

APPROVED  
Bd. Mtg. 3-25-21

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
(Official)

February 25, 2021  
Elizabeth, New Jersey

The regular business meeting of the Board of Education was called to order on February 25, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. The Meeting was previously noticed to be held in the Multipurpose Room of Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education School No. 51, 544 Pennsylvania Ave., Elizabeth, New Jersey 07208. However, in light of the public health emergency caused by coronavirus and the Governor's Executive Order reducing the allowed capacity for indoor gatherings, the Elizabeth Board of Education will conduct the meeting remotely using online platform technology without providing a physical meeting place.

Board President Jerry Jacobs presented the following statement at 6:38 p.m.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. This is a regular business meeting of the Board of Education. Pursuant to New Jersey statutes and the rules adopted by the Board of Education, notice of this meeting using an online platform was sent to The Star Ledger and Cablevision of Elizabeth on February 22, 2021. In addition, this notice is posted on the Bulletin Board in the lobby of 500 North Broad Street, and pursuant to this act, a copy has been filed with the City Clerk of Elizabeth, New Jersey.

There will be an online public portion for citizens to address the Board. Participants for the public portion must register online up to the start of the meeting so that they may have the opportunity to speak. The public participation form states the name and email of the person who wants to comment. Members of the public who prefer not to or do not have the means to participate using the online platform may continue to participate by emailing statements relative to agenda items and/or educational matters to the Secretary of the Board at [kennedha@epsnj.org](mailto:kennedha@epsnj.org). All statements received will be read into the record during the meeting's public comment portion. All emails must be submitted and received by the Secretary of the Board up to the start of the meeting and, as is always the case, must include the public member's full name for the record. Each statement submitted by a participant shall be limited to three minutes in duration. The time limit will be strictly enforced and audio transmission will be terminated at the end of three minutes. The total time of public comment shall be limited to 60 minutes. Emails received but not read after the 60-minute duration will be spread in full in the Official Board Minutes of this meeting.”

Present: Nathalie Alcaide-Hernandez, Diane Barbosa, Charlene Bathelus, Maria Carvalho, Iliana Chevres, Rosa Moreno-Ortega, Stanley Neron, Stephanie Pestana, Jerry Jacobs – 9  
Absent: None

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., Chief of Operations Francisco Cuesta, Co-General Counsel Jonathan Williams, Esq. of DeCotiis, Fitzpatrick & Cole, LLP, and members of the community were present via an online platform.

Mr. Jacobs called for a moment of silence for the passing of Dr. Orlando Edreira who was a former Elizabeth Board of Education member, New Jersey State Board of Education member, and City of Elizabeth Councilmember-at-Large.

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer stated that we are observing a moment of silence for the passing of Dr. Orlando Edreira whose name adorns Dr. Orlando Edreira Academy School No. 26. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that Dr. Edreira served in myriad facets and earned the utmost respect for his dedication to service as an elected member of the Elizabeth Board of Education, member of the New Jersey State Board of Education, member of the Community Advisory Board of the Community Mental Health Center at Elizabeth General Hospital, and founding President of the Elizabeth Historical Society. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that as a life-long educator and former Professor of Spanish and Chairman of the Department of Foreign Languages, Literature and Culture at Kean University, Dr. Edreira was culturally attuned and involved with such organizations as the American Society of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, the Modern Language Association, Columbia University Hispanic Institute, Cuban-American Association of New Jersey Incorporated, the Puerto Rican Organization for Community Education and Economic Development Incorporated, the American Society of International Law, and the Rutgers University Society of International Law. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that Dr. Edreira was enthusiastically involved in the education of countless students through a distinguished career and life dedicated to community service and outreach. The positive impact he had on the Elizabeth community and the lives of Elizabeth students is both indelible and immeasurable.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer thanked Mr. Jacobs for allowing her to share the significant impact that Dr. Edreira has had on our community. Mrs. Hugelmeyer offered condolences to his family. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that he led an incredible life and leaves behind an impressive legacy.

Mr. Jacobs thanked Mrs. Hugelmeyer and stated that he would also like to offer condolences from him and his Board colleagues. Mr. Jacobs stated that he was such a great man to our community. Mr. Jacobs stated that he is happy that we were able to honor him by naming the school after him.

Mrs. Moreno-Ortega spoke in Spanish for the community.

Pledge of Allegiance  
National Anthem

The African American National Anthem, *Lift Every Voice and Sing* by James Weldon Johnson and performed by Kerry Stubbs, music teacher at George Washington School No. 1 was played.

