

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

March 8, 2017 – 6:11 p.m.  
Administrative Offices

Presiding: Comm. Christopher Irving, President

Present:

Dr. Donnie Evans, State District Superintendent  
Ms. Eileen Shafer, Deputy Superintendent  
Robert Murray, Esq., General Counsel

\*Comm. Emanuel Capers

\*Comm. Oshin Castillo

Comm. Chrystal Cleaves, Vice President

Comm. Jonathan Hodges

Comm. Manuel Martinez

Comm. Nakima Redmon

Comm. Flavio Rivera

Absent:

Comm. Lilisa Mimms

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

Comm. Martinez read the Open Public Meetings Act:

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

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

**Special Meeting  
March 8, 2017 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.

Comm. Irving: I want to welcome everyone here this evening. Tonight, and in subsequent meetings, there's really no discussion on the budget. Tonight is the opportunity to hear from the public relative to their opinions and thoughts on the budget, budget process, and how the budget will be created. I just want to make clear that the Board will be hosting weekly meetings every single Wednesday. Next week we have our regular Board meeting and then the Wednesday after that on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, the budget will be introduced. That will be the first set of conversations and hearings. There will be

another meeting after that on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Then the week after that, there's going to be the actual formal budget adoption. We will have roughly about five weeks over the course of the next month and a half to allow the Board and, most importantly, the community to weigh in on the budget. Right now, because the budget has not been formally introduced, this is the venue just to hear from the community, their thoughts, opinions, and maybe even concerns they may have relative to the budget. We are here to do that. But I do encourage folks who are here to let other folks know once the budget has been introduced to really look at what is being proposed, to share your concerns, to offer recommendations and suggestions for other areas that we need to look into as a district. I think it's going to be pertinent and important to do so. I want to make it very clear that that is the process we are moving with. I want to make sure the community understands that the interest of ensuring that the hearings happen in a timely manner has always been the intention of this Board and that we're following through with those intentions. I want to thank Terry and her staff for helping to organize the meeting dates. I do know there should be a new flyer coming out very soon with the dates of when the hearings will be. I just want to make sure that the Board members can blast that out on social media. Folks in the community can do so as well. We have five weeks, but the more we continue to put the information out, it can't ever be enough.

\*Comm. Castillo enters the meeting at 6:14 p.m.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

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

Comm. Irving: I want to thank all the folks who are here tonight because many of you are going to be sharing comments and concerns even without having the physical budget in front of you. I thank you for the opportunity. I want to remind everyone you have the minutes. So when you hear the bell, please wind down and close up.

Mr. Corey Teague: Good evening Board members. I just wanted to come and reiterate my point concerning the special education and make sure that special education is not grossly underfunded in light of the fact that we have a new Secretary of Education in D.C. who is not even familiar with some of the laws that were passed to protect students with disabilities. Having been on the Board we know that federal funding impacts state funding, which impacts local funding. We know that. That's just 101. At some point if Betsy DeVos doesn't decide to properly fund it, it's going to trickle down to the district. So I'm asking you as a parent of a special needs child and as an advocate for children that have special needs that you guys keep that on the list of priorities to make sure that it's properly funded and that there are people in place to provide the in-classroom and out-of-classroom services that they need, that it continue going smoothly. I have the weirdest feeling that this lady that's there now is going to wreak havoc on education in general, but especially on the special education population.

Comm. Irving: Mr. Teague, I just want to take a quick pause. What I want to do specifically is very similar to what we did last week. Dr. Evans, is there someone who's just recording and documenting some of the recommendations and comments of the community? It's going to go in the minutes, but I do want specifically what folks are saying to be documented. Is there someone who can take care of that for us, Dr. Evans?

Dr. Evans: Aren't we recording everything? It's being recorded.

Comm. Irving: There's a format that the Board is going to get before we end tonight. Sorry to interrupt, but I just want to make sure that what you're saying is being verified. There's a format that we're going to get and I like that same format Dr. Evans and Ms. Shafer shared with you and I and the Board. They're going to detail who said what, what recommendations they have, and how that will show up within the budget and the budget presentation. I just want to make sure that's public by the next meeting. I just want to make sure that gets on record. I'm sorry. Please continue.

