

# **MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION WORKSHOP MEETING**

March 8, 2023 – 6:07 p.m.  
Joseph A. Taub School

Presiding: Comm. Nakima Redmon, President

Present:

Ms. Eileen F. Shafer, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Susana Peron, Deputy Superintendent  
Khalifah Shabazz-Charles, Esq., General Counsel

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

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

Absent:

Comm. Manuel Martinez

The Salute to the Flag was led by Comm. Redmon.

Comm. Freeman 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:

**Workshop Meeting  
March 8, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.  
Joseph A. Taub School  
202 Union 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.

## **PRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Recognition of Student Athletes**

Ms. Shafer: All of you, including our cheerleaders, have been part of something that has inspired the people of the great City of Paterson. Please know that when we see any of you, we see a tremendous reason to be proud. We see proof that hard work can

pay off. We are reminded that if we truly commit ourselves to a great purpose and around people who are like us, we can achieve our dreams. And that gives all of us in the City of Paterson a tremendous amount of hope for the youth of this city. At this time, I want to introduce Assistant Superintendent David Cozart, who oversees athletics.

Mr. David Cozart: Good evening, everyone. Ms. Shafer just said a mouthful, but there are a couple of things I want to put into perspective. Several years ago, in developing this program I sat down with Dr. Glisson, and we started mapping things out. We wanted to make sure we had student athletes who are also part of the community. When Mr. Hill was selected, he was also told these are the things we have to do. Those individuals who coached under him had some expectations for these kids to not only maintain their grades, but also to do community service and to be involved in the community. They had to understand there was a life outside of Eastside and wearing those uniforms meant having student pride and bringing respect, not only to yourselves, but to the whole community. That's been a great task. We started seeing them in churches, at food drives, and at different community events. Hard work pays off because I think what's being built at Eastside High School is about relationships. Coaches have developed relationships with the kids and their parents. When you go to the games, you start seeing they are exciting. The girls and boys are excited. The only drawback is that Eastside has a small gym so everyone can't come inside and watch the games. It's exciting because you see parents, staff members, and Board members there as well. They look around the audience and they see people they recognize supporting them. Principals and teachers come from other schools to support them. That's what we're talking about when we say we're bringing pride back to Paterson. No matter how you look at a school district, athletics will always be your ambassador because athletes are the only ones who go from school to school. Our sportsmanship is not in question. I really appreciate the effort, hard work, and drive. You put the 'P' back in Paterson. Mental toughness and everything is there. They dominated and everybody knows who we are. I want to thank the academic counselor. Ms. Benjamin, please stand. It's her job to make sure that the kids are on track academically, and that they are academically eligible. Our role is still once you leave Paterson Public Schools, you should have options. That's our expectation. You are a student athlete. We're trying to create legends. Period! Former Coach Hill, T.J. Hill the player, his jersey is on the wall. We can say he did this. He's on the sidelines with them. Wait until you see our spring flag football team. We're going to see kids coming out here and dominating. The point I'm making is that it's a family affair. Eastside is truly a family school and I'm really proud of what they have accomplished. But we're not finished. The girls are young. They are babies, but they shocked the world last year. If you saw the scores, they're dominating. I stated to the coach that I believe this Eastside High School Basketball Team is the best Paterson has to offer. I say that because they won those games by playing hardnose defense. The other teams we've had in the past were good. But this team's defense puts a lockdown on you. They never believed they were out of the game. The question is would the game be close. They played their hearts out like champions. I applaud that and you can walk around and say that you are Paterson's best basketball program. Period! At this time, I'm going to bring up Mr. Hill and he's going to bring up the coaches to introduce the kids.

Mr. T.J. Hill: First, I want to thank the Board, Superintendent Shafer, the cabinet, and Mr. Cozart. On behalf of the Eastside High School Athletic Department, we appreciate you guys for giving us the time. From my perspective, it takes a village. Everyone here, from Mr. Matthews, the Superintendent, Mr. Cozart, my principals at Eastside High School, you guys allow me to do my job. I appreciate the support. As long as I'm in this district, we're going to take this sport and make Paterson a success.

## ***(Student Presentations)***

### **Student Safety Data System (SSDS) Report**

Ms. Laurel Olson: Good evening, Commissioners old and new, Madam Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and cabinet members. My name is Laurel Olson, the Supervisor of Student Support Services. The department oversees our Student Assistance Counselors, responsible for our substance abuse intervention and our social/emotional learning department. I'm making the presentation today on the Student Safety Data System (SSDS). The NJDOE requires us to report any student being found or considered positive in relation to substances or alcohol. The students are considered positive in four circumstances. They are either confirmed to be under the influence after a medical examination; found in possession of substances or drug paraphernalia in school, on school grounds, or school-sponsored function; they refuse to take a medical examination; or the amount of possession they have on their person is enough for sale or distribution. During pre-COVID years, the department provided substance intervention and medical examinations to anywhere between 150 to 250 students per school year. According to the trends of our SAC Department, while we were completely remote in the 2020-2021 school year, we had three positive cases reported. As we returned to in-person learning in the 2021-2022 school year, our numbers started to increase and become stable as they had in the past. At the end of the 2021-2022 school year, we had 210 students reported. 162 tested positive, which is about 77%. We are about halfway through the 2022-2023 school year, and we had 80 students tested and 66 or 82% tested positive. Of the 66, 29 tested positive for marijuana use, 25 refused to be tested, and 52 were in possession. This chart is another visual so you can see where our substance cases are being reported. 87% are at the high school level and 13% at elementary. I do want to highlight possession cases. While reviewing the statistics, we are the highest on record for the past 15 years. The earliest data I have is from 2008. For this first half of the year, we are at 52 cases of possession with marijuana infused or THC vape pens leading the confiscations. Should confiscations continue, we can easily surpass 100 possession cases by the end of the school year. This report is just from July to December, and we have had more possession cases between January 1 and today. Here are some examples of the possessions that we are seeing in our schools that we are confiscating from our students. In this slide we see many different types of cannabis or THC-infused vape pens. Not only is there a focus behind these products, it's usually anywhere between 55% and 90% pure THC. It provides a different feeling versus smoking a physical plant and vaping. There is a higher euphoric feeling that comes with smoking these higher potency THC's. The consistent use of it with a concentrated cannabis product increases the tolerance of the user leading them to seek out the substance more. The bottom left photo is heroin packets. The top photo is a half-smoked joint, a lighter, and an empty pre roll so you would actually take the marijuana and fill it yourself. The bottom photo is vape pens and paraphernalia. The photo on the right is all marijuana products. Both of these photos show marijuana possession confiscations along with some paraphernalia at the high school level. This slide is a seven-year comparison of our data in the SAC Department from 2015 forward. The colors denote what we would like to see, negative drug tests are what we like and that's blue. Red is anybody who has been considered positive. The chart does indicate that you have more positive infractions than not. There was a drastic spike during the 2018-2019 school year. Even if a student tested negative and was drug-free on a medical exam, they are still considered positive because of their vape pen. In the summer of 2019, we did change our policy. In addition to a student having a vape pen, they also had to be witnessed to be under the influence of a mind-altering substance. Additionally, we like to have the students sent to the nurse to have their vitals checked as a secondary measure just to make sure they're

okay. I did touch before on the 2020-2021 school year. It was very difficult for the SAC Department to identify students who might need assistance due to the remote learning. So many of our students did not have access to the camera on their computer or were not in an environment to show themselves so our numbers did go down. In the 2021-2022 school year you see our numbers heading back to a direction that the department had seen before. Since 2010 the SAC Department has been hit with budget cuts and reductions in force, forcing more attention to be provided towards on-the-spot interventions like assisting with the drug testing versus our preventive efforts, one-on-one counseling, group sessions, and planning drug information sessions with staff and students. A department, which was once 25 staff members, has been drastically cut down to seven. Two of those SAC counselors are grant funded, which is set to expire in 2024 and I have one retiree this June. I wanted to note that marijuana legalization is here. Although it's illegal for our students under 21, the perception of risk in New Jersey is going down which may correlate to numbers increasing. There were studies done and the future forecast is that they don't believe that the usage of marijuana is set to slow down at all. Whether it's the flower or the oil that is in vape pens, they see an increase over the next 10 years. I wanted to touch on some ideas for the district and what we can do. We can't stop kids from purchasing marijuana, but we can work with our students and community at large to get the information out there. Now that it's legal, there's a lot of misinformation. As a district, that would be a nice way to start the September 2023-2024 school year. To combat vaping, in 2019 we started the "Escape the Vape" campaign. We had initiatives where our students would create artwork and they were given prizes. We're trying to think of ways to revamp that campaign and rename it "Clear the Air." It would be more of a truth initiative campaign. It would encompass vaping as well as marijuana. We're clearing the smoke, clear the air. Some other ideas are video and poster campaigns. PSA video campaigns would begin in the high schools. We would solicit Rosa Parks High School students to do script writing. They would do two to three-minute role-playing presentations. John F. Kennedy students would edit the videos in their TV studio. Videos would be shared through the "Clear the Air" campaign or whatever title we decide to use, a district website which could be visited by anyone at any time. We would like to involve the special education students at STARS. They could print our T-shirts, stickers, even working harder to get the word out. I would look to our Full Service and family programs to assist. If all goes well and the video is chosen, we will submit that video next February to the Passaic County Film Festival. The video focus is high school, but I would like to get the younger folks involved with poster contests. It would be open to grades 1-8. There would be three winners from each grade band. Everybody would be getting their prizes. The community would be involved. We could get some of their artwork on buses or billboards around town. The poster submissions, just like the videos, would be shared on the webpage and Eduvision. We could get help from STARS students with t-shirts, stickers and photos put up around town. We would post their submissions to the Passaic County Film Festival. That concludes the report and I'm happy to take any questions or comments.

