

**BARNEGAT BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL MEETING**

**December 3, 2007  
Monday, 6:00 PM**

Cecil S. Collins School  
570 Barnegat Blvd. North  
Barnegat, NJ 08005

*OUR MISSION: The Barnegat Schools, in partnership with our community, nurture and educate our children in accordance with all core curriculum content standards to prepare them for responsible citizenship and success in life.*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mrs. Mitchell: This Special meeting of the Barnegat Township Board of Education for December 3, 2007 is called to order.

**OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT**

The notice of this meeting has been forwarded to the Asbury Park Press and The Times Observer, placed in the Municipal Building and filed with the Municipal Clerk, in conjunction with the Open Public Meeting Act N.J.S.A. 10:4-10.

Mrs. Mitchell: Roll Call please.

**ROLL CALL**

Mrs. Taylor	Present
Mr. Dorow	Present
Mrs. Germano	Present
Mr. Splendorio	Present
Mr. Kostka	Present
Mr. Davis	Present
Mr. Houser	Present
Mrs. Lally	Absent
Mrs. Mitchell	Present

Also Present: Dr. Thomas C. McMahon, Ed. D., Superintendent  
Brian S. Falkowski, Board Secretary/Assistant Business Administrator  
Joseph Coronato, Attorney

**FLAG SALUTE**

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Please stand for the Flag Salute.

All: Flag Salute

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. For the audience clarification we are going to have a Motion right now to go into closed session. If anyone here was invited to go into closed session, that is going to be through these doors outside into the building adjacent to this building. And we will be back, hopefully, within an hour but I cannot promise that, it could be longer than that. May I have a Motion to go into closed session? Motion by Mr. Dorow, seconded by Mr. Davis. All in favor, aye. Opposed? Thank you.

Mr. Splendorio: We may not come back in the typical hour, did you say that?

Mrs. Mitchell: Yes, I did.

Mr. Splendorio: I did not hear you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you.

Mr. Splendorio: Never mind.

Mr. Kostka: For you people like Ralph who cannot hear so well, maybe 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Splendorio: You are right, when you get old that happens.

**WHEREAS**, Section 8 of the Open Public Meeting Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting in certain circumstances.

**WHEREAS**, this public body is of the opinion that such circumstances exist,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Education of the Township of Barnegat in the County of Ocean and State of New Jersey, as follows:

The public shall be excluded from discussion on the actions upon the hereinafter specified subject matter(s) personnel

The general nature of the subject matter(s) to be discussed is listed in Executive Session, Executive Discussion and Executive Information.

It is anticipated at this time that the subject matters will be made public, if and when, confidentiality is no longer needed. Action may be taken.

This resolution shall become effective immediately.

### **CALL TO ORDER ROLL CALL**

Mrs. Mitchell: This Special meeting of the Barnegat Township Board of Education for December 3, 2007 is called back to order. May I have a Roll Call please?

Mrs. Taylor	Present
Mr. Dorow	Present
Mrs. Germano	Present
Mr. Splendorio	Present
Mr. Kostka	Present
Mr. Davis	Present
Mr. Houser	Present
Mrs. Mitchell	Present

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Good evening, everyone. Thank you for all coming out this evening. A couple of things I would like to mention before I ask for a Motion into Public Session.

Last Monday things got a little bit out of hand here and just looking at the Minutes briefly at what transpired last week within the first ten minutes of Public Session, I, Dr. McMahon and Mr. Coronato asked over fifteen times to not actually single out Coach Murphy and say negative things about him. So, to Coach Murphy we apologize for that. This evening Coach Murphy asked us if we would please recognize Mr. Balka first, and then three people to speak on his behalf and then himself and then anyone else who would like to address the Board after that will have an opportunity to do so. I remind you that there is a five minute time limit and also please state your name and address for the record. I also remind everyone to please be very respectful to one another and please no calling from the audience.

Also, another thing is what happened last week there was a lot negative comments, like I said earlier, and we have to be really aware of the chain of command. If there is something negative that someone needs to say there is a chain that you need to follow and that is going through the coaching person, Dr. Saxton if it is at the high school, then the Athletic Director, and so on until it gets to Dr. McMahon and if there is no resolution at that point the Board would hear that. With that said, I would now ask Mr. Balka to please come to the microphone. Mr. Balka, please?

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

I am sorry; I am a little bit ahead of myself, if you just wait there one minute. May I have a Motion to move into Public Session? Motion by Mr. Splendorio, seconded by Mr. Davis. All in favor, aye. Thank you. OK, sorry Mr. Balka you have the floor.

## **PUBLIC SESSION**

Mr. Balka – Thank you Board, thank you Dr. McMahon for giving me this opportunity to speak tonight. My name is Lou Balka and I am the President of the Barnegat Education Association. I am here tonight to discuss the way the Public Session was conducted at the last Board meeting. I am not here in the Public Session to talk about the performance of a Coach, because there is a proper procedure and policy for that and I thank the Board for allowing us to follow that proper procedure. Let me start by saying that the Board has a set of rules and policies to follow. The Administration has a set of rules and policies to follow, teachers have a set of rules and policies to follow and so do our students and your children have rules and policies to follow. The members of the public when electing to speak in public session must also follow those rules and policies set forth by this Board. It is wrong to discuss personnel in public without proper notification of a staff member through a RICE notice. It is also wrong to discuss a staff member in public without the consent of that person. Policy prevents that from happening, this is not what we teach our students, your children. When the Board corrects a public speaker to stop because they have not followed the policy, one would expect that person to stop and follow procedures. If this does not happen, it sends a wrong message to our students and your children. As parents and teachers we teach respect and discipline and ensure that our children grow up to be law-abiding citizens. But if we do not demonstrate this we send the wrong message. We must also set an example, times are different and that is why today registration 18A3714 was added. It was added on harassment, intimidation and bullying and using electronic communications to stop cyber bullying in school districts.

When I first started teaching in the 70s if the child was harassed or bullied on the playground he or she could always find safety in one's home. But today when that same child goes home and turns on their cell phone or computer the bullying can still continue by the way of text messages, emails, etc. Some children may not be able to deal with this and some do, some simply just delete the files and turn off the computer. But you know what? Some cannot. Unfortunately, we read and hear about these children's tragedies and suicides like Ryan Patrick Halligan from Vermont and recently a thirteen year old girl from Missouri because of bullying. Parents must be aware of this and I thank the Board and I thank this administration for taking the pro-active stand on bullying.

