

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

July 12, 2012 – 6:34 p.m.
Administrative Offices

Presiding: Comm. Christopher Irving, President

Present:
Dr. Donnie Evans, State District Superintendent

Comm. Chrystal Cleaves
*Comm. Wendy Guzman
Comm. Jonathan Hodges
Comm. Errol Kerr

Comm. Manuel Martinez
*Comm. Alex Mendez
Comm. Kenneth Simmons, Vice President
Comm. Corey Teague

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

Comm. Simmons read the Open Public Meetings Act:

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

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

**Special Meeting
July 12, 2012 at 6:30 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.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF:

Policy on Student Uniforms

Comm. Hodges: Board need to encourage the Principals and Parents.

Comm. Irving: On the next Board meeting we will have a resolution to vote on student uniform.

* Comm. Guzman enters the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Board Comments at Meetings

Comm. Irving: Had conversation before with Superintendent to remove Board comments from the agenda, which he did remove from agenda. But now Board members will like for it to be put back on Agenda. Let's go around the table and receive comments from each board member to find out who will agree to place it back.

Comm. Cleaves: I agree, but if we do we need to stay on target with the Board comments. Meaning I have a problem that if we are talking about an item for discussion we do so, but do not wait until we go around for the vote and then discuss it again. At that point we should vote on it. We do have committee meetings, workshops and regular meetings. Therefore, we can ask questions at committee meetings and also at workshop, at that point we should be able to vote at the regular Board meeting.

Comm. Guzman: I agree with Comm. Cleaves, we have plenty of time for discussion at committee meetings, workshop meeting and then vote at regular meeting. I suggest maybe to have the Agenda on TV before the meetings that way parents/community know ahead of time what they are been discuss at our board meetings.

Comm. Teague: I agree. We as Board members we get lots of calls from parents/community they expect us to know and have answers to their questions. We need to be informed on what is going on in our District.

Comm. Mendez: Yes, I agree with Comm. Teague. We to receive lots of calls from parent/community and it will help us get their answer.

Comm. Martinez: Yes, I agree.

Comm. Kerr: Yes, I will like to put it back on agenda.

Comm. Simmons: I agree with Comm. Cleaves and Comm. Guzman. We need to focus on any questions/concerns at the committee meetings and workshops. We need to cut down the hours in our regular meetings when we have all our questions/concerns answered at the workshop session. Other districts board meetings go for no more than 3 hours.

*Comm. Mendez enters the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

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

There were four speakers from the public.

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

RESOLUTIONS FOR A VOTE:

Resolution No. 1

BE IT RESOLVED, that the list of bills dated 06/29/2012, in the grand sum of \$14,773,843.78 starting with check number 176282 ending with check number 176842, to be approved for payment.

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

It was moved by Comm. Mendez, seconded by Comm. Martinez that Resolution No. 1 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Hodges who voted no. The motion carried.

Resolution No. 2

BE IT RESOLVED, that the list of bills dated 07/03/2012, in the grand sum of \$387,838.27 starting with check number 176843 ending with check number 176845, to be approved for payment.

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that check numbers 176846-176849 be approved for payment in the amount of \$221,208.49, for a grand sum of \$609,046.76.

It was moved by Comm. Mendez, seconded by Comm. Simmons that Resolution No. 2 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Hodges who voted no. The motion carried.

Resolution No. 3

Approve transfer of funds within the 2011-2012 school year budget for the month of May 2012.

WHEREAS, the New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:23A-2.3(d)-(h) requires the Board Secretary and the Board of Education to certify that no budgetary line item account has been over-expended and that sufficient funds are available to meet the District's financial obligations, all transfers were fully executed consistent with code and policy prior to obligating funds; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approve transfer of funds within the 2011-2012 school year budget, for the month of May 2012, so that no budgetary line item account has been over-expended and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations, as requested by various budget managers, and as identified in the list of transfers attached hereto and made a part of the minutes. Furthermore, the transfers were approved by the Department of Education.

It was moved by Comm. Mendez, seconded by Comm. Martinez that Resolution No. 3 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Cleaves and Comm. Hodges who voted no. The motion carried.

Resolution No. 4

WHEREAS, NJSA 18A:21-2, NJSA 18A:7G-31, and NJSA 18A:7F-41 permit a Board of Education to establish and/or deposit into certain reserve accounts at year end; and

WHEREAS, the aforementioned statutes authorize procedures (Title 6A:23A-14), under the authority of the Commissioner of Education, which permit a Board of Education to transfer unanticipated excess current revenue or unexpended appropriations into reserve accounts during the month of June by board resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Paterson Board of Education has previously established a Capital Reserve, a Maintenance Reserve and an Emergency Reserve; and

WHEREAS, the Paterson Board of Education wishes to establish one more additional reserve, a Tuition Reserve; and

WHEREAS, the Paterson Board of Education wishes to transfer unanticipated excess current year revenue or unexpended appropriations from the general fund into the four Reserve accounts on or before June 30, 2012 pending on available surplus; and

WHEREAS, the Paterson Board of Education has determined that an amount not to exceed \$21,000,000 is available for such purpose of transfers not exceeding:

- \$14,000,000 for the Maintenance Reserve
- \$4,000,000 for the Tuition Reserve
- \$2,000,000 for the Capital Reserve
- \$1,000,000 for the Emergency Reserve; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Paterson Board of Education, that it hereby authorizes the district's School Business Administrator to establish the Tuition Reserve; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, by the Paterson Board of Education, that it further authorizes the district's School Business Administrator to make said transfers consistent with all applicable laws and regulations in an amount not to exceed \$21,000,000; not exceeding \$14,000,000 for the Maintenance Reserve, \$4,000,000 for the Tuition Reserve, \$2,000,000 for the Capital Reserve, and \$1,000,000 for the Emergency Reserve; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, this resolution shall take effect with the approval signature of the State District Superintendent.

