

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

December 6, 2022 – 6:00 p.m.
Remote - Zoom

Presiding: Comm. Kenneth Simmons, President

Present:

Ms. Eileen F. Shafer, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Susana Peron, Deputy Superintendent
Bryant Horsley, Esq., Souder, Shabazz & Woolridge, LLP
Boris Zaydel, Esq., Board Counsel

Comm. Vincent Arrington
Comm. Emanuel Capers
Comm. Oshin Castillo-Cruz
Comm. Jonathan Hodges

Comm. Dania Martinez
Comm. Manuel Martinez
Comm. Nakima Redmon, Vice President
Comm. Corey Teague

Student Representatives:

Ms. Paris Higgs

Comm. Simmons 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
December 6, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.
Virtual
90 Delaware Avenue
Paterson, New Jersey**

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

Comm. Simmons: Board members, if you'll indulge me, I'm going to move some things around and I need to take care of some business at the top of this meeting. We have 341 speakers signed up for public portion. In accordance with Bylaw 167, due to the volume of speakers and to ensure the orderly operation of meetings, we're going to limit public comments to 100 speakers. We're also going to limit the time for each speaker to one minute. The total time for public portion will be two hours.

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 December 6, 2022, beginning with check number 234217 and ending with check number 234289, in the amount of \$10,708,291.83, and direct deposit number beginning with 1527 and ending with 1549;

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.

Resolution No. 2

WHEREAS, in accordance with the American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ARPESSER III), districts accepting ARP-ESSER funding are required to update the Safe Return Plan for the continued safe return to in-person instruction and continuity of services for all schools, as well as post the updated plans on their websites as required by ARP Act section 2001(i)(1) by December 23, 2022; and

WHEREAS, this plan serves as local guidelines for all instructional and non-instructional school activities throughout the entire ARP-ESSER project period and must be updated every six (6) months through September 20, 2023 or whenever there are significant changes to CDC recommendations for K-12 schools.

WHEREAS, in response to this order the Paterson School District is submitting the updated American Rescue Plan; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby approves the district's submission of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Safe Return Plan.

Resolution No. 3

WHEREAS, the districts' 5 Year Strategic Plan: Paterson- A Promising Tomorrow's Goal 1 is to create a student- centered learning environment to prepare students for career, college readiness and lifelong learning, and;

WHEREAS, field trips afford students a firsthand educational experience that is not available in the classroom, and;

WHEREAS, the Assistant Superintendents have approved/recommended the addition of the attached field trip locations;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Paterson Board of Education accepts the addition of the attached list of approved destinations as appropriate field trip sites for the students of the Paterson Public Schools for the 2022-2023 school year.

Resolution No. 4

WHEREAS, Policy and Regulation 7510 authorize the Superintendent, upon consultation with the Board of Education (the "Board"), to permit the use of school facilities for any purpose not prohibited by law, provided that such use does not interfere

with the educational and co- curricular programs of Paterson Public Schools (the "District");

WHEREAS, the District received a request from a film production company (Day of the Fight, Inc.) which is currently making a film called "Day of the Fight," which is written and directed by Film and TV star Jack Huston (American Hustle, Ben-Hur) and stars actor Michael Pitt (Boardwalk Empires, Seven Psychopaths) in the leading role.

WHEREAS, the film is a redemption story about a former champion boxer whose life has fallen apart. The film takes place over the course of one single day, the day of his first major prize fight in years. Interweaving between the day of his fight and memories of his past, the film tells the tale of a man who is trying to put the pieces of his broken world back together.

WHEREAS, the filmmakers are requesting to film at Public School No. 2, 22 Passaic St., in the back playground area that lets out on Market Street.

WHEREAS, the action in the scene is as follows: A father is standing on the sidewalk on Market Street opposite the schoolyard. He watches as his daughter enters the schoolyard on Market Street and walks into the school. She looks back before entering the school and waves at him before walking in.

WHEREAS, the filmmakers are requesting access to the schoolyard, as well as the use of one of the abutting doors that lead out to the schoolyard. The actor playing the daughter will basically enter the building through said door and close the door behind her until we cut. No actors or crew members will enter the school beyond the vestibule on the other side of the door.

WHEREAS, the filmmakers are also requesting the ability to place extras in the schoolyard to give the scene the feel of an active school in the morning.

WHEREAS, the filmmakers need one day of filming, Friday, December 16, 2022, and an additional day to set up beforehand and another day after for restoration.

WHEREAS, the filmmakers have provided the scripted dialogue of the scenes to be filmed (attached).

WHEREAS, the District owns and controls a school facility known as Public School No. 2 and located at 22 Passaic St., Paterson, NJ 07501;

WHEREAS, Public School No. 2 Principal Vanessa Serrano has verbally affirmed that the filming will not interfere with the school's instruction and function on the requested date.

WHEREAS, use of this facility will be subject to the provisions of Policy and Regulation 7510, and governed by a written Facility Use Agreement that sets forth standard use/service fees and insurance and liability requirements;

WHEREAS, the Superintendent and Board have reviewed details of the proposed filming activities and believe they will not interfere with the District's educational and co-curricular programs;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves the use of 22 Passaic Street (Public School No. 2) for proposed filming activities, subject to Policy and Regulation 7510 and a written Facility Use Agreement.

Resolution No. 5

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, to approve a motion to go into executive session on Monday, December 12, 2022, at 5:30 p.m. in the 2nd floor conference room at 90 Delaware Avenue, to discuss personnel.

It was moved by Comm. Castillo-Cruz, seconded by Comm. D. Martinez that Resolution Nos. 1 through 5 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

Paterson Board of Education Standing Abstentions

Comm. Arrington

- Self
- Family

Comm. Capers

- Self
- 4th and Inches
- Westside Park Group
- Insight
- Jersey Kids
- NFL Foundation

Comm. Castillo-Cruz

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

Comm. Hodges

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. Dania Martinez

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

Comm. Manuel Martinez

- Self

Comm. Redmon

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

- Comm. Simmons
- Self
 - Family

- Comm. Teague
- Self
 - YMCA

PRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Shafer: At this time, I would ask the Board and the community to have a moment of silence. We did have a third grader at Edward Kilpatrick Elementary, Mia Dye, who passed away on November 30. She was not ill. I just ask that you keep her family in your thoughts and prayers and we can have a moment of silence.

Moment of Silence

Ms. Shafer: I also want to congratulate Johan Beltre Baez. He is a senior at International High School in the IB Program. He was accepted to Brown University on a full scholarship. He intends to have a double major in biochemistry and visual arts. He is hopeful that he will learn about design and production of prosthetic devices by pursuing medical school or a research field. Congratulations to Johan. At this time, I'm going to pass it off to Paul Brubaker and Michelle VanHoven to introduce our holiday showcase.

Mr. Paul Brubaker: Good evening, everyone. I'll ask Mr. Boris Zaydel to play the presentation.

Holiday Showcase Video Presentation

Ms. Shafer: I just want to thank Paul, Michelle, and Dan for putting this together. I also want to thank Rosa Parks, Norman S. Weir, and School No. 24 students. Great job and thank you all for your participation! That concludes my report.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Items Requiring a Vote

Instruction and Program

Comm. Arrington: Instruction and Program met yesterday. In attendance were Comm. Castillo-Cruz, myself, Comm. D. Martinez, and Dr. Hodges. We will be submitting I&P-1 through 21. There were no questions or discussions on the items. The meeting minutes are on the Google Doc.