Mr. Jacobs stated that the performance by Kerry Stubbs was from our Black History Month celebration last year.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer introduced a video that was put together for the Elizabeth Public Schools Black History Month Retrospective that represents the past performances from the various district schools in celebration of Black History Month.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer commented that we miss our students in our schools and the video this evening tugs at our heart strings as we look at our beautiful students ranging from preschool all the way through high school. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that as we celebrate the history and contributions of our black and African Americans in this country it's important that we take the time this evening to share both the accomplishments and the challenges that relate to accessing inclusion. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that this year this pandemic has truly brought some unique circumstances to what would otherwise be a truly, joyous occasion this evening. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that it's important that we take the time to honor the work that is being done in our schools, the work that our past administrators, the work that our past educators started, and the current work that our educators and our students are doing. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that it is important that we come together this evening because despite the challenges of the pandemic we continue to make this year the best that it can be.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that through our virtual programs she would like to share and have our community access the district website, [www.epsnj.org](http://www.epsnj.org) and be able to access the Excellence News this month which truly highlights what it is our educators and our students have come together to honor for Black History Month. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the work occurs not only this month but occurs in all ten months from September through June. Mrs. Hugelmeyer invited the community to access the Excellence News to see the amazing work that is happening beginning with the Elizabeth Board of Education President who served as a panelist on the Amistad Forum this past week. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that there is amazing work happening through the virtual program and the online opportunities that are offered to our students.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer introduced a video presentation of those who came before us and those who worked alongside us, those who we have lost but have left a very rich legacy, and those who are currently paving the path forward. Mrs. Hugelmeyer presented Honoring and Remembering Our Past: A Commemoration of the Lives of our Black Administrators and School Namesakes.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she hopes everyone enjoyed seeing our past administrators and current administrators in our organization. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that it was an appropriate balance of having our students as well as our role models.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the Elizabeth Public Schools became a member of the Amistad Collaborative in December 2019. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the purpose of the Amistad Collaborative is to ensure the Elizabeth Public Schools achieves the learning goals set forth by the New Jersey Legislative Amistad Bill. Mrs. Hugelmeyer introduced Reverend George Britt from Mt. Teman AME Church to provide a presentation to our community.

Reverend George Britt thanked the Elizabeth Public Schools for this opportunity to come and give thanks for our young people who are achieving excellence in our midst. Rev. Britt stated that they are resilient and we are grateful for their attitudes which will take them to very high altitudes. Rev. Britt gave thanks to the Amistad Collaborative which consists of the Elizabeth Public Schools, the New Jersey Association of Black Educators, United Youth of New Jersey, NAACP Elizabeth Branch, Mt. Teman African Methodist Episcopal Church's African Cultural Awareness Ministry, and most importantly the entire village. Rev. Britt stated that it is a collaborative because we are committed to working together to ensure full implementation of the Amistad bill which ensures that the rich diverse history of people of African descent is not isolated to the month of February. Rev. Britt stated that the purpose of the bill is to ensure the infusion of the history and contributions of people of African descent throughout the ten months as the Superintendent has stated. Rev. Britt stated that this is very important and very necessary because

as Desmond Tutu said, “Inclusive good-quality education is a foundation for dynamic and equitable societies.” Rev. Britt stated that we know in this current time there is a need for all persons, especially those who have been oppressed for more than four hundred years, to be acknowledged for their contributions and their value. Rev. Britt stated that he acknowledges and appreciates the commitment of the Elizabeth Public Schools to the Amistad Collaborative. Rev. Britt stated that he appreciates the opportunity of the Excellence News letter that will and is providing greater awareness to the community regarding the significance as well as the requirement of the Amistad bill. Rev. Britt stated that this is law so there is a requirement and we understand that it is relevant. Rev. Britt stated that we thank our Governor for signing legislation to strengthen the Amistad bill. Rev. Britt stated that we also thank Assemblywoman Quijano, our very own assemblywoman, who was one of the sponsors to strengthen the Amistad bill to ensure greater independence of that commission, to ensure the commission had the resources necessary to execute and fulfill its mission. Rev. Britt stated that we are thankful also because in 2002 the law was introduced to ensure the infusion of the history and contributions of people of African descent in the social studies curriculum. Rev. Britt stated that with the strengthening of the bill, infusion would go beyond the social studies curriculum. Rev. Britt stated that the good news is that the Elizabeth Public Schools is in a good position to capitalize on this opportunity and to ensure that we are achieving this new and expanded law because of the Collaborative. Rev. Britt commended the Elizabeth Public Schools for acting on the Collaborative’s request to bring an independent consultant and assessment of the implementation of the Amistad bill. Rev. Britt stated that we are thankful for Dr. Davida Lindsay-Harewood who has been a valuable asset to the Elizabeth Public Schools and to our students as she has evaluated the curriculum and identified strengths and also weaknesses. Rev. Britt stated that the good news is that the Elizabeth Public Schools is investing and ensuring that those weaknesses become strengths. Rev. Britt stated that we are thankful for the current commitment to ensure professional development for teachers and administrators which is underway. Rev. Britt stated that we are thankful for the commitment of the Elizabeth Public Schools to ensure that we don’t just achieve compliance but the Elizabeth Public Schools becomes a model for ensuring that the history and contributions of people of African descent is infused into the curriculum and it is not isolated to February. Rev. Britt stated that we appreciate the strength of the amendments that have been made to the bill and we appreciate the Amistad Collaborative’s commitment to ensure that we achieve full implementation of the bill even in its evolving state. Rev. Britt asked for the community to continue to keep its eyes and ears open in response to implementations that are forthcoming and for them to be more of a participant in how we move forward to ensure full implementation. Rev. Britt stated that it will result in our students having a richer educational experience which enhances everyone’s self-esteem and prepares them for excellence in any arena and any endeavor in which they choose to share their gifts and talents to not only enhance this City but also this world that has been entrusted to us. Rev. Britt thanked everyone and stated that they have come a long way but we have a long way to go. Rev. Britt stated that the good news is that we are going to go far because we are going to go together.

