

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

January 31, 2018 – 6:14 p.m.  
Administrative Offices

Presiding: Comm. Oshin Castillo, President

Present:

Ms. Eileen Shafer, Acting State District Superintendent  
Ms. Susana Peron, Acting Deputy Superintendent  
Robert Murray, Esq., General Counsel

Comm. Emanuel Capers  
Comm. Jonathan Hodges  
Comm. Manuel Martinez  
Comm. Joel Ramirez

Comm. Nakima Redmon, Vice President  
Comm. Flavio Rivera  
Comm. Kenneth Simmons

The Salute to the Flag was led by Comm. Castillo.

Comm. Ramirez read the Open Public Meetings Act:

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

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

**Special Meeting  
January 31, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.  
Administrative Offices  
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.

**OPENING REMARKS**

Comm. Castillo: I want to thank everyone tonight for joining us on this very important evening. I want to first introduce ourselves for the candidates that may not know us. My name is Oshin Castillo and I'm your Board President. Right to my left are Vice President Nakima Redmon, Commissioner Joel Ramirez, Commissioner Flavio Rivera, Commissioner Manny Martinez, Dr. Hodges, and Commissioner Kenny Simmons making his way up here. This evening we will be conducting interviews to fulfill the vacancy left by Comm. Christopher Irving. He is now the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for Passaic County. The person that is selected this evening

will fulfill the role until January 2019. They have to, of course, run in the November elections. The way the process will work tonight is that we will invite the candidates to join our Deputy Superintendent Susie Peron in the adjoining room. We will call each candidate one by one. There will be a series of questions that the Board will ask. You will have one to two minutes for a brief introduction and state the purpose and why you want to be on this Board. You will get seven questions from the Board asking about your ability and interest in joining us. Cheryl, do all the Board members have the questions?

Ms. Williams: You have them.

### **CONDUCT INTERVIEW SESSION OF CANDIDATES FOR THE VACANT SEAT ON THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Comm. Castillo: Ms. Peron is going to accompany the other candidates into the adjoining room while we have the first candidate come up. We have done it in the order in which we have received all the applications. The first candidate will be Corey Teague followed by Ms. Stacey Coleman. The third will be Mr. Vincent Arrington. Fourth would be Mr. Rodney Devore. Fifth would be Mr. Mosleh Uddin. We will be filling the vacancy for Comm. Irving. He will fulfill the position until January 2019. Each Commissioner will ask a question. Welcome, Mr. Teague. How are you today?

Mr. Corey Teague: Okay. How's it going, Madam President?

Comm. Castillo: Could you just briefly introduce yourself and give us the reason you want to return to the Board?

Mr. Teague: Good evening Commissioners. My name is Corey Teague. I'm a former Board of Education Commissioner. I served from 2012 to 2016. Before, during, and after my tenure on the Board, I continued to remain a very strong and vocal advocate for education and especially making sure that students in the special education spectrum receive the right amount of attention and services that they are legally entitled to. My work has continued even until this day. One of the reasons why I decided to even submit an application was because I saw there was a vacancy there and I understand the importance of making sure that we have a full Board so that any decisions that are made can be properly vetted. We want to make sure that things are being done appropriately for our children. That's the reason why ran. I wanted to make sure that seat would be filled in some way and that we would have an opportunity to fight for our kids.

Comm. Rivera: By the way, welcome and good luck. What specific skills would you bring to the Board?

Mr. Teague: For one, I'm an extremely active parent. I do believe that up until recently there has been a very strong disconnect between the parents and the Board. As a Board member/active parent, one of my skills is making sure that the parents are fully engaged in what's going on at the Board meetings and with School Board business, even on social media as well. That's one of the biggest skill sets, coming to the Board as a parent and as the parent of a child with special needs. I'll be able to connect all of them to the Board.

Comm. Capers: Thank you, Corey, for signing on and trying to come back to the Board. Good luck to you as well. Can you tell me about NJQSAC? What does it mean and how do you see its connection to local control as we regain local control?

Mr. Teague: Even when I was on the Board I said that NJQSAC in and of itself is a very political structure. I already knew pretty much that it was based on who actually became the next Governor. While it was under Christie's control and even under several other Governors, there were many times when the Board would meet or get very close to the standard and then they would either shift what we were doing, change the scores, or change what they saw happening within the district in their evaluations so that we wouldn't meet the mark. I was very surprised that we finally did meet our quota in all of the different components of QSAC. I believe that it's going to take us into a place where we control our schools and the decisions that are made here, which is all the more reason that we have to make sure that the people that are there are going to fight for the needs of the children.

Comm. Redmon: What is your vision for the education of our community?

Mr. Teague: My vision has always been to make sure that I empower the children through empowering and educating the parents. That has always been my objective and goal. Granted, I have had some very interesting ways of getting information to the public and I can accept that. Sometimes I have had ways that were a little aggressive. I can also accept that. But it can be charged to my heart and not my head because my ultimate goal and objective is to make sure that children are empowered by empowering the parents and making sure that the parents are fully aware and knowledgeable of what's going on with their children and schools.

Comm. Simmons: Good evening, Mr. Teague. As you know, through the QSAC process the district has met the requirements to receive local control. The State Board still has to vote on returning local control to the district. What does that mean to you?

Mr. Teague: That means that the Commissioners will now be at the helm of the administration. In the past, if the Board voted on a budget, the State District Superintendent would have the power to override it and pass it. With what's coming in March when the State Board makes the final vote next month, the School Board will have the power on the local level to approve or not approve a budget. Basically, the decisions that they make will be final where in the past the state has given the State Superintendent the power to override any decision that the Board makes. That particular component in many ways is going to be removed. Now you're talking about a situation of absolute power. You have to really be careful to make sure that the folks that are there are not going to abuse that power because you're getting ready to receive a lot of it.

