

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

December 9, 2020 – 6:04 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. Jonathan Hodges  
Comm. Joel Ramirez

Comm. Kenneth Simmons, President  
Comm. Corey Teague

Absent:

Comm. Oshin Castillo-Cruz  
Comm. Nakima Redmon

Comm. 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  
December 9, 2020 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**

### **Update on Packets**

Ms. Shafer: Thank you, Mr. Vice President. Good evening, Paterson community and Board members. Our first presentation is an update on the paper packets. I want to thank Deputy Peron, assistant superintendents, principals, teachers, and parents for working together to ensure that students submitted their work during the fourth marking

period last spring. Once the packets came in, Mr. Lenny Moore put all of this together and that is the report that you are going to see. It was time-consuming and it was a lot of work that Lenny put into this to give you this presentation tonight. I want to remind everyone that it was the fourth marking period when we closed in March. The paper packets was the way in which students were learning, reviewing information, and turning in work. Keep in mind that the state guidance was for us to be flexible with student grading. Also, keep in mind that some of our students had family issues during the pandemic, such as family members were sick, hospitalized, or passed away. Our high school students became the breadwinners and were holding down fulltime jobs and going to school at the same time. Parents had childcare issues. We had the major impact of the digital divide. It took everybody working together, including the support of the parents, teachers, principals, and all staff, to ensure that the packets came back to the district. Also, keep in mind that the parents were coming out to the meal sites when the transmission rate was very high and that's where they would get the packets and leave the packets that were completed. Every school and their parents had many different circumstances that they were dealing with. I want you to keep in mind that students who did not complete their fourth marking period work did not necessarily fail for the year because the grade for the year is based on all four marking periods. I want to make sure that everyone understands that. We're talking about packets only for the fourth marking period. The grade for the year is an average of all four marking periods. At this point, I'm going to turn it over to Deputy Peron and Mr. Lenny Moore.

Ms. Peron: Good evening, everyone. Before Mr. Moore, Deputy Director of MIS, begins his report and his presentation, I just wanted to bring some background into this. As Ms. Shafer said, all of these incompletes are not solely paper packets. They had to do with online assignments as well. As you know, our high schools last year went virtual in April after spring break. We handed out all the Chromebooks and they began to do and submit all their work virtually online. Some high schools were virtual from March. The middle schools were next. Not all middle schools went virtual, but a lot of them did. Very few elementary schools went virtual because of the Chromebooks. Keep in mind that when you look at incompletes, it's not just about handing in paper packets. It's also handing in virtual assignments. It was a yeoman's job. The paper packets did come in. We received them through the food sites. We checked them in at 90 Delaware. It was totally a team effort and it included many staff members from all departments at central office. It included school staff and even some of the principals who volunteered to come in. We kept communicating with parents through the district website, Superintendent letters, and Robo-calls about the submission of packets. We communicated to families that packets were going to be collected into the new school year all the way up to October 26. We handed out those communications and we made those phone calls. Families were aware of that and principals, as Mr. Moore's presentation is going to include, worked really hard to collect all of the assignments. At this point, I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Moore so that he can go through his presentation and we'll take questions once he's done.

Mr. Lenny Moore: Good evening, everyone. This is the Incomplete Grade Update Overview. This is just an overview of the work that was done on collecting information for the packets. Data Request - there was a request to identify the number of students receiving at least one 'I', incomplete grade, as their fourth marking period grade. Students receiving an 'I' was based on the following – they did not turn in all required number of packets assigned during the fourth marking period school closure, incomplete assignments were handed in, or no assignments received for school work through Google Classroom. Principals received the report in July that identified around 9,700 students who received at least one 'I' as their grade for the fourth marking period. Keep in mind the fourth marking period grade is only part of the grade that comprises

the overall final grade received for the 2019-2020 school year. For example, a student may have received an 'I' for the fourth marking period and still pass the course with a passing grade based on their overall work for the other three marking periods. Each school was emailed an Excel spreadsheet containing students receiving an 'I' for the fourth marking period. Any grade updates received through either parental contact or from teachers were entered into the spreadsheet. The updated spreadsheets were returned to the MIS Department and were used to update grading information in Infinite Campus. Data Used - the following data was used for this request. Excel spreadsheets extracted from Infinite Campus listing any student receiving a fourth marking period 'I' grade and a Google document maintained by the district to record the packets turned in. The grading rubric used below determined the scores for the returned packets. Five returned was 90, four was 89, three was 80, and two or less was 50. These are the procedures done to update the grades in Infinite Campus. The following procedures were used to update student grades. Marking period grade data was extracted using Microsoft Sequel from Infinite Campus. The students who received an 'I' as their fourth marking period grade were compiled and saved to an Excel spreadsheet, and these files were then emailed to principals for distribution. The updates were done as follows: spreadsheets sent to schools, the updated letter grade and corresponding percentage was entered into the spreadsheet and emailed back to the MIS department. Updated Google document - returned packets. The Google document maintained by the district was updated based on additional packets received at designated school locations or central office. Any packet received during this time was marked with an 'X' in the document under the appropriate phase. The Google document was then shared with the MIS Department. The MIS Department used the returned spreadsheets and shared Google documents to update the fourth marking period grade in Infinite Campus. If the overall final grade changed based on the updates to the fourth marking period grade, that grade was updated as well in the system. This is just some additional information. Please note the following was sent out on August 13 by Ms. Shafer to parents. The October 26 deadline to turn in the completed packets and/or virtual assignments, the location of nine drop-off sites, including central office, to hand in packets, a call center number for English, Spanish, Arabic, and Bengali speaking parents that provided answers to additional questions or help in obtaining packets or assignments, and notification that incomplete grades would convert to a failing grade if no work was received by the deadline. Final grading calculations - special grading calculations were considered due to the March 17 school closure due to the pandemic. The hope was to give every student the best opportunity to receive the highest grade possible. Students received a higher grade of the following two calculations for their final grade. The average was taken for the first marking period through the fourth marking period. Whichever was higher, that's what the student received as their fourth marking period grade. Please note that students receiving an 'F' for the fourth marking period does not mean that they fail for the entire year. The final grade is determined by an average of all previous marking periods. No students were retained due to failure for the school year. This is some of the work that the principals did with their schools in ensuring the packets were completed. Principals worked with parents on a one-to-one basis based on their needs and request to complete the packets. Principals met with parents to identify root causes. Principals and teachers provided students with alternative assignments and projects to make up the missed work. Principals and teachers modified work to ensure that IEP's were being adhered to. Principals ordered wellness checks. Principals, vice principals, and guidance counselors followed up with parents and students to ensure that work was submitted. Numerous Robo-calls and emails were made. Principals and teachers met with parents and students via Google Meet to aid with completing packets. These are just some of the statistics. Grade Data Overview – "I" Updated to Letter Grade. The following summarizes students who had at least one fourth marking period 'I' with the corresponding grade change. This was

based on packets and/or virtual assignments received by the district and updated in Infinite Campus. This is covering elementary schools grades 3-8 and the high schools 9-12. This shows that if they had at least one 'I' for the fourth marking period, what was that converted grade based on whatever work was received. Again, please note that students receiving an 'F' grade for the fourth marking period did not mean that they failed for the entire year. The final grade was determined by an average of all previous marking periods. No students were retained due to the failure for the school year. Grade Data Overview – "I" Converted to "F". The following summarizes students who had at least one fourth marking period 'I' and whose grade was converted to an 'F'. This was based on packets and/or virtual assignments not received by the district. This includes for elementary schools, grade 3-8, students who failed the fourth marking period and received a passing final grade. This shows that 95.3% of students who received at least one marking period 'I', that 'I' being converted to an 'F', received a passing grade for the year based on their overall year's work. Please note that receiving an 'F' for the fourth marking period does not mean that they fail for the year. The final grade was determined by an average of all previous marking periods. No students were retained due to failure for the school year. This is just an overview for the high schools, students who had their 'I' converted to an 'F' due to not receiving any packet work. For high schools, we had 83.6% of students who received at least one marking period 'I' and that 'I' was converted to an 'F', but they received a passing grade for the entire school year. Again, they received the 'F' for the fourth marking period. That does not mean that they failed for the year because the final grade was based on the average of all marking periods. No students were retained due to failure for the school year. This is just a summary of everything that was done. Parents received notification and deadlines regarding submission of incomplete assignments and packets from the district. Principals worked with families to assist in obtaining missing work. Students receiving an 'I' mark for the fourth marking period had that mark converted to a grade based on packet assignments submitted to the district. 'I' grades were converted to 'F' if no packet assignments were received. The final grade was determined by averaging all of the marking periods, not just failure of the fourth marking period alone. No students were retained due to failure for the school year and updated final marks will be reflected on 2019-2020 report cards and transcripts. That concludes my report.

Comm. Martinez: Thank you so much. Are there any questions from the Commissioners at this time? Please feel free.

Comm. Simmons: Just for clarification so that folks understand, when we went on full remote that was at the end of the third marking period?

Ms. Peron: Yes, it was.

Comm. Simmons: Any student that was failing at that point, parents had already been contacted or parents were already made aware that their child was in danger of failing for the year?

Ms. Peron: Yes, Commissioner. During the third marking period always, if a child is in danger of failing the grade for the year, the parent is contacted. They receive a letter and they meet with the principal or the teacher who informs them of this. By this time, before the pandemic, those kids were communicated to if they were in danger of failing the year.

