

The business meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on January 23, 2025, at the New Providence High School/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, by Mrs. Cuccaro, Board President.

Present on the roll call were Laura Castellano, Bernadette Cuccaro, Dr. Kristen Empson Hayden, Stacey Gunderman, Amanda Marano, Joseph Walsh, and Donna Zane. Also present were Dr. Lauren Zirpoli, Superintendent of Schools, Joseph Ugialoro, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services, James Testa, School Business Administrator/Board, and ten (10) members of the public.

Mrs. Cuccaro led in the salute to the flag.

Mrs. Cuccaro read the following statement:

This is a public meeting of the Board of Education of the Borough of New Providence. Adequate notice of this meeting has been given in accordance with PL 1975, Chapter 231, in that a notice was made in conformance with Section 13 of the Act.

Whenever the business of the Board requires it to convene to a Closed Session, the session will begin no later than 9:30 p.m. At the conclusion of the need for a Closed Session, the Board will reconvene for the public portion of the meeting. At that time the Board will complete any other business that may be before it and the public will then be given an opportunity to be heard before the meeting is adjourned.

BOARD PRESIDENT COMMENTS

Mrs. Cuccaro addressed the breach to PowerSchool that occurred on December 28th. In a letter to affected districts, they stated that "PowerSchool became aware of a potential cybersecurity incident involving unauthorized access to certain information through one of their community-focused customer support portals. PowerSource." The New Providence School District was not affected by this breach but has been made aware that the bad actors gained access to the system by using a "compromised credential" to enter PowerSource. In response to the breach, PowerSchool has deactivated the account used to gain access to the system and "conducted a full password reset and further tightened password access control for all PowerSource customer support portal accounts." There is no evidence that other PowerSchool products were affected, and they have not found any malware or continued unauthorized activity in the PowerSchool environment. So, to reiterate, the New Providence School District was not affected by this breach.

As we continue our Strategic Planning during this school year for the next 5 years, I thank everyone who returned a survey or has attended one of the first three sessions. Our district-wide strategic plan for 2025-2030 will provide a roadmap for our district to achieve our goals and allocate resources effectively, but it will only be as good as the input we receive from our education community. I hope that you will join us for the remaining six sessions on

- Mental Health and Resilience
- Performance Metrics and Evaluation
- Elementary Instruction, Curriculum, and Programs
- Secondary Instruction, Curriculum, and Programs
- Athletics, Music and Performing Arts, and Co-Curricular
- Finance, Facilities, and Security

While we welcome everyone to join the dialogue in person, if you cannot attend but would like your voice heard, I encourage you to email Dr. Zirpoi, myself, or the Board with any thoughts you may have.

STUDENT REPORT

Dr. Zirpoli asked for the Vice President of the Senior Class, Robert Bress, in the absence of the student representative, to present his report. Mr. Bress' report is as follows:

Good evening, everyone. Thank you, Dr. Zirpoli, for the warm welcome. My name is Bobby Bress, and I'm Vice President of the senior class. I'm excited to share some fantastic updates from our school as we power through the academic and athletic seasons.

Let's start with academics. We're currently halfway through the midterms. I'm happy to report that our student body has shown tremendous dedication and hard work. The exams are proceeding very well, reflecting the rigorous effort put forth by our students. The last day of exams will be this Monday, January 27th. Our National Honor Society has been exceptionally active, tutoring middle and high school students, and enhancing our academic support network.

In terms of Athletics, our teams are having a season to remember. Our ice hockey team has advanced to the County Finals, where we'll take on Westfield HS in the championship game this Friday at 6 pm at Warinaco Park. Our girls' basketball team has also had an outstanding performance this season. A special shoutout to Coach Pazdera, who secured his 400th career win on January 18th against Glen Ridge – an incredible accomplishment!

The boys' basketball team continues to show great promise and is preparing for our 8th annual Spread the Word Inclusion Games on February 1st against GL. I encourage everyone to get their tickets early – they're going fast! In addition, the team will be hosting a blackout game to raise money for the Red Cross/LA fire victims. The game will be on February 4th at home against Oratory. Kudos to our basketball program for the work they are doing in support of these great causes. Our swimming teams are gearing up for their county championship meet this Sunday at the Jersey Aquatic Center. We're excited to see them compete right here in New Providence. At the Union County Indoor Track Championships, two school records were broken: 1) The Girls Spring Medley Relay comprising Cait Orchard, Sophis Espaillet, Jillian Troy, and Miranda Bournique with a time of 4:31.55 at the G1 Relay Championships. 2) and in the Girls 800 m – Miranda Bournique with a time of 2:21.77 at the Union County Championships.

In wrestling, Braeden Valley defended his title as the Union County Champion at 144 lbs, dominating last year's champion with an impressive decision of 10-0. This marks his second consecutive county title – congratulations to Braeden and the entire wrestling program! Last but not least, our Varsity cheerleading team won their division and were named grand champions at the Golden Bear Invitational held this past weekend.

Beyond sports, our students also excel in extracurriculars. Our Model UN team had a remarkable achievement at their recent conference in Hershey, PA, with 1700 students participating. For the second year in a row, they won the Outstanding Delegation Award. Ty Ikeda won the Premier Country award for representing Japan. Additionally, Mayuri Rajakaruna and Davis Stassfurth were selected as alternates to attend the National Conference, CONA, a testament to their exceptional skills and preparation.

