

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

December 8, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.  
Remote - Zoom

Presiding: Comm. Kenneth Simmons, President

Present:

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

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

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

Absent:

Comm. Dania Martinez

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 notice of this meeting:

**Workshop Meeting  
December 8, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.  
Remote - Zoom  
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.

## **REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Ms. Shafer: Thank you, Mr. President. Before I move into the presentations, I would just ask if everyone can come on the screen so I know who I'm speaking to. Thank you. Good evening, Board Commissioners, cabinet, staff, parents and Paterson community. I want to take this opportunity to address the Board of Education Commissioners, the staff of Paterson Public Schools, and most especially the students and the families that I have served. When I was Superintendent of Schools in 2018, I was given one

resounding clear objective. That was to do everything I could to restore decision-making power of Paterson Public schools back to the duly elected Commissioners of the Board of Education and to restore the voices of Paterson families in public education for the first time since 1991. I knew as the Superintendent of Schools I would not be able to do that alone and that is why I launched my administrative motto "Together We Can." It wasn't just a motto. I enlisted the help of our students, parents, community, community leaders, our local government, our local clergy, cabinet members, district leadership, district teachers, and all staff. In keeping with my own personal priority, we reached a new contract with the PEA within my first 100 days as Superintendent. That was in order to establish good faith that was not existent prior and to partner with our teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries, nurses, and all PEA members who work and serve our students. Together we accomplished local control. The decision was rendered by the state on January 6, but we all know that local control was not restored in a single day. It took a very long time. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed us to accomplish even more and together we kept our students fed during the 18 months our school buildings were closed. Together we closed the digital divide and provided all our students with Chromebooks and internet access. Together we continue providing opportunities for student success and we prepared our buildings to allow our students and staff to safely return to them. I'm immensely proud to work for the students and families of Paterson Public Schools. Not only serving as Superintendent, but during every single day of the past 31 years. You are only as good as the people around you and I have been so fortunate to be surrounded by extraordinary people. That is why I am so grateful to this community, the Board of Education Commissioners, the members of cabinet, the executive directors, the directors, and everyone I worked with in the Superintendent's office. My staff is second to none. And all the principals, the vice principals, the supervisors, paraprofessionals, secretaries, custodians, nurses, food service workers, and everyone who works to take care of the district's thousands of students every day as if they were their own children. It is after much personal reflection and thoughtful consideration of all that has been accomplished and all the people I have been so honored to work with and to come to know that I have come to a decision to notify the Board of Education Commissioners tonight of my intention to retire as Superintendent of Schools on June 30, 2022. Those aren't easy words to say. I had many sleepless nights. It's not easy to leave, especially about a career I have loved every day for 41 years, 31 of them in Paterson. It gave me time to reflect on the little things. Just the other day I was at Kennedy High School where a student stopped me and she said she recognized me and she just wanted to say hello. Students know me. Parents know me. More importantly, they know that I love them. Moments like that matter to me, just like moments when parents have said to me, "You really care about my kids." That is absolutely true. To the parents, I have always felt that your children are my children. I have always wanted and will continue to want the best for them. This district is at a critical point. Prior to the pandemic, more kids were reading on grade level. We had more kids going to two and four-year colleges. More AP classes were being taken by our students and more dual enrollment. Then the pandemic came. But we are getting back on track and that's why it's a critical point. The pandemic is not over and the thousands of students still need a thorough and efficient education. For the remainder of my tenure here until June, I will continue to focus on the needs of the staff, the students, and their families. We still have the better part of half a school year to complete before I retire and there is much work to be done. And you all know me. I will be here every day working just as hard. For now, I say thank you from the bottom of my heart and God bless each and every one of you. Please continue to have children in the forefront. Thank you.

Comm. Hodges: I'm going to be unpleasant. To Superintendent Shafer, the circumstances around your decision, which the public does not know about, but I do

know about, are an embarrassment to this city and an embarrassment to this Board of Education. It's regrettable that you've had to take this position because of the activities in the back channels that every single Board member knows about. And they are a legion. They can call me a liar if they want to, but it's the truth. When your original position was offered to you, I was chief among your detractors. I want to say that I personally am very sorry that you have made this decision today. Not only does it deprive our staff of a very good leader, but it also opens the door for what I anticipate will be someone who's not going to be quite as good. People on this Board know who that is. If they want to ask me, I will go ahead and say it. This is not just you're retiring. There has been a lot of trash that's been going on behind closed doors and in the background that people in this community don't know about and that people in this district do know about. It's a shame and a disgrace and it's this kind of thing that should not take place when we are trying to educate children. When we want personal things for ourselves and for our friends, this is what goes on and this is what has resulted. Your retirement is well-deserved. I want to thank you personally for what you have dedicated to this district. I am certain that what's going to happen in the future, what the aim is in the future, is not going to be to replace you with someone who is nearly as interested or as qualified as you are. That's the goal of many of the Board members in this district and I want the public to know it. I am not going to hide it and I'm not going to be quiet about it going forward. I am going to use whatever means necessary to publicize this nonsense that has taken place here. This community needs to know what has been going on with their Board of Education and, unfortunately, with your tenure as Superintendent. I thank you for your efforts. I am sorry that you had to go through what you've had to go through, particularly in the last few months. I hope that you will look back on most of your tenure here in this district fondly and purposefully, as opposed to what took place in the last few months on this Board and in this district, which is a travesty and a disgrace. When they move forward the way they plan to, I am going to tell people just what's going on and why. I look forward to every possible mechanism that I can provide. I promise you that. Thank you, Mr. President.

Comm. Teague: I welcome any challenge that may come, but I am one of those Board members who is aware of what was going on, on both sides. There was some wrong on each side. There was some strong-arming going on. There was some sabotage going on. There were some people who were intent on holding up an entire process to get leadership positions on the Board. There are probably some things that were slightly unethical. I welcome any battle. Trust me. I welcome any battle.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: At the end of the day, 41 years rolls off the tongue very easily, but I know it's been 41 years of hard work and dedication. We do want to thank you for your service. I've said this in the past. You have been the best Superintendent, especially during this time. You can't look the other way on that. You have been the best Superintendent, particularly in the last few years. You were the best person to move this district to where we are and move the district forward. I do appreciate your work. When you say you're there every day, you are literally there every day. I want to thank you for your hard work, dedication, and passion for Paterson Public Schools. I think that is worth a lot of praise. It's been a very difficult few years, not only with the Board members, but moving the district forward with the state. We have gotten there with your leadership, and I do want to thank you for that. It's important and I think you deserve the praise and appreciation from this district. Thank you for all your work. You know we have a lot of work to do in the next few months, so we are going to continue moving the district forward. Unfortunately, to all the other nonsense around conversations, we will see what happens as we move forward. We will not tarnish the conversation of all the great things you have done, and we will not deal with Board member nonsense at this moment. I agree with Comm. Teague. We will move forward

in doing the processes that we have done for the last few years correctly. We are going to continue to move the district forward as we should for the sake of Paterson and for the students in this great city. Thank you once again and let's continue the hard work. We have a long time to go. Thank you.

Comm. M. Martinez: I'd like to give the opportunity for anyone else to make some comments before we move on. I will leave the floor open.

Comm. Arrington: I don't know if this is the appropriate time. Obviously, we are not saying goodbye right now, but thank you Eileen. I really appreciate you. You've answered every email, all my silly questions and texts. No matter what time of the day or night, you and Cheryl always respond to me. Thank you for everything you do, Eileen. You know how I feel about you. You are definitely the only Superintendent I know. Thank you for everything that you have done for this district, Eileen.

