

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

March 31, 2021 – 5:30 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. Oshin Castillo-Cruz
Comm. Jonathan Hodges
Comm. Dania Martinez

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

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:

**Special Meeting
March 31, 2021 at 5:30 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.

**MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS
PERSONNEL AND LEGAL MATTERS**

It was moved by Comm. M. Martinez, seconded by Comm. Redmon that the Board goes into executive session to discuss personnel and legal matters. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

The Board went into executive session at 5:40 p.m.

RECONVENE

It was moved by Comm. M. Martinez, seconded by Comm. Castillo-Cruz that the Board reconvenes the meeting.

Comm. Simmons: Comm. Teague had to leave. He had a family emergency.

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

The Board reconvened the meeting at 7:07 p.m.

REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

Ms. Shafer: Thank you, Mr. President. Good evening, Commissioners, staff, Paterson families, and community. Let me thank all of you for joining us tonight. I want to begin with some good news. Cheryl Coy, our Assistant Superintendent for Special Services, applied for an SEL grant with the Camden County Educational Services Commission in partnership with the school-based Health Care Solutions Network. It's a five-year grant. I'm going to ask Cheryl to give us a brief summary about the grant.

Ms. Cheryl Coy: Good evening, everyone. This grant will be able to support 36 schools with 32 clinicians and transitional coaches throughout the district on mental health. Paterson was awarded this contract. It's a five-year renewable contract and it will support students who have accumulated five unexcused absences in a month or 10 unexcused absences in 90 days, so those who have attendance problems. It will also support students who exhibit behavioral challenges determined by referrals to administration, in-school or out-of-school suspension and behavior grades, significant social/emotional issues, anxiety, depression, or withdrawal from school participation and a need for prevention of mental health counseling. The district will work on the training process now with the intention to have the program in place by July 1. Prior to the program being in place, we would like to do a kick-off with Parent University so that parents are aware that this resource will be available in every school throughout the district. This program is offered in 36 and will cover any school in the district that does not currently have mental health support in their school. These clinicians will be on site every single day and will work with a maximum of 15 students per session throughout each school day, Monday through Friday. In the event that we are in a remote setting, they will also offer via tele-therapy for the students.

Comm. Hodges: You said that this was for 36 schools. But then you also said that it would be for all schools. I don't understand the difference.

Ms. Coy: We had 36 schools that were not covered with mental health support. This grant has allowed us to pick up the additional 36 schools that were not already covered. There are schools that already have this program in place and there are full-service schools that have mental health clinicians on site already.

Comm. Hodges: All 52 schools will then be covered, correct?

Ms. Coy: Yes. I submitted the grant to cover any school that did not have a clinician on site as of today's date.

Comm. Hodges: Thank you.

Ms. Coy: You're welcome.

Ms. Shafer: Thank you, Cheryl. I want to take this opportunity to clear up some misinformation that is out there and to put our parents and staff at ease. Miscommunication is being circulated and causes some unnecessary anxiety for folks in a very trying time. My hope is to alleviate the anxiety and reignite our ability to work together. There are some things that I want to make clear as the Superintendent. The district has been working on preparing schools and district buildings to be safe learning environments for staff and students for when we return. Paterson schools have remained closed since March 17, 2020. Since that time, my team has been analyzing COVID-19 data, including the positivity rate in Paterson, Passaic County, and the State of New Jersey. As it relates to the safety walkthroughs, I want everyone to know that I invited the PEA and the delegates to join the district administrators on the readiness walkthroughs of school buildings for April 21 and 22 when all precautionary measures will be in place. I have not blocked the PEA delegates from safety walkthroughs of school buildings, but I've been trying to facilitate them with the cooperation of the PEA. I sent the PEA President a chart for him to fill out with the dates, the times, the schools and when the delegates would be joining us for each visit. This will happen during the school day and we will provide class coverage for the delegates. It does not make sense to do school readiness walkthroughs this week. Currently, all safety precautions are not in place at the schools and everyone is well aware of that. Two weeks ago, we received the application for ESSER II funding, and many of our safety precautions like air purifiers and air scrubbers came from that funding. Now is not the time for us to do walkthroughs. Since I have been the Superintendent of Schools, I have been transparent and engaged all stakeholders during these trying times. Today is no different. We know we are not ready to open and, as such, we never stated that. If we were prepared, we would be open now. We know we need a few more weeks to get everything in place so that we can ensure that our schools are safe for everyone. The district has spent close to \$6 million to purchase 4,000 air purifiers to be installed in every classroom and office throughout the district, and air ventilators with HEPA filters for rooms that do not have windows. This week, we installed over 2,000 air purifiers and are on schedule to install the remaining 2,000 units. There would be no point in doing safety walkthroughs this week when we know more time is needed to install the remainder of air purifiers and other precautionary measures. Another miscommunication is that we have not done anything in 13 months. I take exception to that. My team and principals have been working extremely hard on making our buildings safe, closing the digital divide, providing meals for all of our students, close to 3 million of them, updating our reopening plan, contact tracing when we have a positive case in the district, training teachers on remote learning and teaching, providing intervention platforms for our students, addressing our facility issues, building Plexiglass dividers, sanitizing our buildings, providing parent workshops, tracking student attendance, and communicating with parents and staff, only to name a few. Let me also address pictures that are being circulated of the John F. Kennedy Educational Complex. Classrooms have been damaged because we needed a new roof at John F. Kennedy High School. The new roof construction started in January. We needed a certain outdoor temperature to continue the roof work. When temperatures dropped, the workers went to another roof job in the district. Now that the warm weather is back, the work at John F. Kennedy High School has resumed. The classroom damage will be repaired. All new roofs are currently underway and the building has eight roofs to be replaced. I'm going to ask if we can put up the pictures of the work that's being done at John F. Kennedy. Neil, can you walk us through what these pictures illustrate?

Mr. Neil Mapp: Good afternoon. What we see here is one of the eight major roofs on the building and the arrow is pointing towards the gymnasium, which we've had significant water infiltration in. What you see now is the new sub-membrane that's placed on the roof. It's a sprayed-on membrane that's weather sensitive. We pulled off

in January because manufacturer's recommendations tell us that roofing product should be sprayed on at certain temperatures. It was below freezing at the time and so we couldn't spray that final roofing membrane on. We are at the point now where we are about to finish the final membrane on the roof. If you can see the bottom of the arrow, that's a roof over the locker rooms and that roof is completed. Is there another picture? It's a white coating that's placed as a final coating on the roof and that's what the gymnasium will look like. You can see the four different wings of the building, ACT, BTFM, STEM, and SET. We need to put on the final white coating on the ACT and STEM roofs and we have not started the roof renovations over BTMF and SET. Those are due to begin in the next couple of weeks and we are scheduled to complete the project at the end of April. All roofs should be completed by the end of April of this year.