But, as technology changes and so quickly I would ask this Board to continually revisit those policies. Now, as adults we must lead by example. We must be careful when we write blogs and emails so we don't send the wrong message to our students which are your children. Make sure they know that it is not ok to publish hurtful, cruel, insensitive dialogs because that is cyber bullying. Think before you post. It is time our great community focuses on this district's positives. We have a great staff, we have a great administration, and we have a great Board. It is time this great community comes together and I am proud to be part of it. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Balka. Mrs. Downs or Mr. Durning?

Mr. Pat Durning - My daughter Taylor is on the basketball team. I just want to say that I was here for the last meeting and what I witnessed embarrassed me. I was very disappointed in what I was hearing, upset, yes. I have known Mr. Murphy, Coach Murphy, eight, nine, ten years. I know him as a good man, a proud man. My son went to him for basketball, my daughter does now. I consider him a great teacher. He has forgotten more about basketball than most people will ever know. He works them hard, he works them hard, and I have no problem with that and I think he should and he hold people accountable which is good for them too. I think what happened to him and taking a good man's reputation and dragging it through the mud was deplorable and despicable. That is my take on it; I will not vary from that, but I do not see how that man should not be coaching this team today. He deserves to be here, he does not deserve to go any place else. I do not know how he gets his reputation back, but he should. It should never have been out there like that, like it was. I just want to say that he is a good man, he is a good man and I think you all should recognize that for what it is. If there is some disgruntled children on the team that's ok. Parents have the right to be disgruntled, I am too at times, but you know what? There are proper channels, take them through the proper channels and deal with it that way. And you have options, if you don't want to play, don't play, nobody is forced to play, my daughter is not forced to. She is going to continue to play; and I hope Coach Murphy is the one who is leading the team quite honestly because he deserves to be and these girls will only be better for him being the coach of this team. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Mrs. Downs, please?

Mrs. Cindy Downs - My daughter Sarah is on the freshman basketball team. Sarah wanted me to come here to today, I am going to make it short, I know you guys know how shy I am. I will make it short and sweet. Last week when this all went down Tuesday and Coach Murphy announced to the team that he was no longer coaching, Sarah came home to me and we were talking and I said Sarah you will have to decide at this point either you play with him or without him. She said to me, her exact words, "you always told me that my judge of character was one of the best things I had and I am telling you that man is a positive and you have to do something". So, of course, that is when I started to open up my mouth. I just wanted; the little time she has known him he has been a positive to her. She has never, she's had practices so far she did the spring camp with him, it has been wonderful, and I don't want to get into what happened with the people. It happened, but I just think that everybody should realize that it does not matter if it is rec ball, middle school ball, high school ball, these coaches are not doing this to make these kids lives miserable, they can't be because they could be home making their families miserable. So, that is what my husband said, so. I just want you guys to know I am only here for Sarah, and Sarah, you know, I have always said that to her and everybody, pretty much, in this room knows me. You guys, if there was something that was not positive in my kids' lives you all know you would have heard by now. So, I just wanted to get that all across to you, and Dr. McMahon is like, yep, I know I would have heard it by now. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you, Mrs. Downs. Mr. Cotton?

Mr. Steve Cotton – I will give you two different perspectives on it. I have been coaching sports for twenty-five years. I have kids ranging from 22 years old to my youngest being six. Several years ago I was told to go up and see John Murphy's place and see how he ran his facility in Toms River and the way the kids were taught and the discipline of the kids. Having been coaching this long I went up to Mr. Murphy's place in Toms River and instantly when you walked into the facility you saw the discipline of the kids that were there, the way they behaved themselves, the way they were taught, the encouragement Mr. Murphy gave them and that was what I wanted my kids to have. Not only my kids, but the same way I felt I coached kids as well. Both of my daughters and my youngest son and my niece I put all of them with Mr. Murphy training them because of what he did and the way he handles kids and what he does.

His team in the high school last year and even when I am coaching rec, Mr. Murphy was able to get these kids to come down and train the kids I was coaching at a younger age and develop these children. Between that and the summer programs that Mr. Murphy did I don't think there is anyone who has ever given so much to the game and cared so much for the kids. The stories if everybody was able to speak and say what Mr. Murphy has done for them personally, and what he has done for them not only as a coach but what he has done for them as an adolescent or coming up into sports or just in his overall caring of kids, I am sure that everybody in this room has a story about John Murphy. This is not a story limited only to kids, some of these kids now I know that are here are not kids anymore. These are people in their thirties and we have all experienced it. Some of these, you know, Murphy's Girls goes a long way. We were talking earlier, some of them, let's just say they are not eighteen anymore, ok?

What this is, this was an attack on a coach and someone like me who enjoys the kids who lives his life for the kids, and that is what I enjoy doing, coaching kids...I coach boys, I coach girls, and I have been coaching for a lot of years. I don't want to be the next one attacked and all the coaches, I am sure they feel the same way. Everybody is here because of the love of the game. Murphy works the kids hard, we said earlier, he does work the kids hard and we all have different ways of doing it. In working them hard as a coach, our one thing is not just to teach the game, but teach a kid how to get out them what they themselves don't know is inside them. That is a coach's job and that is what every one of these coaches in the high school, the junior high and on down do. It is our job to get out of them what they themselves don't know they have. Yes, I am here to support John Murphy, and I think it is a huge injustice that he is not out here coaching right now; and for all these kids that I coaches who have been dying to play for Coach Murphy, including my daughter, and including a lot of these other kids, John Murphy is the best guy for this job, and John Murphy should have this job. This is what the girls need, they all need it. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Mr. Murphy, please?

Mr. John Murphy – Thank you, this is very overwhelming right now. When you decide to put time into becoming a coach or a mentor or anything else, you don't expect tangible

results; you expect what is called intangibles. Whether the kids learn to work hard, or learn to communicate or learn to set goals for themselves or even to get from point A to point B within their environments. Those are the things you hope to impart on anyone who you choose to coach; and this outpouring of kids as Mr. Cotton had just said. There are kids here that I don't want to look over my shoulder because I will realize how old I actually am. This is just an overwhelming and a spontaneous response and it has taken me absolutely by storm; and I want to thank every person here for their support for the hugs, for the just, hey keep up your good work, whatever. I would like to thank the Board for listening and being patient through this whole system; and I am hoping to alleviate some of the other people who I know would be nervous coming up to this dais right now and speaking as I am sure they would like to do. I would like to thank them, I would like to thank them for their support and just recognize all of these people. If it with the permission of the Board I would like the people who have come out tonight with no other urging than just being good people and good citizens and people that care about rectifying things that may have been distorted or whatever the case may be. I would like to see the people who have come here tonight to just say, hey Murphy we've got your back, like they said they have done in the past. I would like to see them stand right now.