Comm. M. Martinez: If there is anyone else who would like to share some comments, the floor will remain open. I will have remarks to share at a later date. I think in light of the work that remains in front of us this topic needs and deserves its moment. I want to do so accordingly, so I will refrain at this time from making those comments until I feel it's a more fitting time where we can focus solely on that. If there are any other comments that would like to be made, I welcome that. If not, we can move on with the agenda.

## **PRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Discussion of the New Jersey Department of Education, Office of Fiscal Accountability and Compliance Audit of the Carl D. Perkins Funds**

Mr. Will Graulich: Thank you, Ms. Peron, Ms. Shafer, Board Commissioners and members of the Paterson community. My name is Will Graulich. I serve as your Director of Secondary Education and the presentation I have tonight is a required component of an audit implemented for our Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Grant. The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Grant of 2006 serves as the principal source of federal funding to improve secondary and post-secondary career and technical education, also known as CTE programs. CTE is organized educational activities that offer a sequence of courses that provide students with academic and technical knowledge. Skills, as well, that allows them to be prepared for further education and emerging employment sectors. CTE is not present in all of the district's career pathways, but only those that meet a very high and strict requirement eligible for funding from the state and thus federal government. The New Jersey Department of Education initiated a routine audit for school year 2017-2018 of the Perkins grant. The auditor from the NJDOE commenced work in the summer of 2019. After a brief period, the auditor was transferred to another assignment and reestablished contact with the district in August of 2020. The district worked with the auditor over the course of the 2020-2021 school year and recently submitted their audit report which required the district to create a corrective action plan for their eight (8) findings, which I will present this evening. The district is required to present these findings at a public meeting, send the New Jersey Department of Education a resolution approving the corrective action plan, and post the findings of the report and the corrective action plan on the district website. Since the 2017-2018 school year, the district has been awarded over \$1.3 million in Perkins funds. For this particular audit year of 2017-18, the district was awarded \$309,933.00 in Perkins funds. As a result of the audit of this \$309,933.00 from that year's federal Perkins allocation, the district will be reimbursing the New Jersey Department of Education \$13,130.51 or 4.25% of that

year's allocation. I will now review these findings and our methods of implementation to correct these findings. Please bear in mind that given that this audit was conducted on a grant period of five cycles or years ago, some of these corrective actions are actually already in place. This corrective action plan was cooperatively developed by multiple district departments. Recommendations or findings #1 and #6 require the same methods of implementation. I will present them together. Recommendation #1, computing devices and equipment acquired with grant funds at a cost of \$12,033.84 were not available for inspections. Number 6, the district failed to maintain effective control and accountability for computing devices and equipment in accordance with federal regulations and program specific requirements. Now during this grant period, the district purchased 318 such devices and this monetary figure of \$12,033.84 is reflective of 18 devices we are unable to locate. As such our methods of implementation to remediate findings #1 and #6 are to examine processes utilized in school year 2017-2018 and identify areas in need of revision and evaluation. Using results of that revision and evaluation, we will develop and implement standard operating procedures for logging, tagging, and tracking computing devices and equipment. We will also be following up with the New Jersey Department of Education on the process method and form to return funds owed and then we will subsequently reimburse the NJDOE. Findings #2 and #8 also require the same methods of implementation. I will be presenting them together. Finding #2, non-personnel expenditures of \$1,096.67 were allocated to the grant in contravention of federal regulations and departmental guidelines. And #8, Paterson did not ensure compliance with certain other department guidelines while administering the grant. Our methods of implementation to remediate those two recommendations are to regularly confer with New Jersey Department of Education's Office of Career Readiness when encountering issues or questions pertaining to the Perkins grant. Participate when available in any professional development or learning opportunities. Conduct annual workshops for school-based administrators and CTE teachers on non-allowable and allowable costs associated with the grant. Contact the New Jersey Department of Education for the process method to return the funds owed and subsequently reimburse the NJDOE. Recommendation #3, several district Board policies relating to internal controls were not provided for examination or required revisions. We will review and have reviewed current policies and identify where revisions are needed and update policies and post those on the website. Recommendation #4, the district failed to adhere to New Jersey public contracts law and federal regulations when purchases exceeded the public bidding threshold. Paterson will adhere to the New Jersey public contracts law or Universal Grant Guideline II, CFR subsection 200-318-26 whichever is most restrictive when obtaining goods or services for the Perkins program. Finding #5, Paterson did not review vendors for suspension or debarment. Our method of implementation to remediate is to update the vendor application packet to include verifications or identify any vendors suspended or debarred from participation in federal programs. We will also be incorporating an online verification protocol. Recommendation #7, which is the final recommendation presented tonight, the grantee used improper codes to classify Perkins funds in its accounting system which impacted the final report. As such we will monitor and review guidelines and broadcasts provided by the New Jersey Department of Education to adhere to changes to the revenue and program codes. This concludes my presentation and review of a corrective action plan. I appreciate your time.

Ms. Peron: Thank you, Will.

Comm. M. Martinez: Thank you. If there are any questions regarding the presentation that Will just gave I will leave the floor open.

## **Start Strong Assessment**

Ms. Joanna Tsimpedes: Good evening, everyone. I just want to start off with saying that the Start Strong results that we are putting forth tonight are preliminary numbers. The state was supposed to release the finalized reports this past week, but pushed the deadline back. If there are any changes to our preliminary numbers, we will update the power point and send it out to the Board members. I'm going to turn it over to Luis and Nicole who will be presenting the results tonight along with strategies that we have put in place to remediate.

Ms. Nicole Brown: Good evening, Commissioners. We're going to take a little road trip back in time. Going back to the 2019 school year, in March 2020 our schools closed for the health-related COVID-19 pandemic. Students at that point were provided paper packets to complete assignments for the duration of the school year and state assessments were not administered. Fast forward to the last school year of 2020-2021, September through June our schools in Paterson remained closed for the health-related closure for all our students. The digital divide was closed, and students were able to participate in synchronous instruction through Google Meet and had asynchronous options as well in the event that they could not participate during the actual school day. A small population of our students returned for in-person instruction in June 2020, which gave us a taste of what it was going to be like returning in September of the current school year. In order to assist our families, parent workshops were offered to help with Google Classroom, utilizing Google Meet, and digital tools for their children. Numerous professional development sessions were provided to teachers on a weekly basis to help support implementation of remote learning. Again, state assessments were not administered. In lieu of the NJSOA for the 2020-2021 school year, the Start Strong assessments were administered and that satisfied the federal testing requirement. The tests were designed as all other assessments in the State of New Jersey, to provide a fair and equitable assessment reliably measuring the state learning standards. The Start Strong assessments were designed to test students in English language arts in grades 4-10, math grades 4-8, and those enrolled in algebra I, geometry, and algebra II, and science grades 6, 9, and 12. They were designed to indicate a student's readiness for the current math ELA science course and are based on the subset of prioritized prior year academic standards. They're measuring the previous school year's work, not grade level standards that students are currently in. The Start Strong versus the NJSLA - these two assessments do differ in the way they are designed. Start Strong has only one unit of testing for each content area and students may take up to two content areas in a single day with the units no more than 60 minutes in length. In the NJSLA, each content area has two or three units of testing, depending on the content. Students can take up to units within the same area in a single given day. The units vary in length from 45 to 90 minutes. With the Start Strong assessments, all the items are multiple choice and machine scorable, which allow for same-day reporting. Teachers have access to their results immediately. The NJSLA has testing that consists of multiple-choice open-ended questions that do not allow for same-day score reporting. We have to wait for summative files. With Start Strong, teachers and administrators had access to those on-demand and dynamic reports through the testing platform of Pearson Access Next. With the NJSLA, there is no on-demand access to any of those platforms. With Start Strong, ELA grades 4-10 are tested. With the NJSLA, it's grades 3-9. For math, Start Strong has grades 4-8 and 9-10 enrolled in algebra I, geometry, and algebra II. The NJSLA is math grades 3-8 and grade 9 enrolled in algebra I, geometry, or algebra II. For science in Start Strong, we have grades 6, 9, and 12 and with NJSLA grades 5, 8, and 11. Start Strong assesses the prior available standards during the fall and the NJSLA will assess the current grade level standards during the spring. That moves us into our results.