Operations

Comm. Arrington: Operations met today. Present was myself and Comm. Capers. We have four resolutions that we will be submitting. Two are late, but two were about the bus routes and the professors-in-residence program. We have two new items coming up on long-term suspensions and the HIB report that Ms. Payne will be presenting.

Fiscal Management

Comm. Simmons: Fiscal met just before this meeting. I'll have that report next week.

Personnel

Comm. Redmon: I was absent for personnel yesterday.

Comm. Simmons: I'll give that report next week as well.

Committee Report

Facilities

Comm. Capers: I didn't give the report of last month's meeting, but both are similar. Present were myself, Dr. Hodges, and Comm. Arrington. Neil Mapp and his staff were present as well as Mr. Matthews, the BA. They gave an update on the John F. Kennedy bleachers. The completion of that project will be on 12/26. We also went over the All-Boys High School renovation and the program layout. We talked about the 90 Delaware lease renewal and negotiations. We went over the new STEM replacement high school update. We identified different capital projects that were going on throughout the district once funds become available. Cheryl sent out an email to all the Commissioners to show all the capital projects that need to be done. We want to poll the Board on which projects should be done first. Nobody sent a reply back to that. We discussed capital projects and facilities will do what's needed as a priority. All projects are a priority. They gave an update on the planetarium at PANTHER Academy. We are going to schedule another meeting this month to talk more about that, as well as the 90 Delaware lease. That's it. Does anybody have any questions? That concludes my report.

Family & Community Engagement

Comm. D. Martinez: We're scheduled to meet on Tuesday.

Policy

Ms. Williams: We're scheduling policy as well.

Technology

Comm. Hodges: Technology met, but I don't have a report to give you.

Comm. Redmon: Would you like to report at the next meeting?

Comm. Hodges: Some of that material was over my head. I'm going to defer to Mr. Arrington.

Comm. Arrington: I don't have the report. I'll report at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

Comm. Redmon: Following along with what the President said at the beginning of the meeting, we're shortening the public portion to the first 100 speakers with a minute to speak.

Comm. Simmons: The total time for public portion is two hours.

Ms. Rosie Grant: Good evening, Commissioners, Madam Superintendent, staff, and community members. I thank you for this opportunity to speak. I speak on behalf of Paterson Education Fund. First, our condolences go to the grieving family. Losing a child is devastating and I'm so very sorry for your loss. We extend congratulations to the young man who won the scholarship and to all the students and staff who participated in this evening's production. I wanted to alert you that PEF participated in the Race Forward Conference. Linda Reid went to Phoenix to be part of a panel. They talked about Restorative Practices in Paterson as a co-governance model of schools and communities working together to move a school improvement agenda. We will share the national report with you when it is available, but Paterson was featured in front of an audience of 3,500 people across the United States. We're staffing up for our local implementation, so anyone who is interested in learning to facilitate Restorative Practices and do trainings, please be in touch through our Paterson Education Fund Facebook page.

Mr. Charles Ferrer: Good evening, everyone. As First Vice President of the Paterson Education Association, but also as an employee of the Paterson School District, our members feel like they're currently in an abusive relationship with almost no way out. One of the most important things is that enough money has been given, according to the Commissioner Secretary of Education, so that every employee in education should be paid a livable and competitive wage. I don't understand what the problem is here when you have the American Rescue Plan money plus the local and state money to the tune of \$350 billion that goes throughout the United States. There's more than enough money to come to the table and pay your employees what they're entitled to. Stop disrespecting some of your people. There is not supposed to be a have and a have-not situation and that's what we've created here. Some people get everything and when we ask...

Mr. Gennaro Tortoriello: Good evening. Why are you denying the community and our members an opportunity to speak here tonight? It's the job of the Board and the district to ensure that our students receive quality services. Part of that involves staffing schools appropriately. There are nine math vacancies in your largest high school. There are multiple special education teachers in elementary schools covering classes because you don't have enough teachers. Here's a solution – settle the damn contract. Stop playing games, settle the contract, and show our members the respect that they deserve. What's going on now is unacceptable. It's criminal for the children who are not receiving the services and it's disrespectful to the staff. None of you would allow this if this was happening for your children. Unacceptable!

Mr. Jeffrey Gutt: This is Jeffrey Gutt and I want to share with my community my respect for my district and the children in my care. I've been serving in the Paterson community for over 20 years in Paterson Public Schools in any capacity that Paterson asked me to serve. I demand a fair and equitable contract, respect for me, my family, and my children that I teach in that classroom. My respect begins with a contract. Settle the contract now. My family can't survive. I can't be the best teacher that I can afford to be because we're drowning. Settle our contract. Thank you.

Ms. Camille Lewis-Francis: Good evening. I'm here to let you know directly that as a Paterson Public Schools employee I feel devalued. I'm a veteran teacher with veteran expertise. I'm also a specialist. This came by working hard at my craft. I enjoy perfecting my craft. This is because any knowledge I gain directly affects the students. Perfecting my craft didn't happen in one school year. It happened over 15 years. When someone with one or two years of experience is being compensated as if they had eight or nine years of experience, it devalues my hard work. It says to me that my hard work doesn't mean as much as that person. That's how I feel.

Ms. Tawnya Stojakovic: Good evening. What wonderful performances by the talented students of Paterson Public Schools. They must have great teachers. That's why teachers demand a fair and equitable contract. Respect begins with our contract. Settle now. Thank you.

Ms. Helen Dennis: My name is Helen Dennis and I'm a 20-year veteran teacher of the Paterson Public Schools. I love the kids I work with. I love the school I work in. I hate our contract or lack of it. Please, you cannot put students first if you constantly put teachers last. Settle our contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Debra DiPrima: Good evening Commissioners. I was very disappointed to hear that you would only allow the first 100 speakers tonight. I know that there were many more people who would like their opportunity and right to voice their opinion and speak to the Board. I'm here to urge you to settle the PEA contract. All our teachers who are showing up for our Paterson students every day deserve a fair and equitable contract. That goes for all staff, not just teachers. Settle the contract now.

Ms. Deirdre Karcher: I wish for you to settle our contract please. So many of our teachers are young and their pay has been frozen, and they have debts to pay and other things. If you remember in the past, it was absolutely devastating to our staff what happened a few years back. Please don't let that happen again. Settle our contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Christina Somma: We have great teachers and they're leaving to be valued in other districts. I'm guilty. I can no longer afford to stay in Paterson. My own family is suffering. I'm a 17-year highly effective teacher certified to teach k-8 and highly qualified in English. My husband is left to have three jobs to make up for what I can't contribute to our family of four. I have a five-year-old and a ten-year-old and I have put Paterson before my family for many years. Because I'm underpaid, my husband spends many hours away from us. For 16 years, my husband has asked me to leave Paterson. I started here and said I'd retire here. Since we're not right sized like others in our district, I'm seeking to be employed by other districts. Please do the right thing. Would you work under the contract you have proposed? The students suffer when dedicated teachers have to leave. What is the number of vacancies now? Don't you want loving, caring, educated, experienced, and dedicated teachers working in this district? You don't know what you have until it's gone.

Ms. Karyn Stephenson: Good evening. I'm a 34-year employee of the Paterson Public Schools. I have never felt so disrespected by this district. Please settle our contract now. Enough is enough. Thank you.

Ms. Danielle Bespalko: I'm just another fed up teacher asking you to please settle this contract as soon as possible. More and more teachers are resigning by the day. Despite filling some vacancies, more are still happening because we just can't take it anymore. Any Paterson teacher can get hired on the spot somewhere else right now.