Mr. Jacobs thanked Rev. Britt and Superintendent Hugelmeyer. Mr. Jacobs asked if any Board members would like to comment.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked Rev. Britt for recognizing that we are investing in our children. Mrs. Carvalho stated that it means a lot that he is recognizing it and values the work that we are

doing here for education in the Elizabeth Public Schools. Mrs. Carvalho stated that it means a lot to all of us to know that he is here to work with us to make sure that we continue to roll out the work that needs to be done.

Mr. Neron thanked Rev. Britt, the entire committee, and the commission for the great work that they have done to advocate and push us along. Mr. Neron stated that this work is arduous and we have a long journey ahead. Mr. Neron stated that the journey that we have embarked on is simply amazing and thanked the community because we cannot do this without them. Mr. Neron stated that this is so important and is a direct reflection of what is happening in our schools. Mr. Neron thanked Rev. Britt and the committee for their work on the commission. Mr. Neron thanked the administration and Superintendent for their support of the professional development to bring us this far.

Mr. Jacobs stated that Mr. Neron reminds him so much of himself and what it means to be a black father. Mr. Jacobs stated that he is proud of Mr. Neron because he is a true example of a black father and wanted to recognize it because we are in Black History Month. Mr. Jacobs stated that it is not because he is a Board member or a friend but it has to be acknowledged and recognized because it is important that black fathers raise their children in today's time.

Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that today we are celebrating the role the African Americans played in the development and progress of our community and our country. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega thanked our school community teachers for teaching this to our children. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that she received feedback from different parents that it is different this year and she witnessed different kind of celebrations in different kinds of classes. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega thanked the African American Black community who make an impact in our Elizabeth community. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega thanked Ms. Bathelus, Mr. Neron, and Mr. Jacobs and stated that she is proud of their hard work and dedication. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega thanked Ms. Bathelus and stated that she is a woman representing her community and she is proud of her. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega thanked Mr. Jacobs for equality and the way he is supporting the Amistad curriculum. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that on February 22<sup>nd</sup> there was a speech on the Black History Month celebration. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega thanked the Superintendent and her staff for their dedication and hard work and stated that she appreciates the big difference in this year's celebration compared to past years.

Mr. Neron acknowledged the Superintendent and team for putting together a great tribute to some of the history that we have here in our City and the foundation that has been laid by so many greats that have come through the Elizabeth Public Schools. Mr. Neron stated that we stand on their backs because without them we would not be possible. Mr. Neron stated that speaks for all of us, especially those of African descent who opened those doors for us and were the first to have done it. Mr. Neron commended Mr. Jacobs for the great work he has done this week with the Amistad Commission.

Ms. Bathelus wished everyone Happy Black History Month. Ms. Bathelus stated that she truly appreciates the efforts that our school district put together to acknowledge the different schools that we have. Ms. Bathelus thanked Mrs. Moreno-Ortega for her comments and appreciates her always standing with the black community, always supporting, always being there to cheer on and representing with us and standing apart. Ms. Bathelus stated that she likes the

background screen Mrs. Moreno-Ortega has tonight and thanked her for standing with us at all times, whether it was during Black Lives Matter movement, during any time when we needed to hire more diversity in our district, during Black History Month, during Haitian History Month in May, and that she truly appreciates it. Ms. Bathelus thanked all of our staff members and teachers. Ms. Bathelus stated that growing up she never had a black teacher and she sees how important it is for students to look up in their classrooms and see someone who looks like them. Ms. Bathelus stated that is one of the reasons why she wanted to be on the Board so that when students and young girls see her they can say one day they would love to potentially be on the Board of Education and make decisions for the school district as well. Ms. Bathelus stated that seeing black administrators everywhere and seeing everyone in our district contributing to the success of our district is essential. Ms. Bathelus stated that she doesn't want to just thank you now but wants to thank you all the time and acknowledge the efforts that you do. Ms. Bathelus stated that they appreciate you standing with us and supporting us and also holding us accountable when need be. Ms. Bathelus hoped everyone is well and safe and continues to celebrate one another all the time no matter who we are. Ms. Bathelus stated that we should continue to celebrate one another continuously.

Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that in this Black History Month celebration she wants to congratulate our Board President Jerry Jacobs who was selected to represent Union County on the state level for New Jersey School Boards Association. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that as a black man it is not easy to have that seat and he can raise his voice at the state level and make an impact and change things. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega congratulated Mr. Jacobs and stated that he deserves that position and as an African American man she is proud of him. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that sometimes when you sit down with others across New Jersey as part of the executive board it is not easy as an African American or Latino. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that as one of the members of the executive board with almost 200 NJSBA members, the Spanish community and the African American community is not well represented. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that it was important to celebrate the great opportunity that Mr. Jacobs has with the New Jersey School Boards Association. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that she wanted to share this great news with the community.

Mr. Jacobs thanked Mrs. Moreno-Ortega and stated that she was an inspiration for him to be a representative for the NJSBA 20<sup>th</sup> Legislative District. Mr. Jacobs thanked Mrs. Moreno-Ortega for her dedication and leadership and stated that Mrs. Moreno-Ortega holds two titles on the state level and this is her second year being a member of the NJSBA Urban Board.

Mrs. Barbosa wished everyone Happy Black History Month. Mrs. Barbosa stated that this afternoon she said Happy Black History Month to one of our ninth-grade students and he responded that every month we learn about Black history and we should always. Mrs. Barbosa stated that he is right and that is why we sit on this Board to make decisions. Mrs. Barbosa stated that this month is Black History Month but every month we celebrate Black History and all American History.

Mr. Jacobs shared the President's Focus and stated as we approach a full year from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, he would like to thank and express his appreciation for our students, families, teachers, administrators, Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer and her leadership

team, his colleagues on the Board, City officials, and residents for their contributions and support to ensure education continued here in our community throughout this incredibly difficult time. Mr. Jacobs stated that through all we have endured, we have stayed united, resilient, and determined in delivering instruction and services to our students to help them continue in their development. Mr. Jacobs stated that with that same resilience and determination, we will continue to work toward our ultimate goal of reopening our schools. Mr. Jacobs stated that despite the challenges, teaching and learning continues.

Mr. Jacobs expressed his gratitude for our teachers and students throughout Elizabeth Public Schools for their outstanding efforts in celebrating Black History Month. Mr. Jacobs stated that through research, presentations, artwork, poetry, documentaries, photos, songs, and more, our teachers and students have been learning, bringing awareness, and honoring the past and present contributions of African Americans and Black culture. Mr. Jacobs stated that African Americans have contributed to so many advancements in society and communities everywhere, including right here in Elizabeth. Mr. Jacobs stated that it is almost a year to the day that we dedicated School No. 30 in honor of the great Chessie Dentley Roberts who is a lifelong resident of Elizabeth and became the first African American business teacher in Elizabeth. Mr. Jacobs stated that Chessie Dentley Roberts was instrumental in the desegregation of public housing and the statewide celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day among so many amazing acts of service for which she received distinguished service awards. Mr. Jacobs stated that she joined Mabel G. Holmes, Frances C. Smith, Donald Stewart, Jerome Dunn, and Charles W. Harris as African Americans who made significant impacts on the Elizabeth community whose names now adorn our school buildings. Mr. Jacobs stated that along with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Toussaint L'Ouverture, eight district schools now are named in honor of black men and women who have effected change in our community and beyond. Mr. Jacobs stated that as black men and women continue to make their mark in our community, throughout our country, and throughout the world in advancing society, he thanked our teachers once more for introducing our children to these noted figures, telling their vitally important stories, and sharing their influence and impact on history.

Mr. Jacobs stated that he had the opportunity this past Monday to participate in the Amistad Commission Black History Education Virtual Forum. Mr. Jacobs stated that the discussion centered on a milestone in Black history education with the recently amended law to make New Jersey the first state in history to require Black history be taught in every grade. Mr. Jacobs thanked Assemblywoman Annette Quijano and fellow panelists Charlotte Brown, founder of United Youth of NJ, James Harris, President of NJ Association of Black Educators, and Gary Melton, Manager of the Human and Civil Rights, Equity, and Governance from the New Jersey Education Association, as well as former Assemblyman William Payne who joined us. Mr. Jacobs stated that it truly was a pleasure to share this powerful conversation with others who are so dedicated to the advancement of Black History education and equity within our school communities.