Mr. Murphy: Thank you, that is the essence of what coaching is all about; and I want to thank the Board and I want to thank everyone for being here. I don't want to prolong the activities any longer unless it is necessary, but I want to thank all of you for letting me be a part of your lives. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Would anyone else like to address the Board? Mr. Laufgas, please? Mr. Laufgas, I remind you it is only about this agenda item, we are only speaking about Coach Murphy and the basketball team, please.

Mr. Bernard Laufgas – Ok. I have a couple of things; before I start I just want to make one announcement. This Wednesday, December 5, Jennifer Holly, I am sure you know who she is, she won the State Championship in Pole Vault, the Freeholders are going to recognize here with a Proclamation, and I hope that everybody who came out tonight would be there at the Board of Freeholders Administration building and let's show her how much she means to all of us.

I never met Coach Murphy, I do not know who he is if he stood next to me. What does a coach mean? A coach is more than a teacher. A coach is more than a parent, the kids trust you. Unfortunately, the Coach did not do enough and there were dissatisfied athletes. You cannot be a coach if the athletes do not trust you. I know, I had a coach, my high school coach in running was lousy, and the coach that helped me was a coach from a different school. He helped me and I became quite successful in running. Why, because I trusted him. I respected him and I honored him when my first son was born I went to his house, this is many, many years ago, I graduated in 1962, in 1973 I went to the house, I put my hands up with my son and I said I named my son after you. That is what coach means. I am sure Coach Murphy is probably a good coach, he probably made mistakes, but you cannot have a team if a coach does not have the trust of the athlete. Coaches are great when they stand on the sideline and they see the kids did far beyond

the 200% that somebody gave. When my friend, Billy Mills, won the gold medal in the 1964 Olympics the coach from the side, Coach Eastman, one of the greatest track coaches in history, stood on the side and has tears in his eyes. He and the coach had an argument, but the coach saw and Billy thanked him, that is what a coach means. Yes, Mr. Murphy is a great coach and a lot of people like him. A lot of the kids like him. When he loses trust...

Mrs. Mitchell: Mr. Laufgas, you need to refrain from saying negative things. You are putting Coach Murphy with some negative comments. I will not allow that again.

Mr. Laufgas – OK, I did not know that I am supposed to give you so I could sensor what I have to say. We are not in the Soviet Union, that has been gone.

Mrs. Mitchell: Mr. Laufgas?

Mr. Laufgas: Yes, Mrs.....

Mrs. Mitchell: Can you wrap it up you have about one minute left.

Mr. Laufgas: Yes, I did not have five minutes yet, you are interfering with my time.

Mrs. Mitchell: Mr. Falkowski is timing it and you have five minutes by policy and you know that. We go through this every meeting. I am asking you politely to wrap it up.

Mr. Laufgas: Now, I just want to say that maybe Coach Murphy would do a better job in the next school; maybe this will be a lesson for him. I have nothing against him, I don't know who he is, however, many; many athletes came out and spoke up. I was here. I think the best thing the coach should do is go to another school and teach there, and he would learn from his mistakes. Next, time I will give you my speech so you can sensor it.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Laufgas, would anyone else like to address the Board? Yes, in the back, sorry you will be next. I am sorry.

Ms. Coleen Cromwell – I graduated 2005 out of Southern Regional. I have coached many of the girls who are freshman and eighth grades since they were fourth grader girls in the Barnegat Girls' Basketball League, and also co-founder of Barnegat Girls. I wanted to address the Board tonight not because of Mr. Murphy and not because of that, but because I made the same mistake that every one of these seniors is making. As a junior I played for Southern Regional, Mrs. Snyder, great coach, amazing basketball talent, can teach anybody anything about the game, but you know what, she was tough and I walked away. I did not play in my senior year of high school because the coach was tough, and as I put it to my father, she was mean. She was not mean, she made me into the coach that I am today. I use all of her drills; I say the same things that she said to me now to the kids I am coaching. This year I have second and third grade girls. They are doing drills at a high school level, and not because of my playing abilities but because

of the coaching I received there. I don't want to see this Board let these girls make the same mistake that I did. Don't walk away from a coach who knows more about the game of basketball than all of us combined in this room. It is not fair; and it is not fair to the girls in the younger grades who would not have the opportunity to be coached by such an amazing man. I sent my girls that I coached to his clinics, when he had the Main Court. I told every child who wanted to play competitive ball that is where they should be playing, because this man knows more about his game and cares more about these kids than any of us here. All I am asking is that the Board does not deny every kid from junior year down and those seniors who do not agree with this, and I know there are girls out there, don't deny them the chance to play for a man that knows more about the game and can teach these kids more than any of us standing here. Thank you.

Christina Mancheno: I am a senior on the Basketball team. I have been playing for all four years, and I have known Coach Murphy for four years of my high school career. Coach Murphy is a very respectable man, he has made me grow as a basketball player, and as a person in real life. He gave me the confidence I needed to play on the court and just the other day one of my head coaches, Coach Brown, asked me, asked the question why am I here and why do I want to play basketball. I didn't know the answer anymore because I feel like I have lost the confidence in myself, I feel like I couldn't play anymore, and I just couldn't do it and I think I need Coach Murphy back to help me feel that way again. That is about it.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you, is there any other comment? Yes?

Antoine Shadd: I know Coach Murphy as a person and he is a great man, I love him. I see him a lot at school and he gives me high-fives, you know, keep your head up. He is a great coach. I think that he is the best thing that has happened to this girls' basketball team and he is such a great coach. He knows so much about the game, I mean, like, he would sit down with me and explain to me stuff that would make me a better player. He tells me drills that I could practice at home, stuff that would just make me a better person and better at any sports. He could teach any sport if he felt like it. He is such a great man and has so much knowledge to him that it is unexplainable. This man, I think, should be coaching our basketball team because I think he is a hard worker as a coach and as a person in general. I think he is just a great man and he does not deserve this, he deserves to teach these girls and these girls deserve to be taught by him. That is all I just wanted to say, I just wanted to put that out there that he is a great man and he deserves everything he has worked for. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Yes, Miss Cotton?

