

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

April 18, 2012
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called on April 18, 2012 at 5:30 p.m., in the Multi Purpose Room, Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education, 544 Pennsylvania Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Board President Marie Munn presented the following statement at 6:10 p.m.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. This is a special meeting of the Board of Education. Pursuant to New Jersey Statutes and the rules adopted by the Board of Education, notice of this meeting was sent to Worrall Community Newspapers, The Star Ledger and Cablevision of Elizabeth on Friday, April 13, 2012. In addition, this notice is posted on the Bulletin Board in the lobby of 500 North Broad Street, and pursuant to this act, a copy has been filed with the City Clerk of Elizabeth.”

“I wish to extend a warm welcome to everyone present to this April 18, 2012 meeting of the Board of Education. We are here to govern, provide management oversight, and make policy for the district. The Superintendent manages the district. This is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public.”

“This meeting is being recorded and will become part of the Elizabeth Board of Education permanent record. In order that the recording will adequately reflect the proceedings, please refrain from talking while others are speaking. I also ask that you silence the sound on your electronic devices. Since it is legally mandated that these proceedings be accurately recorded, I may have to ask for order periodically should noise begin to interfere with our recording capabilities. I am pleased that you have taken time this evening to join us. Thank you for your interest in the Elizabeth Public Schools.”

“There will be a public portion for citizens to address the Board. Participants for the public portion must sign in one hour prior to the advertised start of the meeting so that they may have the opportunity to speak. The sign-in sheet states the name, address, telephone number and reason that the person wants to comment, whether it is an agenda item or a general education comment.”

Present: Pastor Burgos, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Donoso (arr. 7:20 p.m.), González, Nazco, Perreira, Mrs. Munn – 7

Absent: Messrs. DaSilva, Trujillo – 2

Superintendent of Schools Pablo Muñoz, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., Board Attorney Kirk Nelson, Assistant Superintendent for Schools Jennifer Barrett, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Olga Hugelmeyer, Executive Director for Human Resources/Labor Attorney Karen Murray, Assistant Board Secretary Donald Gonçalves and Comptroller William Greene were in attendance. There were no members of the public in attendance.

Pastor Burgos gave the invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance
Pledge of Ethics
Core Beliefs and Commitments

Pastor Raul Burgos read the following statement.

“For the past ten years I have had the honor to serve as a member of the Elizabeth Board of Education. After my last election in 2009, I made the decision that it would be my last term. Through the action of the Legislature, incumbent’s terms were extended an additional half year to conform to the general election calendar. This has not changed my personal calendar where my term would have expired this month. Therefore tonight I submit my resignation effective immediately.

I feel gratified and greatly satisfied with the significant strides made by this Board in close collaboration with the administration. Of particular note is the progress since we installed our Superintendent Pablo Muñoz and embarked in a clear pursuit of strong vision, purpose and strategic planning, that were surely lacking in the past.

Certainly, our great success has come at significant price. Our detractors have mounted a formidable political assault on the Board including false and distorted reporting of our progress. I feel we have finally been vindicated with the report by former Justice Stein, whose stellar moral standing speaks clearly and has reassured our City of Elizabeth residents as to the quality of our district.

In the last few years I have also added numerous personal responsibilities, in addition to my community work. As pastor of Comunidad Cristiana we have opened a magnificent community center called the Liberty Center that requires my focused attention.

Also, I’ve been doing increased international leadership training and consulting work, which keeps my busy overseas.

Most important, I believe there is a capable team on this Board that along with the administration will continue to excel and make Elizabeth the best urban school district in the State.

Mind you, I will not disappear. But rather will continue to cheer your progress. The best days for this district are still ahead! Thanks!”

A motion was made by Mr. Nazco, seconded by Mr. González, to accept the resignation of Pastor Raul Burgos.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Mrs. Munn – 5

Negative: None

Mr. Nazco commented that it is with a heavy heart that we accept the resignation of Pastor Burgos. Mr. Nazco stated that Pastor Burgos along with Board member DaSilva are the longest standing members on this current Board. Mr. Nazco stated that Pastor Burgos has been a pillar of strength for this Board in all that has been accomplished and that he has dedication, foresight, and wisdom that he has shared with this Board. Mr. Nazco stated he is proud to be a colleague and more importantly a friend. Mr. Nazco stated that although Pastor Burgos will be missed he is excited by the possibilities and opportunities that Pastor Burgos has coming forward and knows that he will excel at them as well. Mr. Nazco thanked Pastor Burgos for his leadership, his presence, and guidance and stated that the children of the City of Elizabeth thank him. Mr. Nazco wished him well in all his future endeavors and may God bless him.