It was moved by Comm. Mendez, seconded by Comm. Martinez that Resolution No. 4 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Hodges who voted no. The motion carried.

Resolution No. 5

WHEREAS, Paterson Public Schools are required by New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:23-2.11-5(c).4(iii)-(vi) to prepare monthly Financial Statements; and

WHEREAS, the School Business Administrator has prepared and presented the Board Secretary Report A-148 and the Report of the Treasurer A-149 including the cash reconciliation for the month of May 2012;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Paterson Public Schools acknowledge receipt of and accept the Monthly Financial Reports for May 2012; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Paterson Public Schools hereby incorporates the Monthly Financial Reports for the fiscal period ending May 2012, as part of the minutes of this meeting and note the public discussion of same for the minutes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the School Business Administrator be directed to forward to the County Superintendent the minutes together with the Monthly Financial Reports; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall take effect upon its adoption.

It was moved by Comm. Martinez, seconded by Comm. Mendez that Resolution No. 5 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

Resolution No. 6

WHEREAS, approving the Stillwell-Hansen service contract supports the Bright Futures Strategic Plan 2009-2014 Priority IV: Efficient and Responsive Operations, Goal 3: Increase Capacity; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 18A:18A-5a(19) the District is allowed to procure goods and/or services for the “*support and maintenance of proprietary computer software and hardware*” by resolution at a public meeting without public advertising for bids and bidding; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Technology has determined the need to procure annual maintenance service for the Liebert Uninterruptible Power Systems (UPS) and Standard Air Conditioning System to protect the District Mission Critical Servers and associated equipment located in the Network Operation Center. This operation supports the District Business, Educational System as well as Email, Internet and all technology based equipment, and

WHEREAS, the Stillwell-Hansen maintenance agreement will allow the Technology Department access to the following services: A/C Comprehensive Full Service (APL), UPS essential service including guaranteed 4-hour response 24 hours/day, 7 days/week, emergency service, labor and travel, parts and preventive maintenance, corrective maintenance; and

WHEREAS, the procurement of the Stillwell-Hansen maintenance agreement constitutes proprietary hardware applicable to Technology Department operations, which includes maintenance of the following hardware: Uninterruptible Power Systems/Stationary Battery Systems (to maintain power in the event of an electrical power failure) and Air Conditioning System (which maintains constant temperature in the Network Operating Center preventing overheating); and

WHEREAS, Stillwell-Hansen has been the only sales and service representative for the Liebert Corporation and the maintenance agreement fee for Stillwell-Hansen is \$29,960.00; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Paterson Public Schools approves this resolution to Stillwell-Hansen so they meet the needs of the district by providing the necessary Maintenance Agreement to the Department of Technology for the 2012-2013 school year in the amount of not to exceed \$29,960.00.

This resolution shall take effect with the approval signature of the State District Superintendent.

<p>Stillwell-Hansen, Inc. 3 Fernwood Avenue PO Box 7820 Edison, NJ 08818-7820 Attn: Nancy Toye</p>

Not to exceed \$29,960.00

It was moved by Comm. Martinez, seconded by Comm. Mendez that Resolution No. 6 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, except Comm. Hodges who passed, Comm. Mendez who voted no, and Comm. Teague who abstained. The motion carried.

Resolution No. 7

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public School District has applied and been awarded a reduced amount of funds for expenditures supporting implementation of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act; and

WHEREAS, the State has approved and awarded the Paterson Public School District \$15,307.00 in support of the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights Act (P.L. 2010, c122); and

WHEREAS, the Paterson Public School District will comply with the terms and conditions, and will apply the funds accordingly; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Paterson Public School Board accepts the reduced amount of \$15,307.00 in lieu of the originated amount of \$74,684.00. The funds will be applied towards a percentage of 2011-2012 expenditures incurred for the Zone Program.

It was moved by Comm. Cleaves, seconded by Comm. Guzman that Resolution No. 7 be adopted. On roll call all members voted as follows:

Comm. Cleaves: Yes.

Comm. Guzman: Yes.

Comm. Hodges: No.

Comm. Kerr: No.

Comm. Martinez: Yes.

Comm. Mendez: No.

Comm. Simmons: No.

Comm. Teague: No.

Comm. Irving: No.

The motion did not carry.

Resolution No. 8

WHEREAS, once during the year the District removes all stale dated outstanding checks from the Payroll Agency Account and transferred to the District General Fund for the prior year; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the following checks listed and attached to this action be removed from the Payroll Agency Account to the District General Fund and be made a part of the minutes.