Stephanie Cotton: I am a student at Brackman and feel very lucky to train with Coach Murphy. I trained with him in 2003 at The Main Court until it closed down. I was upset because I really enjoyed training with Coach Murphy and many others did to. When I found out that Coach Murphy was coming to the high school I got excited because training and playing with Coach Murphy is an honor. Knowing I was only in fifth grade, I had to wait, but that man would do anything for you so it was definitely worth the wait.

When the Board of Education offered winter training with Murphy last year I turned my form in right away. He was the coach that you always wanted to have and always wished to have. I could not wait until high school to play for Mr. Murphy, all I had was two more years and I was anxious to play for him, but many people had to say stuff and lie about Coach Murphy's coaching style. It was ruined for me, maybe you have to sit out a game or two but that is what being part of a team means. There is no "I" in team and the "I" is the way some people looked at it. Many were devastated when they heard about it, maybe Murphy did break one daughter's heart, but these parents broke many more including myself. It is unfair that so many people have to suffer for the self-satisfaction of a few players.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Is there any other comment? May I have a Motion to close...I am sorry, yes?

Rick Wallace: I spoke last week; I still hold the same view. At the end of last season there was a banquet for the team and not many players showed up, not many families, the way I hear it not many families showed up or players showed up at the summer camp, not many players initially went out for the basketball team. I saw many games last year, home and away, and the atrocities that were committed against these girls still stands. Shame on this administration for allowing it to happen as long as it did; and they were there to witness the games. Now, if this is a pep rally for Murphy I am not for it. I do want to say I think it is still terrible what happened to our daughters and funny how a whole bunch of kids can change their minds in the course of a year when it seems like everybody has something to say negative about the program. It does not matter what he did 30 years ago, we did not see the same person last year. That is all.

Mrs. Mitchell: Would anyone else..yes, sir?

Vinnie Savileri – I live in Barnegat and I am pretty active in the community for fifteen years or so. I think there are a couple of things that if the Board has not already thought of it or really thought it out all the way. A coach is a teacher, a coach is an instructor, a coach can be much more valuable than a classroom teacher because not everybody reacts the same way on a court or on a football field or a soccer field, he can get kids motivated, he can get them interested in school from sports and other activities like the Band and what not. We have the privilege of having somebody here who many people already have said it, knows the game inside and out, but more importantly he knows how to motivate people. Now, having said that, alright, I think it is great that he is here, I do not know Mr. Murphy personally, I actually took my daughter to his training session that he had in Toms River several years ago, six or seven, and I sat through each and every session. I think I know a little bit about basketball and everything he did was impeccable. I mean I could say that it is..A+ if I was to grade it, he was fair, I watched him courtside. I intentionally went to several games last year in order to make an observation of his game, not that I am the all expert, I am not, I am a parent, so that is what I wanted to see. Courtside manner, impeccable. What goes on at half time or after the game I don't know. I saw a ten second clip on the internet which really, really bothered me and that is why I am here, alright? I think Mr. Murphy definitely should be the coach, unequivocally. He

is the best coach for the girls' basketball program that we could ever hope to get; but having said that, there is absolutely, unequivocally, no excuse to be talking to anyone in the age range of fourteen to seventeen in the manner that I heard on the internet. If that ten second spiel is correct, what I watched and heard, we need some training. Mr. Murphy needs to know that is not appropriate. But, you go to a football field and watch the coach, because I did that too, I used to play some football, I know what it is like, but as a Board you need to understand that we have to be out on the field and out on the court on a tennis court, in bowling lane, we have to be watching how the coaches are working with the kids. Because not everybody reacts well to screaming, they just don't, they shut down really quick and if we lose them in the classroom and we lose them on the field or in the bowling alley, or on a tennis court, we have lost them for good. That is real important.

I played all different sports and the young lady that was up here before, she said as a senior she decided not to play anymore because yelling might have just gotten too much and she appreciates it more now years later, the technique and what not. I did the same thing, alright? I walked away from a basketball scholarship. I said I am not listening to this anymore; I am not going to have somebody yell at me and talk down to me, it is not happening. So, all I am saying is that we have a really, really good coach here and I think we should keep him without a doubt. It is not just him, it is other coaches too, you need to go on the football field, alright? There are ways to get across to people without screaming them down. Again, we are dealing with fourteen to seventeen year old kids. It is not going to bring out the best in most of them, alright, it is just not. I would challenge you to get some observations from the school psychologists, and what not, people that work with counseling and ask them what is the best way to get across to a young person. Having said that, I think it would be a huge mistake to let him go, but we need to make sure that all the coaches are aware of the fact that it is not about winning. This coach knows it is not about winning because when I watched him he was down by 30-40 points during a basketball game, three games actually, his courtside manner was impeccable, never changed, but this ten second blurb on the internet if it is accurate, that bothered me. There was dialog that did not need to take place. So, I want to leave you with those thoughts and my last point is I definitely think it is a mistake if you let this coach go.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Raphael?

Mr. Rafael Adorno – At first I would like to say that unfortunately I really do not know Coach Murphy, I have had the opportunity of seeing him taking my son to wrestling practice last year. Some of the things here about Coach Murphy particularly that I have gotten to actually know him through all his actual students and his athletes. A few things that I know and want to make sure people understand, he is a coach from a little bit of a different era, an era I think some of us as parents forgot to remind our children the way it used to be. He made some mistakes, the things that I think this Board should not let him go, set guidelines and precedents that they actually know you would be a much better board to make him go forward and understand the right signal...it just has to send the right signal out to all the coaches. There is really something I did want to read

particularly that you may be able to understand, his athletes, his students and the people that support him.

You can ask any good coach what makes a good coach and you will probably get a thousand answers so I will not sit here and lie to you and tell you that you have to believe what I am about to tell you. All coaches will say this too, it more my belief and opinion to be a good coach you have to be able to motivate your athletes to play the best of their abilities. Motivation is the single most important thing in mind; if you can motivate your kids they will give you 110%. There are also seven aspects of being a good coach; the kids have to believe in what you are doing, they have to buy into the system. There are many good coaches that have a good plan and have a good way of going about their plan, but some of them cannot get their players to buy into that system and their way of playing the game. As a coach as well as a teacher you must give respect to get respect, too many times adults seem to think that they are superior just because of age. These kids are at a stage in their lives where if you give them some respect and treat them like they are people too; they are more than willing to try to please.

