

**MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
BOARD GOVERNANCE TRAINING/RETREAT**

October 3, 2020 – 9:30 a.m.  
Remote Meeting (via Zoom)

Presiding: Comm. Kenneth Simmons, President

Present:

Ms. Eileen F. Shafer, Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Susana Peron, Deputy Superintendent

Comm. Vincent Arrington

Comm. Oshin Castillo-Cruz

Comm. Jonathan Hodges

Comm. Manuel Martinez, Vice President

Comm. Joel Ramirez

Comm. Nakima Redmon

Comm. Corey Teague

Absent:

Comm. Emanuel Capers

Comm. Simmons read the Open Public Meetings Act:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend the meetings of the Paterson Public School District, as well as other public bodies at which any business affecting the interest of the public is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this law, the Paterson Public School District has caused notice of this meeting:

Board Retreat  
October 1-3, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.  
Remote  
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.

Board comments on what they took away from Chapter 3: "Superintendent Governance Mindset"

- There are different leadership styles among superintendents
- Every action is executed with a specific purpose in mind, not sporadically
- The recognition of governance and how important it is
- The board needs to function as a team
- The superintendent guides and listens to the board; brings everyone together around common goals
- The superintendent has to be the one to set the culture of communication
- Struck by the similarities of the five superintendents mentioned in the chapter

Superintendent shares her thoughts about how her responsibilities toward the Board have changed since she began her tenure

- Has been fortunate to have had good relationships with various Board members before becoming superintendent
- You find out what you have in common with the Board members and capitalize on that
- Element of trust is vital between Board and superintendent

Board reacts to comments by superintendent and their views of her

- Superintendent is accessible and trustworthy
- Board appreciates the frankness and direct communication style of the superintendent
- Hard-working and leads by example
- Her team is transparent and inclusive of the board
- Adapts her approach to address the needs of the district
- Appreciative of the reopening plan and the way it has been adjusted with changing circumstances
- Superintendent is responsive to the needs of the community

## Review of Chapter 3: “Superintendent Governance Mindset” – Typical Governance Styles

- Hands Off Approach
  - Past superintendents in Paterson have displayed a “hands off” style of leadership, which has led to friction and frustration on the part of the Board
- Preemptive Damage Control Approach
  - It is dangerous and can turn a Board against the superintendent
  - When the superintendent does not appear to fulfill his/her role, it forces the Board to take a more aggressive role
  - Superintendent withholding information causes the Board to be in the dark and creates a disconnect in the relationship of the Board
  - It is essential to ask the right questions of the superintendent and the administration

## Breakout Groups Exercise – Review Superintendent Examples from Chapter 3

- Group #1
  - Discussed Young Men’s Leadership Academy Program
  - Program was slated to be cancelled due to questions about its effectiveness and leadership
- Group #2
  - Striking similarity between the example in the book and Ms. Shafer
  - Superintendent makes sure the Board knows what is going on with the programs throughout the district
  - Superintendent can ensure programs are being implemented by bringing the Board into the classroom and conducting walkthroughs with them
  - There should be a process for boards to evaluate whether rigor is taking place in the classroom
- Group #3
  - Board is considering scheduling a one-hour working session before each board meeting to discuss the district strategic plan
  - Requests for programs by the administrator should show how they're linked to the strategic plan
  - Align all programs to the strategic plan through the resolution process
  - Important for the Board to schedule “equity walks” to get a feel for what's happening in the school district

### Discussion of Chapter 3: "Politics and Governance"

- Politics is interwoven into every aspect of life, including education
- Board must separate politics from the work of governing
- Politics can be used to the advantage of the school district
- Good governance of the Board has improved over the years and it has made good use of politics

Question for reflection: How does the intersection of your personal and professional identity impact how you lead?

- You have to be very intentional about making sure that you are representing all the children and in your role as a governing body

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

No speakers.

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

### ADJOURNMENT

**It was moved by Comm. Teague, 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 12:41 p.m.