Mr. Luis Valentin: Good evening, Commissioners. My name is Luis Valentin. I'm the Acting Director of Assessments. Today I will be sharing the results for the Start Strong. If we look at the NJSLA historically, it has five score groups with children scoring in 1 and 2 on the lower end of the spectrum, in 3 on the higher end, and 4, 5 are usually proficient. If you're looking at the Start Strong, it's different. Where it says, "Strong Support May Be Needed," those are students on the lower end of the spectrum. "Some Support May Be Needed" is right in the middle. "Less Support May Be Needed" are your higher performing students. In looking at our district averages, we're looking at ELA having 24% of students with "Less Support May Be Needed" versus math with 5% of students with "Less Support May Be Needed." In science, we have 4% that are "Strong Support Needed." Students are more proficient in ELA compared to math and science across all grade levels with the 24% needing less support. The results that we're seeing are similar to what's been seen in international and national studies that reported research illustrating students need greater support in the content area of math as compared to ELA. The state was prepared to address this research through distribution of ESSER funds focused on learning acceleration. Looking across our demographics, female students slightly outperformed their male counterparts in ELA. There was no major difference between genders in math and science. Our former EL's outperformed our current EL's. Furthermore, the former EL's slightly outperformed the district average in ELA as well. Looking at the economically disadvantaged versus non-economically disadvantaged versus homeless, there was virtually no difference in performance across subjects between these subgroups. When looking at it by race, we see that our Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students were almost identical in ELA, math, and science. Our Asian students outperformed our Hispanic/Latino and Black/African American students. We have 46% "Needed Less Support" in ELA, 18% "Needed Less Support" in math, and 8% "Needed Less Support" in science. When looking at some of the other categories, such as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, I would not look at this data too closely because it's a much smaller subset of students. We're talking about maybe 10 or fewer students included in those subgroups. Looking through our grade level specific ones, we can see that ELA and math grade 4 was right around the percentage points for math as far as the number of students who need less support. For grade 4, they were slightly under the district average. For grade 5, they actually outperformed the district in ELA in the subgroups of "Less Support May Be Needed" and "Some Support May Be Needed." They also had fewer students in the "Strong Support May Be Needed," which is also a good thing. 49% have "Strong Support May Be Needed" versus the district's 55%. In looking at math, it's almost identical. For grade 6, for ELA our students did slightly better as far as "Some Support May Be Needed," but it stayed the same in "Strong Support May Be Needed" and "Less Support May Be Needed" went down a little bit. In looking at math, it's almost identical to the district average. As for science, we're looking at grade 6 outperforming the district average with science. We have 6% with "Less Support May Be Needed" versus 4%, 22% with "Some Support May Be Needed" versus 19%, and 72% with "Strong Support May Be Needed" versus 77% for the district. In ELA and math for grade 7, they outperformed the district in both categories. We have 26% of students versus 24% with "Less Support May Be Needed" in ELA, 27% of the students versus 21% with "Some Support May Be Needed." We lowered that number in "Strong Support May Be Needed" to 55% for the district and 47% for grade 7. For grade 8, we see similar results with math. Math was outperforming the district as well. There are slight percentage points. ELA was about the same, with the exception of a few percentage points for the "Less Support May Be Needed." When moving into high school, grade 9 was about the same as the rest of the district. Grade 10 outperformed the district across all three categories. We're looking at 29% with "Less Support May Be Needed" versus 24%. 17% with "Some Support May Be Needed"

versus 15%. 54% with “Strong Support May Be Needed” versus 80%. For math, we're looking at about the same as the district average. For geometry it's slightly higher than the district average, but there's not much change going across high school math as well. We're seeing the same results here for algebra II. A higher percentage of students did go into the “Some Support May Be Needed” bucket. Those were students who are not in the “Strong Support May Be Needed” versus the 72% that are in algebra II. Our high school science underperformed versus the district average. Just keep in mind when looking at these results that even though we're looking at percentage points, score groups, this test is not constructed the same as the NJSLA. This test consisted of 20 questions that were multiple-choice. The students were tested on a subset of standards, not the same amount of standards as the NJSLA. This gives us good information moving forward, but it's not necessarily the same type of information that we would use as we do with the NJSLA results.

Ms. Brown: Here are some of the recommendations that we have regarding the data analysis. What has changed since the 2020-2021 school year in terms of professional development? We have digital leadership sessions that have been provided to district administration during cohort trainings and teachers through school-led PLCs. We have had a focus on social/emotional learning to make sure that our students are in the right mindset for school. Training has been provided to district leadership. All building staff and SEL teams are in the process of being hired to provide additional supports to both our teachers and students. We have blended learning training that has taken place and cohort training for teachers specific to their content area. It's not just how to incorporate blended learning, but what specific tools will help to advance that within the designated contents. Response to intervention is under way. Training has been provided to all district administrators as well as all teachers. We know that the pandemic has caused learning loss, but we want to make sure that intervention procedures are carried out correctly in the classroom and that we don't have an influx of INRS cases. After school professional development for teachers is happening utilizing that data to adjust the pacing and to meet the instructional needs of the students. For students, we had a summer enrichment program. About 1,500 students participated. It was open as a voluntary program to students in grades k-8, with our k-5 population being in-person and 6-8 remote. This was different than in the past. Previously, our summer programs were mandatory based on student proficiency and they were only open to grades 3-8. Our summer program this year was focused on ELA, math, and science. It lasted for 18 days during July for three and a half instructional hours daily. We have a Saturday STEAM academy under way, which was open to all students as a voluntary program in grades k-8 for in-person learning. We have about 500 students participating in that. It has an interdisciplinary focus that uses project-based learning to support the content areas of ELA, math, and science. It is occurring over the course of 10 Saturdays from October through March. They have three and a half hours of instruction on those days that they report. An after-school program is under way. The planning phase is currently happening with principals determining the needs assessment and submitting that. That will be open to students as a voluntary program in grades k-8 and will provide them up to 75 hours of instruction throughout the remainder of the school year through May. We know that our high school students have unique needs since some are working after school and their time is more rigid. We wanted to make a resource available to them that would allow them to participate at any point in time. We have contracted with Tutor.com to provide 24/7 access to live tutors that support instruction in over 300 courses. When students are working at home and they realize that they're stuck on a homework problem, writing project, or college essay, they can log in and within minutes they can have a tutor working with them one-on-one to support their needs. They have the availability to use tutors in other languages if necessary. We are in our fourth year of the Wonders Reading Program. That is the resource that we're using for our k-5



