

**MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING**

April 18, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.
Remote - Zoom

Presiding: Comm. Nakima Redmon, President

Present:

Ms. Eileen F. Shafer, Superintendent of Schools
Khalifah Shabazz-Charles, Esq., General Counsel
Boris Zaydel, Esq., Board Counsel

Comm. Oshin Castillo-Cruz
Comm. Valerie Freeman
Comm. Eddie Gonzalez
Comm. Jonathan Hodges

Comm. Dania Martinez, Vice President
Comm. Manuel Martinez
Comm. Della McCall
Comm. Kenneth Simmons

Also Present:

Mr. Ray Pinney, New Jersey School Boards Association

Comm. Redmon read the Open Public Meetings Act:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend the meetings of the Paterson Public School District, as well as other public bodies at which any business affecting the interest of the public is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this law, the Paterson Public School District has caused adequate and electronic notice of this meeting:

**Special Meeting
April 18, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.
Virtual
90 Delaware Avenue
Paterson, New Jersey**

to be published by having the date, time and place posted in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Paterson, at the entrance of the Paterson Public School offices, on the district's website, and by sending notice of the meeting to the Arab Voice, El Diario, the Italian Voice, the North Jersey Herald & News, and The Record.

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

Comm. Redmon: I would like to welcome Mr. Ray Pinney from the New Jersey School Boards Association. He is here to do an overview of the Superintendent evaluation process for the new Board members who are here.

SUPERINTENDENT/CSA AND BOARD EVALUATION PROCESS

Mr. Ray Pinney: Thank you. I just want to go over the basic process for it. If you have any details, because this is an online process, you can always contact our office. Charlene Peterson will probably be the person coordinating the technical aspects of it, but it is a legal requirement. I'm also going to touch on two other things briefly, the Board self-evaluation, which doesn't have the same deadline as the CSA evaluation, and also some thoughts about a new superintendent coming in and how you can get that started on the right foot. I know you'll be meeting on that later this week. If you have any questions, you can put them in the chat room or raise your hand. I know some of you are driving. This is an important thing to do. Most people ask what the role of a Board member is. One of the most important things is hiring and evaluating your superintendent. It's maybe the most important job you have because the superintendent has the tools at their disposal and they're the educational leader of your district. It's important to build that good relationship and the evaluation process is an important part of that. There are legal guidelines for you to do the evaluation. It's required. We'll go over the process and then use it as a tool. You have to decide with the Board President and Board attorney who's conflicted. If you have any relative that works in the district, you're conflicted from the superintendent evaluation process. I just wanted to be upfront with that and make sure you let us know who's conflicted. It's your main oversight of what's going on in the district. It's where the conversations begin. There are legal requirements here. I sent links to all these presentations plus other information. If you have any questions on the CSA evaluation or Board self-evaluation, please let us know. The Board shall evaluate the performance of the superintendent at least once a year. The evaluation has to be in writing and the Board and superintendent shall meet to discuss the finding. We will get to the meeting that the Board has before this. The evaluation has to be based on goals and objectives you gave the superintendent last summer. We will get to the leadership qualities later on too. You have to do this by July 1. Later you'll see a calendar. You're in the calendar by mid-May. The superintendent should be finishing up their self-evaluation and then you meet after that. You want to get everything done in June and give yourself a few weeks to make sure you get it done in time. You should be looking at areas of strength, areas that need improvement, recommendations for professional growth, and indicators of student progress. This has to be voted on by the majority of the Board. We've had districts that have lost some points under QSAC because they didn't do this on time. The monitoring system is an easy way to get some points on QSAC. You don't want to lose points on something that you can control. You're using NJSBA's tool. I'll go over a little bit why it's a good service for you to use. We don't just come up with this. We develop this with NJASA. We meet on a regular basis to look at the evaluation process and tools. We're working together collaboratively on this. Hopefully we're modeling what superintendents and boards should be doing too. You don't have to use our service. You can use others, but you do have to do an evaluation process that has some of the things I talked about before. It's not something that you can just put off. Ours is based on the statutes. It provides you the statutory requirements and methodological based on that. It makes it easier for you. We want full participation of all Board members who are non-conflicted. Some Boards have on occasion not done that. They have had a committee do it. We prefer that the whole Board does it because it is a majority document, which we will discuss later on. That's why you use our tool. You need to get it done in writing by July 1. NJSBA has an in-district census. We have a census for every district. Ours is based on the right names in our database to do the evaluation. If we're missing a new Board member or anything else, that's important for us to know. You have to identify who's conflicted and they can't participate in this evaluation. They're not even in the room when you're discussing it. If you have any