Comm. Teague: Along the lines of what Comm. Simmons is asking, I just spoke to a parent who was not notified.

Comm. Martinez: Comm. Teague, I'm not sure if Kenny was done. Are you done, Kenny? I just wanted to make sure he was done.

Comm. Teague: I was going to say for clarification, I'm sure there are probably some that slipped through the cracks. There has to be because I did receive some calls from parents who were not made aware and the district has their information. I'm sure there are some slips through the cracks. It's okay to say that because I'm sure it's not every single 100%. I'm sure there are some slips through the cracks because I have a parent who is going to reach out in the morning. I was just on the line with her. I'm just trying to figure out what happens if they were not contacted and they just were able to get onto Infinite Campus to find out that their student isn't in class when they're there with their student in class with them. What do we do in that situation where the system is saying they're not in class when they know their student was there because they were sitting right next to them?

Comm. Martinez: I would imagine that parent would have to first reach out to the building supervisor, the principal, to see if it can be rectified there. If it cannot be rectified on the building level, then I would imagine the assistant superintendent overseeing that respective school would then be able to intervene and further investigate. Ms. Peron, if I'm incorrect, please correct me.

Ms. Peron: No, Commissioner. You are absolutely correct. I would ask Comm. Teague to let the parent know that she or he can reach out to either myself or Ms. Shafer and we will gladly research what the problem is and where we need to go. Usually, it's the principal and then the assistant superintendent. If it's not resolved, it comes to our level.

Comm. Teague: Okay.

Comm. Martinez: Are there any further questions regarding this presentation?

Comm. Hodges: Would you put the presentation back up and turn to the part where you had one marking period, two marking periods, three marking periods, and then you divided it by three? I wish I could have asked you then.

Mr. Moore: I think it's back in additional information.

Comm. Hodges: My concern was that represented three marking periods versus four and you gave them the highest grade of the two. How does that work?

Mr. Moore: There's a letter grade and a percentage that corresponds to the letter grade. There's an average taken between the three. This is just done for the pandemic just to make sure that we gave them some kind of benefit for being out. We averaged the first three marking period grades and then took the average of the four marking period grades and compared them. Whichever was the higher was the final grade they get. An 'A' may correspond to 90%. 'B' may be 80%. You would add the three scores and average them for the first three marking periods and then we did it for the fourth marking period. Whichever was higher, we tried to give student the benefit of the higher grade.

Ms. Peron: We had this discussion when we were talking about grading and trying to decide what type of grade we would assign the packets. We had a special meeting around this topic because we said that we would average out. If a student was a great student and was excelling in every marking period and then because of the pandemic

experienced loss or experienced health issues, we would take all of that into consideration and take a look at the three marking periods and take a look at the fourth. If this was a child who was always an overachiever but because of the pandemic experienced an extenuating circumstance, we would take that into consideration.

Comm. Hodges: I see. You had 9,000 incompletes. Is it 9,000 different students or 9,000 incompletes from a number of different students?

Mr. Moore: It was 9,000 students who had at least one incomplete grade for their fourth marking period.

Comm. Hodges: That's roughly a third of the district.

Ms. Peron: Yes, it is. We didn't end up with 9,000, Dr. Hodges. The slides show the number of students at the end where we got to the number. It turned out to be like 4,000. It was 2,900 in elementary, and in high school there was another 2,600.

Comm. Hodges: It's basically 5,000 'F's you converted to.

Ms. Peron: For the fourth marking period, not for the year.

Comm. Hodges: You had 5,000 students who did not submit packets.

Ms. Peron: Or an assignment.

Comm. Hodges: Even if you submitted 9 out of 10 assignments, would that one still cause you to receive an 'F'?

Ms. Peron: No.

Comm. Simmons: You would receive an incomplete for that tenth assignment.

Comm. Hodges: But how do you calculate what the overall grade would be?

Ms. Peron: It depends. If you were calculating the packets, three packets is a passing grade. In a course, you would have maybe 10 assignments equaling up to a final grade, 10% of your tests, 10% of your homework, or 20% of your quizzes. Things like that fall in line and they average into a grade.

Mr. Moore: This is the grade that they received on the report card. They received an 'I' based on a combination of whatever they handed in or didn't hand in. They received an 'I' and that's what we were working on. Anyone who received an 'I' was able to hand in any additional work to boost that 'I' up to whatever grade based on the work they handed in.

Comm. Hodges: To get an 'F', particularly in the high school, you have to not hand in a lot of material.

Ms. Peron: Correct.

Ms. Shafer: The other thing to keep in mind with high school students – and this happens whether you are in a pandemic or not – is that students look at their first three marking periods, they know they're going to pass for the year, and don't do as much work as they did those first three marking periods. That happens in a typical year, not

just with the pandemic. We also know that some students looked at their grades up until that point.

Comm. Martinez: Any other questions for the members before we move on to the next presentation?

Comm. Arrington: I just want to thank the team on the hard work for this. I know it was a very challenging situation they were dealing with here. I especially want to thank them for working through this and putting this together.

Comm. Martinez: Agreed, Vince. Thank you. Thank you all. Superintendent Shafer, I believe we have one more presentation.

### **High School Restructuring**

Ms. Shafer: Yes. The next presentation is the High School Restructuring. This is a two-phase restructuring of the high schools and Deputy Peron is going to complete that presentation.

Ms. Peron: Alongside Mr. Will Graulich. I'm just checking to see if Will is on.

Mr. Will Graulich: Hello, I'm here.

Ms. Peron: As I spoke to some of the Board members during the instruction and program meeting, I'm bringing to you a little bit about the high school restructuring. As you know, this is just an update on the programmatic piece of the High School Restructuring and then the updates on High School Choice Process. As a Board goal, we have to restructure our high schools and we have developed working committees. So far, we have three committees who have met on a weekly basis and we have a fourth committee that will convene after the holidays, and that is the community stakeholders committee. I will be sending out invitations to community partners and other stakeholders that can help us and inform us with this work. The other three committees are for Overall Programmatic and Curricular Group, Administrative Reorganization, and Facilities/Budget. Tonight's overview is a very quick overview on the surveys that we developed. Our first line of work was to survey our students in the following grade levels – grades 6-8, 9-10, and 11-12. I did not present the surveys to you at this PowerPoint because they are lengthy, but I did email them to you through Ms. Williams with this PowerPoint. You have all the different surveys that went out to the students if you would like to look at them. The activities and the surveys will continue through January 8. Fortunately, we captured the surveys up to yesterday so that I could have some preliminary data to report to you because I was assigned to report out at the December workshop meeting. The information is still forthcoming. Those surveys are going to run through January and we will continue collecting the information. Hopefully, I can have the entire picture of all the surveys for you in February. I do have some preliminary results tonight. In grades 6-8, right now I have data for 1,644 respondents. We say unverified because we still have to assign them to the schools, but we know that they are coming from this grade band. Right now, we looked at the biggest trends and I just added two trends here. I do have some more that I can speak to you about in my data points. The greatest priority for grades 6-8 when considering a high school is that 57% of 1,644 students said that they choose a high school according to their career choice or their interest. Their top three career cluster interests are arts, AV technology & communications, health, science, and information technology. When we gave out these surveys to the students, we also attached activities that the teachers were to present to the class and talk about career

clusters, industrial trends, and things of the sort. At the end of their activities and their lessons, they took this survey. In grades 9-10, I'm reporting right now 941 unverified respondents. 55.3% of those reported that a school's career theme contributed to enrollment decisions. These are existing freshmen and sophomores that are in high schools right now. Their top three career clusters were arts, AV technology & communications, business, management & administration, and human services. Our last cluster of students was grades 11 and 12. Each of these surveys and their clusters are different because we asked different questions for each of the grade bands. 11 and 12 are exiting students so they are getting ready to move on to college and/or a career. Their questions were varied from our middle school students and our current freshman. I captured 1,178 respondents right now. 65.5% of them would recommend their academy school to an incoming freshman. The most significant experience for these kids that they reported was their social experience, academic experience, and sports. These were their most significant experiences at the high school level. We also are working on an additional survey efforts. Our committees are established right now and working on development and implementation of surveying stakeholder groups such as teachers, parents and families, community members, and organizations. These surveys are planned for January 2021 implementation and the results will be forthcoming at the February meeting. What does this mean for high school restructuring? It means that we have yet to compile all of this data, take a look at the industry trends and the labor needs that are currently out there and will be out there in the future. We have to take a look at our teacher certification realities. If our survey data shows that our students are interested in something in a career field or a career choice that we don't have the option right now or the teacher talent to teach those courses, we need to recruit that. Or we need to really take a look at who is certified to teach what and base our programs around that. We also have to take into consideration our facilities, maybe looking at consolidating programs and resources and offering them in one place. We are also looking at the administrative positions and we are reorganizing all of that. More of that work is oncoming and developing as we speak. I do have some other types of statistics that I can share with you, but it will all be available to you once we collect all of the information. I reported in grades 6-8 about 1,400 students responding, but in grade 6 alone we have roughly 1,900 kids. In seventh grade, we have roughly 1,900 kids, and in eighth grade the same. We're still missing a lot of data and information from the grade bands and the students. Are there any questions? This is a twofold presentation. If you want to ask me questions now or we're just going to move into High School Choice. The work of the High School Restructuring is going to be over two years. The first year the biggest change will be the administrative change and organization. The second year, which would be school year 2022-2023, would be the academies and the curricular programs. We still have to offer our students choice right now who are incoming into high school. We have to take into consideration what their interests are, where they will go, and then develop a transition program for them. Some of these kids are going to be transitioning and some of these academies may not be offered. We definitely don't want it to be a detriment to them if they are taking certification courses and if they've taken some dual enrollment courses that will get them into college and will follow through with their bachelor's degree in whatever career they choose to go. We have to take that into consideration and plan the transition for them as well. This year we are not in-person and we have to plan a High School Choice Fair virtually. We are bringing to the Board all of the plans that we have set aside and we're developing in creating for our families and our students.