Comm. Martinez: Good evening. What are some of the fiscal challenges that the district currently faces? How do you propose as a Board member to address those challenges?

Mr. Teague: I know that we still have a lot of issues with the children having proper tools within the classroom, especially within special education. I believe I had a conversation with Comm. Simmons about having a specific building that was accessible for students who had multiple disabilities. I have spoken with several folks within the district that confirmed to me that the district would save millions of dollars if we could be able to bring our students back to Paterson. My son attends school in Clifton. I would like nothing more than for him to be able to be here. Every time there is a situation in Clifton, what do I have to do? I have to find a way to get all the way over there. If the school is right here, it would be easier for me as a Paterson parent to get there. On top of that, it would save the district millions of dollars. Most of my concentration is on

special education because a lot of money flows through that specific area. I believe that if we really take a closer look at special education and find out where there are gaps and where money is being wasted, we can actually save the district a lot of money. I do believe there's a lot of money going through that department despite the fact that there are a lot of services not coming out of it.

Comm. Ramirez: Good evening, Mr. Teague. What do you see as the number one issue that limits the improvement of academic achievement in our district?

Mr. Teague: The one thing that I see right now is the continual lack of parental involvement. I'm not saying that it hasn't improved over time because it seriously has. I have to commend Kemper McDowell and his team and that's something I don't usually do. I have to commend him because lately even with the live feeds it's beginning to engage the parents more because you're beginning to see more conversation in the streets and on social media. Everything for me starts in the home. If it's not straightened out in the house, you can't expect the school to do what you can't even get done at home. I believe that everything has to be centered around the home, the family, and the parents and make sure there's a connection there. When that is straightened out, it will begin to positively impact the things that are happening in the school district.

Comm. Martinez: I'm going to ask this question on behalf of Dr. Hodges. What do you think are the first steps that the Board should take after receiving local control?

Mr. Teague: Number one, the Board should have a retreat just with the Board members to actually discuss what their plans are going to be and how they intend to work along with the Superintendent and the district officials to make everything flow smoothly. As I said, once you have local control, now you have the ultimate power. Everything rests with you. I remember when I was on the Board before. Things would go wrong and a lot of times I could tell a parent the state makes the decisions and the state does this and that. Now with local control, all the power falls on the local Board. I think the first step is the Board should really have a conversation together and make sure everybody is on the same page or at least in the same book. Then the next step is to go to the community and tell them we have power that we didn't have before. The state has taken the cuffs off. So as a community, what do you expect of us now that we have more leverage to get more things done for you as the parents and as the community? There should be a community forum between the Board and the city. Before that, the Board should have a conversation amongst themselves to see where everybody is at and where everybody's goals are.

Comm. Castillo: Thank you, Mr. Teague. First of all, I want to thank you for your interest in coming back to the Board of Education. There are no more questions as of right now. Please stay in the adjoining room and we will render a decision by the end of this evening. We appreciate you taking this time out and wanting to come back to join us. Good evening, Ms. Coleman. How are you?

Ms. Stacey Coleman: Good evening. I'm fine.

Comm. Castillo: I just want you to briefly introduce yourself and give us a reason why you want to be on the Board. You will get a question from all the Commissioners. You have about two to three minutes to answer each question.

Ms. Coleman: Good evening Commissioners and Ms. Shafer. My name is Stacey Coleman. I'm a lifelong resident of Paterson, New Jersey. I'm a product of the

Paterson Public Schools and a graduate from Eastside High School. I have a bachelor's from Morgan State University and a master's from Fairleigh Dickinson University. I'm currently employed at Passaic County Board of Social Services as a social work supervisor where I have been employed for the past 20 years. I'm also an adjunct professor at Montclair State University where I facilitate a course in family and child studies. It focuses on children and families in poverty. I've been there for the past 9 years. The reason I would like to be appointed the next Commissioner on the Paterson Public School System is because there are some issues that I think our children are faced with in our community. Being a social work supervisor and an adjunct professor, I have learned that our children have barriers that prevent them from being educated to the highest of their capabilities. Those barriers should be addressed as well and try to bridge the gap between their lack of being educated and the barriers that they face and try to bring them together so they don't have such a hard time absorbing the information. That's what I would like to see on the Board of Education.

Comm. Rivera: Welcome, Ms. Coleman. I wish you good luck. What specific skills will you bring to the Board?

Ms. Coleman: The specific skill I would bring to the Board is my knowledge of the barriers our children face in our community. We have to understand that this is an urban area and our children face issues that a lot of us, if we're not in that field, won't understand. Our children are not hard to educate. It's just other issues that they may face at home that may distract them. Once we realize what those issues are, then it's easier to educate our children. We don't always have to classify them. Just bringing that knowledge and understanding of the needs of our children is the skill that I would bring to this Board.

Comm. Capers: Welcome, Ms. Coleman. Can you tell me what NJQSAC is? What does it mean? How do you see its connection as we regain local control?

Ms. Coleman: NJQSAC is the way the New Jersey Department of Education evaluates our performance. There were five components that we needed to pass to regain local control. I think our school district has just passed the last one. It means a lot because now we're able to monitor ourselves and improve on the things that we feel we need to improve on without outside interference. We are capable of making the decisions and see where our children need improvement. That's why it's important to have control.

Comm. Redmon: What is your vision for education in our community?

