

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

August 11, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.  
Remote - Zoom

Presiding: Comm. Manuel Martinez, Vice 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. Dania Martinez  
Comm. Nakima Redmon  
Comm. Kenneth Simmons, President

Absent:

Comm. Corey Teague

Comm. M. Martinez 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  
August 11, 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.

## **PRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

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

Ms. Shafer: Good evening, Board Commissioners, staff, and Paterson community. I want to just go through the School Safety Data System Report with Laurel Olsen. Then we will move into the Transition Program with Cheryl Coy. Boris, if you could put up the SSDS report.

Ms. Laurel Olsen: Good evening, everybody, Board Commissioners, Ms. Shafer, our superintendents, team, and cabinet. I'm Laurel Olsen. I'm the Supervisor of the Student Assistance Department. Tonight, I will be reviewing the first section of the SSDS report, which is the SAC department's substance abuse findings. For the SAC department, in substance abuse cases any student found to be positive must be reported to the NJDOE using the SSDS report. There are four ways a student can be considered a positive offender. It's either confirmed that they are under the influence of drugs with a drug screen, they are found or seen in possession of substances or drug paraphernalia, they refuse to take a medical exam or drug test, and/or the amount of their possession is also equivalent to a sale and/or distribution charge. This year we have had seven students tested. Most students have been completely remote all year, welcoming only a certain group of students back in June. During a normal school year, we would have provided substance intervention with drug tests to anywhere between 150 to 250 students according to the trends of the department over the years. This year was just seven. Four of those students were negative or drug free, three being confirmed as positive cases. The first two positive students were both male and both during the first reporting period. It is a little repetitive from my report in February. The first case was in September. An eleventh grader tested positive for marijuana and two pain killers, oxycodone and oxymorphone, and was in possession of marijuana on his Google Classroom camera. The second was an eighth grader at MLK who tested positive for marijuana use after his mother requested assistance through the child study team and we got connected with them. Our last case was a tenth grade female student at STARS Academy who brought a bottle of alcohol to school on the first day that students were allowed to return. This slide shows a 20-year comparison of the substance abuse reports, beginning in the 2000-2001 school year. The blue on the chart is what we want to see. Red is like a warning and less desirable. You will notice a drastic spike in the red during the 2018-2019 school year and that was due to our policy stating that all vape pens were considered drug paraphernalia. You can see that many of the students automatically came up positive because of the way the policy was written, even though their urine might have been drug free. We changed our policy during the summer of 2019 to still report vape pens, of course, but additionally the staff was also required to believe that the student was under the influence of a mind-altering substance before we would perform a medical examination with drug testing. The 2020-2021 report is not an accurate representation of what we experience in this department on a typical basis. While we understand and are in touch with the students, we can also appreciate that some of them are in environments that prevent them from appearing on camera and it's difficult for staff to identify a student who may be under the influence of substances. Because of this, we identified fewer students this year under suspicion and in possession. Instead, we've increased our efforts to provide supports to students with the SAC department's prevention and intervention activities, including collaborating with both school and outside agencies for further assistance, counseling sessions on Google Meet or the telephone, crisis intervention, grief counseling, and classroom lessons. The headlines can tell us a lot about the district's future regarding SAC department services. Some impacts the pandemic has brought to our youth include increased depression, anxiety, boredom, and in turn leading to increased suicide attempts and a rise in drug misuse. They personally could have had jobs and are now unemployed, their parents are going through that situation, or there's extra stress in the home. There's sickness. There's death. When you think about substance abuse, it's pretty tough on our youth. We are social beings. We crave interaction. Some youths still do socialize in person. With former entertainment options still being closed or limited in some capacities, like concerts and movies, any sort of limited capacity dine-in or restaurants, or even now vaccine mandated arenas they may be too young to receive the vaccine or maybe they are of age but have not had a chance to receive the shot yet for whatever reason. These restrictions feel like a lockdown, like