Comm. Martinez: Ms. Peron, did you say that second portion of the presentation would be given today or in the near future?

Ms. Peron: Today, the High School Choice.



Comm. Martinez: Let's just pause for a moment before that second part to allow for any Commissioners to ask their questions while they are still fresh and then we can move on to the second. Vince, I thought I saw your hand go up. Doc, I thought I heard you. Do you have a question?

Comm. Hodges: Yes, I do. Vince, did you want to go?

Comm. Arrington: I'm good, Dr. Hodges. Go ahead.

Comm. Hodges: For the elementary students, what kind of exposure do they have to engineering careers and understanding what engineering is as they are making these choices?

Ms. Peron: The Department of Academics set aside some activities that presented different types of careers and courses for the students. They utilize Naviance as well. I can't give you the details right now, but I can certainly get you those details of the activities. We do have them and I can provide those to you, Comm. Hodges. The Department of Academics did put together all of that as well as utilized Naviance to present those types of things to the students.

Comm. Hodges: That's my concern. I did see some health science there, which is encouraging. I didn't see engineering, which is a little concerning and some of the other areas are going to be limited. I wondered about what the students' understanding is. I can't imagine that they see a lot of variety of expertise in this community. They would have to be exposed to it in order to make some sort of a choice. It's how you expose them to it as well. I really don't know what that looks like and I am concerned about the choices that are represented here.

Comm. Martinez: Dr. Hodges, was that your only question for now?

Comm. Hodges: You can continue.

Mr. Graulich: Good evening, Commissioners. It's a pleasure to be with you this evening. The portion I'll be presenting tonight is that of High School Choice, which as Ms. Peron alluded to, has been very much influenced by our High School Restructuring, specifically with regards to student surveying. The High School Choice Team is interdepartmental. It's been very much of a collaborative effort among central registration, the department of communications, MIS, and leadership within the division of academic services, specifically that of guidance and counseling and secondary education. The material we are presenting tonight and the process has very much arisen given the situation that the pandemic has thrust us in. That said, I can assure you that members of the team that you see on this slide have been very enthused and are really excited about what's about to be presented before you. As was just being referred prior to and frankly according to the members of the team on the previous slide, for the first time in recent history there's been an extensive amount of education activities invested in the students prior to the application process. It was launched on November 16 and will be continuing through January. It's the expectation that all students in grades 6-8 will be participating in three distinct activities. The first is a career cluster interest survey. This is a fun survey that students rate how they would like doing a specific task or about their interests and talents. At the end, it recommends some of the career clusters that they, based on their survey responses, could translate into a career or an industry they would enjoy. From there, teachers have been engaging in career exploration activities. There are 16 career clusters and there's been

no one specific career cluster that's had specific emphasis. In fact, the cornerstone or the earmark of these activities is to introduce students to all 16 career clusters. That way, when they participate in the interest survey, to which data Ms. Peron spoke to, to some extent they've been provided at minimum surface level understanding about what is in fact involved in each of those 16 career clusters. On December 15 at 6:00 p.m. is our High School Choice Kickoff Event. This is replacing the event that was previously referred to as the High School Choice Fair, which would have been that one-night event in the JFK gymnasium. This is going to be live-streamed. A comprehensive presentation will be made providing an overview of the curricular and thematic programs of the 12 choice high schools, as well as an overview and more or less a 'how-to' of how to access and complete the revised High School Choice application. The High School Choice application this year has been converted to meet the needs of students and families given our remote instruction and learning. It will be accessed and completed through Infinite Campus specifically through the student portal. Students will complete their application within there and afterwards parents can view as part of either an ongoing conversation or to check in and view and ultimately sign off on their children's High School Choice application through their parent portal. Ms. Vainieri's part-time staff has been at work getting in touch with parents, calling them one by one, to ensure they do in fact have access to this portal and have been and will be walking them through the process to access that. The actual High School Choice application will be similar in the sense of the schools represented of our 12 choice high schools. 9 of our 12 are represented on this High School Choice application – the School of Culinary Arts, Hospitality & Tourism; School of Government & Public Administration; School of Information Technology; Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics; School of Architecture & Construction Trades; School of Business, Technology, Marketing & Finance; School of Education & Training; Academy of Health Science; as well as Garrett Morgan Academy. The remaining three schools of the 12 choice schools will continue to have their own separate application process with an optional and separate application. That will be for International High School, PANTHER Academy, which is transitioning to P-TECH @ PANTHER, and Rosa L. Parks School of Fine & Performing Arts. To recap briefly, the first 9 schools are on an application that is required for all eighth graders to complete, and the schools that you see on this slide are in fact optional and are not required for students to complete. Something that the team is very excited about is a brand-new initiative, the High School Choice Website. This website will be made available and unveiled to the community at the same time of the December 15 kickoff event. In fact, the recording from the December 15 event, should a parent or student not be able to attend or want to see it again, will in fact be uploaded on that website. It will be extremely robust and comprehensive. Each of the 12 schools will have their own tab on the website in which there will be a more thorough overview of their programs, pictures, a list of courses students can expect to take, and an additional prerecorded presentation provided by each school's principal and administrative team. This is really a chance for them to hear about the 12 schools. A student and their family can access this website and get a more in-depth and thorough detailed presentation specifically about a school. In addition to the video of the December 15 event being uploaded very quickly onto this High School Choice Website, the PowerPoint that will be used, which includes the overview information of the 12 schools as well as the detailed information about how to access the applications and how to complete them, will be provided in four different languages – Spanish, Arabic, Bangla, and Turkish. On the website as well there will be comprehensive information in regards to timelines, deadlines, and specific application information and guides on how to complete. Publicizing efforts have been underway. Tomorrow morning we will be recording a video message from Ms. Shafer kicking off the High School Choice Process and speaking to its importance. That will be posted on the district webpage, the main website, as well as the High School Choice page. That video will also be circulated via

social media along with the social media overhaul. We'll be distributing a flyer. In addition to that flyer will be information about accessing the event and the application. The High School Choice Website will be provided to principals via the Divisional Reminder from the Division of Academic Services, as well as eighth grade counselors via the Department of Guidance and Counseling. Tomorrow night we will be sending out a Robo-call to all eighth grade families encouraging them to log in and view the December 15 event and also drawing their attention to the kickoff of this process and access to the website and a second reminder the night before on Monday, December 14. Here are some important dates to highlight. This will be most certainly underscored in the presentation on the 15<sup>th</sup> and readily made available to all stakeholders in the community via the website and through our school channels. As I mentioned, on the 15<sup>th</sup> is the launch of the event, the website, and the formal application process and availability of the application. The deadline for completed applications, and I'm speaking specifically to that High School Choice application of those 9 of 12 schools, will be January 22. There will be forthcoming dates for those other three schools – International High School, Rosa Parks, and PANTHER. As you know, they have a different process in which interviews, auditions, and other needs are met. They do their best to expedite the process as well, but inevitably sometimes they do need additional time to complete those. During the week of February 22, the Office of Central Registration will conduct the lotteries and it is currently planned that on the week of March 15 school placement notices will be distributed. That concludes my presentation with regards to High School Choice. I'd be more than happy to take any questions you have. Thank you very much.

Comm. Arrington: Thank you for the presentation. Who initiates the application? Is it the student or the parent?

Mr. Graulich: As of the 15<sup>th</sup> or perhaps the morning of the 16<sup>th</sup>, it's my understanding that will be available and pushed through the student's Infinite Campus portal account. Between the December 15 and January 22 date, eighth grade guidance counselors will be instrumental in making communication and contact with these students as they have in years past. It hasn't been uncommon in years past for eighth grade school counselors to have individualized meetings, small group meetings, and all of the eighth grade within their school. That process is obviously going to continue. Ultimately, the guidance counselors will be very much a squeaky wheel to follow up and monitor the applications to ensure that they get completed and students are reached.

Comm. Arrington: It does begin in the student portal, not the parent portal, correct?

Mr. Graulich: That is my understanding. To be honest, I'm 99% sure on that one. I know for a fact that on Tuesday, Ms. Vainieri will provide much more detail given that her department oversees the implementation and the development of that. But that is my understanding, sir. We can definitely get you an answer prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> and I know for a fact that will be well explained on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

Comm. Arrington: Once a student completes, does the application route to the parent in the parent portal, or does it go right to central office? Does that question make sense?

Mr. Graulich: It does. Again, I believe this will be better suited and better handled by Ms. Vainieri. But it is my understanding that parents will be encouraged and will be followed up with to at minimum access their student's application. They will be able to see the student's application in their own parent portal and ultimately click the checkbox signing off on it.

Comm. Arrington: I guess I had two concerns. If the parent doesn't sign off, does it stop the application or impact the student? What if the parent doesn't agree with what the student selected? Does his parent have any oversight to say he should be applying for this academy and not just going where his friends are? I'm kind of curious.

Mr. Graulich: I want to get you the correct answer to a tee. I think we can follow up with you very quickly on that. Certainly, that message will be well conveyed in advance of the 15<sup>th</sup>. What I do know from experience is that the prior application process that was conducted more or less on paper and then inputted into Infinite Campus by the counselors also did require parent signatures and interaction.

Ms. Peron: Will, I have Lisa overseeing the entire process. Maybe she can help us with the responses. I know that this year is a little different because it's online. She really holds the details for it. Comm. Arrington, can you please repeat your question?

Comm. Arrington: Where does the application get initiated? I think Will was saying it's in the student portal.

Ms. Lisa Vainieri-Marshall: Yes.

Comm. Arrington: Once it's initiated, does the application go directly to 90 Delaware?

Ms. Vainieri-Marshall: No, it never comes to 90 Delaware. It's all online. The student will fill it out and he can electronically sign. Then the parent has to electronically sign. Then the guidance counselor certifies it. It's not really certified, he signs it. Then we extract that data.

Comm. Arrington: The parent has to sign off, correct?

Ms. Vainieri-Marshall: Yes. It will never make it to the guidance counselor if the parent does not.

Comm. Arrington: I'm pretty sure you guys have already thought about this, but if there are any applications that get stuck at the parent...

Ms. Vainieri-Marshall: We just started on Monday. I have staff that is calling every eighth grade parent and making sure that they are set up on the portal, getting their email, and informing them. Every in-district eighth grade parent should be receiving a call from us.

Comm. Arrington: For the seventh and sixth graders once we get into middle school, I wish we could start planting the seed on the high school choices. These kids are going to graduate in five months and now they have to make this serious decision. Dr. Hodges talked about it earlier. I would love to start planting the seed in sixth and seventh grades.

Ms. Peron: Lisa, do you want to answer that?

Ms. Vainieri-Marshall: We started for the sixth and seventh grades. We're starting with surveys that are happening. We are also thinking of some type of curriculum or something to do in the classroom for sixth graders and seventh graders just to introduce them to the topic. I know it's all tied into High School Restructuring. There is work in progress right now for sixth and seventh graders as well.

Comm. Arrington: There are some principals doing outstanding jobs out there. Off the top of my head, School No. 2, School No. 10, School No. 21, and School No. 20 where they bring people into the school and kids can meet people with different careers. I'm not sure if that's happening districtwide. Thank you, Lisa and Will. I really appreciate it. Great job! Like Dr. Hodges says, some kids don't even know what an engineer is. We have to somehow start introducing them to these careers so they'll know what programs they need to take.

Ms. Peron: Comm. Arrington, I just want to add that we did have that all planned for May out of the recommendations from Dr. Hodges and the fact that we need to begin to talk about college and career earlier in the elementary schools. It was a set activity for every school. It was a week of career and college awareness and we had all different activities. Every principal was involved. They each had their own activities planned, but the pandemic hit. We have to think outside of the box and maybe do it virtually.

Ms. Joanna Tsimpedes: May I add to that? We know that it is important to expose our students at a younger age to the different careers so that when they do get to the choice for an eighth grade they have a better understanding of what their interests are. As we are building our budget also for the guidance department for the 2021-2022 school year, we're looking at moving Naviance down to all middle schools, 6-8. Currently, we have it for grade 8. But we do know that it's very important in order for students to make informed decisions that they know more about their own interests and really know the 16 career clusters that exist so that they can make a decision about where they want to go based on what interests them. They need to know what is out there for them as well, what is upcoming in career choices, and what does that look like monetary-wise as students graduate. We always look at what the average income is for a specific career. It's important to start embedding that in our students' minds from a younger age so that they can research. That's something we're going to look at to give students the opportunity. They're all going to have to deal with Naviance. There is a course within the platform where they're doing self-exploration, career exploration, and partaking in activities which then produces something for them to say this is where your interests lie based on what you've put in and what you've answered to things. Kids sometimes don't know. They don't know the careers that are out there. They may think of engineering, but not really understand the different careers that impact engineering. They might think of arts, but just think it's music only or drawing. They don't realize there's a whole back scene to it that requires students to have an in-depth understanding. Part of the High School Restructuring is to help students make informed decisions so that when they are choosing their pathways, they're choosing them based on what is best for them and their interests.

Comm. Arrington: Thank you, Joanna. Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

Comm. Martinez: Dr. Hodges, I'm going to wild guess that you have some questions?

Comm. Hodges: I think Corey was ahead of me.

Comm. Martinez: I beg your pardon. Corey, if you have questions go ahead.

Comm. Teague: The main question I had was regarding Rosa Parks. Are they still going to conduct the auditions online? What about the students who don't have that kind of equipment?

Mr. Graulich: It's my understanding that the intent is that we are all planning hopefully to be in schools on January 19. If that is in fact the case, they will proceed with

auditions, socially distanced and as appropriate. The school principal has said that they will adjust their application process review auditions as appropriate depending on how we are as far as in-school instruction or not. For a more specific answer, I think it would be prudent to ask Rosa Parks administration to provide you a formal answer offline after the meeting.

Comm. Martinez: Corey, was there anything else to your question?

Comm. Teague: No, that will do.

Comm. Martinez: Great. Dr. Hodges, you are up.

Comm. Hodges: Increasingly, the state is trying to increase the level of interest in vocational training for students in normal high schools, looking at plumbers, electricians, and those kinds of jobs that don't require a college education. I didn't see that reflected so far in your survey, which is part of my concern. That's why I asked the question which was covered rather well. We're going to have to find ways to increase the students' exposure, particularly as we decide what kinds of schools we're going to be opening at the high school level moving forward. That's part of my concern. How do we make the choice based on these surveys which may not come from students who are well-informed as to what's available to them and what's really available out in the community in terms of future job opportunities? Although I'm certainly someone who wants every child to go to college, I know it's not realistic. I have to grudgingly admit that there are vocational opportunities which may serve some of our students better. We need to address that since Tech isn't for a large number of our students. That's one thing. The other thing is you don't include Rosa Parks, International High School, and PANTHER as part of the regular application. How does the child or the parent apply to those schools? How do they become aware that those schools are open to be applied to?

Mr. Graulich: Great question. Those are optional and separate applications. Each of those school's applications will be moving towards complete electronic format. The link and accessibility to those presentations will be on the centralized High School Choice Webpage. We are really going to make every effort over the next month to push the community to use this website as a resource as we truly feel it will serve as a one stop shop and information hub. I know each respective school has been and I'm sure will continue to be active in their promotion of their programs, not limiting themselves to school presentations and other types of events. The logistics are a student completes the High School Choice application that's required of all eighth graders, they will be going to one of those nine schools, and then a student can apply to all three of the other schools if they want or just two or one of them or none. Should a student get selected for one of the schools of the nine and then the feedback comes in that they have been offered at spot at one of the other three or two of the three, the student would then make that decision and it's my understanding that the Department of Central Registration would then update the records accordingly.

Comm. Martinez: Doc, I think that was a very good question. I think what Will just outlined was kind of the formal ways that the district and the individual schools do that. One thing we can't underestimate is the communication that takes place among parents and families of scholars. I have conversations regularly with parents and they're asking specific, pointed questions about specific schools. Amongst the folks in the community there are ongoing conversations and a very good understanding and depth of knowledge about the respective schools and the academies available throughout the district. So we have to also consider that as well, but that's a good question to make

sure. There are two parallel tracks there. There is the formal way that the district and the schools are getting that information out there, but then we also have to keep in mind that parents do regularly communicate. I have conversations with parents and sometimes they are informing me of things that are going on in respective schools and opportunities. That's something we should also keep in mind. Spot on with that question.

Comm. Hodges: There are other parents who are not informed and they may just stop at the initial application for the three schools when their child could in fact qualify for the other three. That's my concern.

Comm. Martinez: Again, that's why the parallel tracks - the district and respective schools doing their own outreach and initiatives to get that out there, but also the parents talking.

Ms. Peron: I just want to go back to Dr. Hodges' concern about the survey and the vocational. I went back to the surveys which all of you have and I just did a really quick review of it. Question No. 14 in grades 6-8 is about architecture and construction and it asks about the interest in becoming a plumber, an architect, or a heavy lifter. It does include those vocational careers.

Comm. Hodges: Again, the question may be there, but what is the student's exposure to what a plumber does, what an electrician does, and the salary and so forth? That's the kind of information that people need to know. I went to medical school, but had I known what I could have done as a police officer I might have changed my mind. It was far easier to do that. You understand the concern that I have.

Ms. Peron: I do and that's why, as we said before, we have upped those activities and those offerings in curriculum. We had those activities aligned to these surveys. As you said before and as we all know, we do have to bring this to the awareness of kids. We do have to present this to them so they are aware and they do see other things they don't normally see in school, in their house, or in the community. Understood, point taken and noted, and we will continue to develop and create those types of activities through the guidance department and all other content areas as well. As you know, it's all integrated and interdependent.

Comm. Hodges: It would certainly be important for any discussion on future academies the district wants to move forward with, and that's what I'm really concerned about. I don't want to take something off the table that a student should have or they're asking for while on the other hand there may be other academies that may also benefit them that they may not be aware of. We don't want to shut the door on academics here or close out opportunities students should be exposed to.

Ms. Peron: Noted.

Comm. Martinez: Very well. Thank you, Dr. Hodges, and thank you to all of you for those very thorough presentations. At this time, I can keep it with Madam Superintendent for her report.

## **REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

Ms. Shafer: Thank you, Mr. Vice President and Board members. I just want to give you a couple of updates on what's happening around the district despite the pandemic. We did have a student from John F. Kennedy High School who was a junior last year and

won the Private Prep Scholarship for the ACT prep and college coaching program. Her name is Noor Hassan. She went through that program which is very rigorous, time consuming, and difficult. As a result, she has been accepted to Stanford University for next September. We're extremely proud of her and her accomplishment. Last week, Victor Cruz again gave us a donation of another 200 Chromebooks. We are appreciative of him and his generosity. This past week, we rolled out our Social Justice Committee. If you recall back when George Floyd was killed, murdered, I had come forward to say that I wanted to put together a social justice advisory board where both students and staff could come. It would be a safe haven to talk about any type of social injustice that they experienced. In order for us to get to that end goal, we rolled out a Social Justice Committee last week. I'm working very closely with Assistant Superintendent Warren and Dr. Tyeshia Hilbert, Vice Principal at Dr. Frank Napier, Jr. School. We met with a group of stakeholders from the district and leaders. Now we're going to roll it out to parents, students, and teachers as well so that we can put a process together, address the inequities, any type of discrimination, or hate crimes that are happening throughout the district. The committee's goal really is to ensure that our policies, practices, and procedures are implemented, that we get resources out to everyone, and that we provide students, parents, and staff with a safe haven for open communication regarding equity issues in the district. We also want to make our schools a more restorative environment. In getting there, we are going to be providing professional development, trainings, and support to educate first everybody about all of this before we can start making some inroads into what can be done to improve the environment. Stay tuned. We'll have plenty of updates as we move through this process. Next week, I'm going to start a COVID-19 Reopening Advisory Board. This Board is going to consist of all of the unions in the district and their presidents. They can bring a representative who is a district employee to the meeting, as well as the stakeholders who are also running our full-service community schools. We are going to meet and go through our reopening plan. We are making some adjustments now. Just as an example, if you recall back in August when we went through our plan there were discussions around mandatory temperature checks. Now that we will have full body scanners, we'll be able to have temperature checks for everyone, our students and our staff. That's going to be mandatory temperature checks and that's just one example. We are going through our entire plan as we speak and making adjustments and changes as to what has happened over the past nine months. Another example is that we moved our meal distribution from Wednesday to Thursday and we're providing meals seven days a week now instead of five. Different things like that that we are changing in the plan to ensure when we open that we are ready and it will be a safe environment for our staff and our students. We'll keep you posted on that as well. We really wanted all the stakeholders to be there at the table who represent everyone in the district so that as we move through the plan we can address any issues and concerns and then when we're ready to reopen everyone has been at the table. We had our students in grades 3-5 over the Thanksgiving holiday working on what's called Imagine Math. It's a technology platform. The more work that you do in Imagine Math you're able to accumulate points, and those points turn into dollars. During the Thanksgiving holiday in grades 3-5, they are called Think Points. Our students earned the most in the State of New Jersey of 16 million points. That translated into them donating 340,000 of those points to a charity called Feeding America. Despite the pandemic and everything that's going on, our students are still thinking about others and made the donation of their points. Thanks to the teachers who are helping the students with this, but also to the students and parents for doing this over the Thanksgiving holiday. I want to now just give you a reminder about the student meals. We had talked about providing meals for weekends and holidays, and we are going to put this out to the community. On Monday, December 21, students and families will have meals for five days. On that Monday, instead of picking up meals for three days, they are going to pick them up for



five. That will get us from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup>. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, which is Wednesday, and that is the last day we are in session before the break, they'll get another five days' worth of meals and that will get them through to January 1. We want to be able to provide students with food security. They'll be getting 10 days' worth of meals, that's breakfast and lunch, for the winter break. I thank Dave Buchholtz, our director of food service, for doing a great job in ensuring that our students get meals on a daily basis. We have been partnering with the Paterson Board of Health. If you recall, we used International High School during that crisis, H1N1. During that crisis we worked with the Paterson Board of Health and used International High School. Yesterday, a couple of us met with Dr. Persaud from the Board of Health. We toured International High School because it will be used as a vaccination administration site for the City of Paterson once the vaccines arrive for the public. We've also asked our school nurses for anyone to volunteer to help us with the administration of the vaccinations. I'm happy to say that 11 nurses volunteered to help during the work day to assist in administering these vaccinations. We'll continue to work closely with the Board of Health. Once the vaccines come into the city and we know when they'll be able to administer them to the public, we'll do another walkthrough to make sure we have everything in place and they have everything they need. We'll then be able to assist in the administration of the vaccinations. As we move into the assessment of where we are with COVID-19 for the school district, we had said that we would come back to the Board at this meeting to discuss where we are and what our next steps would be. Just today, there was an article that came out that 9 of New Jersey's 10 largest school districts are now all remote. During the past 10 months, the number of infections has reached an all-time high. If you take a look at this chart, if you go back to April, we had 175 cases per week in Paterson. Right now, we're up to 192 a week and that's an increase. If you move through this document, you'll see the number of Paterson daily positives. Our highest was in May at 262. Now our highest is 323, which is a significant increase. On the next chart, you'll see at the bottom it says that on Monday, March 16 the Mayor announced three COVID-19 positive cases. On December 7, there are 14,672 confirmed positive cases in Paterson. A significant culmination since the pandemic started. If you look at the next page, this is indicative of the holidays and this is why we made a change about the schools being open every day and everybody being in central office at the same time. We knew that something was going to happen between Thanksgiving and the winter break. The week of November 29 through December 5, right after Thanksgiving, the number of daily cases in Paterson was 233 and the week prior was 192, a significant increase due to the holidays. The rest of the document talks about where testing is occurring. It also talks about who is most at risk. Unfortunately, it is the seniors who are most at risk. 80% of the related deaths in Paterson belong to residents 60 years of age or above. The age group of 70-79 saw the highest number of deaths, which was 112. On the next page, it talks about gender and unfortunately the men are at 61% and women are at 39%. You can also see above where the deaths are as it relates to the entire city and the six wards. The next page talks about race and ethnicity with the Hispanic at 54,000 and the Black at 30,000. Again, this is the deaths. It's extremely serious right now. It's the worse it's been since the pandemic started. The remainder of the report is about hospital statistics. If you go to the last two pages, we met yesterday with IBM and they're providing New Jersey predictions for COVID in 21 counties. If you look at this chart, you'll see that in Passaic County they're predicting between now and December 26 that there will be 326 new cases per day. The average daily cases could be as high as 426. Again, it's that holiday period. They did not go beyond December 26, but I think we could all interpret this of what we've seen from Thanksgiving that from December 26 where you have the Christmas holiday and then you go into the New Year holiday, two weeks after that cases are going to be extremely high as well, but they just did not go into that. On the last page, you'll see that after spiking to 301 new cases on December 1 new cases will stabilize at 268 a day by

December 26, but they could be as high as 341. With all that said, I am recommending to the Board that we continue remote instruction until mid-February when we do an assessment and come back to the Board. At the February workshop we'll make another recommendation based on the science and the statistics of Paterson, Passaic County, and the State of New Jersey.

Comm. Martinez: Thank you, Superintendent. Those statistics are eye-opening and staggering. I don't know what more evidence folks need to see before them to understand and grasp the severity of what's going on. I don't think those were intended to be, in any way shape or form, a fear tactic, nor is what I'm about to say. In my capacity as a funeral director in the City of Paterson, I can tell you firsthand that the phone is ringing here regularly as it pertains to COVID deaths. We're just one funeral home in the third largest city in the State of New Jersey. After talking to other funeral directors in Passaic County and vendors that we do business with, there is a steady uptick in the number of cases that are going on all around us. Again, this is not meant to be, in any way shape or form, used as a fear tactic. I'm only speaking as an individual. Be careful, folks. Take the precautions and be careful out there because this is not a joke in any way shape or form. As an individual, I can say that I second and agree with the assertion of continuing virtual learning through February understanding that this needs to be discussed as a Board and voted on and a consensus needs to be made. My sole perspective and position as it pertains to this is that we should continue to remain virtual until further notice because this is real. Again, that is an understatement. Thank you for your presentation. In conversing with the President, he has foregone his report. My little words were essentially going to take the place of his report.

Comm. Arrington: I just want to thank Superintendent Shafer and Assistant Superintendent Dave Cozart for the Thanksgiving game. She didn't report on it today, but the kids had an awesome time and it was really something special for the kids to have their senior night. It was all social-distanced. Everything was practiced, like masks. I just want to compliment Dave Cozart and Eileen on the job they did with that event. It was something special for our kids, some normalcy. I just want to commend her and Dave Cozart on that.

Ms. Shafer: Thank you, Commissioner. Vice President, before we move along, the last time we voted on continuing remote the Board resolution left it open that the Board would not have to vote, but I would like to at least get feedback from the Board, if everyone is in agreement, that we are going to make another assessment at the workshop in February to see if it's safe at that point to return to in-person.

Comm. Martinez: Got it. I've already chimed in so simply with the thumbs up on the screen or a yay or nay.

Comm. Simmons: Just for clarification so that folks understand what we're doing, we will not be returning to in-person learning in January.

Comm. Martinez: That is correct.

Comm. Arrington: Will that line up with the marking period?

Ms. Shafer: The end of the marking period is in January. We were trying to do that but because things are so bad and with everything you read right now, December, January, and February are going to be the worse three months.

Comm. Arrington: Got it. Thank you. I personally support your decision.

Comm. Martinez: We've heard from President Simmons and Comm. Arrington. Would Joel, Corey, and Doc like to chime in with their thoughts?

Comm. Ramirez: Mr. President, I would agree that we have given the Superintendent the authority to make this decision and I think that given the uptick of cases and the second wave and the conditions of the City of Paterson, I fully support the Superintendent's decision to push this back.

Comm. Martinez: Thank you, Comm. Ramirez. Comm. Teague and Comm. Hodges, go for it.

Comm. Hodges: I have always maintained that these were going to be difficult months because they corresponded to the flu season. The reason why you get the flu during this time of the year is because you are indoors and the exposures are high and the opportunity to spread the common flu is a problem. This pandemic is layered on top of that and it's a grave concern. I truly believe it would be prudent for us to wait to see where we are in February and go from there because I think the numbers are definitely going to spike. I anticipated that earlier in the year and I concur that it would be prudent to make that decision now and move forward.

Comm. Martinez: Thank you, Dr. Hodges. Corey, anything you want to add?

Comm. Teague: For the most part, I'm satisfied with the presentations tonight. I do have some parents that have some issues with the incompletes because some of the parents are claiming that they did not receive communications from the teachers. I'm waiting for them to email me now. The reason why I want them to put it in writing is because I want to make sure they are able to write it down so they can't change up their story on me. When they email me, I'll forward it to the respective people.

Comm. Martinez: Corey, if you can have them memorialize it that would be helpful. We kind of shifted gears really quickly. If you can, with a simple yes or no, indicate whether or not you would be comfortable with continuing the virtual learning into the month of February.

Comm. Teague: Yes.

Comm. Martinez: Perfect. Superintendent and Mr. President, it's unanimous across the Board that all the Commissioners are indeed in favor of continuing virtually as a district in light of the current and the anticipated continuation of this spike. It's unanimous across the Board.

Ms. Shafer: Thank you.

Comm. Martinez: Thank you all. At this time, Boris, do we have any folks lined up for public portion?

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

Ms. Rosie Grant: Thank you. Good evening, Commissioners, Ms. Superintendent, and members of the staff and public. Thank you, Ms. Shafer, for your presentations tonight. They were very informative. It's good to be able to keep abreast of what's going on as that does not happen in every community. I'm always appreciative of that. Thank you, Board members, for following Ms. Shafer's recommendation to remain remote until the numbers are better. I think the most important thing is to keep our children and the staff who serves them safe and alive. I wanted to let you know that PEF started the 21<sup>st</sup> Century After-School Program at Senator Frank Lautenberg and School No. 15. It's open to students in grades 3-12 at those schools and we will also have programs for their adult family members. We are accepting up to 100 students at each site. If any of the parents are listening, please follow the directions from your principal and register your kids for after school free tutoring, homework help, and lots of every exciting and engaging activities. It is STEM focused, although there is an arts component. We like to say STEAM, which I explain as STEM with attitude. We'll have a lot of that in our after school program. There's career awareness and exploration. There's also a civil engagement component and social/emotional learning as well, three hours a day, Monday through Friday. We are pleased to be collaborating with the district, St. Paul's Community Development Corporation, and New Destiny Family Success Center to bring you these programs. Right now, the kids are very engaged in arts, which is being delivered by Arts for Kids, and we look at it as healing through arts in these traumatic times. Thank you for your work and thank you for this opportunity.

Comm. Martinez: Thank you, Rosie. Boris, are there any more speakers?

Mr. Zaydel: No other speakers.

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

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

### **Resolution No. 1**

Whereas, the Paterson Public School District approves the payment of bills and claims dated December 9, 2020, beginning with direct deposit starting with 800 and ending with 824, and check number beginning with 224707 and ending with 224873, in the amount of \$10,715,221.57;

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

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

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

Comm. Arrington

- Self
- Family

Comm. Castillo-Cruz

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

Comm. Hodges

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. Martinez

- Self

Comm. Ramirez

- Self
- Berkeley College
- City of Paterson

Comm. Redmon

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

Comm. Simmons

- Self
- Family

Comm. Teague

- Self
- YMCA

## **Resolution No. 2**

WHEREAS, this supports Paterson-Promising Tomorrow Strategic Plan , Goal 1:Teaching and Learning: to create a student-centered learning environment to prepare students for career, college readiness and lifelong learning and to Increase achievement levels, and

WHEREAS, programs provides students equity of access as well as ensures that students not only grasp the key mathematical concepts, but enjoy making connections between concepts and the world around them. The program is dedicated to fostering curiosity and confidence in learners, and

WHEREAS, The Envision Mathematics program will provide resources for each student enrolled in Grades K-5. Materials are available in print for both English and Spanish and digitally for Arabic. The teachers and students will have digital access to all printed materials for 6 ½ years (December 10, 2020 – June 30, 2027), along with the student workbook being replenished each year for the duration of the contract, and professional development will be offered (25 virtual sessions at no cost to the District) over the duration of the contract, and

WHEREAS, Envision Mathematics supports coherent, focused and rigorous mathematics. Personalized math practice, built-in interventions and customizable

content deepen understanding and improve student achievement. Problem-based learning provides opportunities to think mathematically, communicate with peers, and apply knowledge and skills, and

WHEREAS, the Paterson Publics School District approves Envision Math resources for Grades Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup> Grade for 6 ½ years December 10, 2020 – June 30, 2027 in the amount. The cost of the resources will not exceed \$1,291,979.50 pending budget approval.

**It was moved by Comm. Simmons, seconded by Comm. Arrington that Resolution No. 2 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Hodges who abstained. The motion carried.**

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

Comm. Arrington

- Self
- Family

Comm. Castillo-Cruz

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

Comm. Hodges

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. Martinez

- Self

Comm. Ramirez

- Self
- Berkeley College
- City of Paterson

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 mission, vision, goals and objectives of the Five-Year Strategic Plan “Paterson-A Promising Tomorrow” recognizing traditions and diverse community partnerships. The Paterson Public School District is to provide an academically rigorous, safe, and nurturing educational environment, by meeting the social, emotional and academic needs of our students as we prepare them for post-secondary education and career. Goal Area #3 Assist in establishing new community partnerships with adult mentoring for students in grades 6-12 that will promote character building, improve achievement and reduce chronic absenteeism; and

WHEREAS, the School 20’s mission is to prepare our students in an environment that nurtures students academically, socially, and emotionally in order to be successful life-long learners; and

WHEREAS, School 20 continues to strive to create and maintain viable community partnerships with the City of Paterson community to support and enhance our overall environment. We believe this token will create additional opportunities to assist our school community and enhance our community relationships post COVID-19; and now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, we recommend the Paterson Public School District Board of Education to accept Golconda Temple #24, Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order Nobles of Mystic Shrine, Prince Hall Shriners gift of twenty-four bicycles for selected students in grades K-5.

**It was moved by Comm. Arrington, seconded by Comm. Teague that Resolution No. 3 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Simmons 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. Martinez

- Self

Comm. Ramirez

- Self
- Berkeley College
- City of Paterson

Comm. Redmon

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

Comm. Simmons

- Self
- Family

Comm. Teague

- Self
- YMCA

#### **Resolution No. 4**

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public Schools has been impacted financially due to the Covid-19 pandemic and had to purchase additional technology and PPE items to ensure the students of the district are safe and are receiving the education needed; and

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public Schools accepts the Cares Act Funding donation from the City of Paterson, to help with these expenses; and

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public Schools will be receiving the amount of \$3,782,306 to be used as follows for the 2020-2021 school year; and

PPS	
PPS - 400 Promethean Boards for hybrid learning	2,069,436.00
PPS - 600 Chromebooks for distance learning	217,800.00
PPS - Thermal cameras (60 schools, 3 cameras at PPS HQ)	980,572.00
PPS - PPE/masks for students, disinfectant, foggers	514,498.00
TOTAL	3,782,306.00

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Paterson Public Schools accepts the Cares Act Funding in the amount of \$3,782,306 to go towards; Promethean boards, Chromebooks, Thermal Cameras, and PPE/masks, disinfectant and foggers from the City of Paterson.

**It was moved by Comm. Arrington, seconded by Comm. Simmons that Resolution No. 4 be adopted.**

Comm. Simmons: The resolution reads as if we are receiving actual funds and we will not be. If we are saying that we are receiving money, do we have to include that in our budget somewhere and somehow?

Mr. Richard Matthews: Commissioner, this would be like any other donation. The actual monetary value of these items will not be in our budget. The dollar amount would not be in terms of receiving any revenues. It would just be like a donation. Anything that's over a certain amount of money would go into fixed assets. Anything over \$2,000 would go into fixed assets. We would record all of those items under fixed assets, but that's all we would be required to do, whether it was a motorcycle or a Promethean board.



Comm. Simmons: There is some concern about the language on the city side that refers to this as a loan.

Mr. Matthews: Correct. Chief McDermott spoke to me on Monday and told me that we would receive the goods as a loan because there was some language in the resolution that was sent by the City of Paterson that was to be corrected at a later meeting date not yet determined. It would be as a loan temporarily and then after the new resolution was passed by the City of Paterson and the Council, we would receive the goods as the property of Paterson Public Schools.

Comm. Simmons: I'm assuming this would be for either Mr. Matthews or General Counsel. In the event that language does not change...

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: I can address that. I actually had a conversation today with the law department to get a better sense of why there was some confusion. My understanding is that initially the city was not in possession of some of the items. In drafting their resolution at the time, they did not want to commit to giving things they did not in fact have. I believe the usage of the word 'on loan' was meant to address the fact that they didn't have the material. The preference to say this would be given to the district on loan was to not put the city in a position where they would have to give us something that, let's say, they didn't get. If they pass the resolution saying they are gifting it to us, hypothetically if they didn't get it they would still be responsible for giving it to us. That's why I think this 'on loan' language came into play. However, my understanding is that they are expecting to receive some of the items that are outlined in Resolution No. 4. On their December 29 meeting, they'll be able to pass the resolution that does not include the word 'loan.' At that time, they'll actually have the material and can pass the resolution in layman's terms donating us these items.

Comm. Simmons: I'm going to add to that confusion. Not too long ago, I had a conversation with the Council President and his understanding was that resolution they voted on did not include giving us anything. The resolution was only for them to buy the equipment.

Comm. Martinez: Kenny, just to jump in, I was going to make that point. I had a similar conversation. Essentially, our understanding seems to be the same. That resolution was simply them accepting the goods. Perhaps it's going to be reflected in that 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, but right now that first resolution was to actually receive the goods as the city. Now they are going to get them, but they have yet to vote to actually assign or donate or whatever that language may be. That was my understanding as well, if anyone can shed light or some clarity.

Comm. Arrington: When I read the resolution, it says we are receiving \$3 million. I read this as we are receiving money to be used to purchase these products. Is that the case?

Comm. Simmons: That's the way I read it, hence my question to the BA.

Comm. Arrington: We didn't talk about this in technology, the compatibility with these boards and how we are going to use these at some of our older schools with electrical problems. That's probably something for the Technology Committee.

Comm. Simmons: We have a number of these boards in the district already.

Comm. Arrington: That language kind of confuses me.

Comm. Martinez: I think we're all somewhat still unclear on this.

Mr. Matthews: I think the language can change to just say that we are accepting the donations of the Promethium boards, the Chromebooks, the thermal cameras, and PPE. We can put the total value of the donation is \$3,782,306. We can talk about the value of the donation. We need to accept the items that are in that resolution from the City of Paterson because we specifically asked for items that are in this resolution and the value of those items are \$3.7 million. The value of the donation is not as important as what's actually going to be in the donation. We could speak to the actual number of Promethium boards, Chromebooks, thermal cameras, and PPE masks. We could probably change the language to include the quantity of the items that we are receiving.

Comm. Simmons: My question to General Counsel is, can we vote to receive items that the city has not voted to give us yet?

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: If you don't mind, I want to take a moment to look exactly at the language because this is kind of a nuanced issue. My concern is in protecting the district and once I look at it, I'll be able to give a definitive answer. I don't have any objection to agreeing to accept these items. However, I would recommend, as long as our language is clear, that we are accepting them as a donation in our resolution, which I'll read again. We can move forward with agreeing to accept them. I would not take possession of these items until the City Council passes their final resolution outlining that these things are being donated. If we pass this resolution, accept these items, and for some unknown reason the Council chooses not to change the language and now these items are on loan to us, inherently that means there is the potential that they can request them back. If we are not able to provide them back for whatever reason, then like any loan there is the potential expectation that we will reimburse them. While that might not be their position at all, that language is open to that level of interpretation. I would recommend that if we would like to move forward with this and we can... It may be necessary for the city to obtain these items. However, I would not take possession until the City Council passes their resolution that clarifies this is not a loan to us or that at least their resolution outlines we are not responsible for paying them back in any way for these items.

Comm. Martinez: If I'm hearing you correctly, it's safe to assume that we can go ahead with this vote to essentially accept when the time is right. Once the city has cleaned up that language, this obstacle has already been cleared so then we can actually go ahead and receive them. Those contingencies or clean-up around the language will then be done on their part.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: Perhaps we can just lay this one on the table for now and give me an opportunity to make sure that the language in our resolution doesn't leave us to any potential exposures. Then within the next five minutes, I'll be able to come back and let you know if we can move forward on the language in this resolution in light of some of the new information that I'm receiving and the Board members have received now.

Comm. Martinez: Very well. For Kenny and Superintendent Shafer, we don't want to put this off or jeopardized any of the timelines we have in place as far as receipt and usage of these materials. General Counsel, we can go ahead and table this for a few minutes so you can do that due diligence. Again, I don't want to jeopardize the timeline.

Mr. Matthews: I just want to add a little bit. As part of this CARES money, the City of Paterson has to be able to encumber these funds by the end of the year. That's why they have pressed the vendors to deliver material to us within the next couple of days so they can be invoiced and they can put together the requisitions to pay these invoices. This material is coming to us next week. Not to us directly, but to the City of Paterson. Some is being stored at the firehouse. I'm setting up a meeting on Friday to meet with the technology people, central stores, and facilities so that we can receive these goods because they don't really want to hold onto them. We had already talked about being able to receive these goods sometime next week. That meeting is going to take place on the 29<sup>th</sup>. That can change, but we had those conversations to be onsite and be present when the stuff was being delivered to the City of Paterson.

Comm. Martinez: That sounds about right. Kenny and Eileen, if you are comfortable with that, we can put a pin in this for a few minutes while General Counsel does her diligence so as not to disrupt the timelines that are set with delivery, receipts, and so on. Are we okay with that?

Ms. Shafer: Yes.

Comm. Martinez: Fantastic. General Counsel, we will give you a few minutes to go ahead and do your due diligence there. In the meantime, we can jump in the agenda to general business, to presentation of resolutions for the regular meeting.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **Items Requiring a Vote**

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

Comm. Arrington: The Instruction and Program Committee did meet on December 7 at 6:11. Present was Comm. Arrington, Comm. Hodges, and Comm. Ramirez. During that committee meeting, we did review items I&P-1 through I&P-8. The minutes from the meeting have been uploaded to the Google Drive. We are going to be presenting items 1-8 for vote during the next regular meeting.

Comm. Martinez: With that, if anyone wants to go ahead and look at the Google Drive at the resolutions and at the notes and then they can email Comm. Arrington any questions they may have or bring them to the table for the next meeting. Any questions for I&P now while we are here?

#### ***Operations***

Comm. Ramirez: Mr. President Simmons, would you like to present the minutes since you presided?

Comm. Simmons: Actually, I was multitasking so Comm. Arrington should.

Comm. Ramirez: Comm. Arrington, I know the minutes have been uploaded and the items that are going to be presented are in the minutes and they've been expressed. Do you want to add anything to the report since you presided? Just a clarification, Cheryl, if the report can be edited and reflect that Comm. Arrington presided, not Mr. Cozart.

Ms. Williams: Yes.

Comm. Arrington: Operations Committee met on December 8. Present was Comm. Simmons, Comm. Arrington, Comm. Teague, and I believe Comm. Ramirez came in. I think that's another correction too.

Comm. Ramirez: I did not stay for the full length of the meeting.

Comm. Arrington: I know you were there for a time. We are submitting four items for review, items O-9 through O-12. As Comm. Ramirez says, the minute meetings are on the Google Drive and they have some notes in there. Are there any questions about that?

Comm. Martinez: Please feel free to review the notes as they are uploaded.

### ***Fiscal Management***

Comm. Simmons: Fiscal is scheduled to meet on Monday. We have not met yet.

### ***Personnel***

Comm. Martinez: I'll take the lead on this because I know Comm. Redmon is not with us right now.

Comm. Ramirez: Commissioner, we have a meeting coming up on Monday.

Comm. Martinez: There we are, beautiful.

### ***Governance***

Comm. Martinez: Governance did meet yesterday. We discussed some current pending litigation which is currently underway. Those notes will also, if not already, be made available on the Google Drive for anyone to review. If there are any questions pertaining to that information, please feel free to email those questions and we can discuss those as need be. I see additional. I'm not sure what additional means, but if anyone wants to jump in and report on additional, feel free.

Ms. Williams: That's just an additional item that was added.

### **Committee Reports**

#### ***Technology***

Comm. Arrington: Mr. Vice President, the Technology Committee is meeting tomorrow.

Comm. Martinez: Very well. Thank you.

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

Comm. Teague: They are also going to meet tomorrow at 6:00.

#### ***Policy***

Comm. Arrington: Policy met on December 7. Present was Comm. Arrington and Comm. Hodges. We are submitting multiple policy changes for review. The changes are on the Google Drive with the meeting minutes.

Comm. Martinez: Fantastic, thank you, Vince. I would encourage all Commissioners who have any questions regarding the committee meetings to please feel free at your leisure to review them as they have been uploaded in the Google respective drives. You can take the time you need to read through them and send back any questions between now and next week. That gives us a nice window of time to be able to read and respond to any inquiries you folks may have about any of the items that were discussed in committee.

### **Information Items**

Comm. Martinez: If there are any information items, now is your opportunity to bring them to the table.

Comm. Hodges: I forgot what I wanted to ask you earlier.

Comm. Martinez: Take your time. We're still waiting for General Counsel to come back with her findings.

Comm. Hodges: One of my questions would be for General Counsel. I feel like I have to recuse myself from No. 4 since it is part of the city. I can't really comment.

Comm. Martinez: To your point, maybe you can have that conversation with her offline, but I see what you mean. Is there anything else as far as information items?

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **Resolution No. 4**

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public Schools has been impacted financially due to the Covid-19 paramedic and had to purchase additional technology and PPE items to ensure the students of the district are safe and are receiving the education needed; and

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public Schools accepts the Cares Act Funding donation from the City of Paterson, to help with these expenses; and

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public Schools will be receiving the amount of \$3,782,306 to be used as follows for the 2020-2021 school year; and

<b>PPS</b>	
PPS - 400 Promethean Boards for hybrid learning	2,069,436.00
PPS - 600 Chromebooks for distance learning	217,800.00
PPS - Thermal cameras (60 schools, 3 cameras at PPS HQ)	980,572.00
PPS - PPE/masks for students, disinfectant, foggers	514,498.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,782,306.00</b>

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Paterson Public Schools accepts the Cares Act Funding in the amount of \$3,782,306 to go towards; Promethean boards, Chromebooks, Thermal Cameras, and PPE/masks, disinfectant and foggers from the City of Paterson.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: I'm ready whenever you are. I did review what was written there and it is referred to as a donation. It does read that we will be receiving \$3,782,306 to

be used and then it outlines what that money will be used for. I do believe we are able to move forward on our end. I would still caution us from accepting these items. I understand the prior conversation, but based on the fact that we are even having a discussion and, as many of you have indicated, you've spoken to City Council members who appear not to have the same level of clarity about what's happening. While I completely understand what the business administrator has stated based on his conversations, unfortunately the Council would have the final say so I would caution us accepting anything until they have passed their resolution. Our resolution is fine to move forward on.

Comm. Martinez: In summary, it is okay for us to proceed with this vote on Resolution No. 4 with the understanding that the City Council still has to clear their vote on the 29<sup>th</sup> before we actually physically receive anything.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: That would be my recommendation because if it does not pass or if the Council takes a position that they want us to reimburse them if it's damaged, anything can occur. Based on what we are receiving I don't see why that would occur, but the city knows better about why and how and the parameters of receiving this funding. We don't. I wouldn't recommend that we put ourselves in a position where we accept items and have potential liability for those same items that we are accepting under the belief that it is a donation.

Comm. Simmons: I have a question. If I heard him correctly, the BA did speak to some of that equipment being stored at our facilities.

Mr. Matthews: No. They wanted to know where we would want stuff to be delivered to. We wanted stuff to be sent to central storage. The impact is not a budget impact. It's an impact to the balance sheet which is totally different in terms of it being assets to our balance sheet. We would not have to move on these items in terms of using them and storing the thermal scanners. We can delay that until after that resolution. I'm just afraid they might not have a place to put them until the 29<sup>th</sup> because stuff is coming in next week. That's my only concern.

Comm. Simmons: Does that imply acceptance?

Mr. Matthews: We are going to accept it as a loan. When we receive the items, we would receive them as a loan and then we would receive them as property of Paterson Public Schools after the resolution went through on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

Comm. Simmons: If I'm hearing General Counsel correctly, she cautioned against acceptance. If we are in fact storing it in central storage that to me implies that we are accepting it.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: That is correct. I would say if we are taking possession of these items in any way, we are accepting it. In light of what these items are, we can't put anything in writing because that would have to be approved by the Council as well. There's really no ironclad way of not being stuck with these items as a loan if we accept them. If you look at them from a perspective of a loan, they are loaning us these items. To the extent we don't accept them I think that's the best option. If we do accept them, the items are what being loaned to us. The other option is to return them if it's not passed on the Council side. I don't want us to be blinded to the potential, albeit small, that once we accept them they say we've accepted them and they did this on our behalf. We just leave ourselves open for potential arguments no matter how trivial and no

matter how small. Even if they are not strong arguments, they end up creating potential issues that we would have to address.

Comm. Martinez: While the language may seem like semantics, the devil is in the details. Mr. Matthews or Superintendent, is there any way that we can reconsider housing whatever materials we were going to temporarily be housing? I think that would alleviate some of the concern. What's the old adage? Possession is 90% of ownership. If we don't actually have them in-house, it is less likely that we can be held responsible for damages or perceived ownership. Long story short, would there be any way that perhaps you guys can revisit that conversation to see if those materials can be housed somewhere else until this is cleared up?

Ms. Shafer: At this point, they were going to house whatever they could in one of the firehouses. The rest they were sending to us. Khalifa, is it possible that our resolution could read differently and say that we will store them until the City Council approves giving us this donation? Could we put all that we just talked about in our resolution so that it's clear the Board did not vote on any type of a loan? What they voted on was to store these items until the City Council approves it at their next meeting, which I think I heard was December 29. Could we be that specific? That would protect us as far as storing the items because there's no place else to put them. It gets us away from this terminology of loan.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: Unfortunately, Madam Superintendent, we would have conflicting resolutions with the city, which would leave us in the same position. As it stands, the city has said they are loaning it to us. This is on loan. When you think of it in that perspective, god forbid we accept these things, we don't use them, and then there is a flood and the ceiling caves in and damages a million dollars' worth of material. It would be very difficult for us to argue that we shouldn't be responsible because we've admitted we're only storing them. The city has not agreed to that from the City Council perspective. They have not said they agree to give us this to store. They are saying they are loaning it to us. It's largely because this appears to have become somewhat of an issue. It gives me a little agita about whether or not all of the necessary parties in the city, being the Mayor and the Council, which requires both of them, are all in agreement at this time on how this will be given to the district. While that may not be accurate, we are all speculating and it's just based on the conversations, the language is black and white. It's a loan. Now that it seems there are some inconsistencies potentially on the city side, if we accept this, like anything else, we are accepting all of the responsibility associated with housing it. Again, even if we don't use it, if something happened and the city was unable to pass their resolution that says this is a loan and at any time we may need this back, if we don't have it to return like any loan we would probably have to pay whatever that value would be. It seems potentially unlikely, but if it were to happen the law would not be in our favor, in my opinion.

Ms. Shafer: Got it.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: Unfortunately, this may just be a small sense of semantics in the language that was written. Again, I've spoken with the law department so I do understand their reasoning had more to do with the same thing we are discussing tonight. They understood that by saying they would give us something they didn't have in their possession, if we wanted to be unreasonable we could say to them they passed a resolution saying they owe us \$3.7 million of equipment. Sorry you didn't get it, but we still need it and you are bound by that. They also took the very same precautions in their resolution. That's why from our vantage point, that makes it a little bit clearer why

I'm taking this position on our side. It's the small detail that if things go wrong we are \$3.7 million or whatever issues to the negative.

Mr. Matthews: I just want to add that these items are being paid for by federal funds. This is not something that the City of Paterson can come back and say we would have to pay them because these items are being paid for from the CARES Act money. They're going to be submitting their expenditure reports for these items as part of another \$5 million they are submitted for and this is all paid for through that money. But I hear what you're saying.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: Mr. BA, I'm not saying we can't vote on it so that we don't interrupt whatever documentation the city needs to move forward. We can vote on this so the city can be in compliance with whatever they need for the CARES Act. We can absolutely vote on it. My only caution is that if the items aren't coming until next week, if we can perhaps find a way to not accept these items. The voting is fine. It's the acceptance that gives me some concern.

Mr. Matthews: I'll talk to Chief McDermott tomorrow and tell him they have to hold onto the items until the Council passes that resolution on the 29<sup>th</sup>.

Comm. Martinez: I think that's the safest play. We can proceed on this vote so as not to disturb or interrupt any timelines that have been set forth. But the prudent thing to do as a district would be to request that they house them elsewhere. This way, we avoid that little potential snafu. Kenny, I think you were about to jump in.

Comm. Simmons: I was going to say the same thing. I agree we can move forward. If I heard the Superintendent correctly yesterday, it was the chief who said it was a loan and he would need somebody to sign for receipt. Madam General Counsel, correct me if I'm wrong. If it is the chief asking for us to sign for receipt, I don't think he has the authority to do that.

Mr. Matthews: No. I was going to be the person to meet the chief to receive the goods. When I call Chief McDermott tomorrow, I'm going to tell him we cannot sign off on receipt of goods until after the 29<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: To answer your question, Comm. Simmons, I think everyone is just operating in this abundance of caution because of the amount. I believe this will hopefully all work itself out. That's why the chief wants someone to sign because the chief has to do what's necessary to protect the city's interest.

Comm. Martinez: Madam General Counsel, I think you hit the nail right on the head. Everyone is just operating with an abundance of caution so as to make sure this goes smoothly. I'm an optimist. The cup is half-full. I'm very comfortable that this will work itself out. With that being said, there's no harm in covering ourselves to make sure we are indeed not held liable for any potential snafus that may occur, however slim that possibility may be. If there are not any more questions or conversation around this, I think we can proceed back to Resolution No. 4. I'll leave the floor open right now for any last questions or comments about this before we move into a vote.

Comm. Arrington: Mr. Vice President, I want to be clear. We are not accepting these things, correct?

Comm. Martinez: We will not physically be receiving them nor will we be physically housing them. That is affirmative.



Comm. Arrington: I'm clear.

**On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Hodges and Comm. Ramirez who recused themselves. 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. Martinez

- Self

Comm. Ramirez

- Self
- Berkeley College
- City of Paterson

Comm. Redmon

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

Comm. Simmons

- Self
- Family

Comm. Teague

- Self
- YMCA

Comm. Martinez: Before I call for a motion to adjourn, are there any final comments or thoughts anyone would like to render? The opportunity and the time are now.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.