Coaches have to know that all kids are not the same, different kid's needs different kinds of instruction. There are some kids that you can simply give a look, and I know a lot of us coaches know that, a lot of them. I am a little emotionally about it because it really bothers me when you think about this some more. There are some kids that you may need to talk to privately, and there are some kids that you can get right in their face and that is something their families can teach our kids the way it was in the old school. It is good, it is not demoralizing. As a coach it is your job to be able to read your team and know how it works for them and for each individual. The coaching aspect does not end with the step outside the lines. I am sorry; the coaching aspect doesn't end when you step outside the lines. You must wear many faces. The coach, a friend, a disciplinarian, a teacher, advice giver and somewhere in-between and even butt-chewer every once in awhile. You have got to kind of kiss their butts sometimes too. This is not an easy job and it is definitely not for everyone. Many men can coach; but it takes a special person to be a good coach and Coach Murphy I will say I believe you are a good coach with some unfortunate mistakes, but I hope we keep you and take it from there and learn from it. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Yes, sir in the back please? Yes, Mrs. Cellini, I am sorry, yes, second.

Mr. Bob Municchi – I have two students that attend Barnegat High School. I am here to support Coach Murphy. Neither one of my kids played for Coach Murphy, they both say he is a great guy. The one thing I would like to discuss is I went through the high school handbook and there is no reason whatsoever that there is not a policy in tact in that handbook about making it illegal tapes. I think the Board needs to go over that and implement that into the Handbook. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Municchi. Mr. Municchi, I will have something to say at the end of this meeting in regard to that comment. Mrs. Cellini, please?

Mrs. Linda Cellini: I live in Forked River, but I am finishing my 26<sup>th</sup> year here in Barnegat as a teacher. I am very proud of our character education curriculum. I am very proud of the fact that we just had a week of anti-bullying education for everyone, adults as well as children. I just would like to remind everyone, because I am so proud to be a part of this community, that there is a way to disagree without being disagreeable, there is a way to have different opinions and yet respect each other. Proper procedures were not followed in this case and I don't know Coach Murphy or anything about him, but what upset me is the violation of the proper way of doing things and the total lack of respect that was exhibited at the last meeting and I apologize to the Board and the Administration. I was aghast. I would just like to close by saying, those of you who are parents, would you like someone to come into your home with a cell phone and video tape you while you discipline your children? Is there anything you have ever said to your own child that could be misconstrued or taken out of context? I do agree with the gentleman who just spoke, thank you very much for stealing my thunder. We very much need to address the proper and improper use of videotaping. Thank you.

Dr. McMahon: In regard to Mrs. Cellini's comments as well as Mr. Balka's and to address the coaches, since the last meeting there have been a number of proper procedures that followed that meeting by some of the parents. As a matter of fact, today in the Executive Session before this meeting, parents came in to speak to the Board; students also spoke to the Board in Executive Session. There has been a number of letters and emails written to the Board; and one of the parents that spoke negatively at the last Board of Education meeting followed the procedure this week with the Assistant Superintendent and myself and today that child and parent decided that if Mr. Murphy is coaching they will be on the team and if Mr. Murphy is not coaching they will be on the team. That basically, they have gone through the procedures at this point.

There are many issues relative to this investigation that were performed by the Athletic Director and the Assistant Superintendent after the last Board meeting. Issues that are to remain in the Executive Session in regard to parents' behavior. I know we are talking about coaches behavior, but there are some parent behavior that the Governance Committee will speak to that we are going to look at in terms of all types of behavior in terms of bullying that we basically don't address to the newspaper at these meetings. We have code for parents; there is code NJSIAA code for parent behavior, picking up students from practices and at games, that also needs to be looked into. This is a whole team approach to actually working on this issue with students, staff, parents, players, coaches and that is something that I know that I think this issue has raised to the Board's attention as well as the Union's that working together, I think, and having all the information out for the Administration to look at that we can solve together and I think that is clearly a step in the right direction.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you, would anyone else like to address the Board? Yes?

Rich Bowen – I am here on behalf of Mr. Murphy; and I find Mr. Murphy as a great guy and I think he is one of the greatest things that happened to our basketball team and just want to let him know I am here for him.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Yes? You will be next.

Mr. Augie Penza – I know Mr. Murphy for seven years now and played with him at the Main Court in Toms River. I heard a lot of people come up here and say tonight that the coach is more than a teacher and more than a parent. That man that you see sitting right there, he more than that, he is more like a family, a family-guy. To me, he has a special place in my heart. Between everything I have been through playing basketball, he has always been there for me, and I think if you are playing basketball and if you are on a competition team, if you can't take a little bit of yelling and a little bit of focus just to get the object done then you shouldn't be playing, because if you can't take a little bit of criticism or a little bit of judgment than you are never going to get anywhere in life with that. I would just like to say that I don't know exactly how the Barnegat High School is and all, but I know this man is probably one of the best coaches around and he is one of the nicest guys I ever met and I just want to let him know I am here for him.

Mr. Coronato: I would just caution the Board, and also the people in the public, that obviously this is a Barnegat School District, and I would hope that people who want to step forward here would be coming from Barnegat. I certainly do not want to curtail other individuals, but again I think it is more germane to have people that are from Barnegat that are familiar with the program that is being conducted here in Barnegat. I think that to have people come from Toms River or Lacey Township and all over, first we would be here all night; and two is that I think that what is really more important at this juncture is to discuss what is going on with the Barnegat Township High School Varsity program. So, I would just caution to at least have those people who live in Barnegat step forward.

Mrs. Mitchell: Would anyone else like to address the Board? Mr. Santasieri

Mr. Paul Santasieri: I work here in the district three years now at the high school. As one of the most senior members of the coaching staff with 28 years of experience and one of my former cohorts sitting up on the dais there, Mr. Falkowski, whom I coached, knows all better how coaching goes. Me and Murph have a special bond in that we have coached for a long time; and we understand that things change and people change, but we also know that motivation is a big part of success. In order to motivate sometimes you have to get down and dirty; it does not mean you have to be abusive, but in no instance did I ever think that Murphy was abusive. You have to motivate, motivation is the key. I just want to sit here and say that first of all I am proud of all the coaches that showed up tonight, I am so proud that we got his back. That is the best support I have seen in all the years I have been here and that includes my previous school district. Coaches to come here and offer that support and tell Murphy we have his back, I think is most important. I think it would be so wrong for you not to consider him to come back and coach this team. He has forgotten more than what we will ever remember when it comes to basketball and

I just want to come up here and lend my support and thank the district, thank the Board of Education, thank Coach Germano and thank all of our coaches for telling us we got his back.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Come up.

Emily Collins – I am only a freshman at the Barnegat High School, but all I have to say is that I have only gotten coached for like three days by Coach Murphy and all he ever had to say to me was compliments, “Every time I see you, you are always smiling”, and stuff like that. Yeah, if he is a hard coach that is what coaches are, like they push you, they want to make you better. My coach, Miss Meyer, right here she was coached by Mr. Murphy and she one of the thousand point shooters that he coached. She had a full-ride scholarship, she had a chance to be a professional, and she is a coach here. That is like four things that Murphy did for her; and I am sure like many other coaches are here too. I know Gino is here and all these girls here from Mon Don, I saw girls from Jackson and I saw girls from Brick Memorial. That just shows how great of a coach Coach Murphy is and I just want to say as a freshman I hope I have the opportunity to be coached by Coach Murphy.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. I am sorry; I have to clarify the policy because I see Mr. Seveleri’s hand up and Miss Durning. Ok, Miss Keough you can come up next; and it is five minutes per speaker and I have to follow that policy so if you were up here already and you had that five minutes it is only a one-time chance. Miss Keough would you like to come up?

Katherine Keough – I played varsity basketball at Barnegat; and I have been coached by Murph last year and I know personally I have complained because who doesn’t complain about a coach? You know? Every single team that I have ever been on, I have at least complained once. I mean who doesn’t? It is just what comes of the sport, you know? Just through my whole experience he has just helped me and supported me the whole entire time, he has been with me, working with me. Over the summer he agreed to have sessions at 6:30 a.m. to any girl who was willing to participate; and I was the only one to show up but he did not turn me away. He came every morning at 6:30 a.m. to help train me into the player that I am. He did not say, no, you are the only one showing up so it isn’t worth it. He said, alright you are here so you want to play so I am going to help you be the person that you can be. Murph has just given me so many opportunities that I would not have had otherwise. I think he has made me into a better basketball player without a doubt.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Anyone else? Mr. Savileri, I am sorry, I can’t.

Mr. Savileri: I only took a few minutes...

Mrs. Mitchell: No, it was timed, it is a one time. Sorry. Anyone else? Yes?

Sarah Downs – I play freshman basketball for Barnegat. I just want to say that I am not good at public speaking but I just want to say that I have his back, and I support him all the way.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Yes, please?

Sarah Knight: I am also a varsity basketball coach in another district. I respect the fact that this is a Barnegat Board of Education meeting, but I also feel that when this was made public knowledge and put into Ocean County newspaper attacking someone that we support that we all have a right to speak.

I also am not a public speaker there is only one group of people that I feel comfortable speaking in front of and that is my team. The reason I feel comfortable speaking in front of my team is because of the values and lessons that Mr. Murphy has taught me over the years. I know off-hand that there is more than a dozen coaching positions in Toms River alone taken by his former players. There are positions in this district of Barnegat that are taken by his former players. I just don't see how the values that people are saying that he is not portraying could have been some a positive influence over so many people who are now in very successful positions. Mr. Murphy has taught so many players, three alone on my coaching staff that are here. All three of us played for him since 1988-1989; and I just feel it would be a major injustice to this district. OK, I have come and watched games, I have played Barnegat and I have watched this school district play. It would be a major injustice to deny these girls the type of basketball knowledge that this man knows and which has helped so many in the past. People can say what they want, but nobody who is that successful, especially as a coach, I know first-hand how kids can frustrate you, how you can take kids under your wing, how you can give kids the shirt off your back, how you can come in at 6:30 a.m. I personally learned from him that and was in my gym on Christmas morning last year for any kids that wanted to come in and play because we had a game the day after Christmas. I too had one girl show up and worked with her, and that is something I learned from this man and I feel it would be a terrible disservice for you not to have him continue coach in your district. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Yes?

Emilio Mancheno: I am a freshman. I just wanted to say that you do not have to be an athlete for Coach Murphy to know that he is a great guy. He could be in the hallway, always be smiling to you even if he doesn't know you. He will always be there and he is a person that you could always go to talk to. Like, it is not even basketball, you can relate to him to anything. I had an hour conversation with him on Monday, last week about music, because I am more of a band person, and he was telling me how he used to be in a band. I just wanted to let him know that I have his back and it will be a horrible decision if you guys don't reinstate his coaching because he is a great guy and I think he should coach again.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Is there any other comment? Yes?

Marissa Brugnoli: I am a freshman at Barnegat High School and I just want to let everyone know I came into the basketball program and I was really excited to get to know Coach Murphy. I heard so many good things about him, and for him to feel the need to resign I feel very bad. I don't think he deserved anything he went through. I know me along with a lot of the other players; we would be more than happy to be coached by him. We felt like he helped so many people like Coach Meyer, she told us so much like how he helped her through her basketball career and she said she credited him a lot for like all she has been through with basketball. A lot of us girls want that same opportunity to be coached by him. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Yes?

Taylor Durning: I am a player at the Barnegat High School basketball and I just wanted to say that Murphy was more than just a coach. Like, there were rumors going on about me and he never once turned his back on me. He told me to be strong and that I can do it, like I can beat them. I don't understand why any of this is happening, he does not deserve any of this, he has pushed us so hard, like he makes us work for stuff that these girls never had to work for before. I think that the opportunities that he is giving us are just so amazing that they should not be taken away. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Anyone else? Yes?

Dana Lozito: I just wanted to say that Coach Murphy is the best and is always there for me and I always see him at the clinic, he is my coach. I just wanted to say that he is the best.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Anyone else? May I have a Motion to close Public Session? Moved by Mrs. Taylor, seconded by Mr. Splendorio. All in favor, aye. Opposed? Thank you. Public Session is now closed. Mr. Coronato, please?

Mr. Coronato: I just thought that maybe I should give a little background to everybody that is here and also to the Board to just exactly where we are today. At the last Board meeting several parents came up and made comments about the basketball program. One of the reasons why when people come to the Board of Education and they want to express their feelings, they are certainly able to do so, but it really is improper to mention a particular teacher's name or to mention a particular individual's name because (1) the person is not here; (2) the employee may have as much right as you have to complain about them, they have as much right to be present in order to know what goes on. This is kind of an example of what has happened here. As much as I tried to instruct the people to talk about the program, they were insisting to bring about an individual's name, in this case, Coach Murphy. As a result he was not here, he was not here to defend himself and this is the first time it was brought to the Board of Education's attention.

Also, there is a procedure to be followed and in this case the procedure was not followed. What really needs to happen is that if there is a problem, they need to go through the proper channels which is again through the Principal, the Athletic Director and work

there way up to the Superintendent's office. If that is done, ok, then those issues and they may be or may not be valid issues, can be addressed and therefore it is not necessary to be to have somebody skewered in public about whether or not they did do something or did not do something. So, as a result of what happened the last time, Coach Murphy then at that point resigned the next day. So, I believe what is before the Board, and it is my understanding based on what happened in Executive Session, that Coach Murphy wants to withdraw his resignation and I guess that is what would be held by the Board. It is my understanding, too, that once you submit your resignation to the Board it is valid as of the date it is submitted. So, at this point in time there would be a Motion if he came into Executive Session, so it is my understanding that the Board has two decisions. Whether to at this point in time to his request to rescind his resignation or in the alternative not to rescind his resignation.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mrs. Mitchell: OK, Mr. Splendorio, please? OK, I am sorry can I interrupt you for a minute? Without any objection from the Board, there is not a Motion on there to approve the Agenda, so I need to do that first. May I have a Motion to approve this Agenda? Motion by Davis, seconded by Mr. Splendorio. Any discussion? All in favor, aye. Opposed? OK, thank you. Mr. Splendorio?

Mr. Splendorio: I assume from our attorney's discussion that the appropriate Motion would be to accept John Murphy's request to rescind his resignation as a Barnegat Girls' Varsity Basketball Coach.

Mrs. Mitchell: Is that correct, Mr. Coronato? We need a Motion to accept his letter of resignation first?

Mr. Coronato: No, I think as I understand it, Coach Murphy has requested to rescind his resignation.

Mr. Splendorio: So, I make the Motion to accept Coach Murphy, or John Murphy's request to rescind his resignation as a Barnegat Girls Varsity Basketball Coach.

Mrs. Mitchell: Is there a second on that? Seconded by Mr. Kostka.

Mr. Splendorio: Madam President, I am going to reserve my right to speak last on the Motion.

Mr. Coronato: I think what you need to do now is to explain whatever affirmative vote would be. There is a Motion on the table which has been seconded. It is my understanding that if this Motion were to be accepted that means that Mr. Murphy's resignation does not exist and he then would be the basketball coach in Barnegat Township. A yes vote means he stays as a basketball coach.

Mrs. Mitchell: And this will be done with this Motion, solely with this Motion?

Mr. Coronato: That is correct.

Mrs. Mitchell: OK, I also remind the Board I am going to ask for discussion now and Mr. Splendorio would like to be last, if there is any discussion now is the time to discuss it and not after or before your individual vote. Is there any discussion on this? Mr. Splendorio?

Mr. Splendorio: Thank you. For me and I don't know how many other Board members I speak for, but this is not an easy decision in some regards. I have coached Little League and softball; and I have a personal relationship with three of the people who spoke at the last meeting in opposition. I believe them to be sincere people. The Board does not sit here to say I accept, I favor John Murphy or I don't favor John Murphy. The Board's prime responsibility is to see, determine the facts and make a decision that is not best for Mr. Murphy, but what is best for the students and the district of Barnegat.

So, while we make this decision, there is a Motion on the floor and it is not done in terms of I favor Mr. Murphy or I think the people that spoke last week were insincere. For me, I think they were sincere. I think they are misguided in terms of the direction in the way they took action on their sincere thoughts, but they are sincere. So, we as a Board had to sit down and investigate the situation as best as possible and we had to make a determination as to what was best for the district. For me, the issue was were the facts before us correct and if so, and I am not going to determine that here today because it would be inappropriate, I am not allowed to discuss this specific issue so you'll stop me and I won't go that far. So, first we had to determine whether the facts were correct and assuming the facts were correct in total context of the man's career and what we should do for the students of Barnegat, is it a fatal error?

After hearing all that information and factoring in all that we know the only conclusions I can come to is why I made this Motion would be to reject Coach Murphy's resignation and to reinstate him as the coach of the Barnegat Girls Varsity Basketball team. I see this as a Board member for two reasons (1) the context of the total life-experience of the gentleman and the facts that we cannot talk about that we heard in closed session. The second issue, if we act, and this by itself would not be enough to keep...why I am going to make this Motion...but the Board has got to consider that if we throw someone to the wind because of even the most sincere concerns that could have been handled and should have been handled on an individual basis, who is the next one who is going to coach this team? Alright? We have a process, who wants to be the next coach when if you sit somebody down for a very legitimate reason or not a legitimate reason and make a judgment and even if there is an error in your judgment, and none of us are perfect. Coach Murphy isn't, I am not, none of us here are to be challenged in a public session and challenge their integrity and their skill and who wants to go through that? How do we attract good coaches? That is the second issue for me. So, taking both the issues in context I think the Board has only one decision to make, one reinstate Coach Murphy and ask the parents who spoke at the last meeting to step back into the process, resolve the issues with Coach Murphy and move forward for the benefit, not only of their children

but for the benefit of all of Barnegat. I thank you and I urge all of my fellow Board members to vote yes.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you, just a final clarification before the vote. Voting yes on this is saying you are in favor of Coach Murphy being the girls' basketball coach. Another reminder is that it needs five to pass. May I have a Roll Call please?

Mrs. Taylor	Yes
Mr. Dorow	Yes
Mrs. Germano	Abstain
Mr. Splendorio	Yes
Mr. Kostka	Yes
Mr. Davis	Yes
Mr. Houser	Abstain
Mrs. Mitchell	Yes

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Welcome back Coach Murphy. May I please have some order we have a couple of other items we need to finish up here?

Dr. McMahon: Yes, please just be seated for a couple quick minutes.

Mrs. Mitchell: Mr. Kostka, please, did you have something?

Mr. Kostka: Yes.

Mrs. Mitchell: Excuse me, thank you. Mr. Kostka, please?

Mr. Kostka: Just give me a second. Mrs. Mitchell, I just wanted to take a moment, I have to agree with Mr. Balka and Mrs. Cellini and the gentleman in the back who spoke, Mr. Municchi. We do have a problem with morale in this district due largely to the internet harassment. It is important to know that this Board's action with regard to a certain websites were not something this Board did to protect itself. The site has been running amuck for over two years now, and we have sat idly by while she posted numerous comments and debaucheries against our actions and the Board's personal lives. We allowed this person to speak her piece because all of us sit here, why for what reason? Because we are public officials; and we know what we got into when we signed on for this job. We will endure whatever hurtful and untrue, and I mean untrue things, that have been posted about us, but one thing we will not tolerate is for our students or our staff in this manner to feel bullied or harassed by anyone or anything posted on this website. That is where we draw the line, don't talk about our kids and this website did just that. So, yes, we took a stand this year right before you for the betterment of our students. Now, if you want and go ahead and say something or write whatever you want about me and my fellow Board members go ahead, but do not harass, berate, talk or write about our students and staff. Mrs. Becker, I hold you personally responsible for whatever is on your website. Thank you.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you, Mr. Kostka. Anyone else? Mr. Splendorio?