Comm. Simmons: Regarding the future forecast, is that prevention for underage use or just increased use overall?

Ms. Olson: I believe it is overall, not focused on one group.

Comm. Simmons: You mentioned that if a student is found in possession of a vape pen and if their test comes back negative, they're still found positive.

Ms. Olson: That was our prior practice. That's what we had changed in the summer of 2019. If a student is found with a vape pen, we send them out for testing. If the testing is negative, there's no mind-altering substance in that vape pen.

Comm. Hodges: Does the Kennedy studio have a full-time instructor and classes?

Ms. Shafer: They have classes in the TV studio. The students have a club that goes around and videotapes.

Comm. Freeman: If the students are testing negative, but they're found in possession of a vape pen, what currently is the procedure? Does that remain on their record?

Ms. Olson: We do keep a running log when a vape pen is confiscated. I also make note if they were sent out for a drug test. That was based on the staff member believing or suspecting that they were under the influence. If they were negative on their medical exam, there are no consequences or requirement to meet with a social worker, which is done with other students who are positive.

Comm. McCall: How do you determine how many SACs you need per school? If you have a school that has high use, do you have more SACs there?

Ms. Olson: We have a full-time at Eastside and a full-time at Kennedy. I have another SAC counselor that covers all the additional high schools. Four SACs cover the selected elementary schools. Schools are chosen based on prior data. They're strategically placed throughout the district. Most of their time is spent in the schools with higher referrals from the past. Not just for substance abuse, but crisis intervention and mental health support. It could change yearly. It depends on what happens during the given school year.

Comm. McCall: Throughout the entire district we have seven?

Ms. Olson: That's correct.

Comm. Freeman: I'm just a little concerned about that - seven SACs throughout this whole district with the rise of marijuana and other substances. We need to address that and try to put something out there to get some SACs in here. That's alarming to me for the size of the district and the high schools. Even in the elementary schools you see these children smoking and vaping. I see it in the street. It's alarming to me that we have seven Substance Abuse Counselors in the entire district.

Comm. Redmon: To add to your comment, some of our SACs were RIF'd during our budgetary process for the last four or five years.

Ms. Shafer: About five years ago and before that there were a couple of RIFs each year. This year we were able to bring two back using ESSA funds. It's something we need, and we talked to Mr. Matthews about it as we continue to try to balance the budget.

Comm. McCall: Before the RIF, how many SACs were in the district on a full capacity?

Ms. Shafer: About 18.

Ms. Olson: The last cut was in 2019 and it went from 12 to 7.

Comm. McCall: Prior to any budget issues, we only had 17?

Ms. Olson: Before I started here in 2014, I was told there were 24 SACs. I think there was a RIF in 2010 to about half and then another one in 2019 by half again.

Comm. McCall: So you went from 24 to seven SACs with the climate we live in today with all the drugs, especially with the marijuana. This is something we really have to discuss and look at because it looks like we're setting our kids up for failure. When I think about the drugs and alcohol out there today, we have to make sure we give our children support in every way possible when it comes to substance abuse.

Comm. Hodges: I want to support what Comm. McCall said. Smoking and sale has been legalized and the culture that exists is a real problem. I think we really have to be aggressive in some way because it's not getting any better out there. (Inaudible)

Ms. Shafer: As the students come in, we're getting them right away. That's also why the numbers have gone up. They're triggering the metal detectors and we're confiscating them. It's better that those numbers go up and we confiscate them than them being in school using them. We also made out really well with the Juul lawsuit. About a year and a half ago, we joined a nationwide lawsuit against Juul, who was the original developer of the vape pen. We just received information from them that we will be getting \$600,000 under the lawsuit. Something that we should look into are the vape detectors that we can put in the restrooms. Some of them pick up audio. Legal is taking a look at which ones we should get and if there are any issues with privacy. It's something we will bring back to the Board in a presentation.

Comm. Gonzalez: How many SACs do you think we need in the district?

Ms. Olson: I started at Kennedy High School. Once I started making the connections, whether it be a substance abuse intervention or mental health intervention, I needed help. I had another SAC come onboard with me for two years before we both got RIF'd. If I needed a partner to help me with 2,000 students, I'd say anywhere between 15 and 20.

Comm. Hodges: How many nurses do we have on staff now?

Ms. Shafer: I'm pretty sure we have one in every building now.

Ms. Joanna Tsimpedes: We have one in every building. At John F. Kennedy and Eastside, we have two due to the large populations. We also have a nurse to assist with preschool enrollment. All our schools have nurses. There are two that are vacant, but we have agency nurses covering those schools. We are covered every day with nurses.

Comm. Redmon: Ms. Shafer, when you do the budget presentation, maybe we can figure out how we can add more SACs. (Inaudible) Thank you for your presentation.

Mr. Dalton Price: Good evening, Commissioners. When I sent my presentation to Cheryl today, I left out a slide with numbers on it. She did send it to all the Board members. You can also get it after the presentation. We'll go over the numbers for weapons, vandalism and violence in the school district. John F. Kennedy High School had three possessions, a knife and one possession of a handgun. Eastside High School had six possessions of a knife. Rosa Parks had one possession of a taser. School No. 10 had one possession of a knife. Alonzo "Tambua" Moody Academy had

damage to property by a student. John F. Kennedy had damage to property. A student set a trash can on fire. John F. Kennedy also had a false alarm. A student pulled a fire alarm. John F. Kennedy had one student who stole a device from another student. John F. Kennedy had one unwanted sexual contact, one threat of simple assault made towards a staff member, seven assaults on students, and nine fights with student-on-student. Eastside High School had two threats from a student to a staff member. Alonzo "Tambua" Moody Academy had one assault on a staff member. Rosa Parks had two threats by a student to another student. Dr. Frank Napier had one criminal threat by a student to the entire building. School No. 24 had two threats of criminal activity. A student made a threat towards the building. School No. 24 had one unwanted sexual contact. This was a total of 44 incidents. Are there any questions?

Comm. Hodges: Is this a stable number? What's the trend?

Mr. Price: Compared to last year this time? I didn't get those numbers. The issue we had with the handgun; I don't know if last year we had any. The metal detectors are helping to get devices caught before they enter the building. I have to look at those numbers. I can say the numbers of fights, especially at John F. Kennedy, are down compared to last year. We have some programs to get students to understand that this is not the way to go. We've brought parents in. We've had students come to a Saturday program. Those students benefited because the City of Paterson did a large concert at International High School and those students got to go backstage and see some of the entertainers because they participated in the program. Those students are still not getting in trouble at the high school level.

Comm. Hodges: That's good. Thank you.

Comm. Gonzalez: I heard you say you didn't include the numbers on this report. Why?

Mr. Price: When I sent the email to Cheryl today, I did not send the slide. When I realized, I sent it to her, and she did send it to the Board.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: (Inaudible)

Mr. Price: To some extent.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: (Inaudible)

Mr. Price: Absolutely.

Comm. Gonzalez: I had a question with reference to the partnership between Passaic County Sheriff's Department and Paterson Police Department.

Mr. Price: What's the question?

Comm. Gonzalez: The amount of individuals who are supposed to be patrolling around Eastside.

Mr. Price: They didn't give us a number. We asked them to give us whatever they can spare and that's what they give. If we get locked into a number, I'll get it to you.

Comm. Gonzalez: Do you know if they have anyone thus far?

Mr. Price: The Sheriff's Department did.

Comm. Gonzalez: Different times, same time?

Mr. Price: We have a window from 2:00 to 4:00. At 1:00, the Sheriff's Department also has people at the school.

Ms. Nicole Payne: Good evening, Commissioners, Board, and cabinet members. Good to see you all. My SSDS is a little bit more extensive. There was a request to go over what HIB is so I'm going to give you a little bit more than just numbers this evening. For some of you who don't know, around 2011 the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights came out. It was established to prevent, record, investigate, and respond to incidents of HIB. We want to reduce the risk of death by suicide amongst our students and also create a positive culture and climate in the schools. We also want to be able to document and look at that data and come up with intentional strategic plans to make sure that our school climates and safety are paramount. What is HIB? What is harassment, intimidation, and bullying? It could be any gesture, written, verbal, physical act, or electronic communication (cyberbullying). It can happen once or multiple times. It could take place on school property, any school-sponsored event, on the bus, or off school grounds. When we have things that happen in the community, it does impact school because it does involve our children. Sometimes parents think it didn't happen in the school, but it impacts us every day at the school level. It's reasonably perceived as being motivated by a characteristic. Those motivating characteristics must be present in order to have a valid case of HIB. Whether it's race, color, religion, you have to see all those characteristics and then the distinguishing characteristics. Distinguishing characteristics can get a little broad and I'll go over that in a second. We need the criteria that I just listed and then one of the others. Did the child feel fearful? Was there physical or emotional harm done to the student? It had the effect of insulting or demeaning a student or group. It created a hostile educational environment, interfering with the student's education. When kids don't want to come to school or go to lunch, or when they're not learning in class, these are symptoms of a hostile educational environment. I will provide a little clarification on gesture or act. Substantially interferes with the orderly operation. We must also understand that disruptions don't always occur the same way. Sometimes it can be dramatic. It could be an explosion. It could be something that's going on in the school. Or it could be a subtle change in the child's behavior. Maybe they're more fearful. They don't want to go to lunch. That may not manifest itself the same way as if you see children taunting one another, someone ridiculing, or someone putting something up on their social media. It needs to be more than just a momentary annoyance. Somebody kicking your chair may not necessarily mean that it's bullying. We must be able to identify that. We have anti-bullying specialists in all the schools. They take care of the investigations in conjunction with the principal, and it's recorded accordingly. A distinguishing characteristic can be broadly interpreted. If a child is a vegan, they have lice, the quiet kid, the new kid, or are parents, all of those things could be identified as a distinguishing characteristic. It may not be race, color, or creed. It could be something that distinguishes that child from other children. These are the different types of harassment and bullying. When kids get these little chat rooms together and they're talking about each other and rating and liking each other, that is a form of bullying. Betrayal of confidential information - many times young people have friendships. Someone falls out with another person, and they share personal information against that person. That child feels low, or they're ridiculed. Property damage - some of the other ones we're much more familiar with. Impersonating someone with a speech impediment or a physical disability, these are all different types of harassment and bullying. One of the big things is understanding the difference between a conflict and actions of bullying. A lot of times folks think that a situation may be bullying because there is a fight or



