

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
OAKLAND, NEW JERSEY**

March 24, 2015

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**Meeting** A Special Meeting/Public Hearing of the Board of Education was held at the Administration Office on the above date. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by Mr. Gaffney.

**Meeting Notice** Mr. Gaffney led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance and read the Open Public Meetings announcement as follows: The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Law was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interests is discussed or acted upon. In accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Oakland Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted on May 3, 2014 in the Municipal Building, the Board Offices, all school offices and copies sent to newspapers serving Oakland: The Record, Ridgewood News and Suburban News. The Board reserves the right to limit public discussion of personnel items, so as to preserve individual privacy.

The Board appreciates the concerns and comments expressed by the public and will take them into consideration. However, please remain advised that, neither the Board nor the administration may comment on or respond to public inquiries or statements regarding any internal personnel matters involving a District employee.

Please be further advised that there is no privilege or qualified privilege with regard to any statements that you make before the Board of Education. Furthermore, in addition to their respective rights to privacy, employees of this school district retain all rights regarding defamation and slander according the laws of New Jersey.

**Roll Call** The following members were present: Mr. Gaffney, Ms. Cooper, Mr. Scerbo, Ms. Shelkin. Also present were Dr. Gina M. Coffaro, Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Kyle J. Bleeker, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, and five members of the public. Mr. Akovity arrived at 6:07.

**Purpose of the Meeting** This Special Meeting has been called, as required by law, as a Public Hearing on the proposed School Budget for the 2015/2016 school year. It is intended to provide the public with information concerning the budget and to answer any questions there may be on that subject. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Board of Education will deliberate, as needed, and take action to adopt a proposed budget for the 2015/2016 school year. The tax levy will be submitted to the voters on April 21, 2015.

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**2015/2016 Budget Presentation**

Questions from the Audience on Agenda Items

*Mr. Frank Spinella - 100 Lakeside Blvd.*

- Question for Mr. Gaffney - can you further explain some of the federal and state mandates that are imposed that do not get funded
  - Dr. Coffaro and Mr. Gaffney responded that as an example, the implementation of the PARCC assessment was offset by approximately \$16,000 from the State but cost significantly more to have the necessary equipment in place and to adequately train the staff.
  - Mr. Akovity also responded that the funding we got from the State does not cover the costs.
- Asked to elaborate on the Next Generation of Science Standards - What exactly does that refer to?
  - Dr. Coffaro responded that they refer to the implementation of new standards that help to infuse the STEM concept to the classroom - not just about science but about the whole field of technology and engineering as well
  - Mr. Gaffney - we are at an advantage because previous initiatives we developed with a bottom up approach starting from the lower grades and moving through the high school. The approach for the Science standards is top down and will start at the high school and filter to the lower school. This should prove as an advantage and be easier to implement.

*Ms. Elizabeth Benducci - 9 Valley View Avenue*

- Asked a question if the wood shop was going away?
  - Dr. Coffaro and Ms. Cooper responded that it is not going away but will be modified to incorporate it into the new WOOD-STEAM-TECH concept that is being introduced.
- Mentioned that many of the points of recognition mentioned in the presentation seem to only be available to workshop students. Will there be an opportunity for other students to participate in these items?
  - Dr. Coffaro responded that we are always looking at opportunities for all students not just workshop to participate in
  - Mr. Akovity responded that there are opportunities for other students such as the Toshiba Challenge and the Discovery Challenge. These were done a few years ago and were not just for workshop.
  - Ms. Cooper - opportunities will be there with the STEM room as well. Mentioned that there are corporations that provide grants that anyone can compete in. The STEM-TECH-WOOD room can open up some of these opportunities.

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*Ms. Rebecca Greene - Suburban News*

- For the layperson in the audience, what are one or two big items that the BOE are adding or have taken out from the budget?
  - Mr. Gaffney - one of the things we are proud of that we did not eliminate anything, we will have the same number of teachers coming back
  - Dr. Coffaro - when looking at class size, we are keeping them at an optimal working size
  - Dr. Coffaro - adding the Math and Science Supervisor gives us the opportunity to better work with FLOW
  - Mr. Gaffney - the supervisor helps us maintain the high standard of teaching in the District with NJ ACHIEVE
  - Mr. Akovity - commented that he is proud of the fact that we are maintaining many of our programs despite that we have still not recouped the State Funding we lost a few years ago.

**Finance  
2015-2016  
Budget**

Mr. Scerbo moved and Ms. Cooper seconded that it be resolved that the Oakland Board of Education adopt the following School District Budget for the 2015-2016 School Year for submission to the voters and hereby authorizes the School Business Administrator to submit the proposed budget and required supporting documentation to the Bergen County Superintendent of Schools for approval:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Local Tax Levy</u>
Total General Fund	\$29,197,151	\$27,074,293
Total Special Revenue Fund	\$ 445,377	-0-
Total Debt Service Fund	<u>\$ 355,248</u>	<u>\$ 234,464</u>
Totals	\$29,997,776	\$27,308,757

On a roll call vote: AYES: Mr. Scerbo, Mr. Akovity, Ms. Cooper, Mr. Gaffney, Ms. Shelkin. Motion carried.

**District Tax  
Levy**

Mr. Scerbo moved and Ms. Cooper seconded that it be resolved that there should be raised for General Fund School District Tax Levy \$27,074,293, for the ensuing FY 2015-2016 School Year. On a roll call vote: AYES: Mr. Scerbo, Mr. Akovity, Ms. Cooper, Mr. Gaffney, Ms. Shelkin. Motion carried.

*Mr. Scerbo thanked all for their work and effort on the budget - he is very proud to present this budget to the public.*

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**Audience  
Participation**

Mr. Scerbo moved moved and Mr. Akovity seconded to open meeting to public participation. On a roll call vote: ALL AYES.

*None*

Mr. Scerbo moved moved and Mr. Akovity seconded to close meeting to public participation. On a roll call vote: ALL AYES.

*Mr. Gaffney expressed his thanks for those that came out and attended tonight's presentation. He encouraged everyone to please go out and vote - we are in a select group in the State that can still go and vote. Residents cannot vote on the Municipal, County or State budgets, but they can have a say and be a part of the school budget process for Oakland. Please exercise your right and ability to vote.*

*Mr. Gaffney also gave a reminder that Monday, April 13th the Budget will be presented again at an evening coordinated with the PTO's and candidates will have an opportunity to speak that evening as well. The meeting that night begins at 7:00 pm.*

**Adjournment**

Mr. Akovity moved and Mr. Scerbo seconded to adjourn the meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 6:50 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Kyle J. Bleeker  
Board Secretary/Business Administrator