they are in jail with no freedom. This, in turn, can increase the desire to escape. With normal avenues being closed or limited, it can encourage them to still gather but use substances as an act to socialize. Experts predict that the new pandemic for 2021 will be all-consuming with mental health healing. You will notice the true reality we are facing with our youths with the headlines right on the slide – the increases in mental health treatment needs, increased reports of depression and anxiety, more drinking, and more use of painkillers. These closures, whether they are temporary or permanent, have assisted with the detachment of therapy and connection in general. When considering New Jersey treatment for youth drug use, the state only has one in-patient residential program available for youths under 18 who need substance abuse support beyond an after-school or outpatient type of program and within these past five years we've had six. Five of them have permanently closed. Additionally, we kicked off the 2021 year in New Jersey by legalizing recreational marijuana for those aged 21 and over, and we are already seeing discussions throughout the state. Within the first article from July 11, a quote from our Mayor said that 76% of Paterson voters supported the legalization of marijuana in the statewide referendum that preceded the change in New Jersey regarding cannabis. On that same token, published in April 2021 in the Journal of the American Medical Association, a study found that nearly 11% of teenagers who tried marijuana for the first time were dependent on it a year later. After three years, of those same teens, 20% reported having a substance use disorder. That's something that's not included or wasn't written in the little verbiage when we casted our vote. The words like marijuana, painkillers, suicide, mental health, crisis intervention, death, self-injury, gangs, trauma, and tragedy. Although they are powerful and shocking words, they are all words that a SAC deals with on a daily basis. For us, it's not just words. These are situations and they are happening to real people. These are happening to our kids, our students. We are in charge of protecting and healing our children, teaching them confidence and support and empowering their lives for the better. We have some initiatives for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year for the SAC department. We're hoping to battle those headlines I just went over to decrease youth mental health concerns as well as substance abuse. We will be continuing our "Escape the Vape" campaign, which began pre-COVID in 2019. In January 2020, Governor Murphy had signed a bill prohibiting the sale of all flavored vapor products, including menthol, except for tobacco flavor. That law took effect on April 20, 2020. However, there are loopholes in the policy and legislation, and it does not ban low-risk flavored tobacco products, such as chewing tobacco. It also leaves flavored combustible products on the market, like these flavored cigars that seem to be popular with our youths. Additionally, JUUL, the main producer of pod-based e-cigarette devices who seems to be most popular with our kids, just paid \$51,000 to buy an entire issue of the American Journal of Health Behavior to make it publicly available. All 11 articles that they put in were company-funded studies by JUUL that are pro vaping. These are some this that we're still up against. During the May 2021 Board meeting, it was voted in. I worked with our legal team to get us on a mass action lawsuit against JUUL Labs. I'm hopeful that the district will reap benefits from the lawsuit so we can continue funding our campaign. To kick off the school year, each principal will receive an anti-vaping care package. It will have 10 different pamphlets on vaping paid for by a vaping grant that was awarded to the SAC department a month before we left for COVID, along with a large anti-vaping poster created by the SAC department and printed by Mr. Steve Olympio in our district security office. As for training, the SAC department has partnered with PICASA at Montclair State University to provide Full-Service Community Schools, the Al Moody Academy, and all SACs with a free six-hour training addressing early intervention techniques. With this, we're assisted to fulfill our goal area 4 of our strategic plan, the social emotional learning goal. To continue to achieve that goal, we have mental health first aid. The training will be happening later this year. After I am trained and certified, we will have the ability to train other Paterson Public Schools staff, beginning with the SAC

department. Thinking a little futuristically, we hope to have additional staff trained as well. The training covers topics such as depression and mood disorders, anxiety, trauma, psychosis, and substance use. Mental health first aid is important because it teaches about recovery and resiliency. You can get it from the pre work to the post work. It's not just the immediate. LGBTQ I have on here as well because gender and sexual identification are ever-present with our youth. There's a want for any human being to identify with who they are, how they feel, and be proud of it, not having to feel any shame, guilt, or be embarrassed. There was a poll conducted in February. The generalization group that has the highest percentage of people who identify in the LGBT community is the youngest generation Z (1997-2000). That's 15% compared to 9% of millennials (1981-1996), and about 4% of generation X (1965-1980). Next, I have marijuana 101 presentations for community and families. I mentioned before that 76% of registered Paterson voters are for adult recreational legalization. It's all fine and well if you're of legal age to make your own decisions. My concern is the lack of knowledge regarding the legalization amendment New Jersey has voted yes for. For example, when legalization was first proposed, those found in possession of or using under 21 a notification cannot be made to the guardian, but that has since changed. A lot of it involves alcohol as well. Anybody under the age of 21 found in possession of marijuana or alcohol will have their parents notified, whether it's a first offense or not. If you believe that marijuana sales are going to help out our youth, because that's what you've been told, I would try to rethink that thought. The New Jersey legal breakdown of the legalization is this – for every \$350 ounce of marijuana sold, a little less than \$4 of that goes back to funding underage deterrence. It's a little bit over 1% of someone's purchase to assist our students, our upcoming leaders. I believe our community deserves to be informed. I've already began discussions with Mr. McDowell, our Executive Director of Full-Service Community Schools and Community and Family Engagement, on how we can tackle providing our parents, families, and community with accurate information to make informed decisions. Not only about their approach to marijuana with their children, but for themselves as well. Lastly, we want to give a focus to violence prevention. It's something that has been on our radar as SAC counselors for years. As we continue to work towards a normal learning environment, we want to be able to provide not only literature, but speakers and assemblies regarding violence, the dangers, how to ask for help, and to take a stance on being prevention-driven in the department. Weekly when you read the Paterson News, unfortunately I find news of stabbings and shootings. It was multiple people involved and it's resulting in all these unnecessary injuries and fatalities. The town recognizes the increase and wave of violence and recently hired 30 new police officers in July. As a school district, we must continue to work within our buildings where our young bright minds come together to learn. To that end, I'll end my portion and turn it over to Mr. Dalton Price who will discuss the violence and vandalism portion of the report.

Mr. Dalton Price: Good evening. My name is Dalton Price. Thank you, Ms. Shafer, for allowing me to present and good evening to the Commissioners. I'll be covering violence, vandalism, and weapons for the last three and a half years. As you can see, the numbers remain relatively consistent across the board. We're working especially with the new violence prevention specialist that came into the district. We're working to help improve these numbers. Here you can see the vandalism included with trespassing for the computer system as our kids were home using the Chromebooks. School No. 5 had five incidents. School No. 24 had three. John F. Kennedy SET had one. John F. Kennedy BTMF had six. That is it. Thank you.