It was moved by Comm. Guzman, seconded by Comm. Mendez that Resolution No. 8 be adopted. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

Resolution No. 9

WHEREAS, the Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS) was founded to promote school district transformation for high student achievement, and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Center for Reform of School Systems is to teach board members and superintendents how to transform their districts for high student achievement and has established itself as the premier provider of governance training for district leadership teams across the country, and

WHEREAS, CRSS trains school district leadership teams – through better governance – to meet the education challenges of the 21st century, and

WHEREAS, CRSS' flagship service is the highly rated Reform Governance in Action (RGA) program to dramatically improve student achievement and eliminate the achievement gap by guiding and assisting school boards and superintendents to become more effective reform leaders, and

WHEREAS, the school board's instrument for reform is board policy, participating teams will develop, adopt, and implement the following policies and practices:

- A clear statement of the board's core beliefs and commitments to guide all board actions.
- Policies and practices for effective and efficient board meetings focused on student achievement and an effective structure for board committees and workshops.
- An effective constituent service system that eliminates board micromanagement.
- Effective management and financial oversight practices to assure effective and efficient operations and maintain a clear line between the board's governance responsibility and the superintendent's management authority.
- Reform policies aligned with the district's core beliefs and strategic plan.
- Data dashboard will be developed, adopted and implemented to monitor indicators of district performance.

- Superintendent's evaluation will be developed and executed.
- Effective board communication with internal and external constituents on the above.

WHEREAS, the work is divided into four phases: a Building Blocks phase; a Reform Leadership: Theory of Action phase; a Reform Policies phase; and a Sustainability phase, and

WHEREAS, accepting participation in the Reform Governance in Action (RGA) program support all aspects of the district's priorities and goals in its Bright Futures Strategic Plan 2009-2014, and

WHEREAS, participants will be committed to attend four institutes and ten on-site work sessions over a 24-month period, now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Paterson Board of Education approves participation in the Reform Governance in Action program offered by the Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS), during a 24-month commitment, to build a strong and effective board/superintendent team focused on creating a school system with high levels of student achievement, at a total cost of \$280,000.00, with anticipation that CRSS will assume part of the cost.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Paterson Board of Education approves attendance at the CRSS RGA Training Program in Santa Fe, New Mexico, July 19-23, 2012, at an estimated amount of \$25,000.00. This program is to be funded by private revenues not connected to the general fund budget, tax levy, state or federal funds.

It was moved by Comm. Guzman, seconded by Comm. Cleaves that Resolution No. 9 be adopted.

Dr. Evans: ...a lot of reforms that got national acclaim is the author of this work and runs the center. But part of the training is there and part of it is here. Some of it doesn't involve any travel and some of it we may have to get in our cars and drive to Syracuse, New York because there are three districts involved at the same time.

On roll call all members voted in the affirmative, but each Commissioner abstained on their own name. The motion carried.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF:

District Office Reorganization

Comm. Irving: Let's go back to Item A, District Office Reorganization. What I'd like to do is allow Dr. Evans the opportunity to go over that. We will have as much discussion as we can legally and publicly and we'll all know when we reach that point. When we get to the point of the personnel matters we'll have to motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel.

Dr. Evans: One of the items on the transformation plan that was recently developed is the reorganization of the district office. The rationale is explained in part in the document that you have. In fact, we've had one discussion preliminary to putting this in final form a couple of months ago. Since that time it wasn't in final form. We were working on it but I gave you an update. I need to tell you there are still a couple of

areas where we still will have to do some additional work. I'll explain where and why as I get to those. Let me give you the context for this reorganization. I'll start with two items that are in your Board packets. One is a memorandum from two district superintendents from Barbara Gentworth. The subject is implementation of ESEA flexibility in the 2012-2013 school year. What that memo does is explain the waiver that the Department of Education successfully secured from the US Department of Education. This is a waiver to many of the provisions of No Child Left Behind. This is the waiver that created priority schools and focus schools. We no longer have to identify schools as being in need of improvement as we have. The memo explains that and I put it in your packets for you to refer to later and to read. It came a couple of days ago even though it's dated July 10. That was a couple of days ago so I decided when I was reading it myself yesterday to bring it to you today so that you could read it later. One of the questions you had is how does the waiver impact on what we do with our low-performing schools. This explains what the waiver is all about. But this is also part of the context or the backdrop for the reorganization. The second item that you have is one that you requested. Actually, I think Comm. Simmons requested that I share it with the Board. It's a summary report for the QSRs, the Quality School Reviews that were done for four of our priority schools. I mentioned recently to Dr. Hodges that the reviews had already been done and learned that there were several who weren't aware that the reviews had been done. Actually, the first one was a month and a half ago. But you have four reports there reflecting those reviews and I would strongly encourage you to read those reports because it provides very strong evidence for major change in at least three of the four schools that are mentioned there. Fortunately, we're already making many of those changes. When I read this report yesterday and read some parts of it again today it was very clear to me that in a couple of cases we need to go back and make sure we've done enough because some of the things that they found there we were aware of and obviously we made changes because we were aware of them. But still, I just want to make sure we're going far enough to address some of organizational school culture issues and a number of the things they mentioned in those reports. But that is an additional piece that provides a backdrop or context for some of the reorganization that is taking place. So I would encourage you to read that and reread it if you have to because there is some information in there that you really need to understand and embrace. Reorganization also occurs for four other reasons. One has to do with the need to realign district staff and responsibilities with the school improvement initiatives that we are either already implementing this year or are adding to the array of offerings or initiatives for next year. For those there needs to be district level support, district level supervisory staff, directors, and assistant superintendents in place to support these initiatives in the way that they need to be supported. When I say support I'm talking about both providing professional development, providing oversight to make sure things are being implemented as they're supposed to be implemented, in some cases modeling activities, working with principals to make sure that the leadership that's necessary is in place and principals are performing their instructional leadership responsibilities in a responsible way. We need to make sure that we have staff in line to address them. One of the items you're going to see in three of these reports is that in a couple of cases that's an issue. We've corrected that with this reorganization in terms of having appropriate staff for some of the newer initiatives or some of the areas of concern that those QSR teams observed when they went into the schools. So making sure we have staff aligned with our initiatives is one major reason for it. Secondly, we have some high priority initiatives that we've either had on the drawing board and are not implementing them, or we've been implementing them for three years now such as full service community schools. One of the things we have to be very careful about is that as we add initiatives we begin to stretch people very thinly and it takes away from some of the things that we're doing. We don't want to do that. We don't want to water down the support that we're providing for some of the initiatives that are yielding the