Ms. Coleman: As a supervisor at social services, I supervise the employment and training program. I see a lot of our adults cannot read. We have to test them and bring them up to par so they can receive training in whatever field they decide to go into. It's the same with our children. They're not up to par. My vision is incorporating a curriculum to allow our children to be up to speed with their counterparts. As a facilitator at Montclair State University, they are not children that come from my community that I'm teaching. I would like to see our children being competitive in higher education. We don't have that and we need to bring that up to par. That's my vision, to allow our children to be educated and to eliminate the educational divide.

Comm. Simmons: Good evening, Ms. Coleman. As you alluded to earlier, the district has recently passed the last hurdle in the QSAC process to regain local control. The State Board still has to vote on giving it to us. What does local control mean to you?

Ms. Coleman: I think local control is very important, as I stated. It gives us the ability to govern ourselves and make the decisions that best fit the needs of our children. Every community is different and the needs of every child are different. You can't take it as a broad spectrum across the board and say everything is even and equal. Our children may have greater needs. To govern ourselves we can determine that. That's why it's important.

Comm. Martinez: Good evening and welcome. What are some of the fiscal challenges that our district currently faces? How do you propose as a Board member to address some of these challenges?

Ms. Coleman: The biggest fiscal challenge is being underfunded. Once we've regained complete control, we can prove ourselves academically and hopefully lobby the state for additional funding. That would be my hope.

Comm. Ramirez: Good evening, Ms. Coleman. What do you see as the number one issue that limits the improvement of academic achievement in our district?

Ms. Coleman: What limits the academic achievement in our school district is our children are lacking the basic educational foundation. We go back to kindergarten and first grade. I have a granddaughter that's in the second grade and I see the issue very clear. I have two adult sons that attended the public school system. Each one of those children received phonics and that was over 20 years ago. Now we're faced with the issue of our children not having phonics. We know that English is the hardest language to understand. We can have two different words spelled the same, pronounced differently, and have two different meanings. Our kids are focusing on reading the word and they cannot comprehend what they're reading because they're too busy trying to pronounce and learn the words. I think that's the number one challenge that we face in our educational system.

Comm. Hodges: Good evening. I wish you were here under more serious circumstances. What do you think are the first steps that the Board should take after receiving local control?

Ms. Coleman: I know you have been working on developing the curriculum, but maybe refocusing on trying to incorporate phonics back into the school district. In my opinion, that would be the first step.

Comm. Castillo: Thank you so much. Again, I want to thank you for taking the time out and for wanting to participate and be part of the Paterson Board of Education. Right now we don't have any more questions, but I do ask that you stay in the adjoining room. After some deliberation we're hoping to render a decision tonight. Good evening, Mr. Arrington? Just so everyone has the same directions of the process, I will be asking you to briefly introduce yourself and why you're interested in being part of the Board of Education. Then my fellow colleagues will each ask you a question. That should be about 15 minutes or so. You have two to three minutes per question. Cheryl is behind you with the clock. You'll hear the buzz if your time is up. Good luck.

Mr. Vincent Arrington: Good evening everyone. I'd like to take this moment to give you an introduction of myself. First of all, I'm a proud resident of Paterson. I graduate from School No. 10. I have one child that's in Norman S. Weir and one that graduated from Norman S. Weir and is currently in high school. I'm very engaged in the community and very active. As most of you know, I'm always engaged with whatever organization that's out there. I'm very passionate about education. I'm a lifelong learner. I'm always

reading journals and things of that nature. I'm always trying to learn and improve myself. I'm current a PC student with a concentration in technology. I'm doing my dissertation on cloud computing. I'm a very results and goal-driven person. I'm not easily distracted by obstacles. I'm currently working on my PhD. Also, I have a master's certificate from Rutgers University. I also have a master's from Nyack College. I have a leadership certification from William Paterson University. I'm also project manager certified at UPS. I also have an ITIL certification, which is basically an IT certification. I have my bachelor's from Nyack College. I also have an associate's from Passaic County Community College. Some of the opportunities I see in the district, coming up on the agenda is creating a balance budget for 2018, the superintendent search, gaining local control is something that the Board obviously is working on, restoring full funding hopefully will happen this year. Contract negotiations and improving test results in all demographics, delivering curriculum, and continued execution of district improvement plan, and health care cost reductions are some of the opportunities I see happening out there for the district. If I was appointed, some of the things I would employ would be to help set a vision and the goals in the district, adopting policies and directing the district in setting priorities and achieving goals, being involved in hiring and evaluating the superintendent, evaluate appropriate adoptions of the annual budget, participating in the collective bargaining process, adopting curriculum, reviewing contracts, and providing best practice opportunities for the district. What would I bring to the Board of Education if appointed? I'm a team player and communicator. I believe in the servant leadership model. I'm a very evidence-based data-driven person. I believe in analytics and having facts to support my decision. I'm a firm believer in best practices. A lot of problems have already been resolved out there. It's just a matter of researching and applying those solutions to our organization. I'm a heavy project management person. I've effectively managed projects and programs at UPS. Cost control, risk management, contract management, and scheduling are some of my attributes. I have 25 years of IT experience and 22 years of management experience in a Fortune 500 company. If appointed, I would meet with all Board members and cabinet members to engage in learning all of the important issues that are going on in the district. That's a brief introduction.

Comm. Rivera: Welcome, Mr. Arrington. I want to wish you good luck. What specific skills will you bring to the Board?