Ms. Olsen: This is the end of our portion. There is a separate SSDS report for HIB that Ms. Nicole Payne will provide.

Comm. Hodges: What do you mean by computer trespassing?

Mr. Price: There were incidents where students were on the computer, and someone was able to get into the system and start using language or saying things that should not have been on the system or available to the students.

Comm. Hodges: They were hacking other people's computers?

Mr. Price: We call it trespassing, but yes.

Comm. Hodges: I just want to be clear. Thank you.

Comm. Arrington: Thank you for the presentation. With the legalization of marijuana, what are the cutoff levels for testing? Does that change now? I've been reading that the chances of having a secondhand smoke positive test are really low. Are the cutoff levels being changed because of the legalization of marijuana? Does that make sense, Ms. Olsen?

Ms. Olsen: Yes, it does. I can only speak to student testing. I can't speak to any staff testing. We have a cutoff level of 10 nanograms per milliliter and that's been pretty standard as long as I have worked for the district. I don't know if there is talk about changing that. I don't know if that would come directly from the testing facility, but it's definitely something I can ask and get back to you about.

Comm. Arrington: I was reading like 50. We're pretty low.

Ms. Olsen: Yes.

Comm. Arrington: I'm in your lane here, Dr. Hodges. Help me out here. I thought 50 was the standard, but we're at 10.

Ms. Olsen: Yes, we are at 10.

Comm. Arrington: Interesting.

Comm. Hodges: I no longer have that knowledge. I haven't been involved in that testing for quite some time, almost 18 years.

Comm. Arrington: Thank you, Ms. Olsen.

Comm. M. Martinez: Any other questions from Commissioners to our presenters?

Comm. Hodges: I'm concerned with all these mental health issues that you've stated and we have five SACs. Is that what we have on staff now?

Ms. Olsen: We are happy to announce that we can have two more for the 2021-2022 school year. The two that we have gotten back are ones that were RIF'd in 2019. Both have over 15 years of SAC experience and not just SAC experience, but within Paterson Public Schools. Our department has grown from five to seven.

Comm. Hodges: Given the mental health issues that are being predicted, are we going to be equipped to handle the needs of the students with the current staffing levels that we have, particularly with the importance of mental health as part of this transition out of the pandemic?

Ms. Shafer: Dr. Hodges, in addition to the SACs, we also have guidance counselors. If you recall, Cheryl Coy received a grant to have additional clinicians in every school. Cheryl, do you want to comment on the grant that you received?

Ms. Cheryl Coy: This grant will cover 32 schools that do not currently have mental health support. It's through an outside agency with Camden Educational Services. We are currently hiring mental health clinicians to be onsite in schools five days a week in a centralized location to work with students who are expressing or struggling with mental health crises.

Comm. Hodges: How long does the grant last?

Ms. Coy: This grant is for five years.

Comm. Hodges: Thank you.

### **Transition Program**

Ms. Coy: Tonight, we're going to do a really brief presentation on the STARS Academy Transition Program that will be housed at Paterson Catholic. I'd like to formally introduce Ms. Angela Yezdanian who will be the Transition Coordinator for this program. She actually came up with the name for the program, which is TIES (Transition for Independence, Employment, and Success). The TIES program will establish relationships for our school community within the community-at-large. Students will develop their self-advocacy, prepare for the evolution of adulthood, participate in formative transition planning, and learn what it looks like to live on their own. In this cluster there will be five different classrooms that will allow students to participate in kitchen and dining room living, bedroom and living room, social recreation, and two career readiness rooms. We will establish a baseline with students using individual measurable post-secondary goals assessment that will be aligned to a rubric to monitor the success of the program based on their level of skills that's aligned to the introduction of the skill – emerging, progressing, and mastery – and also the percentages of their IEP goals. The curriculum to be used will be the functional life skills curriculum. This will allow for students to participate in career readiness, financial literacy, independent travel skills, community-based instruction, and work-based learning. Students will be given the opportunity to run a school-based store and that's going to be one of the work-based learning assignments. With this store, students will learn inventory, purchasing, pricing, and budgeting. Students will also have the opportunity to run a makeshift eatery while in the school where they will be trained and certificated in Safe Serve Food Handling. This is a snapshot of what our data will look like. Each student will go through a series of formal and informal assessments throughout the year. We will start out with a transition planning survey to identify the level that students are on. Progress will move in clusters of being introduced – emerging, progressing, and mastery – based on their skill set and goals and objectives of their IEP. Some of the sample assessments that will be included in the course will be community-based instruction. They will learn how to develop a grocery list and they will have to be able to do independently on their own. For employment, they will have to learn how to create a resume. For financial independence, they will have to learn how to use an ATM. For life skills, they will do items such as wash and fold laundry and clean the kitchen. These are some of the things that they will be doing throughout the course of their day at the transition program. That is the end. Are there any questions?

Comm. Hodges: This is going to take place at Paterson Catholic?