students. However, we have introduced iStation, which is the literacy intervention platform that was new for students in May 2021. That is utilized by our k-8 students. Learning Ally was launched in March 2021 and that is for all students. With those two resources they have the ability to hear text read fluently and follow along. If they are a struggling reader, they have that support as well as the availability to practice their foundational skills and be put on their unique learning path. If they are accelerated, they are also pushed forward to continue to advance. In science, we have the Defined Learning Platform, which is in its second year for grades 6-8 and new for grades 3-5. That gives students access to project-based tasks that have an interdisciplinary focus and also a career-related focus so that they're exploring the science content and also have real-world application. We have Mystery Science for k-5 and Pivot Interactives, which is in its second year for high school. Both allow for students to have simulation of lab experiences. If need be, in terms of sharing resources or acting in a virtual blended environment, they have the availability to still participate in those lab skills. We have Newsela for grades 3 through high school. It is available in both science and social studies. It allows for teachers to take the students' reading Lexile level and provide them the same article at five different reading levels. All students are getting the same content within the article but are able to read it at their availability and then engage in conversation with their peers about the text that was read. For math, we have Big Ideas, which is in its third year for high school, and enVision Math, which is in its second year for grades 6-8. Grades k-5 was adopted in January 2020. In terms of intervention platforms for math, we have ALEKS, which is in its third year for high school and second year for grades 6-8. Imagine Math is in its second year for k-5. As with the iStation platform in literacy, ALEKS and Imagine Math both have benchmark assessments that students take throughout the school year which allow for progress monitoring and also gives teachers that baseline in terms of where students' proficiency is and what skills they would need additional support in, along with activities that teachers can utilize during small group intervention to help support the students at their levels. With those intervention platforms, we are monitoring that data from a district level and running weekly usage reports. Information is then shared with all building administrators and supervisors, so they too are aware of what the usage looks like. That data is being discussed at data meetings being held with all our schools and grade levels. In those meetings we are discussing data specific to the intervention platforms, providing both growth and usage, running records, which are looking at students' reading proficiency in grades k-5. We're looking at the social/emotional learning school goals, absences for students and staff, their current school grades, any vacancies that might exist, along with the Start Strong results and action plans schools have developed regarding those. Then the data analysis itself for Start Strong is done by grade and standards in concepts. We have professional development and implementation for teachers. That's being monitored during learning walks, visitations, and lesson plan reviews. The distribution and analysis of data took place in November. The development of instructional strategies is happening November and December with presentation of information to our schools in December and January. Professional development is already under way for our teachers that began this week. Learning walks will continue to take place for the duration of the school year. In the Start Strong analysis itself, teachers have the availability to see all the questions when they hover over the blue circle. That will give them the answer choices that were available, along with the questions themselves. The standards are there and if the teacher hovers over the 'i' in this indicator they are able to see the description of the standard. The concept that was targeted within that question is given to teachers and then the percentage of correctness. We have 'correct', 'incorrect', and 'partial'. If it is marked 'correct', it means that students got both parts of a two-part question correct. If it's 'incorrect', both parts were wrong. If it's 'partial', they got one of two questions correct. Are there any questions?

Comm. Hodges: You gave us a lot of data and information there. I'm sorry I couldn't stop you during the process to help my understanding. In the Start Strong testing, were there particular areas of weakness that you were able to uncover? Was this a general weakness that was uncovered by the analysis?

Mr. Valentin: The analysis covered the general topics. It didn't cover anything specific because, as was stated earlier, the summative file has not been released by the state as of yet. We are dealing with some preliminary data. Once we have the summative file, we can start breaking it down by reporting content a little bit further.

Comm. Hodges: You put together an approach to address it, but I'm trying to figure out what it's aimed at. Is it just a generalized approach which you will then go back and refine when you have the information come out? That's what I'm looking for. I'm trying to find out what particular areas of weakness our students seem to exhibit and how you are directing a more comprehensive approach to those particular areas.

Ms. Brown: At the present point in time, it's a more comprehensive approach since we're looking at district data. However, as I mentioned, the teachers had access to on-demand reports at the time the assessment was administered. They have more specific student information regarding the students in their classrooms. At the school level, they're using that to guide the work in their PLCs and then perform interventions with the students. It is being done at a more granular level within the schools already, just not currently from the district since we don't have that in our summative files yet.

Comm. Hodges: Have the schools noticed any particular areas of weakness that they're trying to address? Or is it just a more comprehensive approach?

Ms. Tsimpedes: We've been meeting with principals individually to discuss data points for their building. We actually had spent time at a principal meeting to show them how to access the Start Strong assessment data, the preliminary files, so they can go in themselves. Some of them had already done it and started analyzing where their weaknesses are. One of the things that we're finding is predominantly in grades 3, 4, and 5 the struggle is with fractions, which makes some sense because it's very hard to teach students math virtually versus in-person. As we look at the data even from our intervention platforms, we're finding that the kids were remote from third grade all the way through fifth grade, although they were receiving instruction virtually, it is not the same when students need that tactile learning and the visual representation with the teacher. That is something that we're looking at. Schools are also basing after-school programs that will be starting in January on data that they have from various pieces. Start Strong is just one mirror of data that schools have. We have assessments at the school level that the teachers are looking at. We're also waiting for that final report to be put out from Start Strong. We ourselves can also tabulate lesson plans and resources to share with our teachers, especially in those domains that we are finding are in common across the district as an area of weakness.

Comm. Hodges: For the ninth and eleventh grade, is it general science or are there particular courses, such as chemistry, physics, etc.?

Ms. Tsimpedes: It's a general science approach that they utilize for the Start Strong assessment this year. When the students do assess again this year, they will be taking an eleventh-grade comprehensive assessment. That was the assessment that started before the pandemic. Unfortunately, we only had one year, and we never received data from the state because the pandemic had occurred and they didn't have a second and

third year comparison. We're looking at multiple pieces of data to identify for science what is going to be the focus. We do know that we need to concentrate on the sciences.

Comm. Hodges: If you're an eleventh grader, you're missing one of the big three, are you not? It's biology, chemistry, and physics.

Ms. Tsimpedes: They start off on environmental science while they take chemistry and biology. Back in the day, it used to be a biology exam. The state changed that and made it a comprehensive eleventh grade exam. This year our juniors will be taking a science comprehensive NJSLA exam inclusive of a new assessment that will be one of the graduation requirements for the class of 2023.

Comm. Hodges: We'll still be teaching biology, chemistry, and...

Ms. Tsimpedes: Absolutely. That did not change.

Comm. Hodges: My concern is that general information is what you get in the elementary school. I'm wondering how the high school curriculum will help you do well on that test.

Ms. Tsimpedes: When we looked at what the state puts out as areas of focus, we ensure within our curriculum that these pieces are inclusive enough. As I had mentioned, we were waiting for a more comprehensive report to come out regarding the NJSLA science, and it was not put forth. We are using the data points that we have, inclusive of what's been covered on previous assessments and using what the focus standards are for next generation standards, which is the NJSL. That is our focus when it comes to science, ensuring that our students have the exposure and the experiences to the different sciences so that they have a well-rounded comprehensive approach to science when they do take their science exam and be better prepared as they move on in their coursework as seniors and onto college with their sciences.

Comm. Hodges: We have a way to go yet.

Ms. Tsimpedes: Yes we do, Dr. Hodges. I do not argue with that at all. This pandemic just added more pieces to the pile, but we are working on it. We have put procedures in place. We are looking at data. We're ensuring that everyone is doing the same thing. We are all accountable for educating our students and ensuring that we are meeting their needs and continuing them to grow.

Comm. Hodges: We at least know that there's a problem with fractions. What about algebra?

Ms. Tsimpedes: We are waiting for the different pieces of algebra that comes with regards to the standards. Are we looking at linear equations or the graphing? That's why it's important, which we will talk about next, to have that focus to ensure that our students are completing the intervention platforms to help them build their understanding so that they can be successful when they go to high school. Ms. Brown talked in her presentation about our students having a tutor available to them 24 hours a day. As students are logging on and asking for specific help, they are asking about linear equations and functions, graphing, and real numbers. Students are using the platform to get that additional support at home to ensure that they can continue to do the coursework and not give up. We know that when students struggle, sometimes they

tend to give up on themselves and then we start seeing students failing. That's what we're trying to avert.