Mr. Arrington: Project and IT management. I'm well-versed in IT. I think I can help the district out in achieving some of its IT goals, improving its curriculum, and using technology. Project management is one of my attributes. I have the ability to manage multiple projects. I'm going to bring my energy and my willingness to help the 25,000 kids in Paterson. That's what I'm going to bring if I was appointed.

Comm. Capers: Good evening, Mr. Arrington. Can you tell me what NJQSAC is? How do you see its connection as we regain local control?

Mr. Arrington: QSAC is a process developed by the state to help monitor state-run districts. There are five elements - instruction and program, fiscal, governance, operations, and personnel. It's basically just a consistent way for the state to monitor. The whole goal of it was to get the districts off the monitoring and be able to be accountable and manage themselves. It's a process to make a district accountable and run more efficiently.

Comm. Castillo: What is your vision for education in our community?

Mr. Arrington: It is to identify underperforming groups and demographics within the city and try to help those students perform better in the district. Also, try to enrich our curriculum to make it more adaptable. Obviously, our kids are more technology influenced now. Improve our curriculum with a little bit more technology and make it more entertaining for our children.

Comm. Simmons: Good evening, Mr. Arrington. As you know, the district has met all the requirements to receive local control. The State Board just has to vote on giving it to us. What does the district receiving local control mean to you?

Mr. Arrington: It means we will be in full control and totally accountable for our actions. We don't want to go back to 1991 where we had fiscal mismanagement. We will be accountable for our actions and we won't have the state overseeing our day-to-day operations.

Comm. Martinez: Good evening and welcome. What are some of the fiscal challenges that the district currently faces? As a Board member, how do you propose to address some of those challenges?

Mr. Arrington: The major one is obviously underfunding. That's a big challenge and we're hoping with the new administration that we restore that funding. In any organization right now health care costs are a big issue. A lot of organizations are trying to figure out the best way to supply their staff with great health care coverage while reducing costs. I think the health care coverage is a big issue driving up costs and getting full funding from the state. That would really assist the district.

Comm. Ramirez: Good evening, Mr. Arrington. What is the number one issue that limits the improvement of academic achievement in our district?

Mr. Arrington: I have a small sample of data, but I think the challenge I see is that we have a group of children that are underperforming. We have to find a way to identify who they are. I think we know who they are. What is the method to deliver the curriculum to them to help improve their score? I think that's the biggest challenge I see in the district, finding a way to deliver the curriculum to the underperforming students and help them to succeed in life.

Comm. Hodges: What do you think are the first steps that the Board should take after receiving local control?

Mr. Arrington: That's a great question, Dr. Hodges. There's obviously going to be a transition team to help assist bringing in the last two elements. I think there's going to have to be a transition team to help take control back of the district.

Comm. Castillo: Once again, thank you Mr. Arrington. We don't have any questions for you right now, but thank you for your interest in being part of the Board of Education.

Mr. Arrington: Thank you for the opportunity.

Comm. Castillo: Please stay around. After some deliberation hopefully we will be rendering that decision tonight. Hang out in the adjoining room. Good evening, Mr. Uddin. Am I pronouncing your name correctly?

Mr. Mosleh Uddin: That's fine. Good evening Board.



Comm. Castillo: I will ask you for one or two minutes to introduce yourself and give us the reasons why you would like to be on the Board of Education. Then my colleagues will all ask you a question. You have two or three minutes to answer each question. Cheryl is in the back with the clock. Once you hear the buzz, the time is up.

Mr. Uddin: To start off, good evening. My name is Mosleh Uddin and I'm a resident of Paterson, New Jersey. I was born and raised here. I'm from the education system. I went to School No. 5 and also got my high school diploma from John F. Kennedy High School. I got my bachelor's degree in criminal justice from William Paterson University with a concentration in sociology. I'm here because I have a special need and heart for the youth that need development. I do work with a lot of kids for recreational purposes and sporting events. My main concern is for the youths. I'm here to help develop the youth.

Comm. Rivera: Welcome, Mr. Uddin. I want to wish you luck. What specific skills will you bring to the Board?

Mr. Uddin: Thank you for having me. I have a great understanding and communication with the youth in Paterson. On my spare time, I volunteer my time and I have invested in the youth for recreational purposes. I coach a soccer team on the side. That's for the kids from John F. Kennedy High School, Tech, and Don Bosco as well.

Comm. Capers: Good evening. Can you tell me what NJQSAC is? What do you see as its connection as we regain local control?

Mr. Uddin: NJQSAC is an organization that's from the Board for the students and for education for a better opportunity for the Paterson students.

Comm. Castillo: What is your vision for education in our community?

Mr. Uddin: My vision for education is that I feel like we can go back and look at our academies and help with reconstructing the academies to make some improvements in some situations. We can combine it with recreation. Even as a student in the city, sports was always a scapegoat for me that helped me to get through education as well as academics.

Comm. Simmons: Good evening, Mr. Uddin. The district has recently met the last requirement to receive local control. The State Board now has to vote on giving it back to us. What does receiving local control mean to you?

Mr. Uddin: Receiving local control is a great deal that will be invested into our students. That will help us get more opportunities for our kids, academics, more after-school programs and other recreational purposes.

Comm. Martinez: Good evening and welcome. What are some of the fiscal challenges that the district currently faces? How do you propose, as a Board member, to address some of these challenges?

Mr. Uddin: We have a lot of budget cuts that have been going on from our schools and the students. We can go to the state and try to get some funding to help out with the fiscal problems.

Comm. Ramirez: Good evening, Mr. Uddin. What do you see as the number one issue that limits the improvement of academic achievement in our district?