Ms. Shafer: Neil, thank you for clearing up any miscommunication that's out there. In addition, I want to let all the staff members know if you haven't signed up for a vaccine and you would like to, we are still working with Hackensack Meridian at the Mega Site in the Meadowlands, St. Joseph's Medical Center at Dr. Hani Awadallah School, and we sent out another notification that Calvary Baptist Church is doing shots this weekend. There are opportunities for you to sign up if you still want to get the vaccine. I know some of the staff members emailed me that, for one reason or another, they needed to take the Johnson & Johnson. That is now available. Lastly, I want to just reiterate that we must work together during these difficult times for the benefit of our students, families, and staff. My administration is committed to opening schools and providing a safe environment for our students and staff. Many of you have communicated your situation and challenges during this pandemic to me and I listened and heard all of you, hence my urgency to be transparent and informative. I urge you to begin making the appropriate arrangements and accommodations for family or childcare so that you are prepared to return to school in the near future when it is safe for us to reopen. I now want to move on to the COVID-19 statistics and the Superintendent's recommendation. As all of you know, every other month since the pandemic started 13 months ago, I have been updating the Board on the COVID-19 statistics and making a recommendation. Up to this point, I have made the recommendation to extend remote teaching and learning. The safety and well-being of my staff and students has and remains top priority. Since the beginning of the pandemic, I have been guided by the data and science to continue remote teaching and learning or to make a recommendation to the Board to reopen schools. Today is no different. The science and the data of the pandemic is as follows – yesterday New Jersey reported another 4,378 confirmed new COVID-19 cases despite ongoing vaccination efforts throughout the state. Although the number of new cases has declined significantly since January, in March we saw this downtrend reverse as new case rates started to climb. Over the past month, the number of new cases has increased by nearly 50% in Paterson and Passaic County and by 16% in the Northeast New Jersey region. This uptick marks a localized peak in community transmission similar in magnitude to what we saw in April 2020 and again in November 2020. If you recall, we took precaution to make sure everyone was remote after the Thanksgiving holiday and over the Christmas holiday. I am very concerned now because the holiday is Sunday but we're already seeing a spike. Everyone knows that families and friends will get together for the holiday. Restaurants are open at 50% so people will be going out. We already are seeing an uptick before the holiday and that is concerning. As more schools have reopened for in-person instruction, the total number of school-linked outbreaks has grown by 61% in the past month, up to a total of 221 school-linked outbreaks and 1,002 school-linked infections since September. This includes 12 confirmed outbreaks in Passaic County and 42 school-linked cases. At this time, Mr. President and Board Commissioners, I am recommending that we continue with remote teaching and learning and to continue with the safety of our students and staff first. We will come back to the Board at the end of

April or early May to give you another update as to what Paterson, Passaic County, and the Northeast region looks like as it relates to the virus. Thank you.

Comm. Simmons: Thank you, Madam Superintendent. I will remind Board members that the last vote we took actually gives the Superintendent the authority to extend remote learning so there's no need for us to take a vote on that. As such, Board members, if you look at your agenda, I'm going to pull Resolution Item No. 1 which approves the opening of schools. That's the agenda that I have. I'm not sure if all Board members have that. Just to make sure that if you do, we are going to pull that item. I couldn't agree more with the Superintendent about everyone working together. That means the union and the administration along with the Board to make sure that we are doing what's in the best interest and safety for children. We'll still continue to work toward the goal of getting buildings ready. That has not stopped. That will continue because we want to make sure that when we return we do it as safely as possible. I will be reaching out to the Superintendent and we can reach out to the union leadership to make sure that we are all on the same page and we are all working together as we move forward. This isn't going to go anywhere, but we are doing everything that we can with our partners. We are partnering with St. Joseph's, Hackensack and other partners such as Calvary Baptist Church. Recently, the Community Health Center of Paterson has reached out to make slots available to make sure educators and our staff are vaccinated. We encourage people to take advantage of those opportunities. To date, I believe we have close to 2,000 members of our staff already vaccinated.

Ms. Shafer: Yes, that's correct.

Comm. Simmons: We want to continue that trend and we want to continue to move forward in making sure we get as many people as possible vaccinated.

Ms. Shafer: Mr. President, let me just say that those are the only ones we know of. Staff members and employees could have received the vaccine on their own in their community or somewhere else and we just don't have that information. I also want to reiterate not only working together, but the invitation is still open if the delegates want to do the safety walks with us on April 21 and 22. The union president can fill out the chart that I sent him. We will get the coverage and we will do the walks together. Thank you.

Comm. Simmons: Again, that's working together and we want to make sure we continue to do that. We do want to make sure the buildings are safe. We would like the union to be involved in that process. Before we move to public comments, I know that we had a large number of people registered to speak and I know that we have a lot of speakers online. If you are online and registered to speak about the reopening, as you just heard, we will remain remote and we will come back and revisit and look at the data again in early May. Before we open public portion, I would like to move out of order just a little bit so that if anyone is online and that's what they needed to hear we can give them an opportunity to drop off if they'd like. Once we finish the business and we still have a large number of participants online to speak, I will at that time entertain a motion to suspend our bi-laws, which allows for people to speak for two minutes, and lower that time to one minute and to limit public portion to one hour so that we can move this along in an orderly fashion.

Comm. Hodges: Was there another mention about emails?

Comm. Simmons: Yes. The Board understands and takes all of these concerns seriously, but Board members do have lives. They have to get to doctor's appointments. When they are emailing Board members, I would implore folks to use

the Board members' district email address and refrain from using Board members' personal email addresses because of the amount of emails that they are receiving. There were some things sent out to them today that they didn't see because they had so many emails in their personal email addresses.

Comm. M. Martinez: Mr. President, to that point, just as we were in the meeting, I received several emails to my personal email asking why we put executive session first. Again, we understand. This is what we are here to do, but there are also boundaries. When you send it to our work email, then that's appropriate, but not to our personal email addresses. That's inappropriate. As you made the recommendation, send them to the work email. That's fine. Personal is personal for a reason and let's please respect that line.

Comm. Hodges: It doesn't influence how we are going to act in any way whatsoever. All it does is make it a little more difficult for us to function outside of the school district. That may not be what people want to do or the influence that people are trying to engender with their in-mail messages. I would just request that they observe that and do whatever they want to the school district emails.

Comm. M. Martinez: Agreed, Dr. Hodges. Respectfully and let's act accordingly.

RESOLUTIONS FOR A VOTE:

Resolution No. 1 was pulled.

Resolution No. 2

WHEREAS, Paterson Public Schools ("the district") has entered an emergency contract for the purchase of the following goods/services: New School Boiler

WHEREAS, this contract was necessary to address the following emergency conditions affecting the health of safety of occupants of school property: There is an immediate need to replace the boiler that has failed at PS 8. This boiler has required many costly repairs over several heating seasons. On December 30, 2020 a leak was discovered, and the vendor was dispatched to assess what repairs would be necessary. The cost of this repair will be costly and will not guarantee continued operation of the boiler. The secondary boiler in the building was activated but due to its age and poor condition, is unable to maintain the required temperature in the building.

