

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

May 20, 2017
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called on May 20, 2017 at 8:30 a.m., in the Elizabeth High School Frank J. Cicarell Academy, 40 Morrell Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Board President Stanley Neron presented the following statement at 9:00 a.m.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning. This is a special meeting of the Board of Education. Pursuant to New Jersey Statutes and the rules adopted by the Board of Education, notice of this meeting was sent to The Star Ledger and Cablevision of Elizabeth on May 16, 2017. 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.”

“I wish to extend a warm welcome to everyone present to this May 20, 2017 meeting of the Board of Education. We are here to govern, provide management oversight, and make policy for the district. The Superintendent manages the district. This is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public.”

“This meeting is being recorded and will become part of the Elizabeth Board of Education permanent record. In order that the recording will adequately reflect the proceedings, please refrain from talking while others are speaking. I also ask that you silence the sound on your electronic devices. Since it is legally mandated that these proceedings be accurately recorded, I may have to ask for order periodically should noise begin to interfere with our recording capabilities. I am pleased that you have taken time this evening to join us. Thank you for your interest in the Elizabeth Public Schools.”

“There will be a public portion for citizens to address the Board. Participants for the public portion may sign in up to the start of the public speaking portion of the meeting so that they may have the opportunity to speak. The sign-in sheet states the name, address, telephone number and reason that the person wants to comment, whether it is an agenda item or a general education comment.”

Present: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus (arr. 9:05 a.m.), Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves, Messrs. Nina, Rodriguez, Neron – 7

Absent: Mrs. Amin, Mr. Perreira – 2

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., Co-General Counsel Jonathan Williams, Esq. of DeCotiis, Fitzpatrick & Cole, LLP, and members of the public were in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of Ethics

Mr. Neron stated that this is a special meeting for our board retreat to provide guidance for governance.

Mr. Neron presented the following public participation statement.

“At this time, the microphones are open for public comment to those who have signed in prior to this session. I shall call individuals to the microphones based on the order of the sign-in. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three minutes in duration. The total time of public comment shall be limited to sixty 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 participants 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.”

Mr. Neron called upon the first public participant, Christina Moreira, to address the Board.

Christina Moreira, 805 Gebhardt Avenue, asked why a free legal clinic connected to a board member is allowed to use the school email system and what is the criteria for using the email system. Mrs. Moreira spoke about a lack of information for the community for dental, free fingerprinting, State Facilitator for IEP, and the lead report for each school.

Mr. Neron thanked her for her comments and called upon the next public participant, Maria Lorenz to address the Board.

Maria Lorenz, 103 Murray Street, spoke about the district Facebook page and email system and stated that other parent organizations want to advertise. Mrs. Lorenz spoke about SEPAC, the lack of an elopement policy for students who walk away and are found blocks away, and that they are failing our students and failing our parents.

Mr. Neron thanked her for her comments and called upon the next public participant, Joe Cortico, to address the Board.

Joe Cortico, EEA President, stated that he was disappointed that the EEA did not know there was a special board meeting with the Panasonic Foundation and that there was no official notification to the EEA.

Mr. Neron thanked him for his comments. Since there were no other citizens to address the board, Mr. Neron declared this portion of the public meeting closed.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer responded to the public concerns and stated that all requests are forwarded to the Superintendent for review. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that community information is posted on Family Connect and Community Connect and there is a clear line of communication. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that with regard to the student who walked away we took disciplinary action with the paraprofessional and met with the parents. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that with regard to notice of the board meeting, the meeting was advertised as all meetings are and communicated on our website. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that this is a board retreat and Mr. Cortico has not attended retreats in the past and he is always welcome.

Mr. Neron welcomed the Panasonic Foundation and introduced members from the Panasonic Foundation including retired Executive Director Larry Leverett and Senior Consultants Adrienne Bailey, Sean Stalling and Kaili Baucum. Mr. Neron stated that the Panasonic Foundation members joined him on the President’s Tour yesterday and visited classrooms at School No. 6 and toured the diversely populated City of Elizabeth. Mr. Neron stated that Elizabeth is the fourth largest City and we are approaching being the third largest school district in the State of New Jersey. Mr. Neron stated that the board would like to move this district forward and set a foundation for future boards to come.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the Panasonic Foundation is involved in moving this district forward and is focused on students first. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated how much she has learned from the Panasonic Foundation from the time she was an Assistant Superintendent to the last three and a half years as Superintendent.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that Board President Stanley Neron, Board Vice President Maria Carvalho, Board member Jose Rodriguez, and she recently attended the Panasonic Leadership Associates Program (LAP) conference on April 27-28, 2017. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the objective was to enable participating board members to become acquainted with work currently being undertaken to meet the Promise Goals and to enable all EPS participants to identify the critical next steps for work currently being undertaken to meet the Promise Goals. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that some of the highlights include interviews with board members, three priority policies to consider for revision and monitoring, additional data presentations for advanced placement (AP), suspension, chronic absenteeism, ninth grade performance, and examining third grade PARCC data. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the priority areas for follow up include curriculum of inclusion for Amistad and Latino heritage, what we have in place for students who work, additional information on FASFA, restructured guidance function, and activating student voice. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the LAP attendees recognized and supported the need for enhancing the EPS current data functions in the area of Board of Education leadership and monitoring, central office vision, and infrastructure along with active school level supports. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that this is the basis for our further work with the Panasonic Foundation.

Mr. Neron thanked Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer. Mr. Neron introduced the Panasonic Foundation Senior Consultant Adrienne Bailey who facilitated a board training program sponsored by the Panasonic Foundation.

Panasonic Foundation Senior Consultant Adrienne Bailey thanked everyone for coming. Ms. Bailey stated that retired Executive Director Larry Leverett, Senior Consultants Sean Stalling, Kaili Baucum, and she have all been teachers and some of them have been principals, superintendents, regional superintendents, state board members and they are a powerful team. Ms. Bailey stated that they have the opportunity to work with the Board and the community and their mission is to break the links between race, poverty, and educational outcomes by improving the academic and social success of ALL students and ALL means ALL.

Ms. Bailey presented an overview of the retreat agenda goal to further the board's effectiveness in essential areas of governance with the objectives to reach understanding of key issues identified in board interviews, reach agreement on beliefs and norms for board communication practices, deepen knowledge and understanding of the board's policy role, and develop a framework for board goals and an annual work plan.

Ms. Bailey stated that boards in high-achieving districts exhibit habits and characteristics that are markedly different from boards in low-achieving districts. Ms. Bailey stated that there are eight characteristics of effective school boards and the first is committing to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision. Ms. Bailey stated that the next is that effective school boards have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels. Ms. Bailey stated that the third is that effective school boards are accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement. Ms. Bailey stated that the next is that effective school boards have a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals. Ms. Bailey stated that the fifth characteristic is that effective school boards are data savvy and they embrace and monitor data even when the information is negative and use it to drive continuous improvement. Ms. Bailey stated that the next is that effective school boards align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals and effective boards saw a responsibility to maintain high standards even in the midst of budget challenges. Ms. Bailey stated that another is that effective school boards lead as a united team with the superintendent each from their respective roles and with strong collaboration and mutual trust. Ms. Bailey stated that the eighth characteristic is that effective

school boards take part in team development and training sometimes with their superintendent to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

Senior Consultant Adrienne Bailey introduced Senior Consultant Sean Stalling.

Senior Consultant Sean Stalling stated that this is an opportunity to establish communication norms and procedures and for the board members to talk to each other. Mr. Stalling instructed the board members and administrators to work in groups to examine and analyze a communications agreement. Mr. Stalling led the board members and administrators in a group discussion of board governance and the effectiveness of communication norms and procedures.

Senior Consultant Sean Stalling introduced Larry Leverett, retired Executive Director of the Panasonic Foundation.

Larry Leverett stated that the effectiveness of governance is the key to whether you achieve your goals. Mr. Leverett led the administration and board members in a discussion of where the line is for governance and management and the communication necessary when the line is blurred. Mr. Leverett asked how board members communicate with other board members, with the superintendent, and with other staff members and what are the expectations to how the system works. Mr. Leverett instructed the board members and administrators to work in groups to analyze and discuss the communication agreements of three districts.

Mr. Leverett stated that communication requires ongoing feedback loops with board to board, board to superintendent, superintendent to board, board to staff, and staff to board. Mr. Leverett stated the need to have an agreement on inter-governmental communication and asked how are they communicating with City Hall and other governmental agencies. Mr. Leverett stated that the need to have a communication process and it may require drafting a bylaw. Mr. Leverett stated that the goal is to develop a draft of a communication agreement with a small group of board members and an administrator.

Mr. Neron stated that the committee will be Board members Charlene Bathelus, Dan Nina, and Jose Rodriguez and School Board Administrator/Board Secretary Harold Kennedy, Jr.

Mr. Leverett stated that the next retreat is scheduled for July 22nd and a rough draft of the communication agreement should be completed by June 8. Mr. Leverett stated that the next work is developing an intergovernmental agreement and media releases through work with the policy committee and an agenda setting process for procedures and communication developed by the Board President and Superintendent. Mr. Leverett stated the need for a timeline to come back to the full board in July.

Mr. Stalling spoke about the board's role in the constituent service system. Mr. Stalling instructed the board members and administrators to work in groups to examine and analyze the current Constituent Service Policy and Flowchart Exhibit to determine what was assumed by those who wrote it, what do they agree with and what do they disagree with and what do they aspire to develop in this policy. Mr. Stalling led the board members and administrators in a discussion of the current Constituent Service Policy and Flowchart Exhibit. Mr. Stalling stated the need for a timeline to address this policy.

Mrs. Hugelmeier responded that the timeline will be August in order for it to be ready for implementation in September because parents need to be informed.

Ms. Bailey explained the framework for board goals and the work plan including a blueprint and calendar. Ms. Bailey reviewed the operational reports required by statute and/or legislation including the superintendent's annual performance evaluation, QSAC, board self-assessment, personnel actions required, and the budget cycle. Ms. Bailey stated that the priority

policies for revision from the LAP conference include the Data Dashboard, Promotion/Retention, Student Code of Conduct, and Grading Policy. Ms. Bailey stated that the policies for revision from today's work include Inter-government, Communications, Constituent Services, and Management Oversight. Ms. Bailey explained the need to monitor existing policies including Graduation Requirements, Constituent Services, and Special Education. Ms. Bailey reviewed the issues that the board needs information including course requirements for advanced placement, chronic absenteeism, suspension, ninth grade performance, and examining third grade PARCC data. Ms. Bailey stated that the Board needs to decide the frequency for the priority information reports based on whether it is required by policy, how often the board wants the information, and the policy monitoring procedures.

Mr. Leverett stated that there are two key people involved in the initial framework and then it goes to the full board to develop the consensus. Mr. Leverett stated the next step is that the board officers work to define the timeline, structures, roles, and responsibilities related to the plan completion and implementation. Mr. Leverett stated that typically the work plan is developed first and the board decides what do they need to change and then at each board meeting the board spends a few minutes going over the work plan making any adjustments needed. Mr. Leverett stated that the draft should be done by September.

Ms. Baucum explained the work plan and the discipline so everyone owns the work plan and knows what to expect. Ms. Baucum led the board members in a discussion of the commitment to the work plan including holding people accountable, monitoring the progress, not postponing, directly digging with any issues around equity, and making the data public. Ms. Baucum stated that the strategic directions include the board building its capacity to understand and interpret the data and the board agrees on a clear definition. Ms. Baucum stated the importance of the board following through in working with the superintendent to establish board goals and an aligned work plan.

Mr. Leverett stated that the board leads in transforming the culture and climate of the Elizabeth Public Schools with the attention to balancing political interests versus attention to the students and staff. Mr. Leverett stated that there is high leverage and high challenges to consider and there is a unique opportunity to build on great work over the years.

Ms. Bailey commended the board members and administrators on their work and led the board members in a discussion of reflection of the retreat and what went well and what changes are needed. Ms. Bailey stated that there is a new Executive Director at Panasonic and one of her first visits will be to Elizabeth.

Mr. Neron thanked the Panasonic Foundation for facilitating the governance retreat and stated that the next retreat will be scheduled for July 22nd.

On a motion by Miss Bathelus, seconded by Miss Goncalves, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves, Messrs. Nina, Rodriguez, Neron – 7

Negative: None

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