kinds of results that we are getting. So making sure that our high-priority initiatives continue to have the support they need while making sure we have the structure and support in place for the newer initiatives that we're implementing. The Effective Schools model, creating healthy school cultures is actually taking on new meaning since culture is part of the focus for priority and focus schools. School culture is one of the dimensions that they are now measuring. Fortunately, we've been implementing the Effective Schools model since 2009. So we can't lose sight of that and make sure that we're doing that with fidelity.

Comm. Hodges: What do you mean by school culture?

Dr. Evans: School culture is the way things are done in the school. Let's get specific with some examples. What are the expectations of everyone in the setting? What are the expectations of students, teachers, administrators, parents, and everyone associated with that school? An organizational or school culture dimension would include what the expectations are. What are the rules of engagement or the rules of the road? What are the roles and responsibilities of the people there? Feeling tone is also another. If you go to a school and you don't feel comfortable or welcomed that means you don't have a healthy school culture. A healthy school culture is one that is welcoming. I actually have hard copy information I can give you. That's what our Effective Schools model is about, by the way.

Comm. Hodges: How does one measure that?

Dr. Evans: By asking the people in the setting - asking the teachers, asking the students, asking the parents, and asking the non-instructional support staff in the school. That's how we measure it. We just did a survey of all our schools on that. But let me go through the contextual piece and then we can come back to that. The last focus of the reorganization was reduction. One of the things that we know that as capacity among our district level staff, our school level staff, principals, vice principals, teachers and so on, as their capacity increases then there's less of a demand to have as many people as we have at the district office. District offices exist for two big reasons. Number one, to make sure that people are doing what they're supposed to be doing out in the schools or if they're in departments at the district office to help facilitate a lot of what's happening in the school, to make sure they're doing what they're doing. The other is a major support function. Professional development is a support function, helping people to work through issues, budgets, and so on. Evaluation and helping people to do those things is a support function. So it's both support, but it's monitoring and some would call it compliance. I don't like to use the word compliance, but in reality sometimes that's what it comes down to. As our staff's ability increases to perform the job that they have, the less they need someone there providing additional professional development or monitoring because they're doing the job right the first time. So the premise here is then as you build capacity among school level staff you need fewer district level staff to monitor and provide that professional development. You still need district level staff. Don't get me wrong. There are functions that have to be performed by someone outside the school. So reducing over time as that capacity builds is part of the motivation for the reorganization as well. The substance of the reorganization is represented in the memorandum and the organizational chart that's attached to it in the material that was sent to you. It includes revisions to the divisions, realignment of positions within divisions, and the recreation of the departments. Actually, some departments were torn apart and then built differently to provide support for some things that we didn't have in place a year or two ago. It includes restructuring the cabinet even at the senior level. We did some restructuring and made some major changes. There were some reassignments that resulted both at the cabinet level and supervisory level

and among principals to make sure that we were addressing some issues that needed to be addressed. We had some vacant positions that we've had vacant for some time, some for almost two years now. We've been without a general counsel for almost two years. We're filling those critical roles now. So that's a part of this reorganization as well. The detailed list you have and I think that's probably where you have some questions with regards to some of the information. We can get into those specific questions that are unique to individuals at least in executive session, but you may have some general questions about some of it as part of this public conversation. I will say to you as reflected in the last paragraph additional reassignments of supervisory staff will be made as the 2012-2013 school year progresses. There are at least three departments that I'm still looking at. One is obviously special education. We are still going through the study that Montclair did. We've implemented parts of that already as it relates to staff, but there's some additional work that Mr. Peron and I need to do to make sure that we're addressing areas to help us accelerate student achievement while making sure that our programs are in compliance with state and federal laws in that area. Secondly, I received yesterday a copy of the English Language Learner program, the study that the University of Pittsburgh did for us. I haven't even read the whole study myself. I'm going to continue reading it. It's pretty thick. I'm going to continue reading it tomorrow and into the weekend and will have a better feel of what they are recommending as well. So that has clear implications for what we do with the English Language Learner programs. Those are two big ones that we're still looking at and will be influenced by those studies. As a result we didn't necessarily make this public tonight because I know some aspects of it are going to change and I didn't necessarily want to put in the public a document that changes as soon as Ms. Peron and I get together and determine how we're going to implement certain aspects of it. Generally speaking it's close to being in final form. There is also some costing out that's being done to make sure we are within the appropriate parameters as it relates to the cost of district administration. There are some parameters that are clearly established that we're working with the department on to make sure we're within those as well. With that I'll stop and if there are specific questions that you have that are not unique to individuals then now is the time. But for individuals we have to do that in executive session.