Dan Ruzicka, a New Providence High School junior, auditioned for the New Jersey Music Educators' Association All-State Band on Saturday, January 18, 2025. As a result of this audition, he was accepted as second-chair bass clarinet in the Wind Ensemble. He will perform with the ensemble on Saturday, February 22, as part of the New Jersey Music Educators' Association State Convention in Atlantic City. He will also perform with the ensemble at NJPAC on Sunday, February 23.

Earlier this evening, a number of our students were recognized through the Student Art Exhibit at the Board of Education Office for their amazing artistic talents. Congratulations to all of our students whose artwork was displayed as a part of this exhibit! The variety of artwork is truly amazing.

In closing, the achievements across our academics, athletics, and extracurricular activities are a true testament to the hard work and spirit of our student body and the unwavering support of our faculty and

staff. As students, there is much to take pride in as part of the New Providence High School community. Thank you all for your continued support and for playing a vital role in preparing us for future success.

ENROLLMENT

Mr. Ugliarolo gave a summary of the current enrollment. Allen W. Roberts School has 633 students, Salt Brook School has 582 students, New Providence High School has 647 students, New Providence Middle School has 391 students, and lastly, 35 out-of-district students to give us a total of 2,288 students.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Zirpoli gave an update on the Redistricting Plan on behalf of the Board and the District. She then went on to go over the chronology of events that ultimately led the Board in August 2022 to decide to redistrict.

Approximately in June 2017, the Bard property on Central Avenue was sold. As the sale took place and it was known that housing would be developed on the Bard property, the BoE approved Statistical Forecasting LLC in August 2021 to complete a demographic study. The sole impetus for the demographic study at this time was the sale of Bard. The sale raised the concern of capacity at Allen W. Roberts and the BoE wanted to be prepared in the event Allen W. Roberts would be over capacity.

The first demographic study report was presented to the Board on December 16, 2021. The presentation included:

- Enrollments (PK-12) are projected to increase for the next two years (due to new home construction) before reversing the trend.
- Enrollments have declined in the last two years at the ES level and last three in MS.
- Slight net outward migration of students present in the district.
- If not for new proposed housing, PK-12 enrollments would continue to decline. New housing offsets much of the enrollment decline that would have occurred.

What was also presented to the Board was that there was inequity between the enrollments of Allen W. Roberts and Salt Brook currently had and was projected to have fewer students than Allen W. Roberts. The Board decided to use Statistical Forecasting to complete a redistricting analysis which was presented to the Board on July 28, 2022. Based on the analysis, the Board and the Administration devised the Redistricting Plan based on the recommendations that were approved by the Board of Education at the August 20, 2022 meeting.

In September 2022, a letter was sent to the community by then Superintendent, Dr. Miceli. Included in Dr. Miceli's letter was information about the redistricting plan. Dr. Miceli explained that, as a result of our evaluation of Salt Brook and Allen W. Roberts' current and projected enrollments, there is an identified inequity. This inequity leaves Salt Brook School with a significantly smaller population than Allen W. Roberts School. Dr. Miceli explained in his letter that the next two years would allow families in the identified Zones time to become aware of the changes, and evaluate them accordingly for their children. The plan includes moving the existing District line for elementary schools from Livingston Avenue to South Street, which many years ago was the case. The salient points of the letter stated:

1. The primary goal is to provide equity among both elementary schools with the least amount of disruption for our students. By this, I mean that we are trying to ensure that all students who started at an elementary school may continue to stay in that school through 6th grade.
2. In September of 2024, incoming Kindergarten students identified in Zones A & D will attend Salt Brook School instead of Allen W. Roberts.
3. Any newly registered students who move into Zones A & D, regardless of grade, beginning in September of 2024 will attend Salt Brook School instead of Allen W. Roberts.
4. Any students who currently live in Zones A & D and attend Allen W. Roberts through the 2023/2024 school year will be grandfathered at Allen W. Roberts, and will not have to move to Salt Brook.

5. If you have a child at Allen W. Roberts, and you have another child entering Kindergarten who will attend Salt Brook as a result of these transitions, and you would like for your older child to attend Salt Brook as well, you can make that request and we will honor it pending class size capacity. This will allow for both students to attend the same school. This will not be honored in the inverse. If your child is entering Kindergarten and they are in the identified zones during the proposed years, they must go to Salt Brook. If you are interested in transitioning your child from Allen W. Roberts to Salt Brook, please contact Dena DiRocco, Registrar at (908) 464-9050 x-4221.
6. In the 2025/2026 school year, no additional movement will occur. In the event students move into Zones A & D during that year, regardless of grade, they will attend Salt Brook.
7. In September of 2026, phase two will occur, and we will make the same transitions for students entering Kindergarten in Zones B & C. All of the same standards will apply.
8. Beginning in September of 2027, all students residing in Zones A, B, C, & D (except those who are grandfathered) will attend Salt Brook.