Comm. Hodges: How well are they doing in the earlier grades with simple multiplication and division? If you can't do multiplication and division, you can't do factoring, which really destroys your ability to do any algebra. You mentioned fractions. Multiplication and division are key and have to be mastered.

Ms. Tsimpedes: Teachers include that as part of their essential activities for students to build that fluency. Even kindergarten, first and second grades speak to fluency regarding addition and subtracting of numbers. When we get to third grade and students are introduced to multiplication, they are exposed to the practice. Being that we now have our students in front of us and we also have intervention platforms that assist with helping our students acquire the knowledge that they need, we are seeing kids make progress. We also have to keep in mind we have a long way to go, and we are celebrating when our students are doing well. We have to continuously motivate them and let them know to keep doing what they are doing because it's working. We are seeing that as our students are coming back to in-person instruction this school year there are gaps. There's no denying that and our teachers are working tirelessly to ensure that we are meeting our kids where they need to be, working on those intervention groups to ensure that the students are receiving that differentiation support that they need in order to move forward.

Comm. Hodges: I just want to make sure that those particular areas are stressed because obviously those are foundational pieces. If you don't have that, it's certainly hard to build on it and move forward.

Ms. Tsimpedes: I absolutely agree with you, Dr. Hodges. That's why we are meeting with the individual principals and having these meetings to discuss the areas of concern that they see from teacher feedback, assessment feedback, and intervention platform feedback.

Comm. Hodges: I look forward to the ultimate report when all the data is forwarded so we can see whether we've mapped out the appropriate approaches to address our students' needs. I thank you very much for the conversation.

Ms. Tsimpedes: Any time, Dr. Hodges. Thank you.

Comm. M. Martinez: Are there any other questions or comments regarding this presentation?

Comm. Arrington: Do we teach our kids test-taking strategies, especially for multiple-choice? There is a science behind that, knowing how to eliminate. I was looking through some of the test questions. Do we educate our kids on that before taking major tests?

Ms. Tsimpedes: That's something that we explain with our teachers. If there are four multiple questions, two don't belong and two could be. These are things that we do teach our kids. There's a conversation similar to what we had in I&P the other day with regards to preparing students and making sure they have the skills necessary to be successful. That's something to continue to teach the students as they progress right in their school year. In the beginning, the younger grades are not listing as many multiple choices as they do in the older grades. Then you're also doing open-ended questions where you're making sure students are answering what is being asked of them getting

right to the point with specific examples from the story, whether it's analyzing text, citing text, or defending your answer. These are things that our teachers are doing to ensure that our students continue to embrace test-taking. Many kids do shut down with testing. They get nervous. That's one of the things we have noticed. Our kids get nervous around a test. I'm sure all of you have children and when it's time for a test they panic. They may know the answer, but they freeze up at the moment. These are things that we do work with our teachers to help the students.

Comm. Arrington: Do our students have an opportunity to take a practice test prior to taking the official test?

Ms. Tsimpedes: With regards to any test?

Comm. Arrington: For this assessment.

Ms. Tsimpedes: We do provide practice tests for our students. We didn't even know what to expect with Start Strong. The state was exempt from taking it because our students were virtual, and the federal government waived the requirement in lieu of Start Strong this year. We knew that it was going to be based on the blueprint that came from the state, something that our students were acclimated to doing. But when it comes to NJSLA, the questions that we formulate on our unit and midyear assessments do mirror what the expectation is of questions they would see at the state assessment. We want to make sure that students understand that you can see a standard assessed in different ways and there are different ways of answering. This year we have yet to take the midyear assessment. That will be done in January. They do mirror online assessments. That was one of the things that I know the Board wanted our students to experience, the way they would see them when it came to the summative assessments that were provided by the state. When our students take assessment now, they take them digitally so that they experience that, as well as being able to utilize the different tools that they would see, such as highlighting, drag and drop, multiple select, and so forth. We do provide questions that they would see. Sometimes the state does put out practice tests that we can use. We have not seen anything as of yet come through.

Comm. Arrington: Thank you.

Comm. M. Martinez: Any other questions?

Ms. Shafer: Thank you Joanna, Luis and Nicole for your presentation.

### **Goals Status Report**

Ms. Peron: We're presenting on the goals. This is just an update. We said from the very beginning we would be continually updating the goals and presenting them to you during the Board workshop or regular meeting. We have four major district goals which were formulated in collaboration with the Board of Education. Goal #1 is high school restructuring. Just as you see on the screen, we're showing you the original Board goal and then the Board resolution that was adopted on September 8, 2021, which outlined the options and the pathways for each of the high schools. Where are we standing as of this moment? We continue with our planning meetings and those consist of meeting with administrators of the buildings, different administrators in the district. We're having student meetings to provide student voice and input about high school planning and extracurricular activities in each of the high schools. We're conducting budget planning, facility, and high school choice application meetings. That will soon be on the table for our students. We have student course scheduling meetings. We have to ensure that

we will be ready for the next school year. Scheduling needs to start sooner rather than later and so those meetings are ongoing. To date, we have conducted some interviews for our newest title of pathway coordinator positions. We have had viable candidates and have a recommendation. We are currently in negotiations with this candidate. Nothing to bring to the Board yet for approval, but the work is ongoing. We have conducted facility walkthroughs. In September we conducted a virtual walkthrough with Bergen County Technical and Vocational School. I listed this one because I described in detail our other meetings of other places that we had been to during the summer months and last year. In October we conducted a facilities walkthrough of Eastside High School and John F. Kennedy Complex. In November we conducted a walkthrough of Paterson Catholic, which is located in the Paterson Catholic building. Our future walkthroughs will consist of International High School Complex and Rosa Parks High School. As you know, restructuring doesn't only encompass the programs that we are going to change. It also encompasses strengthening each of those programs at our facilities. Facility walkthroughs will be ongoing. In those facility walkthroughs we have participation with Neil Mapp and Tracy Williams, who is our project lead for high school restructuring. Our next steps are to continue the interviews for pathway coordinators. We have five positions available for that. We're going to begin our posting for curriculum writers and curriculum planning. We are currently doing an audit of all the courses and coming together as a team to decide what is needed, what can be dropped, and what needs to continue for some of our students who are in the last year of their pathways and programs currently. We're meeting with neighboring high schools. That work will continue. It's always good to network and gain ideas from our neighbors and those who have been in the business of vocational and restructuring before us. We are also conducting a community-wide meeting for students and parents. We need to inform them of what options are coming soon. Although we have been transparent through our Board meetings, we need to really have a conversation with parents and students about high school restructuring as a whole. We continue with our facility readiness. We're going to begin taking a look at ordering resources and equipment for each of the pathways, continue the requirement and the proposals of the architectural engineering services, and the renovations of our science labs. We do have proposals on the table and we're going to begin that work. We have to continue our development of bids for contractual services that will be needed for construction. Something very important to contemplate, and I need the attention of the Board of Education, is the naming of the STEAM building at Paterson Catholic. Right now, we have HARP in there, but we are going to be combining other academies. We should really start thinking about renaming that building and stop calling it Paterson Catholic. Next steps are to take a look at staffing. We have an audit of the entire district, our teaching staff and staff at the high schools. We need to take a look at job descriptions and postings for vocational educators. As I mentioned earlier, we need to continue looking at our courses and our pathway analyses for our 2021-2022 projections. Before I move on to Goal #2, which will be presented by Ms. Cicely Warren, are there any questions about Goal #1?

Comm. Hodges: What happens if we have more students than we have room for at Paterson Catholic? What do we do then?