Ms. Coy: Yes, it will.

Comm. Hodges: How many students are anticipated?

Ms. Coy: 58 students.

Comm. Hodges: Will you need to be building out structures in the school for that?

Ms. Coy: We have actually already started building out the structures. The walls and everything have been completed. We're now going through the process of installation of the appliances and shelving.

Comm. Hodges: I'm just wondering whether or not it wouldn't be better at the larger vocational school, maybe at Eastside.

Ms. Coy: We looked into the Paterson Catholic location because HARP was the only program currently going in there. For this population of students, we need to start small to get them into a routine. Even though Don Bosco is a big school, it is not much bigger than what they are used to. To put them at Eastside or Kennedy may be more of a distraction for them. If we're able to build capacity with a comfort level, we do want to expand the program. Currently, we have Westside Café at John F. Kennedy. The goal is for the students to go through the food handlers licensing program, get certified, and do field trip assignments at Westside Café, and learn full scale cooking like the other students in that program.

Comm. Hodges: I was just thinking that if you have cooking going on at Eastside that was part of my concern. The other thing is the size. Do you have about 800 students that you can take over to Paterson Catholic?

Ms. Shafer: Between 800 and 1,000. The students that are going to be in the transition program are coming from STARS Academy. They have been in a building with their peers. In order to transition them into a situation with general education students, students that they don't know, you want to start off small. That's why we chose Paterson Catholic. Like Cheryl said, we can look at expanding it or having it in a number of different places. Right now, you need to do that transition slowly for those students.

Comm. Hodges: I know you talked about expanding the size of the number of students who are participating at Paterson Catholic. I'm just wondering when that would take place and how do we anticipate that taking place given the size of the building. That can be discussed down the road. Thank you.

Comm. Arrington: How many students did you say would be in this program?

Ms. Coy: Currently there are 58 students.

Comm. Arrington: This program will coexist with the STEAM program that is projected to go to Paterson Catholic.

Ms. Shafer: That's correct.

Comm. Arrington: Thank you. It's a great program and I'm excited about it.

## REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Ms. Shafer: I just want to go through my report. I have a couple of documents to share with the Board. I'm going to ask Boris to please put them up. You will receive these documents. The first one is the accomplishments of 2020-2021. When you have time, I would ask you to please take a look. We did not stop here in the Paterson School District just because we were remote. In addition to that, you will see the priorities for the 2021-2022 school year on page 22 of the report. At your leisure, you can take a look at it. We did have some outstanding student accomplishments last year. If you have any questions, you know that I'm certainly available to have a conversation with you. The next document is promoting student vaccinations. We have partnered with St. Joseph's, the Paterson Department of Health and McDonald's on Broadway and Madison. The students are going to be able to go to St. Joseph's or the Health Department at 176 Broadway with parent consent. The office hours are there. We are also providing transportation. We have a call number and also a Google form that the parent can fill out. Once you fill it out, we will come and pick up the parent and child at your home and bring you to whichever site you choose and take you back home. McDonald's has partnered with us. They are paying 50% and that student will receive a \$10 voucher redeemable at McDonald's after the second vaccination. This is for students who are 12 years and older. We wanted to make sure that we didn't have any barriers in the way for parents. We know that many parents don't have vehicles and also may not have the funds to take a taxi or public transportation. We're setting up the transportation as well as an incentive for the students. I certainly want to thank Lisa Harrison, who is the owner of McDonald's at Madison and Broadway, St. Joseph's Health, and the Department of Health at 176 Broadway for this partnership to help get our students vaccinated, if that's what parents choose. The next document is The Road Forward plan. This is our reopening plan. It is in compliance with the guidance from CDC and the New Jersey Department of Education. We sent it to you late this afternoon because we had an update and it's on page 22. In case of changes in CDC guidance or New Jersey Department of Education guidance and we had to transition to remote instruction, how would we do that. We also put in a section that if for whatever reason we have to open in September with remote instruction, what that plan would look like and also if we had to go from in-person instruction to a hybrid model. The plan now includes all those items, as well as classroom compliance of social distancing. You know masks are mandatory. We're going to continue with all of our safety precautions, including at least two windows open, air purifiers, scrubbers, blasters, hand sanitizers, Plexiglass partitions for the teachers, and everything we went over last year in the plan. In order to communicate this information to the parents and the community we have a community forum on Tuesday, August 17, Monday, August 23, and Tuesday, August 24. They're all at 6:00 p.m. In addition to that, we have put together the next document, which is a pamphlet for parents. This is a pamphlet that folds in half. It talks about symptoms, vaccines, masks, social distance, the requirement of uniforms, COVID testing, lockers, dressing for physical education, shared equipment and materials, all the layers of protection that we have, the different letters that we send out if a student tests positive in your child's class, and the health screening questionnaires. That questionnaire is available on your phone. If you don't have a phone, we have now put together tablets. Every day the parent can fill it out with the child, tear it off, and the child brings it to school. We are going to be putting this on the website and the parent portal. We're sending it to schools so that they can give it out. We'll be sharing it on the community forums. This is a pamphlet for our parents. It's an easy read instead of reading the entire plan and it answers most of the questions they may have. In case there are some questions we didn't answer, in the next document we're reestablishing our parent hotline. If you have a question about reopening, you call the hotline. You can leave your name and number. If we don't answer and we're on with someone else,



we'll call you back within 24 hours. You know that we kept that hotline open all last year during remote instruction. That concludes my report.