Mr. Jacobs thanked members of the Elizabeth community who have helped advance Black History education here in our schools like Charles Harris who helped put the wheels in motion for the establishment of the curriculum of inclusion, Ms. Bathelus and Mr. Neron who have continued the advancement of the curriculum of inclusion while serving on this Board, and the Amistad Collaborative here in Elizabeth for their work so far in helping us reach where we are today and their continued work in helping us advance further.

Mr. Jacobs thanked all of the black men and women who came before me, both from within Elizabeth and beyond, who helped make it possible for him to be in this position to help serve the

community he loves so much. Mr. Jacobs stated that there are too many of you to mention individually and he doesn't want to leave anyone out because so many contributed to the movement, our advancement as a community, and the advancement of Black History education in our schools. Mr. Jacobs stated that the acts of service and sacrifices made by each and every one of you is honored and revered in the highest regard. Mr. Jacobs acknowledged the new President of the Elizabeth Branch of the NAACP Shawn McClain.

Mr. Jacobs stated that Mr. Williams will speak prior to public speaking.

Mr. Williams stated that he wanted to clarify for members of the public and interested parties with regard to the process which the Board is following in connection with a new contract for the Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer. Mr. Williams stated that at the Board's last meeting a week ago, the Board adjourned into closed session and gave proper notice to discuss personnel matters. Mr. Williams stated that six of the Board members did engage in a discussion about a new contract for Mrs. Hugelmeyer. Mr. Williams stated that the resolution allowing the Board to go into closed session pointed out that official action might be taken by the Board upon their return to public session. Mr. Williams stated that after discussion in closed session with regard to the possibility of a new contract and a recognition of the fact that Mrs. Hugelmeyer's current contract is coming to an end at the end of this school year, the Board also recognized that by state law she was entitled to the intent of the Board during the month of March. Mr. Williams stated that as a result of that discussion, a resolution was adopted lawfully after the rules were suspended in accordance with New Jersey administrative procedures. Mr. Williams stated that the resolution that was adopted was for a new contract for Mrs. Hugelmeyer for a five-year period which will commence July 2021 after her current contract has concluded. Mr. Williams stated that the resolution indicated that compensation would stay the same and the contract that was being contemplated had to be subject to approval by law from the County Superintendent of Schools. Mr. Williams stated that we are in the process of finalizing that contract and sending it to the County Superintendent of Schools and when that approval is secured it will be returned to the Board for a further discussion and another vote to authorize the execution of the contract if that is the Board's pleasure at that time. Mr. Williams stated that there has been some discussion about the applicability of N.J.S.A. 18A:11-11 which requires thirty days notice and requires a significant amount of procedural aspects to this situation. Mr. Williams stated that the statute does not apply to what was done by the Board and does not apply to the type of contract that is being awarded to the Superintendent of Schools. Mr. Williams stated that the contract that is being awarded is being done lawfully and in accordance with the same process that has been followed in the past for the Superintendents as well as the Assistant Superintendents who have one year contracts. Mr. Williams stated that the process is followed every year with respect to them. Mr. Williams stated that there is a written question and answer document which is a guidance document from the New Jersey Department of Education which is somewhat lengthy that he is willing to share with any member of the public. Mr. Williams stated that it is an answer to the process that was followed. Mr. Williams gave his phone numbers and email for anyone who wanted to contact him.

Mr. Williams stated that public comment at the last meeting pointed out that a mistake, which as an attorney for the Board, he did overlook the regulations for public speaking do require that cameras display the faces or images of those people who are speaking if the Board members' faces and images are displayed during the Board meeting. Mr. Williams stated that as a result of that comment and he appreciates the fact that it was made, tonight the public comment will result

in a split screen which will show the person speaking as well as the timing clock that we previously were displaying. Mr. Williams thanked Mr. Jacobs for the time to address the Board.

Mr. Jacobs thanked Mr. Williams and asked if the Board members had any questions.

Ms. Bathelus asked Mr. Williams to repeat his contact information just in case people did not get it.

Mr. Williams gave his contact information including phone numbers and email address. Mr. Williams stated that any member of the public who actually wants to have a discussion about this and is truly interested in getting the correct answer should phone him at their convenience.

Mr. Jacobs presented the following public participation statement.

“At this time, the meeting is open for public comment to those who have registered with the online participation form prior to this session. I shall call individuals to participate based on the order of the sign-in. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three minutes in duration. The time limit will be strictly enforced and audio transmission will be terminated at the end of three minutes. The total time of public comment shall be limited to 60 minutes. No individual is able to yield their time to another individual. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually. The following rules for public participation shall apply: time limits will be strictly enforced, no personal attacks on individuals, no vulgar or indecent language, a person may address the board no more than once during a single meeting, speakers should refrain from naming individuals, and comments or questions posed during public participation will not be debated. As a reminder, this is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public.