WHEREAS, boards of education may negotiate or award any contract without public advertising for bids when an emergency affecting the health or safety of occupants of school property requires the immediate delivery of goods or the performance of services in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-7;

WHEREAS, the District's need for such goods/services was not reasonably foreseeable or arose notwithstanding the District's good faith efforts to plan for the purchase of necessary goods/services, as required by N.J.A.C. 5:34-6.1 (a)(3);

WHEREAS, the District awarded this contract through a non-fair and open process in accordance with N.J.S.A. 19:44A-20.4 and 20.5, for a contract term not to exceed 12 consecutive months, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:34-6.1 (a)(5);

WHEREAS, C.J Vanderbeck agreed to provide such services for a total price not to exceed \$75,125.00; and

WHEREAS, the awarding of this contract is in line with the “A promising Tomorrow Strategic Plan 2019-2024”. Goal Area #2: Facilities, Objective 4- “Create/maintain clean and safe schools that meet 21st century learning standards.” And

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education ratifies the emergency contract with C.J. Vanderbeck, for a total amount not to exceed \$75,125.00 in the 2020-2021 school year.

It was moved by Comm. Redmon, seconded by Comm. M. Martinez that Resolution No. 2 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

Paterson Board of Education Standing Abstentions

Comm. Arrington

- Self
- Family

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. 3

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the City of Paterson, as Landlord, leased certain real property commonly known as Hinchliffe Stadium, an approximately 5.64 acre tract of land located at 186-218 Maple Street, Paterson, New Jersey (currently Block 801, Lot 6.01, formerly and at that time Block 801, Lot 6) (the "Stadium") to the City of Paterson, as Tenant, pursuant to a certain Lease dated June 8, 2010; and

WHEREAS, a developer has proposed to preserve and rehabilitate the Stadium and to also develop an abutting lot (currently Block 801, Lot 7.01, formerly and at that time Block 801, Lot 7) with multifamily housing, financed by a multi-layered financing strategy including, but not limited to, New Jersey EDA ERG State Tax Credits; and

WHEREAS, on October 19, 2019, the Board of Education of the City of Paterson and the City of Paterson amended the June 8, 2010 Lease in order to facilitate the said rehabilitation of the Stadium and the development of the abutting Lot 7 (the "Amended Lease"); and

WHEREAS, on November 30, 2020, the Board of Education of the City of Paterson approved by resolution a purchase and sales agreement for Lot 7, an option to purchase lease hold interest, and an amended and restated lease (the "Restated Lease") between the Board Education of the City of Paterson and Hinchliffe Master Urban Renewal, L.P.; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2021, the City of Paterson acquired fee simple title to Lot 7 for One Dollar (\$1.00), by quitclaim deed from the Board of Education of the City of Paterson with the Board of Education of the City of Paterson retaining a right of reversion if the developer fails to develop the property; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2021, the City of Paterson assigned its rights under the Amended Lease to the developer, known as Hinchliffe Master Urban Renewal, L.P., a New Jersey limited partnership; and

WHEREAS, NJCC CDE AMOS LLC, a New Jersey limited liability company ("NJCC Sub-CDE"), CONSORTIUM AMERICA 93, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company ("CA Sub-CDE"), RBC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SUB 27, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company ("RBC Sub-CDE"), USBCDE SUB-CDE 211, LLC, a Missouri limited liability company ("USB Sub-CDE" and together with NJCC Sub-CDE, CA Sub-CDE and RBC Sub-CDE, individually each a "CDE Lender" and collectively, the "CDE Lenders"), LIFE MANAGEMENT IV, L.L.C., a New Jersey limited liability company ("Senior Lender" and together with the CDE Lenders, individually each a "Lender" and collectively, the "Lenders") intend to loan Hinchliffe Master Urban Renewal, L.P. for the purposes of developing the area known as Hinchliffe Stadium; and

WHEREAS, the Senior Lender has made or is making a mortgage loan to Hinchliffe Master Urban Renewal, L.P. in the principal amount of \$27,392,348 (the "Senior Loan"), upon the terms and conditions of applicable loan agreements and ancillary agreements for the purpose of financing the development of the area known as Hinchliffe Stadium; and

WHEREAS, the CDE Lenders have made or are making a mortgage loan to Hinchliffe Master Urban Renewal, L.P. in the principal amount of \$20,780,000 (the "CDE Loan", and together with the Senior Loan, the "Loans"), upon the terms and conditions of applicable loan agreements and ancillary agreements for the purpose of financing the development of the area known as Hinchliffe Stadium; and

WHEREAS, Lenders will not make the Loans to Hinchliffe Master Urban Renewal, L.P. unless the Board of Education of the City of Paterson agrees to subordinate its Right of Reverter to the Loans as set forth in this Agreement.

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the City of Paterson and Hinchliffe Master Urban Renewal, L.P. wish to subordinate the Board of Education of the City of Paterson's right of reversion in favor of the lenders of Hinchliffe Master Urban Renewal, L.P.; and

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2021, the City of Paterson transferred Lot 7.01 to Hinchliffe Housing Urban Renewal Associates, L.P. with the Board of Education of the City of Paterson's right of reversion; and

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Housing and Mortgage Finance Agency, an agency of the State of New Jersey whose mailing address is 637 South Clinton Avenue, Trenton, New Jersey 08650 (the "Hinchliffe Housing Lender"), has made or intends to make three (3) mortgage loans to Hinchliffe Housing Urban Renewal Associates, L.P. in the principal amounts of \$15,319,591.00; \$2,006,148.00 and \$6,000,000.00, respectively, upon the terms and conditions of applicable loan agreements and ancillary agreements for the purpose of the developing and constructing an affordable housing project on Lot 7.01; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the City of Paterson agrees that the Right of Reverter reserved to the Board of Education of the City of Paterson shall be subordinate to the three mortgages to Hinchliffe Housing Lender; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF PATERSON hereby approves the Subordination Agreement for Hinchliffe Master Urban Renewal, L.P.'s lenders and the Subordination Agreement for Hinchliffe Housing Urban Renewal Associates, L.P.'s lenders as respectively, Exhibit A and Exhibit B and authorizes the Superintendent of the Board of Education of the City of Paterson to execute and the counsel to the Board of Education of the City of Paterson to attest the Superintendent's signature and for said designees to take all actions necessary or desirable to implement the said Agreements.

It was moved by Comm. Redmon, seconded by Comm. M. Martinez that Resolution No. 3 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Commissioners Castillo-Cruz and Hodges who recused themselves, and Comm. D. Martinez who abstained. The motion carried.

Paterson Board of Education Standing Abstentions

Comm. Arrington

- Self
- Family

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comm. Simmons: How many speakers do we have online right now?

Mr. Zaydel: We have 50 at the moment. I would just like to tell everyone that when your one minute ends, your mic will be muted just so that everyone can speak. If your Zoom name is anything other than the phone number or the full first and last name that you registered with, your turn might be skipped because I won't know exactly who to unmute. If you are calling in, I'll rename your Zoom name based on your phone number. If you are on multiple devices, please log off of all but one device so that I can unmute the right account.

It was moved by Comm. M. Martinez and seconded by Comm. Arrington that the bylaws be waived which allow for the allotment of two minutes per person, and that the public portion be limited to one hour.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: I know you motioned for less than two minutes, but you didn't indicate how many minutes each speaker would have.

Comm. Simmons: Do we need to amend that motion?

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: I missed if it was seconded.

Comm. Simmons: It was seconded.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: You can just amend the motion. Withdraw the second.

It was moved by Comm. M. Martinez and seconded by Comm. Arrington that the bylaws be waived which allow for the allotment of two minutes per person, and that the meeting allotment for public speakers be reduced to one minute per person, and that the public portion be limited to one hour. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

Comm. Simmons: We'll call our first speaker and be reminded that only those that are on at the time we start will be allowed to speak.

Ms. Rosie Grant: Good evening, Commissioners, Madam Superintendent, staff, and audience. Thank you for this opportunity. First, congratulations on the social/emotional wellness grant. That is wonderful news. I can now remove that point from my comments. Ms. Shafer, thank you for your recommendation to remain remote and thank you Commissioners for supporting that decision. Every time the question of

reopening has come up, PEF has advocated for delayed opening until you can ensure everyone's safety. The reopening plan covers things that are in our control, but there is so much about this COVID-19 virus and infection that is outside of our control. It is important that we minimize the risk to our children and the adults who serve them. PEF is encouraging parents to opt their children out of this year's test, if there is to be a test. The state has asked the federal government for a waiver, but no waivers have been issued to date. I've put a link to a sample letter on the Paterson Education Fund's Facebook page for anyone who needs a sample to guide them. I don't have to read my reopening comments based on the decision that was made today and I'm grateful for that. I think you saved some lives. Thank you for your time and your service to our children.

Mr. John McEntee: Good evening. That was some speech, Ms. Shafer. You know we've been working with you and we couldn't be anything more than transparent. We gave you a copy of our checklist, we gave you access to our delegate assembly meeting, and we allowed you guys complete access to what we were doing. For you to say that there's misinformation, I think, couldn't be anything more than fake news. Let me be clear. We are going to work with the district. We are going to make sure that these schools are cleaned, that the signage is down, and that everything to keep our employees safe is in place. I would challenge the district to question why we are here tonight. We are only here tonight because there was a 'special meeting' called to fast-track this. That's why we are here. This wasn't supposed to be held until the middle of April. Let me be extremely clear to the Superintendent. The School Board needs to make these decisions. This is no longer a state-operated school district where Trenton can make phone calls to certain people and try to influence us. The students, the teachers, the secretaries, the nurses and all of our employees have got to be in the front of all the decisions that are made. We are not going to be cowed by anyone who calls from Trenton. I hope that in the future no one else is as well. Mr. Mapp, when we spoke about the roof at John F. Kennedy you said to us, and I quote, "It's completed." Then, when we showed you the pictures before we sent them out you said to us, "Oops, I misspoke."

Mr. Zaydel: Mr. McEntee, I'm sorry. I have to disable your mic. We need to move on to the next speaker. Thank you for your comments.

Mr. Charles Ferrer: At that worksite safety meeting, we were told that the roof work had already been done. The pictures came about after we went and inspected it. That's why we talk about transparency. If you want us to take your word, then your word has to be true. We are here to work with the district, as John said. That's our intention, to make sure that every building is safe for the students and everybody that goes into them. Currently, just about every week from September 18 forward, either remote or onsite, people have tested positive for COVID. That's with small numbers in the building. We don't want this problem moving forward when we put larger numbers. My goal is not to lose one more person to this disease.

Mr. Errol Kerr: Mr. President, Ms. Shafer, and the Board, good evening. I came here this evening prepared for a discussion on the reopening, but I suppose that was properly settled so we'll wait until the next meeting. However, another subject of concern for us is the standardized test slated to be administered this spring across the state. There is clear recognition that the virtual platform employed nationally over this school year while helpful to some degree has created huge gaps in learning for most of our children. The Acting Commissioner of Education, Dr. Angelica McMillan, in a speech recently said that the administration is seeking public comments on the question

of a waiver on standardized testing for this year. According to the reports, she said the state is...

Ms. Rana Omar: Good evening, Board. I just wanted to thank you guys for your consideration today and how important it is that we remain safe, protect the children, protect ourselves, and our families. It's really important that we follow the science. Just based on what's going on in our state right now, the numbers are up in Passaic County. Our goal is to protect the children, the adults, and everybody that's coming in contact with everything that's going on. This has been a really difficult time and I totally understand it's a difficult time for parents, students, and teachers. We are all doing the best that we can and trying to protect ourselves, our families, and all those that are around us. Thank you for the consideration today and it's appreciated.

Ms. Jennifer Ellerman: Good evening, my name is Jennifer Ellerman and I have been a teacher with Paterson Public Schools for 6 years. I will admit that when I found out we were starting the 2020-2021 school year, I was devastated knowing that we would not be going back in person. I was willing and looking forward to going to school in person and getting back to normal life and teaching my students. To be completely thrown into the unknown as an educator where you never thought virtual school would be a full-time reality was a difficult task, but the teachers of Paterson have risen to the occasion. I believe that when the building is safe and up to the guidelines proposed by the CDC, we will rise to the occasion as well as always. I just also wanted to make note that the proposed plan suggested that students attending in-person or virtual would be a full day until 3:00 o'clock. I can tell you personally since teaching virtually for over a year that it's a struggle every single day to keep the students engaged for the allotted time as is. To simply throw the students into a full day wearing masks in-person...

Ms. Jennifer Rodas: Hi and good evening everybody. I just wanted to thank you for making the decision that you made based on the statistics and the data, not only Passaic County, but especially for Paterson with the rise of the cases. I definitely think you made the right decision tonight. We also have to keep in mind that even the CDC is recommending that even though people are vaccinated and it's a personal decision to vaccinate, they still have to wear a mask and maintain social distancing because there is growing evidence that people can still spread the virus as well as develop COVID even after getting the vaccine. Then you are adding these new variants into the realm as well, which is putting people more susceptible. I definitely want to thank you for ensuring the safety, not only of our students and staff, but the community overall. Have a good night.

Ms. Monifa Mears-Greer: Good evening. Thank you so very much for your decision. I'm sure it took some time to really see what is important and what's best for the district as well and I appreciate you all for that. I'm very happy to know that we are still thinking about everyone that's involved, not just the students but the staff in general. That makes me feel great because I have strong anxiety and I was really nervous about the upcoming days. I'm just glad that the decision was made very carefully. Thank you so very much.

Ms. Lynn Schweighardt: Hi. I just have two questions. Can Ms. Shafer possibly give a more specific date? We won't be starting before this date or maybe afterwards. For people who need to arrange childcare I think that might help. Could we please discuss why when we are reopening initially, especially if it's before the end of June, we have to have eating in school? We have in our buildings classes that are going to have 16 kids in each cohort eating breakfast in a classroom that cannot be spaced 6 feet apart, which is required for eating. There's no room for 16 kids 6 feet apart. I feel we need to

continue with distributing the meals the way we've been doing all along and start back half a day without the eating, especially if it's before September. That would alleviate so many concerns. I'm a nurse. I'm very concerned and people are talking to me. The eating in the class is the biggest issue for so many people. Please consider that if we do reopen, especially if it's just for the end of this year. Thank you.

Ms. Melissa DiPietro: Good evening, everyone. First of all, thank you so much for letting the data drive your decision. I know that this gave everyone a reason to breathe. I do want to mention a couple of quick things. First and foremost happy news - we are proud to share that 22 students representing School No. 28/PAGT sent eight projects to the Regional National History Day Competition. They won their respective categories and have advanced to the state competition to be held in May. We are extremely proud of these 22 scholars and their outstanding accomplishments during these extraordinary times. Back to the problem at hand, we are really concerned. Many of us only have one electrical outlet that is working in our classroom. How are we supposed to plug in these air purifiers on top of everything else? Wi-Fi wasn't supported for the staff on PD days and now we are going to have everyone streaming. Regarding the screening of the kids, what about pullout for non-traditional classrooms? Are there procedures in place for that and keeping everyone safe? I think we just want some more clarity so we feel safe as well. Thank you for your time. Have a good night.

Mr. Tim Raimondo: Two quick questions. When the decision is made to reopen, is there going to be a window in place as far as how long it's going to be before we open? You're not going to decide we are going to open on a Wednesday and say next Monday we are opening. Is there a set window in place of how long after you announce that we are going to reopen when we will actually reopen? Second, could we talk about the universal bell schedule and the removal of zero period? I know it benefits the biggest population. Unfortunately, the kids that need it the most are the smaller population. The removal of the zero period really affects students that need extra help as well as the strongest students that have the ability to take extra classes and to take college credit classes which won't be there. I know there's an exception box underneath the new universal bell schedule, but we already know that this district has pretty much said no zero period regardless. I would like to hear about that also. Thank you.

Ms. Kimberly Reardon: Thank you for letting me speak tonight. I'm a little confused about transparency when I live in an urban district myself and my Superintendent, Dr. Marnie Hazelton, has given us weekly updates of staff and students in schools that have been infected since September and we were virtual. In the opening of my personal school district in mid-February as hybrid half-days, we have shut down twice since then. As soon as the state loosens the guidelines, the infection rates will continue to climb regardless. I have concerns about children eating unmasked in my room as I am medically compromised. Nobody might as well wear a mask for the rest of the day. There's absolutely no reason and no way to clean that room afterwards. You need to consider a half-day. A full day is too much. Nobody should be eating in the building. Grab and go, bag the lunch, and they leave. I see very little instruction on how the day is going to work in the reopening plan in terms of who is moving throughout the building, how they are going to move throughout the building, and exactly what is going to happen. I don't see any specifics in the 222 pages...

Ms. Sigal Kaplan: Good evening, Board members. Thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to speak. I've been teaching in the district since 2001 and I wanted to thank Ms. Shafer for reconsidering the reopening and delaying it at this point. I have several concerns if we do open up. I know I've read that each child will be walking around or have their own partition and they will have to carry it to the cafeteria. I am not

quite sure how that would be considered a safety precaution when you are moving around from room to room and floor to floor, especially in buildings that have kindergarten through eighth grade in them. Young kids are prone to dropping things. Everything can get contaminated. It was also noted that they're going to be sanitized on a daily basis by the...

Ms. Danielle Bespalko: I'm a pre-k teacher at MLK. A lot of times with pre-k, we have special circumstances and special rules. It's a different population of students. When we reopen, there needs to be just as much special attention given to that population. Our kids have tantrums, cry, and act out behaviorally. They have not ever been away from their parents. Consoling them, wiping their tears and mouth, and helping them in the bathroom is a part of our everyday activity with them. The guidelines need to be adjusted for us specifically. Like the other teacher said, eating in the classroom is a long amount of time, the breakfast, lunch, and snack in the classroom, as well as an 80-minute naptime they would have to remove their mask for. There really wouldn't be a need for masks if for the majority of their day they are going to have no mask. The kids of our age group cough, sneeze, yell out with no mask on, and they are putting things in their mouth constantly. Their hands go in their mouth. The toys go in their mouth. It would be a real struggle...

Ms. Heather Crawford: I want to thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. I also would like to thank you for the decision you made this evening. I do think it's in the best interest of everyone at this point in time following the science to keep us all safe. I'd also like to thank you for the opportunity to be vaccinated because that does somewhat lower the anxiety of returning to school. I do have some concerns about the cohorts and if a student comes to school not on their cohort day. What is the plan and procedure in place for that? Will the students be allowed to stay? What will happen with those students? I'm concerned that the distance in the school and the social distancing in my classroom will become ineffective if the students are allowed to stay. That's a concern and I also have the same concerns about the students travelling with the Plexiglass dividers. I also teach primary students and they do have a tendency to drop things walking back and forth on the staircase and down the hallway.

Mr. Jason Velante: Superintendent, Board members, administration, and council, thank you for your prudent decision to protect our students. We respectfully request considering any future reopening date until the district allows the union delegates time to conduct safety walks of each worksite so that the result of these safety walks can be used as accompanying data that the Board uses to take any action before reopening. We humbly ask that if these safety walks are not yet completed, that you delay any future Board action until you've had time to review the results. I yield the remainder of my time to any subsequent PEA members scheduled to speak. Thank you very much.

Ms. Greta Mills: Thank you so much. I hope everybody can hear me. I just want to go over the fact that we are putting a whole bunch of programs in place. We have Go Guardian and Clever and I don't understand why we need both. We just need Go Guardian. Let Clever go. We have SABIS Realize and Imagine Learning. We need to come down to just one program. Use the SABIS Realize. Achieve 3000 covers math, science, and social studies. Let the Wonders and the Learning Alley go. We are putting in too many programs. And then maybe keep some Nearpod because it covers every subject and every special. Once again, thank you for not having us go to school. I sent a list of all the concerns that I have and it's definitely going to be an issue if we as teachers...

Ms. Shannon Alejo: I do want to say thanks for extending our remote learning, but I do have some concerns with our reopening plan. Specifically, according to News New Jersey, they have the Governor quoted saying that students and teachers with serious health issues will still be able to work remotely in the fall. Currently, Paterson doesn't have this policy in place for us, specifically the pregnant people. I am currently pregnant and was advised not to get vaccinated. I'm either going back to work unvaccinated or having to choose my own setting. Second, I do agree with the breakfast in the classroom issue. If you guys did grab-and-go breakfast and lunches, it would definitely limit exposure. Since we don't have a return date currently, I think that it will be 90 degrees in June. We are going to have masks on, no AC, and no windows open. That's about it.

Ms. Bree Brown: I just wanted to say good evening to everyone on the Board. Thank you so much for taking into consideration not opening the schools right now. The reopening plan is in our control and COVID is not right now. Even though we are all getting vaccinated at this time, we do still need to save lives. I just wanted to say thank you for your time and your service and thinking about teachers, students and everyone in Paterson. Thank you.

Ms. Gina DeSino: Good evening, everybody. I'm looking for a date of when we will be remote until and when we are revisiting this. I am on the restart committee for my child's school in a small district of only 100 students. I know they have every precaution in place. In the past three weeks, they've had 10 positive COVID cases and had to go remote because that's how fast it's spreading in the past three weeks. I am one of the PE delegates and would like to get into the building to do a safety walk as much as everybody else and I appreciate that, but I would like a date. That's what I'm waiting for, a date for when we are revisiting this. That's it. Thank you.

Ms. LaDeana Artis: Good evening to everyone on the call. I appreciate the opportunity to speak again tonight. I am a parent of a fourth grade student at School No. 2. He is in the autism classroom. I appreciate the safety precautions that are in movement to ensure the safety of the staff and students. When it is determined that it is safe for the schools to reopen, it is my understanding that there's a plan for the special needs students to follow the Cohort A or B. I was wondering, just for consistency and structure, if there was any way the children with special needs can return to school four days a week. In School No. 2, there are only six students in a classroom and there's no guarantee that all six students will return.

Mr. Gennaro Tortoriello: Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. We all know what the COVID numbers are, both nationally and locally. I'm compelling you to do the right thing. I thank you for tabling the decision until April. Our schools are not going to be ready. I applaud the district for purchasing the necessary equipment and for hopefully making the appropriate repairs to our buildings. May is not going to be the time. Why would we rush to jeopardize the safety of students, families, community members, and the staff? Many staff members who wish to be vaccinated will be unable to do so by the proposed return date, if that is still the date. Let's focus on September and let's do it safely. Management disagreeing with labor on issues is nothing new. There's no reason to disagree when it comes to safety. Losing one person, whether it be a student, a staff member, or an administrator, is unacceptable. Thank you for the opportunity. Good night everyone.

Ms. Melissa Gettleman: Good evening, Board Commissioners and Superintendent Shafer. Thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight. Scientists are predicting that the surge will continue until it peaks in mid-May. I urge you to use this science before

rushing to choose another reopening date. I urge you to think towards September. I humbly ask that you don't rush to open our schools and endanger our city. The people of Paterson deserve to know they are sending their children into safe buildings. The impact of rushing to open schools as cases increase could prove devastating to our cities. Members of Paterson community, students, staff, and families are irreplaceable and their safety should be driving this decision. Please look towards that as you continue to make these decisions. Thank you.

Ms. Patricia Cadet: Hi and thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. I hope everyone is well. I am glad that you decided to table the opening of schools and the decision for that. My children's school is remote until the end of the year. Because they have been home with me all this time, I don't have daycare for them. I don't have family to take care of them. I can't afford to take a leave of absence. Financially, that's not possible. If we go back to school and the districts around us where our teachers work, it's going to cause a hardship for us. I don't know what to do with my children. They are not old enough to stay home alone yet and that's a big concern for me as a mom. I'm the mom to some of my kids at school too. I love them as well, but I'm worried about my own children right now. What am I going to do if we go back?

Ms. Judy Richter: I'm very glad that everyone has made the decision to keep schools closed. I think a lot of staff members would have more trust in your decision to potentially open schools if we believed that the schools were safe prior to COVID. I teach at John F. Kennedy and I'm well used to the water damage from the leaky roof and being told that the mold was taken care of, but taken care of means changing the ceiling tiles. As you are preparing the buildings to reopen, let's please not just change the ceiling tiles but actually take the opportunity to fix the roof, which I have been told so many times has been fixed. Let's actually deal with the mold that comes from the water damage and maybe also consider the condition of the parking lot, which has gone from bad to I don't even know how to describe the condition of the parking lot at Kennedy right now. It's undriveable. Thank you very much.

Ms. Mary Overbay: Hi. I am the parent of a child in School No. 13 that's in eighth grade and I was notified that the graduation would be virtual. I get it's a pandemic. I work in St. Joseph's so I know all about COVID. I feel as though it's unfair to the parents. There are so many outdoor places. They did an eighth grade graduation at Garrett Mountain where parents are able to see our children graduate. That's a moment you don't get to take back. I've been dealing with my children at home for the past year. I don't complain because it's a pandemic. But I feel as a parent I deserve to see my child graduate and walk across the grass or whatever the case may be. That's my concern. Thank you.

Ms. Mary Demoer: My name is Mary Demoer. I've been a teacher in Kennedy High School for 25 years. While nothing would make me happier than returning to my classroom and teaching directly my students, I'm afraid that it's not safe. The fact that our union has not been allowed to participate in safety walks through the building is suspect, although I am hopeful after hearing Superintendent Shafer's response to that. I don't think the buildings really are safe. Kennedy has not had good circulation for the entire time I've been there. While the extended remote experience has been challenging, rushing to stop at the expense of the safety is a poor choice. The well-being of our students and staff throughout the district has to be paramount. Thank you for letting me talk.

Ms. Sandra Hernandez: Hi and good evening to all. First of all, I just want to begin by commending and thanking Ms. Shafer for your leadership and for following the science

at this time. It's obviously very brave of you. I also want to extend my thanks to all our Board members for doing the same and making this difficult decision which will keep our students, their families, and our staff safe from this disease. I have no doubt that you have saved lives tonight. In the event that you are able to open in the near future, I just hope that you will consider easing students and staff into going back by keeping us to a half-day schedule, basically following what we currently do now until 1:30. I think it would really be helpful in keeping kids safe as they can pack their breakfast and lunch for the next day and not eat within the schools if COVID is...

Ms. Peggy Goodwin: Good evening, everyone. I'm a specials teacher in Paterson Public Schools. I specifically teach art. Will the ventilation equipment be put in all of the specials areas, such as the gym, art rooms, and music rooms? As a specials teacher and someone who uses paper specifically for their subject area, to be told that we cannot use paper, how am I supposed to be effective in my classroom? When my students are online, they are drawing in notebooks when we're doing remote teaching. When they go back into the building, they will not be allowed to use paper. I'm trying to figure out exactly what I'm supposed to be doing to offer my students something that's going to be effective for everyone. Also, regarding the travelling, the specials teachers walking around the buildings is going to be a problem because we're basically going to be the Typhoid Mary spreading this. We are going to be exposing ourselves and everyone else to the potential virus that's out there. I'm very concerned. I'm someone who has diabetes. I don't want to get...

Mr. Patrick Berry: Board Commissioners, please do not approve any tentative reopening dates until the district allows the union delegates time to conduct safety walks of each worksite. More importantly, we ask that the results of these safety walks be determined as one of the factors that the Board uses to take any action before reopening. In light of the Governor's comments on surge variants delaying New Jersey's reopening, taking a vote to reopen on May 3, 2021 before the safety walks have been administered leaves all students and employees at risk. We humbly ask that if these safety walks are not yet completed that you delay tonight's Board action on reopening until you have time to review the results. I'm speaking as a cancer survivor. I'm very concerned about the well-being of, not only myself, but everybody else who has preexisting conditions.

Ms. Stephanie Mandy: Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I'm a second grade teacher in Paterson Public Schools. Thank you for delaying the opening of our schools. I know you made the best decision for our students and staff members. I just wanted to ask Board members and the Superintendent if teachers will be allowed time to set up their classrooms and receive clear and specific guidelines and protocols to setting up their rooms. I'm also very concerned with screen time for students. Right now, we are working on an earlier day for them. They're pretty much done with virtual learning and then we have time for intervention. Having them virtually learning for longer periods of time is very difficult, especially for our younger students in the lower grades. Another concern of mine is fire drills. When we have fire drills, how are the students going to be maintaining safe distances? There are tight hallways and stairwells. This is very concerning for us.

Mr. Michael Dean Lewis: I thank the Board for allowing me to speak. I am hopeful that we will return on May 3 and that we will be given time, like we would normally get, between when we arrive and to set up our classroom. Yes, I am looking forward to teaching my children. I'm a chemistry teacher at Eastside High School. This is my twelfth year at Eastside. I want the union to agree with the Superintendent and the Board that we will be allowed to open as soon as possible. Thank you.

Ms. Carolyn Alford: Good evening, everyone. I want to thank our host for a job well done. I can hear the exhaustion in your voice. Thank you so much for doing this for us. I would like to add on to the concept of considering half-days. As a public servant and a mother prior to being a teacher, it is a big concern that we have had numerous nosebleeds in many of those buildings. John F. Kennedy is not the only building. With that being said, a half-day would be most conducive considering we have students now with masks on, those who have really bad asthma conditions. These are some concerns that we want to take into consideration as you consider the half-days, the nosebleeds. Also, my students have been mentally tortured throughout this time. You can see it. We do everything we can to make it easy for our babies. At the same time, it's the district's responsibility as well to make sure we take care of our children properly. A whole day is really going to tip them over. Those are my thoughts. Thank you.

Mr. Sahil Shah: First of all, thank you for all you do. The partitions for the lower grades are one of my concerns in the programs. I'm a pullout replacement. The pullout students from multiple classes like student A from grade 2, student B from 3, and student C from grade 4 and then bring them all together in another room. I share my room with two other teachers. How will this be implemented where we can still maintain social distancing? When we have lockdown drills, how will those be implemented and still maintain social distancing when I'm sharing that room with three other teachers? Also, the paper situation, as a special education teacher the students need to get their hands dirty with paper. That's what I want to talk about.

Ms. Shay Brown: Good evening, Madam Superintendent and Commissioners. How many Commissioners have actually coordinated and walked the 52 buildings? If none, is there a plan for that to happen? I would think that being under local control you would want to see the condition of the buildings. These are buildings that our children are going to be spending seven hours or less in. Is there any update on what the summer school model may look like? I am a Paterson parent. I have a son with special needs who attends Dale. I also happen to be a third grade special education proud Paterson teacher. I'm also a Paterson resident and taxpayer. I've called into many meetings. How do you answer anybody's questions? I've never had a Commissioner call me. It would be nice. I'm sure Boris can give you my information, my email and cell number. I would love to have a face-to-face virtual contact conversation about what's going on and answers to my questions. I'm also still waiting to hear your plan for potentially holding smaller, more focused...

Ms. Susan Little: I had 500 million questions, but I'm going to limit them. Are you aware of the recent COVID cases causing the closure of Eastside High School and NRC in Paterson? This is with minimal staff in the building. Staff has been put at risk unnecessarily and at what cost? Why are you allowing certain staff, such as secretaries, to be put in this position? In my humble opinion, the secretaries are the heart of the school. I love the social/emotional learning focus.

Mr. Todd Pipkin: Good evening. I'm just looking to hear some points of clarification in the days ahead. Are our guidance counselors, secretaries, and security guards being given first priority with receiving the air purifiers and PPEs that are currently being disseminated since they are in the buildings weekly? Will the reopening schedule date occur if all schools aren't 100% in compliance with the PPEA preparation? Lunch dissemination would be a disaster. FYI, one sneeze releases 10,000 droplets that can cover the distances of a 747 airplane. You can imagine that with little kids. I don't know if you've watched them covering their mouth while sneezing. The technique is not too good. Lastly, has the state talked about any...

Ms. Gianna Alarico: First, I want to thank everyone for the hard work you are doing. My daughter goes to a self-contained classroom. I know you are not reopening the school, but the time being in front of the computer for her is getting her very aggressive. How are we going to work on this? So many hours in front of the computer is really hard for these kinds of kids. Being next to her every day is very stressful. I see how the teachers are working very hard, but there should be other ways to help these kinds of kids. Thank you so much for your answers.

Ms. Maria Gonzalez: Good evening Board members and Superintendent. Thank you for your time. I'm representing not only a Paterson teacher but also a member of the Paterson community, born and raised. I am so grateful you have chosen to keep the schools remote. I'm very concerned about enough work being done to prepare all the buildings. John F. Kennedy was talked about earlier today. Unfortunately, it is not the only school in the district that is in dire need of getting fixed. Having worked at Eastside High School for the last eight years, you literally have to cover your nose in order to walk into the auditorium because the stench of mildew and other mold is overwhelming from the rain constantly falling. There are leaks all over the place. What is being done to check...

Ms. Sharon Allen: Good evening. I am a physical education teacher in the elementary. My concern is for the specials in terms of travelling. For physical education, the CDC recommends outdoor activities as opposed to indoor. I am requesting that physical education classes be conducted outside as much as possible. The combo hybrid and in-person situation is going to pose a lot of difficulties for many staff members with the Wi-Fi issues being what they are and the device issues. In the elementary level, there's no break in between classes. The back-to-back classes are not going to provide enough time for sanitation of spaces and equipment, especially for physical education or the art and computer teacher. Mask breaks for staff as well as students should be implemented somewhere in there and consistent cleaning of spaces within the gymnasium, adjacent offices, bathrooms, and staff rooms. There's only one toilet and we eat in the same...

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

Comm. Simmons: Boris, thank you for handing that, although not usual or normal, public portion so well.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Shafer: We have a Google Drive going so we can get the questions out to everybody. I'm going to answer the questions that are pertinent to me. Then, I'm going to turn it over to Eliza who is going to call on the cabinet level leadership team person. They will recite the question and then they will give the answer. We'll just move through that. Let me first thank John McEntee for speaking. You are absolutely correct, John. We did exchange checklists. You gave me yours and we gave you ours. You allowed us to attend the training with your delegates, but you forgot to mention that we agreed to have the delegates and yourself conduct the safety walks together with the district administration. You had delegates and yourself reach out to principals directly to conduct safety walks. One group wanted to do the walk at 10:00 a.m. during a school day. I'm not sure who excused them to do that. Others wanted to do it at 3:30 when the principals and the chief custodians are gone for the day. You caused confusion for our principals when times are difficult enough for them. That is certainly not working

collaboratively. Again, I'm going to say to the delegates that are on, we have extended that invitation and it is still extended for April 21 and 22. I know that everyone is looking for a start date. In the first week of May, we will come back with another assessment as to whether or not we can open. I can't give you a date. I can tell you that if it is safe, we will open. I think all the planning that anyone needs to do should start to happen. Someone mentioned the transparency of positive tests. The union president gets a report every Friday about any positive tests we have in the district, whether it's in-person or whether the individual is remote. At this time, I'm going to turn it over to Eliza Rodriguez who will go through the questions with the cabinet and leadership team.

Ms. Eliza Rodriguez: Good afternoon. When are students going to eat in schools? Can an assistant superintendent please answer this?

Ms. Cicely Warren: Meals will be provided in schools following the social distancing guidelines. Cafeterias will be arranged to maintain a safe distance between the students. Students will have their partitions with them in the cafeteria. Multiple lunch periods will be scheduled to maintain a safe number of students in any dining area. Furthermore, if we are having students in the buildings for a full day, we have to allow them to eat.

Mr. Mapp: May I add that cafeterias will also receive air purification devices.

Ms. Rodriguez: There was a concern stated regarding electrical outlets in classrooms. How will air purifiers be used with only one outlet? Streaming for student pullout services, more clarity is needed regarding this.

Mr. Mapp: Historically, we had about four or five desktop computers in the back of every classroom. Those desktops are no longer being used because each student has their own personal device. That frees up a lot of amperage in the room and these air purifiers don't take more than 10 amps. We should have ample amperage to support any additional equipment in rooms, specifically the air purifiers.

Ms. Rodriguez: Thank you for that. The other question was regarding zero period. Why was it removed?

Ms. Joanna Tsimpedes: This is for next year's schedule. We are going to a uniform schedule across all our high schools so that we have uniformity across our transient population. Students will still be provided opportunities to take enrichment courses as the students will have an eight-period schedule out of a nine-period day. There will be opportunities for students. No one will be left behind.

Ms. Rodriguez: Thank you, Ms. Tsimpedes. Can students have a half-day in the building?

Ms. Coy: This is not feasible due to childcare and employment insecurity. Students will transition to the full-day schedule.

Comm. M. Martinez: I'd like to intervene and make a recommendation. I think it would be better suited to give these responses via email. I think it's going to be more timely and more effective. The hour is late and there are probably 50 more inquiries left. That's my recommendation. We have the list of questions in the Google format. Respond to them via email because I'm sure there are going to be questions in response to your responses. My recommendation would be to do that via email.

Comm. Hodges: The problem with that is for the people who called in. How do they get their answers?

Comm. M. Martinez: Through emails. They can respond back.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: A lot of the inquiries made, except maybe one or two from parents, are from staff members. A lot of this information is procedural and about daily duties and activities that are governed by the Superintendent. Either these have to be answered by email or all these questions have to be compiled plus the additional that you have, sent out to principals, and make sure they get to their buildings. Whatever you may think is best. This is under the purview of the Superintendent of daily duties of her staff. There were two or three questions from parents. I think we can have those conversations about the parent-oriented questions. Staff should get their recommendation or all information based on what they should expect and when to expect it either from the Superintendent or their building principal.

Comm. Simmons: Can we identify those questions that were asked by the parents? Do we know which ones they were? I know that there was one about eighth grade graduation. There was a parent with a special needs student. There was another parent who talked about communication with the Board. She had another question.

Comm. Redmon: Comm. Simmons, can we address the issue with the person that talked about meeting with the Board? As a Board, she couldn't meet with us individually because our duties are to meet as a full Board. The only way she could meet with us is during public portion.

Comm. Simmons: It sounded like at the end she wanted communication with the Board members. I know that parents often reach out to us via social media and I know most Board members get back to the parent.

Comm. Redmon: You guys know I'm not really a social media person. I was going to make sure they know that if they wanted to contact us they can do it through the Superintendent's office and we'll definitely be able to get back to them.

Comm. Simmons: Did she have a concern prior to that? I'm not sure if that was captured.

Comm. Redmon: She was on like two or three meetings ago. I remember.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: Why don't we let Madam Superintendent answer those? If not, she can contact the Superintendent's office and we can look for the information and assist her in any way we can.

Comm. M. Martinez: Folks may have these same questions over and over. My suggestion would be to create a Frequently Asked Questions response list and forward it to the website, a fact sheet. Folks who have the same inquiries moving forward can refer to them and they'll be listed right there.

Ms. Shafer: We already started a Frequently Asked Questions list. We'll add this to that. A lot were statements, but we will send this to everyone who had a question tonight instead of the cabinet level administrator answering that. We'll send them an email. Let me answer the parent who talked about graduation. We are waiting to get guidance from the DOE. It appears that restaurants are at 50% and outdoor graduations would be okay as long as you have masks, social distancing, and take

everyone's temperature. We will be providing principals with information regarding graduation. If a school has a playground or an area where they can have a graduation outside, they should so that parents can attend the eighth grade graduation. If the school does not have a playground or an area to have graduation, then they can buddy with a school that does that is close by and not make it a hardship for parents and students to get there and have the graduation outside as well. What was the other parent question?

Ms. Rodriguez: Ms. Brown asked how many Commissioners have walked the 52 buildings to assure they are safe.

Ms. Coy: Ms. Brown is a parent/employee. The other question is with regard to special education students being in four days a week. If we do return this year, the schedule will be in a Cohort A, B, or C, allowing us to support the reentry plan in phases. Even though the autism class only has six students, you may have an LLD class that has 16 students. It wouldn't allow for us to really have a class in full capacity as part of the reentry phase-in.

Comm. Simmons: There was a parent that had a special needs child with the attention span concern.

Ms. Shafer: I think that was the one that wanted the four days.

Ms. Coy: With the autism, yes.

Comm. Simmons: That's it in terms of parents. Just so I can answer, I haven't walked the 52 buildings. I have visited School No. 9, which is the model of what everything should look like. I have taken the time to do that. I'm not sure of Board member's schedules or if they have the ability to leave their jobs during the day to take those walks. The other concern is that we want to make sure we keep buildings, people, and Board members safe. We try to follow the guidelines that are sent forth for everyone else. We aren't allowing people to just go into any buildings. We are trying to follow that model as well.

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: Mr. President, if I may add, I know there was a lot of concern about classrooms and the logistics of that. Madam Superintendent, there has to be some communication between the teachers, principals, yourself, and Mr. Mapp. Obviously, there are things that Mr. Mapp may miss. He just doesn't know the logistics of the classroom. Every teacher faces things and their needs might be a little different. The art teacher talked about paper. Those things should be talked about with the principal and a list should be created of things that the facilities director may not necessarily be involved in or be knowledgeable of because he's not teaching in the classroom.

Comm. Simmons: Madam Superintendent, in your factsheet with the responses to the staff, I did hear the concern about plugging the air purifiers in and whether or not we'll be ready in terms of electricity in the classrooms. One teacher spoke about only one outlet working. Can we make sure we address that in the factsheet?

Comm. Hodges: I am curious about the idea of not being allowed to use paper.

Ms. Shafer: That's the first I've heard of this. I'm not sure what that's about.

Ms. Tsimpedes: Ms. Shafer, we have not put any correspondence out with regards to not using paper. The only thing is that students cannot use the same resources in the classroom. In an art class, for example, students would have to have their own individual baggies. They would come prepared with their crayons, scissors, and whatever it is that they need. They would not be able to use the materials in the classes that share resources. Paper was never said that it could not be utilized. Students will also have their devices in the classroom so that if they choose to use the device versus paper to construct projects and so forth, that is a possibility for the students. Never have we put anything in correspondence to say paper cannot be utilized in classrooms.

Comm. Simmons: Before we proceed to adjourn, does anyone have anything for the good and the welfare to add?

Comm. Hodges: If we decide to move forward and open schools on May 3, when will the schools be open at that point? What's the lead time in terms of after our decision?

Comm. Simmons: I think that is going to be determined on the data. It's something that will be a discussion. If we decide to open, I think we will have to have discussion about what that's going to look like.

Comm. Hodges: As long as there's no set time yet, then fine.

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 9:01 p.m.