You're forcing us out the door. The longer this battle goes on, we suffer, but the kids suffer the most. They can see that burned out teachers are affecting them beyond repair. If you care at all about the future of these kids, you'd settle this already. Please think if your child was in a class with no teacher, aide, or not getting the special services they need due to vacancies that stem from having no contract. How would you feel if it was your child not properly supervised or educated? Don't deny that this is wrong. Please do what's right for the students and the teachers of Paterson. Thank you.

Ms. Dayna-Marie Zisa: How many vacancies do we have right now? We're still dealing with not having a contract. Yet, people are getting right-size raises. I believe the Board of Education is spending \$16,000 to go to Miami Wednesday or Thursday this week. We deserve a contract. We deserve a livable raise. Our students deserve for us to be able to come to work every day not worrying about our bills and what's going on in our personal lives because we don't make enough money because we didn't get raises. Stop disrespecting us and give us a raise now. Thank you.

Ms. Gayle DeNicola: Good evening. Congratulations to the young man who got accepted into Brown University. Thank you so much to the choir members for that beautiful presentation. I've been a proud Paterson Public School teacher for 38 years. Right now, we all deserve a fair and equitable contract. Respect begins with our contract. Please settle now. We are losing very good teachers who don't want to leave. They love the students. It's just not economically feasible for them to stay. Thank you.

Ms. Lisa Reiner: I'm a 16-year veteran teacher. I dedicated my entire career to the City of Paterson. I love to serve my students. Yet, I make less than a first-year teacher in Newark. Does that seem fair? I'm asked every day by my family members why on earth I stay here. Lately, I've been wondering the same. I'm speaking tonight because teachers and staff deserve a fair and equitable contract now. It's time to stop playing the blame game and start taking serious consideration to our wellbeing. Otherwise, the mass exodus will continue. Mr. McEntee is not the PEA. I am. We all are. When you throw blame and shade at him, you're in turn doing the same to us. The back-and-forth between salary guides and who is responsible is petty and does nothing to solve the problem. Meanwhile, you neglect to tell the public that you want to give us zero. Your Board is dangling \$7,500 carrots in the faces of new hires using COVID relief funds while we line the streets begging for crumbs. You should be using COVID relief funds to retain us. We elected you, Ms. Shafer, at the time you gave such a great contract. I don't understand why you can't end the time with us the same way. Stop trying to defend your inactions and start acting. Settle our contract. Thank you.

Ms. Michele Nardino: Please settle the contract now. We are losing way too many teachers to other districts. Paterson teachers need a competitive wage or, as you call it, need to be right-sized the same way that the assistant superintendents had their salaries right-sized. What's good for the goose is good for the gander. Thank you and have a good night.

Mr. Steve Dinnerman: I've been a teacher here in Paterson for 15 years. My salary today is not much more than what I made when I first walked in the door. It's embarrassing. It's pathetic. Luckily, I'm off tonight so I can speak to you all. Normally, I'm working one of my three extra jobs – one after school, one at night, and one on the weekends. I have two young children that I don't get to spend as much time with because I need to work extra jobs just to keep the lights on and put food on the table. The district has invested a lot of money on SEL and mental health. You're creating a mental health crisis amongst your staff. You have no idea how stressed and beaten

down we are. We cannot survive. We're not just complaining. Do the right thing. Give us a fair and equitable contract. Thank you.

Ms. Greta Mills: Hello everyone. Please settle the contract. When I say settle, I mean we deserve a raise. You have teachers out here putting plays and shows together and this has been going on for years. At this point, we need to be making sure that we get paid for our services. Time out for free things, constantly doing things, and trying to help the students because we care, but then the Board is not there trying to make sure that we get paid. We want to do what we need to do for our house, pay our bills, survive, not struggle and work so many jobs. I know about working massive amounts of jobs just to pay the bills and put my son through college. We need a contract that shows that we are going to get paid a good amount of money. The same way everybody else is sitting there getting paid, we need to get paid for our services. We work hard every day...

Ms. Raquel Ford: There are 10 vacancies in my building. We have no bilingual homeroom teachers in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades. In January, we will be up to 12 vacancies. Settle the contract.

Ms. Noreen Veloz: Good evening. I'm speaking on behalf of not only myself, but all the people that cannot speak tonight. First, we had COVID. Then we had the nonsense with the health insurance. Now we have the nonsense with the contract. If you really cared, you would settle this contract. We are on our way back to state control if we cannot work together. Thank you.

Ms. Felicia Eason: My name is Felicia Eason. I'm a Paterson voter, resident, and longtime Paterson Public Schools employee. Settle our contract fairly. Settle it now. Thank you.

Ms. Responda Sims: Good evening to all. My name is Responda Sims. I've been an employee of Paterson Public Schools for 23 years. I'm really upset over the \$7,500 bonus. That truly was a slap in the face. That's over \$800,000 that could have been used towards the contract. Non-bargaining received a cost-of-living raise and other large substantial raises at central office. This \$7,500 could have been used as good faith to make teachers stay in Paterson. Instead, you used it for other means. Settle the contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Joy Spinelli: Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Joy Spinelli. I've been a teacher in the district since 2000. I've been lucky enough to work alongside some of the greatest teachers in the state. It is heartbreaking watching everyone leave. Every child deserves a teacher in their classroom. Please settle the contract.

Ms. Kathleen Renegar: Good evening, my sympathies to the family who lost a child. You need to settle the contract fairly and soon. I teach juniors and I've had several of them ask me if I was going to leave. You're causing anxiety amongst your students. They're losing teachers who have been here for over 10 years, not just new inexperienced teachers, but excellent teachers. You're causing them anxiety. We deserve a fair and reasonable contract. Thank you.

Ms. Julie Lorman: I'm asking you to simply settle the contract. Thank you.

Ms. Stephanie Warlick: Good evening, my name is Stephanie Warlick. I'm a teacher at School No. 9 in Paterson for over 15 years. I teach middle school math and I love my job. Unfortunately, I have to have two other jobs just to pay my bills because the take

home pay that I receive is less and less every year. Not only is my take home pay less, but my actual base salary has barely raised at all in 15 years. After sitting frozen for four years and losing two years of my experience in the past, if I lose any more time and pay I will have to leave Paterson with the many other people who have left this year. I'm not only asking you to settle our contract, but I'm also asking that you settle one with a fair increase for what has changed in our country and our world over the last few years. Inflation is insane. Groceries are out of control. We need to be able to pay our bills so that we can support your children. If we can't support your children, the school system will fail. The only way to put your children first is to put...

Ms. Megan Anderson: Good evening. Please settle our contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Roneea Bundick: Good evening. As an educator in Paterson for over 20 years, a resident, homeowner, taxpayer, and voter, I'm asking for a fair and equitable contract. Thank you so kindly.

Ms. Amy Reyes: Good evening. I'm asking you to please settle a fair and equitable contract.

Ms. Stacey Rzeszutek: I'm a 17-year Paterson veteran who should be at the top of the guide. Instead, I'm three years away making less than some first-year teachers because of lost steps from previous contracts. I still show up every day for my students despite the lack of respect from you. Right-size our salary! We demand a fair and equitable contract. Respect begins with our contract. Settle now. Thank you.

