAF	MARGARET	\$21.41	\$500.00	5
MOLINA	CRISTINA	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
NOVELLI	MICHELE	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
OAKES	MARY	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
OWENS	EILEEN	\$21.41	\$0.00	5

CLOSURE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2021-2022 PERSONNEL APPROVAL - PARAPROFESSIONALS

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LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	RATE	LONGEVITY	STEP
PATEL	ANKITA	\$19.23	\$0.00	1
PAVLOU	MARIA	\$20.78	\$0.00	4
PRANO	MARGARET	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
RING	ANTOINETTE	\$21.41	\$700.00	5
ROSNER	CHRISTINE	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
ROTA	JANET	\$21.41	\$500.00	5
SAAD	FARHA YOUSSEF	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
SCHIFFMAN	ELAINE	\$20.78	\$0.00	4
SEIN	JESSICA	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
SLOEZEN	GABRIELA	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
SMITH	DIANE	\$21.41	\$500.00	5
SORMAN	KATARINA	\$20.23	\$0.00	3
SORRENTINO	PATRICIA	\$21.41	\$700.00	5
STRAUSS	DIANA	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
STRAUSS	LOURDES	\$21.41	\$0.00	5
SUN	CHANGHUI	\$20.78	\$0.00	4
VELELLA	ALICE	\$20.78	\$0.00	4
VORA	NILA	\$19.73	\$0.00	2
WATKINS	GAIL	\$21.41	\$700.00	5
YOUNG	WASHINGTON	\$21.41	\$700.00	5

To The Board of Education,

We want to thank you for all of your time and effort you have put into this year to make it as safe and successful as possible. As June approaches, we have been reflecting on all of the accomplishments and obstacles our students have overcome this tumultuous year.

In regard to the possibility of the extension of the school day, our Kindergarten team would like to express some reasons why extending to a full day would be challenging for young learners. Please see below for our concerns:

- Social Emotional impact: Extending screen time could result in struggles in behaviors and implement a negative outlook on their education.
- The extension of sitting at desks or being on the screen: Extending the time students need to be on Zoom or sitting at a desk would decrease movement. If this were a typical school day, children would be rotating in and out of the classrooms and moving about the room for supplies and materials. It is not in best practice to have students sitting for an elongated period of time, and if the school day extends, they will be sedentary for the majority of the day.
- Transition: Any type of transition takes time for young learners to acclimate. Redesigning school schedules and allowing students to adapt and become comfortable requires an adjustment period. With 28 days left of school, the time given would not be sufficient enough for proper execution of a new schedule to align to their social/emotional and academic needs.
- Mask fatigue: With a 5 day schedule we are starting to see mask fatigue in our young K learners. It's a daily struggle for many kids to wear their mask in the correct way with the current schedule. Extending to a full day will likely present more challenges.

We appreciate you taking the time to review our thoughts and concerns regarding extending to a full day. Keeping our schedule and allowing students the natural closure to our school year is in the children's best interest. The students have been resilient through many transitions and changes, and it is our hope that we are able to conclude the 2020-2021 school year in the most suitable environment for all learners.

Warmest regards,
The Kindergarten Team

May 13, 2021

Dear Closter Board of Education,

Good evening. We are aware that you are discussing a longer school day schedule. We too are looking forward to getting back to normal and having our "regular school day back." However, we would like to share our concerns and advocate for our younger learners. Below are some reasons why we are asking you to please consider keeping the school day schedule as is until the remainder of the year.

- The students have dealt with so many changes this year. Children thrive on structure, consistency and routine. We have already disrupted their routine multiple times. Having approximately 28 days left to put new procedures in place is not setting them up for success.
- Classrooms in first grade are extremely tight and being crammed in there from 8:00 to 12:45 already has its health and safety challenges.
- We are noticing that first grade students are already finding it difficult to keep their masks on, focus and participate past noon. A longer day with masks during a hot month will be even harder.
- Our first grade transitional classroom will be extremely difficult to adjust for the virtual and in school schedule to include breaks, lunch, recess, snack, and specials.
- A full day for our virtual students will mean so much more sedentary screen time for them. It is also very difficult for them to stay engaged and focused for a long period of time on Zoom.

We know everyone wants what is best for the children. We love our students and are here to help them in any way that we can. Please consider leaving our school day as is until the end of the year so the students can have a safe, smooth and successful ending to the school year.

Sincerely,
The First Grade Team

Dear Mr. McHale and Members of the Closter Board of Education:

The 2nd grade team is opposed to the full time return of students and staff during the current pandemic for the following professional, educational and health related reasons.

The disruption to children and schedules is a major concern. There have been so many schedule adjustments throughout the year and the children/staff have settled into the most recent change to five day sessions. Making another change impacts many children socially, emotionally, and academically.

The timing of this change is concerning due to the Memorial Day weekend approaching and families traveling. Based on the number of students who needed to be quarantined following recent holidays as well as family vacations strongly indicates that there will be many students needing to do so and then livestreaming must be implemented for an entire day.

The increase in screentime is a major concern for children. Rates of obesity, sleep disturbances and behavioral problems related to increased screen time are often reported as concerns. Also, the students who are in school are required to sit in their desks with minimal movement. They are not allowed to walk around the classroom, share materials, and with 23- 25 desks in the classroom there is no space. Is this in the best interest of our young students?

This is also a time of year where teachers, staff, and students alike are working towards preparing for the transition to the next grade, as well as for a smooth start for the following year. Changing the schedule, yet again, will interrupt a lot of these healthy closure and transition processes. Every time there is a schedule change, the students need to readjust and learn a new routine. This will take away from quality instructional learning time. We recommend finishing the year with our current schedule and focusing on each child's individual needs.

We do not believe another change would be in the best interest of our students and staff at this time. We hope you consider our professional expertise and concerns related to a full day return to school.

Thank you,

The 2nd grade team

Dear Closter Board of Education,

As third grade professional educators, we are in opposition to, once again, changing the schedule at Hillside School.

A major concern is the effect that yet another schedule change has on our learners, especially the most vulnerable special education and special needs students.

For example, changes in pullout programs (for ESL or special education, for example) disrupt classroom instruction; and because the schedules of specialists (for music and art, for example) are created for periods of varying length, core teachers must plan instruction around the remaining chopped-up time. Problems often occur in the classroom when students do not know what to expect; are confused or frustrated; feel hurried; experience wait time between activities; or are overstimulated (Docking, 2002; Miller, 1984). Most students benefit from a consistent and predictable learning environment that limits surprises (Kerr & Nelson, 2002; Reinhart, 1991).

Another concern is that children and staff will be in masks for an extended period of time. The most common side effect of prolonged face mask use was bilateral headache. Face masks may further cause perioral dermatitis with rashes and redness, i.e., an infection of the skin around the mouth because of saliva, sweat, and moist vapor between the mask and the skin. This may provide a breeding ground for bacteria. Itchy rashes may be caused by irritant dermatitis, caused by the mask and/or the attached rubber strings rubbing the skin of nose and ears

A last concern is that students are experiencing long term burnout effects of too much screen time. A landmark National Institutes of Health study of 10,000 children that began in 2018 found that those who spent more than two hours a day using screens scored lower on language and thinking tests. Some children with more than seven hours a day of screen time also experienced thinning of the brain's cortex, the area related to critical thinking and reasoning. In addition, the blue light emitted from screens can interfere with natural circadian rhythms leading to poor sleep. Lack of sleep impacts how well children feel the next day as well as their brain's ability to process and store new information when learning in class.

For these reasons, we ask you to consider not making another change to the district schools' schedules for the remainder of this school year.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thursday, May 13, 2021

To the Members of the Board of Ed:

The 2020-21 school year so far has been a tremendous challenge, to say the least. Having the school day shortened from the beginning of the year has forced teachers to consolidate learning, to focus on the most crucial standards, all the while staying alert to the social-emotional needs of our students. Teachers and students have adapted a number of times this year to a different modality each time with little consideration to our most at risk population or the impact it has on all. In a year of a pandemic, routines are critically important to the mental and emotional health of all students and staff. We all want to return to normal because this year has been a trying time for our staff, students, and community, but when we are constantly changing what is expected of students and staff, are we making the best decisions for all?

There has been a proposal floated to move to an all-day learning model. While we realize that covering core content is of utmost importance, there are several drawbacks to an all-day schedule at this time which far outweigh its benefits at this late point of the year.

First, there is the issue of mask wearing. From the outset, this has been a concern for parents, students, and teachers alike. We feel that an entire school day is far too long for young children to be wearing masks as well as difficult for teachers trying to project their voice that many hours with a mask on as well. Currently, students wear masks for approximately 4 3/4 hours, with a break in the middle for snack. If we switch to an all-day schedule, students will be wearing masks for 7 hours with a break for only lunch. Wearing a mask for recess will be mandatory and that is another big concern as the temperature begins to rise. For virtual students, this extension to the day will create even more screen time which is not in the best interest of the child either.

Second, staggering lunch times will mean that some students could be forced to eat as early as 10:30 a.m., since each grade will need space in the gym to spread out. This will make the rest of the day very long, and presumably students will need another break in the afternoon. Related to this point, will there be enough support staff to cover twice as many lunch periods as previously covered in a normal school year?

For these reasons, we respectfully request that you take our concerns into consideration and hold off on moving to an all-day model until the fall of 2021.

Sincerely,
The Fourth Grade Team
Hillside School

May 12, 2021

Dear Mr. McHale and Closter Board of Education Members:

We are aware that you are making a decision to move to a longer school day for this school year. We want to take this time to share our thoughts on how this will impact our special education students so you can make a decision that is in the best interest of our student population.

As you know, routines and consistency are crucial for all students, but especially for our special education students. Right now, the children have established routines and are thriving. Students are behaving responsibly and feeling confident in knowing their schedules, and being able to independently follow them. To change the schedules again, would be disruptive, especially after two previous schedule changes which resulted in a long adjustment period for them. We feel another change would be detrimental to the children and we do not see any benefits for increasing more school time with less than 30 days left of school.

Many students with special education services already attend a full day of school several days out of the week, with only a half hour for lunch. Their services may include Multi-Sensory Reading Services, Occupational therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech/Language services, and English as a Second Language services. On the days that students have this full schedule, teachers report students are less attentive, tired, and looking for breaks during math and language arts. Every time their schedules changed by adding more hours to their day, time was taken away from their learning to adjust to the new changes. It takes months to establish the routines we now have in place. For our most fragile learners, this kind of disruption can have lasting, negative effects.

Additionally, our virtual students already spend too much time staring at computer screens. Some students have complained about headaches and eye strain. Zooming for longer periods of time can be mentally tiring and distressing, with no real academic benefits.

For our students who are in person learning, they are sitting in rows, in masks, with minimal movement and student interaction. This is not conducive to cognitive growth - especially in the younger grades where children learn from doing, movement and hands-on group activities. Wearing a mask for 4 hours is challenging, but for longer than that, it is harmful, to say the least. Adults struggle to wear masks for even a few hours in a row, how can we ask children to do it?

This change will not only impact student's schedules but it will also impact the support staff that have been working with them all year. Our paraprofessionals work on a part time schedule. This would mean that our students will not have the consistency and support they need throughout parts of their school day.

Towards the end of the year students are excited for their classroom's end of the year projects and activities. To change their schedule as they are usually winding down could lead to unhappy, unproductive students.

The students want more of what their school used to look like. In fact, we all want to go back to a "normal" day. However, rushing into a longer day in a restrictive environment of passive learners, is not in the best interest of our students.

Let's return to a full day schedule when children can benefit from longer days where active learning, group activities, and social/ emotional learning can properly take place.

At this time we do not feel there are enough benefits to extending the school day with only a few days left of school. The routines and schedules are set and are successful. Let's give our young students peace, calmness and routine for their last 30 days of school.

We are grateful that this district has always considered special education as a priority and hope you will continue to keep the student's well-being in mind as you continue to make decisions that will impact them directly.

Thank you for your leadership in a challenging year and for taking the time to read and consider our input as you make ongoing decisions.

Sincerely,

Hillside Elementary School Special Education Staff

May 12, 2021

Dear Mr. McHale and Closter Board of Education Members:

We understand that you may soon be making a decision as to whether or not to move to a longer school day for this school year. With this in mind, we wanted to take this opportunity to share what we are seeing as this district's mental health professionals so you can take this into account as you seek to decide what is best for our students and district.

We know that the mental health of our students is directly linked to their ability to learn and perform academically. It is also central to their safety with suicide being the 2nd leading cause of death for youth ages 10-14 in United States as of 2018¹. While data as to how the pandemic is impacting mental health is still being collected, it is suspected that mental health concerns among youth are only on the rise. A CDC report indicated that between April and October of 2020 there was an increase in mental health related pediatric emergency department visits. Compared to 2019 data, this was an increase of 24% in 5-11 year olds and an increase of 31% in 12-17 year olds².

With this in mind, we wanted to share our concerns about our students' and teachers' ability to sustain another change in a year already full of loss, ongoing stressors, and many other challenges and changes.

At Hillside and Tenakill, we have been seeing increasing academic and social/emotional concerns throughout this year. The amount of students not keeping on their cameras or not participating in classes has risen as the year has gone on. At Tenakill, the amount of students with documented mental health concerns has risen. The number of students on the in-danger of failing lists continue to remain high in spite of ongoing check ins and supports.

While there have been students who have had trouble academically, emotionally, or socially since the start of the year, with each teacher or schedule change that has come, we have seen an increase in the amount of students who are not completing work, attending virtual classes, or are expressing other signs of concern at home or school. While coming in five days a week and changing our schedule benefited some in terms of structure and social outlets, we have seen an increase in concerns, including with students who have not previously struggled consistently.

We know that many of our students have experienced loss and/or trauma outside of school this year in addition to all they have lost in terms of a normal school experience. From a trauma-informed perspective, we also know that change and transition can be challenging for students who have experienced prior trauma and loss. As such, best practice for schools seeking to be trauma-informed is to be intentional about changes and transitions. Practices like giving plenty of warning and preparation before transitions, holding to set routines and structure as much as possible, and not changing much at once are seen as vital considerations in helping children adjust to the change without triggering additional trauma or stress responses. With a recent large change to our schedule that did not allow us to incorporate some of these best practices, another significant and quick change could likely be an additional hardship to students still adjusting to the last change.

We are also concerned about increasing the amount of time students will have to sit in a classroom and how this will impact students and the classroom environment. Teachers do an amazing job trying to get them to move, however if you can imagine a classroom with desks 3 feet apart, it does not allow much

¹ <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6945a3.htm>

room for movement. At this point in the year, an increase in length of time in classes may actually decrease the quality of learning.

While there are likely some students who would be able to adjust to another change if they had to, we are most concerned about our most vulnerable students. We have seen pockets of students that have been struggling more than others in the face of changes all year. Those that appear to be finding changes more difficult are our special education and 504 students, those with poor executive functioning skills, our fully virtual students, our new students, those with previous traumas, and students with previous mental health concerns (minor or significant). For those already significantly behind in their assignments and expressing being overwhelmed as they do not have enough time in the day to do new assignments while making up old assignments, an increase in the school day will only increase the pressure they are feeling.

This is also a time of year where teachers, staff, and students alike are wrapping things up, working towards natural closure, preparing students for transition, and preparing for a smooth start the following year. If we were to make another change at this point in the year, we suspect this would interrupt a lot of these healthy closure and transition processes and could have a negative impact even into next year as staff will need to focus on executing and helping students adjust to this change at the cost of some of these processes.

Lastly, but just as central, we are concerned about our district's staff and the negative impact of another change on them. They have had to pivot and change multiple times throughout the year, and though we work with seasoned professionals who have gone above and beyond, asking them to adapt again will increase staff stress and decrease morale. If teachers and staff struggle, they will not be able to instruct or support students as effectively.

We have heard that some other districts in the Valley are moving to longer days, however we do not know the individual situations of those districts, the number of changes they have already sustained, or other factors that went into that decision. From what we see in our schools from a mental health and wellness perspective, we do not believe a change would be in the best of interest of our students and staff at this point in time. We recommend finishing the year out with our current schedule and focusing this next month on needed closure, transition planning, and detailing out plans for next year so students, staff, and parents can be aware of what is coming and be able to spend the summer preparing themselves mentally and otherwise.

We are thankful to be part of a district that was intentional in considering and planning with the mental health and overall wellness of students in mind as we created our plan for this school year. We wanted to share this information (that you may not have been aware of) in order for you to be able to continue to keep student's mental health and well-being in mind as you make ongoing decisions.

Thank you for your leadership in a challenging year and for taking the time to read and consider our input as you seek to make decisions in the best interest of our students. You are welcome to reach out to us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joan Romo
School Psychologist

Dara Weiss
HES School Counselor

Alexandra Earle
TMS School Counselor

Dear Mr. McHale and Closter Board of Education:

My children continued to progress academically this year and last because of the fantastic teachers at Hillside, the girls, and myself

I appreciate the children going back five days a week. I strongly feel that going back all day is a disservice.

- I do not want my children to have the additional time in masks.
- My children do not want to spend more time in masks.
- With services and Math Plus, my children already have a full day. These services, while necessary, feel more punitive than enriching as their days are already longer than the average student without services.
- With lunch and recess added in, how much academic time will they be gaining?
- I already feel for the custodial staff and all the additional cleaning that has to happen. What has to happen if lunch is added?
- How social is socially distanced lunch and recess? My kids want recess but what they truly want is to play with friends without restrictions.
- For the virtual students, the additional screen time is concerning in and of itself.
- Is it worth the upheaval to change the schedules for so many students?
- With one month left, does this change add to overall education?
- My children don't need their teachers burning out before school ends.

I would ask that you poll parents prior to making this change at this point in the year.

Amy Goldstein
226 Cedar Lane