disagreement, but that's why we need to investigate and go deeper to find out what is really happening. A conflict is a violation of the student code of conduct. It's not that it won't be addressed, but it may not rise to the level of actually being harassment, intimidation, and bullying. A conflict is a disagreement between two people. They're expressing their sides. There's not an imbalance of power. Typically, it can be resolved. These are the things that we look for when we look at conflict versus bullying. This is a chart to give you an idea about the differences between conflict and bullying. We share this information with our parents. It can also be emphasized more because of the climate and things that are going on right now in the community. We need to really be on top of it and differentiate between conflict and bullying. These are a couple of scenarios that may come. This will show you the difference between conflict and bullying. The first scenario talks about a young lady who sees a boy from her class. She talks to the boy from her class because he keeps leering and staring at her and makes her feel uncomfortable. She tells him. He does not stop, even when she finally says something. That would be an example of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. It's continuing. The child feels uncomfortable. She's trying to tell this young man to stop. Ayanna says that Brianna gave her a mean face during recess and called her a friend stealer because their mutual friend sat next to Ayanna. That situation is a conflict. There's an emotional piece to that. She feels left out, but no one is specifically keeping her out of the situation because of something or a distinguishing characteristic for that child. This is one of the ones that may come up and a parent may say their child is being bullied. We work with the children and family and provide some social skills as well for that student and try to give them other tools. That's what it is as well, providing our students with the tools to navigate as well as the school also providing them with a safe learning environment. This one has to do with cyberbullying. Somebody posted a meme of another child. The child felt distressed once he saw this. He verbalizes it to his parent and doesn't feel comfortable coming to school. That would be an incident of HIB. There are a couple others. I'm not going to go through them, but I put that in there just so you can get an idea of some scenarios. The last one was a real case in New Jersey a few years ago. A student harassed another student, and the child was hit in the face. That wasn't the bullying part. The bullying part began when he continued to get teased about being hit by a girl. It even went so far as the teacher saying, "How does it feel to be hit by a girl?" That actually happened in New Jersey and it was found to be an HIB case. Not because of the physical piece, but because of the constant teasing about the event that had occurred. There is some new legislation on the books that has referred to Mallory's Law. Unfortunately, a 12-year-old young lady in 2017 died by suicide as a result of relentless bullying online and in middle school and what I can gather is that the school district did their due diligence. They did everything they were supposed to do, but it still continued despite all their efforts. The family pushed forward to have legislation to pull parents in. Even though we pull in parents, sometimes parents have to be much more involved in getting the child who is causing the harm to stop. The law now says that parents who have not shown a reasonable effort to work with the child who is causing the harm can face litigation, fines, and can be sent to classes themselves. The state is really ramping up because of the deaths that are happening with our young people because of the trauma that's being caused by harassment, intimidation, and bullying. There's also new legislation around reporting. There's a preliminary determination. Principals can look at a situation, get information, and make a preliminary determination not to investigate. They can say this doesn't meet the threshold and they're not going to investigate. The law now says that principals have to be much more explicit about expressing that. It's not somewhere in somebody's notebook, but it's actually documented. It has to be sent to the Superintendent before it can be approved. The Superintendent can say at that point that it needs to be investigated. There is much more law and legislation around this preliminary determination. As the Anti Bullying Coordinator, I strongly advise, influence,

and tell folks let's not do preliminary determination. It's well within your right, but let's take it to the next step forward. If we do the investigation, whatever we find, even though it's in the law, we have Board policy that says this can happen. I really try to encourage the practice of doing the investigation although you have the right not to. Further, this is now getting reported to the state. Every preliminary determination that we make not to investigate will be reported at the end of the school year to this Board and to the state. The state will be monitoring. I'm sure that it has a lot to do with folks saying they made a preliminary determination and there's no record or evidence. We want to just make sure we tighten up our monitoring and how we're working with these cases. As we can see with the young lady in Ocean County, it's serious. Also, around new legislation we're supposed to report immediately to local law enforcement or the county prosecutor's office if we believe that a bias-related act is going to happen. If somebody finds out, they're supposed to contact the prosecutor's office and local law enforcement. If we know that a group is going to be targeted, we need to let them know immediately. A bias-related act is similar to the HIB distinguishing of protective classes. It may not rise to the level of a crime, but we have to take this first step as a school community and report it directly to those offices. Cyber-harassment is another part of the new law. Any minor under 16, along with their parent or guardian, must attend class to reduce the tendencies toward such behavior of harassment, intimidation, and bullying. We can say to parents they need to go take the class with their child because this continues to happen. They also have put in a piece in which parents can now be fined for the first offense and up to \$500 for subsequent offenses. As you can see in the last bullet, we can hold parents liable in a civil action if they demonstrate willful or wonton disregard for that minor. That goes back to what I was saying earlier. We need everybody involved. We recommend Perform Care, mental health, and different things for the student that is causing the harm and the student that is being harmed. We can't just treat the students that are being harmed. We also have to work with the ones causing the harm to get to the root so they can stop. We keep records the same way that we have been recording student records, but on the third offense an intervention plan must be created. We're talking about the third offense from kindergarten through 12. It's not three offenses in a year. It's your whole school career. Luckily, we have a great program called Hibster which reports all this digitally. T.J. Best got the program many moons ago. I think you've had it 10 years now. It catalogs and keeps all that data. You can run a report and find out if any student has been on a third offense. When you enter the child's name, it self-populates and says this is the student's second or third offense. We have to come up with an intervention plan. Of course, if it's a special needs student, we align that with the IEP that may already be in place. Again, the intention in all of this new legislation is to beef up what we're doing for our kids and being able to document it. I thought I was going to be able to have a nice little computer right here to show you the website, but if you go to the district website on the front page at the top it says, 'Report Bullying.' When you click on that, it will take you to the HIB platform where you can enter all this data. Anyone can enter the data into the platform. There are new forms that came out, but the Hibster program populates that information onto that form. Any parent can come to this, click continue, and begin to enter this information. It asks you if you're a staff member or family member. When you click it, there's a drop-down menu where you can select a school. Parents can say what's going on. They can click a specific incident. We have a way and a tool for parents to be able to inform us. When it comes from the outside, it comes to me or goes directly to the school. Then I reroute it to the school. We have 10 days to do the investigation. If it happens to go longer, we need to make note of it. I just wanted to let you know that there is a place for parents to go to report immediately. It doesn't have to be parents. It can be local education or agency members meeting with staff. This is readily available. This is a new form that came out. When you enter that information online, this form fills out all the fields. Within the Hibster platform, this is where we talked about the

preliminary determination. That's even in the program. If principals are going to do that, they have to come to this area. All the principals have been trained, so they know where to go. Again, I strongly advise not to do the preliminary determination. This is just another example of that form. When we do it electronically, it populates this way and we can keep a hard copy of that information. This will be used at the end of the year when we report how many of those happened. Just to take you through the steps for the HIB investigation, it's reported to the anti-bullying specialist or the principal by anyone in the system. If parents tell a staff member that staff member should be entering it. You can tell a parent to enter it, but if you're already receiving the information, let's just help out parents and put this information in for them. The investigation must be completed within 10 days. All parents and guardians are informed then. Whether you're the harmer or the harmed, everyone is informed. All students are interviewed as well as witnesses. We upload the evidence into Hibster. Action can be taken prior to completion of the investigation. If there was a fight and we're claiming that it was HIB, we're going to deal with the fight first and we're going to look at the student code of conduct to see if it met that threshold. We can take those actions prior to. We can separate the kids and put them in different homerooms. A determination of HIB can come afterwards. We want to deal with the immediate issue at hand. The school will inform the parent of the outcome based on school findings. That part is key and we need to let parents know at the school level. At the end of the month, you guys get all the incidents and then you actually vote to affirm or reject the findings. We'd like to let parents know at the school level this is founded or unfounded, but it still needs to go before the Board. They have the right to appeal if they're not happy with the determination. The report is sent to the assistant superintendent and then to the chief school administrator to create the report. If the Board of Education votes to affirm, reject, or modify the chief school administrator's decision, we send out a letter from our office within five days of the Board meeting. Within 60 days a parent can request a hearing before the Board to appeal the decision. Parents have recourse. If they don't like one decision, they can go to the OEL. Parents do have recourse if they're not satisfied with the outcome. There's an HIB resource guide online. Back in 2020, Ms. Shafer in conjunction with a lot of departments in the district posted a 200-page resource guide. It has a plethora of information, tools, and resources located within that pamphlet. It's available digitally as well as manually. That's about HIB, the process and the investigations. Now we'll move into the numbers. Each year we do this. We have detailed a number of HIB investigations conducted, whether they were founded or unfounded, trainings, and programs. Each school submits this to us. We upload it into the NJDOE. For September through December, there were 165 incidents reported. 44% were founded and 56% unfounded. That's pretty consistent. We're usually at around 45% or 55% over the years. The top number is where we were last year. As you can see, there's been an uptick in overall incidents, founded and unfounded. This is a breakdown according to unit. Certain units are bigger than others. The numbers are going to be bigger naturally because you have more opportunities. Unit I includes John F. Kennedy, P-Tech, Paterson STEAM, Rosa Parks, School No. 21, and School No. 18. Those are big schools as well. This is a two-year comparison of where we were with Unit I. The numbers dropped. I do believe it's the same composition of schools. This is Unit III. Knowing the schools that are involved there and in Unit III, the numbers went up. Unit IV, these are some of our smaller schools. In Unit IV, the numbers have increased. Unit V, we can see an uptick from this time last year. As a part of this process, schools must identify the trainings and programs that they have instituted during the school year. They are supposed to have an impact on the school culture and climate in a way that creates a positive culture and climate and also equips staff, students, and stakeholders to deal with things that may come up during the course of the school year. These are some trainings that have taken place for this school year. We also use the ON-Spire district training module. We do a lot of things in person or on