Mr. González commented that it is with great sadness that we accept the resignation and thanked Pastor Burgos for his friendship, leadership, and mentorship. Mr. González stated that he learned a lot from Pastor Burgos in many aspects including the community service that he does and his passion for leadership training that has influenced many of us. Mr. González wished Pastor Burgos the best of luck in all the new areas to bring his passion and knowledge of leadership training to the rest of the world especially in the Spanish language. Mr. González commented that this is not goodbye but hasta la vista.

Mrs. Munn thanked Pastor Burgos for his wisdom, knowledge and everything that he brought to this Board. Mrs. Munn commented that she is not saying goodbye and that Pastor

Burgos will still be around and reachable and that this Board is a family and we don't let go of our families that easy. Mrs. Munn stated that it has been a pleasure to work with Pastor Burgos and all the things he has done in helping this district move forward and wished him the best in all his endeavors and may God bless him.

Superintendent Pablo Muñoz wished Pastor Burgos well and commented that he still remembers their first encounter at least twelve years ago at a Curriculum of Inclusion meeting at Prince Street when he was a Director and Pastor Burgos became a community member on the committee. Mr. Muñoz thanked Pastor Burgos for teaching him a lot from his work and that his pastoral life and his work in business and how they come to meld together have influenced him. Mr. Muñoz stated that as a Board member there are a few things that you have had a great impact on me and others and when you're thinking about us, think proudly. Mr. Muñoz stated that Pastor Burgos brought an emphasis on leadership and developing future leaders and bringing to focus the author John Maxwell, a minister who turned to writing about leadership. Mr. Muñoz stated that we use Pastor Burgos' leadership development model here and call it cohorts, that the concept of developing people inside a nested community that we call cohorts but Pastor Burgos called them something different when he helps establish a bible study group and helps build them to capacity with strength to continue, then leaves and goes to establish another group. Mr. Muñoz stated that as a Board member Pastor Burgos was counter-cultural to the public education speed, that we move slowly in public education and his desire to push us accelerated the speed that public education moves. Mr. Muñoz thanked Pastor Burgos for his friendship through the years, for being a great man, a family man, and for his prodding and questioning so that it made us think through the problem and decide on the best alternative. Mr. Muñoz commented that it is always good to have great role models.

Julian Trevino, Senior Consultant, Center for Reform of School Systems, stated that Pastor Burgos is a professional, a colleague and a friend who will be missed. Mr. Trevino commented that it is good to know that Pastor Burgos is still in the City of Elizabeth supporting this Board and stated that one of the topics tonight is challenges to sustainability and he wished he did not have a live case and a challenge to sustainability. Mr. Trevino stated that this is a classic example that anything worth doing takes a lot of sacrifice to do it good and Pastor Burgos is a classic example, that he has made a difference and thanked him.

Pastor Burgos thanked everyone and commented that the reason he is not more emotional is because he is not moving away and that he will just be playing a different role. Pastor Burgos stated that one of the most important things is that he is comfortable knowing that there is a capable team with great courage on this Board that will continue and it will be sustained.

Mrs. Munn presented the following public participation statement.

"At this time, the microphones are open for public comment to those who have signed in prior to this session. I shall call individuals to the microphones based on the order of the sign-in. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three minutes in duration. The total time of public comment shall be limited to sixty minutes. No individual is able to yield their time to another individual. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually. The following rules for public participants shall apply: time limits will be strictly enforced, no personal attacks on individuals, no vulgar or indecent language, a person may address the Board no more than once during a single meeting, speakers should refrain from naming individuals, and comments or questions posed during public participation will not be debated. As a reminder, this is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public."

Since there were no citizens to address the Board, Mrs. Munn declared this portion of the public meeting closed.

Mr. Muñoz stated that the Elizabeth Board of Education was selected in 2008 in the final cohort of The Broad Foundation funded governance training program that was provided by the Center for Reform of School Systems (CRSS) in their Reform Governance in Action[®] program. Mr. Muñoz stated that the program involved looking at the bylaws, policies, and regulations in order to dramatically transform the Elizabeth Public Schools into a high performing urban education district through reform policies. Mr. Muñoz stated that the two year training program included four retreats and on-site training and at the end of the program the Board decided to continue with the Center for Reform of School Systems with Sustainability Workshops and this is a continuation of that program. Mr. Muñoz introduced Julian Trevino, Senior Consultant, Center for Reform of School Systems, who facilitated a board training program to sustain the reform tools developed and established during the Reform Governance in Action[®] program.