Mr. Vince Gurnari: I've been 21 years in Paterson. I teach economics and social studies. Please settle this contract. Our students are hurting. I cannot tell you the number of times a week I have to explain to a student why they're sitting in an empty classroom, why their teachers are leaving. I had a student this week break down because he's sitting in classes with no teacher all year. He's a senior sitting in classes with no teacher. What are we preparing these students for? Settle the contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Arlethia Kelley: Good evening. My name is Arlethia Kelley. I would like to say that the greatest contribution to our schools is our teachers. They are the ones who day in and day out care for our students. We demand a contract. We know that communication is considered one key component in successful leadership. As leaders, we thank you for what you do, but we also say that there is a breakdown in the communication. Perhaps we can meet in person and settle this contract and have all of our teachers paid what they deserve. We deserve a fair and just contract. Thank you.

Ms. Irina Montoya: Good evening. I'm a schoolteacher in Paterson. I've been a veteran of the Paterson Public Schools for the last 24 years. Please settle the contract now. The ones who are suffering are the students. Teachers have left and will continue to leave if you don't offer competitive salaries. Stop the games. Settle the contract now. Put our students and students first. The children of Paterson will be left behind. Thank you.

Ms. Ivrielle Dworkis: Good evening to Commissioners and Superintendent Shafer. Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. I have been here only eight years. Compared to the others who have been here 25 and 30 years, I've only been here a small amount of time. Four years ago, when we settled our last contract and Ms. Shafer seemingly expressed how much she cared about the students of Paterson, I find it difficult to believe now that she still cares as much when she's not showing any care at

all to the teachers and the staff of Paterson. We are here for the same reason. We are here to serve the students of Paterson. We need support from the Board and the Superintendent to settle the contract so that we may continue to work together toward our mutual goal of serving the students of Paterson. Thank you.

Ms. Priscilla Campagna: Good evening. I'm a Paterson Public School teacher for over 23 years. I'm asking the Board to do whatever needs to be done to secure us a fair and equitable contract as soon as possible. Our teachers are leaving for better paying districts at an unprecedented rate. We need to have a contract in place to keep the teachers we have while staying comparable to other districts that are paying their staff better. Please settle now. Also, for two hours, or 120 minutes, that would be 120 speakers. I believe you should add another 20 speakers. Our members deserve a chance to speak. These meetings should not be virtual. They should be in person. We've been back for two years now. I think it's only fair that they give us a chance to see our faces while we speak and deliver our messages. Thank you.

Ms. Tara Feltey: My name is Tara Feltey. I'm a pre-k teacher at School No. 16. I'm here to show support for all my fellow teachers at our school. We work hard. We love our jobs. We love our students. Please settle the contract now. We deserve it. Thank you.

Ms. Lynn Schweighardt: There's an article in the paper about how many teachers you've hired. What about all the ones leaving? You hire teachers at such a high rate of pay that it's forcing the people who have been here for years to leave because it's disrespecting them. It's very unsettling to be a teacher here for 10 or 15 years and have somebody come with one year's experience making more money than you. Instead of hiring a new teacher that's forcing more teachers to leave and increasing the exodus, how about settling our contract, giving us fair pay, and keeping the people who really want to be in Paterson and are really dedicated to the children? Settle our contract now. None of you would ever settle for the type of contract that you initially want us to sign. Please settle our contract and keep the wonderful staff that you currently have. Thank you.

Ms. Nicole Fuller: Good evening, everyone. My condolences to the family. As a Paterson resident, taxpayer, homeowner, voter, and educator, I am beyond disheartened by the lack of compassion for the staff and our students. We are in post-COVID. Our students have been through so much. We're paying a whole lot of money for SEL. These things that are being done are not in their best interest. These high school students are aware that their teachers are leaving in droves. I'm just wondering how we've come to this. We need to settle this contract and put all personal and whatever we have going on to the side. Our children deserve the absolute best. The games need to stop. Teachers are leaving, 10 years plus vested teachers who care about our students. I am very disheartened, and something really needs to be done.

Ms. Nalan Musa: Good evening, everyone. My name is Nalan Musa. I've been a Paterson Public School teacher for almost 20 years now. I was also a student in the district. As a child, I remember the teachers going on strike back in the 1980's. I still remember it and it was a very devastating situation that happened. I don't ever want to go through that again. I think respect begins with a fair contract. We demand a fair and equitable contract. Please settle the contract now. Thank you everyone and have a good night.

Ms. Lynn Hazelman: Thank you for letting me speak. I'm very excited that one of our students got into an elite school, but I'm also curious. When he actually comes back,

will his teachers who got him there and supported him the whole way be here still? Without a contract, they're probably going to be on the same step. Our Superintendent makes over \$200,000. It's public record. Our staff nine years in with a master's degree is making less than \$60,000. Our brand-new teachers who are coming in are making \$96,000. These are just some of the numbers out there that you are avoiding saying. I don't understand why. We need a contract. I'm a single mom of two kids. Unfortunately, I don't get to work extra jobs. I'm going to have to leave Paterson. I'm sorry I don't have a great speech. I'm not an English teacher. I like numbers. I'm a computer science teacher. I want my students to enjoy it. All they see right now is a lot of teachers who aren't even in their rooms because there are none. The subs are not...

Mr. John Demeski: Please settle the contract. Thank you.

Ms. Judith Richter: Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. I've been teaching high school history in this district for over 20 years. I've never had to watch so many of my friends and other teachers leave for other districts. I've never had to spend so much of my time explaining to my students why their favorite math teacher, English teacher, or other teacher they were depending on to write their recommendations is now going to Hackensack or some other district that pays so much more. Settle our contract now please.

Ms. Nadia DeCroce: Hello. I've been a Paterson teacher for 20 years. I'm asking you to please settle our contract. We are losing teachers left and right for better paying jobs. Please. It's in the best interest of our students. Settle now.

Ms. Kadedrea Winston: My name is Kadedrea Winston. I work at EWK. I have been a teacher for about 18 years. I'm asking for all the support from all the Board members to help us settle and get a fair contract. We all need a fair contract so that we can survive and pay, not just the bills to keep the lights on, but get food. Everything is rising and we need to keep up with that cost. I'm asking you to settle our contract because we want it for all teachers, staff members, secretaries, and everyone. Thank you.

Ms. Mary Andersen: Good evening to the Board and Ms. Shafer. I've been a Paterson teacher for 24 years. I love my students and my school. We're like a family. Please settle the teacher contract now. Help our students keep the excellent teachers that they deserve and need to be successful. Thank you.

Ms. Helene Anderson: Good evening, everyone. Thank you for allowing me to speak. I would just like to say that the cost of living has gone up and I have not gotten a raise. I'm almost 20 years in the district and I do feel it's unspeakably unfair that we continue to work in the conditions that we work in to support our students so that their learning environment is safe. Please settle the contract now. Please settle the contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Talena Lachelle Queen: Peace and blessings family. This is Talena Lachelle Queen. I'd like to reaffirm all of the points that have been made by my colleagues before me. We are in the midst of our five-year strategic plan and I am concerned that we won't be able to realize the goals that so many people worked hard to accomplish to this point. When you thought you've done everything you could to settle this contract, please do just a bit more so that we can retain the teachers that we have. Blessings!

Ms. Aiat Oraby: Good evening, everyone. Thank you for letting us speak tonight. As a teacher in Paterson Public Schools, I'm here today to tell everyone that we are teachers in public schools, and we are dedicating our time to our students because we respect

and love them. We treat our students as our own children. As we are respecting our students, we respect our work. We go to work every day. We need that respect back. We need you to settle our contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Michele Scavone: I'd like for the Board to settle the contract in order for you to retain the amazing teachers that you currently have working for Paterson Public Schools. Thank you.