the Google Meet platform. Bystander Programs are important to work with young people to combat harassment, intimidation, and bullying. These are different programs that have been implemented within the school. I know that PBSIS was an initiative from 2012-2013, but there are schools that are still using that as a resource. We talked about the social emotional learning teams, Restorative Circles, and safety patrol programs in elementary schools where students become safety patrol partners and it really fosters leadership. We see a lot of boys and girls groups going. The schools are really trying to address positive school climate and cultures through a myriad of different programs and trainings. As part of some of the ideas that the Board wanted to see and Ms. Olson was talking about, we're looking at doing student-created videos. This is just a synopsis of the two types of videos. We want to make a video that is a call to action for students. We'd use high school students from Rosa Parks, John F. Kennedy, YES, and some middle school students. The video would highlight these three bullets - bullying shouldn't happen to anyone, where to go to get help, and be an Up-Stander. What's the scenario? It has much more to do with enacting scenarios for students to act out and for us to be able to identify HIB and explain it. This is a production schedule that I came up with. This is what will be happening each month as we work toward making the final project. We want to have the final presentation for the June 7 Board workshop. We want to have the students drive this. We will help give them the goals, but we really want them to drive that. Students are acting, writing, directing, and editing. It's going to take a great collaboration between all these schools, but I think it will be a great opportunity. This year we can submit to the All-American High School Film Festival. They have a 30-60 second PSA entry. We'd like to enter into that, as well as the 2024 Passaic County Film Festival. I'm going to work on a parent HIB video to post on the district website to go over what I've gone over with you and to keep parents engaged. Those are the topics that I will go over. Those are the sections I will be working on. I would hope that by the April workshop I will be able to present something ready then and for back-to-school night. That's the end of my presentation. Are there any questions?

Comm. Hodges: I notice that we're pushing student-created videos, which I'm very happy about. Are there regular programs being broadcast over at Kennedy via the studio? Are the students who are taking classes putting on programs regularly throughout the building?

Ms. Shafer: Yes.

Comm. Hodges: So you can go up there and see some student work throughout the building?

Ms. Shafer: Yes.

Comm. Hodges: Then this makes sense. Thank you.

Comm. Simmons: You mentioned an action being taken prior to the completion of an investigation if there is a violation of the student code of conduct. How often does that happen?

Ms. Payne: We see it more in physical altercations or inappropriate sexual contact. In those instances, we want to separate students and deal with it accordingly, but maybe 40% of the time.

Comm. Simmons: How often do we see action taken during the investigation where students are suspended or placed on bedside?

Ms. Payne: That's what would happen. Especially when we have fights, the person who started it would typically be the ones who are suspended. If there's a disciplinary hearing that comes out of it, there are different levels of that.

Comm. Simmons: The investigation has to be completed within 10 days. Is there a disciplinary hearing within the 10 days? Is it extended beyond those 10 days?

Ms. Payne: In practice, it should happen within the 10 days. There's time to receive paperwork and schedule availability. I do all the disciplinary hearings from all the schools in the district, so we need to make sure there's availability for that. If we have a large melee with eight kids involved, I have to do eight separate disciplinary hearings because every child receives their own due process. As much as possible we try to expedite and get it within that window.

Comm. Simmons: If you're the only person who does disciplinary hearings, can other people be trained to conduct those hearings?

Ms. Payne: I believe so.

Comm. Simmons: If because of availability the investigation extends beyond 10 days and the student is on bedside for those 10 days, then there might be a penalty.

Ms. Payne: Let me differentiate. The disciplinary hearing would be like a Category III, which may not even be HIB. There are two different things. A number of disciplinary hearings don't necessarily fall within HIB.

Comm. Simmons: If we can expedite those, it is easier to have others to conduct those hearings?

Ms. Payne: I think so. We have to be very specific because we would want it to be the same lens and perspective and fairness.

Ms. Shafer: After I took a look at what happened with some of the situations we talked about, the paperwork being filled out to request a disciplinary hearing took too long, even weeks. I just put something out now that says if you're requesting a disciplinary hearing, you have 48 hours to get the paperwork in. The students then are on bedside for a long period time. Bedside is from 3:00 to 5:00 after school. It gives those kids the full day to hang out and get in trouble. We saw that happen. I put it out that you have to request the hearing within 48 hours and then you have three to five days to get a disciplinary hearing done. We can't have kids hanging out weeks because we're waiting for paperwork. That's unacceptable and that's where we are right now.

Comm. Hodges: Is expulsion a possible consequence?

Ms. Shafer: Yes, but it depends on the infraction.

Comm. Hodges: What is the provision for their educational training if that happens?

Ms. Shafer: There will be a hearing with the Board. We would still have to provide them with an education. That would be an out-of-district placement. That could be administrative bedside, but again, bedside is two hours after school. There's no way around that because we can't free up teachers during the regular school day to do bedside.

Comm. Hodges: So that's inherently an additional cost. If there's a referral, are they assigned out-of-district somewhere outside the city?

Ms. Shafer: Yes.

Comm. McCall: When we know a child has a behavioral problem and this surrounding is not good for them, we have some referral programs within the district that they can go to. How soon do we determine that? What do we do when those programs are full? What is the second recourse? For example, say a child is referred to one of our local programs that provide behavioral assistance, but that school is full. We know this other child is not a good fit for the program he or she is in, what do we do with that child?

Ms. Shafer: We have to keep in mind that our alternate high school was created for a certain type of student. That was the student that was in trouble with the law at some point and needed to come back to school. At some point, they would be returned back to their school. Some find out when they go to the alternative school, they want to stay there. Over the past couple of weeks, those students are not the type of students that we are going to put in the alternative school. The alternative school is also for students with behavioral problems. If we start rolling it out, just within a two-week period we had close to 10 students involved in shootings, stabbings, and guns. They make videos with guns. We don't put those students in the alternative school because they stole somebody's phone or got into a couple of fights. Those are two different things. Parents would say they don't want their kids there because of the elements involved. We have to be very careful with the students that we place in the alternative high schools. Those students over the past couple of weeks are having disciplinary hearings and have to go to a program out-of-district. The behaviors that they're engaging in, our alternative school is not equipped to deal with that. They need to go to a program that's equipped to handle that type of behavior.

Ms. Payne: The alternative school also services students who are falling behind academically. I don't know if some of you remember, there used to be a few alternative schools. Due to budget, we now have one. Now we have to figure out how to accommodate students. Students who would typically fit the Silk City kid that was cutting class but not stealing anything, we don't have those opportunities. Now we just have one location. Sometimes it becomes a shell game trying to find appropriate placements for students. As Ms. Shafer indicated, we're trying to push back on some kids and have other resources.

Comm. Hodges: How do you design that course of training and for how long?

Ms. Payne: Every time a student enters, they have an individualized educational plan. Based upon what they were taking at whatever high school they were at; we replicate that at the school. The other part is that at Al Moody Academy we have a self-management class which works with the students' social-emotional learning as well. We put that plan together when the student enters. They do an orientation process. We find out more about the student. The alternative application is actually, not just the academic record, but teacher comment so that we can get an idea of what the student is able to do, what they're capable of doing, and how they are in class. We monitor that behavior and at the end of the year, if they're not graduating as a 12<sup>th</sup> grader, I review all the students, also looking at recommendations. If you've made certain criteria such as behavior, academics, and attendance, we will be able to move them back into their school of origin. There are times when we have students who can return back to their school of origin, and they don't want to leave. They don't want to leave because they're

seeing what they need in the smaller environment where they're being nurtured, they're getting the attention, and the class sizes are smaller. It's a more structured environment. That's what happens as well.

Comm. McCall: How many students are we currently serving at that facility?

Ms. Payne: 175. That includes special education as well.

Comm. Hodges: What happens if there are students in the middle schools? Where do they go?

Ms. Payne: We try to provide resources within those schools. I know that we're going to have a conversation about some other things. We try to find resources in the school or transfer a child to another elementary school within the district, with the success plan for that student. There is no alternative middle school option.

Ms. Shafer: I have a meeting scheduled next week to put a plan together for an alternative middle school. I was able to speak to two developers from Paterson who are able to give us space at no cost in a new building. It's at Ellison and Mill Street where they're developing a senior citizen complex. They have offered to give us space. We're going to develop a plan. They're going to be done in October so we're planning to open up an alternative middle school. Once we put the plan together, we'll bring that to the Board.