Mr. Teague: As a community and education activist, my area is to say please remember the special education spectrum. I know you will, but just keep in mind that we have a Secretary of Education now who doesn't really know anything about it, so it's not really on her top priority list. Being that we have a lot of students within our district that would be impacted, it's going to be on our priority list as always. Thank you for your time. I know how much work this is because I remember I sat there once. I have to give you all a thumbs-up because I know you have a lot of work on your hands. It's much easier where I'm at now to just throw stuff. When I'm over there I know how hard it is. Trust me. I know both angles. That's why I can talk like this. A lot of people come to the microphone and they've never been over there, so they don't know both sides of it. I do. I know you guys have a lot of work to do, but Godspeed.

Reverend John Givens: Good evening Mr. President, Dr. Evans, and the entire Board. I'm Reverend John D. Givens, President of the Paterson Pastor's Council, representing the faith-based community this evening. We have some concern with regards to the budget and the question with the budget of how we are prepared for providing the proper education for the kids with the type of budget that may be presented or already has been presented. We have experienced half terms, substitute teachers, or not quality teachers, etc. I need not waste my time with all that, but deal with the question, are we prepared for our students to be provided with the proper education, materials, and classroom conditions, etc.? I don't know who to direct it to, but can the budget at hand sustain proper education to our children? If not, where are the cuts going to be?

Comm. Hodges: Mr. President, did he mean the budget or the funding that we're receiving?

Reverend Givens: The funding is applicable to the budget. Am I correct?

Comm. Irving: They're correlated. Reverend Givens, as I said to Mr. Teague, we're going to transcribe all the questions folks have and get those responses to the community and folks who are here in writing to you before next week's meeting.

Reverend Givens: So we're not prepared to give an answer to the questions this evening?

Comm. Irving: You asked for a lot. You asked for three questions relative to what's being prepared, where we are, and what's the general funding. In all fairness, that's something that needs to be adequately answered and not just given lip service. The intent is to make sure that we give responses that are coherent and accurate, not just paying lip service to the folks who happen to come up here.

Reverend Givens: I appreciate that because we would appreciate it being accurate so we know where we really are with the situation. I don't know if my next question is to the President or to Dr. Evans. The Paterson Pastors Council sent a campaign with regards to trying to motivate the parents as well as the students in terms of the

importance of seeing that the kids are being educated properly and motivate them to study and achieve. We're asking for some help, either from the Board or through Dr. Evans' staff, to help us to get the community together so that we can present a campaign within the city. We can get our \$200 million and we're going to get it from the state in due time, but we need everybody to be on board, parents as well as teachers. We're asking the school district and Dr. Evans' office staff to help us to put that campaign together where we can work directly with our parents and our children.

Comm. Irving: Thank you, Reverend Givens. Thank you all for being here.

\*Comm. Capers enters the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

Ms. Rosie Grant: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. I took some time to write a list of priorities. My overarching question is the one I have every year, the question that I hope you ask yourselves as you develop the budget. How will this budget provide for a thorough and efficient education for Paterson Public School students? This is your charge as the body in charge of Paterson Public Schools, in charge of overseeing it. Some of our priorities from PEF that we suggest to you are programs to improve student outcomes. Kids are not performing at grade level. I know that we're looking at student growth, but when you look at the numbers of how kids are performing, they're dismal. What will be put in place through this budget to help that particular situation? Particularly around literacy, we're doing poorly. Kids need to learn to read by the end of third grade. After that point, they're required to read to learn and if they don't have that basis, they fall behind more and more every year. We advocate for arts and music for all students. This is not an elective. This is something that is in the New Jersey standards and needs to be in our curriculum. Last year, according to the State of New Jersey's Art Survey, we had 28 certified art teachers in the district for 29,000 kids. There is no way that we're providing the level of education that they need when we have so few people in that area of specialty. We need smaller class sizes. It is more challenging to teach and to learn when there are too many students in the classroom. It leads to behavioral issues. It puts stress on the teacher. It puts our students at further disadvantage. We also need to pay attention to our facilities. There are some things that the SDA is responsible for – that's for building and major reconstruction – but we're responsible for regular maintenance and upkeep of the facilities. That's related to the reduction in the janitorial staff. I've been in a classroom where there were not one, but two mice. I was just there for an hour to develop a workshop. We can't have this as a continuous thing. Please allocate sufficient money so that we can pay attention to the maintenance and upkeep of our school. In this case, I asked and we were told that the garbage hadn't been taken out because the janitors couldn't put in any extra time and they had Friday meeting. So the garbage stayed Friday through Monday in the building and the mice came in. High school bathrooms are not looking good. Is that my three minutes already? If I may, I won't go into the detail of the other things on my list, but Full Service Community Schools is a successful turnaround strategy. You will see when you have a chance to look that it's included in the state's ESSA plan. It's something that we ought to be paying attention to. We need more teachers teaching in their core subjects. We need to explore the different ways in which Title I funds can be used under the new Every Student Succeeds Act. I can email these to you tomorrow. We need more nurses. We need more guidance counselors. Their caseloads are too large and we're not preparing our kids for college because they simply don't have the time. We need more social workers. We need more members of the child study teams. People are waiting too long to get their students assessed by the child study team. We need enough technologies so that kids can continue to have classes and access to technology while we do the PARCC exams. They need to continue to learn, the ones that are not taking the test at that time. I need you to join me in the fight for full funding