Mr. Uddin: I feel like we could have better communication with our students as in interacting with them because sometimes kids do get lost in the education system, which they believe is either too difficult or not for them. So, if you have some kind of counseling that would help the kids have a better point of view of education it will just give them a little push.

Comm. Hodges: Good evening. What do you think are the first steps that the Board should take after receiving local control?

Mr. Uddin: We should establish a meeting for the students as well as the Board and the parents. We should see what issues we have and let the students' as well as the parents' voice be heard. From there we should take on what we should do for improvements.

Comm. Castillo: Thank you, Mr. Uddin. We don't have any more questions for you tonight. We do thank you for taking out the time and for being interested in the Board of Education. Please hang out in the adjoining room and after some deliberation we should be able to render a decision tonight.

Mr. Uddin: Thank you for your time and for the opportunity.

Comm. Castillo: We did receive seven applications. Two of the applicants have since withdrawn their names from consideration and one candidate hasn't come in yet. I do make a motion for us to go into executive session to deliberate about the candidates.

#### **MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED SESSION TO DISCUSS FILLING THE VACANT SEAT ON THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**It was moved by Comm. Capers, seconded by Comm. Martinez that the Board goes into closed session to discuss filling the vacant seat on the Board of Education. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.**

The Board went into closed session at 6:59 p.m.

#### **RECONVENE**

The Board reconvened the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

#### **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. Castillo: It will be three minutes for everyone just so we can be respectful of everyone's time.

Mr. Robert Scott: First and foremost, good evening. I want to thank counsel and the Board of Education for everything that is being done and the different steps that are being done to make sure that all of our parents and everybody that's outside knows exactly what's going as far as transparency with the process. As President of Paterson PTO Leadership, I just want to make sure that I acknowledge what the entire Board is accomplishing, especially the efforts that are actually being taken to make sure that

every single parent that has a child in this school system has the opportunity to know what's going on. Lastly, I'm recommending and begging that the different parents that are out there in social media land seeing what's going on please take the effort to start to come out and become a little bit more involved. Like I said, we're at a cusp right now where a lot of decisions have to potentially be made. Let's not wait until the last moment for these decisions to be made when parent involvement can come forward and see what's going on. There are different meetings and different things that are occurring in the community. Please everybody, take the time to come out and be a part of our children's education. Thank you for your time.

Ms. Amanda Rivera: I was just listening in to what everyone was speaking about if they were elected or picked for the position. As a parent, don't just say it. I want to see action. I don't want to hear, "I'm going to do this for your children," and then they just don't. That's a big issue because a lot of times people get in these seats and they're not about what they said they were about. I just wanted to address that. That's pretty much all I have to say and that's all for now. Thank you.

Ms. Victoria Oquendo: Good evening to School Board members, Superintendent Shafer, and congratulations Oshin Castillo as School Board President. I find you to be facilitating pretty well this evening. When making your choice tonight I want you to know that the choice that you're making will have little to no impact on you. It will have every bit of an impact on children. You are their voice. You have been elected by the people, for the people, for their children, for the interest of the children and not special interests and hidden agendas. When you think of someone to advocate for the children, when you look at experience, when you look at work, when you look at principles, personalities are important. But not to where that takes precedent over who would be effective for the position to replace Christopher Irving on the School Board. I hope this evening when you make that choice you make it with respect to what's in the best interest of the children. Quite frankly, we have a lot of work to do and I know we all know that. I don't want to be redundant. I have some issues. I don't want 'No Child Left Behind' just to be a slogan. That needs to be a reality because the reality is there are children being left behind. When I find my grandson in a certain school in public school gets rotted lunch almost, poor low-quality lunch, and a charter school a few feet away with fresh, home-cooked meals, a child is being left behind. That's not fairness. That's not equality. It's a proven fact that when a child's nutrition is not up to standard, they can't learn. We live in a system where we're subjugated to genetically modified foods. Hot dogs are a carcinogen. They cause cancer. They should not be consumed by our children in the school, even if they eat it at home. Let's set a higher standard at school and maybe we can begin to undo some of the damage that's coming from home. There's a proverb that says, "The ruin of a nation begins in the home." It doesn't matter who we put in these seats, if they don't have a plan for everybody to come together as a collective whole to figure out why the apathy and the uninvolved parenting. There's a universal law called cause and effect. These things aren't taking place for naught. There's a reason and something going on at home and we need to get to the bottom of it so we can produce better and more economically viable citizens. Thank you.

Ms. Valerie Freeman: Good evening everyone. When you go into your session to pick Christopher Irving's replacement, I ask that you think with an open mind, put personal issues to the side, and pick the person that's best for the job. In my opinion, with you guys about to get local control, we need someone who knows what's going on. We need someone who has been working with most of you or have worked with some of you. We need someone who knows and who's compassionate. It's not to say that the others are not compassionate. I speak of this one person and the reason I'm speaking of him, Corey Teague, I see not only when he lost the election, the work that he had for

the children never stopped. His compassion for the children never stopped. His advocacy for the special education children never stopped. We all know the state of our special education program. Almost throughout this whole state it's a problem. We know that many of the services the children are not receiving. We need a strong advocate for that. We need someone who is going to go to Trenton when you're not supposed to be in Trenton. That's important to me. That shows me that your compassion for the children is here. We need someone who's for the children. I'm not going to say that the others are not, but for me and what this Board is about to partake and be in control of, it's important that someone who knows what it entails with this Board and has experience on the Board, we need that. We don't need because someone has a degree. I'm not big on degrees. You can have as many degrees as you want. It doesn't make you smarter than me and it doesn't make you better than me. That's what we push. We want to push that for our children. We want them to succeed. We want them to go to school. But you can't downplay a person who doesn't have a degree. That's what we do here and that has to stop. His compassion and his advocacy for parents and he's not on the Board - they call him and he goes. They need him to advocate in a school and he goes. He doesn't have to do that. That shows me his compassion and his seriousness for wanting to do the right thing with the special education program. You guys know what's going on. You know the lawsuits that are coming. You know the lawsuits that you guys have. Until you get that special education piece together, we're going to be in a problem. I'm asking you to put the personal and political things aside and choose the right persons. Choose someone who has experience on the Board and who can do the job that's needed to get done. Thank you.