### **Budget Update**

Mr. Richard Matthews: Good evening, Commissioners. Tonight, is a budget update. There's no presentation, but I'm going to go through where we are with the budget. Last month we went through the gap review, and we had mentioned that the Governor's address was at the end of February and we would be getting our state aid come March 1. We got our state aid last week. That number came in at \$34,356,880. I remember last year at this time we had received \$18 million and that was disappointing. We started working with legislators and people in the community to touch base with Trenton and I feel that has helped us out this year. We feel some of this stuff is not just \$2, but we have relationships with people who told our story. We received \$34 million and I'm very happy with that number. We're still trying to balance out the budget. Today we received some more news that we want to add some SACs to the budget. The budget team has met with central office, k-8 schools, adult schools, and high schools. There are 103 different call centers that we met with. We are at a point now of finalizing the budget. We're going to start keying in all the information that has to go to the DOE software. Our plan is to have you guys review the budget next Monday or Tuesday. By next Wednesday night, we're supposed to have a tentative budget to the Board. That budget will have to be balanced before it goes to the county. It has to go to the county for approval no later than Monday, March 30. The county gets a month to review the budget and have it back to us no later than April 20. We have a couple of days for a public hearing before final adoption no later than May 5. We can have that public hearing before, but that's the last possible date. Since I last met with you, we had three community forums last week. We had one on Tuesday with the PTO, on Wednesday with International in-person and hybrid, and one last Thursday at Eastside High School also in-person and hybrid. We were able to take questions from people online and in the audience. The turf field at Eastside High School was brought up by the community. That's also in our priorities. Revenues from Hinchliffe Stadium are not in our budget, but a major topic of discussion. Learning loss was another topic and is in our budget priorities. Funding for security because kids don't feel safe so that's also something

we're doing. Mr. Price is trying to beef up the amount of people that we have on our rolls and not be as dependent on our contracted vendor. Arrow Security has had some challenges as far as staffing. Cost of transportation - for the most part we have all our routes filled. Transportation costs are going up. It's an issue of supply and demand. Drivers are in big demand and the price of drivers is going up. The price for fuel, maintenance and repairs has risen drastically over the last couple of years by more than 20%. Another thing that came up in all the forums was bilingual population and education. That is also a budget priority. As I said to you at the last meeting, our plan for bilingual was to phase it in over a couple of years. The code dictates that as you add 20 people of a certain language, you have to add staffing for that. There's no way to project what that number is year-to-year. We've come up with some guesses talking to our people in the district. We're probably going to stack that number around 15 additional staff members. Church Street came up. That's something that we're still working on. We're having a challenge with our owner at 90 Delaware. We're looking to do an RFP to get a real estate broker. Those are some of the major takeaways from the last meeting. We also had Councilman Velez speak on behalf of the city regarding requesting a meeting with them to go through the budget and some of our tax stuff. He was there to talk about that. What's in the budget? As I said earlier, last month when I came to you I addressed learning loss. These items are in the budget - staffing for bilingual, expanding the robotics team, reading at grade level, expanding sports, and Urban Leadership. On the operations side, concession stand at Bauerle Field, the field turf at Eastside High School. They have to go across Market Street to Bauerle Field so now we're going to be able to keep them on the campus side and have some of their physical education happening on campus. Blacktops at Eastside High School and Kennedy High School - we're getting more blacktop requests. We just got one today for School No. 28 because that blacktop there is in bad shape. Between you and myself we have to figure out something regarding the blacktops. We do have Eastside High School and John F. Kennedy. Over the last three years we have increased staffing in facilities. One of the things we have to do is support Mr. Hill. We're going to do some site improvement at MLK. We're looking to do some environmental abatement. Over the last couple of years, we've been getting a lot of push for windows, doors, and air conditioning. Mr. Price has a plan to address adding more Board guards to the budget, reducing our dependency on the vendor. SACs will be added. We're going to work on that tomorrow morning. Technology is adding staff. SPED is adding staff as well. Over the last couple of years, we haven't reduced staff. We've increased staff as we needed it. Everybody has been getting incremental increases as we can year over year. Sometimes you don't get what you want. You may want five or six positions, but you get two or three. I keep watching the vacancies. People are asking for positions. If they're not being filled, then we have to make some changes or reclassify the positions. We have to keep monitoring our PCR, that's where all our positions are. That's where most of the money in the budget goes into. That's \$265 million of salaries. Our budget for this year is \$650 million. Salaries are the biggest part of our budget. That's where we have a lot of the room to maneuver and make things happen, like taking on these new SACs. Next week you'll have the tentative budget, or the preliminary budget. When you see that budget next week, you're going to see the operating budget around \$650 million. Then you're going to see some of our grant money, which we have to give to you at 85%. We're going to take you from the gap and show you how we closed the gap. We got \$34 million in state aid. This is the cost of this. We'll show you a bridge of how we closed the gap. That's my update. Are there any questions?

Comm. Redmon: It would be nice if we got a response from the City Council President in writing or email. I'm glad that Councilman Velez did speak about the meeting that we've been requesting in regards to the budget. We still haven't gotten a response from the City Council members. We're still doing our due diligence to make sure that the



public understands our budget process. We're being proactive so that the community knows how things are working in the school district and how it's going to affect their tax dollars.

Comm. Hodges: Was Mr. Velez there to represent the City Council? Or was he there as an individual?

Mr. Matthews: It's my opinion he was representing the fifth ward and as a parent. Other people running for fifth ward council were there as well. They all came to the microphone and spoke. The Eastside PTO was very good. We got a lot of feedback from parents. It was great.

Comm. Simmons: There was misinformation on one of the forums about the charter schools and PCTI. Can you explain that?

Mr. Matthews: It was asked of me if we get any money back from PCTI. On a year-to-year basis we get money back from PCTI depending on how many kids come back to the district. It's not really in a year. It's after the July Board meeting of the following year. If they come back in January or December, that summer of the succeeding fiscal year we're getting that money back from them. Last year we got back \$135,000 around July/August. We got the money back in August. Charter schools give us a midyear adjustment. The charter schools get what we get from the state. Our number for 2023-2024 is \$123 million. We put that number in our budget. Some districts budget \$110 million because of their midyear adjustment. We never pay less than our original number. Our number never goes down for charter schools. I've been here for five years, and we've never gotten money back from charter schools. We've gotten money back from PCTI, but never from charter schools. I've never stood before you and said we got money from charter schools. As the enrollment changes during midyear, they increase our number. Every presentation for fund balance always says midyear adjustment. That number that we give you is \$123 million, but we're going to end up paying \$123 million plus another number because there's going to be another kid or two going to the charter schools. We always pay more than the budgeted number. With PCTI, we get money back based on who's coming back to the district.

Comm. Simmons: The misinformation was that we receive money back from charter schools. I know that we don't, but I needed the BA to explain that. I know that we receive money back from PCTI the following year, but never from charter schools. That is misinformation.

Comm. Freeman: I just need to be clear on what I'm hearing. If money comes back from PCTI and the charter schools are already taking a lot of our money, they send the children back and we don't get the money back? Do we receive any money the following year?

Mr. Matthews: We always end up getting more kids going to charter schools than coming back. That's why it's called a midyear adjustment. Every year in the fund balance report I count it as a challenge to our budget. The number always goes up with charter schools and I call it the midyear adjustment. I never put it for PCTI because the number always goes down.

Comm. Freeman: I need a clarification on Councilman Velez? You said he was there acting on behalf of the City Council?

Mr. Matthews: He was there as councilperson and parent.

Comm. Freeman: Madam President, we need to send another hand delivered letter to the City Council. We need to make them understand that this meeting needs to happen. I'm going to start letting the community know who's holding us up. If we put pressure on, that's the only way it's going to get done. As long as we sit here and keep sending letters asking them for a meeting, the Council President should be responding, not Luis Velez. I think it's disrespectful for Luis to take on that role. That's not his role. He's not the Council President. I'm requesting that we hand deliver another letter. I'm going to go to social media and let the community know.

Comm. Hodges: I'm sorry the councilman is not here tonight because there are a number of things I'd like to discuss. There's a commercial on television about charter schools. In there was Congressman Pascrell, the Mayor, Mr. Velez, Mr. Mendez, Ms. Davila, and somebody else. We're spending \$123 million for charter schools. The City Council sold the Leder Dye property for \$7 million. They had an offer for \$5 million to a business, but they sold it to a charter school forming company which means the property goes off the tax roll. They no longer get a dime off that property. They could have sold it to a business, which would have given them income for years. Instead, they're angry at us because we raised school taxes for Paterson children, which we haven't done in the last five or six years. For 21.6 years before that we didn't raise it a dime. They're out there supporting charter schools that are taking 20% of our budget, and that's a problem. They don't want to talk to us about it because if they had, we could have advised them how to do some different management of tax ratables in their city. This would help us all out because we're all taxpayers here. I'm concerned that this district took a vote two years ago on whether to challenge any new charter schools and we decided to be neutral.

Comm. Redmon: We did not take a vote. There was a consensus.

Comm. Hodges: We achieved a consensus. Tonight, I want to see whether that consensus holds. We need to be rather aggressive in stopping that number from going up. We received \$18 million last year in our budget and it went to charter schools. It didn't go to us. It all went to charter schools. I think that we need to be pushing back on the opening of new charter schools in our city and we're not doing that now. There are other districts throughout the state which push back. I spoke to the assemblyman that was here and raised that issue with him. I said we can't sustain this. Next year it could be another \$20 million or more. I'm not saying anything about stopping the charter schools that are open now. They're here. New charter schools are opening and taking money out of our district. We need to be pushing back against that. Other district do it and we need to. If we don't, we're going to look like Jersey City where a majority of their students go to charter schools. And it's a question of whether or not they're performing better than we are. We have more services. We have special education students. We take their troubled kids. We can't get rid of them. In the interest of our students, we need to be pushing back against new charter schools opening. We need to send letters to our representatives, the Governor, and the Commissioner of Education. We have a city here that's already depressed that they're funding, along with the municipal budget. But then you're taking money out of our budget to fund new operations, which is a problem for us. Unless they hear it from us, it will not stop. Madam Chair, I'd like to have a motion to see whether we want to change that consensus and see what the vote is at this particular meeting.