questions on whether someone should be participating, you can run it by your Board attorney as well. We recommend that you set a calendar. You may want the superintendent to have their self-evaluation done at this point. Everyone knows when we're meeting to discuss this. The important part is for the Board members to put their opinions in too and try to do it as quickly as possible. I know sometimes you're busy, but this is important. You must take time for this. If you have that calendar, you'll know when you have to react to the superintendent's self-evaluation. This is just a basic calendar that we have. It starts last year in June and July when you set the goals with the district. We're much later in the year. The superintendent may have some very good success in August, September, or October. During COVID, just opening the schools was a major thing. You have to look at the whole year. We tend to look at what they have done lately. If a superintendent has some good successes in August, September, or October, you should be discussing those as well. You should have a conference with the superintendent just to discuss this. The superintendent will put in their input on the self-evaluation process. They log onto our website. They do their self-evaluation. They give you backup information as to why they did certain things. They tell you what they achieved. Then the Board members individually have to complete their evaluation. We recommend around middle to end of May. We will send you the individual responses to the Board President. The Board will have to have an executive session to review all the compilations of everyone's view. We will get into a little bit more detail. Then you meet with the superintendent. This is the process. The superintendent will be completing her self-assessment with evidence of her leadership standards. The Board then will look at the self-evaluation. They all compile their analysis of it. This is the only time the Board can meet without the superintendent and discuss the performance. It's a majority document, though you can have the minority give input. When you finally decide on your summative document it's a majority document. Then you meet with the superintendent and discuss it. You can have a pre-evaluation conference to discuss her progress and goals. Maybe you can give a little preview of what you feel the year has looked like. These are the areas you wanted to focus on last summer. How did we make achievement towards these? Keep in mind some of these many not be one-year goals. They may be progress towards those goals. It may take two years. When you're trying to improve test scores or something like that it may take a couple of years. This should be a collaborative process. You should be having conversations on a regular basis trying to meet your annual goals and looking at the action plans that the superintendent put together to achieve those goals. You should be getting regular updates on that looking at what you've done during the course of the year. This is an example of what it is. The superintendent will be filling it out and you will say whether you agree with whether they achieved that goal or made progress towards it, or if there was little or no progress.

Comm. Gonzalez: Is it possible to expand your screen? Part of the bottom of the screen is cut off.

Mr. Pinney: I've been trying to get that. I'm sorry.

Comm. Gonzalez: Most of your slides seem okay. A handful of them are cut off at the bottom.

Mr. Pinney: We did send it to you. You should have copies of all this, and you can call me. Here's a sample of the compilation of the goals. You'll have a goal, and the superintendent will have their comment. Then you will say whether they achieved, made progress, or little to no progress. This is where you're going to have to have a discussion as a Board. If everyone is in agreement, it's not that hard a discussion, but someone might disagree. This is where you're going to have to have a conversation as

a Board. Besides the goals, you're going to have to start looking at leadership styles and how someone is as an educational leader. This comes from the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. This is part of that collaboration we had. They decided some of the characteristics of a good educational leader. What are the standards they have to meet? Being a superintendent is a hard job. It's not just knowing curriculum. You have to be able to communicate with the community and the Board and have a good mission and vision. These are the standards when they look at leadership that's also on our evaluation tool. These are the six standards – mission, vision, core values; governance, ethics, professional norms; operations management; curriculum, instruction, assessment, school improvement; community of care, equity and family engagement; and professional capacity/community of school district personnel. These are the leadership standards that have been looked at as necessary to be an educational leader. This is the standard assessment. If you're a new Board member you may have to fill this out. If you came on the Board in January and some of the stuff that was discussed you didn't really observe because it happened in the fall, you can say 'not observed.' That is not going to reflect negatively on the superintendent. It won't reflect positively either. You didn't observe it. That sometimes happens with a new School Board member. You're starting this process and you've only been with the superintendent for four months. It's hard for you to observe everything. Usually this is where you have a newer Board member. It's important that you know about that. Don't feel like you have to put something down. In your pre-meeting you should also discuss what they mean for you. You should all have the same definition of what proficient or unsatisfactory means. Here's a compilation. You would average those out. The majority is positive and then you go through the rest of them. You'll look at these standards individually and make a decision as to whether you felt that standard was met. Once you have it, you put it all together. I'm assuming the Board President is not conflicted. If they are, they have to designate someone else. They will put the compilation together, share it with the Board in a closed session, and have a majority opinion. This is not all those numbers put together. You're using those numbers as a framework for discussion. It will be a summative report. It's a majority document. If four of you feel that the superintendent walks on water and three of you don't believe they can even swim, the four carry the weight. In that meeting with the superintendent, you can reflect some of your minority opinion. It depends on how you write it. You can include some of it. It's a majority document and the evaluation of the superintendent rests on that. Usually, the Board President writes it and everyone can have input on that. The Board President can have someone else write the document. It's up to you guys how you want to handle that. You give it to the superintendent ahead of time too so that they don't come to a meeting and don't know what's going on. This is another example of annual performance report template. This is just an example of the next two slides. There are things where you can check more than one area if you think they have done that. When you meet as a Board, you should all be in agreement on these definitions. You have to have the same discussion so that it means the same thing for everyone. If you give comments on their leadership skills, try to give supporting documents. Don't just give a negative or great number without some good examples as to why you feel that way. I think it's important that you do that communication. As you go into having a new superintendent, it might be something that you need to discuss right from the beginning. When you have a summary conference, you have to Rice the CSA. You share the evaluation with them prior to the conference. It has to be a majority of the total members. Your minority opinion can be voiced in that meeting, but the document is majority. If there's a minority opinion, this is their time to speak. Overall, this is not once a year. It should be an ongoing event. I know we're talking about it now because this is when you have to fill out all the forms. Throughout the course of the year, you've been hopefully having some conversations on this. You set the goals with the superintendent and have conversations on it. Maybe note when