Councilman Luis Velez: Good evening, Commissioners. Good evening, Superintendent. Madam President, congratulations. I had the chance to come down here and express myself in gratitude of your leadership moving forward. Commissioners, I thought you were going to hire another Superintendent. I was scared. I'm a little bit disappointed on the process. I know you guys went into closed session to select the next Commissioner, but those Commissioners and you Commissioners didn't have the chance to listen to the public and what they're looking for in a Commissioner for the Board. It will be a little bit more practical to listen to the public first and then go inside and make your decision. Then there will be an engagement between the community and the decision of the Commissioners. It's good and dandy to listen to us after you guys have made your decision. Whoever is coming and the decision that this Board has made I will respect that decision. But I will be watching that that decision goes according to what the community needs knowing that that Commissioner understands that this Board, the Paterson education and the students are world diverse and understand the needs of everyone in this city without looking that the right is better than the left and do the fair judgement to move this city forward. Keep politics away from this Board. I agree with your decision because you already made the decision. I hoped I could have intel before speaking, but I don't have that. Congratulations once again and whoever had the opportunity to serve as Commissioner of Education understand that you guys have to work together. One of the questions that I did not hear is, are you willing to work with me to move the Board of Education forward? God bless you. Thank you. Once again, congratulations to Comm. Castillo for your presidency and the Board leadership moving forward.

Comm. Castillo: We usually answer all questions at the end, but in this particular moment I would like counsel to make that clarification.

Mr. Murray: The Board has not made a decision on who to name as the Commissioner yet. The Board at this point has heard those candidates speak. The Board had an opportunity for a discussion of what each member's general thoughts were. We'll hear

the public now and then the President of the Board will call for a motion on appointing. At that time, there will be a decision.

Councilman Velez: The statement before going in there you should strike from the statement. When you say we're going to go into closed session to deliberate, that's a decision.

Mr. Murray: No.

Comm. Castillo: Okay. Let's keep this process going. Let's be respectful of everyone else who's here for comments.

Councilman Velez: Thank you. I appreciate it.

Ms. Marcella Simadiris: Praise the lord everybody. I just want to let everyone know that I haven't received any responses to my questions that I brought forward at the last couple of Board of Education meetings. Sometimes you get a little frustrated and you think that you come up here for nothing. I want you to know that our librarian is worth it. It feels like she was mine because I fought so hard for her. For months I was telling everyone there was money in the budget for a librarian, but we had to wait a whole eight months before we got that librarian. It's worth it. You have to see the children coming to the library. They're so excited about the books. It brings such joy to your heart. I just want you to know the little things. Even if I come up here and I'm bringing 105 things forward and you just do 3, it's all worth it. I want to say that too because I wish Mr. Rojas was here because he finds it inappropriate that I come up here and send him emails asking about funding with regards to lead monitors that we're supposed to have in our building that are still not there even though there are monitors that are taking on responsibility as a lead monitor and not getting paid. I suggest the district stop exploiting their community members. What else do I need to say? I also want to talk about how everything is a write-up. In my reality the adult positions both in and out of the building are very aware of what's happening and do nothing to change situations so that children have a better learning environment and are less likely to rebel. The only answer is to write them up and suspend them. That's an issue that I'm hoping you all have some conversations about. The lack of travel time does play a serious role. I know I brought it forward to my union officials because there's no way a teacher can get 40-minutes prep if there's no travel time. It's a contractual violation, but for some reason there's no group grievance. I don't know why. I'm still waiting for information on how to know when parent liaisons are in our building. I don't know that. When we switched from Infinite Campus to PowerSchool, it's difficult to see who's classified and who's not. I'm reaching for 109 at-a-glance summaries and I'm not getting them. I'm told that I have to meet for each classified student in order to receive that 109 at-a-glance. I have children that have IEPs and I have no idea what the modifications are. I've been asking for these for a long time. I also wanted to share with you that I recently partook in a support group. In Essex County we have a family service organization. I believe there's one in Passaic County. Maybe you want to utilize your director of culture and climate and get a relationship with them. Support is necessary. Just doing a self-care plan I want you to know the working conditions that this district has me working in I can't care for myself. If I can't care for myself, I can't care for these children. Thank you.

Ms. Autumn Mottley: Hi. My name is Autumn. This is my second time speaking. I just wanted to say that at School No. 4 our teacher left and we don't have a teacher so we can't do math. The teacher left because she said she signed for School No. 13 because she wanted to leave from here because of disrespectful kids. Everybody treats

her how she treats us. I just want to say that we get split up every day and we need a teacher. We don't learn math and stuff. I go to an after-school program and every time they ask if we want dinner, people don't want it because there's hair in the food. Everybody goes there just to play. They don't eat the food because there's hair in it.

Comm. Castillo: What grade are you in, sweetie?

Ms. Motley: I'm in sixth grade.

Comm. Castillo: Thank you. Great job!