Comm. Redmon: We need a motion and a second in order for that to happen. It was a consensus that we stay neutral on that issue. We can have Cheryl poll the Board for a consensus on the charter schools. Once we get that back, we can go from there. We

also have to find out from the state regarding opening of new charter schools. We have to make sure that we send a letter asking for no new charter schools or the expansion of charters that exist now. We need to clarify what we're asking for.

Comm. Hodges: I'm asking for no new charter schools. I think expansion is a problem too, but I want to at least stop new charter schools.

Comm. Redmon: You're asking about the new charter schools that are being presented to the City of Paterson.

Comm. Hodges: That's what I'm asking for. Is it the Board's opinion to change the motion?

Comm. Redmon: I'm taking the direction. I just need to know what you're asking.

Comm. Hodges: I'll start with new charter schools.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: (Inaudible)

Comm. McCall: PCTI returns money when they return students?

Mr. Matthews: Yes, and to add to that, they also have reduced their tuition to us for this year. PCTI for the 2021-2022 budget was \$20 million. For 2022-2023, it was \$18.7 million. They gave us a reduction on their tuition rate for this year's budget. They did the same thing for 2023-2024.

Comm. McCall: I get that and I'm very grateful. My concern is that we have children that go to a charter school and if that child doesn't fit in or is not in the right setting, we get that child back, but the money doesn't follow the child.

Mr. Matthews: Let me clarify.

Comm. McCall: What I've heard was that Tech returns a kid back with their money. I also heard that our charter schools will return the children, but you're not getting anything. In the midyear report, you indicate a difference because now that child is back in our district. Somebody help me understand it, because maybe I'm not hearing it.

Comm. Simmons: In the beginning we budget \$123 million. Unlike PCTI, in the midyear we end up paying more to the charter schools because more students are going to there. Even if a student comes back, there's really no effect because they're still leaving. I won't say it balances itself out, but because those students are going you don't necessarily see money coming back.

Mr. Matthews: That's it. During the midyear adjustment, our number is higher because more kids went than came back.

Ms. Shafer: Tech caps their number. They say we can have 'x' amount of general education kids and 'x' amount of special education kids. These are the seats, and we have to pay 'x' amount of money. That's what we pay. They don't take more kids than that. On the charter school side, they say we owe them \$123 million, and they don't tell us how many seats. As the year rolls on, more kids go to the charter schools than \$123 million. Five kids may have been sent back, but because they took more, now we owe more money even though five came back. They don't have a cap.

Comm. McCall: There has to be a cap somewhere. I can't imagine a school being open and them not knowing their own enrollment. Can someone help me with that?

Mr. Matthews: We're approved for a certain number of seats per charter school.

Comm. Redmon: That's \$125 million for all the charter schools in the City of Paterson. It's not one single school. The enrollment is for all the students that come under the charter. Midyear if we happen to get four or five students back, that money still stays with them because we still have an influx of students leaving midyear. If I come back and 15 go back out, we still owe them for an additional eight or nine students.

Comm. McCall: They all get capped, right?

Comm. Simmons: The difference is PCTI is one school, so those seats are capped. We have several different charter schools. Wherever they go, more students are leaving than are returning. That number doesn't go down. It goes up.

Comm. McCall: When we're budgeting for charter schools, if the charter says that their building can accommodate 150 kids and we already have the money for that, then throughout the entire enrollment for those students, even if they move around within charters schools or they come back to us and another kids goes back out, that budget should still cap that number of children. Am I right?

Comm. Simmons: No. We budget \$125 million. That doesn't mean those charter schools don't have more space. Those schools may have space that additional students can be moved to, which means that number goes up. It's not capped for one school like PCTI. They're not taking any more. One school may not be taking any more, but the other schools may.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: (Inaudible)

Comm. Simmons: You also have to remember that a lot of schools apply for expansions, so they have slots.

Comm. Gonzalez: Point of clarification. I think we're all saying the same thing but looking at it differently. Every individual school has a cap. There is a cap. Let's say five students. If they're all \$150, then it's \$150 times five. That's the cap. However, what you're trying to explain is that not all students apply at the same level. Throughout the year you have some Paterson Public Schools kids going to any one of these schools. To your point, there is a cap. From my understanding, each individual school has a full enrollment. (Inaudible)

Comm. Freeman: Are we going to revisit the charter schools? There are some things on here we have to vote on tonight. I need to know if we're going to get that consensus before I vote on a particular item.

Comm. Redmon: The consensus will go to Cheryl once we reach our decision on only new charters.

Comm. Gonzalez: I request to postpone that vote for the simple fact that there's obviously a lot of confusion about charter schools and the process and the budgeting. I request that we have a session specifically on charters. Mr. Matthews can help facilitate that. If there are questions that Board members have, they can be answered

by yourself and others so that when we do take the vote, everyone is clear as to what is going on.

Comm. Redmon: He has to ask for a motion and a second in order for us to actually vote. We're asking for a consensus of the Board and after that we can have direction with regards to new charters. If we're doing a motion, I need a motion for the floor and a second. Comm. Gonzalez is asking for a postponement. If we do a postponement, it's fine. We're not going to have another presentation. Any person on this Board who has any information they're not clear on, they can write that down and send it to Cheryl. She will make sure every question is answered.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: Is this consensus for a letter?

Comm. Redmon: This is what we did two years ago.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: The consensus would be to fill out a survey that we are not in favor of new charter schools? Or sending a letter saying that Paterson Public Schools is not in favor of new charter schools? We already did a survey so I'm trying to figure out.

Comm. Redmon: We did a survey two years ago. Our consensus was to stay neutral. At that time, we were not fighting the building of new charter schools.

Comm. Freeman: We're new Board members. Two years ago, is different from 2023.

Comm. Redmon: We're asking for clarification on this survey. We have to find out if there's a new survey coming out regarding a letter being sent to the state.

Comm. Hodges: The district can take any position that it wants to regarding new charter schools. The problem is that we have been very silent about that. Other districts have said they don't want new charter schools opening up there because it harms their educational program. We have funding issues as it is and we are not in favor of having new charter schools. We want that to stop. You can all do that. Under state takeover it was heresy to do that. Certain people went around the superintendent to get that done. They were afraid to say no to the state.

Comm. Redmon: Just so we're clear what we're asking for, we're asking for a formal motion on the floor. We need a formal motion and also a second. Or you may want the consensus of the Board and we can do that with Cheryl.

Comm. D. Martinez: I'm going to repeat what I said at the I&P meeting. Comm. Hodges, I understand everything you're saying. At the end of the day, I feel that as a Board I don't think that we have a right to tell parents where they need to take their children. There's a bigger problem and there's so much that we can do as a Board. At the end of the day, it's the state that's approving this. It's our Commissioner of Education that's approving these new charter schools. I don't recall voting on expansion. We don't have a say if we're okay with this or not. There's no vote on that. Secondly, we have to do better as a district and as a Board to emphasize the programs that we have. The reason a lot of our parents and students are attracted to charter schools is because they think they offer more than Paterson Public Schools and also the convenience that charters offer. I'm a single parent. I work for a charter. My child goes to a charter school. I would want more than anything to have my child in a Paterson Public School. Unfortunately, my schedule doesn't coincide with the Paterson Public School District. Secondly, with this economy can I afford to provide

transportation to have my child picked up and dropped off? These are all things that we have to take into consideration. We need to be more solution-based because this is a bigger problem than just the Board taking a consensus or vote that we don't want any more charter schools or expansions. At the end of the day, parents are choosing because they want more options, and I don't feel comfortable telling a parent they can't bring their child to a charter school. That's communism. I wouldn't want someone telling me where I need to put my child. I'm their mother. I'm the one who's going to make the decision. We need to be more solution focused on how we're going to move our district forward and emphasize the resources that we have and the problem areas that we need to fix. We have addressed that in past executive sessions.

Comm. Hodges: You have every right as a school district to try to eliminate competition for scarce dollars. It's done throughout the state. People say they don't want charter schools because it affects their budget, programs, transportation, and their facilities. When charter schools open up and we spend 50% of our revenue for the cost of a child. 40% stay with the district. We don't get that back. That comes out of our budget. It limits our programming, the teachers that we can find, and how we can provide an education to our children in the district. You have every right to say you don't want charter schools coming here. We're trying to rebuild programs and you're competing with us, making it harder for us to do that. If the charter schools were working collaboratively with us and they were sharing programs, which they were supposed to do, it would be a different story. But you don't see that happening in the City of Paterson. Therefore, when I'm sitting back and watching what's happening, \$123 million and next year it will be \$140 or \$160 million. Those are real dollars coming out of our budget. I'm not telling the parents they can't send their children to a charter school. I'm not asking to stop what's going on now. I'm saying why bring more competition. What I don't want to see is what's happening in Jersey City where the majority of their students go to charter schools. Charter schools don't have a regular board of education like this that's responsible to people. They don't have any responsibility to programming like we are required by the state to do. They don't have that. I'm looking at that and I'm saying we're losing what's happening in our district and they're taking money and making it harder for us to perform. Do you know why we only have seven SACs? Because you have \$123 million out of your budget. We sat here and we had to ration nurses. You had to have nurses share buildings because of funding. I screamed about that. You had nurses going back and forth between buildings to handle cases of students who were in physical distress. Outrageous!