Ms. Danielle Dittmer: Thank you so much for letting me speak tonight. My name is Danielle Dittmer and I've been a dedicated teacher in the Paterson Public School District for 26 years. I love my students and I love what I do. I'm just asking you to do the right thing and settle a fair and equitable contract. Thank you.

Ms. Jo Ann Cascamo Palacio: Good evening, Superintendent Shafer and Commissioners. I've been a teacher in the district since 2001. My family is from Paterson, many products of the public school system, teachers in Paterson, and voters. It is both a blessing and an honor to be a teacher in this district. As educators, we teach our students to think and speak up for themselves. It is important that we do the same as our students may be teachers and our future leaders. Employees need a contract. Without one, we are still working. We deserve a fair and just contract. Please show our members the respect that they deserve. Do their hard work and dedication mean nothing to you? We can agree we want the best for our students. What about the staff? I implore you to settle the contract for all staff members. We deserve a fair and equitable contract. Show our students we can work together as a team. Do the right thing.

Ms. Clara Bassert: Good evening, everyone. My name is Clara Bassert and I'm a highly effective ESL teacher at School No. 25. It is my third year in the district, and I absolutely love my school. Helping and building relationships with my students is incredibly rewarding. However, Paterson schools are struggling. Teachers are quitting in droves and many students are not getting the education they deserve. It is because we don't have a fair contract. Increasing our workload for no pay raise is beyond despicable. The economy is awful. Inflation and gas prices are through the roof. You claim that you appreciate teachers, but those are empty words. The last time I checked, I can't use your appreciation to pay for my mortgage, bills, and groceries. Stop deflecting the blame on the PEA and accept your responsibility. Show us that you appreciate us by settling and negotiating a fair contract. On a side note, playing a song with the lyrics "Jesus is born" is highly inappropriate in a district with such a large Muslim population. Thank you for letting me speak and have a good evening.

Ms. Maria Cardona: Good evening, Commissioners and Superintendent Shafer. Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight. I'm asking for you to please settle our contract now. Thank you and have a good night.

Mr. Muhanad Alagha: I've been an educator for over 20 years in the Paterson School District. In those years, I can't recall one time when we have not had to picket, worry, and beg for what other professions just don't have to deal with. Every three years or so we sit on pins and needles, and we pray a fair and equitable contract will be passed quickly. While administrators can enjoy right-size salaries, we just get insulted by being asked to work longer hours, navigate through more and more hurdles, and then get told we are getting nothing in terms of any pay raises. I've personally seen some excellent teachers decide to move on to other districts because the Board refuses to settle on a fair and equitable contract. I'm sick and tired of being sick and tired. We demand a fair

contract and hope you can finally vote on negotiating our contract as soon as possible. Thank you.

Ms. Cynthia Lighty: Hi, I'm a special education teacher and I've been teaching in Paterson for over 11 years. I'm a homeowner, voter, and taxpayer. Please settle our contract now. We deserve a fair and equitable contract. Thank you.

Ms. Daria Chinni: Good evening. In 1856 Abraham Lincoln wrote: "Actions speak louder than words." 166 years later in 2022, here I am to tell Superintendent Shafer and the Board of Education that actions speak louder than words. The thank you letters and best wishes for holidays are shallow. Show us your appreciation by settling a fair contract for all your teachers, secretaries, nurses, and teaching assistants, the ones who make the schools what they are. Thank you.

Ms. Patti Grieco: Congratulations on hiring 115 new teachers. However, the number of teachers leaving the district continues to grow so you are really not accomplishing anything. What are you doing to keep the current teachers? You're wasting our students' time and education. You're disrespecting us and treating us with dishonor. We demand a fair and equitable contract. Respect begins with a contract. Please settle now.

Ms. Camila Ravelo: Hi, my name is Camila Ravelo. I'm a recently hired SLP in Paterson for about three years. I have noticed since I've been here the morale is down, especially with these contract issues. I'm also feeling the pain. I have a young family. I would like to grow and continue in Paterson. I would like these issues to be fixed. I am also requesting a fair, equitable, and competitive contract for all employees. Thank you.

Mr. Dwayne Omar: I am a special education teacher at School No. 30, one of the best schools in the district. We work hard at that school. We demand a fair and equitable contract. We're hearing that negotiations come up with such things as working later and harder. The joke is that we're already working later and harder. Please settle this contract.

Ms. Hora Kohi: Good evening, everybody. I've been working in Paterson for 16 years. I feel very disrespected by not having my contract. Please settle our contract. We'd really appreciate it. Thank you.

Mr. Tom Ziv: Settle the contract now. The teachers in this district work tirelessly to give Paterson students the education they deserve. We deserve a fair and equitable contract. We deserve equitable pay. Thank you.

Ms. Yokaurys Mojica: Just as many of us have said, settle our contract. This is my second year as a teacher. I hate to see such a great town going through this, all the wonderful teachers that I have worked with in the past year and months. For everyone to be going through this at the same time is awful. Please settle our contract. Thank you.

Ms. Alessandra King: I've been a bilingual teacher for 21 years. I'm saddened to see how many effective educators are leaving. For one lost year, it takes three years to catch up. This month alone my school has lost three ESL teachers. As we know, those positions are not easy to fill. Please settle now.

Ms. MaryJo Morales: I have been fortunate enough to work in Paterson Public Schools since I graduated college. I would really hate to have to leave because I really love my colleagues and students. Please settle now. Thank you.

Ms. Rawya Kyle: My name is Rawya Kyle and I'm a teacher at School No. 24. I'm missing my colleagues that I have worked with for over eight years. They have left for other districts that pay more and respect their teachers. Respect us and settle our contract. We deserve a fair and equitable contract.

Ms. Jade Visco: My name is Jade Visco. Thank you for letting me speak tonight. I've been a Paterson Public School teacher for over 16 years. It was my first job since I graduated college. We deserve an equal and fair contract. Please settle now. Thank you.

Ms. Dawn Consiglio: My name is Dawn Consiglio. I've been a Paterson Public School teacher for 20 years now. I love my job. I love my students. Respect begins with a contract. Thank you.

Ms. Lisbeth Taveras: As a former student of the Paterson district and now a teacher and seeing how we've regressed rather than progressed, I think that we deserve a fair and equitable contract. Please settle now. Thank you.

Ms. Ramesha Golaub: Good evening, this is Ramesha Golaub. I've been in Paterson for a few years. I left the district and came back because I love the students and the environment of Paterson. I'm a first-generation immigrant and also a single mom. I have been dedicated to the Paterson students and to my job. I find that we really are struggling with inflation and all the other things that are going on in our environment. After COVID and being put in place and putting my 150% effort in, I find that not having a contract is very poor discipline for Board members and our Superintendent.

Ms. Tanisha Tuck: My name is Tanisha Tuck. I'm a school social worker in Paterson Public Schools. I have worked in the district for 23 years. I'm absolutely disheartened and feel disrespected on behalf of all the staff, not just teachers, but child study team members and special education especially. We have lost four great special education teachers in my school and my students are suffering. Settle the contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Ann Marie Velazquez: Good evening. My name is Ann Marie Velazquez. I am a Paterson Public School teacher. I just would like to add to all the other teachers' comments that we deserve a fair contract. Please do what's right and pay our teachers what we deserve. Thank you.

Mr. John Machin: Good evening. The staff of the Paterson Public Schools deserves a fair and right-sized contract. This should be settled by now. Thank you very much.