Comm. Irving: I have some but I'll hold mine until everyone goes around.

Comm. Hodges: My questions really pertain to this QSR review. I'm very troubled by this. First of all, I need to know who these people are, these so-called experts, so that I can convince myself that in fact they're experts. That's number one. I'd like to know who did this. I notice that they interviewed some teachers, parents, and administrators because you mentioned climate. We've been told by the teaching staff that their morale is low because of contract negotiations. Might that be some sort of reflection? Is their interview placed in the context into this report? That's the problem with having outside people coming in and doing these things. They don't know what's going on in the school district. So when you read a report like this you don't know why some of the responses you receive are responses that you receive, because they don't have the context. That's why I need to know who these people are and under what circumstances they engaged these people and when in order to make any sense of this at all. I guess I'd like to have that kind of information. These are not the RACs as I understand it because they haven't paid for the RACs. This is something else.

Comm. Irving: They prematurely came.

Comm. Hodges: But the question is who...

Comm. Irving: Who authorized that?

Comm. Hodges: Yes, because it looks like you didn't authorize it. Who paid for these people to come here and for what reason, is my question, so I can better understand the context of how this was done and why and what this is saying to me. Those are the questions that I'm seeking to understand. I haven't read this obviously because we just received it now.

Comm. Teague: I'm trying to find out what role we actually play in this process because I think I read a letter that you sent us that was forwarded to the County Executive Superintendent and to the State Department of Education. In that letter it basically said that they make the final decision or approval of this. So I'm wondering, if we don't really have say-so as to the approval of it, what's the need for an executive session?

Dr. Evans: Because you have questions. I've been informed that individual Board members have questions about some of the individuals who were either appointed into new positions or some of the changes that were made. Those conversations when we talk specifically about individuals have to be in executive session.

Comm. Teague: So it's kind of a question and answer. Will those concerns be addressed? You say a certain person is not capable for a position. Will that be honored? Will you say you will not put that person there? Do we actually have any say-so?

Dr. Evans: You don't, but I listen and I have made changes when things I didn't know about were called to my attention. But the reality is I make the decision and then for any administrative appointment from director on up it has to go to the Commissioner for approval. So the Commissioner really is the final approval.

Comm. Teague: Okay. That's what I was trying to figure out.

Comm. Mendez: Dr. Evans, the positions that we see vacant in this draft, are those positions still vacant?

Dr. Evans: Yes. If they're vacant on the organization chart they're still vacant. That's correct.

Comm. Mendez: You mentioned that you conducted a survey to create a culture of schools. Is that going to be district-wide in every school?

Dr. Evans: It actually went out in June. It went to 25% of the parents in every school and to every faculty member in every school. Depending on the size of the school it was either 100% of the students or 25% of the students in larger schools and then every instructional support person, such as institutional aides, secretaries, and so forth. They were asked to complete it. This was all done through an online mechanism and the response was very large. But they were rating their individual school. It was set up in such a way that it went on and asked them questions that ultimately took them to the survey for their school. The surveys are all the same, but obviously they're aligned with each individual school. We have that information. In fact, I have a spreadsheet with the results on it that I'm reading through now and trying to get a sense of where our schools are based on those surveys. But it tells us ratings on a number of questions that are a part of our Effective Schools dimension on things like expectation, rules and regulations. Are they clear? What are the roles and responsibilities? Are they clear? Do parents feel welcomed into the school? Do students feel a part of the school?

Comm. Mendez: It's a big issue in some of those schools.

Dr. Evans: Exactly. After I go through it and make meaning of them myself obviously I'll be sharing them with staff and with the Board.

Comm. Mendez: If you don't mind, I'd definitely like to have a copy of that survey that you conducted. I'd like to see it and read it.

Comm. Kerr: Going through this reorganization list here I noticed many positions here you have executive director. Some of the positions that you have executive director you don't have a director following that executive director. What makes a person an executive director and no rank of director comes below that executive director?

Dr. Evans: In the cases where you're seeing executive director and you don't have that staff it means they were in a position where they were responsible for directors and they may have been reassigned away from that or to another area of responsibility that goes beyond the level of responsibility that directors have, but not enough to be at the assistant superintendent or chief level. That's the distinction between a director and executive director. Executive directors have directors reporting to them or their responsibilities go beyond the job responsibilities that we associate with the typical director positions.

Comm. Kerr: It's kind of strange to me. I have difficulty understanding that schematic. When you use that designation it's one of rank. So you don't have an executive director if a rank of director doesn't follow that person. In terms of pay, the executive director has a different scale from a director.

Dr. Evans: Actually, we use the director scale and we add an additional amount at each one of the steps. If a person is at the same level in terms of years of experience and so on for director and we elevate that to executive director, at the same years of experience there is a salary enhancement at that particular level because it's additional responsibility.