you have attained a goal throughout the course of the year. This should be a conversation that's going on all year long. Review the performance over a full year, not just something that happened three weeks ago. You might have had a great fall and you need to let the superintendent know they did their job at this point. Don't just weigh something that happened in the last three or four weeks. Throughout the course of the year, you should develop a system to retain evidence of the work that the superintendent has done. It should be a two-way communication throughout the course of the year. This is the responsibility of all eligible members to fully participate. Probably the most important role as a School Board member is to hire and evaluate the superintendent. They're your educational leader. They're the ones who get everything done in your district. You can't have individual success as a Board member. You can only do it as a team working with the superintendent. You need to do this all year around and everyone needs to be participating. You can't check out on this one. That's the end of my slides. I know you're going to be looking at having new leadership this year. I would recommend having a Board retreat and setting those goals with them. I recommend maybe having a goal-setting session with the superintendent and getting to know each other a little bit to move forward on that, especially that first year. I would recommend you do something over the course of this summer so you can get to know your new educational leader. The other thing I was told to talk about was the Board self-evaluation, which I sent you some information on. That doesn't have the same deadlines and timeframes, but that's a good tool for you. The superintendent and the BA can participate in that because they are part of the Board team. I'll send you the document. You look at that and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Board on dealing with certain communication issues or working with the administrative team. There are two parts to that form. How do you feel the Board works as a whole? Do you guys work well together? Is there an area you can improve on? How do you feel you work as an individual Board member? We compile those scores to see and a lot of times we have Board members say, "No one is doing a good job, except for me." You want to see how you're doing when you start evaluating how the Board operates as a unit. This might help you set Board goals. I think it's important for you to do that as a team. You evaluate everyone else in the district. You might as well evaluate the Board members too in that area. It's not required that you do a Board self-evaluation – it used to be years ago – but it is a best practice. You can do that in the summer or now. I would focus on the SCA evaluation first because it has legal ramifications with QSAC. I didn't have too much else. Is there anything else anyone wanted to add or ask about?

Comm. Redmon: Thank you, Mr. Pinney, for giving us the update on the superintendent evaluation. If you have any questions, you can always reach out to him. Just make sure you leave your contact information with the Board.

Mr. Pinney: I'll give Cheryl my other contact information as well. I sent her some links that are helpful. You'll have different avenues. The biggest problem we have is that sometimes people have technical difficulties. If you have any issues with that, we can help you with that as well. You guys have a great night. Good luck with everything this week. I know you have a budget meeting tomorrow. Have a good day.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

It was moved by Comm. Hodges, seconded by Comm. M. Martinez that the Public Comments portion of the meeting be opened. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

No Speakers.

It was moved by Comm. Hodges, seconded by Comm. D. Martinez that the Public Comments portion of the meeting be closed. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

OTHER BUSINESS

It was moved by Comm. McCall, seconded by Comm. Freeman that the Board goes into Executive Session to discuss issues that warrant confidentiality, as consistent with NJSA 10:4-12 for matters of Attorney/Client Privilege, Contracts, Legal, Litigation, Negotiations, Personnel and Student Matters. The minutes will be made available to the public upon request, when the confidentiality of the subject is no longer warranted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

The Board went into executive session at 6:13 p.m.

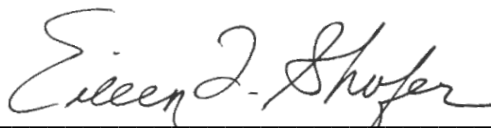
It was moved by Comm. Hodges, seconded by Comm. D. Martinez that the Board reconvenes the meeting. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Comm. Hodges, seconded by Comm. D. Martinez that the meeting be adjourned. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Eileen F. Shafer", written in black ink.

Ms. Eileen F. Shafer, M.Ed.
Superintendent of Schools/
Board Secretary