of the School Funding Reform Act. I understand that it's a flat funded budget, but I also know that the law provides for a whole lot more than we're getting and Paterson children deserve to get what they're entitled to under the law. The opportunities to testify before the senate and the assembly are open through March and one into April. I've posted it on my Facebook page, Paterson Education Fund. Please go to the page. Please register. Do it quickly because the slots will fill up. Please go out and testify to get the funding that Paterson kids deserve. Our children are waiting and they need us. Thank you.

Comm. Irving: Ms. Grant, just a reminder of what I shared with Mr. Teague, the goal is to document all the recommendations and suggestions you have and put together a document in the next week that will be a written response to all the recommendations you have, very similar to what we've prepared for the Board tonight.

Ms. Valerie Freeman: Good evening. How are you? I have four things. I have a lot of things that concern me, but these are the four I think we need to really focus on. I think it's so important that we have a fulltime nurse in every school. My niece was attending the Early Childhood Center on 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue. She suffers from seizures and because there wasn't a fulltime nurse there, she had to be transferred to another school. We appreciate that, but there should always be a fulltime nurse in every school. I grew up in the Paterson Public Schools from elementary through high school and I've never seen where we did not have a fulltime nurse. It's important because you never know what may happen. I'm just asking you guys during the budget process to look at that to see if it can be done because it's too important. The district will be put at risk if anything should happen and we don't want that. I'm going to be a stickler on these consultants. I just think we have too many and the money could be used in different places. When you hire new administrators in the schools and in central office, they should be able to perform their job abilities without having a consultant to help them. It's a waste of money and I'm sure there are guidelines and requirements when you come for the job. They should be able to handle it without a consultant helping them. Again, the money can go elsewhere. My next concern is the substance abuse counselors. I think what's going on in the City of Paterson, especially with our youth, they're trying so many different drugs, they're coming to school high, they're walking to school smoking blunts. We need substance abuse counselors like we need the nurses. I think somewhere in the budget you have to find the money. Cut some of the consultants. Use the money there because these kids are coming to school high, under the influence, and drinking alcohol early in the morning. I see it as I take my kids to school. I see them walking to Eastside because that's the area I'm in. It's just like a normal practice. Growing up we didn't do that. We didn't have that, but times have changed and society has changed tremendously. We have to be able to help them or combat it. When they come into the building, have someone who will be able to sit and talk to them because you never know what's going on in their household. My concern is having a child under the influence is not conducive for the teacher and the other students. You never know what they're smoking. Just one last thing - my granddaughter was in a private school and she was in prek-3. She has learned cursive writing there. I had to put her in public school because the private school closed down and she was told not to write in cursive. I have a problem with that. She's five years old and she's in kindergarten. I don't want the teachers to tell her not to write in cursive because she has mastered that skill. When she's asked to sign her name, you have to sign in cursive. Printing your name to me is not your signature and that's not what we were taught. Growing up in the Paterson Public Schools, we had penmanship and cursive writing. I think you need to bring it back because it's important. My daughter that's in the seventh grade doesn't write in cursive, but I'm teaching her that at home. In the seventh grade, she doesn't write in cursive. She writes some because she had her foundation in private school