In 2023/2024, the District continued to coordinate with Dr. Grip and the anticipated overall lower enrollment in the District started, but full-day kindergarten numbers were higher than initially anticipated. Dr. Grip was contacted and he advised that the District look at the numbers in October 2023. At that time, Dr. Grip advised another report was needed to determine if the redistricting plan was still necessary.

In January 2024, the Board approved a follow-up report for Statistical Forecasting based on the full-day kindergarten numbers that we had.

In April 2024, Dr. Miceli presented the results of the updated demographic study which showed that the District should continue with the redistricting plan. The updated plan did include the dwelling information for Bard. It also recognized other potential housing construction but did not include it in the report, as the number of dwellings was not available at the time. Dr. Miceli stated at the Board meeting, "It is concluded that the projections and plan are correct, and no changes are needed at this time. However, it is important to monitor potential housing projects."

This year, during the fall months, we had some requests from families that reside in Zones A & D to keep their younger child entering kindergarten next school year at Allen W. Roberts as their eldest child is there. This prompted me and the Board to revisit the work done by Statical Forecasting and to also gather some further information. We gathered further information on the number of families who reside in Zones A-D who currently have a child at Allen W. Roberts which is 96 families. In total, these 96 families account for approximately 134 students.

After having robust conversations and discourse, the Board has decided to keep the redistricting plan as it was discussed and approved to be carried out. Here are the salient reasons in addition to all of the information that we have from our former analysis of Statistical Forecasting:

- Our redistricting plan can impact families with multiple children through 2029-2030 if residing in Zones A & D and until 2031-2032 if residing in Zones B & C. There is no way to make decisions on a case-by-case basis when we have 96 families that may be impacted in the event they choose to have additional children. This is why the District and Board from the onset stated in all communications that to have the least disruption for students, parents could request that their eldest child (currently at Allen W. Roberts) be moved to Salt Brook pending class size. The Board also chose to phase this in in two stages over four years so that families could plan. I would like to note that there are districts that move the line and everyone moves with it. Our Board chose not to do that to accommodate families.
- Upon further analysis, both myself and Mr. Testa met with the Borough Planner to better understand future housing implications. Currently on Central Avenue, next to the Bard property, there are eight properties with no age restrictions that are zoned for affordable housing. What this means is that when a warehouse owner goes to sell their property, the likelihood is that a developer will purchase it because it has already been zoned and they will pay top dollar. We also know that 221 Chanlon has been sold and plans are with the building department. There will be a total of 104 dwellings on this property, all of which will be zoned for Allen W. Roberts. We also

know that Block 210-Lot 21 (143 dwellings), Block 340- Lot 6 (85 dwellings), Block 221- Lot 2.01 (150 dwellings).

- We all recognize that this is not easy for families who reside in Zones A-D and they will be impacted. Therefore, for those families to choose not to move their eldest child to Salt Brook, we have already begun working on the school calendars to ensure that there is no overlap with events such as Halloween parades and Clap Outs. We are also prepared to have an early morning drop off and late pick up at both of the schools for those families.
- Moving forward, as we open registration in February 2025, on a case-by-case basis and pending Kindergarten class size at Salt Brook, we will allow families to request an incoming Kindergartener for the Fall 2025 who reside in Zones B or C to start their Kindergarten child at Salt Brook next school year (2025-2026) as their youngest child (sibling to the Kindergarten) will eventually be there.

Dr. Zirpoli then asked if anyone from the Board would like to comment.

Mrs. Cuccarro commented that the Board recognizes that this is not an easy decision and it's not a decision that the Board has taken lightly. The Board would like to keep families together however, this decision has a lot to do with class size, and in districts right next to New Providence, two years ago, moved the line and moved all the kids over. New Providence chose not to do that so that your kids would not have to move if they didn't want to.

Mr. Walsh commented that part of the discussion with Dr. Gripp was done before the bond referendum. The Board was trying to determine before the bond referendum, if it was necessary to add more space at the schools. The conclusion was that there was no need to add more space at the schools because we had the possibility of moving the line.

Mrs. Marano commented that this is not an easy decision, but that the Board will be monitoring all class sizes moving forward with the line move. It was only last year that there were parents from Allen W. Roberts concerned about class size.

Mrs. Gunderman commented that the Bard property that is actively under construction will be opening for residency exactly a year from now, which is halfway through the next school year, and all of those dwellings are zoned for Allen W. Roberts and as people move in with children in January, we need to welcome them to the District but also at Allen W. Roberts.

STATE OF THE SCHOOLS/MID-YEAR GOALS REVIEW PRESENTATION ([LINKED PRESENTATION](#))

Dr. Zirpoli reminded the Board that the mid-year goal review will not be very detailed since in February, Mr. Keaney will be presenting the curriculum report and there will be more details in the presentation. The goals of this presentation are to highlight the progress and achievement of our board and committee goals as well as to outline the Strategic priorities for the remainder of the school year. Our mission and our philosophy are that in partnership with our student's teachers parents and community, the mission of the New Providence School District is to prepare our students academically for their pursuits to develop the appropriate social and emotional skills to be productive empathetic global citizens and to stimulate a growth mindset for continued lifelong learning and a culturally diverse society.

Dr. Zirpoli then went on to review the goals for 2025, which for the most part have been achieved. The goals are the following.