Ms. Kathy Morgan: Good evening. My name is Kathy Morgan. I'm just going to say that I hope that you really take your time and pick the right person for our children. Make sure that it's somebody that's going to be there for them as far as the Board and the Commissioners are concerned. My kids have graduated. I have grandchildren in school and I work for the school system. I think that moving forward even you and the new person need to show up to some of these schools. I know Corey used to do it. Do some drive-bys. Everybody is talking special education. All these kids that they have in special education and having on medication don't always need medication. You need to check some of these teachers because a lot of them don't live in our community and don't care about our kids. They start at second grade tearing these kids down and sending them to the office and creating behavior patterns. He's in kindergarten. If you can't control a kindergarten child, you shouldn't be teaching. A kindergartener should not be in the office three and four times a day. Maybe you should go home and not that child. I'm saying it because I've seen it and I watch these teachers come from other communities. You start tearing these little boys down. You wonder why the boys are on the streets selling drugs and toting guns. It's because they didn't get what they needed in school. I'm not saying that the parents are not doing it at home. But if I have to keep leaving work for a kindergartener, what is wrong? If I'm getting a call every day, you need to go home. It's time for principals to start saying they don't need them in their school anymore. Just like we block substitutes when they can't handle a class, let's start red-flagging some of these teachers. They come from their communities and I bet they wouldn't treat their child like that. If you did that to their child, there would be lawsuits across the board. I'm getting real sick and tired of watching these little boys being torn down from kindergarten to second grade. Ms. Morgan is your teacher this year. Ms. Morgan is going to put a bug in Ms. Redmon's ear that you're getting little Joey and Joey is a problem. By the time Joey is in second grade, Ms. Castillo is getting little Joey and he's been a problem. The reason I'm saying this is my baby got that treatment. They did that to my child from kindergarten to about second grade. I was really going to handle the second-grade teacher. I'm being really honest. I got so tired. I was spending my sick and vacation time at the school. Come to find out the child was a type 1 diabetic and we didn't find out until he was 11 years old. Nobody took the time to find out what was going on there and I'm seeing the same pattern with other people's children. Somebody has to be accountable and you all are on this Board. You govern the schools. Stop by. Check out what's going on. No offense to any of you other candidates because some of you I know personally. I'm not talking about what you can bring to the Board because I see your qualifications, but I know when I call Corey he was a show up person. I'm saying whoever you bring on and the ones that are here, you all need to show up.

Mr. Kenyatta Stewart: Good evening. Before I start, I want to say good evening. From the back I want to let you guys know this looks really good. With the country and all the comments that are made about women and things of that nature, I just happened to walk in. For whatever reason, I didn't appreciate what I was walking into, but to see four

powerful women sitting there controlling the meeting, the men that are working with you all, it speaks volumes to where Paterson is going. I really appreciate that. This is my first time really speaking since I saw Capers a year ago. I swore Kenny in this year. I'm going to say congratulations to the new folks as well. Dr. Hodges, congratulations on reelection. As far as this idea of bringing someone new, I'm sure that you guys are going to work together with whomever you decide to pick. I was impressed with all the candidates. I got here towards the tail end of Corey Teague's presentation, but all the candidates did a great job. I'm going to ask them to stay involved even if they're not selected. Democracy is democracy. The next election is going to come. If you want to be involved, continue to be involved. Continue to work with the Board. I'm going to ask you guys to continue with inviting people to come here. Continue with working with the community because it's a huge deal. There are a lot of complaints and I can appreciate it. I know we have a lot of work to do. I'm working in Newark now with the community. I'm going to ask you guys to continue to work with the community. Thanks.

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

### **ACCEPT NOMINATIONS FOR CANDIDATE TO FILL VACANCY ON THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Comm. Castillo: First of all, I want to thank all the candidates that took out of their time to come here and express their interest in being part of the Board of Education. We're moving forward and in a great direction. This is a very important time and I do appreciate you wanting to volunteer your time for this community and for the students. For those who will not be sitting here, please stay involved. We need every single one of you to continue this progress. We can't do it by ourselves. We definitely need the community behind us.

Comm. Hodges: I would like to nominate Corey Teague.

Comm. Martinez: I'd like to nominate Vincent Arrington.

Comm. Capers: I second Mr. Teague's nomination. Madam President, there are two candidates up here. You have to do one at a time. You have to close the nomination.

Comm. Castillo: I'm going by our counsel.

Mr. Murray: You vote one at a time. You vote in the order that a person is nominated. Mr. Teague was nominated first and there will be a vote on Mr. Teague. Depending upon that vote, there would then be a vote on Mr. Arrington. I would comment again as the Board President pointed out, at the time of a vote in the affirmative to indicate the reason for that vote. It will require five votes of the Board to seat a candidate.

Comm. Castillo: If I'm not mistaken, we close the nomination and then we proceed on the voting. Correct?

Mr. Murray: Correct.

Comm. Castillo: Awesome.

Comm. Hodges: We're supposed to discuss why we vote the way we are.

Comm. Castillo: That's during the roll call. Let's close the nomination and then move forward.

Comm. Rivera: I second the nomination for Mr. Arrington.

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

**The Board voted as follows on the nomination of Mr. Corey Teague:**

Comm. Capers: No.