Ms. Peron: We were actually working on that today, looking at the projections of the enrollment. With the existing students there it is definitely under-enrolled. We do have the TIES program there, which is the special education new program that Ms. Coy will be presenting an update about. We have to take a look at the students that are coming from the other academies that are moving into this STEM high school. Some of these students are seniors. We have to take into consideration whether or not they want to move into a new high school, being that they were enrolled three years at a high school

and they are finishing up their career there. We need to make provisions to allow them to finish their courses there and remain there as a senior. Because of that, we do have to talk about a huge challenge, which is transportation. We are experiencing challenges with transportation for our current students who are enrolled at Paterson Catholic. There are a lot of buses that they have to take. Some of them say it's a real hardship. That is another challenge that we are looking at as well. We are going to be working with the hard numbers. We have asked MIS for data. We have asked central registration for data. We're working with those numbers now. More about those numbers will be coming to you soon as we analyze how many students we have, where they are right now, and is it fair to ask them to move to a new building for their senior year next year.

Comm. Hodges: The two comprehensive high schools are going to be primarily vocational programming. Is that correct?

Ms. Peron: The two comprehensive complexes do consist of a vocational program. We have cosmetology at Eastside as well as construction trades and automotive at John F. Kennedy. Those programs cannot enroll as many students as we have enrolled in the past for the regular pathways, so we have to take a look at that.

Comm. Hodges: My concern is you have two large high schools, and they can't go unfilled. At some point, you may have to have some sort of non-vocational programming on those buildings. How do you do that given this approach? You have to look at those numbers and projections down the road. You can't teach but so many kids in a vocational setting and do it well.

Ms. Peron: Very true.

Comm. Hodges: Both those buildings could hold close to 2,000 students apiece. 4,000 kids primarily going into vocational programming would be a concern to me.

Ms. Peron: It would be near impossible for all 4,000 to go into vocational?

Comm. Hodges: Right.

Ms. Peron: It would be near impossible because I don't have that many teachers or periods that would be available for those course offerings at each of those high schools.

Comm. Hodges: Exactly. We need to look at that quickly.

Ms. Peron: Yes, sir. We are working on that now. We actually had that meeting today. We're collecting the data. We came together as a team to decide on what data would inform us of that. The walkthroughs are important because we need to establish capacity. We're analyzing all that data.

Comm. Hodges: There was some talk of perhaps enlarging the facilities at Paterson Catholic. That's another issue that we have to wrestle with in order to put pressure on the SDA.

Ms. Peron: Absolutely. We have had meetings on hold and dates to be held for the SDA meetings and we have not heard back from them yet. Ms. Shafer and I have been on the helm for that and really just pushing for that meeting. We are relaying and we need that space. We need that work, especially over at the Paterson Catholic building where there is sufficient space for us to expand the building.

Ms. Shafer: I did hear today that we're meeting with them on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Peron: Very good.

Comm. Hodges: Thank you.

Ms. Cicely Warren: Good evening Commissioners. Goal #2 speaks to addressing the learning implications due to COVID-19 pandemic in grades pre-k through 12 by increasing the effectiveness of instruction and developing administrator and teacher capacity. This will be done by professionally developing administrators and teachers in blended learning and pedagogy. Progress towards this goal will be evidenced by an increase of 10% in the identified instructional indicators. Specifically, what will we measure? There are indicators in the walkthrough and instructional feedback and support tool that all observers use in classrooms that are directly related to the professional development that's being offered this year. The two indicators that we selected have historically been the most challenging for the district. In particular, they were challenging during remote instruction. Those two indicators are lessons adjusted based on classroom response data. That basically speaks to how teachers are responding to the data they're collecting in real time during lessons when they check for understanding at the end of lesson when they conduct the DOL, demonstration of learning, in the last few minutes of class. It can also include quizzes and short assessments, the data that they're collecting from students throughout instruction. The baseline score of 45.5% means that was observed 45.5% of the time when walkthroughs were conducted when we were in remote instruction last year. The other indicator we are focused on is the purposeful use of engaging instructional strategies. Again, that was particularly challenging during remote instruction because the students weren't physically with us and the teachers had to learn how to adapt technology to promote community and engagement and solicit responses from each student, as opposed to all the students at one time as they were remote. The baseline score represents the number of walkthroughs where that was observed last year, which was 28.9%.

Comm. Hodges: What should the baseline scores be on both those indicators?

Ms. Warren: What should they be?

Comm. Hodges: Yes. I don't know what I'm looking for.

Ms. Warren: It's not a measure of proficiency. It means that during the 10-minute classroom visitation and support walkthrough the observer indicated that they saw that 45.5% of the time.

Comm. Hodges: The goal should be what?

Ms. Warren: Ideally, we would see it all the time, but we have to understand that in a 10-minute walkthrough it could have occurred before or after the 10 minutes were over. This is a snapshot of what's occurring in classrooms. It's not a comprehensive picture of what's happening in the classrooms. These are unannounced classroom visitations.

Comm. Hodges: The current standard is 45.5%. Are you looking for an increase over that? Or is there an amount that should be in place?

Ms. Warren: The goal is a 10% increase in each of those in response to the professional development.



Comm. Hodges: A 10% increase is only going to be 30.9%. That's not very high in the purposeful use of engaging instructional strategies. That, to me, is inadequate.

Ms. Warren: Again, this is not a measure of proficiency. It's the occurrence when supervisors, principals, or vice principals do a 10-minute walkthrough, anyone who observes a classroom unannounced for a 10-minute window. That's different from the official observation and evaluation rubric. This is for feedback and coaching. This is a different tool.

Comm. Hodges: Okay. Thank you.

Ms. Warren: Where are we now? Round One goes from September to the end of November. This is the data that was pulled as of November 16. Lessons adjusted based on classroom response data. For Round One, that was observed 38.9% of the time during the 10-minute walkthroughs. The second indicator, purposeful use of engaging instructional strategies, at the end of Round One it was observed 22.5% of the time. What we're seeing in both those indicators is approximately a 6.4% decline in how often that was observed. What are the implications of that? This goal and the professional development that is being measured by the goal are intended to be an intervention in terms of instructional strategies. We've talked about intervention in terms of student performance and student skills and student proficiency. Rarely do we focus on how instruction is impacted by the professional development that's offered in a quantifiable way. In order to intervene and improve those outcomes in that regard, we have to understand the context in which these numbers are developing. What are the implications of these two indicator scores? There has definitely been an adjustment going from remote instruction to in-person instruction. When we measure lessons adjusted based on classroom response data, when we were remote that might be students working on a shared document in Google Classroom. That might be students doing Padlet or Jamboard. Those are all online platforms. When we return to in-person instruction that is going to look different so that may mean that we need to recalibrate what that actually looks like. Teachers are now balancing workbooks, student notebooks, textbooks, Chromebooks, and partitions. In some instances, it really looks like a choreographed dance and people are still learning how to manage that choreography. There's an adjustment period and we need to provide support to facilitate that adjustment. Another implication of these numbers is that in many classrooms there are vacancies. Even when there are no vacancies, there are substitutes due to absences for various reasons, such as quarantine and the typical per diem absences that we have in any given year. It's certainly exacerbated by the pandemic. Additionally, there was considerable time dedicated to assessment. When the students returned, all teachers were anxious to see what they were dealing with in terms of student skills. I'm not going to say it was learning loss, because students did learn while we were out learning remotely, but it's not the same as students being in-person. Teachers really wanted to assess where students were. That's different from the Start Strong assessment. That could be teacher-made tests, running record, or all the various online and intervention platforms that we use. They really wanted to get a sense of what we needed to address when students returned after being away from us for 18 months. It also means we need to clearly define classroom response data. Typically, we measure or look for multiple response strategies, exit tickets, DOL's, for students to be doing group work, collaborating, and presenting their work. That is going to look different in-person than it does remotely. We need to ensure that's clear to all the classroom practitioners and it also needs to be clear to all observers. That leads me to the next implication, that there needs to be continued training of classroom practitioners and observers. There are people who observe classroom teachers on a