1. Enhance district wide communication programs focusing on the technological distribution of district information and continue to enable improved engagement with the community.
 - Dr. Zirpoli commended Mrs. Mangle for her help in fulfilling the communication goal and ensuring that the District keeps both families, the community, teachers, and students updated on the wonderful things that the District is achieving.
 - Dr. Zirpoli also highlighted the annual communication plan that is reviewed every year.

2. Enhance elementary student programming for early student development and offer more resources and experiences to enhance student achievement.
 - Implementation of the i-Ready math program
 - Purchase of the i-Ready diagnostic model for Language Arts and Reading
 -
3. Enhance secondary programming to continue to enable student achievement, while Preparing students for career readiness and post-high school academics.
 - Commended Mr. Henry and his administrative team for their work on changing the Middle School bell schedule in order to make the Middle School schedule a rotating and drop schedule.
4. Implement a robust Social Emotional Learning curriculum for the District.
 - Creature Comfort Dog Therapy Program
5. Continue to monitor community housing development and proactively address the Impact on the district from a facilities and instructional perspective.
6. Enhance the district facilities to develop a modern learning environment, considering collaboration, class size, grade configuration, and extracurricular activities.
 - Purchase of new furniture through the bond referendum
7. Continue to develop an innovative, collaborative, and modernized instructional framework focused on higher-level thinking, real-world problem-solving, student autonomy, self-pacing, and the development of a student-centered, learner-driven classroom environment.
 - Personalized Learning Initiative
 - Professional development rubric for teachers
8. Develop and implement data-driven decision-making for teachers, parents, and students enhancing student achievement from K to 12.

Dr. Zirpoli then went on to discuss the new 2024/2025 Board Goals that were developed last Spring.

1. Develop a strategic planning framework that aligns with the district's vision and goals, fosters stakeholder involvement, and ensures ongoing evaluation and adaptation to effectively guide educational initiatives and resource allocations.
 - The framework for strategic planning is:
 - Vision- Portrait of a Graduate
 - Mission & Philosophy
 - Values- Mr. Uglialoro is working on this district wide through the District's Belonging and Community Initiative
 - Goals- Final Strategic Topics
 - Dr. Zirpoli reminded and encouraged the public to attend the Strategic Planning Session because these sessions provide quantitative and qualitative data that is used to come up with the final goals.
2. Monitor the implementation of the Belonging and Community Initiative goals for the 2024/2025 school year.
 - Dr. Zipoli and Mr. Keaney have been monitoring the feedback received by staff and students regarding the implementation of the Beloning and Community Initiative.

- The landscape of the district is changing and shifting therefore we must continue to provide professional development for our teachers to meet our students where they are at and to create an inclusive environment.
 - Dr. Zirpoli presented the results of survey data regarding the Belonging and Community Initiative.
3. Monitor and support the successful integration of the new Superintendent of Schools and administrators, to ensure high standards of leadership and to promote continuity in student achievement.
 4. Strategically allocate any remaining bond referendum funds toward infrastructure improvements that align with the district's priorities.
 5. Complete the fiscal year 2025/2026 budget process in a timely and compliant manner while staying within the 2% tax levy cap restrictions.

Dr. Zirpoli then presented the Committee Goals and their progress.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology

- Monitor the implementation of a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion rubric by which our curriculum will be evaluated.
 - Mr. Keaney, alongside Department Heads, is creating a rubric through which all of the school curriculum will be reviewed.
- Monitor the integration of AI across curriculum and instruction by designing learning experiences that foster students' understanding of AI concepts, ethics, and implications.
 - "The New Providence School District believes that artificial intelligence can enhance teaching methods, expand learning resources, and contribute to a dynamic and innovative educational environment for students and faculty."
 - AI is being successfully integrated into schools and is not being overused.
- Monitor the implementation of personalized learning strategies to meet the diverse needs of our students.
- Monitor the Dog Therapy Program and other potential SEL opportunities.
- Monitor potential new NPMS elective offerings.
 - Design and Modeling for 7th grade
 - Automation and Robotics for 8th grade
 - Creative Writing and Art of Debate for 7th grade
 - Investigative Journalism for 8th grade
 - Media Mashup for 8th grade

Finance, Facilities, and Safety/Security

- Present the 2025/2026 budget within the State-mandated cap.
- Monitor the completion of the district-wide HVAC project that will take place in the Summer of 2024
- Review remaining bond proceeds, if any, after all projects are completed and consider additional projects that were removed from the original project scope.
- Monitor enrollment projections, ongoing community housing updates, and the elementary schools redistricting plan.

Personnel, Management, and Communication

- Support the new Superintendent of Schools by establishing clear expectations and goals along with ongoing communication and feedback.
- Support and work with the Superintendent of Schools by communicating expectations for the process and development of comprehensive strategic planning for the 2024/2025 school year.
- Evaluate and update, as necessary, the Communications Plan for the 2024/2025 school year.
- Evaluate the professional development plan for staff members.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the new early dismissal professional development days for staff.
- Recruit and retain diverse talented educators for the 2024/2025 school year.