Mr. Trevino stated that he has built a relationship with this Board that he does not have with other Boards and the resignation of Pastor Burgos is difficult and very apropos to the discussion tonight of the challenges to sustainability and maintaining sustainability. Mr. Trevino stated that this district has dramatically improved and has a wonderful leadership team. Mr. Trevino stated that it is not by accident that you have achieved what you have achieved and so the question is how do you maintain that. Mr. Trevino stated that the discussion tonight is about the challenges of sustainability and the governance solutions to sustaining the reform momentum.

Mr. Trevino stated that the goal is to develop practices and policies that will sustain the district's reform initiatives to promote high achievement and operational efficiency. Mr. Trevino stated that it is one thing to do it and another to sustain and keep on doing the good things that have been done to promote high achievement and operational effectiveness, that both go hand in hand, the operational side of the system has to support the academic achievement. Mr. Trevino stated that we are also going to examine the factors that can derail some of that and discuss what are the greatest challenges. Mr. Trevino stated that during this session we will gain clarity on the challenges to sustainability, learn about the importance of civic capacity, transition planning, monitoring and forward planning, develop a process designed to sustain the reform momentum in the school district and develop an annual sustainability calendar and plan to monitor the district's reform progress. Mr. Trevino stated that civic capacity is getting the word out to the public and this district is doing something very novel that he has never heard of before and that is the Excellence Parade being held this Saturday and that this is classic for building civic capacity. Mr. Trevino requested a copy of a video of the event for the CRSS library.

Mr. Trevino stated that the definition of sustainability in this context is to keep a good thing going and unless we pay mind to it, it's not going to happen, that we have to address it formally, there has to be a timetable and milestones, and the questions when, how, who, and what are we going to do have to be answered. Mr. Trevino reviewed the Reform Governance in Action[®] Framework with the core beliefs and commitments, theories of action for change, reform policies, policy development and oversight, building blocks of reform governance, roles, responsibilities and relationships, civic capacity, and transition planning. Mr. Trevino stated that very few school systems in the United States understand that framework but this Board understands that framework. Mr. Trevino stated that all of the areas of the framework need to be sustained and that it never ends. Mr. Trevino explained that we are trying to sustain high student achievement, effective and efficient operations, and broad public support.

Mr. Trevino used an analogy of a cargo ship to explain the responsibilities of each group to reach their destination. Mr. Trevino stated that the district can be represented by a cargo ship with the cargo being the students, the crew being the teachers and staff, the captain of the ship represents the superintendent and the owners of the ship represent the board. Mr. Trevino stated that the board sets the direction for the cargo ship and the direction is high student achievement and efficient district operations. Mr. Trevino explained that if we have efficient district operations we can get the cargo ship moving in the right direction. Mr. Trevino explained that the water represents the politics and it is rarely calm but underneath the calm water may be problems. Mr. Trevino stated that if you are lucky you can see a storm coming on the horizon or other problems and plan for it. Mr. Trevino stated that the importance is moving the cargo, the students, safely to the destination of student achievement.

Mr. Trevino stated that Boards can sustain reform by building civic capacity, transition planning, monitoring performance, and forward planning. Mr. Trevino stated that Boards can build civic capacity by overlapping centers of influence with business leaders, elected officials, parent groups, media, unions, religious leaders, and grassroots/community organizations. Mr. Trevino stated that Boards must lead, that the importance of honesty is that the public must believe the district is honestly and openly acknowledging its problems and making concerted efforts to improve. Mr. Trevino stated that too many urban districts have minimized problems, made excuses, and blamed failures on individuals rather than acknowledge that problems are serious and systems are ineffective. Mr. Trevino stated that the Board must keep the public informed and the public must understand the Board's core beliefs and commitments, theory of action and policy framework. Mr. Trevino stated that building on a foundation of trust created by honest and open communication about what is, the Board must build support for what should be. Mr. Trevino explained that in a district with good civic capacity the Superintendent creates a district infrastructure that includes highly effective people and systems to manage media relations, community partnerships, and parental involvement and is personally an evangelist for the Board's vision for change. Mr. Trevino explained that in a district with good civic capacity, the Board is well acquainted with the influential people in the community, encourages members with close contacts in the centers of influence to take responsibility for nurturing relationships and building support for reform, reaches out to groups and individuals to build personal relationships and educate and knows when to solicit input from the community. Mr. Trevino stated that it is important to solicit broad input on issues that the public really cares about such as school closings, bond priorities, attendance boundary changes and new admission criteria for the gifted program.