Comm. Hodges: I'm voting yes for a number of reasons, not the least of which is, as has been stated here, he is a strong advocate. He can hit the ground running. He does not stop. He's uniquely undeterred by external forces. He will work tirelessly for Paterson's children. He has done that. I don't know any other person on this Board and in this building that is more known down in Trenton than I am. That will be Mr. Teague. He's known for advocating. He has no car. His resources are limited, but he is known in Trenton more than I am, which is quite remarkable because I'm there for a wide variety of events, boards, and other issues of advocacy. Most importantly, he's independent, something that's sorely lacking here. He is independent and someone who will work just for the interests of children. That has been his habit and I expect that to continue. I'm sorry that we don't have more examples of such independence that we can present to this community and we do not. Mr. Teague works continuously, particularly in the area of special education. That's a major problem facing us. It continues to be a major problem facing us and it's something that we cannot allow to slip off the radar for our children. I really want to make that very clear. This is a person who delivers something that we are desperately in need of, a laser-like focus on special education, which is why I'm voting for him, and, of course, his independence. Thank you.

Comm. Martinez: No.

Comm. Ramirez: No.

Comm. Redmon: My answer is no, but my explanation is that Mr. Teague is a strong advocate. He says things that we can't say behind this table. We need people like that that can go to Trenton to lobby on our behalf. I believe sometimes when you are policymakers, which we are sitting behind this table, we can't say anything. But when we have advocates that can advocate for our kids they can say the things that we can't say.

Comm. Rivera: No.

Comm. Simmons: No.

Comm. Castillo: No.

**The motion did not carry.**

**The Board voted as follows on the nomination of Mr. Vincent Arrington:**

Comm. Capers: Yes, so we can continue moving our district forward.



Comm. Hodges: No.

Comm. Martinez: Yes. I felt Mr. Arrington was the most prepared and the most qualified of the candidates.

Comm. Ramirez: Yes, based on his level of preparation for today. His academic background progression from associate's all the way to a PhD degree. I think he will be a great role model and a great asset to this Board.

Comm. Redmon: Yes. He will be a great asset to our technology department.

Comm. Rivera: Yes. We need to improve many areas in the district. When making my decision, I evaluated every candidate and one area that I felt was very appealing was the technology aspect that this individual brings to the table. When choosing a replacement, I always try to find a candidate that can come in and contribute right away. I'm going to give you an example of when I started. On my first meeting of the finance committee, I noticed just by looking at the books we had a receivable on our books for a long time. It was something that was being overlooked by staff and everybody here. It was a receivable from the SDA. That means we spent the money and no one bothered to bill the state for the money. When I inquired about it, they spent the money five years before and nobody ever bothered to bill because there was no oversight. I'm not going to take credit for getting the money. I'm going to give the credit to the staff that did it, but I was on them all the time to make sure that this was done. I was just told not long ago that we actually collected about \$400,000. If I wasn't insisting that they bill the state for this we would have lost it. Going back to the candidate that we're discussing right now, Mr. Arrington, this district a few years ago lost \$2 million. I'm going to use the word lost. We purchased software in this district that we were not able to use. The name of that software was ALIO. On top of the \$2 million, we spent a few hundred thousand dollars paying a consultant to try to implement it, which took a few years for the district to actually acknowledge and make the decision that this was not going to work. Recently we shifted from Infinite Campus to PowerSchool. Now we're going back to Infinite Campus. That's another \$500,000. We all can't be in the same committees. We need to have trust in our Commissioners and the staff. As Board members we need to also provide oversight and ask the questions that need to be asked so these things don't happen again. We found out that this decision was made without the input of the staff that was actually going to implement the system. By having Arrington here, I believe that he will ask those questions with the 20 plus years of experience. I'm not going to get into this, but this nonsense about people not being independent, if being independent is somebody not able to work with other people, I don't want to be independent. I'm a team player. I know how to work with people to move the district forward. I'm here to represent the people and that's my reason for voting for Mr. Arrington. He's the best candidate at this moment. They all did well, but he is what I feel we need in the district right now. Thank you.

Comm. Simmons: My answer is yes for this candidate for a lot of what Comm. Rivera said. Between the two of us, I think there's 50 years of IT experience. As he spoke about ALIO, I remember being the lone voice to talk about the issues with it, how it wasn't going to work, and giving the reasons why it wasn't going to work, although we still moved ahead with it. I think that had he and I been here we wouldn't be in the situation that we're in with PowerSchool going back to Infinite Campus. For that largely technological reason, my vote is yes.

Comm. Castillo: Definitely yes. I think that we want to move all of our schools to the 21st Century. We're moving a curriculum that's full of technology. We want to give our

children those opportunities that we have in other areas where we're competing. Being in finance is a difficult piece to work with. Someone who has a doctorate's in business management definitely brings the educational background and the years of experience working in those areas. I think it's a very important piece that we need right now moving into local control. We're at a point where we need all the education background and the experience that we can obtain in order to make sure that this district is moving forward in the best direction. My vote is yes.

**The motion carried.**

Comm. Castillo: Congratulations, Mr. Arrington. If you can please come forward, we have a lot going on and we need you up and going. We're ready to swear you in and make sure that you're ready.

**RESOLUTION:**

**RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, the resignation of Dr. Christopher C. Irving created a vacancy on the Paterson Board of Education, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has elected to fill the vacancy on the Board, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has interviewed candidates to fill the vacant seat, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Paterson Board of Education approves appointing Vincent Arrington to fill the vacant seat on the Board of Education effective upon the swearing in ceremony scheduled for January 31, 2018.

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

**SWEARING IN CEREMONY**

Sworn in by Superintendent Eileen Shafer was Mr. Vincent Arrington.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Comm. Castillo: Before we adjourn, I would like to also congratulate our new Executive County Superintendent of Schools for Passaic County Dr. Christopher Irving. Kemper, how many views have we had today?

Mr. Kemper McDowell: More than 1,000.

Comm. Castillo: Over 1,000 views on Facebook live. That's definitely great.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.