Dr. Zirpoli went on to discuss what the remainder of the year looks like:

- May 29, 2025, Board Meeting- Presentation of Strategic Plan
- June 26, 2025 Board Meeting
 - Approval of Strategic Plan
- 2025/2026 Budget
 - Dr. Zirpoli and Mr. Testa are working on identifying priorities and building the budget within the 2% Cap.
- Continue to work on the Belonging and Community road map and complete the goals on the road map at each school.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Cuccaro opened the meeting to the public at 7:45 p.m.

Montana Cheal, 89 Woodland Road

Mrs. Cheal began her comment by thanking Mr. Ugialoro for the conversations that they had regarding the redistricting plan. She stated that Mr. Ugialoro was very helpful, empathetic, and kind. Mrs. Cheal recalled Mrs. Marano's comment regarding class size and wanted to know the projected numbers for next year's kindergarten class.

Dr. Zirpoli responded that at this time the District does not have that information because the Kindergarten and 1st grade registration has not yet opened. The registration will be opened on February 13, 2025, and will be open for a month. Registration is an ongoing process, however, within the month of kindergarten and 1st-grade registration, the District will be able to capture the estimated class size number. This estimated class size number will continue to change through the summer as new families move into the area. In May, it would be possible to have a more accurate number of class size.

Mrs. Cheal then asked Dr. Zirpoli about taking requests from families affected by the redistricting plan to keep children together and when Dr. Zirpoli would be deciding on those requests.

Dr. Zirpoli responded that a family residing in Zones B and C has requested that their kindergarten child start at Salt Brook School, where their three-year-old will also attend.

Mrs. Cheal interpreted Dr. Zirpoli's response and asked why she wasn't offered this option when her oldest child started kindergarten and then two weeks later her family was notified that they were being redistricted and couldn't start at Salt Brook School.

Dr. Zirpoli asked Mrs. Cheal what age her oldest child was.

Mrs. Cheal responded that the child is now in second grade.

Dr. Zirpoli responded that she would not be able to respond to her question because she was not the acting Superintendent of Schools at that time.

Mrs. Cheal then asked that since the District is now offering Zones B and C the option to start their children at Salt Brook School versus Allen W. Roberts School, pending class size, how many children will be split up at two different elementary schools next year?

Dr. Zirpoli responded that at this time she does not have that information.

Mrs. Cheal asked at what time pre-care would start and at what school the pre-care be.

Dr. Zirpoli responded that the idea of pre-care and after-care is not a new topic. The Board and the District had discussed this option at the beginning of the redistricting plan that would be put in place if necessary.

Regarding the start time of the pre-care and after-care, the District is still working on the times. The Board will need to discuss what would be appropriate in terms of an early drop off and then also what would be appropriate as a late pickup.

Mrs. Cheal responded that she will need this information as she has a kindergartner who will be at Salt Brook School and a rising- third grader at Allen W. Roberts. She then commented on the District noting properties that will potentially be developed and how Dr. Gripp noted in his latest study that possibly 33 students would be spread out across the three schools; elementary schools, middle/ high school. Instead of the 72 students coming from the Bard property.

Allison Caravano, 20 Edward Court

Mrs. Caravano asked how the data was reanalyzed or analyzed differently from the previous study to assess the number of families that were going to be impacted.

Dr. Zirpoli stated that the District used the information that was in PowerSchool. The District ran a report of addresses in Zones A through D of current families that have children in Allen W. Roberts. The District saw that there were potentially approximately ninety (90) families impacted because that is how many families are currently residing in Zones A- D who have a child at Allen W. Roberts.

Mrs. Caravano followed up her question by stating that she lives in Zone A and there is one family currently impacted by the redistricting plan and she will be the second family to be impacted. Currently, at Allen W. Roberts, there are twelve (12) fewer kids in the kindergarten than in Salt Brook. So when families are asking for a grandfathering, we are not talking about kindergarten families starting now, we are talking about the kids that are currently at Allen W. Roberts School. She is curious as to how this decision was made. She respects the need to redistrict, as an educator herself, she understands that Berkely Heights also did a redistricting but they provided bussing for their families. She asked the Board to look at each family on a case-by-case scenario.

Dr. Zirpoli responded that the District reviewed the data and currently, twenty-one (21) children in Zone A attend Allen W. Roberts, and so if any of those twenty-one (21) have younger siblings or if mom or dad have not yet chosen to have another child or mom and dad do not plan to and have another child, those are then decisions that would have to come into the fold. When we get to Zones B and C the numbers jump tremendously, currently, we have approximately ninety- nine (99) students in Allen W. Roberts in Zones B and C in grades kindergarten through 4th grade.

Mrs. Caravano thanked Dr. Zirpoli for the information but reiterated that her question is if there will be a case-by-case considered based on enrollment for Salt Brook if families want their kids to go to Salt Brook and want their kid at Salt Brook for Zones B and C. Can we not be given the same opportunity to assess the enrollment on the other side of town if we have a kid that's there already there. The other question asked was if the pre-care and after-care options for families are going to be covered by the District or are the families going to be asked to contribute to that.

Dr. Zirpoli responded that the District would be covering the cost of the pre-care and after-care.

Mrs. Caravano then asked what pre-care and after-care would look like in regards to time, who would be watching the children, etc.