daily basis, the building level administrators. Then there are supervisors who come in for coaching around particular instructional skills, but they're not in the buildings as frequently. We need to make sure everyone is calibrated for our current reality, which is returning from remote instruction and incorporating our technology with actually being in-person. What are our next steps? We have shared the goal with principals and that has been shared with vice principals and classroom teachers at the building level. Now we need to disseminate the results of where we are now at the end of Round One. We also need to differentiate the support provided based on those specific indicators. That support is going to take place in multiple venues, during PLC's and individualized coaching. What we found due to vacancies and absences is there are challenges in principals being able to meet with their staff in their grade level meetings, vertical articulation meetings, and PLCs. Some are being creative and working after school, as a funded specialized program, and lesson studies so they can really dig deep into what coaching skills and support are needed to improve instruction. Additionally, we're continuing to make resources available after the PD sessions, to ensure that teachers have access to it, and that it's being used to support professional development in buildings. Some of that is already posted on the district website. Lastly, what gets monitored gets done. The current plan included providing reports after each round of observations. We need to do that more frequently so that we are reviewing that data more often and sharing it with stakeholders. Are there any questions about Goal #2 before we move on?

Ms. Cheryl Coy: Good evening everyone. Goal #3 is the transition program to formally prepare students with disabilities into the evolution of adulthood and independence. The program constitutes formative transition planning that will guide students and families to resources, community and state agency partnerships, employment, and self-advocacy. In their pursuit of postsecondary goals, students will learn what it will look like to live on their own, establish employment, maintain a household, build meaningful relations, and sustain their status of services they are entitled to under the guise of their Individualized Educational Plan Transition Plan. We have created a mission and goal for the program. The mission is transition for independence, employment and success, the TIES program, is a bridge between academia to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century life and career skills to enable students to make informed decisions that prepare them to engage as active citizens in a dynamic global society and to successfully meet the challenges and opportunities in a global workforce. Our vision is to bridge academia to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century life and career skills through the approach which includes navigating today's life and work environments, learning and innovative skills in such areas as communication and collaboration, and core subjects to prepare our learners for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century independent living experience. TIES pathway - we have purchased the Brigance Curriculum of Transition Surveys and Activities. Through this survey it allowed us to assess students' progress towards transition goals and develop instruction for independent living, employment, and additional postsecondary skills in the classrooms. The transition skills activities are a comprehensive collection of age-appropriate lesson plans and activities that support classroom instruction and transition planning for students preparing for life after high school. These activities are designed to align to the transition skills inventory for progress monitoring. Lessons are aligned with IDEA transition planning guidelines and key skill areas assessed in the transition skills inventory, TSI, including postsecondary opportunities both education, training and employment, independent living, and community participation. All 52 students have completed the Brigance Transition Inventory Surveys to identify their baseline of abilities. Survey outcomes will support IEP goals and objectives. All surveys were completed in a one-to-one setting to provide a clear synopsis of the students' projected career pathway and establish each student's present level of performance. Teachers may select, adapt, and add items that may be required to meet local standards and

individual needs to meet the student and program needs. Teachers will track students' mastery of skills to show progress from the baseline of introducing to mastery of the skill set. Students will continue to engage in group and small group instruction that complements their interests as identified by the survey results. Here is a sample of some of the surveys and activities goals that students have completed in order to establish their baseline and achieve mastery level of skill sets. Are there any questions?

Ms. Tsimpedes: Goal #4 is the academic goal that ties both ELA and math. In ELA, 70% of our students in grades k-3 will increase their reading comprehension levels by a minimum of two levels by the end of the 2021-2022 school year. From that, the goal was for 70% of our students in grades 6-8 to have progressed to their phase II class or beyond in ALEKS. This will help facilitate the increase of mathematical proficiency among our middle school population and prepare them for success in their high school math courses. One of the tasks that we are doing this year is monitoring the data to ensure that everyone is well informed. The assistant superintendent of academic services emails the weekly reports for the intervention platforms to principals, vice principals, cabinet members, supervisors, and anyone at the district level that is included in the distribution of the data. The data then is monitored by the principals. It's referenced in Standards II and IV on the evaluation rubric so that when the principals are conducting their observations teachers are bringing in their data points to discuss where the students are in intervention. We have provided professional development for teachers and continue to do so for not only teachers, but administrators in ensuring that everyone understands how to read and utilize the data to make informed instructional decisions for students. We just completed administering our running records for our marking period one so that we knew where our students were in their reading comprehension skills to target where they should be as students are progress monitored and interventions continue to occur. We have also reintroduced individual principal meetings that are spearheaded by the Deputy Superintendent and the Superintendent. At these meetings, each principal attends and discusses the academic progress of their students, inclusive of intervention data. They talk about failures, attendance, vacancies, and anything that is a challenge when it comes to academics. The unit assistant superintendent participates, as well as the assistant superintendent over academics and the associate chief academic officer. We are almost at the end of our round one meetings with our principals. They are scheduled for three times throughout the year. We started them in November and will be completing them in December. We will meet again with the same principals in February and March, and again in May and June. Follow-up after the meetings occur with the unit assistant superintendents to ensure that challenges that were discussed at the meetings are addressed at the school level, inclusive of celebrating the student data when we see gains are being made and that the usage is increasing. As a district we have centralized our intervention platforms and everyone in the district is utilizing the same platforms so that we can look at the changes that we see as well as have fidelity to the model. When the principals do receive the email with the information from these principal meetings, they then turnkey them and discuss the academic progress of the student. This is important because in the past we have had several platforms when it comes to interventions. Some were school-based, and some were district-based. Based on the recommendations from the Board of Education we have now gone to a district-based platform versus having schools have their own platforms to ensure that we monitor the data and consistently look to see the gains that are being made by students as well as identifying challenge areas based on what the data is telling us. The other important piece to bring to the forefront is the level of accountability that is taking place currently. Central office ensures that the conversation that takes place with the principals then goes back to the teachers so that when they have the discussion

regarding the usage and lack thereof, they can pinpoint it and make it a central focus at their data, PLC, and grade level meetings. Are there any questions regarding Goal #4? I know I touched upon some of it prior with the Start Strong assessments and the data points that were in there.

Comm. M. Martinez: Just for clarity, if there are any questions that Commissioners may have pertaining to other goals besides #4, please feel free to do so as well.

Ms. Shafer: I want to thank Deputy Peron, Cicely Warren, Joanna Tsimpedes, and Cheryl Coy for their presentations on the status of goals. I already gave my report. We can move on.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

Ms. Rosie Grant: Good evening, Commissioners, Madam Superintendent, staff, and community. My heart is heavy. Ms. Shafer, thank you for the work you've done for our students over the last three years and indeed over the past 31 years. You've steered this district to local control. You have been the most welcoming and collaborative Superintendent in my 29-year tenure at Paterson Education Fund. Even before you became Superintendent while you were Deputy, we knew that once we had the go from the top, you were the person to go to for implementation. I'll be sad to see you go and it is a great loss to our district. It is apparent that you have been made sufficiently uncomfortable and this discomfort has led you to this decision of what I will call early retirement. Know that you have earned it. Know that you have done well by our students. Know that you have done well for this community. We love and appreciate you. Do retire proudly. You have always held Paterson children first and I thank you for that. To the reports, thank you for sharing them with us. My observation is that 89% of our kids need some or strong support overall. This is concerning, but not entirely surprising given we're coming out of a pandemic. I've talked recently with a second-grade teacher who has kids in her class who have never been to school before. This is a monumental task. I had some other questions prepared for today but I'm going to stop there given that I'm running out of time. There is some concern about our seniors and whether or not they are ready to graduate given that they missed their testing opportunities, and the portfolio process is now going to be totally online submissions. There are some changes coming down the pike that I want the Board to be aware. I know that the administration is already aware and probably planning for it. Thank you so much for your time and attention this evening.