Comm. Capers: I have some concerns about physical education and how kids are going to dress for gym. Is it an option that kids dress for gym? Are we mandating them not to dress for gym?

Ms. Shafer: The issue becomes the spread of the virus through the use of locker rooms and close contact as the lockers are all next to each other and you're changing your clothes. The information from the New Jersey Department of Education was not to be using lockers. In the parent pamphlet we said that when students have physical education, they can wear their gym clothes to school. This isn't much different than prior to the pandemic where we have schools that do not have locker rooms. The children wear their gym uniforms to school.

Comm. Capers: How about high school?

Ms. Shafer: The same thing.

Comm. Capers: Hygiene levels come into place. After gym, do they just put back on their uniforms over their gym clothes without changing?

Ms. Shafer: No, they can wear their gym clothes to school. They don't have to put their regular uniform over it. The high schools have gym uniforms. They have a shirt with their school's name. They're not going to be putting layers of clothing on because of hygiene issues and also because of the heat. We're hoping that if the weather cooperates most physical education classes will be held outside, which is also more of a safety net for them.

Comm. Capers: If students don't want to wear all that extra clothing, would they be penalized in any way by the teacher?

Ms. Shafer: They're not going to be penalized, but we're not asking them to wear extra clothing.

Comm. Capers: If they have gym on this day, you're asking them to put their gym uniform on and then put their uniform over it, correct?

Ms. Shafer: No.

Comm. Capers: I'm missing something then.

Ms. Shafer: If you have physical education today wear only your physical education uniform. If you don't have physical education today, wear your school uniform. We're going to be a little loose on the uniforms for a number of reasons. One, keep in mind that last year the kids did not wear their uniform. Some of them may have grown and some families may not be able to afford the uniform right now due to the pandemic and being out of work. For the most part, the principals have some type of payment situation with the parents. If that does not work, we're not going to penalize any child for not having their uniform. We're not asking anybody to wear two uniforms at the same time. We don't want that either. When you have physical education, wear the uniform to school. When you don't have physical education, wear your school uniform.

Comm. Capers: What does the uniform consist of? Shirts and t-shirts? Sweatpants and a t-shirt? In the fall weather is unpredictable. It can get cooler.

Ms. Shafer: Many of the schools have two uniforms for physical education. They have the shorts and the sweatpants, depending on what the parent purchases. If they don't have their school uniform but they have the same color, or even if they don't have the same color, we're going to be lenient. We understand the hardships that parents are going through. What's really important right now is to get children back into school.

Comm. Capers: Are the teachers going to be lenient, or the schools in general?

Comm. M. Martinez: Respectfully, Comm. Capers, this is something that is to be handled by building administrators. It is not our purview to determine what happens when kids are not in uniform. The building leadership handles that.

Comm. Capers: Of course. I just want to know what's going to happen. We get the calls saying, "My kid failed gym because of this." I'm just asking what the rules and regulations are. I'm not asking to control it. I'm just asking what is going to happen.

Comm. M. Martinez: It's like trying to predict the weather. We're assuming that these things are going to happen. We're putting hypothetical scenarios and asking 'what ifs.' We don't know if these things are going to happen. Why are we concerning ourselves with 'what ifs?'

Comm. Hodges: You can assume that it's going to be very cold in the wintertime.

Comm. M. Martinez: When we get to the wintertime, the building administrators will handle it accordingly. That's the point I'm making. We're spinning our wheels. There's no need to discuss this right now. When winter comes and it gets cold, the building administrators will say put a sweater or sweatpants on. What are we talking about?

Comm. Hodges: That's what we're trying to find out. If you're talking about what you're wearing to gym...

Comm. M. Martinez: You wear the gym uniform. When it's hot, you wear shorts. When it's cold, you wear sweats.

Comm. Simmons: This isn't different than what students in general have been doing for the longest. When my sons were in school, in the winter they would wear their sweatpants.

Comm. Capers: I was talking about high school students.

Comm. Simmons: It's the same thing. They have two uniforms, one for the summer and one for the fall. They either have sweatpants or shorts. They wear them based on what the weather is.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: Madam Superintendent did say that they would be lenient. The Superintendent will pass that down to the principals and then it will be passed to the teachers. If the student does not have a uniform, as long as they're wearing the attire, whether it's the school color or not, they will still be able to participate in gym without a problem.

Ms. Shafer: The most important part of a uniform in physical education is your shoes because we don't want you to get injured. We're going to talk to the principals next week at the Administrators' Institute. Students will not be harmed if they don't have an appropriate uniform, whether it's the school uniform or the physical education uniform. They will not be harmed, not their grade, not detention. We need to get kids back into school. That's number one. Number two, we need to be sensitive to what parents have been through. They don't have a job. They don't have any finances coming in. Many of them have been displaced. COVID is still here. It did not go away. We all need to be able to be understanding and sensitive to what parents and children have been through as we welcome them back to school on September 8.