Dr. Zirpoli responded that if there is one student who would need pre-care or after-care, they would be at the main office with the principal. If there are more than three students then a certified teacher would be watching the students. The administrator would reach out to teachers and see their availability to coordinate a schedule.

Mrs. Caravano thanked Dr. Zirpoli and appreciated that the District is looking at this from the point of view of the parents however she feels that there is more consideration for families that don't yet live in the district

and current parents are the ones who will be living this on a day to day basis for several years. She hopes that there will be a follow-up conversation.

Rebecca Nichols, 38 Charnwood Road

Mrs. Nichols commented that to her knowledge she is currently the only hybrid family with one child at Allen W. Roberts and another at Salt Brook. She has faced significant frustration due to a lack of communication about available services like before and aftercare. Her family has been paying out-of-pocket for busing and aftercare, which adds to their challenges. Events like back-to-school night and Halloween parades have forced parents to choose which child's event to attend, creating additional stress. Despite frustrations, Mrs. Nichols acknowledged the support from teachers and principals at both schools. She is happy that the District will be looking at the school calendar to help avoid schedule conflicts between the schools. She did ask for the District to share the school calendar and any accommodations to be shared at an earlier time so families can plan accordingly.

Mrs. Cuccaro declared the public portion of the meeting closed at 7:18 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Marano moved to approve the minutes for:

Business Meeting:	December 12, 2024
Closed Meeting:	December 12, 2024

Mrs. Gunderman seconded the motion and it was carried on the following vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Abstain</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

ACTION ITEMS
FINANCE ACTIONS

Mr. Walsh, Finance Chairperson, moved to approve Items 1 through 3 as listed below:

BOARD SECRETARY REPORT APPROVED

1. After review, we hereby accept the Board Secretary and Treasurer reports for December 2024. No major account or fund has been overexpended in violation of financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.

BILL LIST APPROVED

2. Approve the payment of bills for January 2025, in the amount of \$7,439,337.25.

DRIVE FOR AUTISM DONATION APPROVED

3. Approve the generous donation from the Drive for Autism Foundation to Salt Brook School for sensory pathways, cozy corners, and classroom cool-down areas, in the amount of \$2,500.00.

Mrs. Marano seconded the motion.

It was carried on the following vote.

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

FACILITIES ACTIONS

Mr. Walsh, Facilities Chairperson, moved to approve Item 1:

JERSEY CENTRAL POWER AND LIGHT AGREEMENTS APPROVED

1. Approve the agreements between Jersey Central Power and Light and the New Providence Board of Education for the installation of electric distribution facilities, under 18A:18A-5, as listed below:

Allen W. Roberts School
Work Request #: 63091536

Contract Amount:	\$40,933.44
Total:	<u>\$40,933.44</u>

Salt Brook School
Work Request #: 63242569

Contract Amount:	\$47,362.36
Total:	<u>\$47,362.36</u>

New Providence High School and Middle School
Work Request #: 63124284

Contract Amount:	\$48,720.49
Total:	<u>\$48,720.49</u>

Mrs. Marano seconded the motion.

It was carried on the following vote.

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

EDUCATION ACTIONS

Dr. Empson Hayden, Education Chairperson, moved to approve Items 1 through 8 as listed below:

2024/2025 HARASSMENT, INTIMIDATION, BULLYING RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Per the 2011 Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act, approve the recommendations of the Superintendent of Schools regarding the following 2024/2025 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying investigations:

<u>School</u>	<u>Incident Report Number(s)</u>
Middle School:	3
Salt Brook:	1, 2

LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT APPROVED

2. Approve the Uniform State Memorandum of Agreement Between Education and Law Enforcement Officials for the 2024/2025 school year, a copy of which is filed with the Superintendent's office.

2024/2025 TEXTBOOK/EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL ADOPTION APPROVED

3. Approve the following textbook/educational material adoption for the 2024/2025 school year, details of which are in the hands of each Board member:

- a. Biology Now, (Honors Biology- 9th grade)

STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT CHATHAM HIGH SCHOOL APPROVED

4. Approve the enrollment of Student #11203 at East Mountain School, for the 2024/2025 school year, at a tuition cost of \$54,500.00, effective 1/2/25.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT THE MUJC DEVELOPMENTAL LEARNING CENTER APPROVED

5. Approve the enrollment of and extraordinary services for Student #11224 at MUJC Developmental Learning Center- Warren, for the 2024/2025 school year, at a tuition cost of \$108,792.00, effective 1/2/25.

MORRIS UNION JOINTURE COMMISSION SPECIAL EDUCATION RELATED SERVICES APPROVED

6. Approve the following Morris Union Jointure Commission special education related services for the 2024/2025 school year:

a.	Adaptive PE	\$201.00/hr.
b.	Occupational Therapy	\$206.00/hr.
c.	Physical Therapy	\$227.00/hr.
d.	Speech/Language Services	\$242.00/hr.

LINKIt! PILOT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING APPROVED

7. Approve the LinkIt! Pilot Memorandum of Understanding between LinkIt! and the New Providence School District, for the remainder of the 2024/2025 school year. Copies in the hands of each Board member.

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT FOR STUDENT #10813 APPROVED

8. Approve the settlement agreement for Student #10813, copies in the hands of each Board member.

Mrs. Zane seconded the motion.