Ms. Shannon Alejo: I just want to reiterate what my colleagues have said about getting a fair contract. I also think that we should reconsider some of the points that you are putting on the table, specifically two weeks in July. If you think about it, most of the teachers are moms and dads and we're going to have to provide childcare for our children working extra months when our kids will be home. Please reconsider. Thank you.

Ms. Erika Hernandez: I'm a Paterson Public School teacher. I've been teaching in Paterson for over a year, but my career in teaching has been for about 18 years. I think

it's extremely unfair that as teachers and staff we continue to be disrespected by not having a fair and equitable contract. I love my job. I love what I do. Every day going to work and seeing my students learning and progressing is what all teachers want their students to do. Please think hard. Keep us in mind. Everyone is struggling right now with inflation. Everything is going up. We deserve a fair and equitable contract. Please settle now. Thank you.

Ms. Lories Slockbower: I'm beginning my 24th year at Kennedy High School. I love my kids and my colleagues. I think it's deplorable that I'm explaining to seniors who are sitting in a class with no pre-calculus teachers, a senior who needs that class for her college preparation. Another one who is special needs and can't find an economics class that has a teacher because it's too large. She needs a smaller environment. You need to settle this contract now. By respecting us, you're respecting our students. We claim to put Paterson students first, but you put them dead last when you put us last. I have one more year before retirement and I wanted to work until I was 70. I cannot tolerate what's going on in our district. It's discouraging. Settle it now. Be fair for all employees in this district. We deserve better and so do the students. Thank you.

Mr. Alex Ishkanian: Good evening. I'm a teacher at MLK in the autism program. Please settle the contract. Be competitive with other surrounding districts so we can stay here and continue to serve our students. Thank you.

Ms. Diana Copello: Good evening, everyone. I would like to speak to all my colleagues. Please settle the contract. The teachers are the backbone of society. We are the ones who help the students. We help you. You would not be sitting where you are if you did not have a teacher in your life. Please settle a fair and equitable contract for all. We deserve it. Thank you.

Ms. Cayetana Sanchez: What an honor to be able to speak to you tonight, especially on behalf of all my colleagues whose voices will not be heard tonight. I've been in Paterson for 23 years. I'm a bilingual teacher at School No. 15. I wish I could say that being here tonight is not about money. We know that is the big issue. It's about respect and dignity. We are the backbone of this district. Give us the respect we have earned. Give us the respect we deserve. Give us the contract. We deserve a contract. Thank you and have a great evening.

Ms. Jannelle Herbert: Good evening, I'm Jannelle Herbert. Respectfully, there's no other way to say it. The contract needs to be settled expeditiously. Teachers have to put on multiple hats in a classroom – mom, dad, social worker, nurse, data analyst, truancy officer, guidance counselor, computer technician, and custodian – just to name a few. We go far and beyond the call of duty on a daily basis. It's only right we be compensated fairly. Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is the progress. Working together is success. Let's square this contract away now in a timely fashion. Thank you.

Ms. Carly Tennant: This is Carly Tennant. I'm a 4th grade teacher at School No. 15. I go above and beyond for my students as well as many other teachers at my school. We don't feel that we have the respect we deserve. Please settle a fair and equitable contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Amy Rios: Good evening. My colleagues and I are professionals who do the best for our students every day. We shouldn't have to fight for what we work hard for. Please give us a fair contract. Your teachers are suffering and that means our students are suffering as well. Thank you.

Mr. Carlos Rios: First, I have to say I find it very concerning that the members of this Board felt it was okay to go into a private session for over five hours last week during the last Board meeting and then gave the public today a two-hour limit. That is indicative of the attitude that the Board seems to have towards the people of Paterson, including the children. Not working towards settling the contract is more of the same. Why should I be surprised? Please do the right thing and settle the contract already. Do the right thing for the people and children of Paterson. Thank you.

Ms. Norma Vitale: Good evening, everyone. I have been in Paterson for over 17 years. Our students deserve a good education. However, we are losing so many amazing teachers to higher paying districts. It really is heartbreaking when I hear new teachers that just started two or three years ago looking for another job because they hear new teachers making a lot more money than they are. They have heard stories of how we have been at times without a contract for four years. They don't want to go through that. They haven't invested into the district for longer than two or three years. Therefore, they have nothing else to lose if they leave. I urge you to please settle our contract now. We deserve it. Our students deserve it. We teach. We care. Be fair. Thank you.

Ms. Rayna Gorga: This is Rayna Gorga. I've been teaching in the district for over 20 years. I'm asking that you please settle the contract. I witnessed losing four years of hard work that I put in and I don't want to see that happen again. Please settle now.

Mr. Robert Flynn: There are a number of things amiss here. Number one, no sense of urgency. Number two, no empathy for your employees. Number three, a lack of financial acumen, especially when it comes to the value of money. Teachers are leaving due to subpar pay and lack of a contract. We all want to advance, promote, and improve education in Paterson. It starts with a new contract. Thank you.

Ms. Dana Hirschfeld: My name is Dana Hirschfeld. I'm a first-year second grade teacher. I have been offered many other job opportunities. As an eager first-year teacher, I chose to go to Paterson. I am disheartened and upset like all my other colleagues about the lack of respect we have been given from the Board. Please settle our contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Michele Grevesen: I think we should have a fair and equitable contract. Last time, we went six years without one and we can't repeat that process. Thank you.

Ms. Caitlin Aylmer: As a new teacher in Paterson, I am disappointed and upset by the lack of progress that has been made by the Board in settling our contract. I and my fellow teachers deserve your respect, especially the ones that have been in Paterson for way longer than I have. How upsetting and disheartening that you treat your employees this way. Please settle the contract.

Ms. Latoya Jones: Good evening, everyone. My name is Latoya Jones. I have worked in this district for over 16 years. I'm a parent, resident, and voter. We demand a fair and equitable contract. We need our salaries right-sized just like the assistant superintendents. Respect begins with a contract. How do you expect to attract highly qualified teachers if the administration fails to respect the teachers that have spent so much of their time and effort to address the needs of the students? Have a good night.

Ms. Karen Lipari: Good evening. I'm asking as a dedicated Paterson teacher to please show us and our students the respect we deserve by giving us a fair and equitable contract. Save Paterson schools. Keep your staff. Please settle now. Thank you.

Ms. Leena Musbeh: Our teachers are hurting and leaving. Settle our contract now. Give us a fair contract. This is my first year in Paterson. I want to stay in Paterson, but that starts with a new contract for all teachers, not only for me, but for everybody. Thank you and have a good evening.

Ms. Dana Brannan: Good evening. What a great job this evening by our Paterson Public School students. Kudos to their teachers for going above and beyond, again, and without a contract! Obviously, this is not appreciated. You are chasing good teachers out of our district. We demand a fair and equitable contract. Respect begins with our contract. Settle now. Thank you.

Ms. Denise Holsworth: Good evening. Our students deserve teachers and staff that they can rely on. How can our students rely on adults that are constantly leaving due to their contract not being settled? Please settle our contract and put the children of Paterson first. Thank you.

Ms. Marni Mendez: Good evening. Imagine your child has not had a certified ELA teacher for the second consecutive year. Imagine your non-verbal child with autism has not had a certified speech therapist to help them learn communication skills. These are not imaginary scenarios. These are real scenarios that happen to real children in our district. We need to settle this contract. Thank you.