Comm. Hodges: The reason why I'm asking the question is because I want to know what to tell parents when I get calls and they raise that question. Some of us do get calls. It's not an inappropriate question to ask about the sweats versus the shorts. That's what we're trying to find out.

Comm. Simmons: But she answered the question.

Comm. Hodges: Not to my satisfaction. To yours she did.

Comm. Simmons: She said shorts or sweats, weather permitting.

Comm. Hodges: I was not aware that...

Comm. Simmons: I hate to be this way, but we need to start paying attention. We're asking questions that she answered in the presentation.

Comm. Hodges: I'm going to ask the questions I need to ask, Mr. President.

Comm. Simmons: And there's nothing wrong with that, Dr. Hodges. However, she mentioned all of this in the presentation. As the Vice President said, we're spinning our wheels. We're coming back and asking questions that she has already answered.

Comm. Hodges: It wasn't clear to me about the sweatpants in the wintertime. That's why I asked the question.

Comm. Simmons: After Comm. Capers asked the question, she answered it. Then you came back and asked the same question.

Comm. Hodges: I'm sitting here thinking about shorts. I wasn't thinking about sweats.

Comm. Simmons: Right, but she was specific. She said shorts or sweatpants. She said students have two gym uniforms, shorts and sweatpants. She answered the question. She answered it three times.

Comm. M. Martinez: I think we're all clear right now. Madam Superintendent, if we can proceed.

Ms. Shafer: I understand Nicole Payne is on, if she would just present the HIB information.

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

Ms. Nicole Payne: Good evening everyone. Thank you for your time. I'm just going to go over the School Safety Data System Report. As you know, each year we have to present Part I and Part II. We're presenting Part II this evening. It covers February through June. I'm also going to share the ABR scores for the self-assessment for 2019-2020. This just goes over what we're reporting to the SSDS, the number of investigations and incidents, training, and the programs provided. As I indicated, we'll also discuss the ABR scores. We had low numbers due to school closure. We only had 14 incidents this school year. Unit 1 for Part II, you can see the schools. We had really low numbers in terms of incidents of intimidation, harassment, and bullying. You can see there was a total of three incidents for Unit 1. The total for the year was nine incidents. For Unit 2, Part II, we can see seven incidents. For the year there were 12 complete incidents. This is Unit 3 for the entire school year. They had five incidents. Unit 4 is a small unit. For the school year they only had two incidents. A lot of that has to do with the school closures. I would not like to see the numbers go up for 2021-2022, but we will keep it monitored. Of those incidents that we had, there were different motivating factors. The program breaks down the types of motivating factors that led to the HIB incidents, appearance being the major factor. As you can see, 45% of the incidents were dealing with appearance. The next is mental, physical, or sensory disability. Gender, other, and medical condition are tied up. Classifications for HIB such as verbal, electronic, violence, physical and emotional - 46% of the classifications of harassment, intimidation, and bullying were verbal. Then we can see that the electronic cyberbullying also had an uptick as well. These are unfounded cases of HIB. Although these cases were unfounded, there were still mitigating factors that led to the disruption that was caused in school. Of course, for unfounded sometimes there's no identifiable nature. That's what makes it unfounded. Again, we see appearance. What's important about knowing this information is that now we can begin to target those types of areas and make sure that our students are educated, supported, and know how to deal with those situations and become more sensitive to the fact that we are trying to correct those situations. A lot of the unfounded cases of HIB had to do with the electronic aggression and cyberbullying. Verbal is any type of threat and aggressive speech. I just wanted to share that information because as we go back next school year we can begin to drill down and see those areas in which we need to provide further support for teachers. We get a self-assessment grade. We review and reflect upon our practice. Each school has to submit a score. We can get a total of 78 points, which is the maximum score. That score drills down to see the areas in which we are doing well and where we need to improve. The district then takes the raw score, the average of all the schools totaled up. As you can see, these are the 2019-2020 ABR grades. They will be posted to the website and to individual school websites. We didn't have an improvement this school year. As I move through the document, you can see those schools and the scores. We did a lot better this time. We had more schools scoring themselves within the 78 to 70 range. Our district rate is 66. For 2018-2019 it was 60 so we did increase by six points. I did professional development about the ABR score. I noticed that we needed to take a better look at some schools. Sometimes it could be a compliance issue or folks think it's a compliance document. I really wanted to drill down because that informs our practice. How we score ourselves informs our practice and those areas in which we need to improve. I took the numbers and I created a chart in which we could see how we averaged. Schools scoring between 77 and 63, which represent 80% or better, we had at least 36 schools in that bracket. You guys can see the breakdown as we go along, which was a better improvement from 2018-2019. As you can see in that upper echelon, we only had 34%. We were able to go to 70%. In these other areas we just decreased, and I was glad to see that movement. With 2020-2021 we should see more movement in terms of our ABR score. I just broke it down

again showing you the numbers. We had 18 schools in 2018-2019. Now we have 36 again doing 80% or better. As you can see, we didn't have any schools fall in that 62% to 58%, scoring themselves between 48 and 46. We just moved up. We are making progress. The schools are doing fantastic things and I really want to commend them, especially during school closure and figuring it out virtually. How do we still reach our kids? How do we still reach our young people and be able to support them, as well as the staff? They did some wonderful staff development as well. The areas in which we did our best in 2018-2019, this is just a reflection of that. These are the HIB trainings and programs that the schools were involved with for this school year. We can see the different trainings that the staff went through. These are SEL activities and lessons led by school counselors and teachers. There was a big push for SEL while looking for other ways to support our students. We all know the statistics. We all know the information about school closure and how it impacted our kids. Again, this just lists those programs that the schools were involved with. Elevate Students is a character-based and leadership program, Shining Stars, Random Acts of Kindness, Student-Led, Virtual Spirit Week, Growing in Grace, the Hero Squad Program, and Virtual Charity programs that the schools actually conducted. These are the partnerships that we have in the community with different groups. They're coming into the schools and adding additional supports around social and emotional development and character development. Although we were closed, the schools really did a wonderful job in making sure that they were still in contact with the students. It wasn't just me. Guidance and academic services really kicked up so working together we were really able to provide that continuum of services for our students and families. At this time, does anyone have any questions? Thank you for your time this evening.

Comm. M. Martinez: Thank you for your presentation.

Ms. Shafer: I just want to thank everyone for presenting tonight. I also want to thank cabinet for putting together the "The Road Forward" reopening plan and everyone for all their work during the pandemic and the summer. We will continue to get ready to welcome students on September 8. That concludes my report.

Comm. M. Martinez: Thank you very much, Madam Superintendent and to all the presenters and everybody for their continued diligence throughout these strange times that we find ourselves in.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

**It was moved by Comm. Redmon, 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.**

Mr. Ira Israel: Good evening. Thank you for having me here. I was reaching out to Brother Corey Teague. I'm from Israel United in Christ. It's a faith-based organization. I want to present to you guys a presentation that we did before Rutgers University and Buffalo University. I also helped out in Bergen Community College. It's a history presentation. There's a statement that if you don't know who you are, it's hard to know where you're going. Latino and African American youths are not really fed history. It's really redundant all the time. It's the same people every year for Black History Month. We don't really go further past the slave trade or the colonization of the 'so-called' Latinos. This presentation is really focused on the lost history of who we were prior to being enslaved. For example, we don't really get taught that we were the Moors during the Dark Ages in Spain and Europe. Who were the Tainos before they came and conquered us? Who were the Boricuas before they came and conquered us, as well as

the Aztecs and the Mayans? I actually sent Mr. Teague the actual presentation. I'm not sure if I can share my screen. He has it. We have done this presentation at Rutgers University and Bergen Community College. Our crew would like to present it to the high schools in Paterson to give the youth more self-esteem and encouragement for who they are and promote more positivity instead of all the negativity that's going on today with the media and the culture we're living in. Even though we are a faith-based organization, this will be a historical presentation, not religious.

Comm. M. Martinez: I appreciate you sharing that information with us. Thank you so much.

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

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

### **Resolution No. 1**

Whereas, the Paterson Public School District approves the payment of bills and claims dated August 11, 2021, beginning with check number 227476 and ending with check number 227616, and direct deposit number 1059 through 1068, in the amount of \$8,796,845.60;

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, the district has to amend the previously submitted resolution # 3 voted on June 2, 2021, for the analysis of its Food Service's revenues and operating expenditures for the 2020-21 school year, the projected deficit was projected at \$2,500,000 but has an increase of \$500,000.

Whereas, transfers to Food Service fund may be necessary in situations where a district charges for meals or receives state or federal meal subsidies, the activity of its food service operation must be accounted for in an enterprise fund. Any board contribution, including the payment of certain salaries or other identified specific expenditures should be budgeted and expended as a transfer to cover deficit in account 11-000-310-930. For CAFR presentation, the budgeted and actual transfer is presented as a general fund operating transfer; and

Whereas, the Food Service program did not generate adequate revenue to support its operating expenditures, which created a deficit in the net position as, identified in the 19-20 audit. The District is responsible to raise \$1,003,808, in the subsequent General Fund budget to cover Food Service deficit in net position; and

Whereas, the district has done an analysis of its Food Service's revenues and operating expenditures for the 2020-21 school year, and have calculated a projected deficit of \$3,000,000. Food services will not generate adequate revenues to exceed operating expenditures and will create a deficit in net position for 2020-2021. This is a direct result of COVID-19 and school closures, which created a reduction to meal counts and decreases the federal reimbursement; and

Now therefore be it resolved, the board by resolution allow the transfer from the General Fund in budget account 11-000-310-930, Transfers to Cover Deficit, for 2019-2020 for \$1,003,808, as per audit; and

Be it further resolved, the board approve transfer from the General Fund 11-000-310-930, Transfer to Cover Deficit, to the Enterprise Fund for 2020-2021 for \$3,000,000, to cover projected deficit and to comply with corrective action in place. Funds transferred to the Enterprise Fund for Food Services, at the end of the year are for the actual amount and any funds not needed for a deficit should be refunded to the general fund.

Be it further resolved, that this resolution shall take effect upon its adoption.

### **Resolution No. 3**

WHEREAS, public schools have a profound impact on thousands of students, families and staff and are charged with the care, education, nourishment of their students and are an integral part of the health and safety of our communities and must provide staff and students with a safe and effective educational environment that supports student achievement; and

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public Schools District "District" is scheduled to open schools for all staff and students, to report in person, on Wednesday, September 8, 2021, and

WHEREAS, the "District" has collaborated with city government, health care and business leaders to encourage COVID-19 vaccinations, authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), among eligible students to make sure students and staff are as safe as they can be when they return to school, and

WHEREAS, it is the goal of the District" to encourage parents of students 12 years old and older through their partnerships with the Paterson Department of Health and St. Joseph's Health to increase vaccinations among Paterson students, and

WHEREAS, the "District" is prepared to provide transportation, by PPS employees, for those families who are in need of a ride to and from the vaccination sites, and

WHEREAS, the "District" will also be launching an incentive program in collaboration with McDonald's restaurant located at Broadway and Madison Avenue, Paterson, NJ, for students to receive a \$10 gift card (\$5 District: \$5 McDonald's) redeemable at McDonald's at Broadway and Madison Avenue, now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education supports the partnership with McDonald's restaurant located at Broadway and Madison Avenue to launch an incentive program to encourage COVID-19 vaccinations for students 12 years old and older, by providing students a \$10 gift card, with McDonalds contributing \$1,500.00 and the District matching the \$1,500.00, plus any additional costs.

### **Resolution No. 4**

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
Manuel Martinez, Jr.	NSBA 2021 CUBE Annual Conference	September 15-18, 2021	\$2,295.00 (registration, transportation, lodging, meals)	
Board Member	Atlanta, GA			
TOTAL CONFERENCES:			1	
TOTAL AMOUNT:			\$2,295.00	

#### Resolution No. 5

WHEREAS, the N.J. Department of Education and the N.J. Department of Health released The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance June 2021, which requires Local Education Agencies including public school districts to plan to provide full-day, full-time, in-person instruction, and

WHEREAS, The Road Forward: Health and Safety Guidance June 2021, supplants health and safety protocols previously outlined in Executive Order No. 175 and in the state's previous guidance in The Road Back, and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has determined that PreK-12 schools can safely reopen for staff and remain open if they strictly implement prevention strategies that include universal and correct use of masks and physical distancing, handwashing and respiratory etiquette, routine cleaning and sanitizing, air quality monitoring, and contact tracing in combination with isolation and quarantine; and

WHEREAS, the District has installed air purifiers in all classrooms and offices, and

WHEREAS, in addition to implementing these strategies, the District has made vaccinations available to all employees and students 12 years and older; and

WHEREAS, the District has also designated a medial sick room, and established daily health screening requirements and temperature checks;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board approves The Road Forward: Returning To Paterson Public Schools in The 2021-2022 School Year as the District's restart plan as detailed therein.



**It was moved by Comm. Redmon, seconded by Comm. Castillo-Cruz 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
- 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**

Comm. Arrington: Technology meets tomorrow.

Comm. M. Martinez: We will hold off on these presentations and resolutions until next week's regular meeting.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Comm. M. Martinez: We need to approve a motion to go into executive session on Monday, August 16 at 5:00 p.m. to discuss personnel.

**It was moved by Comm. Redmon, seconded by Comm. D. Martinez that the Board goes into executive session on Monday, August 16, 2021, at 5:00 p.m., to discuss personnel.**

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: We're approving a motion to go into executive session on Monday?

Comm. Redmon: Yes, because we can go into executive session without opening the meeting.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: Thank you.

**On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.**

Comm. Arrington: I think we should acknowledge the loss of an educational giant in the community. We all know her very well. It's a tough loss for all of us. I just want to pass my condolences on to her friends and family.

Comm. M. Martinez: Thank you for bringing that to light, Vince. The City of Paterson indeed suffered a great loss of someone who was an advocate for education and young people throughout the city. Thank you for recognizing that. Nelly Celli will be dearly missed.

Comm. Hodges: That is indeed quite true.

Comm. M. Martinez: Absolutely.

Comm. Hodges: During next meeting are we having a discussion about school readiness? Has that been done already?

Comm. M. Martinez: I'm unsure if that's on Monday. It's on Wednesday's regular meeting.

Comm. Redmon: Monday is just the executive session for personnel.

Comm. M. Martinez: Dr. Hodges, to your point, the school readiness and preparedness will be discussed at Wednesday's regular meeting.

Comm. Hodges: The discussion on goals will be when?

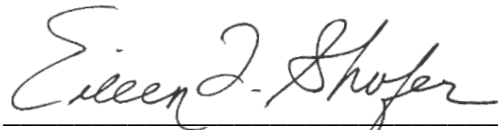
Comm. M. Martinez: Superintendent, will that also be included in Wednesday's meeting?

Ms. Shafer: We wanted you to listen to the transition program. We've put together all the data and metrics. We're going to send it out for the Board to take a look at and let us know which three goals you want us to move forward with. That was discussed with the Board President.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Eileen F. Shafer". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

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