Joe: (Comments made away from the microphone)

Dr. Evans: It's a higher pay scale because it's a higher level of responsibility. Executive directors have more responsibility than directors.

Comm. Kerr: I did ask for a job description for all these positions so we can clearly delineate where one ends and where the other starts. I did not get that yet, but I hope that going forward we will get it so we will have a better understanding of positions.

Dr. Evans: Yes, you will get it.

Comm. Irving: I had the opportunity yesterday and today for three hours because I had a layover in St. Louis, Missouri to really try to absorb as much of this reorganizational chart as possible. As far as what's said here there are a few things that stuck out to me. Number one is the vacancies. We have an astronomical amount of vacancies on that organizational chart and it's beyond sad that we are able to function the way we do with not having the necessary staff. I think I counted almost 20-something vacancies going through the four different directors or unit heads and the offices in which they're in charge of. With that said, and this is to Dr. Newell's office through the Superintendent, I'd like to see a report of all the current vacancies and the length of time that they have

been vacant. I think that then puts our foot to the fire in saying we have to do something about this. It's absolutely irresponsible on our part to leave positions vacated. If funding is the issue, then funding is the issue. But if funding is not the issue then we need to be filling those positions. These are people who should be doing work in these jobs. They're not doing this work in these jobs. To Comm. Kerr's point, we're promoting folks to executive director positions before we're filling folks who are really doing the ground level elbow grease work associated with the jobs in respective positions that they have. The other concern that I wanted to express as much as I can here is about the reorganization chart. I think this reorganization chart actually makes sense. Out of all the reorganization charts that we've been given this is probably the one that makes the most sense with regard to a clear track of staff persons responsible and the clear track of the folks who are account to them. I do have some questions with regards to how people fall in. But there are some areas that are ambiguous and you have to put them where they are. But with that said, there are still positions that I'm looking at and there are jobs and roles that play a crucial role to the development and growth in this district. Those positions do not have the necessary support in order to do so. Case in point, in our guidance department we do not have an assistant director of guidance or an associate director of guidance. We don't and it's absolutely ridiculous that in this organization chart I'm looking at positions that have been created and that have come forth and we're expecting one guy to be in charge of the guidance department for an entire district of 30,000 kids. It makes no sense. Even at the parent community engagement we have one director and no assistant or associate director. With all due respect to Mr. McDowell and his staff, the truth of the matter is there is a certain capacity gap that exists in that office. I certainly hear and understand that there are positions that need to be filled. But when I see vacancies and we're not earmarking that money to fill the positions but yet we have crucial on the ground staff who can and do work that can tangentially affect numbers from year to year and we don't equip those folks it makes me really wonder what are our priorities and values. Those areas in particular stuck out to me as I'm going through the organization chart. I do want to talk about that in closed session, in particular those three areas, guidance, for all those reasons that you just talked about before, Dr. Hodges, but also for our family and community engagement department. We have to think about what capacity do our departments have and what propensity do they have to continue to do. If we don't have the capacity, then we don't have the propensity.

Dr. Evans: To speak to at least one, maybe three of the comments, one was related to guidance and the other to the vacancies, for some of those positions the vacancies were created by actions associated with this reorganization chart. People were actually reassigned because they simply weren't getting the job done. Keep in mind that we have various levels. Let me give you an example. Supervisors, vice principals, and department chairs are the same level. They're all considered supervisor level people. We may have had a district office supervisor for whom I or other staff was dissatisfied with the quality of work we were getting but this people had high potential for being either a vice principal or a department chair. So they were moved out of the position where we weren't getting the production that we want and we felt we could get it in a different role. So, some of those positions were created for that reason. In other cases there are some people who simply have not been reassigned because we so far haven't found a good fit for them yet. But the position is vacant because we want a highly qualified person in that role.

Comm. Irving: I absolutely agree. But with all due respect, I remember looking at the old chart you gave us. I'm not going to take that for granted until I see some document that clearly states how long those positions have been vacated. Is it six months?

Clearly that's what we're talking about with three months, but if we're talking about a year or two that's a whole different monster that we're dealing with.

Comm. Hodges: This isn't confidential. Is it, Dr. Evans? I'm talking about the QSR.

Dr. Evans: Actually, it's not. It came to us from the Department of Education.

Comm. Hodges: Okay, because I just read this. I have two small points.

Dr. Evans: I might point out district office is mentioned in there.

Comm. Hodges: I have two small points before I get to this. You have not read this. I'm about to. If you're going to make a move around the guidance department, Dr. Evans, one of the things I would strongly suggest is that the guidance counselors be removed from the control of the individual principals and placed under a person who's in charge of guidance so that person can dictate what kinds of things they want the guidance department to do. It's been a travesty. We have questionable practices in our guidance departments which may not be of immediate concerns to principals because they have so many other things to do. But if you want an effective guidance department that follows a particular regiment, then they should be responsible to someone who has that guidance background. Principals don't necessarily do that. It's been reflected time and time again by the information that our students receive from guidance counselors, such as if you get 900 you don't need to take the SAT over again. We've had numerous students told this in the school district which is outrageous. It's the same thing for the parent liaisons, who quite frankly should be under the control of the Parent Resource Center. That way they won't be used as a gofer, secretary, to copy, or whatever. They have a responsibility to their true function, which is to involve themselves in parental concerns and trying to engage parents. It's not what the principals hired them for, which is why you have the people that you have. You can't get around that because they hire them with one intent in mind and the district's purpose and the reason that they're here is something entirely different. As a result you get the staff that you have. As I mentioned before, we have not read this yet. This was on our desk. The reason I'm so concerned is we're basing our responses in part to these reviews. Let me read you what the review says.

