

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

**October 2, 2020 – 5:00 p.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.

Review of “Guidelines for Serving on the Board”

- Reserve Judgment –
 - Board members and the administration expressed the importance of mutual trust
 - Facial expressions and body language speak volumes
 - Not rushing to judgment in the name of activism
 - Attack a problem by asking “why?”
 - Think carefully before reacting; get all sides of the story before forming an opinion
- Listen Empathetically –
 - Involves focusing on the individual and not yourself
 - Nodding doesn’t necessarily mean agreeing
 - Listen like a parent; put yourself in their shoes
 - Be accessible
 - Take a “clinical” approach; analyze the history of the individual to determine how to assist them
- Stay Focused on Content, Not Behavior or Style –
 - It is a challenge to not allow the manner of delivery to overshadow the message
 - Dividing the Board into “factions” hinders good communication
 - Separate the emotional content from the actual words being spoken
 - Try to figure out where the speaker is coming from – do they have an agenda?
- Do Not Take Differences Personally –
 - It is more productive to try reach a compromise than to “go to war”
 - Respect the opinions of others, even if not agree with them
 - Good communication minimizes misunderstandings
 - Developing relationships within the Board important
 - Taking offense saps energy needed to accomplish the real task of the Board

Review of Chapter 2 – Trustee Governance Mindset

- What does Systems Thinking mean?
 - Implementing processes to ensure things are being executed accordingly
 - Focus on what, why, and when things will happen
 - Seeing patterns and connections
 - Looking at the whole picture when making decisions
 - Requires cooperation and collaboration
- What does coherence mean?
 - Research and understand issues in offer to meaningful insight
 - Each Board member brings their “thumbprint” or expertise to the decisions made

- Having a governance mindset means:
 - Make sure Board agendas and discussions keep the focus on the needs of students
 - Strive to be a student-centered school district
 - Viewing the task of the Board as a “business” and the members as “CEOs”
 - Effective time management at meetings – give appropriate time to important topics
 - Agenda items and presentations should relate to Board goals and the strategic plan

Breakout Groups Exercise

- Systems Thinking (Group 1) –
 - When an issue is reported about a certain school, is the problem happening globally in the district?
 - Develop successful model programs and implement them across the district
 - Improve the curriculum throughout the district
- Strategic Focus (Group 2) –
 - The Board does not oversee day-to-day operations
 - Trust the teachers and building administrators to do their job well
 - Allows the Board to focus on their work of governance
 - Focus requires alignment, discussion, and benchmarks
- Deep Learning (Group 3) –
 - Requires a deep understanding of the issues
 - Imperative that Board members come to meetings prepared and well-informed about agenda topics
 - Professional development helps Board members remain up-to-date, informed, and knowledgeable
 - Recognize and address different learning styles among students
 - Acknowledge the value of both vocational school training and college

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.