Ms. Patty Bottone: I'm new to School No. 15. I've been a teacher for seven years and I left for a better experience. I have to say as far as the staff and students go, it's been incredible. The lack of pay and funding towards the students has been really rough. I have three kids at home, one of which is special needs. I have three jobs. It is impossible to afford the cost of living. Unfortunately, if we don't settle with a fair contract, I'm also going to have to leave. I don't want to. I love these students. They're sweet and they deserve everything that we can possibly give them. We can't get blood from a stone. That's all.

Ms. Lauren Schwerin: I've been teaching for the Paterson Public School District for 19 years. I'm asking the Superintendent and the Board to settle our contract now. Thank you very much.

Ms. Jennifer Ellerman: My name is Jennifer Ellerman and I've been a teacher in the district for eight years. I'm just wondering... (inaudible). Please settle the contract now.

Ms. Anita Valencia Bozzo: Good evening. It really is breaking my heart to see so many great teachers leaving our school. I've been working at MLK for 22 years. I've never seen anything like this. We have so many children without a certified teacher, children who are desperately in need, autistic children, children who cannot get over this turmoil in their lives. You're paying staff from elsewhere top dollar to come here. They're leaving to get top dollar somewhere else. What don't you pay us? It just doesn't make sense. The children cannot tolerate this. They have a whirlpool in their lives sometimes. They're not going to recover from this. This is not good for the kids. This is unstable. You have the power to stop this madness. It just does not make sense. The kids are suffering. Thank you.

Ms. Susan Butterfield: Good evening. I am the President of the Passaic County Education Association. The students and the educators of the Paterson Public Schools deserve a stable environment. Teacher working conditions are student learning conditions. The pre-employment incentives may fill some vacancies in the short term, but the strategy is like throwing water on a grease fire. Settle the contract and then work on the healing that is necessary to move forward for the staff and the students of Paterson. Thank you.

Mr. Christopher Lindsey: This is about more than numbers. This is about experience, dedication, and expertise being hemorrhaged. This is relationships from teaching generations of families being broken. This is kids being upset and distraught because the people they look to learn from aren't there or they leave. None of it is necessary. Please settle this contract equitably. Thank you.

Ms. Sydia Byrne: My name is Sydia Byrne. I've been a Paterson Public School teacher for over 20 years. I recently went back to school to finish my higher education. It is not fair for the children not to have a teacher in the classroom. I am a kindergarten aide subbing for the teacher who left. Please settle the contract now. The children are worth it and I'm worth it. Thank you.

Ms. Robin Malone: Hi, I'm Robin Malone. I'm a 30-year teacher in Paterson and also a product of this district. I'm a very hardworking teacher and very dedicated. I don't see any of the faces of my colleagues, so I imagine this Board does not want to see its staff. I have to say I'm extremely relieved that my camera is off because my face is so incredibly bruised and battered from being repeatedly slapped by this district. Money goes left and right, but not to those who directly impact our students every day. It is beyond disrespectful. We deserve respect and a right-sized fair contract and we want it now. Thank you.

Ms. Lauren Ferrer: Good evening. We deserve a fair and equitable contract. The district needs to figure out how to retain the staff that they have and respect the profession. Board members, please help settle the contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Yolanda Simmons: Good evening. I'm Yolanda Simmons. On behalf of teachers and essential support staff, settle the contract now. We need to focus on our true mission as educators, which is student academics, achievement, and enrichment. Settle the contract now. We're missing the opportunity to rebuild better relationships between the school district, the staff, the parents, and our students. Settle the contract now. What are you waiting for? Why are you doing this? This is wounding the lives of teachers and support staff, but more importantly, our students. Settle the contract now. Respect starts with a fair and equitable contract. Please settle the contract now.

Ms. Lina Barbir: Good evening. Paterson children deserve the best teachers and education. Keep teachers in the classroom. My colleagues have said it all. Please stop the suffering and the anxiety. In these hard conditions treat others as you like to be treated. Please settle now. Thank you so much.

Ms. Namaty Asfour: Good evening. I've been a school nurse in Paterson for over 20 years. I work alongside an amazing staff. If you wish to retain your highly effective staff, we need a fair and equitable contract for all. We deserve it and so do our students. Thank you.

Mr. Andrew Kimble: My name is Andrew Kimble. We demand, need, and deserve a fair and equitable contract. Respect begins with our contract. Please settle now. Thank you.

Mr. Hermes Almeida: Thanks for letting me talk here. Somebody said it really well. They said you can't put students first if you keep on putting teachers last. The teachers I work with show a lot of respect to the students. We respect their needs. We do our utmost to promote engagement and make the learning fun whenever possible. We show tolerance and patience when a kid excels in a less-than-stellar way. The next day is a new day, and that kid has another chance to do better thanks to a teacher who brings his or her best each day and treats each kid with respect. Teachers respect not only the students, but the curriculum we're asked to teach, the evaluation guidelines, and the rules we're to follow. How are these dedicated, giving, and respectful teachers treated? How is the respect they give every minute of every day returned? You can't put students first if you keep on putting teachers last. Please return the respect that teachers give this community every minute of their workday by giving us a fair and equitable contract. Thank you.

Mr. Charles Wilson: Good evening, everyone. I'm just wondering what's going on. You asked me to vote for you. I'm a citizen of Paterson. I did my job to vote for you to do the job that you are supposed to do. I can't even afford to buy half of the gifts I used to buy my kids for Christmas because my check keeps dwindling. We need a contract. Everybody else is getting their money. We need to get our money. You asked me to vote for you. I voted for you. Now it is time for the return. Let's get the contract going. Let's get the relationship back together. Let's do what we need to do to get the betterment for our kids. Don't forget, election time comes every year, and we have to vote for you. If we can't get you now, we sure are going to get you later. We're going to get what we need from the City of Paterson. It's time to improve for the betterment of our kids, not just for yourselves. Thank you.

Ms. Angela Harris: I have been a teacher in this district for five years. I put my heart and soul into what I do. I sit down at my computer for hours and hours putting together wonderful lessons for my students. I feel so undervalued. My heart is heavy. I feel so disrespected. Settle the contract. Eggs are up to \$3 for a dozen. A loaf of bread is up to \$2. How do you expect us to get along? How do you expect us to survive? This is so unfair. Settle the contract. Settle the contract. Please give us a fair working wage. It's good for us. It's good for the students. It's good for the community. Settle the contract.

Ms. Emily Rose: This is Emily Rose. I want to reinforce what everybody has said. We deserve a fair and equitable contract. Respect begins with our contract. Settle now. Don't be grinchies.

Ms. Dana Ruddy: My name is Dana Ruddy. I have been a behavioral disabilities teacher for the last eight years at School No. 20. I love my job. I love my students even more. But I cannot stand the disrespect anymore. Please settle our contract now. I'm a young mother and wife struggling to provide for my family with a frozen contract. In today's world where inflation is at an all-time high, the stress that I feel on a daily basis as I fill my gas tank, buy my groceries, try to pay my bills, and pay for daycare is unhealthy. We need to stop playing games and settle this. The lack of respect is disgusting. Respect your staff and settle this contract now. Thank you.

Ms. Wendy Rosales: We need to settle the contract. I have been working so hard to have all these certifications to be suitable for the students and do the best for them, but

my paycheck doesn't reflect that. There are other districts that are doing much better for the master certification that I have. I think Paterson can do much better. Thanks.