Comm. Irving: Let's make sure we focus here before you read that statement.

Comm. Hodges: This is a summary for School 6 and there's history here because the rumored individual who's in charge of all this used to be a principal in this district and left. That's something for personnel. "The school culture and atmosphere are bankrupt. The school is disenfranchised from the district. While the community feels safe in this school, the unhealthy learning environment is corrupt and it is a major problem waiting to ignite. The entire school community has no respect for themselves and the students in particular. Students are acting out of response to how they are disrespectfully treated and taught. Tardiness and absences are reported as responses to the school's failure as well as destructive bathroom behavior," whatever that means. "The environment is not conducive and supportive for learning. The students are requesting sensible and responsible learning and recognize the fallacy in their conversations with adults, particularly the leadership of the school." I don't know what that means either. "Teachers and adult interactions are condescending, demeaning, and not conducive to learning, thinking, and higher order thinking skills. Students are not regarded as trustworthy, responsible, and intellectually competent." This is a sentence from a so-called educational expert. "The Run-D-MC lecture, where students were removed from instruction for an unplanned and unorganized, impromptu more than two-hour

soliloquy,” whatever that means. “If staff were considerate of the needs of their students they would not have exposed them to this assembly. This alone is indicative of the staff’s lack of respect for learning.”

Comm. Guzman: That’s one page.

Comm. Hodges: I have been highly critical and will continue to be highly critical of what has gone on in this school district educationally. I have been critical particularly of some neighborhoods in this district. But I will tell you, Dr. Evans, as my initial comments suggested, which I haven’t even read that, who does the evaluations is extremely important as well as when they’re done. Let’s say that was valid. School 15, New Roberto Clemente, School 13, School 28 were in an uproar over the reform plan. These were all done in that intervening period on May 22, May 30, June 4 and 5 when this whole community – and quite frankly I had a part in that deliberately – was in turmoil around this issue. So what these so-called raters are going to glean from those interactions is going to be questionable. In addition to that, you have a teacher contract where they’ve come and told you that their morale is low and they’re concerned about a wide variety of issues. So you can’t look at that as an honest and true gauge of what’s happening in the building. But this vitriol about the community is disgraceful. I really need to know who these people are. I need to have them explain this to me so that I have a better understanding of what their concerns were and what they saw.

Comm. Irving: Dr. Evans, is it possible that we can invite the evaluators of this for a special meeting?

Comm. Hodges: I would love to have them here.

Comm. Irving: I think they deserve the right to defend the comments which they have made and I think this Board deserves the right to question the statements which they have used.

Comm. Hodges: Only because our actions are going to be based on what this...

Comm. Irving: This foolishness.

Comm. Hodges: This report is a better way of characterizing it. I’m sorry, this is disgraceful. This is an insult.

Comm. Irving: Here’s what I would do, and Cheryl would make this happen, I would ask for you to communicate to the Commissioner’s office that the Board has several questions with regards to this QSR review. I will personally send an invitation to the Commissioner’s office and to the DOE. I can’t even say who the heck in the office did it because there is no office that’s in place. But at least to reach out to the Commissioner’s office to ask for whomever was the reviewers who did this review to maybe come in August and sit with us and discuss this. Stuff like this is what warrants much conversation because that will become a public document.

Comm. Kerr: Before the report was issued was there a conversation with the leadership of the district, Dr. Evans?

Dr. Evans: Actually, a meeting is being scheduled with me and the individual who we think is going to be appointed, if not already appointed because we aren’t sure yet, as being the executive director for the RAC that serves Bergen and Passaic Counties. That meeting will take place within the next two or three weeks. That’s on the agenda.

I have questions about it as well. Out of that meeting can come an engagement once I get a sense of what's going on, hear what he has to say, and then whether or not he's willing to meet with the Board. I can't prematurely say I'll schedule something if the protocol for him and the RACs don't enable that. But my guess is they will. I don't see any reason why they wouldn't.

Comm. Kerr: So that report will be used by the RACs?

Dr. Evans: This was supposed to be like a status report for the school. What is the current status and level of activity? Now, there's another piece that hasn't come yet. It won't be a part of that report. It will be a response to that report. We've already made changes in these schools. The question is do we want to make more changes in the schools. We are in the process now of making changes with faculty. We've changed administration in most of them and still are considering some additional changes in administration. School 28 is going to be a literacy magnet. So there are changes already. All of those schools, by the way, will be in the Innovation Zone next year. The question that we have to first ask ourselves is considering what that says are the changes that we have already made for next year enough to address the things in that report that we feel need to be addressed. That's a question I will have for the person that I alluded to a minute ago. Is that enough or do we need to do more?

Comm. Kerr: But Dr. Evans, I understand what you have just said, but if the report is flawed to its core...

Comm. Hodges: Or in part.

