



GREEN COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 26, 2023

3:30 p.m.

Committee Members: Elizabeth Fiore, Chair
Paulo Lopes, Board Member

Administrative Staff: Dr. Jonathan Hart, Superintendent; Jason M. Bohm, SBA/Board Secretary; Don Race, Facilities Manager; Timothy Charleston, Principal; Dr. Ann DeRosa, Principal; Dr. Kristen Higgins, Principal; Dr. Jonathan Moss, Principal; Sarah Pauch, Supervisor of Math, Science and Technology

Other Members: Betsy Freeman, Teacher; Gargi Adhikari, Teacher; Denise Birmingham, Teacher; Blair Alber, Teacher; Dr. Neil Hendrickson, Readington Township; Steve Foster (absent), Readington Township; Marlene Orlandi, Readington Township; David Livingston (absent), Readington Township; Christina Albrecht, Readington Township; Eric Zwerling (absent), Readington Township; Jodi Bettermann, Readington Township

1. **Strategic Focus for 2024-2025 School Year** - Mr. Bohm shared the minutes from the Strategic Planning Meeting that took place over the summer with Board Members and Administration. The strategic focus areas for 24-25 were discussed. The committee was invited to review and make suggestions on the Action Plan Tracking Document which has finer details of the strategic focus areas, Pillars I-III.
2. **Pillar I: Reduce environmental impact and costs** - Mr. Bohm and Mr. Race gave updates on the Solar Array project, Mr. Bohm is negotiating bids. Next, Mr. Bohm gave updates on the District's capital projects that were completed over the summer and those still in progress. Mr. Bohm also notified the Committee that our district received a grant for one electric school bus complete with a charging station, which has been a goal of the Green Committee for approximately 5 years. Mrs. Bettermann added that Readington will be the first school district in Hunterdon County to own an electric school bus. Mr. Lopes noted that adding an EV to our fleet will help with our Sustainable Jersey recertification application.
3. **Pillar II: Improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff** - Mr. Bohm was contacted over the summer by Mr. Becker, a Readington Twp Environmental Commission member inquiring about partnering on a hike/cleanup in The Learning Woods, which is a property very near Three Bridges School. Marlene Orlandi suggested that the Committee could see how the pilot 4th Grade Field Trip goes and revisit that idea at a later date. For the 4th Grade Field Trip, Mrs. Adhikari, Ms. Pauch, and Mrs. Orlandi of Readington WaterWatch gave an update on the field trip details. Students will be bussed to Lachenmayr Trail where they will hike to learning stations that are aligned to the Science curriculum and were designed by RVCC students and faculty. It was suggested that perhaps 8th Grade capstone students could help maintain the stations/signage on an annual basis.
4. **Pillar III: Provide environmental education (STEM, civic skills, green career pathways, etc.)**
 - A discussion regarding the TBS Bioswale and desire to utilize remaining grant funds on upkeep and maintenance through long-term efforts with Rutgers, local vendors, high school students, among others. Mr. Charleston suggested submitting a request for the project to be considered as part of the 8th grade

civics day to help with cleanup and pulling invasives if experts could be on-site to identify them for students.

Ms. Freeman and Mr. Charleston shared the news that RMS received a Sustainable Jersey \$10K Grant for EcoAction News to purchase cameras, recording devices, and other audio/visual equipment. This new Encore class is a partnership with WHYY PBS in Philadelphia, Student Reporting Labs. It is described as a student driven news and info project for healthy, happy communities. This ties into the district's communication goal.

5. Unfinished / New Business

- Betsy Freeman was recognized by Sustainable Jersey as a Sustainability HERO! Congratulations to Ms. Freeman on the huge honor.
- Mrs. Bettermann highlighted local new school construction in South Hunterdon School District, specifically the Lambertville Regional Elementary School, with green aspects to potentially consider in our own referendum.
- Ms. Freeman shared that NJ Audubon and others have a climate change hub for research and professional development consideration moving forward. There are upcoming professional development opportunities for staff to be shared with Ms. Krial for future partnerships.

6. Our next Green Committee meeting shall be Thursday, November 21, 2024, at 3:30 p.m.