Ms. Ilmadeliz Monto: Good evening, everyone on the Board and Eileen Shafer. My name is Ilmadeliz Monto, and I've worked in the Paterson district for a little over 20 years. I'm here to say that we demand a fair and equitable contract. We don't demand it. We deserve a fair and equitable contract. The cost of living is rising. I'm sure you've noticed that. We deserve more than zero percent. Your motto is 'Children First.' However, how are classrooms without teachers effective? It results in failure. Do you want our kids to fail? I don't want our kids to fail. I want to keep our excellent teachers. You have the power to do something. Can you please do something? Let's just get this done. Let's work together, Ms. Shafer. Put yourself in our shoes. Remember when you were a teacher. You need the support. We need you so that we can help our students. We deserve a contract. When? Now!

Ms. Claudia Thomas: I'm a 5th grade teacher and I've been teaching for almost 20 years. My colleagues and I go above and beyond. I know you've been hearing this the entire night, but it's because we really do. We do this on a daily basis to ensure that our students are getting the best education that they can possibly get. We're with our students more than with our families and that's because we care. We're asking that you please settle our contract to not only be able to survive, but also to be fair to all the hard work we put in every single day. At this point, this is truly disgusting. I sit back and say, is this really our lives right now? We're begging for something that we deserve. I can't even begin to explain how much we deserve this. Please settle our contract. Thank you.

Ms. Judy Ritter: Good evening. I've been a special education teacher at School No. 20 for seven years. We deserve a fair and equitable contract. Please give us the contract we deserve. We all go above and beyond for our students. Give us a contract that reflects what we do for our students and the community. I love my job and my students. Please respect us by giving us a contract we deserve and can live with. Thank you.

Ms. Marika LoBue: Good evening. I'm a 5th grade science and social studies teacher at School No. 9. I'm sure I'm speaking for many of us who teach three 90-minute blocks a day plus intervention periods every day with 30 or more students in a class without any bilingual or special education support. I leave every day wondering how I'm going to get up the next day and do this all over again. Without support, the challenges and expectations faced every day are both physically and mentally exhausting. Also, without a contract, most of us are faced with making tough financial sacrifices on a daily basis. The district website says, "Paterson - A Promising Tomorrow. Together We Can." I'm asking you to please live by that. Please give us the support we need, both in and out of the classroom. Please, let's work together and come up with a contract soon. Thank you for your time.

Ms. Rosemary Chichester: I'm a 26-year veteran teacher and I'm asking you to please settle our contract now.

Ms. Marlo Cozart: I'm honored and glad to be here. I've been a Paterson School District social worker on the child study team for the district for over 23 years. I would love to tell everybody how great we are, but it's hard to do that if we don't settle our contract. Please do so. Thank you so much for listening. Have a great day.

Ms. Monifa Mears Greer: I've been working for the Paterson School District for 21 years and it's been a struggle. This year I've been truly beaten down. I'm feeling a little

overwhelmed. It would be great if we could have a fair contract. Please make sure that you're looking out for all of us, not just the students. It takes a lot for a teacher to prepare for students. Thank you very much.

Ms. Gina Rourke: Good evening. As one of the school nurses, I'm finding it harder than ever to care for the health and safety of our students. The external forces in recent years of these increased viruses have put a lot of pressure on education. Now coupled and even rivaled by the internal forces of this staffing crisis, it's bringing a level of inconstancy and instability like I've never seen before. It's creating an ever-greater risk to the health and safety of our students. Please provide for a fair contract now and bring an effective end to this threat. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

Ms. Francis Velez: My name is Francis Velez. I've been teaching in the district for 10 years and I'm not even at \$55,000. I do not desire to go to another district, but I need to provide for my family during these times. Please settle the contract.

Ms. Joshue Resto: Good evening. A huge shout-out to the kids from the schools that did the holiday singing, that was awesome, and another huge shout-out to a student getting accepted into Brown. That is great stuff to hear. Sorry for the loss of that family member. It's horrible stuff. I've been in the district for 19 years. It hurts having a family. Settle the contract. Do the right thing. Be human about it. It is what it is. This is life and we just have to go about it and settle the contract. Be fair. It's the holiday season. Happy holidays! Be safe. Take care of one another. Let's get it done. Let's work together people.

Ms. Vivian Figueroa: Good evening. Paterson Public School teachers need a new contract. The children in our community deserve a better education with enough staff to serve them. Please. We need to settle the contract now. We need respect. Thank you.

Ms. Betsaida Morillo: I'm a Paterson school teacher. I've been in Paterson now for 25 years. This is the worst I've seen it as far as morale with the staff. I would like for you to settle the contract simply because in the morning I would like to not have to explain to my students which teacher has just left, which teacher is not there, which service is not available, and which substitute will be covering a very essential class that they need. Thank you.

Ms. Aimee Paez: Good evening. I'm just wondering how many more excellent, not good or satisfactory, teachers Eileen Shafer and the Board are willing to lose. We work very hard every day. We show up to work. Our students are suffering. The staff is suffering. The community and parents are taking notice to the point that they have not reelected three Board members and are having them replaced. Yet, two are going to Florida. We are drowning. Not only did Ms. Shafer get raises, the other superintendents got raises as well. Stop the blame game. Work together. We deserve respect. We work hard for our students. All we want for Christmas is an equitable and fair contract. Please give us what we deserve. Thank you and have a good night.

Ms. Jeannette Sosa: My name is Jeannette Sosa. First, my condolences to the family that lost a child. I will keep you in prayer. Congrats to the fabulous chorus presentations and the student going to Brown. I'm excited for that. I'm an ESL special education 19-year highly effective veteran teacher. I live and work here in Paterson and my children attend our public schools here. I vote here. I stand in solidarity with my fellow colleagues. Settle the contract now. We go above and beyond. We spend our

own money on our students' needs. We sacrifice our own family's time. Please give us the respect we deserve. Thank you.

Mr. Jeffrey Nelson: I've been a Paterson resident for 25 years. I've been teaching for 36 years. I've been teaching at John F. Kennedy for five years. It's a wonderful school. The staff is wonderful. I feel so bad for all the children who are going to lose teachers. They continue to leave, and I don't get it. All you need to do is settle this contract. Make it fair. They're leaving because they're getting a better deal elsewhere and it should not be like that. Please settle this contract. The students deserve it.

Ms. So Yoon Lym: I've been a Paterson teacher for 23 years. I was laid off for one year. I've always been optimistic. After the pandemic I started to think back to when I was laid off and I was optimistic. I started to think back to when we had that contract freeze for four years. I maybe should have left. It's gotten so bad that I now have a class that I haven't been trained for. It's essentially an ESL class and I'm an art teacher. I've been teaching six classes without extra pay. This discussion about adding more classes, I've been doing it since 2001. I'm asking that you give us the respect that we give our students, our colleagues, and the district. Give the veteran teachers the dignity that they deserve. Thank you very much. Please settle the contract.

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

OTHER BUSINESS

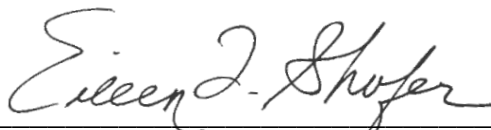
Ms. Shafer: I want to thank everyone who spoke tonight and came to the meeting. The last contract was settled within 90 days of my arrival as Superintendent and approved by this Board. In addition to that, Board members were at the table of that contract. Nothing has changed. Both the Board and the administration care and respect our students and staff and we want to settle the contract, but it takes both sides to come to the table and negotiate. We look forward to the next meeting with the mediator. Please come to negotiations so we can settle the contract. Thank you, Mr. President.

Comm. Simmons: Is there anything anyone wants to add before we proceed to close?

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 p.m.



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