Comm. Kerr: That report has pushed us further in the hole than where we're supposed to really be. So we are starting from way behind where we should have started. So the question is, are we going to accept the position of that report?

Dr. Evans: I don't know that we are in a position to do anything other than accept it, to be frank with you.

Comm. Kerr: We can't challenge it?

Dr. Evans: I honestly don't know that.

Comm. Kerr: We can't challenge in any way?

Comm. Irving: We as a Board can do whatever we want. We can craft whatever letter and language and I think maybe we should.

Comm. Kerr: Let's do that.

Dr. Evans: But again, I would emphasize whatever you do, I do, or my staff does we've already crafted changes for these schools.

Comm. Kerr: It's not the change, Dr. Evans. We're not talking about the changes. We are challenging the document. We're going to continue with the changes, but at least we need to be on record that the report that they have issued was way below where we really are.

Comm. Irving: Let's take a few more comments on this and I want to bring us back on track and move us into closed session for the second part of this reorganization conversation.

Comm. Guzman: I understand that we are a little off topic and I have a problem when we get off topic. But I looked at this packet I had here in front of me and I wondered what it was. I opened it and all I did was flip to the first page. I read that same paragraph Dr. Hodges just read and I refuse to read any more. If we look at this, this is just one school and this one school has 50 pages. Out of those 50 pages there are about 10 different statements. That was just one that was read by Dr. Hodges. That sort of bothered me. But my issue is not only what's said in that statement, but the fact that this was taken into consideration not just by one visit, it tells us clearly it's a 32-classroom visitation, six observations, 31 interviews with teachers, 10 interviews with building leaders, district administrators, students, and parents. So it wasn't just a one-day thing. That's a problem. It wasn't just a one-day thing. If it was a one-day thing I would say they're coming to a conclusion over one day. This was two days but it was a matter of a different atmosphere and different people communicating with different fields and generations. So that's a little issue to me. Not all of them are negative. I need to say that because I did have to look at another school just to try to feel a little bit better. I did take a look at another school and I briefly read a statement, so not all of it is negative. I think we might have to place a little bit more focus. We as a Board need to make sure we look into this. We need to read it and really see what we don't see. This is an outsider. This is a person who came from outside who does not know us, does not know what our district consists of, and that's what they saw. So we need to start figuring out why they saw that. I understand as Dr. Hodges mentioned there were a lot of things going on during the days that they came. But we need to start keeping in mind also and be a little bit more mindful. I'm not saying they're right because I am not happy with what this document says. I was the first one shocked.

Comm. Irving: We need to move with what we have and let's call a special meeting to discuss this. Once we've all read it and understood it maybe in the next two or three weeks or maybe after a conference we can have a special meeting to discuss this and give it the due time it deserves. We're bringing it up and none of us have read the full material. I think it behooves us to do that.

Comm. Hodges: I just wanted to ask Dr. Evans, do we still have Middle States Accreditation come by and visit our schools?

Dr. Evans: No.

Comm. Hodges: That all stopped. Do you know when it stopped?

Dr. Evans: Middle States Accreditation typically for urban districts involves high schools. Is Ms. Shafer here?

Comm. Irving: Are we still doing Middle States Accreditation and if they do how often? Every 10 years.

Comm. Hodges: And it's just high school. What's the other group that comes by every year and does CAPA?

Dr. Evans: That still is occurring.

Comm. Hodges: Who sends CAPA in?

Dr. Evans: As I understand it the team that came actually was a CAPA team. Correct me if I'm wrong, Joanne.

Ms. Joanne Riviello: You're partially correct. QSR replaced CAPA. So this QSR visit is what an old CAPA visit was. Some of the people from the state that were involved in our CAPA visits were also involved in this.

Comm. Hodges: Does last year's CAPA report reflect this kind of commentary?

Ms. Riviello: Off the top of my head, I don't know that.

Comm. Irving: Let's get a copy of last year's CAPA review just so we have something to gauge. I'm going to ask Cheryl can she make sure the Board members get a copy of that so we at least have that to leverage and monitor. Is there anything else before we go into executive session?

Comm. Kerr: We also need to find out the names of those people who were involved in the evaluation.

Comm. Irving: If it can be.

Comm. Kerr: Ms. Riviello just mentioned that there were some folks from the CAPA who were carried over into this. We need to know the individuals who were part of the CAPA assessment or evaluation who were part of this evaluation or assessment.

Comm. Irving: Duly noted.

Dr. Evans: My comment is that before the Board takes any kind of formal action, informal action, or individual action this work session that you're calling for actually needs to occur with the Board and staff. We do have concerns about these schools. Some of the things in there I have seen and I have taken action myself. I can't say that I've seen the full breadth of what Dr. Hodges just read, but I want you to clearly understand what I and my staff have seen, why we're concerned, and why we have taken the initiative to make changes in these schools before we attack the report and the reporters.

Comm. Irving: I think it behooves us to read it first. That's why I think it makes sense to come back and to discuss this after we've read all of the documents. Then we sit down and have a conversation about what we read.

Comm. Kerr: We also need Dr. Evans. What I need Dr. Evans to tell us is where he supports the document and where he does not support the document. We need to know that clearly.

MOTION TO GO INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL

It was moved by Comm. Guzman, seconded by Comm. Cleaves that the Board go into executive session to discuss personnel. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.