It was carried on the following vote.

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

Dr. Empson Hayden highlighted the the LinkIt! Program on for approval and asked Dr. Zirpoli to speak on it more.

Dr. Zirpoli commented that the District will be engaging with LinkIt, a data management platform, that creates analytics on students' performance. After meeting with three companies, one of whom we have engaged with but has not worked to our benefit, LinkedIt was the company we would like to learn more about. We will pilot from January - June with included free professional development and will engage with our administrative team.

PERSONNEL ACTIONS

Mrs. Gunderman moved to approve Items 1 through 6 as listed below:

2024/2025 APPOINTMENTS APPROVED

1. Approve the appointment of the following people with the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools subject to the requirements of Chapter 116 of P.L. 1986 for the 2024/2025 school year:
 - a. Louis Debski, maintenance/HVAC, \$32,385.00 (base \$74,295.00 (\$70,766.00 +\$3,529.00 HVAC stipend differential)), effective 1/27/25
 - b. Taylor Madden, student teacher at Allen W. Roberts, effective 2/1/25-4/1/25
 - c. Alyssa Natale, HS musical (winter), choreographer, \$3,300.00
 - d. Gabrianna Boomer, MS ensemble advisor, \$1,238.40 (base \$2,064.00), effective 1/1/25-6/30/25
 - e. Jennifer Dowden, long-term substitute teacher, effective 12/13/24, to be paid on a per diem basis of \$290.93 (prorated Step 1, Column I, base of \$58,186.00)
 - f. Heather Huber, long term substitute teacher, \$27,929.00 (base \$58,186.00), effective 2/7/25-6/30/25
 - g. Neysa Doshi, student teacher at the HS, effective 2/1/25-6/18/25 (subject to criminal history review procedures)
 - h. Michelle Testa, for teaching three (3) additional periods per day for 17 days, \$2,438.31, effective 1/15/25 through 2/10/25
 - i. Natalie Petrides, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
 - j. Mikayla Mazur, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
 - k. Olivia Gelormini, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
 - l. Nicholas DiGirolamo, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary

- m. Sean Theis, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
- n. David P. Aprill, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary
- o. Jaiden Menen, substitute teacher, teacher aide, and secretary (subject to issuance of certification)
- p. Andrew McCulley, chaperone, HS Model United Nations trip, \$400.00
- q. Angelina Iosso, chaperone, HS Model United Nations trip, \$400.00

2024/2025 ESSA APPOINTMENTS APPROVED

2. Approve the appointment of the following people with the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools subject to the requirements of Chapter 116 of P.L. 1986 for the 2024/2025 school year. These appointments are made under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA):
 - a. Dr. Colleen Hasson, HS Title I program ELA teacher, not to exceed 25 hours @ \$54.87/hr.
 - b. Wendi Kane-Millard, HS Title I program ELA teacher, not to exceed 25 hours @ \$54.87/hr.
 - c. Joan Rykus, HS Title I program math teacher, not to exceed 25 hours @ \$54.87/hr.
 - d. Gavin Jakositz, HS Title I program math teacher, not to exceed 25 hours @ \$54.87/hr.
 - e. David Goldstein, HS Title I program ELA coordinator, not to exceed 15 hours @ \$54.87/hr.
 - f. Kathleen Joyce, Allen W. Roberts Title I program ELA coordinator, not to exceed 15 hours @ \$54.87/hr.
 - g. Brandee Conover, AWR Title I program math coordinator, not to exceed 15 hours @ \$54.87/hr.

RESIGNATION APPROVED

3. Accept the resignation of the following employees:
 - a. Jean Drexinger, Salt Brook Principal, effective 7/31/25, due to retirement

2024/2025 REVISIONS APPROVED

4. Accept the following revision for the 2024/2025 school year:
 - a. Ji Hwan (Brian) Ryu, teacher, \$43,677.00 (base \$68,783.00), effective 12/12/24
 - b. Rayana Patania, long-term substitute teacher, effective 1/2/25, to be paid on a per diem basis of \$319.36 (prorated Step 1, Column IV, base of \$63,872.00), and to be paid for one additional day prior to the 1/2/25 start date to shadow the current teacher
 - c. Rachel Curcio, reading specialist, \$42,029.00 (base \$90,386.00), effective 2/10/25

UNPAID PATERNITY LEAVE APPROVED

5. Approve the request for unpaid paternity leave for Leonard Thomas, custodian, under the state Family Leave Act for a period of twelve weeks commencing 4/21/25 and ending 7/11/25 with continued health insurance benefits pursuant to law. (Based on 10/5/24 date of birth.)

UNPAID MATERNITY LEAVE APPROVED

6. Approve the request for unpaid maternity leave for Kathryn Conway, teacher, under the state Family Leave Act for a period of twelve weeks commencing 6/19/25 and ending 11/12/25, with continued health insurance benefits pursuant to law. Approve an extended leave pursuant to Article X of the Agreement between the Board and the NPEA, from 11/13/25 through and including 6/30/26. (Based on 5/21/25 due date. Dates subject to adjustment by actual birth.)