also, but when she got to public school, they made her stop. I'm doing it over with her and she's grasping it. Dr. Evans, that has to be implemented back into the curriculum because it's important. You don't print your name when you sign your check or a legal document. Sometimes you do when you're not capable of writing in cursive, but a signature is made in cursive writing and we must bring that back into the curriculum. Those are some of the things I have. The other things I will email. I thank you for listening and have a good evening.

Comm. Irving: Val, thank you so much.

Mr. Robert Scott: Good evening everybody. Thank you. Robert Scott, PTO Leadership President. One of the things I really wanted to explain to everybody was that I'm tasked with making sure that the parents, teachers, and anybody part of our PTO leaderships across the district actually know what's going on, taking the different messages that are provided here, and getting that message to the parents. With that being stated, one of the things we're looking for you to provide for us is the cost drivers, especially for our budget. One of the things that we're looking at is that our school leadership is being forced to make hard decisions due to some of the different budget constraints that are being placed. In order to better explain to the different parents at our different meetings, I'm looking for what's pushing this budget. What is causing the budget to get inflated? What is causing the budget to be so high or so low? We want to explain to the parents exactly what's going on. With that being stated, even though a lot of the different parents come up with different ideas, priorities, and stuff we want to do, sometimes it's a reality that it may not be feasible because of the different constraints and the hard decisions that you need to make. In order to better explain to the parents so they understand the process, what's going on, what decisions have to be made, respectfully we want a copy of what's pushing the budget forward. Right now, we are living in a vicious circle. We're losing in the streets. We shouldn't be losing in our schools. The only thing to protect us from the streets is to protect us in the schools. That's part of what we're trying to stress. It's a vicious circle. It's something that's very important. Going back to what one of the parents said with the substance abuse counselors, if we give up on our kids they can very easily become part of the system and now there's another child that can't get that government job. That's another child that can't get to a position where they're going to be working with you, underneath you, or for you because we're not stopping it. It brings back the importance of what was said, the substance abuse counselors. Let's get that young man that may have been walking to Eastside and happens to experiment with it, to explain to him that it's not the right thing to do because now that keeps you out of city hall and different things that we need in our society. Then we become dependent on outside people. Once again, I want to thank all the Board members for your time. I'll be back here next week in order to talk about this again and bring up different things that the parents want to explain to the Board and a simple request so we can explain to the parents in a better way. Respectfully, we want to trouble you for what your cost drivers are. Thank you again.

Comm. Irving: Fair question. We appreciate you sharing that.

Mr. Brotha Burns: Ladies and gentleman, good evening. I'm going to piggyback on everything that Rosie Grant had mentioned. I have a question. If you've been elected to represent public schools, why are you pushing for choice like charter schools? It's just a question. Can I get one answer?

Comm. Irving: That's not going to happen.

Mr. Burns: Thank you for your time.

Comm. Irving: No problem.

Ms. Marcella Simadiris: Peace and blessings. I just want to come and share and give you an update on the playground situation. The tiles were blown off last week. They attempted to place them down. There are boulders underneath them now. It's dangerous. I only say this because I don't want you guys to restrict the children from going outside because they need their recess. Maybe you can take up the tiles. I think it's dangerous the state it's currently in. The Green Team has been meeting and discussing these issues. We have a new member to our Green Team who says he was there about three or four years ago when they had a community committee working on this. There was a model on display at the school that showed walkways, merry-go-rounds, and greenery. We're wondering what happened to that model. We're trying to see if Ms. Knehr can help us contact any of the parents who might have been on that committee so we can see what happened with the plans or what the plans included. I wasn't in the building when that was going on. I understand that there is some conversation going on with administration and we just want you guys to know that the Green Team wants to be part of that process. We want to ensure that things are done properly. I want to remind you again that there's a grant for a rain garden. We want to make sure that everyone who's involved in doing something regarding the facilities at Dr. Frank Napier Academy are in one accord and this is done with intention and properly. Frankly, we're tired of just having things thrown at us as if something has been done and as if there's a resolution. We want to tell you that if the Green Team is not involved in this process, it's very difficult to even consider a resolution. They're the ones that are going to be utilizing this area and we have action steps. We started reaching out to people in the community and we want them involved as well. We've looked at this thing called Building Jake's Place, something that happened in the Philadelphia metropolitan area where they got community involved. We've already recruited two young men from the community that want to be part of it. We just want to say if anybody is working on this, please make sure that you reach out to the Green Team at Dr. Frank Napier Academy. Thank you.

Comm. Irving: Thank you so much, Marcella.

Ms. Victoria Oquendo: Good evening everyone. I just wanted to say briefly when we speak about education I've been doing some extensive research into the history of education. Education exceeds getting a job. Education is preparing people for life. You can get a job, but that doesn't mean you have purpose. Our children are not being educated. When I did some study and research into China's educational system, the number one class they teach is integrity and ethics. They know that without it you go nowhere in life. When you look at our children, they're not being educated. They're not becoming better people. When you look at statistics that say that we're number one for bullying, harassing, vandalizing, drugs, the substance abuse counseling is needed. We do need that in the city. Also, I was scouring over an agenda from last year with respect to some resolutions. I see a lot of money goes towards St. Paul's Community Development. I see a lot of money going towards in-school health fairs. Instead of the in-school health fairs, let's have nurses in the schools. Also, my research shows when we're deficient with community centers the school tries to make up the brunt impact of the lack of community centers. Money that should be going towards educating the children goes into wraparound services that should be provided by community centers. I'm asking you to please be careful in your awarding of your contracts and your consultants. I agree with Ms. Freeman. Why pay a consultant to consult someone who's already being paid a high salary who should have already been consulted? I don't know if that's another way to divert funds. I keep hearing about the flat funding. I

read the book "*Rich Dad, Poor Dad*." Financial literacy - it doesn't matter how much money we get in the City of Paterson. If we don't have financial literacy, it doesn't matter. It's going to go towards more contracts, top-heavy salaries, and cosmetics in operations and administration. Nothing is going towards the children. We have a city full of children who are not being educated because, according to the statistics, they are using drugs and having sex. Education is not limited to school. Parents do have a part to play. They play a great part. I'm not going to sit here and point fingers at any of you because I know the law of attraction. We have not because we ask not and no one is going to advocate for your children. No one is going to do anything for your children that you're not willing to do. I don't expect you to. But what I do expect you to do is place a clarion call to your parents and do try to push them to showing up for their children because we're not. When you can go to Club Bliss and it's full of parents, when you can hold a bowling event and 300 people come, our priorities are not in the right place. What a society does to its children, the children will turn around and do to its society. Thank you.

Comm. Irving: Thank you so much. Wow!

Ms. Darlene Morris: Good evening everybody. We all know that this budget is a very difficult thing to manage and figure out where to put the money, and what's most important. Everybody has their own ideas as to what's most important. One thing I think is important is that the parents understand the why. I know when I understand why then I'll try to work around other things. Like the last speaker was saying with regards to the parents, I think they owe us the responsibility of going to Trenton and wherever else is necessary to get our money. I'm very disappointed in the lack of parents that are not here tonight because Dr. Hodges put that information out early enough. I know I put it out and a lot of other people were going on and on. I think we need to hold their feet to the fire as well. Nobody is going to care about your children more than you. You have to come and show that interest so that the state will understand. You see these little cute smart kids running around and they deserve it. They need it. They should get it. I think everybody here is in agreement to that end, but we also have to work with Rosie Grant and whoever is necessary to go down to Trenton. Last year we had nice representation and it took a lot of legwork. I think that if we have 30 or 40 people from each school, we can fill Trenton up and we can show them that we mean business for our kids and to give us the money. I'm here to support to that end. I love working with the parents. They ask a lot of questions. A lot of them don't know what to do, even how to deal with their children. Last week I was asked to do a workshop on what to say to your children. You would think that you would know what to say to your children. We're working to that end. A lot of them just don't know and we have to educate them to make them understand that children are a big responsibility. We'll help you, but the first priority is you helping us with your children. Thank you.

Comm. Irving: Thank you for all your hard work with the parents and what you do. I mean that.

Ms. Gladys Santiago: Good evening. I came just to discuss a few things that I would like to see in the budget. I know several parents from different schools would like to see it in the budget. I agree with the former people that were up here. Parents need to be more involved, myself as well. It's a learning process and I do think that we need to put the footwork in and definitely reach out to these parents in the community and get them involved. Our children are dying every day in the streets and they are not being educated properly. It's sickening and sad and I think we're all sick and tired of it. I know one of the major issues in the majority of the schools is a lack of teachers. You have a



technology class and no technology teacher. You have a library with no librarian. We have IEPs and nobody to pull these children out, teach them one-on-one, and do the 3:1 tutoring. What's the point of having an IEP if we can't provide the tools that children need and meet the IEP needs? These children are just being passed along. If they were to be transferred to another school in another community, they would be put in a lower class than what they are now. Another issue I've noticed is that a lot of the children are not eating the food in the school. I don't know what's going on with the food. I'm just going to flat out say it tastes nasty. They're starving all day. My kids come home and they are starving because they refuse to eat the school food. I even send food with them to school because the food is spoiled or it's just gross. The children are not eating properly when they arrive at the school. These children need after-school programs. They need assistance. These teachers need the proper tools to do their job. I know teachers that are constantly buying materials out of their own pockets to meet the students' needs. I get a list every year. The list gets longer and longer of things the school needs. I've bought multiple materials for my kids' class in the beginning of the school year and not even halfway through they're already sending me letters home of stuff the classroom needs. This is ridiculous. We're being provided funds and we need to use them properly to make sure these kids are given the proper education that they need. Years from now they're going to be the ones running the city. We're going to be old and we're going to have to look to them to run the City of Paterson and the Board of Education system. Right now the children we're producing I'm terrified for them to watch over me when I get older. They're not going anywhere. Like everybody else said, they're getting worse. They're coming to school drunk. They're coming to school high. Babies are having babies. This is one of the reasons why we're having so many issues with the younger generation now. All these young kids are having kids and not being educated properly. Then their kids are being raised in the school system. They're not getting raised properly and it's just a disaster. All I ask as a parent is for our budget to be used properly. Get the teachers in the positions where they need to know. How do you expect a child to take a class seriously when they don't have a teacher to teach the class? Thank you. I will see you next week and have a good evening.

Comm. Irving: Thank you very much. I know that was the last speaker, but is there anyone else who'd like to address the Board who may not have signed up? Can everyone who is here give Tiniesh when we adjourn your email addresses? When these responses are written I want to make sure they get to you in a timely fashion. If we don't have your email address there's going to be no way for us to be able to do that. Just say your name for the record, please.

Ms. Jessica Schutte: I have four children that attend School 2. We've been in the district for a few years. I've had to say two years ago my husband and I purchased printer toner for my son's kindergarten class because the teacher received the allotted amount for the year and was not allowed to get toner. I still have the piece of paper that I was printed a 'thank you' letter on. Clearly there's an issue with supplies, whether it's paper, which is very limited within the schools. Almost everything they do is printed via the copy machines or in the classrooms. There don't seem to be workbooks anymore where they can simply tear out the page to distribute to the child. At School 2 we have not had a technology teacher for this entire school year and I believe most of last year. There are other schools that have two technology teachers. Our students are supposed to take the PARCC test and STAR assessment on computers and have limited access into actually learning how to utilize the computers correctly. That's an issue. To piggyback off what Gladys had said, there is a large problem with the youth of Paterson not having enough resources to help them move forward, become productive adults, and be proficient and college-ready. There needs to be more with the recreation for the

children. Most times I'm unaware that anything is going on unless I go directly to the Department of Recreation. I know that someone does work for the Department of Education with the Paterson Recreation and he gets paid a nice large salary. I'm not quite sure where that salary is being justified if parents aren't being made aware of recreation services available to the children. If you go on to the Paterson website and you do see the recreation, some of the forms and flyers say to refer to the City of Paterson Recreation Department website. If we're paying such a large amount for the recreation services it should be easier access and we shouldn't have to go from page to page and website to website. I just feel that our children need more. My understanding is the standards are lower in Paterson. I had my daughter evaluated. She's in sixth grade and her grade equivalent for basic reading is in the fourth grade and the fourth month, which is considered average for her peers. She's in sixth grade. It is not average to be two full grade levels behind in the sixth grade. We need more for our children, whether it's extra tutoring after school or educational programs during the summer. There needs to be something because our children are failing. We lived in Fairlawn. She struggled to get C's and D's. We moved to Paterson and all my children are on the honor roll. I don't believe they should be on the honor roll, especially my daughter, because she struggles. Homework takes hours and her grades to me aren't justified. But I keep hearing everything is fine and we're moving along. It's not fine. There's a gap somewhere. She hasn't had a math teacher all year. He comes in once a week and he's on medical leave. That position should be filled. She shouldn't have a substitute for four out of five days a week just handing out dittos and not providing math instruction. Thank you.

Comm. Irving: Thank you so much. Please make sure we get your information because we want to get those responses to you as soon as possible.

Ms. Margaret Padilla: I have one question. What can you do as a Board to change the rule or plan that charters keep the money provided for the child who is sent back to the public schools in Paterson?

Comm. Irving: Thank you. We'll work on getting that response.

Ms. Sailys Cabral: Good evening Board members. May I get an opportunity to just ask a question?

Comm. Irving: Just so you know, we're not going to give a response tonight.

Ms. Cabral: I'm not expecting one. There are certain schools that do have after-school programs. I would like to know how these after school programs are funded and how they are being monitored to see that they're running properly. I can speak on behalf of School 19. There's an after-school program, but it's not enriching for the children. It's basically babysitting. I would like to know moving forward if we can look into the funds that are being used for after-school programs and if they can be monitored properly so that they can be a functioning after-school program. Because of the lack of after-school programs that we have we've raised money ourselves. It's a math/science program that our school offers for our children. It's only offered once a week. The children have such a wonderful time and we'd just like to see how we can further enrich these programs and bring them to the schools. If we have to raise more money or we can just look further into the actual programs, we have to better enrich those programs and not make them a babysitting program for our children. That's all. Thank you.

Comm. Irving: Thank you so much.

**It was moved by Comm. Redmon, 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.**

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Comm. Irving: I just want to remind all the folks who gave questions that we're going to ensure that you get a response. At this point, I just want to ask Ms. Shafer to share the process that we're going to give to the community that the administration has done for the Board.

Ms. Shafer: I'm just going to pass out to the Board members all of the budget priorities that you went over last week. The Cabinet, along with the Superintendent, met. We identified an administrator who is responsible for that particular area and then the action or where we are. The first category says 'underway.' Either we're pursuing this or it's under way. We agree and we're working on it. As you move on to the third page, it talks about funding, if funding becomes available. There are a few items on that page. Then on the last page there are some of the items that we will look to do in the future. Then we have two items in the category of 'other.' It gives you an opportunity to take a look at it. If you have any other suggestions, we'll certainly take them and add them to the list.

Comm. Irving: I'd like to make sure that this document is public at the next Board meeting as well so that the folks in the community have a list of the questions. This is the format in which the folks in the community will get responses, which will have the priority, the community member indicated, the administrator responsible, and the action/steps that will be taken in order to be addressed. Are there any other questions regarding this? I want to remind everyone of what the process for the next few weeks is going to be like.

Comm. Hodges: I'm particularly disturbed about that last young lady talking about the grade level. I really want to delve into that deeply in the future. That's a major concern and I will be harassing people about that very shortly. If you're being told that you're at the sixth grade level and in fact you're being tested at the fourth grade level and you're considered as normal, that's a problem.

Comm. Irving: I want to make clear to everyone in the audience that the next conversation on the budget will be on March 15. The introduction will be on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and then there will be hearings on the 29<sup>th</sup> and then hearings on the 7<sup>th</sup> as well. The administration has also provided for the Board a schedule that delineates all the dates that we're talking about. We'll make sure we get the additional flyers for the hearings.

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.