Comm. Redmon: Dr. Hodges, I don't mean to cut you off.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: I appreciate that this is a very important conversation to have, but we have gotten so far from this agenda. It's 9:00 p.m. and we have things to vote on and an executive session. It's important for us to have this conversation with each other, the community, and the administration. However, one comment took us very far from the business that we have to do. I do agree that this is very important, very educational and very informative for us as Board members, but more importantly for the community. Not that this is not important, but we do have an agenda and we do have an executive session. We do have attorneys waiting. We should create time to have this conversation for what we want to do.

Comm. Hodges: I'll hear that, but I'm going to request the motion.

Comm. Redmon: Are you requesting or putting forward a motion on the floor?

Comm. Hodges: I'm putting a formal motion on the floor to have the Board assume the position that we want to be antagonistic to the future opening of charter schools in the City of Paterson.

**It was moved by Comm. Hodges, seconded by Comm. Freeman that the Board assumes the position of being antagonistic to the future opening of charter schools in the City of Paterson. On roll call all members voted as follows:**

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: (Inaudible)

Comm. Redmon: I'm sorry. We're now in roll call.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: Is there a motion forward? Or is it just a stance?

Comm. Hodges: The Board can ask the Superintendent to submit a letter to the State Board of Education, the Governor, and assemblyman saying because we spend \$123 million in charter schools we want to go on record as saying we are opposed to future charter schools opening up in the City of Paterson.

Comm. Redmon: We have a motion in the floor that's been seconded. You have to either rescind this motion...

Comm. Hodges: I'm not asking for that. She asked what it means. It means that you're asking the Superintendent to...

Comm. Redmon: That's not what your motion stated, Dr. Hodges. Your motion stated that you wanted to take a stand against the expansion of new charter schools.

Comm. Hodges: I rescind my motion.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: Arguably, we can move forward with this. This is a pretty large issue and I know that we stumbled into this conversation. I think we'd all agree that this is probably a motion that the public would want to have notice of before you make this type of vote. It's not to say you legally can't move forward, but I'd be remiss if I didn't say... Realistically, we had no way of knowing this conversation would go here, but I do think it's of the magnitude and has the type of impact on the residents that... It is a legal, appropriate thing to vote on and I guess the more appropriate way to call this vote would be to direct the Superintendent to take a formal position moving forward that our stance is no to charter schools. I think that's what you're looking to do, but I have to caution that it's very significant to do without any public notice.

Comm. Hodges: Then I rescind my motion and I will speak to the Superintendent as to an effective approach to get this reaction that I'm seeking.

**It was moved by Comm. Hodges, seconded by Comm. Freeman that the motion be rescinded.**

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS AND SPECIAL SESSION ON POLICIES FOR SECOND READING**

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

## **RESOLUTIONS FOR A VOTE AT THE WORKSHOP MEETING**

### **Resolution No. 1**

Whereas, the Paterson Public School District approves the payment of bills and claims dated through March 8, 2023, beginning with check number 235791 and ending with check number 235832, in the amount of \$10,880,725.98, and direct deposit number beginning with 1621 and ending with 1633, along with a wire in the amount of \$8,000,000.00, for a total of \$18,880,725.98;

Be It Resolved, that each claim or demand has been fully itemized, verified and has been duly audited as required by law in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:19-2.

**It was moved by Comm. Castillo-Cruz, seconded by Comm. Simmons that Resolution No. 1 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.**

### **Paterson Board of Education Standing Abstentions**

#### Comm. Oshin Castillo-Cruz

- Self
- City of Paterson
- Transportation
- Downtown Special Improvement District
- Celebrate Paterson

#### Comm. Valerie Freeman

- Self
- Family

#### Comm. Eddie Gonzalez

- Self
- Family
- New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC)
- Community Charter School of Paterson

#### Comm. Jonathan Hodges

- Self
- City of Paterson

#### Comm. Dania Martinez

- Self
- City of Paterson
- Ilearn Schools
- Paterson Arts & Science Charter School



Comm. Manuel Martinez

- Self

Comm. Della McCall

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. Nakima Redmon

- Self
- Historic Preservation of the City of Paterson
- County of Passaic

Comm. Kenneth Simmons

- Self
- Family

**Resolution No. 2**

WHEREAS, on March 15, 2007, the State of New Jersey adopted P.L.2007, c.53, *An Act Concerning School District Accountability*, also known as Assembly Bill 5 (A5), and

WHEREAS, Bill A5, N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12(3)f, requires that conferences/workshops have prior approval by a majority of the full voting membership of the board of education, and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:11-12(2)s, an employee or member of the board of education who travels in violation of the school district's policy or this section shall be required to reimburse the school district in an amount equal to three times the cost associated with attending the event, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves attendance of conferences/workshops for the dates and amounts listed for staff members and/or Board members on the attached and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that final authorization for attendance at conferences/workshops will be confirmed at the time a purchase order is issued.

**CONFERENCE/WORKSHOP REQUESTS**

STAFF MEMBER	CONFERENCE	DATE	AMOUNT
Arthur Carpenter	Infinite Campus Interchange 2023	March 14-15, 2023	\$699.00 (registration)
Teacher Coordinator of Scheduling	New York, NY		
Halverie Davis	Infinite Campus Interchange 2023	March 14-15, 2023	\$699.00 (registration)
Guidance Counselor	New York, NY		
Kimberly Liskay-Fedo	Infinite Campus Interchange 2023	March 14-15, 2023	\$699.00 (registration)
Teacher Coordinator	New York, NY		
Gizele Locke	Infinite Campus Interchange 2023	March 14-15, 2023	\$699.00 (registration)

Teacher Coordinator of Scheduling	New York, NY		
Tamisha McKoy	Infinite Campus Interchange 2023	March 14-15, 2023	\$699.00 (registration)
Director of Guidance & Counseling	New York, NY		
Mohammed Saleh	Consortium for School Networking 2023	March 18-23, 2023	\$3,368.15 (registration, transportation, lodging, meals)
Associate Chief of Technology & MIS	Austin, TX		
Michele Grevesen	Staff Development for NSTA Science Convention	March 22-25, 2023	\$355.00 (registration)
Science Teacher	Atlanta, GA		
Anthony Muscato	NJ Speech-Language-Hearing Association	April 20-21, 2023	\$639.16 (registration, transportation, lodging, meals)
Supervisor of Special Education	Long Branch, NJ		
Manuel Martinez, Jr.	Education Law Center 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration & Panel Discussion	May 4, 2023	\$143.54 (registration, transportation)
Board Member	Newark, NJ		
Della McCall	Education Law Center 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration & Panel Discussion	May 4, 2023	\$145.60 (registration, transportation)
Board Member	Newark, NJ		
Nora Hoover	Association of School Administrators Education & Research Foundation	May 17-19, 2023	\$543.34 (transportation, lodging, meals)
Principal/Adult School	Atlantic City, NJ		
Susan Ronga	Association of School Administrators Education & Research Foundation	May 17-19, 2023	\$573.34 (transportation, lodging, meals)
Teacher Coordinator/Adult School	Atlantic City, NJ		

**\*FOR RATIFICATION**

**Total Number of Conferences: 12  
Total Cost: \$9,263.13**

**It was moved by Comm. Castillo-Cruz, seconded by Comm. D. Martinez that Resolution No. 2 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.**

### **Paterson Board of Education Standing Abstentions**

Comm. Oshin Castillo-Cruz

- Self

- City of Paterson
- Transportation
- Downtown Special Improvement District
- Celebrate Paterson

Comm. Valerie Freeman

- Self
- Family

Comm. Eddie Gonzalez

- Self
- Family
- New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC)
- Community Charter School of Paterson

Comm. Jonathan Hodges

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. Dania Martinez

- Self
- City of Paterson
- Ilearn Schools
- Paterson Arts & Science Charter School

Comm. Manuel Martinez

- Self

Comm. Della McCall

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. Nakima Redmon

- Self
- Historic Preservation of the City of Paterson
- County of Passaic

Comm. Kenneth Simmons

- Self
- Family

### **Resolution No. 3**

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public School District recognizes the need for obtaining the most competitive and responsive proposal for goods and/or services; and

WHEREAS, on the Authorization of the Business Administrator, the competitive contracting process NJSA 18A:18A-4.3-4.5, using the request for proposal (RFP) document, was solicited for Student Recruitment & Professional Development Services, RFP-450-23; and

WHEREAS, this RFP solicitation was made by advertised public notice appearing in The Bergen Record and The North Jersey Herald News on February 16, 2023. Request for proposals were mailed/ e-mailed to five (5) potential vendors, in which two (2) sealed

proposals were received and read aloud on March 7, 2023 at 11:00 a.m. at 90 Delaware Avenue, Paterson, New Jersey 07503 by the Purchasing Department; and

WHEREAS, based on the score sheets from the Evaluation Committee Members from the Business Services & Student Assignment Departments, it is recommended that this contract be awarded for, RFP-450-23, pending the availability of funds and satisfactory performance to Caissa Public Strategy in the amount of \$75,000.00 for professional development and \$125,000 for recruitment services (\$850 per student cost); and

WHEREAS, this award is in line with the 5 Year Strategic Plan 2019-2024, Goal Area #1: Teaching & Learning Goal Statement: To create a student-centered learning environment to prepare students for career, college readiness and lifelong learning; now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Superintendent of Schools support the Departments of Business Services & Student Assignment's recommendation that Caissa Public Strategy be awarded a contract for Student Recruitment & Professional Development Services, RFP-450-23, for the 2022-2023, 2023-2024 & 2024-25 school year, pending the availability of funds and satisfactory performance at a total contract amount of not to exceed \$200,000.00 annually.

**It was moved by Comm. Castillo-Cruz, seconded by Comm. D. Martinez that Resolution No. 3 be adopted.**

Comm. Gonzalez: This was the presentation that we had in executive session. (Inaudible)

Comm. Freeman: This is the company that's going to recruit students from the charter schools and Passaic County Tech.

Comm. Redmon: That's correct.

Comm. Simmons: It's not just charters or PCTI. It's any school. It's to try and capture students and talk to them about our options prior to them committing in any direction. I know that the Board had discussion in executive session.

Ms. Shafer: The Superintendent in Newark was very happy with it. This was going back about two weeks ago. I just spoke to him again to find out that they got an additional \$900,000 in their budget because they brought back 143 kids in year one.

Comm. Simmons: (Inaudible)

Ms. Shafer: It was \$140,000.

Comm. Gonzalez: I just want to reiterate what I said in executive session. It sounds great how we need to recapture students from other schools. \$200,000 breaks down to \$850 per student. I would rather invest that in our Family and Community Engagement and recruit one person at a \$60,000 salary to do this. In my personal opinion and from what they explained, it's not anything that we can't do. We have very capable staff in this department. If we're able to spend a little bit of this money to train our own staff, we will have staff members who will do this year in and year out. That being said, when we break down the numbers, 150 students for the amount that we're investing averages out to three kids per school. I think we can recruit three kids per school to come back to the district, maybe even more than that, with our own folks. That's what I got from the

presentation. They were going to come in to teach our folks about what we already know and then go out to the community to do the job. I just don't see the benefit of bringing an outside entity from Texas to do the job that we know we can do if we put a little effort with our own staff. That being said, I thought that was the route we were going to go in.

Comm. Redmon: It was just a presentation.

Comm. Gonzalez: I misunderstood. I understand it has to be voted on, but I wanted to put in my two cents. I feel that this money will be better invested in our own department and bring on additional staff to not only do this but do more work with the Family and Community Engagement Department.

Comm. Simmons: I understand what Comm. Gonzalez is saying. However, part of the presentation was that if they don't bring any students back, we don't pay. Basically, they have to earn their money. If they bring one student back, they get paid \$850. I'm going to try to say this in a way that doesn't get me in trouble. Part of this is also training our folks that we have to do this long-term. There's that piece to it as well. There is also a customer service piece to it as well. We hear about complaints, not just from parents, but from the registration process and schools. Nothing happens if nothing happens. If they're unsuccessful, this doesn't cost us a dime.

Comm. McCall: I know that they will get the kids back. What is the long haul of that child staying? What's their incentive to get a kid back? We don't know that the process is, what they say, or what they do. If there's some type of incentive to bring the child back, how long does the child have to stay before we pay them?

Comm. Simmons: If they talk to the student today and the student says they're coming and they enroll, if the student doesn't show up and isn't counted on October 15, they won't get paid.

Comm. McCall: What if the child comes and the child stays until October 16. What happens then? I'm just throwing it out there because sometimes when we have people who go out into our communities, they provide incentives. Not to say that this company will. If there was an incentive to come back to make the opportunity more enticing, I want to know what is the cutoff for us. You're telling me on October 15 once the child is counted for the state, then they get paid. Is this \$200,000 for the entire year? Do they help us retain kids that on October 17 they decide to leave? If they talk them into staying, do we still pay them for that child as well?

Comm. Simmons: Based upon the presentation, they are talking about the things that we offer to keep the kids here long-term. It's an advertising and marketing campaign. That's what this is. This helps us compete with other schools. It also helps us train our folks so that we can do this long-term. It's not to exceed \$200,000. It may not be \$200,000. It's just based on the number of students that they are able to obtain, which is why Newark capped theirs at \$140,000. They told us, based on their estimates, that they were going to surpass their cap. I don't know if that's happening in Newark.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: I know in those summer months they have not been accepted and parents don't know what to do. They don't know about the programs that we currently have. I was pushed to go to Tech by my parents. Not because they had a clue what Tech offered, but they knew that one of my cousins had a bad experience at Eastside and there was no chance that their daughter was going there. A lot of decisions our parents make are based on that. There might be one isolated issue, but we don't want

our parents making decisions based on hearsay but because they're getting information from our school district. We need to train our administration and our schools. You go into some front offices in the schools, and some are great and some don't give the families the information that they need. That's not something that happens overnight. It's great if we are able to at least get the training for our staff. If we're able to support the community, that's very important. If they don't accomplish their goal and we don't pay them, then great. I understand Comm. McCall's concern about if a child leaves in November, but it's very difficult for parents to make decisions, unless something happens midyear. This is something that we're going to have to trust that the child will stay, unless something happens.

Comm. Gonzalez: This is a vote of confidence in our own department. This is really telling our staff we have confidence in you doing your job. This decision is an investment. I have a lot of confidence in our staff and this department to push something like this. We're surrounded with plenty of organizations or expertise in the way of advertising, commercials, and promotions of individuals that may do this already. We're going to hire these people based on their presentation. You're going to ask for our recommendation about who we go to and speak to. If we are recommending these folks, we should be telling that to our own staff internally to do this, as opposed to spending administrative dollars. I think that it may send the wrong signal to our own staff who I know have very deep roots in the community. Personally, I'm the Director of Community Outreach. That's the work that I do and I have individuals with campaign experience. We all ran elections. We all know what grassroots is. We know how to campaign. I feel like bringing in an entity from that far out is going to take a lot of our staff's time. They're going to have a lot of meetings with the administration and department heads, taking up their time to discuss things that we already know how to do on our own. That's not accounted for in this money. That being said, I just want to put that out there. I understand the concept that if they don't bring in anyone, they don't get paid. I think that we can bring more students back. We just mentioned a little while ago how students leave, not because of lack of advertising or campaigns. They leave midway because they're not satisfied with what's happening in the schools. You can sell someone the idea to go to a particular school because there are great programs and midway kids are leaving schools. They can come in with the idea they were sold on, that this is a great school, but once they realize it's not what it's all cracked up to be and they leave, we lost that money. This goes back to what we discussed earlier. We need to do a better job advertising. Not all schools offer the same things across the board. It's not as easy as putting it in a commercial. Not all schools offer everything equally. We also have to prepare for how we target that audience. Not to go back to the charter school theme, but we're losing a lot of kids because certain schools are just not in their area. Parents feel they are not sending their kids to that school because that school does not pertain to me. Parents have heard of some incidents happening in the past. There's a lot of institutional knowledge that's here. We can give our staff a little bit of training, the authority, and the job description to carry out those orders. We can do that without having to spend the money externally.

**On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Freeman, Comm. Gonzalez and Comm. McCall who voted no. The motion carried.**

### **Paterson Board of Education Standing Abstentions**

Comm. Oshin Castillo-Cruz

- Self
- City of Paterson

- Transportation
- Downtown Special Improvement District
- Celebrate Paterson

Comm. Valerie Freeman

- Self
- Family

Comm. Eddie Gonzalez

- Self
- Family
- New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC)
- Community Charter School of Paterson

Comm. Jonathan Hodges

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. Dania Martinez

- Self
- City of Paterson
- Ilearn Schools
- Paterson Arts & Science Charter School

Comm. Manuel Martinez

- Self

Comm. Della McCall

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. Nakima Redmon

- Self
- Historic Preservation of the City of Paterson
- County of Passaic

Comm. Kenneth Simmons

- Self
- Family

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**Items Requiring a Vote**

***Instruction and Program***

Comm. D. Martinez: I&P met on Monday. We went over the items that are up for vote. We had a presentation regarding the charter schools. Minutes are uploaded to the drive.

***Operations***

Comm. D. Martinez: We were scheduled to meet today. I have the meeting scheduled for next Tuesday.

### ***Fiscal***

Comm. Simmons: Fiscal met last night. We discussed much of what you heard tonight.

### ***Personnel***

Comm. Redmon: Personnel met on Monday. I'll give a report at the regular meeting.

### ***Governance***

Comm. Redmon: Governance did meet.

Comm. Simmons: Those items will eventually come to the Board.

### **Committee Report**

#### ***Facilities***

Comm. Redmon: We have an upcoming committee meeting soon.

#### ***Family & Community Engagement***

Comm. D. Martinez: We're not scheduled to meet this month. We'll be meeting next month.

#### ***Negotiations***

#### ***Policy***

Comm. Simmons: Policy has not met yet this month.

#### ***Technology***

Comm. Simmons: Technology met yesterday. We discussed the items that were purchased through our E-Rate process. During our E-Rate process we applied for items that help us with internet connections. We get 15% of their total cost. Typically, we get reimbursed by the way we choose to set up our internet. Instead of us paying and waiting for the money back, we pay 15% upfront and the vendors go to the government for their money. The technology department is increasing our internet bandwidth so that we can eliminate some of the bottleneck. They're adding a circuit at John F. Kennedy. Right now, there's one at central office. In total, we will have 40 gigs of bandwidth. It is a step up from what we had. Those things are going to help us when phones are going down. We should have more consistency in phones staying up. We had an overview of the...(Inaudible)

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

**It was moved by Comm. Castillo-Cruz, seconded by Comm. Simmons 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 9:22 p.m.

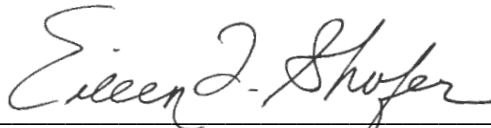
**It was moved by Comm. Simmons, seconded by Comm. D. Martinez that the Board reconvenes the meeting. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.**

The Board reconvened the meeting at 11:10 p.m.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**It was moved by Comm. Castillo-Cruz, seconded by Comm. Simmons that the meeting be adjourned. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:12 p.m.

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

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