EXTENDED UNPAID CHILD-REARING LEAVE APPROVED

7. Approve the request of Victoria Hinz, teacher, (currently on maternity leave), for an extended unpaid child-rearing leave for the 2024/2025 school year, pursuant to Article X of the Agreement between the Board and the NPEA, effective 2/18/25 through 6/30/25.

Dr. Empson Hayden seconded the motion and it was carried on the following vote.

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano
<u>Yea</u>	Mr. Walsh
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Zane

Dr. Zirpoli then took a moment to introduce Louis Debski to the District and commend Mrs. Drexinger for her twenty-three (23) years as principal at Salt Brook School and thirty-four (34) years in the District, she wished her the best of luck in her retirement.

BOARD POLICY

Mr. Walsh moved to approve Item 1 as listed below:

FIRST READING BYLAWS, POLICIES AND REGULATIONS APPROVED

1. Approve the following Bylaws, Policies, and Regulations on the first reading:

Bylaws and Policies:

Policy 2260 (Mandated)	Equity in School and Classroom Practices (Walsh)	Revised
Policy 2411 (Mandated)	Guidance Counseling (Walsh)	Revised
Policy 3418	Substitute Compensation (Walsh)	Revised
Policy 5750 (Mandated)	Equitable Educational Opportunity (Walsh)	Revised
Policy 5755	Equity in Educational Programs and Services	Abolished

Regulations:

Regulation 2260 (Mandated)	Equity in School and Classroom Practices (Walsh)	Revised
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Mrs. Gunderman seconded the motion and it was carried on the following vote.

Roll call vote:

<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Castellano
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Cuccaro
<u>Yea</u>	Dr. Empson Hayden
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Gunderman
<u>Yea</u>	Mrs. Marano

Yea
Yea

Mr. Walsh
Mrs. Zane

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Curriculum, Instruction, and Technology: Dr. Empson Hayden reported the committee met with Dr. Zirpoli to discuss the 2026/2027 school calendar. The committee came up with two options for the Board to decide on. The options are as follows:

Option A:

- Make Columbus Day a 1/2 day of school for students and a full day for teachers where professional development will be provided in the afternoon, which remains consistent with our four (4) early dismissal professional development days. In this school year, this would be one (1) of four (4). Although last year we decided to keep Columbus Day as a full day off for teachers and students, all of our neighboring Districts follow a similar model to what we are recommending. Furthermore, the results of our calendar survey showed that parents were split 50/50 when asked if Columbus Day should be a school day.
- Move from four (4) emergency days to three (3) emergency days. The last time we exhausted all of our emergency days was before the 2019/2020 school year. If we do not use any emergency days, one (1) would be reserved in the bank, one (1) would be used the Friday before Memorial Day Weekend as per the negotiated contract, and one (1) would be given back into the school calendar at the Board's discretion.

Option B

- Move from four (4) emergency days to three (3) emergency days. The last time we exhausted all of our emergency days was before the 2019/2020 school year. If we do not use any emergency days, one (1) would be reserved in the bank, one (1) would be used the Friday before Memorial Day Weekend as per the negotiated contract, and one (1) would be given back into the school calendar at the Board's discretion.
- In this scenario, we would move spring break to the week before Easter (March 22-March 26) to gain the extra day.

The Board was in agreement with Option A.

Dr. Zirpoli commented that this updated calendar option will be approved at the February 23, 2025 meeting.

Mrs. Zane thanked Dr. Zirpoli for answering her many questions.

Finance, Facilities, and Safety/Security: Mr. Walsh reported that the committee will be meeting on February 6th to look at the draft budget.

Personnel, Management, and Communications: Mrs. Gunderman reported that the committee met and explored a potential option of an additional platform for interactive education, in case we have an opening either for a long-term sub that we may not have a candidate for. We have the option to continue instruction with a certified teacher in that specific area if we cannot find someone through a regular course of means. However, the committee is not recommending it for approval yet.

OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

NEW BUSINESS

No new business.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mrs. Cuccaro opened the meeting to the public at 8:23 p.m.

There being no public comments, Mrs. Cuccaro declared the public portion of the meeting closed at 8:23 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION

Mr. Walsh moved to adopt the following resolution:

This body shall on January 23, 2025, in the New Providence High/Middle School Media Center, 35 Pioneer Drive, discuss in closed session, pursuant to Section 7 of the Open Public Meetings Act, specific matters which may generally be described as follows:

- Student Matters related to HIB

The minutes of the discussion in closed session of the aforementioned matters may be disclosed to the public after the final determination of action has been reached.

Mrs. Marano seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

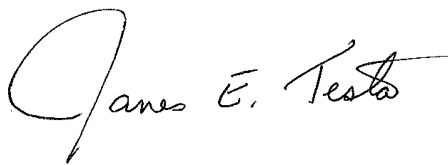
RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION

The Board reconvened to public session at 8:50 p.m.

Mrs. Cuccaro called the Board to order. Board members present were Mrs. Castellano, Mrs. Cuccaro, Dr. Empson Hayden, Mrs. Gunderman, Mrs. Marano, Mr. Walsh, and Mrs. Zane.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business before the Board, on a motion by Mr. Walsh, seconded by Mrs. Marano, and carried unanimously, Mrs. Cuccaro declared the meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James E. Testa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James Testa, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary