

APPROVED  
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BOARD OF EDUCATION

May 4, 2023  
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A Special Meeting of the Board of Education and a Public Hearing on the Budget was called to order on May 4, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the J. Christian Bollwege Finance Academy, 447 Richmond St., Elizabeth, New Jersey 07202.

Board President, Iliana Chevres welcomed everyone to the meeting and read the following statement:

“Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. This is a Public Hearing on the Budget for the school year beginning July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024. 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 Friday, April 28, 2023. 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.

I wish to extend a warm welcome to everyone present for this May 4, 2023, meeting of the Board of Education. 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.

We are here this evening to hear the public express their views regarding the proposed 2023-2024 budget, in accordance with New Jersey Statute 18A:22-13, and I quote, ‘On the date and at the time and place so fixed, the Board of School Estimate or the Board of Education, as the case may be, shall hold such public hearing at which time the taxpayers and other interested persons shall have an opportunity to present objections and to be heard with respect to said budget and the amounts of money necessary to be appropriated and the various items and purposes for which the same are to be appropriated for the use of public schools in the district for the ensuing school year.

There will be a public portion for citizens to address the Board. Participants for the public portion must personally sign in prior to the start 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: Mmes. Barbosa (arrived at 6:52 pm), Carvalho, Dorgely (arrived at 7:05 pm), Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres-7  
Absent: Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Neron -2

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., Assistant Superintendent for Schools Rafael Cortes, Assistant Superintendent for Schools Judy Finch-Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer Cedeno, Comptroller Rajeev Malhotra, Deputy Counsel Heather Ford, and

Attorney Michael Simitz of Kologi Simitz Law Office, Esq., and members of the community were present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Member Jerry Jacobs.

The National Anthem was played.

Board President, Iliana Chevres, asked Schools Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer to present the 2023/2024 School Budget.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer began her presentation by quoting U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona “Proposed budgets need to reflect the deep belief in education as the foundation of all opportunity in America. It requires continued investments that will help schools, families and communities raise the bar in education by promoting academic excellence, accelerating learning, building safe and supportive school communities, and addressing major challenges like the educator shortage, the mental health and well-being of our students, and success to high-quality early learning programs. Also necessary is the expansion of career connected learning in our schools, more pathways to well-paying careers and driving more equitable outcomes in higher education”.

The Superintendent stated that we are currently the second largest district in New Jersey servicing 28,088 students. Mrs. Hugelmeyer presented a PowerPoint slide showing the overview of the district and stated that we have 37 schools including 3 early childhood centers, 20 neighborhood schools, 6 magnet schools, and 8 high schools. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that we serve 27.37% English language learners, 10.24% special education students, 2.1% students who are both special education and English language learners, 60.29% general education students, and 1.02% of our students are homeless. The Superintendent provided ethnic demographic data showing a breakdown of the student body is 76.14% Hispanic, 15.3% Black, 6.78% White, 1.59% Asian, and 0.19% other. Further, Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that 81.3% of our students qualify for free and reduced lunch. In order to support all our educational endeavors and support programs, we have 4,227 team members. Mrs. Hugelmeyer pointed out that student enrollment has grown in the past twelve years from 23,391 students in 2011-2012 school year to 28,442 students currently in the 2022-2023 school year.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer asked how we define every child achieving excellence and said that the Elizabeth Public Schools’ equity goal is that we believe all students can learn and achieve at high levels, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, household income, or home language. In addition, the Superintendent stated that we believe teachers make a positive difference in student achievement and teachers will prepare all students for success in college, career, and our technological global society. Moreover, Mrs. Hugelmeyer said that we believe effective leaders demonstrate unwavering commitment to high levels of achievement for all students. It is a shared belief that parents and caregivers are both valued partners and active participants in their children’s learning and a shared sense of mutual responsibility for learning is the foundation for family involvement to ensure student success. The Superintendent stated that we believe every member of the Elizabeth Public Schools team has a responsibility in producing and supporting high levels of achievement for all students.

The Superintendent presented a slide which showed the 2022-2027 Five (5) year Strategy Map. The Vision guiding this strategy is that the Elizabeth Public Schools will be one of the highest performing urban school districts in the nation, coupled with a promise that the district

would provide an innovative and personalized learning environment that ensures that every child achieves excellence. Goals within the Five-year plan are college preparedness, career readiness, for every child by implementing multi-tiered systems of supports, professional learning communities, and data consults with the goal of creating a data focused approach to continuous improvement across the district. To help achieve these goals, five (5) building blocks will be key points of focus:

- Excellence in Teaching and Learning
- Social and Emotional Wellness
- Workforce Development
- Parent and Community Engagement
- Organizational Effectiveness

Mrs. Hugelmeyer presented a PowerPoint slide showing the budget considerations for school-based needs, historical tax levy data, prior years' spending data, technology infrastructure, strategic goals, enrollment and data projections, staffing, and facilities. She stated that the budget considerations shall be carefully organized and planned to provide adequate accounting for each program expenditure, understanding of the financial needs of anticipated program developments, and be within the financial limitations of the district, taking into consideration the statutory limits on the tax levy. In addition, administrators work with building level staff to determine the school-based needs for the upcoming year. Also, the data is analyzed and compared to the previous five years of historical tax levy data, potential tax burden, and tax growth. As part of the Budget build up the administrative team analyzes prior years' spending as well as considering current year's needs. Mrs. Hugelmeyer informed the audience that the Elizabeth Public Schools I.T. Department is mapping infrastructure components to increase accessibility and bandwidth. Moreover, the district strategic plan is used to determine long- and short-term budgetary goals. The team examines enrollment trends to develop trend line reports and current registration projections are considered to determine grade and course section needs. Staffing decisions are made based on strategic planning goals, student needs, enrollment study, bargaining agreements, and anticipated vacancies. The Superintendent said that planning for future capital improvement includes addressing aging infrastructure, upgrades to facilities to meet students' needs, and equipment replacement.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer took a moment to acknowledge Governor Murphy and the fact that the Governor's proposed budget provides an additional \$830 million statewide in direct aid to our K-12 public school classrooms, which when totaled reaches almost \$11 billion dollars a year in support of public education.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer then introduced the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy to present the financials.

Mr. Kennedy began his presentation by showing a PowerPoint slide on the development of a needs-based budget and stated that the first phase is gathering input from the stakeholders. The second phase is determining the needs based on the October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, enrollment statistics and doing a class size analysis. The third phase is establishing priorities and adjusting budget(s) by having face-to-face meetings with all the principals, and a review all co-curricular inventories and requests, more face-to-face meetings with instructional and operations directors, and doing a comparative analysis of expenditures for the 2022-2023 budget versus the proposed budget. Mr. Kennedy stated that the next and final step is the budget review process which includes a line-by-line departmental budget review, allocation of funds within the school-based budgets based on

enrollment, programs, and equitable need, a review by a financial consultant, and collaboration with and a comprehensive review by the Elizabeth Board of Education finance committee.

Mr. Kennedy presented a PowerPoint slide showing the 2023-2024 Budget Revenue and stated that most of the revenue will come from New Jersey State Aid, \$590,438,261., which is 82.6% of our revenue. The Business Administrator said that the next largest source of our revenue is from the local levy from the Elizabeth taxpayer which is \$59,813,124 (8.4%) while federal aid which is \$50,623,720. (7.1%); the balance appropriation is 10.806,216, (1.5%), and miscellaneous revenue is \$3,043,299 (0.4%) for a total budget of \$714,724,620. Unlike most districts in the state, Elizabeth has \$0 debt service.

In contrast to Revenues, Mr. Kennedy presented a PowerPoint slide showing the 2023-2024 Budgeted Expenditures and stated that our budget expenditures include \$545,580,786. for instruction, which is 76.3% of our total budget; \$21,844,493 is allotted for administrative costs which is 3.1% of the budget; \$71,607,311 will be spent on operations and maintenance of our physical plants which is 10.0% of total spending. Moreover, \$75,692,030 or 10.6 % of the budget is for “other” which includes community services, employee benefits, transportation, and capital outlay.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the comparative 2023-2024 per pupil cost is \$21,211 per student and includes \$12,591. for classroom instruction, \$94 for equipment costs, community services and special schools, \$3,328. for cleaning, repair, and maintenance of our schools, plant and property, \$169, for athletics and extracurricular activities, 3,253, for support services including health, guidance, child study teams, library, and professional development, and \$1,776. for central administration, school administration, business services, human resources, telephone, and postage. Mr. Kennedy stated that the State of New Jersey regional administration cost per student is \$2,443. and here in Elizabeth the cost for our administration is \$1,776 per student.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the 2023-2024 budget and tax levy proposed is in accordance with the rules and regulations as promulgated by the New Jersey Department of Education. Also, the Elizabeth Public Schools prepares its budget following instructions incorporated into the Budget Guidelines and Electronic Collection Manual published by the NJDOE Office of Finance. In addition, he stated that the instructions ensure that budgets and information submitted for approval to the Executive County Superintendent and Business Administrator are complete and correct.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer thanked Mr. Kennedy for his presentation and then spoke about building a budget that follows the Principle of Our 3E’s: Equity-Expectations-Excellence. As she had stated earlier, in discussing the Five (5) Year Strategic Plan, the District would focus on the Five Pillars – the first of which is Excellence in Teaching and Learning. Academic Programs to be included in the 2023-2024 School Year include:

- Mathematics (Algebra) Program and Professional Development for Grade 8
- Science Program for Grades 6-8
- Financial Literacy Curriculum at the High School Level
- Chinese Mandarin World Language Curriculum at School 26
- New Biology and Chemistry Textbooks/e-books
- AP Environmental Science and AP Forensics Textbooks/e-books
- Expansion of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) for grades 6-12

New Avid Sites for 2023-2024 include Joseph Battin School No.4/ Dr Albert Einstein Academy No. 29 and Chessie Dentley Roberts Academy No.30. With the addition of these three

schools the entire Elizabeth School District will be in partnership with AVID in the coming school year. The AVID Partnership aids and gives the students tools to improve their G.P.A., presents opportunities to enroll in A.P. courses, enhances the ability to have an on-time graduation, and acceptances to four-year colleges and universities.

The Superintendent also cited other on-going partnerships, emphasizing that we as a District can't do it alone. Partnerships will continue with Global Logistics which offers a C.T.E. program at the high school level, the Union County Educational Services Commission, the Visual Arts Center of New Jersey, Quaver Music, American Young Voices, Union County Teen Arts, HISPA a program that provides mentors to speak with and encourage students both in the classroom as well help identify career paths for employment and professions., The United States Marine Corps who help run the Junior ROTC program at Halsey Academy, the National Academy Foundation which through its Academy of Engineering and the Academy of Information Technology supports technical education at various levels throughout the High Schools and Project Lead the Way which helps develop STEM curriculums and provides career guidance in Science, Math and Engineering areas of study.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer called attention to the College Readiness- Dual Enrollment programs that the District maintains with Kean University, Middlesex College, N.J.I.T., New Jersey City University, and Rutgers Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute all of which offer students the opportunity to experience college and earn course credits while in High School.

The Superintendent then presented a slide showing the wide array (22) of Advanced Placement Courses offered throughout our high schools in collaboration with the College Board and AP Capstone. Advanced Courses are offered in the Arts, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Languages and Computer Science. In addition, Mrs. Hugelmeyer showed a slide which highlighted the District's Career Readiness Programs. These Career-Technical Education (CTE) Industry certifications include preparation for Global Logistic Exams, OSHA certification, ServSafe, Cosmetology Exams, CNA Exams, EMT Exams, CISCO Exams, ASE (Automotive Service Excellence) Exams, Automotive Technology, Print Services, Health Sciences, Commercial Foods, Print Services as well as Pathful (Virtual jobs shadowing) and Work-Ed (externships in finance and cybersecurity). Many of these courses are offered across our High Schools and Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that we as a District are quite proud of the work being done at Edison Technical and Career Academy in preparing students for careers and to be productive members of the work force.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer moved onto the next slide which showed the core and supplemental programs that we need to continue to fund. As a District we need to identify the needs of our students, whether they be General Education, Bilingual or Special Needs students. We must then fund the supplemental programs that will help our students succeed. Programs that will continue in 2023-2024 are:

- Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH)
- Into Reading, DRA3 (K-6)
- Waggle (K-3)
- Savvas Envision (K-7)
- Carnegie Learning High School Mathematics Solution
- Savvas My Math Lab
- My Access Online Writing Program
- ST Math
- SuccessMaker for Mathematics for Grades K-8
- Moving with Math Supplemental Program for Grades k-5
- HMH Into Science (K-5)
- HSScience textbooks/eBooks

We introduce Technology to our students as early as Grade 2, Digital Literacy is covered in Grades 3 & 4 and Introduction to Coding begins in Grade 5.

The Superintendent then discussed the resources that the district is utilizing to help alleviate the Achievement Gap. Over the past several years the Elizabeth school district has been working with an Amistad collaborative curriculum consultant, leveled curricular materials for Grades K-8, introduced culturally relevant supplemental curricular materials for Grades K-8, instituted a transition program to 9<sup>th</sup> grade and had a 15-hour Sheltered Instruction Module for all instructors for Grades K-12.

During the 2023-2024 Budget process we allocated money for new instructional supplies, equipment, and textbooks to meet the anticipated 2.6% increase in students for the next school year. Also included were funds for the refurbishment of all core instructional course materials including General Education, Bilingual Education and Special Education.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer spoke about Academic Interventions from K-12-Bilingual/ESL students. Within the schools, there are self-contained Bilingual and ESL services for Grades K-12. Materials are made available in native language materials and translation services are offered for assignments and schoolwork. In addition, the District offers a Bilingual Magnet program in Spanish for grades 4-8 at School No. 26. Moreover, Esperanza Literacy Intervention, Guided Reading and Independent Reading Libraries and Learning A-Z Literacy software licenses are made available to students. Additional services include the Smarty Ants Literacy programs in K-2 Bilingual Self-Contained classrooms. At the High School level, Cloud Labs Mathematics and Science software licenses are available plus we have a Point of Entry Program for new students in grades 9-12.

The Superintendent then offered more slides which focused on Academic interventions at the K-12 grade levels for our Special Needs students. The District offers TouchMath for grades K-8, Edmark for Autism /MC/MD, Rethink, 504 Plan Related Services, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Services, Contracted Services with Out - Of – District Schools, Speech Therapist Contracted Services, BCBA Contracted Services, Neurologist Contracted Services, Deaf Hard of Hearing Evaluations, Teacher of the Deaf contracted Services, OT/PT Related Services with Trinitas/RWJ-B, Substitute Services for CST/Speech Contracted Services, Behavioral Services, Nursing Services, and Pre-K Disabilities supplies and materials. The district also helps fund Special Olympics programs and offers Saturday and Summer Recreational Programs for students with disabilities.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer then addressed Academic Interventions for General Education Students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. For those students who are hospitalized and/or recovering from illnesses Hospital Home Instruction and after school home instruction is provided. In response to interventions the district also works within the New Jersey Tiered Systems of Supports (NJTSS). Also, SONDSY multisensory interventions are offered to students. Moreover, the Orton Gillingham literacy intervention program is used in Elizabeth. Leveled literacy interventions are also available throughout the district.

Academic Safety Nets are available after school and on Saturday. Students in grades K-8 may avail themselves of afterschool and Saturday enrichment and academic programs. There are also after school clubs and APEX programs for high school students. On Saturdays, Attendance Recovery Programs, and the Graduation Rate Improvement Program (GRIP) are available for High School Students.

Summer offerings include a Promotion/Retention program for grades K-8, Summer Remediation, APEX Learning and Advanced Credit for Grades 9-12. The United States Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC) runs a summer program for enrolled students. There is a recreation program for Special Education students, as well as recreational athletic programs for Grades 1-8. In Mathematics, students in grades 4 & 5 can choose to participate in the Developing Mathematical Understanding Program and those in grades 6-8 may choose to participate in Algebraic Thinking classes. In addition, an ESL enrichment program may be taken during the summer, and a Summer Arts Enrichment Program is offered for Grades K-11.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer spoke about sustaining and supporting with this budget Visual and Performing Arts and Athletic Programs from Kindergarten through Grade-12. These programs are usually the first to go as dollars are cut from school district budgets, but here in Elizabeth we have made a firm commitment to the Arts. There are Art/Music/Dance Programs offered throughout the elementary schools and there is a Performing Arts after school program for high school students. There are Disney Musicals in our schools and Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy has a partnership program with HBO. Color Guard and Band activities are offered in Winter/Spring/Summer plus a Summer Band Camp for Grades 9-12. Athletically there are expanded intermural sports for grades 6-8, and full athletic programs across several levels for grades 9-12.

The Superintendent concluded the Excellence in Teaching and Learning Pillar with two slides that showed a variety of Student Assessments which are funded in the 2023-2024 Budget. Assessments such as the district benchmark assessments, the State testing Program for NJ Student Learning assessment (NJ SLA), Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) for Special Education students, Graduation Appeals Portfolios, Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA) and Evaluacion del Desarrollo EDL and High School Graduation Appeals Portfolios are given at appropriate grade level and situations. Mrs. Hugelmeyer also stated that College Board assessments such as the PSAT, the SAT and AP exams are provided at no cost to our students. The district also provides New Entrant Testing for English Language Learners and provides translation services for student assessments.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer also made note that while explaining the costs covered by our own budget, the District was also utilizing Elementary and Secondary Emergency Relief (ESSER) and American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds to help subsidize programs and services.

The Superintendent moved to the second pillar, Social and Emotional Wellness. Safe and Caring Initiatives included in the budget are creating and maintaining positive climates in all schools with School Guidance Counselors, social workers, and School Climate Coaches. Positive behavior supports in schools (PBSIS) is part of professional development programs. The district participates in the New Jersey School Climate Improvement (NJ SCI). There are Child Study Team (CST) services throughout the schools. Professional Development opportunities are available for school guidance counselors, social workers, and nurses. For out-of-district students a school guidance counselor is available. We partner with Panorama Education Services to monitor school climate and emotional well-being. In addition, Substance Abuse Coordinator (SAC) services are available to students. For those students that encounter substance abuse issues, Recovery High School Tuition and transportation is provided. Moreover, alternative education programs for at-risk learners are available. Social and emotional learning and culturally responsive pedagogy reference guides are provided to teachers and staff. In addition, Professional Development is offered to teachers and staff in Sensory Paths, Nurtured Heart Approach, Functional behavioral assessment and behavior intervention plans, Intervention and referral services, and New Jersey three-tiered support for grades PK-5 for administrators.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer moved onto Pillar 3 -Workforce Development: She said that our current Staffing levels for 2023 are as follows:

- 4,227 Team Members
- 2,120 Teachers
- 68 Social Workers
- 97 Psychologists/LDTC/Speech
- 71 Guidance Counselors
- 48 Nurses
- 178 Security Personnel
- 42 Central Office Administrators
- 90 School Administrators
- 1,513 Secretarial, Classroom Assistants, Food Service, Business Operations, Plant and Property, Transportation and Technology

The Superintendent then spoke about enrollment and as mentioned earlier, our student population has been increasing steadily, (5,000 additional students over the past twelve years), and that trend is expected to continue. PK-12 enrollment is expected to reach 29,171 students in 2023/2024. It should be noted that enrollment determines the allotment for teachers and support staff for each school building.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer then presented a chart showing how the student population has changed from the 2021-2022 school year to April 2023. In the 2021/2022 school year 65.8% of students were in General Education classes compared to 60.3% in April of 2023 – a decrease of 5.5%. English language Learners (ELL) increased from 22.4% in 2021/2022 to 27.4% an increase of 5%. Special Education students in 2023 were 10.2 % of the school population, an increase of .4% over the 9.8% of overall enrollment in 2021/2022. Those students who were English Language Learners and Special Education students were 2.0% in 2021/2022 vs 2.1% in 2023.

In response to continued enrollment increases and the shifts within student population categories, Mrs. Hugelmeyer said there is a net increase of 51 positions in the 2023/2024 Budget. Those 51 positions are for Bilingual/ESL = 27, High School = 12, Elementary = 9, Guidance Counselor = 1, Nurse = 1, and Vice Principal = 1. These additional staff members will support reasonable Teacher to pupil ratios of: K-5 grade = 1:18 Gr 6-Gr 8 = 1:20 and Gr 9-Gr 12 -1:19. The additional 51 positions are broken down further as 21 Bilingual teachers; ESL Teachers = 6; Mathematics Teachers =2; English ELA teachers = 4; Elementary K-5 =5; Physical Education Teachers = 3; World Language Teacher =1; Science =1,Special Education Teachers =2; Art Teachers =2; Teacher CTE = 1; Nurse = 1; Guidance Counselor =1; Vice Principal = 1.

The Superintendent said there is a new negotiated agreement between the Elizabeth Board of Education and the Elizabeth Education Association through June 30<sup>th</sup> of 2025. As part of the agreement, she was very pleased that the starting salary for a newly graduated teacher will be \$63,446. Mrs. Hugelmeyer thanked the members of the Board of Education for their support during the contract negotiations.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer then spoke about the investment in education that the District makes in its workforce. First year teachers are mentored and receive new teacher training throughout their first year. The district partners with Montclair State University's Network for Educational Renewal with Content Area Trainings including Bilingual and Special education modules. We offer Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) training. At the K-5 level Language Arts

Literacy training takes place with On-site coaching where the trainers join the teachers in the classroom to take a real-world approach. Arriba/Intro Reading and Achieve 3000 training takes place. Moreover, Learning Labs and Leadership sessions take place for K-12 Science teachers. Our Librarians receive training on literacy instruction. In addition, personalized learning environments and differentiating instruction methods are explored and taught. Handle with Care training which focuses on mental health initiatives is provided. The Superintendent further iterated that the district participates in the Global Compliance Network Professional Development System which makes State mandated training available as well as sees that they are completed. Evaluation Training and New Observer training is also offered. The Right to Know Hazard Communication Education and Training program is available for teachers and staff. For mathematics teachers and Department staff, Envision Mathematics training, Carnegie Mathematics Training and Coaching, SuccessMaker Mathematics training are all provided. Furthermore, Mathematics Training for Grades K-8 & HS Algebra II- On-site Coaching and Leadership Sessions take place in the district. In Elizabeth, we also hold an Administrator's Institute, and the district has its own Professional Development days for teachers and staff.

The Superintendent moved onto Pillar 4: Parent and Community Engagement. She spoke about a program for parents by motivational speaker Stephen Hill that was presented the prior week but was going to be repeated on Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup> at the Dwyer Technology Academy. Mr. Hill will give parents some critical strategies to build resilient kids so they can make healthy choices and overcome adversity. This coincides with a new initiative called the Parent Education Institute which will provide various speakers to address the needs of both students and parents. On Saturday May 6<sup>th</sup> the Parent Education Institute will be partnering with the Latino Institute and Earl Brown Education Consulting to discuss among other topics, Immigration Rights, Helping Children with their study habits, Social Media texting and bullying and Financial Literacy.

To continue to improve the Home and School relationship, Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that we have Welcome Centers that offer "One Stop Shopping" including centralized Registration. High School Registration is available after school, on Saturdays and during the summer. Community attendance liaisons work with parents to improve attendance. The aforementioned Parent Education Institute, Student and parent handbooks, newsletters, promotional materials, and brochures featuring school and district programs are all used to keep information and communication going to families of our students. Families are encouraged to use PowerSchool to keep abreast of students' grades and assignments etc. It is the goal of each of the principals to have all families within the school accessing the Power School system.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer went on to say that the district offers High School information sessions that allow eighth graders to be fully informed about what each high school has to offer, and they can make the best decision for themselves. The district and the respective schools all have their own web site where much information can be gleaned. Community Education programs are offered, and Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Seminars are free to students and students. Back to School nights, Award ceremonies, Math/Science /Literacy Nights, and National Honor Society ceremonies etc., are held for the benefit of parents and students.

The Superintendent said we also have parent groups such as the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) which maintains its own home page on the district webpage. One other additional parent group is the Bilingual Education Parent Advisory Committee (BEPAC) which also maintains an informational page on the district website. The Superintendent said the district also partners with Community Organizations such as Future City, Inc., the Elizabeth Historical Society, the Elizabeth Public Library, and the Rotary Club of Elizabeth. These are all important relationships for our students and staff.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer continued with her presentation as she next discussed Pillar 5: Operational Effectiveness. To meet the ever-increasing enrollment needs of the District, the Board continues to source properties and make the investments necessary to make these buildings functional. In the 2023/2024 budget, the opening of the School No. 15 annex, the former St. Michael's school, with its ten (10) classrooms, has been leased and refurbished at a cost of \$1.8 million. In addition, the JVJ Stem Academy, which will graduate its first class of seniors in 2024, has been expanded at a cost of \$750,000. The district has also added the former Immaculate Conception School at a cost of \$1.0 million. This acquisition will add twelve (12) classrooms to our portfolio and will serve as our Newcomer Center for grades 9-12.

The Superintendent wanted to acknowledge the critical role that our Plant and Property Department plays in maintaining the Elizabeth Public Schools infrastructure as well as the role they play in repurposing spaces and acquiring facilities to enhance learning and teaching. The Superintendent was pleased to announce that in the 2023/2024 budget funds have been allocated to be able to award construction contracts for Universal Cooling Systems at Schools 4/5/6/12/18/19 along with Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy, Thomas A Edison Career and Technical Academy and the Edison 9<sup>th</sup> Grade at Charles W. Harris Academy. These cooling systems should be completed and installed by 2025. Mrs. Hugelmeyer announced that a Bakery Shop for culinary education is being created at the Edison career and Technical Academy plus they will be opening a Supermarket Technology Program. Williams Field will have a multipurpose turf baseball/soccer field installed at the site of the current baseball field. The Superintendent then showed three slides that listed all the Capital and Maintenance projects that are funded in the 2023/2024 budget. Mrs. Hugelmeyer said they ran the gamut from door replacements at twenty (20) schools to swipe access card systems to gym bench replacements and intercom system refurbishments. To be able to plan for the future, boilers are being replaced at 4 schools, while three (3) schools will have elevators upgraded and/or replaced, security cameras will be installed at nine schools and roofs will be replaced at two schools. These are just a few of the projects that are included in the 2023/2024 budget so that our buildings can operate efficiently and without interruption. The Superintendent reiterated that these projects are a collaborative effort between the individual school principals, the Plant and Property Dept and central administration.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer moved onto Food Services, which as of April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, in this school year has served students 1.98 million breakfasts and 2.6 million lunches. Afterschool Services through April 2023 had served 440,000 post school day meals to our students. The district is also able to transmit student P-EBT data to the NJ Department of Human Services for Summer P-EBT benefits. The Superintendent also wanted to point out that the School # 3 Peterstown/LaCorte School had won a 1<sup>st</sup> Place 2022 VIP Award from the New Jersey Department of Agriculture in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. This program allows students to try fruits and vegetables they may not otherwise try and at the same time encourages good food and dietary choices.

The next topic the Superintendent addressed was Technology. The integration of Schoology into our technology platform is a major priority as we look to facilitate communication between the Assistant Superintendents, Principals and Teachers for things like lesson planning. Mrs. Hugelmeyer presented a slide with several Technology projects that are budgeted for the 2023/2024 school year. Included among these projects are additional IT technicians, maintenance of one-to-one devices for grades 2-12, Versatrans System for the Transportation Dept, district, school, and teacher webpage creation/enhancement and "Destiny" which is part of the Follett Library Management System.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer then spoke about Security Upgrades that the 2023/2024 budget will support. The district will be adding security vestibules to the front entrance of more than a dozen school facilities as part of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Grant in partnership with the United States Department of Justice. Two Hundred Twenty-Six (226) security cameras will be added throughout the schools. In addition, a Security Supervisor and two coordinators will be funded in the 2023/2024 budget.

The Superintendent said that Eight (8) new school buses will be added to the EPS fleet of buses which now numbers fifty (50) in total to serve our students. Those eligible for bus service are students that attend magnet programs 2.0+ miles from their homes, and those 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> graders that attend high schools 2.5+ miles from home. PK-12 students with disabilities that require transportation as per their IEP plus those students who are either homeless, displaced, or foster children. The district also provides transportation for all Joseph Battin School No. 4 students whether they attend the main campus on Union Ave., or the Annex located on North Broad Street.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer then presented a series of slides showing a Return on Investment and celebrating the successes of 2022/2023 Budget year. During the past year, the John E. Dwyer Technology Academy 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Annex was opened in the former Our Lady of Guadalupe school, the Nicholas Murray Butler School No. 23 had the turf replaced for its baseball and soccer fields along with a new scoreboard installation and Williams Field had the football field turf replaced and a new sound system was installed. In addition, Victor Mravlag School No. 21 converted a former media center, into three (3) new classrooms. Our district painting crew painted the entire building at Winfield Scott School No.2, while stairwells and hallways were painted at Schools No.1, 3,9,25, and 28.

Individual schools received state and/or national recognition for overall academic performance by U.S. News and World Reports. William F. Halloran School No. 22 ranked number 6 in elementary schools and its middle school was number 50 in the state. Terrence C. Reilly's Middle School was ranked number 11 statewide while its elementary section was number 39 among its peers in New Jersey. Elizabeth High School/Frank J. Cicarell Academy was recognized as being the 13<sup>th</sup> best high school in N.J. and number 2,962 in the U.S. Moreover, Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy was ranked No. 45 in NJ and 1,116 in the United States. The Jay Matthews Challenge Index of High School Rankings showed Cicarell Academy as # 192 in the Country. In addition, Elizabeth High School – Frank J Cicarell Academy earned its second straight College Board AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award. Also, Terrence C. Reilly School No. 7 was named a 2023 NJ School of Character. Microsoft Corporation named JVJ STEM Academy a 2022-2023 Microsoft Incubator School. Admiral Halsey Health & Public Safety Academy was named a Naval Honor School.

The Superintendent stated that earlier in the year, EHS-FJC student Makayla Lecky was named a 2023 Governor's STEM Scholar. Two students from John E Dwyer Academy and one student from Alexander Hamilton Prep received College Board Recognition Awards. The QuestBridge foundation awarded two full scholarships to seniors from John E Dwyer Technology Academy.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer went to a new series of slides showing other activities and recognitions received by the district, schools, and individuals. Elizabeth Public Schools were named a Best Community for Music Education by the NAMM Foundation. The district hosted an Amistad Collaborative Forum in furtherance of Black History Month. The crew of the soon-to-be commissioned submarine the USS New Jersey was hosted by students, faculty, and staff of

Admiral Halsey High School. In conjunction with the City of Elizabeth, the Elizabeth River/Arthur Kill Watershed Association and Future City Inc., EPS students participated in Environmental Week 's "How to Use a Weather App" program. Frank J Cicarell Academy's Relay for Life team was featured on Chris Wragge's CBS's Class Act segment.

The Superintendent congratulated the EHS Winter Color Guard team on its return to the WGI World Championships. This same team finished second in the 2023 Mid-Atlantic Indoor Network Class Scholastic A competition. The EHS Color Guard was crowned the 2022 USBands Group 4 Open National Champions. Mrs. Hugelmeier also let the audience know that The EHS Marching Band finished 3<sup>rd</sup> at the NJMBDA State Championships, while the EHS Indoor Percussion Ensemble was named the 2023 USBands Scholastic Standstill Champions.

Elizabeth High School also excelled in Athletics as the EHS Lady Minutemen basketball team were the Mountain Division Champions of the Union County Conference while the EHS Minutemen Boys basketball team won the Watchung Division of the Union County Conference. Individual stand outs included Lucas Ruguinho of the EHS Cross Country team who signed with Division 1 Louisville University while EHS Girls Basketball players Damani Anderson and Kezia Foster will continue playing at the collegiate level as they signed with Middlesex College.

Mrs. Hugelmeier showed slides which listed academic institutions, technical schools, and military branches in which Elizabeth's Public Schools' Class of 2023 graduates committed to enroll or enlist.

In concluding the 2023/2024 Budget presentation Mrs. Hugelmeier stated that the Board of Education and Central Office believe in an open and transparent budget process. All Board of Education meetings are open to the public, and agendas and meeting minutes are available at [www.epsnj.org](http://www.epsnj.org). Copies of the 2023/2024 budget are on file at the Elizabeth Board of Education-Mitchell Building at 500. (North Broad St.). A copy of the proposed budget is posted online at the district's web site: [www.epsnj.org](http://www.epsnj.org).

Board president Iliana Chevres thanked Mrs. Hugelmeier for her presentation and asked if her fellow Board members had any questions or comments. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega asked the Superintendent about the fifteen (15) hour learning module for teachers? Mrs. Hugelmeier replied that this is a course that helps teachers with strategies and tips when they are having English Language learners aka multi-lingual students placed into General Education classes. These are both online and in person sessions so we can ensure our teachers are getting the best training possible.

Mr. Jacobs thanked all that were part of the successful budget process. As a point of clarification, he asked the Superintendent if during the budget process were there any cuts to programs or services? Mrs. Hugelmeier replied no and explained all existing programs and services would be kept. Furthermore, this budget gave the district the chance to expand on these programs and services so our K-12 students would have their needs met. Mr. Jacobs further stated that this budget had a zero percent (0%) tax increase. The Superintendent concurred and said that Mr. Kennedy made special mention of this earlier in the meeting, and that in fact, there has been no tax increase since the 2015/2016 Budget year. Mr. Jacobs pointed out that Elizabeth is now the second largest school district in New Jersey and that both Newark, the largest district and Jersey City, formerly the second largest district in the state, both recently passed billion-dollar budgets. This shows that we continue to run a clean but efficient operation here in Elizabeth. He

did, however, remind everyone that there may be some lean years ahead and our budget planning and execution may not be as easy in the future. Again, Mr. Jacobs thanked everyone for their help and participation in the budget process and said that he was proud to be part of this Board and team.

Mrs. Carvalho also thanked everyone for their help and contributions to the Budget process. The superintendent has once again provided us with a plan of action that keeps us moving forward rather than standing still. This is so important for our teachers, staff and most importantly our students. She was so proud to say that Elizabeth parents may confidently send their children to school knowing that they will receive a quality education. In addition, parents can also be assured that their children’s activities or sports won’t be cancelled, there will be summer programs etc., something that isn’t always the case with other districts. She thanked Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Malhotra for their hard work, leadership, and contributions to the budget process.

Mrs. Barbosa joined the previous board members who spoke and thanked all those who helped put the budget together. She reiterated that there is so much that goes on behind the scenes to build a budget, with so many hours spent in meetings, work sessions and reviews. We are so fortunate that we are able to keep programs, initiate new ones and we can invest in new buses, new air conditioners as well as new school buildings.

Mrs. Chevres thanked everyone for their comments, and she congratulated the Superintendent and the staff for a great Budget presentation.

Board President Iliana Chevres opened the public comment portion of the meeting but since no one had signed up to speak, Mrs. Chevres closed this section of the meeting.

Mrs. Chevres asked Mr. Kennedy to take the Board through the remaining Agenda for the evening. Mr. Kennedy presented a Resolution – ADOPTION OF THE FINAL BUDGET FOR SCHOOL YEAR 2023-2024

2023-2024 Total Expenditures	\$611,534,472
Less: Anticipated Revenues	\$541,867,166
Less: Appropriation of Surplus	\$9,854,182
Taxes to be Raised	\$59,813,124

Mr. Kennedy once again stated that the taxes to be raised have not changed since the 2015/2016 financial year.

A motion was made by Mrs. Dorgely, seconded by Mr. Jacobs, to adopt the above Resolution.

The motion was carried by the following vote:  
Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres -7  
Negative -0

Mr. Kennedy presented the next Resolution – Renewal of Dental Coverage for the District’s employees.

A motion was made by Mrs. Dorgerly, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, to adopt the above Resolution.

The motion was carried by the following vote:  
Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgerly Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres -7  
Negative-0

Mr. Kennedy presented the next Resolution – Renewal of Education Health Benefits Insurance for the District’s employees.

A motion was made by Mrs. Dorgely, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, to adopt the above Resolution.

The motion was carried by the following vote:  
Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres -7  
Negative -0

Prior to asking for a motion to adjourn the meeting Mrs. Chevres thanked the students in attendance, some of whom had served as the student representatives to the Board. She congratulated them for their contributions and said their interactions with the Board members inspires the Board to continue to advocate for students.

Board President Iliana Chevres asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

On a motion made by Mrs. Dorgely, and seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, the meeting was adjourned at 9:14 p.m.

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres -7  
Negative -0

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