If the 60 minute public comment period expires before all registered online participants have been called, remaining participants can email their statements to the Secretary of the Board at [kennedha@epsnj.org](mailto:kennedha@epsnj.org) and they will be spread in full in the Official Minutes of this meeting. The Secretary of the Board will read into the record all emails that have been submitted up to the start of the meeting. Each statement submitted by a participant shall be limited to three minutes in duration.”

Mr. Kennedy called upon the first public participant, Maria Lorenz, to address the Board.

Maria Lorenz spoke about the superintendent contract and SEPAC.

Mr. Jacobs thanked her for her comments.

Mr. Kennedy called twice upon the next public participant, Fairlynn Chisolm, to address the Board. Fairlynn Chisolm did not respond.

Mr. Kennedy called upon the next public participant, Michelle Santos, to address the Board.

Michelle Santos spoke about special education.

Mr. Jacobs thanked her for her comments.

Mr. Kennedy called upon the next public participant, Danielle Fienberg, to address the Board.

Danielle Fienberg spoke about public speaking and the superintendent contract.

Mr. Jacobs thanked her for her comments.

Mr. Kennedy called upon the next public participant, Christina Moreira, to address the Board.

Christina Moreira spoke about the superintendent contract, special education, and the reopening of schools.

Mr. Jacobs thanked her for her comments.

Mr. Kennedy called upon the next public participant, Tammy Blue, to address the Board.

Tammy Blue spoke about a problem with her child.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she will contact her tomorrow morning.

Mr. Jacobs thanked her for her comments.

Mr. Kennedy called upon the next public participant, Melba Henao, to address the Board.

Melba Henao spoke about a problem with her child.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she will contact her tomorrow morning.

Mr. Jacobs thanked her for her comments.

Mr. Kennedy called upon the next public participant, Rev. George Britt, to address the Board.

Rev. George Britt stated that he had no further comments at this time.

Mr. Kennedy called upon the next public participant, Michael Dye, to address the Board.

Michael Dye stated that he is a member of the African Awareness Ministry at Mt. Teman AME Church and spoke about the implementation of Amistad.

Mr. Jacobs thanked him for his comments.

Mr. Kennedy called twice upon the next public participant, Charlotte Brown, to address the Board. Charlotte Brown did not respond.

Mr. Kennedy called twice upon the next public participant, Shawn McClain, to address the Board. Shawn McClain did not respond.

Mr. Kennedy stated that he did not receive any emails prior to the start of the meeting.

Since there were no other participants for public speaking and no emails received, Mr. Jacobs closed this portion of the meeting.

Mrs. Moreno-Ortega asked the Superintendent to explain what the protocol is when the community comes to the Board and addresses concerns or requests and what the parents and guardians can expect.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer explained that once a parent addresses the Board and presented a concern such as the two parents tonight that she addressed, the immediate next step is that she reaches out and coordinates a conference call with the parent and obtains all of the necessary information. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she follows through, whether it is at the school level principal or following through at department level and then she can continue the conversation with the parent. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that school level and department level is how the concerns are handled. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she follows through with the parent until the very end and we have been able to resolve the issue. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that our assistant superintendents are instrumental in this and this is what they do each and every day and our principals are addressing concerns each day. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the protocol is that when a parent has a concern, they should be bringing that concern to the school principal. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that if the issue is not resolved at the school level, which in large part the issues are resolved, then it is brought to the attention of the assistant superintendent that oversees that respective school. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that if the issue is not resolved through our assistant superintendents, then the issue is brought to her attention.

Ms. Bathelus stated that for the last several Board meetings there have been a lot of concerns about the special education department. Ms. Bathelus stated that she reached out to the chairperson of the special education committee, Mrs. Barbosa, about the concerns that she has been hearing from the community about the special education department. Ms. Bathelus stated that she has not heard any responses and perhaps it needs to be an offline conversation. Ms. Bathelus stated that she has some concerns that need to be addressed with regard to what is happening and how we can address some of the issues so that the community members who come and share their concerns can feel a little more at ease.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that when the parents bring forth a specific concern she is able to work with our parent to be able to resolve their issue and be able to have the right people at the table to be able to help and support the parents. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that with regard to the concerns that have been brought forth, they are very broad concerns and not specific to the individual's child. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that at this present time we are operating the way we normally do and are following all of our policies and protocols. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that what

she finds them to be are allegations against our director of special services who does a phenomenal job each and every day working around the clock to serve our children in our school district.

Mr. Neron stated that he heard all the speakers tonight and stated that he tries not to be reactionary. Mr. Neron stated that when he says hold us accountable, he takes that very seriously. Mr. Neron commended Board attorney Mr. Williams who provided full transparency of how to get access to him by giving his phone numbers and email as to how one can get in touch with him. Mr. Neron asked the members of the public who have these great concerns to reach out. Mr. Neron stated that before we make any decision, moves, or we take initiative to do something, we do make sure that we are not breaking the law or following policy. Mr. Neron stated that for the most part it is our responsibility to understand our own policy and we do and if we are uncertain about it we defer to our counsel as he has made himself available to the public. Mr. Neron stated that if there is anything that you feel that we have done that is not according to protocol or not following policy, then please bring that to our attention. Mr. Neron stated that our attorney has made it very clear tonight that if you have any concerns about any of these procedures or things that you feel may not be governed accordingly you can ask those questions and get clarification on it. Mr. Neron stated that before he made a decision to run, he really put long hard thought into it. Mr. Neron stated that he is also a parent and before he was a Board member he was a member of the community advocating long and hard. Mr. Neron stated that he understands what it is like to not be heard. Mr. Neron stated that it would be absurd for us to sit on this side and to do the same to you and that's not why we were elected. Mr. Neron stated that there are parameters that we can not speak publicly and react and answer, give false answers and answers that you just want to hear. Mr. Neron stated that sometimes you may get answers from us that are not pleasing to your needs at that particular time because policy may stop us from being able to do that. Mr. Neron stated that it does not mean that we do not care and we would not be sitting here and doing this. Mr. Neron stated that we do this because we are passionate and we care. Mr. Neron stated that we are here for a reason and we have always said that we stand for our children and the parents. Mr. Neron stated that he does want to make sure we are addressing the special needs issue. Mr. Neron stated that nationally special needs is a dilemma for everybody and he doesn't think anyone has come up with how to figure out all the particular challenges that we face. Mr. Neron stated that everyday it is a growing challenging field that the counselors and director are faced with and the administration is faced with. Mr. Neron stated that he empathizes with the families who are challenged and Covid has not made anything easier and has complicated things for us. Mr. Neron stated that we were on a straight path to address every issue before Covid came along. Mr. Neron stated that now that Covid has been our reality it has been extremely challenging. Mr. Neron stated that he heard the questions about reopening and it is a very challenging feat. Mr. Neron stated that it is going to require a lot of federal input, state input, local input, and community input. Mr. Neron stated that it is going to be a challenge and we have no idea what is to come. Mr. Neron stated that tomorrow there may be a new announcement that we have to shuffle and try to figure out just like we had to shuffle and figure out how to close schools and work virtually. Mr. Neron stated that he wants to make it clear that we do hear all the parents out there and for every person that speaks they represent a large block of our community that wants to be heard and needs to be heard and we get that. Mr. Neron stated that we are here for that and we fight for those who are not even speaking tonight and some people who have issues that we haven't heard from and probably do not want to come forth and talk about their issues for whatever reason. Mr. Neron stated that we want to hear from you, too. Mr. Neron stated that if there are other issues out there please bring

them. Mr. Neron stated that we are listening and we hear you and for those who never speak we want to hear you. Mr. Neron stated that we try very hard to advocate for you and try to figure it out from the analysis and the evaluations we do throughout the district by talking to people and that is the only way to find out what is happening.

Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated to the community that we are nine Board members who are working hard for our community. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that we are here because we care and each one of us cares for our community. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that if you need any specific concerns you can email us and let us know. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that when she receives an email, she sends the email to the Superintendent and President Jacobs. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that there are nine Board members that you can email and bring your concerns. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that we are here for you and have passion for our community. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that if some of you don't have time to address the Board and you don't want to speak publicly or it is personal information, you can email us and we will address the concern. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that the community can visit our website and email us.

Mrs. Chevres asked if there is a possibility to share our social media and website again for the information for each school counselor, social worker, or principal. Mrs. Chevres stated that it is important that all the parents know how to contact our guidance counselors and social workers for extra support not just for students but our families need a lot of support right now. Mrs. Chevres stated that regarding 504, evaluations, and any special services, it is important that the community knows how to communicate with their schools. Mrs. Chevres stated that sometimes the communication goes to special services and some of the requests need to go to the principal or guidance counselor first.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that our website is updated. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that reminding our parents with regard to how to navigate especially during these difficult times is important to include in our communications. Mrs. Hugelmeyer thanked Mrs. Chevres for the recommendation.

Mrs. Chevres stated that it is almost a year to when we started home schooling and everybody is so stressed out. Mrs. Chevres stated that it is important to remind everyone that we are here and we have a great administration to support our students and families.