**It was moved by Comm. Teague, seconded by Comm. Arrington 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 December 8, 2021, beginning with check number 228709 and ending with check number 228758, and direct deposit number beginning with 1174 and ending with 1197, in the amount of \$9,207,157.96;

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. Teague, seconded by Comm. Capers that Resolution No. 1 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Hodges who abstained. The motion carried.**

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

Comm. Arrington

- Self
- Family

Comm. Capers

- Self
- 4<sup>th</sup> and Inches
- Westside Park Group
- Insight
- Jersey Kids

Comm. Castillo-Cruz

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

Comm. Hodges

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. Dania Martinez

- Self
- 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

## 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
*Kenneth Simmons	NJLM Annual Conference 2021	November 19, 2021	\$572.00 (lodging) (previously approved on 11/10/21 – increase in lodging)
Board Member	Atlantic City, NJ		
*Lance Gaines	The Odds and Ends of the Local Public Contracts Law/Institute of Professional Development	December 1, 2021	\$50.00 (registration)
Purchasing Manager	Virtual		
*Donnell Isaac	NJ Association of School Resource Officers	December 6-10, 2021	\$425.00 (registration)
District Security Officer	Morris Plains, NJ		
*Orlando Robinson	NJ Association of School Resource Officers	December 6-10, 2021	\$425.00 (registration)
District Security Officer	Morris Plains, NJ		
Dr. Corey Teague	NABSE Rewind Virtual Conference	December 11, 2021	\$25.00 (registration)
Board Member	Virtual		
Kathryn Beatty	Bureau of Education and Research	January 4, 2022	\$259.00 (registration)
Teacher/John F. Kennedy	Newark, NJ		
Vivian Bumbaco	Bureau of Education and Research	January 4, 2022	\$259.00 (registration)
Teacher/John F. Kennedy	Newark, NJ		

Riwa Dandan	Bureau of Education and Research	January 4, 2022	\$259.00 (registration)
Teacher/John F. Kennedy	Newark, NJ		
Donald Davis	Bureau of Education and Research	January 4, 2022	\$259.00 (registration)
Teacher/John F. Kennedy	Newark, NJ		
Steven Dinnerman	Bureau of Education and Research	January 4, 2022	\$259.00 (registration)
Teacher/John F. Kennedy	Newark, NJ		
Atondra Friday	Bureau of Education and Research	January 4, 2022	\$259.00 (registration)
Vice Principal/John F. Kennedy	Newark, NJ		
Ralph Gioia	Bureau of Education and Research	January 4, 2022	\$259.00 (registration)
Teacher/John F. Kennedy	Newark, NJ		
Sarah Langan	Bureau of Education and Research	January 4, 2022	\$259.00 (registration)
Vice Principal/John F. Kennedy	Newark, NJ		
Shelton Prescott	Bureau of Education and Research	January 4, 2022	\$259.00 (registration)
Teacher/John F. Kennedy	Newark, NJ		
Zachary Wekilsy	Bureau of Education and Research	January 4, 2022	\$259.00 (registration)
Teacher/John F. Kennedy	Newark, NJ		
Dania Martinez	NSBA 2022 Annual Conference	April 2-4, 2022	\$3,429.00 (registration, transportation, lodging, meals)
Board Member	San Diego, CA		
Dr. Corey Teague	NSBA 2022 Annual Conference	April 2-4, 2022	\$3,454.00 (registration, transportation, lodging, meals)
Purchasing Coordinator	San Diego, CA		

**TOTAL CONFERENCES: 17**  
**TOTAL AMOUNT: \$10,970.00**

**\*FOR RATIFICATION**

**It was moved by Comm. Capers, seconded by Comm. Arrington 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. Arrington

- Self
- Family

Comm. Capers

- Self
- 4<sup>th</sup> and Inches
- Westside Park Group
- Insight
- Jersey Kids

Comm. Castillo-Cruz

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

Comm. Hodges

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. Dania Martinez

- Self
- 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

**GENERAL BUSINESS**

**Items Requiring a Vote**



### ***Instruction and Program***

Comm. Arrington: We did meet on December 6. Present was myself, Comm. Castillo-Cruz, Comm. D. Martinez, and Dr. Hodges. We're going to be submitting I&P-1 through I&P-10. I just want to highlight some of the items. There's a music program that we are working on with the Wharton Institute. A highlight of the program is a finance class for FAFSA for our students. We met at 5:06 and we were done by 5:34. The minutes are on the Google Drive.

### ***Operations***

Comm. Teague: We're going to have to reschedule our meeting. We had one set for today, but I was unavailable. We will reschedule.

### ***Fiscal Management***

Comm. Redmon: Fiscal met. I don't have the minutes because I'm not the chairperson. We will just pass it to the next meeting.

### ***Personnel***

Comm. Redmon: Personnel met on Monday. We discussed the vacancies within the district. We have 70 vacancies as of Monday. We also talked about increasing the substitute pay. We were having trouble with providing substitutes for the district. As you all know, we have shortages. We're talking about increasing the pay for substitute services. We will be bringing it to the full Board for approval at the next meeting. We just wanted to let you know the average rate that we're looking to increase to is \$150 per day. Compared to the other districts around us, that's where all districts are at the moment. I just wanted you guys to be aware of that information. We will also have upcoming recruitments for teachers and those dates will be posted soon.

### ***Governance***

Comm. M. Martinez: Governance has nothing to report for this meeting.

### **Committee Report**

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

Comm. M. Martinez: Dania is not here today, so we can just pass this on to the next meeting.

### ***Technology***

Comm. Arrington: Technology met on November 29. Present was Dr. Hodges and myself. An issue we're having is our Chromebooks are experiencing breakage and damage in the district. We wanted to table any fee schedule implementation. We're having a serious issue with breakage in the district and we're going to be putting together some photos to show some of the issues we're having. We're going to table the fee schedule for now while we have some further discussions on that. We do want to educate the public, parents, guardians, and students about the handling of our Chromebooks. They're gentle objects and we need to handle them with care. If we continue to have breakage, we could have a situation where we don't have

Chromebooks for students that do need them. We're going to continue this discussion and we're going to bring it back to the next meeting.

### ***Policy***

Comm. Arrington: I know policy is meeting next week for our bimonthly meeting.


### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Comm. Arrington: I want to send condolences to the Cornish Family. Recently we lost one of our giants, Mr. Robert J. Cornish, Jr., or R.J., as we affectionately called him. He recently passed away. He was a strong pillar in the community. He has some family still working in the district, Dr. Holder being one of them at PANTHER Academy. I learned something new. Mr. Cornish was actually a past Board of Education President. I learned that this week. I just want to give our condolences to the family on losing one of our past Board Commissioners. I want to acknowledge one of our teachers. If my memory serves me, I think she's at School No. 10, Ms. Tania McCombs. She recently received a Golden Apple Teacher Award. I want to acknowledge the great work she's doing and her accomplishment. I want to encourage the public to come down to Eastside on Friday. They are having their basketball kickoff for the girls' and boys' team. I think it's a nominal fee for entry. We're looking forward to seeing everyone support our student scholar athletes.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 p.m.



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Ms. Eileen F. Shafer, M.Ed.  
Superintendent of Schools