Mr. Splendorio: I would like to say something that, I wanted to say it during the time we discussed the Motion on the coach issue, but it is really separate, but really tied in some ways. I served on this Board, thirteen years I think fairly soon, and I came back after 20 months of being off the Board and some people wanted to check, sit on a couch and talk to somebody about it, but because...when I left this Board 20 months ago it was a smooth running machine and everyone here says the nine board members here are puppets of somebody, we have as many arguments and fights and tussles as any group of nine people could have, but in front of you, you never saw it. I can tell you as much as I love Mrs. Mitchell there are things that I thought she and I disagreed on and I served many years as Vice President with her and President with her; and there is not one of you who could tell when we came out of a meeting what we disagreed on and what we agreed on. As adults you discuss things, you come together and you come out unified so the public sees a group of people working together for the betterment of everyone. What has developed in this town is this hatchet mentality where if the only way I can elevate myself is to put you down.

We had a situation recently where our bond rating went up, ok? Yet we had members of the community and the other governing body sending letters to the Attorney General saying we were doing things illegally. The Attorney General calls him up to ask him about the letter, they call the Press and say we are under investigation. About a letter that they sent and the Attorney General turned around and says to us was without merit, but yet what gets in the headlines of the newspaper, the Barnegat Board of Education is under investigation. By what? Someone who knows nothing about our finances, who has never come to one of our meetings, who has never talked to me as Finance Chair, writes a letter to the Attorney General. Yet, it makes it to the front page; and who looks bad, I do. But when you go to sell your house do you want somebody who buys your house...

Audience: This does not have anything to do...

Mrs. Mitchell: Raphael, I am sorry, you are out of order. This is not Public Session, Mr. Adorno. The Board member has a chance to explain and state their opinion on anything. Thank you.

Audience: (inaudible)

Mr. Splendorio: It has everything to do what we are here for because the integrity of every governing body here is at stake because the community is accepting people who turn around and make accusations and the only way they can lift themselves up is to tear someone else down and it is time to stop. The reason why I am saying that is because five years ago I accept that those people are sincere, but why would someone think it would make sense to come up here and attack someone in public when the process should have been to ask for a private session or discussion with the Board and the Board, I tell you, I, Mrs. Mitchell is known as my best ally on the Board, I ran against Mrs. Mitchell. OK? Some people consider Mrs. Lally someone I am associated with, I ran against Mrs.

Lally at one time. When you come up here you do what you can to make what is best for the district. As much as ran against this lady next to me, I have no doubt when she votes back there she is doing what she thinks is right. Even when she disagrees with me and she may not be as smart as I like, she is doing what she thinks is best. The same for Mr. Houser even though he may disagree. When we are back there and someone comes and brings us something up we are going to do what we think is best.

Mrs. Mitchell: Excuse me; may we have quiet out there? Thank you.

Mr. Splendorio: Everybody in the public and every Board member we had to move forward and stop this tearing each other down and start moving forward and let the public see we are unified for one purpose and that is what is best for all of our children and that is what is best for our town. That is all I have to say.

Mrs. Mitchell: Thank you. Anyone else? I have a couple of words and I am going to hand it over to Dr. McMahon and then we will adjourn. There has been much said tonight that summarizes a week of rumor, innuendo, bad feelings and ill-will. I believe our forum this evening and the lessons of our school community have learned from this situation, will take our district stronger and healthier for the sake of our students. Our school system is a microcosm of our society with rules and guidelines to assure proper behavior and order. This past week has been a solid example of why guidelines must be followed, why we need to work together in partnership for our children. When we walk away tonight, I hope we take with us the fact that we are all part of one school community. We can only be strong if parents, teachers, administrators and our Board of Education work together as a team for the betterment of our students.

Parents and residents the part you play in this community is just as important as the men and women who educate our children and those of us who establish the policies and guidelines that make this community. This team as it is runs smoothly. We are all community leaders, guiding our children to a successful future. As leaders we must set an example by assuring our community's well-being. Our community environment must be one that fosters education, personal growth and common respect. I would like to see this Board of Education through its Governance Committee and with the working with the BEA, research and prepare a new district harassment policy that I hope will be a benchmark for others throughout the state. This new policy would go above and beyond the current standards set in our district and the regulations set by the state of New Jersey. Every community member within our district should be safeguarded from personal, written or cyber intimidation, harassment and bullying. Megan Meyer was a thirteen year old girl living in St. Louis, Missouri who took her life after being bullied by a friend's mother who she thought was a fourteen-year old boy.

As a society we need to do whatever we can to see that this will never happen again. I hope this policy will break new ground and be a landmark decision for the Board to adopt and the district to follow. Dr. McMahon, please?

Dr. McMahon: Thank you, Mrs. Mitchell. The past week, actually the past few weeks or even months, as the lead administrator of the district, there are certain things that I want to make sure the community and the Board and the staff is aware we need to look at. We are going to examine the proper channels of communication that we have available to the public and utilized in concert with the Union. We are going to look at Codes of Conduct of our coaches, our parents and our students and work with the Union and our staff to make this, as it always has been, a wonderful place to work. As I echo the words of Mr. Balka and Mrs. Cellini, Barnegat for a great period of time over the last number of years had a tremendous amount of pride. The challenge right now is have administrators, teachers, students and parents disagree with each other, but continue to work to make what Barnegat was named in New Jersey Monthly magazine a year ago, one of the best places in New Jersey to raise young children and the best place to work. I thank you; and I can tell you that it is my challenge and I will work on that everyday. Thank you.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Mitchell: Again, Coach Murphy thank you for the session in closed session, thank you for sitting here and listening to all these remarks and welcome. With that may I have a Motion to Adjourn? Motion by Mr. Splendorio, seconded by Mr. Davis. All in favor? Thank you, good night everyone.

The next Regular Barnegat Township Board of Education Meeting will be held on January 23, 2008 at the Robert L. Horbelt School.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Falkowski, Board Secretary/  
Assistant Business Administrator