Mrs. Barbosa thanked the community for reaching out because more than ever a lot of families feel alone. Mrs. Barbosa stated that we feel alone and have our child with us and at times we don't know how to navigate the platforms. Mrs. Barbosa stated that our children need so much extra help. Mrs. Barbosa stated that we feel for the parents and understand the hardship. Mrs. Barbosa stated that we have different committees that have been working hard. Mrs. Barbosa stated that when appropriate, Mrs. Hugelmeyer will provide information to the community. Mrs. Barbosa stated that we have been working on certain committees, particularly the reopening. Mrs. Barbosa stated that some of the special ed parents reached out particularly about the reopening and want to put our children back in school. Mrs. Barbosa stated that we are working on that. Mrs. Barbosa stated that regarding the parents who reach out about special education, we hear your concerns. Mrs. Barbosa stated that we are parents and we understand the hardships. Mrs. Barbosa stated that we have several committee meetings coming up and the concerns are not forgotten.

Mrs. Barbosa stated that it is something that we are working on. Mrs. Barbosa stated that our Superintendent has given us an idea of how SEPAC is being addressed and how it is going to move forward and we are waiting for reports. Mrs. Barbosa stated that we will provide any information and any help that any parent needs because we know that it can be very lonely. Mrs. Barbosa stated that if you follow any guidance that the administration gives reach out to help and start with reaching out to the teacher virtually and communicating with the teacher and principal. Mrs. Barbosa stated that we are here to help.

Mr. Jacobs stated that we do hear the concerns of our parents and we do really work to try to resolve these issues. Mr. Jacobs stated that sometimes we cannot publicly say what can be done or things of that nature. Mr. Jacobs stated that we are very concerned about each and every one of our students. Mr. Jacobs stated that we all serve at the pleasure of our citizens because we all do care and that is most important. Mr. Jacobs stated that February is Black History Month and Black History is American History.

The President requests a motion to go into Private Session to consider matters exempt under the Open Public Meetings Act, specifically for discussion of personnel, contracts and legal matters. The Board will reconvene in public and may take formal action.

A motion was made by Mrs. Chevres, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, to go into private session at 8:45 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Alcaide-Hernandez, Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mmes. Carvalho, Chevres, Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Pestana, Mr. Jacobs – 9

Negative: None

A motion was made by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, to reconvene in public session at 11:16 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Alcaide-Hernandez, Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mmes. Carvalho, Chevres, Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Pestana, Mr. Jacobs – 9

Negative: None

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that pursuant to Board Policy 5131.1 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) and New Jersey Statute 18A:37 the results of each investigation shall be reported to the Board of Education no later than the date of the next board meeting following completion of the investigation, and include: 1) Any services provided; 2) Training established; 3) Discipline imposed; or 4) Other action taken or recommended by the chief school administrator. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that at the next regularly scheduled meeting after Board members receive the report of HIB investigations, the statute requires that the Board issue a decision in writing to affirm, reject, or modify the Superintendent's decision pertaining to the cases that were reported to the Board members at the last meeting.

Mr. Jacobs added the following to the agenda:

Resolution – Suspension without Pay – S.A.  
Resolution – Consent of Transfer of Liquor License  
Resolution – Settlement Agreement – Essex County Services Commission  
Resolution – Settlement Agreement – Villani Bus Company

Mr. Jacobs asked for a motion and second to adopt the agenda.

Minutes of the Meetings of January 7, 21, and 28, 2021  
Secretary/Treasurer’s Report for the Month of December 2020  
Personnel Report  
Supplemental Personnel Report  
Tuition Report  
Supplemental Tuition Report  
Superintendent’s Report – Considerations  
Superintendent’s Report – Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Investigative Results  
Authorizations Report  
Finance and Accounting Report – Authorization to Pay Vouchers, etc.  
Supplemental Finance and Accounting Report – Transfer of Funds  
Award of Contracts Report  
Supplemental Award of Contracts Report  
Miscellaneous Communication – None  
Claims List  
Resolution – National Nutrition Month  
Resolution – National School Breakfast Week  
Resolution – National School Social Workers Week  
Resolution – Read Across America  
Resolution – St. Joseph’s Day  
Resolution – St. Patrick’s Day  
Resolution – Women’s History Month  
Resolution – Youth Art Month  
Resolution – Payment for Unused Sick Days  
Resolution – Payment for Unused Vacation Days  
Resolution – Qualifying and Appointing Special Counsel Critchley, Kinum &, Denoia LLC  
Resolution – Acceptance and Approval of Corrective Action Plan  
Resolution – Settlement Agreement – C.L.  
Resolution – Suspension without Pay – S.A.  
Resolution – Consent of Transfer of Liquor License  
Resolution – Settlement Agreement – Essex County Services Commission  
Resolution – Settlement Agreement – Villani Bus Company

A motion was made by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Mrs. Pestana, that the above be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Alcaide-Hernandez, Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mmes. Carvalho, Chevres, Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Pestana, Mr. Jacobs – 9

Negative: None

On a motion was made by Mrs. Pestana, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, the meeting was adjourned at 11:25 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Alcaide-Hernandez, Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mmes. Carvalho, Chevres, Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Pestana, Mr. Jacobs – 9

Negative: None

Harold E. Kennedy, Jr.  
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary