

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

October 14, 2020 – 6:11 p.m.  
In Person and Remote

Presiding: Comm. Kenneth Simmons, President

Present:

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

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

Comm. Manuel Martinez, Vice President  
Comm. Joel Ramirez  
Comm. Nakima Redmon

Absent:

Comm. Corey Teague

Comm. Capers 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  
October 14, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.  
In Person and 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.

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

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

The Board went into executive session at 6:14 p.m.

The Board reconvened the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

## **PRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Update on the Five Year Long Range Facilities Plan**

Comm. Simmons: The SDA will be presenting at the regular meeting. We'll do the Long Range Facilities Plan at that meeting. We'll do both of those presentations at the regular meeting next week because the SDA will be presenting on the Joseph Taub School.

### **Graduation Report**

Mr. Will Graulich: Good evening. I'm going to share my screen. Before I begin, can I just get confirmation that you can see the blue screen? Good evening, Madam Superintendent, Madam Deputy, Board Commissioners, and members of the community. My name is Will Graulich and I'm your Director of Secondary Education. Tonight, I have a brief presentation on the graduation results for the 2019-2020 school year. Per administrative code, districts are to annually report graduation results to their boards of education. As you can see on the screen, specifically the number of students graduating in the prior school year, the number of graduates who met graduation assessment requirements by either passing the substitute competency test, the portfolio appeals process, meeting alternative requirements as specified in their IEPs, and finally, the number of twelfth grade students who were denied graduation, and how many of those students were denied solely due to failure to meet graduation assessment requirements. Historically, this information is presented in our annual presentation on assessment data. However, as everyone is well aware, Governor Murphy's Executive Order No. 117 waived graduation assessment requirements inclusive of the portfolio appeals process for any twelfth-grade student who is expected to graduate in the class of 2020. As such, no student was denied graduation due to assessment requirements as those requirements were waived for this prior academic year. The data you see before you is reflective of the August 31 NJ Smart Snapshot. As you can see in the 2020 cohort, 1,403 students received diplomas from Paterson Public Schools. There are an additional four students that are undergoing appeals and review by the New Jersey Department of Education as potential additional graduates. That stems from the four-year adjusted cohort of students who started four years ago in ninth grade of 1,787. These numbers are preliminary as they are under review by NJDOE. The DOE has changed this past fall the way graduation rates have been calculated and I wanted to provide an overview of how those rates have been calculated historically. If you go to school year 2010-2011 and prior to that, seniors enrolled in September and who graduated in June of their twelfth grade year and that is how that figure is calculated. In 2011-2012, the DOE introduced a cohort model where instead of capturing students just from their twelfth grade year, there is the tracking of students from their ninth grade year and for the next four years onward. In the school year of 2016-2017, the DOE asked all districts to exclude all adult high school and alternative programs inclusive of programs like the one we have here at STARS Academy. Those students were excluded from the graduation cohort. Introduced this past fall of 2019 and for this cohort of 2020 graduates, the DOE has required all school districts to now include once again all participants in adult high school programs, alternative programs, and programs inclusive and representative of our STARS Academy. Graduation is something that is not a one-year initiative, as we all know. It's something that is the central focus for bringing students to see their graduation day. As such, here are a few activities and interventions that take place to ensure as many students from their ninth grade year make it to get their diploma on their stage in their twelfth grade year. That would be

including regular meetings of the Superintendent and Deputy with their principals with regards to graduation tracking and regular cohort meetings between the assistant superintendents and their associated principals. Principals are charged with focusing on both ninth and twelfth grade student tracking, two years we've found to be critical in projecting graduation. Regular transcript reviews by guidance teams, providing multiple alternative assessment opportunities as well as portfolio appeals, interventions via Credit Recovery and/or summer school, administrator check-ins with student enrollees of both Credit Recovery and summer school, multiple points of contact for students identified as at-risk, principal-developed graduation action plans, monthly updates, and regular work on unverified student reports. Those are students who have stopped attending school and have possibly enrolled in school districts either in-state, out-of-state, or possibly out-of-country. Until the evidence for such transfers has been verified by formal documentation, those students remain on the cohort. As such, principals and vice principals undertake a series of home visits, social media, trying to contact students through there, meeting with friends and family, and even going to the length of making phone calls out-of-country. Principal-to-home parent family outreach regularly conducted and specifically as it pertains to this past school year impacting the cohort 2020 with regards to COVID-19, ensuring each student had access to a device at home during instruction. The Superintendent and principals led virtual senior meetings in the third and fourth marking periods during the closure. This year, making sure ninth graders received orientation as they would have in-person, but this time for students virtually. That concludes the presentation and I would be more than happy to take any questions you may have. Thank you very much.

Comm. Hodges: We didn't see a trend. I don't know what that represents in terms of last year and the year before that. Are they staying the same?

Ms. Shafer: We can get you a three-year trend and send it to the full Board.

Comm. Hodges: That would be helpful. And it would be even more important next year in view of all this to see where we are. What was the 1,700 and the 1,400?

Ms. Shafer: The 1,700 is the number of freshmen four years ago and that starts the cohort. You follow those 1,700 each year and that's what your graduation rate is based on. In the past, your graduation rate was based on how many students start their senior year in September and how many graduate. They changed it. The cohort model now goes back four years and you track those 1,700 from four years ago and see where they end up four years later. That is your graduation rate.

Comm. Simmons: Which in itself is problematic because we don't know and what would be interesting to find out is of that 1,700 how many students transferred and things like that. What happened to the other 400?

Ms. Shafer: A lot of times, because of our transient population, some of those families move out of country or they move out of the area. Those are what we call unverified that we look at monthly. That's when you can't find them. They say they're going to Passaic. If they go to Passaic, they don't show up in Passaic. It's hard to find them in Dominican Republic or wherever else they go. That becomes problematic for us.

Comm. Simmons: I think that number is still counted in our number when you can't verify it. How does that affect us?

Comm. Hodges: You don't know what that means. It doesn't tell you whether or not they passed or failed.

Comm. Simmons: Because they might not be here. Even though they are unverified, they still affect our rate.

Comm. Hodges: We still need to see the number of students who are held over in addition to that.

Ms. Shafer: You can also have those who are held over who can graduate in five years. They then adjust your graduation rate for anyone who graduated in the five-year cohort. We can get you that information.

Comm. Hodges: We still need to see the number of students that did not graduate for whatever reason so we can gauge what's going on.

Ms. Shafer: I think everyone knows that last year they changed something that really had a major impact on us and that is they counted adult school. Any districts that don't have adult school, therefore, they won't have a count. They count adult school and special needs students who stay until they are 21. I've had many conversations with the state about this. On one hand, the law says you can educate children until they're 21 if they're special needs, but then you're going to hold me accountable for them to graduate in four years. They haven't come up with how they are going to reconcile that. We've had numerous conversations and then the pandemic started and all the folks we have been talking to in Trenton are not all still there. I guess this was put on the backburner. We're not the only district with this issue or concern. You can't force parents to have them graduate. It becomes a whole issue around the income for the families and so on. Many of them would rather keep them in school because for some workshops and job opportunities may not be there depending on their classification.

Comm. Hodges: That's why it's even more important to have additional data that will identify those categories.

Comm. Capers: Do we know our incarceration rate?

Ms. Shafer: We can also add that. We have students who were incarcerated and were able to graduate. But of course, we have some that weren't. We can certainly add that.

Comm. Capers: But that's a trackable number as well.

Comm. Simmons: Any other question? Let's move on.

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

Ms. Shafer: I'm onto my report. You all have a copy of it. We did have our 18-month review with the state for local control and that was on October 7. The district scored perfect scores in 17 areas and substantially met all the remaining 11. We now have the last leg of this which is the six months where we will continue to upload information around those other 11 areas and have the final report and the recommendation of local control if we continue to stay on course in January. I just want to thank the Board for all of your support in getting us there through this transitional plan. Certainly, my team, the leadership team, really all staff, central office, instructional assistants, secretaries, facilities staff, our principals, vice principals, supervisors, highly skilled professionals, our secretaries, and all staff that worked with us to get us to this point. It's not a given. If you follow what's happening in Jersey City you'll see that it is not a given. There are certain benchmarks that as a district we need to make. You'll be hearing more about

this. The Commissioner had some positive things to say about the district and the Board. You heard that. He also complimented the district on their reentry plan. It was very thorough and followed all of the CDC and DOE guidelines. Stay tuned for more as we move through to January. At School No. 21, the third graders won a national math contest. Congratulations to Ms. Liguori, Principal Riviello, and all of the third grade students. They received a \$50 e-gift card either for an online retail business or restaurant of their choice. Hopefully, one day when we get back they'll be able to celebrate. School No. 15 received a Cigna Foundation Grant to benefit their nutritional needs for \$85,000. The Full Service Community School that partners with Saint Paul's will be developing a food pantry and be able to distribute food to families every week on a rotated basis. We're very happy to announce that tomorrow at 10:00 in front of Senator Frank Lautenberg School we will be announcing that the Paterson Education Fund received a \$2 million grant for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers. That grant is going to benefit students at Senator Frank Lautenberg School and School No. 15. It's for five years and the funding will be for academic support services, recreational activities, and counseling services for our students. I attended a couple of Google Classroom workshops with our Online Parent University. We had two events to honor Dr. Gerald Glisson. One was the dedication of naming the fieldhouse in his honor, and then there was the soccer game of Eastside vs. Kennedy. I also had an opportunity to speak with new board of education candidates and provide them some district information. The rest of this you can certainly read on your own. I will ask Luis Rojas to quickly brief you on what's happening in health benefits around the state, just in case you get any questions from any of the employees. Luis, if you can just give a brief summary of the new health benefits with Chapter 78.

Mr. Luis Rojas: Commissioners, good afternoon. We currently have open enrollment in the district going on. It's effective October 1 through the end of the month, the whole month of October. We're currently offering open enrollment like we have in the past. This is nothing new. The only difference this year is that as a result of the new legislation signed into law by Governor Murphy, employees now have to actively choose their health benefits plan. In the past, if I was happy with my current health benefits plan, I didn't have to do anything. No news is good news. If that happens this year, individuals that don't log into our portal and actively choose to keep their current plan, the district will have no choice but to enroll them in the New Jersey Educators Health Benefits Plan effective January 1, 2021. Even if an individual waives their health benefits from Paterson Public Schools currently, they still have to engage and actively choose to continue with their waiver. If those individuals don't actively choose to continue waiving their health benefits, we will again have to enroll that individual into the New Jersey Educators Plan. We've communicated with the district employees on several different avenues. We have done through email. Ms. Shafer has a weekly letter to all staff. We put a little caption at the bottom to inform staff and keep them aware. We also did an all-call about a week ago to all staff. I reached out to all the union presidents so that they can use whatever communication avenue they have with their members to also spread the word. We've also reached out to all our building principals so that at their local staff meetings they can also spread the word. We will continue to push forward and communicate all the way through the end of the month with the hope that we get everybody to engage in our open enrollment and actively choose to either keep their current health benefits plan, change their health benefits plan, or waive their health benefits plan. Like I said, we're going to continue to communicate with all staff and my hope is that at the need of the day we have 100% compliance and everyone is satisfied with their health benefits.

Comm. Hodges: Do we have an idea of what percentage of students have checked in online and are identified as regular attenders?

Ms. Shafer: Yes, we have attendance for September that we can get to you.

Comm. Simmons: Does anyone have any questions for Mr. Rojas?

Ms. Shafer: That completes my report.

Comm. Capers: Madam Superintendent, I spoke with you about this situation along with the Board leadership and all Board members concerning our annual Thanksgiving football game between Kennedy and Eastside. Our football season ends November 6 and then our annual game starts November 25. I talked to a couple of my colleagues about this to get a consensus. Can we move the game up? As you know, we see schools are shutting down and numbers are going up due to this pandemic. The virus is spreading. We are asking to move the game down. There are no playoffs this year so it won't hurt anything. It's just because of the virus. We don't want them to shut down and lose the game. While the kids are wearing masks and doing everything, that two-week break is going to be very detrimental due to the pandemic. I'm asking the Board and the Superintendent to consider moving the game down to the following week after the November 6 game, that Friday night or Saturday. We can do all those same things with the band and everything else how we always do it, but that two-week lag is going to be very detrimental to our kids due to the virus. I just wanted to open up the discussion and see how all Board members feel.

Ms. Shafer: There will not be a band. Even NJSIAA is recommending no band. There would not be a band either way.

Comm. Capers: Got it. I'm just saying community members and organizers come and do different things. I actually spoke to the head coaches. They were agreeing with it as well. I don't know if this is going to be a Board decision or a decision that's going to be left up to the Superintendent for consideration.

Ms. Shafer: I would recommend that the Board give us feedback on it. I also think that it's something that the community needs to be aware of. When we moved the Thanksgiving game from Thanksgiving to Wednesday it was very big because it was about 100 years that we've had that Thanksgiving game. Is this going to be one-time while we're in the pandemic? I still think that needs to be vetted out in the community so that people know.

Comm. Capers: How would we do this?

Comm. Simmons: We had conversation. I had to talk to a few folks, some of my classmates that I graduated with. So far, it wasn't received well. Because of the pandemic, it's one of the things that people are looking forward to.

Comm. Capers: But we're putting our students at risk.

Comm. Simmons: How so?

Comm. Capers: They're not playing? It's a physical game.

Comm. Simmons: Does that mean they can't practice?

Comm. Capers: You have a two-week lag. They're practicing, but it's a different type of style of play. And with the potential spread of the virus, that game could potentially be

cancelled. What I'm saying is that two-week lag would be very detrimental if we had to cancel it. What I'm saying is we have the opportunity to play it, but we play it while the numbers are still safe.

Comm. Redmon: I'm just trying to clarify what Comm. Capers is offering to the Board because I didn't hear.

Comm. Capers: Moving it to the second week, the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, or 14<sup>th</sup>. Just move it up so that it's not a two-week break.

Comm. Redmon: Will it affect the current schedule that's going on?

Comm. Capers: No. Everybody's season ends on November 6. The whole state is shutdown. We only have six games.

Comm. Hodges: The only concern I have for keeping it the way it was is that the closer it gets to flu season, the more chance there is to have possible infections. With any type of sporting event, the more people are at risk, the more they have a chance to spread the infections amongst themselves. The higher the counts, it becomes much more difficult to play in the winter months. Then it won't be as nasty. The State of Florida had to cancel everything.

Comm. Capers: Paterson had to change dates. I don't want to run the risk of losing dates just because of a potential shutdown or whatever. We just have to take that into consideration.

Comm. Simmons: We would just be cancelling it out of caution.

Comm. Capers: It's not canceling?

Comm. Simmons: No, I'm talking about the game that was actually rescheduled. That was out of caution. We could have played the game. We just chose not to play the game.

Comm. Capers: That could potentially happen again.

Comm. Simmons: But in just talking to folks from the community and folks who come into town just for that event, it becomes a huge deal. That's my concern.

Comm. Capers: The travel is different and there's a limit. It's not like everybody can come to game now anyway. The tickets are very limited and the community is very limited.

Comm. Simmons: It's still 500 people.

Comm. Capers: But everyone still can't come to the game.

Comm. Simmons: We have more. You're still going to limit it to 500. When we moved it to Wednesday night, we actually got more participation.

Comm. Capers: I agree with that. I'm just saying we may potentially lose a game or have to cancel a game if we had it later. I'm just bringing that up. I want to see them play during Thanksgiving week, but it's just crazy right now.

Ms. Shafer: The parents and folks in the community would get right into the survey online and fill out a couple of questions. That's all. I do think it's important because we switched once from Thanksgiving to Wednesday night and included the community. I know this is uncharted waters we're in right now, but at the same time you need to include them as well. I think it is a bigger deal to move it so far away from the holiday. I can tell you that last year was the first year we had it Wednesday night and we had a much larger group of folks at that game than ever before, probably in the past 20 years. We'll need to monitor that. It would be a maximum of 500. We have enough folks in the stands for social distance, wearing a mask, and we take everybody's temperature. We did the same thing for graduations. We would pretty much use the same format for that. Let us go back and look into the predictions. I'm also working with IDM who will be presenting to the Board in December what the COVID rate will look like in Paterson and Passaic County as we move through each month. I'm going to check with them to see what it looks like and bring that back to the Board.

Comm. Capers: It was the second year we changed.

Ms. Shafer: Yes. We get more and more each year.

## **REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT**

### **Naming of the School No. 13 Playground Basketball Court to Robert "Tootie" Harrell Court**

Comm. Simmons: Board members have in their folders a resolution to rename the basketball court at School No. 13 to the Robert "Tootie" Harrell Court. While just receiving the resolution, at the September 16, 2019 school naming committee meeting and then at the Board meeting following that a recommendation was made to rename the court and the Board actually approved that recommendation. Because we didn't have the resolution from the committee that was seeking to have the name changed, we held off and we were waiting for the resolution. We have the resolution. Technically, the Board has already approved this. We just held off on the resolution, if I'm not mistaken. Everyone looks confused.

Comm. Hodges: I have no recollection of this whatsoever.

Comm. Ramirez: I have to agree with Dr. Hodges. I don't recall that.

Comm. Simmons: It was done at the same time as the Alonzo Moody Academy. It was done at the same meeting.

Comm. Arrington: Mr. President, part of it too is funding.

Comm. Simmons: The committee is paying for the plaque, bust, and some painting of the court. They are actually funding and paying for that stuff. That was part of it too. We're trying to work with that group that was going to redo the basketball court as the foam rubber.

Comm. Ramirez: Would that be the committee that actually put money into that basketball court?

Comm. Simmons: It's not the same.

Comm. Ramirez: Were they consulted?



Comm. Simmons: Yes, they were. They just have to move forward with what we're doing. We're still waiting for that. This committee held off with the renaming of the court so that they could do what they were going to do.

Comm. Ramirez: I don't want to create any more issues among community groups. One group came forward and paid money into this. Now we're renaming it via sponsorship of a different group. I just don't want that animosity amongst groups and we're in the middle of it.

Comm. Simmons: Both groups have communicated. The understanding was that one group was responsible for the name and the other group was doing the renovation. Cheryl, we can do that now?

### **NAMING OF THE SCHOOL NO. 13 PLAYGROUND BASKETBALL COURT TO ROBERT "TOOTIE" HARRELL COURT**

WHEREAS, Paterson Public School District buildings or separate school facilities shall be named only by formal action of the Board of Education, and

WHEREAS, primary consideration should be given to individuals who have demonstrated contributions to education; contribution to society; contribution to Paterson; historical contribution; international contribution; multicultural contribution; and ethical character, and

WHEREAS, the School Naming Committee convened to consider the naming of the School No. 13 Playground Basketball Court, consistent with district policy on Naming of Schools and Facilities, and

WHEREAS, Robert "Tootie" Harrell, a native Patersonian, was an exemplary athlete and true competitor breaking track and football records and was a leading scorer in basketball at Eastside High School where he was a 3-letter man all four years in Eastside High school, and

WHEREAS, in 1952 he was awarded the Thom McAn Most Valuable Player of the year award for High School Football and in 1958 he was awarded the Old Timers AA of Greater Paterson Harry B. Gourley Memorial Local Athlete Award, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harrell along with several of his contemporaries, became a School 13 playground basketball legend, found many days on the School 13 basketball court beginning early in the morning and playing well into the late evening hours, and

WHEREAS, friends were besting each other on the court and seasoned players teaching the young and the young players showing off for the seasoned stars for forty years on the court at School No. 13 playground and later, "Tootie" continued playing basketball with several city league teams, at the YMCA and in and around Passaic County, and

WHEREAS, Robert "Tootie" Harrell was employed by the Paterson Board of Education in 1967 as a Truancy Officer and was famous for his speed and ability to chase kids and get them back into school, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Harrell married Constance in 1969 and started a family; retired in 1997 and remained athletically active; in 1997 was awarded the "Sports Hall of Fame" from the Old Timers Athletic Association of Greater Paterson in recognition of his character,

integrity and sportsmanship manifested in the sports world; and also received the Harry B. Gourley Memorial Local Athlete Award, and

WHEREAS, as an Eastside High School Hall of Famer, Robert "Tootie" Harrell will always be remembered for the lessons he taught on and off the court, his mark on his community and society as a good father, hard worker, and a man of honor and integrity, and

WHEREAS, Robert "Tootie" Harrell ended his career with over 50 years as an athlete and 34 years as a Paterson Board of Education truancy officer where he used his competitive spirit to inspire young boys and girls to be all they could be, and

WHEREAS, the School Naming Committee determined that the late Robert "Tootie" Harrell, based on this commitment to the children of the City of Paterson, deserves inclusion among the honorees for which facilities are named in Paterson, now

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Paterson Board of Education approves the naming of the School No. 13 Playground Basketball Court to the **ROBERT "TOOTIE" HARRELL COURT** as presented on October 14, 2020, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be effective immediately.

**It was moved by Comm. Arrington, seconded by Comm. Capers that the Board approves the naming of the School No. 13 playground basketball court to Robert "Tootie" Harrell Court.**

Comm. Capers: Mr. Toote was a pillar and meant a lot to this community. I grew up watching him, getting to know about him, got to meet him, and talk with him. He's a great guy. He has a great family. This is an honor to be part of this vote and a part of naming this basketball court. He worked as a truant officer. All of his accolades are in this policy. He was just a great guy and meant a lot to thousands of young people like myself. He had a great impact on young people like myself and many others. I'm honored that the Board is naming this. I'm glad we're moving forward with this. Thank you.

Comm. Redmon: I just have a suggestion. Since some Board members don't recall the original vote, can we please have that sent out to the Board members who don't remember the actual date that it was in so they'll know what it was and what we actually approved?

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

Comm. Simmons: The only other thing you'll see in your folder is just a reminder of how requests come through for staff. Any requests or questions have to go through the Superintendent's office. Please contact Cheryl. There are still some concerns about Board members contacting staff directly. We want to make sure that everything goes through the Superintendent's office and you will get your answers accordingly. We'll go into public comments because I know people have been waiting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

Comm. Simmons: I would just remind everyone that the speaking time limit is two minutes after which we will mute your microphone so please govern yourselves accordingly. Speakers must have registered in advance.

Ms. Rosie Grant: Good evening, members of the Board, Madam Superintendent, staff, and members of the community. I'm speaking as the Executive Director of the Paterson Education Fund. I wanted to say good job to the Superintendent on the report that was presented to the Department of Education, but more importantly on the work that was done to produce the report. This includes work by the Board, staff, supporting community organizations, and members. It was good to hear the report and to hear other people reflect positively on the report. Paterson Education Fund is excited to partner with Paterson Public Schools, the Paterson Alliance, New Destiny Family Success Center, and Saint Paul's CDC for the new 21<sup>st</sup> Century after school program at Senator Frank Lautenberg School and School No. 15. We'll be launching the program virtually as soon as staff is in place and hope to present the program to you at a future meeting. Whenever the buildings are reopened, we will convert from virtual after-school to in-person after-school. I wanted to mention that as a member of the New Jersey Amistad Commission, I was disappointed to hear that Paterson is not on the list of cities that are fully implementing the Amistad Law. There's a full curriculum that integrates African-American History into the social studies curriculum for all public, private, and parochial schools in New Jersey and it is the law. Comm. Capers, I know that you had formed a local team. I would like to help you reactivate that team and see if we can push this work forward so that we can be leaders in this implementation of the law. The New Jersey Amistad Curriculum is found on [njamistadcurriculum.net](http://njamistadcurriculum.net). Thank you for this opportunity again. If my two minutes are not yet up, we also have the School Board election forum and the School Board Candidates Guide on our website at [paterson-education.org](http://paterson-education.org). Thank you.

Comm. Simmons: Thank you.

Mr. Zaydel: None of the other speakers who preregistered are currently on the call so there are no more public speakers.

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

Comm. Simmons: Resolution No. 6 will actually be the vote on the resolution presented by the administration to extend remote learning. Let's do Resolution No. 1 through Resolution No. 5 and then we'll do Resolution No. 6 separately.

### **Resolution No. 1**

Whereas, the Paterson Public School District approves the payment of bills and claims dated October 14, 2020, beginning with check number 224076 and ending with check number 224357, direct deposit dated September 9, 2020, beginning with 728 and ending with 752, and wire in the sum of \$5,000,000.00, for a total amount of \$25,353,597.37;

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

## **Resolution No. 2**

WHEREAS, the Strategic Plan for Paterson Public Schools, Paterson – A Promising Tomorrow, (Goal 1: Objectives 1- 5) reflects the District's commitment to preparing all students for college and their future career via the implementation of a wide array of high impact interventions to accelerate student achievement. Additionally, (Goal 3: Objectives 2-3) reflects increased partnerships with faith-based organizations and other student resources and (Goal 4 Social-Emotional Learning: objectives 1-3) the District aims to create a culture which is inviting and responsive to the needs of our students, parents, and community, as all stakeholders are needed to help support our mission and to play an active role in its achievements; and

WHEREAS, under Title IV, Part B of The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the Nita M. Lowry 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) are defined as centers that offer academic remediation and enrichment activities in tandem with a broad array of other enrichment activities in the areas of arts and culture, youth development, and physical activity to students and their adult family members when school is not in session. The purpose of the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program is to supplement the education of students in grades 3-12. The program aims to assist students in attaining the skills necessary to meet New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards and Student Learning Standards Therefore, all 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC programs must provide participating students with academic enrichment opportunities that complement the regular school day; and

WHEREAS, Paterson Public Schools applied for and was awarded the competitive 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant for New Roberto Clemente Middle School/School 24 and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr School to service approximately 255 students by extending the school day until 6pm beginning October 2020 and providing approximately 4 weeks of additional instruction and programming in the summer. Programming may be provided in-person according to District and State guidelines and through virtual activities as needed; and

WHEREAS, the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Program will be referred to as FOCUS 21 at each of the selected sites `Fostering Our Children's Unique Strengths); and

WHEREAS, awards will be issued on an annual basis with the NJDOE reviewing program performance through on-site and desk monitoring, reports, local and state-level evaluations, adequate and efficient use of federal funds, and a continuation application to determine continued program funding. Based on the availability of federal resources, this five-year grant program began on September 1, 2017 and will end August 31, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Year 4 award will be September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2021. The project periods for the subsequent award years are: Year 5: September 1, 2021 – August 31, 2022; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Paterson Public Schools Board of Education approves the acceptance of the Grant award in the amount of \$535,000.00 to be facilitated by the Department of Full Service Community Schools on behalf of Paterson Public Schools, as the Local Education Authority, to provide comprehensive academic, social, and health services for students, students' family members, and community members for the Nita M. Lowry 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Program (FOCUS 21) for the funding period of September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2021, and authorize a contribution of matching of \$27,300 from local District funds and in-kind services as required and available.

### **Resolution No. 3**

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public School District recognizes the need for obtaining the most competitive and responsive proposal for goods and/or services; and

WHEREAS, on the Authorization of the Business Administrator the competitive contracting process NJSA 18A:18A-4.5, using the request for proposal (RFP) document was solicited for E-Rate Services, RFP-416-21 for the 2020-2021, 2021-2022 & 2022-2023 school year(s). Seven (7) potential vendors were mailed/e-mailed RFP specifications, the list of which can be reviewed in the Purchasing Department, out of which four (4) vendor(s) responded and proposals are on file in the Purchasing Department; and

WHEREAS, this solicitation was made by advertised public notice appearing in The Record and The Herald News on July 2, 2020. Sealed proposals were opened and read aloud on July 21, 2020 at 11:00 am in the Conference Room, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, 90 Delaware Avenue, Paterson, NJ 07503 by the Purchasing Department; and

WHEREAS, the awarding of this contract is in line with the 5 Year Strategic Plan 2019-2024, Goal Area #3: Communications and Connections; and

WHEREAS, based on the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee Members, it is recommended that this contract be awarded for E-Rate Services, RFP-416-21, to Solix Inc., based on 18A:18A-4.5; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the District Superintendent supports the above mentioned recommendation that Solix, Inc. be awarded a contract in the amount of not to exceed:

Not to exceed \$30,000.00

### **Resolution No. 4**

WHEREAS, the Paterson Board of Education Policy Manual receives periodic revisions and additions, and

WHEREAS, the Policy Committee has reviewed policies and regulations for submission to the Board for first reading, and

WHEREAS, a public comment session will be held at the October 21, 2020, board meeting on said policies and regulations, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the following policies and regulations for first reading:

0155.1	Board Member Participation at Board Meetings Using Electronic Device
P1648	Restart and Recovery Plan (M)
P1648.02	Remote Learning Options for Families (M)
P1648.03	Restart and Recovery Plan – Full-Time Remote Instruction (M)
P1649	Federal Families First Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Act (M)
P2200.3	Student Applications for Postsecondary Financial Aid
P2270	Religion in Schools
P2360.01	Distance Learning
P2431.3	Heat Participation Policy for Student-Athlete Safety (M)

P2464	Gifted and Talented Students
P2468	Independent Educational Evaluations
P2622	Student Assessment (M)
P&R5111	Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students (M)
P&R5200	Attendance (M)
P5320	Immunization
P&R5330.04	Administering an Opioid Antidote (M)
P5610	Suspension (M)
R5610	Suspension Procedures (M)
P5620	Expulsion (M)
P&R8320	Personnel Records

FINALLY RESOLVED, that in the event any policy, part of a policy or section of the bylaws is judged to be inconsistent with law or inoperative by a court of competent jurisdiction or is invalidated by a policy or contract duly adopted by the State District Superintendent or Board of Education, the remaining bylaws, policies, and parts of policies shall remain in full effect.

### **Resolution No. 5**

The Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) was approved to assist public schools, charter schools, and renaissance school projects with defraying costs associated with reopening schools for 2020-2021 school year in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHEREAS, in compliance with Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) – 2020/2021 SY, PPS district has met all the requirements contained in the grant for activities allowable under this grant. PPS district will comply with all reporting requirements of the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) at such time and in such manner and containing such information as the NJDOE may subsequently require. PPS district will secure access to home-based connectivity and remote-use devices, related issues in supporting remote learning for all students, including disadvantaged populations; and

WHEREAS, in compliance with Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), PPS will utilize the grant to provide the necessary equipment to ensure that all students and staff are protected; and

WHEREAS, in compliance with Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), PPS certifies the assurances have been read, understood and will comply with all the assurances; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Paterson Board of Education approves the *acceptance* and *submission* of Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) Grant Allocation through the EWEG system accessed through NJDOE Homeroom page, in the amount of \$3,047,847.00.

**It was moved by Comm. Redmon, seconded by Comm. Capers that Resolution Nos. 1 through 5 be adopted.**

Comm. Capers: Can someone explain what Resolution No. 3 is?

Comm. Simmons: E-Rate is a federal program where we make investments into technology and we get a portion of our investment back. It's for schools and libraries.

Comm. Capers: We have to use the company for that?

Comm. Simmons: Yes. The company helps you navigate through every process. If there are issues, they deal with those issues and they help you navigate through the process.

Comm. Capers: Did we use this company in the past?

Comm. Simmons: We've used an E-Rate company in the past. Not this particular company. We've always had an E-Rate consultant.

Comm. Capers: The next one was on Resolution No. 5. We have to show what we paid out or what we received? We show how we spent it? Okay.

Comm. Hodges: How did we come about with that company in Resolution #3?

Comm. Simmons: Through a bid process.

Comm. Capers: How much did we get back for the E-Rate in years past?

Comm. Simmons: We would have to get that information for you. I can't remember the percentage off the top of my head, but you do have to make the investment.

Ms. Peron: I know that it has been in the millions.

Comm. Capers: So it's way more than what we put out?

Ms. Peron: Yes.

Comm. Simmons: I want to say 15%.

Comm. Hodges: What particular qualities does this company offer?

Comm. Simmons: They actually administered that program for the FCC.

Comm. Hodges: This \$30,000 is for three years?

Comm. Simmons: Yes. You want an E-Rate consultant because you don't want to miss deadlines. If you miss windows, you have problems. You can't get that money. Most districts have one.

Comm. Hodges: Who did we have last year?

Comm. Simmons: I believe the company was E-Rate Consulting.

**On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Hodges who abstained. The motion carried.**

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

Comm. Arrington

- Self
- Family

Comm. Capers

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

Comm. Castillo-Cruz

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

Comm. Hodges

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. 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. Simmons: Resolution No. 6 is to extend the remote learning to January 19. An assessment will be made by December 15 to determine if we will open on January 19 or if the remote learning will extend beyond January 19. Everyone has the resolution. I will entertain a motion to approve the resolution to keep schools closed and on remote learning until January 19 pursuant to a second assessment on December 15.

### **Resolution No. 6**

WHEREAS, on August 12, 2020, the Paterson Board of Education ("Board") adopted a resolution authorizing all-remote learning until November 1<sup>st</sup> and directing a reassessment of local pandemic conditions by October 15<sup>th</sup> to determine when schools can safely reopen under a hybrid model;



WHEREAS, the latest data from the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH) show there have been 16 confirmed outbreaks of COVID-19 associated with in-school transmission since August, resulting in 58 new cases among students and teachers;

WHEREAS, the number of new cases linked to in-school transmission in Passaic County is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in the state and, as a consequence, several schools in Passaic County have suspended hybrid in-person instruction, including Haledon, Pompton Lakes High School, Passaic Valley High School, Passaic County Technical Institute and Wayne;

WHEREAS, the number of new COVID-19 cases is expected to grow significantly in the coming holiday season due to an anticipated increase in social contact among friends and families during Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's celebrations;

WHEREAS, that the Board authorizes the Superintendent to keep all-remote instruction in place until January 19, 2021, subject to another reassessment of local conditions by December 15, and

WHEREAS, upon the re-opening of in-person instruction, the district will implement the hybrid model as per the Restart Plan;

WHEREAS, the Paterson Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent to modify personnel and identify staff as essential and/or mandate in district work as she deems appropriate to successfully run school operations; and

WHEREAS, Principals, vice principals, supervisors, secretaries, registrars, security guards and chief custodians will continue to work in the schools; and

WHEREAS, Child Study Team Members and related service providers will continue to conduct evaluations in school buildings for eligible students;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if in-person instruction needs to be extended beyond January 19, 2021, that the Superintendent is authorized to keep schools closed, with notice to the Board, to prevent community spread of COVID-19.

**It was moved by Comm. Ramirez, seconded by Comm. Capers that Resolution No. 6 be adopted.**

Comm. Hodges: Could you more clearly describe this for the people who were not here when we had this discussion?

Comm. Simmons: Sure. We are going to continue remote learning until January 19 because of the current situation. Numbers are going up and things are happening around us with schools closing based on infection rates and based on the data from not just the state but the county. There are some schools that have opened to do hybrid learning and in-person learning and those schools have shut down. We are bringing in to the city close to 40,000 additional people if we decide to open and that includes students moving around and staff coming into the city that do not live in the city. Based on that, the administration has recommended that we keep schools closed until that date, but we will do an assessment on December 15. If the data is favorable, we will move forward with opening on January 19. If it is not, then the administration will let us know. We will obtain data based on trends at the time and make a decision based on the science.

Comm. Hodges: Thank you, Mr. President.

Comm. Simmons: Absolutely, sir. You keep me on my toes, Dr. Hodges. I appreciate you.

Comm. Hodges: That's why I'm here.

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

**Paterson Board of Education  
Standing Abstentions**

Comm. Arrington

- Self
- Family

Comm. Capers

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

Comm. Castillo-Cruz

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

Comm. Hodges

- Self
- City of Paterson

Comm. 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

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **Items Requiring a Vote**

Comm. Simmons: We'll do committee reports and have discussion on the items that have been presented for vote at the next meeting. Does that make sense?

Comm. Hodges: We might have a workshop.

Comm. Simmons: I'm tying that information, tying committee reports to the items that are being presented for a vote. The questions might be answered in the committee report. If they're not, you're still free to ask questions.

Comm. Hodges: The whole point of having a workshop separately was to have open and thorough discussion.

Comm. Simmons: That's not going to change. If we have the discussion and then we do the committee report, the answer could be in the committee report.

Comm. Hodges: Then we do the committee reports first.

Comm. Simmons: That's what we're doing. We'll have the committee reports and then you can ask your questions around the items that the committee is presenting.

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

Comm. Arrington: I&P met on October 7. Present was Comm. Castillo-Cruz, Comm. Arrington, and Comm. Ramirez. We talked about the high school restructuring plan. We're presenting Items I&P-1 through I&P-14. I don't know if you want me to go over each one, Mr. President. The minutes are on the Google Drive.

Comm. Simmons: I will accept questions on any of those items?

Comm. Arrington: Any questions on any of those?

Comm. Simmons: No questions on any of the Instruction and Program items?

Comm. Capers: I remember my colleague to my right brought up something about Item I&P-10. We were going to start looking into hiring our own speech therapists. Are we still looking at that so we won't have to pay out so much money?

Comm. Simmons: I know that we used to. Ms. Peron can correct me if I'm wrong. That's a position that has been traditionally hard to fill.

Ms. Peron: That's exactly right, Comm. Simmons. We do hire our own speech therapists, but it's a hard to fill position. In lieu of all the services needed, sometimes we hired someone to provide those services. We have a lot of services to provide students who technically have it in their IEP.

Comm. Capers: Especially through this time, how are all services being covered? Are they being covered?

Ms. Peron: I would have to defer that question to Ms. Coy. Chief Coy, are you on? I'm not sure if she's on. We will get you that answer.

Comm. Hodges: My concern was almost the same as Comm. Capers. My actual concern was establishing our own group.

Comm. Simmons: Establishing our own and offering our service to other districts.

Comm. Hodges: That's exactly right, so that we will always have people here.

Comm. Simmons: It becomes an alternative service.

Comm. Hodges: That's right.

Comm. Simmons: I think the issue is finding those.

Comm. Hodges: The issue is making a commitment to do that.

Comm. Simmons: It is a hard position to fill.

Comm. Hodges: If you make the commitment, then you can go ahead and figure out how to do it. If you did that, you could guarantee your students those services. Given the difficulties we have, if we plan ahead it would be wise to move down the road and set that up.

Comm. Simmons: In committee we need to have a conversation around aggressively pursuing the speech therapists and pathologists. Any other questions on I&P-1 through I&P-14 before we move on to Operations?

### ***Operations***

Comm. Ramirez: Operations met yesterday at 5 p.m. Present was Comm. Capers, Comm. Arrington, and myself as well as district staff. The items that were presented are Items O-15 through O-23. O-15, O-16, and O-17 are all professional development for conference or workshop attendance for district staff. O-15 is for K-5 math teachers. O-19 through O-23 are all standard transportation items. Does anyone have any questions in regards to any of these items? The meeting minutes have already been uploaded to our Google Drive.

Comm. Simmons: I have a question on professional development. I'm not sure if you can answer it. I'm just wondering why it's in Operations and not I&P.

Ms. Peron: I can answer that. As per New Jersey QSAC, professional development is under Operations and not Instruction & Program.

Comm. Ramirez: I explained that.

Comm. Simmons: When I see Ms. Tsimpedes, I'm thinking Instruction & Program.

Comm. Ramirez: That concludes my report, Mr. President.

### ***Fiscal Management***

Comm. Simmons: The Fiscal committee met yesterday. The minutes are not available yet. As soon as they are available, I will send them out and we will have that

discussion. I will present them. We have Items F-24 through F-32. We can entertain questions on any of those items before we move on to Personnel.

### ***Personnel***

Comm. Redmon: Personnel met yesterday. Presiding was myself. Members present were Comm. Capers and Comm. Martinez. Absent was Comm. Ramirez. The committee talked about the attempt to fill vacancies. We also talked about hosting the virtual job fair with certain universities from Rutgers, Massachusetts College, and state universities of New York in different campuses to increase our annual recruitment for the district. We also talked about hiring a special process through Indeed and Zip Recruiter because the district has been using their free services. I think you have a certain amount of time and then you have to subscribe to their services. We talked about that. We also talked about the true vacancy number. It was 42 last month. It's now down to 30 vacant positions. 23 staff members have announced retirements and resignations. We talked about our Insight substitute services, which is now at \$42,118. Personnel concluded its meeting at 4:30. We are submitting Items P-34 through P-37. Are there any questions?

Comm. Ramirez: It's more of a request than a question. I did not get the weekly reminder that we get for other committees. I have not been getting this.

Comm. Redmon: The invite has been sent by Mr. Rojas. I'll let him know that you have not been getting the actual invite. We'll make sure that you get the invite and the reminder also.

Comm. Ramirez: Thank you.

Comm. Redmon: The minutes have also been uploaded to the Google Drive. Are there any questions or comments?

### ***Governance***

Comm. Martinez: The Governance committee has not met thus far in the month of October. We will be meeting before next week's regular meeting and presenting the findings of that meeting then.

Comm. Simmons: Regarding the one item that you see, although we've seen this attorney before, he now has his own law firm. That's why you see that. He's no longer with the firm that he was with while he was doing a lot of the work for us.

Comm. Capers: All of his work transferred over?

Comm. Simmons: He just won't be doing it with that firm.

Comm. Capers: The contract is with the firm, not him.

Comm. Simmons: It's not a contract. Remember that if they don't do work, they don't get paid. It's on the list. They're in a pool of attorneys. That's it.

Comm. Capers: The work he did have is not completed yet, is it?

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: If there is outstanding work that would be in our best interest to transfer with him, obviously we are the clients. We can direct the firm to relinquish

those files to go with him to his firm, or we have the option to stay. In evaluating the decision to bring this before you, I did find out that he essentially would be the person handling the files out of that firm.

Comm. Simmons: I don't have an issue at all with his level work and his level of expertise. He has always worked and provided services that were in the best interest of the district.

## **Committee Reports**

### ***Technology***

Comm. Arrington: Technology met October 7. We discussed the one-to-one devices. As many of us know, we did hand out some refurbished devices to ensure that every child had a device. As new devices come in, those students will be contacted by the school principal and the devices will be swapped out. We talked about our bandwidth upgrade. If we do come back in 2021, we anticipate an increased demand on our bandwidth. We are doing a bandwidth upgrade and that will eliminate any problems there. One thing we're doing with our Paterson website is moving to a new concept. We're not going to host the Paterson website here. We're going to have a vendor host that for us. Lastly, we're going to be converting over to something called an IP phone system. It's a cost-saving measure. Does anyone have any questions?

Comm. Capers: Do we have a time of when the new Chromebooks will be in?

Ms. Peron: The new Chromebooks are in. They are currently at the warehouse being configured by our team. We have about 16 pallets. They are being configured with time because in haste the first time we configured them and we have to send Altice certain information for them to provide the internet access. There was a lag time in that. We want to make sure that we do everything correct and have time. We are going to be sending out the Chromebooks now to the schools. We're not going to finish all of them and then start doing it. We'll do it on a rolling basis so that schools can start receiving the Chromebooks and they can do their distribution. They can do the exchange for the converted laptop.

Comm. Capers: What's the timeline for that?

Ms. Peron: Like I said, right now we are working on delivering webcams to schools. We've ordered a webcam for every classroom. If we were going to go back in November, we had that ordered late summer and we are now delivering that. We are configuring and going to be starting the delivery of Chromebooks probably next week. I don't have a list of schools yet. Chris, Yacine, and I have to sit together and see how many Chromebooks are configured and done and then what the schools need. There are some schools that need 50 to 75 and then there are some schools that need 150 or 200.

Comm. Capers: Are some schools using textbooks as well? They're doing both to give the kids a break off the screen time?

Ms. Peron: We had a teacher go in September 1 to hand out resources to students and resources that they needed for teaching. That may have been a prerogative of the school, the class, and the content area. I know that happens. There are handwriting books too that were ordered.

Comm. Capers: Getting back to the distribution, the school will come up with plans on how they get it to parents?

Ms. Peron: Yes. Initially, when they first did the distribution, every family that received a converted laptop was told that they were going to get an exchange for the converted laptop. In a perfect world, if we would have been back in November, it would have been a great thing to do in person. Students go into the building, they make the exchange, and schools keep their converted laptop. But since that's not going to happen, families will be called and will be given a time to come and pick up a laptop.

Comm. Capers: So that we won't have the type of pictures that came up last time, my suggestion is that we have lower lines of people. Say if there were 300 kids that got refurbished ones, we're calling 100 back at one time. We keep the social distancing and stuff like that. I understand that school was starting and we wanted to get it out. I understand that. But at the other time, we are in the midst of a pandemic. If we have shorter lines of parents doing the exchange that would be great too. I'm glad we are all on track. Not a lot of glitches. That worked out. The kids are moving forward.

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

Comm. Simmons: Family and Community Engagement committee was rescheduled yesterday.

### ***Policy***

Comm. Capers: Policy met on October 6, 2020 at 5 p.m. Presiding was myself. Members present were Comm. Arrington, Comm. Hodges, and Comm. Simmons. Staff present were legal, Boris, and Ms. Williams. As a guest, we had Paul ??? from United Way. We went over and discussed a lot of policies. I'm not going to name them all. You have that list in front of you. Just go from letters A to I. Does anyone have any questions on the different policies? We changed and added some things there.

Comm. Redmon: A through I are just state-mandated updates?

Comm. Capers: Correct. No. 2 talked about the restart and recovery plan policy guides. No. 3 was a policy update recommendation by myself. You guys have it in front of you. It's called the Student Application for Post-Secondary Financial Aid. Did everybody read it? We're going to go over this policy just to give you a brief synopsis of it. First, Boris worked with me all this month. We went through different things related to graduation requirements. Committee had a great discussion over this. We took the requirement out and made this policy around the education about filling out financial aid and also the NJFAA. That's the New Jersey alternative route for undocumented students so that they can receive money for state colleges as well. Basically, this policy is provided to the district to provide education for high schoolers. It's to set up family workshops, evening workshops, and school assemblies around FAFSA. The numbers don't lie. It's public record. In 2019, the district was at 40%. In years past, we've been around mid-30%, and 40% had been our highest. This policy is for providing more education and will push our students to fill it out and make sure they have options for post-secondary education. Money will get awarded to them for college and all those different opportunities. Are there any questions?

Comm. Hodges: In the past we've had discussions about having the same week we spend with reinforcing the anti-bullying be a week we would spend encouraging students with college. We have not moved forward with that. One of the reasons our

levels are so low is because not all our kids identify themselves as being college material. It would be helpful if we structured programs that same week to talk about encouraging the students to go to college. We need teachers to start having those discussion from third grade on up. Part of this policy was for training about what funds are available. If people think they can't reach it, they're not going to be interested in trying to go to college. During the anti-bullying week we need to make an effort to turn the focus and make it a college week as well. I encourage the administration to do that. It's long overdue. Along with that, we need to talk about exposing the students to possible careers, making them aware of what accountants and engineers are. If you don't see these people, you don't know they're out there and you have no way of appreciating your ability to do work in those areas. That includes business. We have to be more aggressive in that area and it would be helpful to structure some mechanism through curriculum to make this more evident as a school district.

Comm. Capers: College week is very important to our kids and district. Also, the last point of this policy says implementation of this policy shall begin in the 2021-2022 school year. It gives the administration and the district time to plan for this. Our numbers and percentages are going up. I want to add that Senator Nellie Pou weighed in on this policy as well. She educated me on the NJFAA because she was a part of the Senators of New Jersey to draft it for undocumented students. She said that districts need to address this and mandate and encourage students to fill out the NJFAA. We don't know what types of opportunities that leads up to. When I hear 40% of kids filling out FAFSA and going to post-secondary school, what happens to the other 60%? That's worrisome. Are there any questions?

Comm. Redmon: A lot of it is not just our students. We have to make sure that our parents are filling them out because the information needed to process it is for the parents. If some parents don't meet the deadline sometimes, it will reflect in the percentages that you see and why it's so low. You have to stress to parents that their information is needed in order for us to help students get the financial aid and packages. I wouldn't say it's just students. It's a lot of parents too because it is the parents' information that we need.

Comm. Capers: I definitely agree. In the second paragraph in this policy, it says the Superintendent is directed to develop and implement at least two FAFSA and NJFAA evenings and workshops. We are targeting families and students to make sure that we educate everybody. By the time our students hit high school and the twelfth grade, the students and their families are educated around the areas. Yes, we did take that into consideration. We had a long discussion about that.

Comm. Hodges: It is about time that we really push and strengthen the expectation that our students will excel. I've openly stated that in a number of areas. Some of the parents struggle with that because of what they expect their students to be able to accomplish. When you imagine yourself there, you're willing to work. Unless you create an environment where those conversations are ongoing with those students, then they're not inclined to think they can accomplish it. That's a huge part of our job as we try to encourage those conversations. It's about time those things happened.

Comm. Capers: Certainly.

Comm. Arrington: Do we have college fairs?

Ms. Peron: Yes. We have several college fairs. Before the pandemic, we would take students to campuses onsite and they come to the district and have a huge college fair.



We also have college and career week in May as part of the curriculum. We started that way back when Dr. Hodges began talking about starting earlier in the elementary school building the awareness around different universities and just modeling for the students that their teacher or administrator went to this or that college. We do have a college and career week in May. Last year, we partnered with United Way. They received a grant to work with our local school district on FAFSA and trying to improve our numbers and work with the DOE. We had a committee that actually met and we were able to increase the numbers of FAFSA submissions. However, the pandemic hit as well. This year, they were again awarded the grant and they are going to work with the district. We have to be creative on how we're going to do that. We had FAFSA nights and FAFSA fairs. Guidance counselors followed students around. It's like Comm. Redmon said, it is incumbent upon the parents to supply the information such as tax returns and things like that. It is a family affair and parents have to be aware of what goes into filling out the FAFSA form. We have been working. Last year, along with Ms. McCoy, we met with the principals. We had a monthly meeting on increasing the FAFSA numbers. We will continue that. I most definitely think that it's something that we have to keep instilling in our youngsters, that it is possible and that there are opportunities out there for families. That's why we've increased AP and honors and things like that so that the financial burden is lessened. When students realize that they take AP courses and they pass with 3.0, that's three credits off your transcript in college because they're accepted.

Comm. Arrington: Like Dr. Hodges said, I think the kids need to understand the why. To your point, Dr. Hodges, there are career days. I do participate in that.

Comm. Capers: That's what we're talking about.

Ms. Peron: And the elementary schools do it as well.

Ms. Shafer: That was set for last year and then the pandemic hit. We heard Dr. Hodges earlier last year about this. We had a week scheduled and then it hit, but we can still move forward this year. If we have to do remote, then that's what we'll do. I also want to say that at the November I&P meeting, Ms. McCoy will be presenting all of the FAFSA data and what we've done up to this point. That will be at the Instruction and Program meeting.

Ms. Peron: She definitely has already started FAFSA prep sessions. There are college fairs that our students are virtually attending right now. We're planning on districtwide events.

Comm. Capers: I think we do a very good job with college fairs. But you have the college fair and then there's the FAFSA stuff. You have the college fair and you're seeing all of the big schools. I actually helped sponsor a college fair at Eastside High School. The most important part is how a lot of our kids are eligible to receive money. Like Comm. Arrington said, they don't understand the why. They look at the college, get all the data, but don't go to the FAFSA table. This policy talks about education around that, how to get the process started and educating the parents on all those different things. This is just the putting of more legs behind it and getting down to it. Did anyone have any more questions on that or any more concerns? The majority of the committee wanted to bring this discussion forward over the naming of the school. The only thing we wanted to strike out of this and we wanted to have a Board discussion around is should the Board consider renaming schools after deceased people only. Should we name after people who are living as well? We had a great discussion around this. We decided to bring it to the full Board for discussion. Personally, I believe in giving flowers

to people while they're still here, while they do deserve that honor. There are a lot of local people here that are from Paterson that are deserving to get their names at the libraries, playgrounds, schools, halls, whatever it may be. I think we're cutting off the opportunity to only limit to deceased people. People that are living, we get more resources. When somebody has their name attached to it, they get more resources and get more access. We just want to bring that discussion to the full Board. Does anybody want to chime in and weigh on it?

Comm. Redmon: My biggest concern with that is that it may become costly to the district because you can have people coming in with too many names. We would have to do signage, letterheads, and everything like. It's a cost-effective thing to the district. Also, we could open up the floodgates to where anybody can come and submit names. The reason why we left it at the deceased is because it gave us the opportunity to vet those in the community that were involved in education or something with Paterson Public Schools. That's my only concern. I don't want it to be where we're just naming schools after any and everybody. That's the big issue.

Comm. Hodges: The same requirements would be in existence. They have not changed. The Board can sit in judgement over those things and they can choose to name nobody. This opens the door to bring in more money and that would be extraordinarily helpful, rather than waiting for them to pass away. I hate to say it that way. It's an opportunity to make more money this way.

Comm. Redmon: You're seeing it as more of a sponsorship? I was about to say that if this is what we are doing, then we need to put that in the language.

Comm. Ramirez: I know what you're saying. But along the lines of what she's saying, it's already in policy that no corporate donor shall purchase naming rights. That's kind of in the same breath. If we seek Bill Gates to name our school just because it adds money and that means he's going to have a vested interest to upkeep the facility, we might as well sell to Verizon or to PSE&G.

Comm. Hodges: I hear you, but that's not what I'm talking about. What I'm saying is Dr. Lautenberg has been very helpful over the years. It would have been nice to name the school while he was alive because of what he has done. We've done nothing for them. We thank them each time for their scholarships, but it would be nice to hand him that kind of an honor. If the Board has the final say, you don't have to move forward with it. There's no loss of money. It's the recognition for a portfolio of support that those individuals give. That's the way you need to look at it. You're not just taking money. It's why they benefit the district. That's when you may decide and the Board makes the decision, not the people.

Comm. Capers: I shared this with the committee. When I went to William Paterson I was a business major at the time. The person they got to build one of their buildings was telling his story and he was saying that he was from Paterson, New Jersey and it struck me. When I went to talk to him afterwards, he said he went to School No. 26 and he graduated from Eastside High School and he was the owner of E-Trader. He paid for buildings at William Paterson. Paterson Catholic is now coming to us. We want to name the football field. We have a great coach. I'm not going to mention his name, but he has won multiple championships there. That's a great honor. We have to wait until somebody is deceased? Or if a person went to the NBA or the NFL, do we have to wait until they are deceased? We're just cutting ourselves short of resources we may get and our students can benefit from. Just like we named Al Moody after the alternative

school, those kids at that school get to see and touch him. There are other resources that he brings to the school. It's just astronomical.

Comm. Redmon: I'm just trying to clarify. What you're saying is they would only be invested if the school is named for them? They still continue to do resources. I'm only going by the way you're explaining it. If we name a building after them, they would be more invested. A lot of these people that come into the district were invested in Paterson Public Schools. They can do it no matter what because they are invested in our children. At this point, I don't want this to be a free-for-fall.

Comm. Capers: Like Dr. Hodges said, it won't be a free-for-all because the Board has to vote. It only becomes a free-for-all if the Board lets it become that. If the majority of the Board says this year we're not naming any other schools or for the next three years we are not naming more schools, we're not doing it. That's in the policy.

Comm. Simmons: No, because you only serve a three-year term. You can't say what a future Board would do.

Comm. Hodges: Here's the thing, though. All you're doing is taking an individual...

Comm. Simmons: But it doesn't stop it from becoming a free-for-all.

Comm. Hodges: What stops it is the Board making a decision.

Comm. Simmons: Right, but that means the Board takes on the burden. If there are 100 athletes, the Board now has to shoulder that burden and go through that process. It doesn't stop the Board from going through that process.

Comm. Martinez: Mr. President, if I can jump in for a moment please. We saw this last round with the number of folks that were calling in advocating for making their case. I'm not saying the cases that were being made weren't valid cases. They indeed were. But let's also keep in mind that there was a policy recently put in place that was designed to avoid this. If the notion is to go back and start changing that policy to amend it, the policy was put in place specifically to avoid these types of situations. Now to go back and start amending it creates an unnecessary burden that Board members would then have to carry. The policy is in place. It's working. Let's stay with it. We would have folks making cases left and right for people. Some of them are justified and understandably so, but it's unnecessary. There's only but so many schools in this district.

Comm. Hodges: Hence, there won't be that much of a problem.

Comm. Martinez: Tell that to the people who will advocate for their choice when they call up and then don't get what they want. We're opening up a Pandora's Box here.

Comm. Simmons: I'll just share what my concern was in the meeting. Along the same lines as Comm. Redmon, if there are people who are going to do things for the district, they will be doing them. To name a building after a person just so that they can give us money or resources, they would be doing that already. When we compare it to college, like you said, they pay to have those buildings built. They pay to put their names of those buildings because they pay to have the building. I don't foresee that happening here.

Comm. Hodges: All you're really saying here is if an individual steps up over a course of time and provides a career of outstanding service, you don't have to wait until they're dead. It's not just them giving money. It can be any type of outstanding service. This is an opportunity.

Comm. Simmons: Which brings me to the second point I made in the meeting. If people are deceased, we have an opportunity to vet them and thoroughly check out their background. We never know what's going to happen. If you look at Penn State with Joe Paterno, if you look at what happened when they took off Bill Cosby's name, those things happen on a regular basis. You could possibly end up in a situation where you have to remove the person's name because you never know what's going to happen throughout their personal lives.

Comm. Capers: Just like all the statues that are coming down now.

Comm. Simmons: You're proving our point.

Comm. Capers: But you can make the argument that the statue should not be removed.

Comm. Simmons: It's an issue to have to deal with it.

Comm. Capers: Say we wanted to honor President Barack Obama. Do we have to wait until he's deceased to name it?

Comm. Simmons: I don't know what he's going to do tomorrow.

Comm. Martinez: The point that's being made is we're creating an infinite amount of 'what ifs' and possibilities that we will now be burdened with by doing this. There're too many things to think through that can possible happen that will now become the burden of the Board to have to do, undo, and fix. It's a Pandora's Box. It's a rabbit hole that we would just keep going down and down.

Comm. Capers: To move this along, what's the consensus of the Board?

Comm. Ramirez: I think leave the policy as it is.

Comm. Simmons: I think the consensus right now is to leave it as it is.

Comm. Redmon: Are you asking for the official vote?

Comm. Capers: Not a vote.

Comm. Redmon: I thought you said you wanted an official vote to bring to the Board.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: Is it something that you want to do? You want to vote it up or down at this time? You would need a motion.

**It was moved by Comm. Capers, seconded by Comm. Hodges to remove from the policy the stipulation that a candidate must be deceased have a school building named after them.**

Comm. Arrington: Comm. Capers, I understand the spirit of what you're doing, but I think it's going to open up Pandora's Box. My vote is no.

Comm. Capers: Yes.

Comm. Hodges: Yes.

Comm. Martinez: No.

Comm. Ramirez: No.

Comm. Redmon: No.

Comm. Simmons: No.

**The motion did not carry.**

Comm. Capers: That concluded our meeting. Our meeting ended at 6:30.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Shafer: Cheryl, if you just want to get on for I&P-10 for clarification.

Ms. Cheryl Coy: The question came up with regard to the speech therapists and why we're using outside providers. It's actually more cost-effective for us to use Northern Regional and we get a quicker turnaround when it comes to onboarding staff. We are very involved in evaluating them to make sure the quality of the services are where they need to be for students and it has really been a successful process for us over the past three years.

Comm. Capers: This is No. 10. It says Mountain Lakes Board of Education. Is that Northern Regional?

Comm. Simmons: It's for the speech services. That was No. 10.

Ms. Coy: It's pertaining to the speech therapists and the evaluations.

Comm. Capers: Yes.

Ms. Coy: We paid for them to do the outside services. Because of the distance, they are an out-of-district school. Now that they are virtual, they are not allowing us to have anyone from our district come onsite. We have to use their current providers and staff to provide services.

Comm. Capers: We have to pay them?

Ms. Coy: Correct.

Ms. Shafer: The other thing I wanted to clear up has to do with David Cozart. David, I think you heard earlier we had talked about changing the Thanksgiving game because of the shortened season to earlier in the month of November. Can you just explain to us what's happening with football and where we are with that?

Mr. David Cozart: The season ends for Eastside on the 6<sup>th</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> of November for Kennedy. Kennedy has one game to make up. But we also have already agreed to the super conference to have at least one light game, which is normally a consolation game

with a light team. We are already guaranteed to have one game after the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> of November with another team and possibly two. We already committed to that for the super conference at the beginning of the season. That has not been changed as of yet. We have not had any discussions about moving the game from Wednesday to any other time in the year or moving it to the beginning of November. We have not had that discussion with the athletic department.

Comm. Capers: Mr. Cozart, are you saying there's going to be a game either on the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup>?

Mr. Cozart: Yes. We were told we are going to have at least one game with the super conference with light opponents. We are already committed to that game.

Comm. Capers: Okay, that's a different scenario. We should just keep it as is. How about the following week, the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup>?

Mr. Cozart: They said we are guaranteed to have the one, but possibly two. That's why we had to sign off saying we will commit to that game. Remember, Kennedy lost a game earlier, which means they have to make up a game.

Comm. Capers: I didn't know that information. Now I know. I think we should just scratch it and keep it as it is. I thought that there was a lag. A lot of people thought it was a two-week lag. We weren't aware it was final that they had scheduled a game that 13<sup>th</sup> week and another game the following week. That wasn't communicated to a lot of people.

Mr. Cozart: Our conference made it clear that the super conference has that extra game in there.

Comm. Capers: We just need to communicate that out. Everybody is under the assumption that we have a two-week lag. There will be games played.

Ms. Shafer: David, do the coaches know they have this other game?

Mr. Cozart: Yes. I spoke to the coaches tonight also about it. They were verified first. I spoke to both coaches as well as Mr. Durham to verify that same component. We are locked into these games.

Comm. Capers: Let's keep it as is.

Comm. Redmon: Do we have a list of the schedules for both teams?

Mr. Cozart: Yes. They're on the website. They were provided earlier.

Comm. Capers: But those two weeks are not in there.

Mr. Cozart: Right.

Comm. Capers: That's where the confusion is coming from.

Mr. Cozart: Every year those games are not listed there. We get notified towards the end of the season what games we pick up.

Comm. Capers: I'm good with it. I appreciate you.

Mr. Cozart: No problem. One more comment. Regarding the games itself, one thing that we have done this year, all of Eastside and Kennedy home games are being live-streamed for free. We send the links out so people can see the games for free. Those kids who can't go to the games because of our seating capacity can watch the games for free online.

Comm. Simmons: Thank you.

Comm. Hodges: I'm a little concerned about the Amistad. Why have we not recognized this?

Comm. Simmons: We have to maintain the full curriculum.

Comm. Hodges: I've been told we had.

Comm. Capers: That's what I was told, too.

Ms. Shafer: I'm going to research that because I think Comm. Capers went to a conference and they recognized us. We've been recognized all along. This is the first I'm hearing we're not so I will follow up with that to find out.

Comm. Capers: I go to the annual Amistad curriculum meetings and they always say Paterson's on it and stuff like that. I was surprised. I reached out to Rosie already.

Ms. Peron: Ms. Tsimpedes also reached out to Rosie just to get more detail on the information that she shared. I didn't know there was a list.

Comm. Capers: Item No. 15 is about professional development, going over digital stuff, Google Meets, and how to do everything in the classrooms. We had a discussion around yesterday's meeting. Instead of paying somebody to do this, can we do this in house? We have the people to do this training and that are trained in this technology instead of paying it out. That's what I want to know.

Ms. Peron: I half paid attention to your comment. I'm sorry. It's late. We have hired our own teachers to provide training. We put a posting out and we did hire our own teachers to provide that training. The training that we were paying for is the actual Google Suite Level I training that you get certified for. I don't know that they have train the trainer and that anyone in district has train the trainer certificate. I know that we do have people and staff members that are trained at Level I and have that Level I certificate, but I'm not sure. Just because you have that Level I doesn't mean you can become a trainer for Google and train other people. Do you see what I'm saying?

Comm. Simmons: It's actually a different certification.

Ms. Peron: It's not like we could turnkey, unless you're certified to do it. But in going back to your question about using our very own people, we do that. We have principals who provide training to teachers, parents, and students. We have teachers who do the same.

Comm. Simmons: Just so I'm clear, it's about classroom management for math.

Ms. Peron: I'm sorry. I heard Google training.

Comm. Capers: She explained it both ways. She explained yesterday that she would do Google Suites and math.

Ms. Joanna Tsimpedes: Commissioners, I just want to speak to that. We have to keep in mind for K-5 we do not have a math digital resource available to our teachers. We are in the process of looking at a digital resource for our teachers. We need to equip our teachers with the instructional strategies they need in order to perform the strategies with the kids online. It's not just showing them Google. It's actually giving content specific professional development to assist them in their lesson planning, as well as to execute their lessons in the classroom. When we're looking at the different content areas, it's one thing to know how to do a Google Meet and how to set up a Google Classroom. It's another thing to actually utilize the appropriate tools in the classroom to help students in understanding and mastering the lessons. When we looked at these vendors, we were actually looking for content specific strategies because the general strategies we can do in-house. As you all have mentioned, we do have people in-house to do that. However, when you're getting into the nitty-gritty of the content, we need to ensure that our teachers are equipped with the correct tools and have the knowledge base to be able to expand it in the classroom. That's why we looked outside to a different consultant with regards to the math and classroom engagement practices.

Ms. Peron: Commissioner, I thought you were referring to 14.

Comm. Ramirez: If I recall correctly, that's exactly what the doctor mentioned yesterday.

Comm. Simmons: Any other information items before we proceed to adjourn? If not, I'm going to make a shameless plug that I am running for reelection on 6-J. We want to continue this work so please vote for me.

Comm. Hodges: I want to commend you.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: We can't do that.

Comm. Ramirez: Can we issue a reprimand to the Board President?

Comm. Simmons: I'll do it myself.

Ms. Shabazz-Charles: That was not appropriate. Disregard.

Comm. Simmons: Strike that from the record.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.