Superintendent Pablo Muñoz commented that our successful initiatives came from community input including creating magnet schools, creating PreK-8 schools, and closing middle schools and re-purposing them as PreK-8 schools.

Mr. Trevino led the Board members and administrators in a discussion of issues that the public may care about and when to solicit input from the community.

Mr. Trevino stated that we are all transitional and superintendents, Board members and civic and community leaders come and go and rapid Superintendent and Board turnover are enemies of reform sustainability. Mr. Trevino stated that Boards with effective superintendents should do everything in their power to keep them, provide guidance via a clearly defined theory of action, work through differences in a constructive way, provide political cover for tough decisions, provide fair compensation, set clear performance goals and evaluate progress toward them using high-quality evaluation tools, stay above the line, show appreciation and don't fret over minor flaws. Mr. Trevino stated that reform-oriented Board members should commit for the long-term with at least second terms and third terms where possible and community leaders should encourage effective Board members to commit themselves to long-term service. Mr. Trevino stated that turnover is inevitable and the solution is transition planning and in a district with good transition planning the superintendent builds a leadership team that includes potential successors and builds succession planning into the district's processes and culture.

Superintendent Pablo Muñoz commented that one of his roles is to think about staff members who are in the positional leadership roles and are we developing future leaders and who is developing to be vice principals, supervisors, directors, and assistant superintendents. Mr. Muñoz stated that he learned a lesson from John Maxwell that one of our responsibilities as leaders is to develop other people and one of his lessons he writes about is the measure of a leader and that measure is after you leave and then you come back and visit and see if the reform is sustained and most likely it will if you have built up the capacity of the organization to continue after you are gone. Mr. Muñoz commented that we have to be mindful of that to sustain the movement in that department, school or organization globally.

Mr. Trevino commented that one of the problems with transition planning is time, the time that you have to invest and the time that the receiver of the training has to invest because both have a time commitment to what percentage of your work time will be invested in training and that is difficult to do. Mr. Trevino stated that transition planning is essential for Board members and explained that in a district with good transition planning Board members cultivate people who are like-minded about reform, involve them in task forces and other volunteer work and encourage them to run for office and reach out to new Board members and educate them about the importance of reform governance. Mr. Trevino led the administrators and Board members in a group discussion of a transition planning activity.

Mr. Nazco excused himself from the meeting at 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Trevino stated that monitoring and forward planning is essential to sustainability. Mr. Trevino stated that monitoring performance is for continuous improvement and that the priority is to continuously maintain, use, and improve the management oversight system, school accountability system and data dashboard. Mr. Trevino explained that making the most of the monitoring systems includes placing review of the monitoring systems in the strategic plan, placing effective operation of these systems in the superintendent's evaluation, and make annual reports on performance public events. Mr. Trevino stated that monitoring the inputs of the data dashboard, other organizational performance data from state audits, NCLB, etc. and Reform Governance in Action[®] products such as tracking systems results in outputs such as changes and refinements to existing policies and practices and reallocation of resources. Mr. Trevino led the administrators and Board members in a group discussion of a monitoring scenario that the rewards and consequences specified in the new district accountability policy are not strong enough to drive the desired changes in behavior and asked what should be done. Mr. Trevino stated that the school accountability system, management oversight system and data dashboard are useful tools for monitoring, oversight and continuous improvement and they are also reform tools.

Mr. Trevino stated that forward planning should be frequent brainstorming conversations among Board members, Superintendent, and senior staff about district performance data, knowledge of what is and is not working in other districts, knowledge of public and private sector innovation, and ideas from community leaders and others. Mr. Trevino stated that forward planning information includes the data dashboard, other organizational performance data from state audits, NCLB, etc., Reform Governance in Action[®] products such as tracking system plus community input, state policy changes, and knowledge of innovations in other districts lead to the output of reform policies. Mr. Trevino led the administrators and Board members in a group discussion of a forward planning scenario.

Mr. Trevino summarized that Boards can develop a process to sustain the reform momentum in the school district including a plan to build civic capacity, a transition plan for senior staff, superintendent, and school board, an annual sustainability calendar, and plan to monitor the district's reform progress. Mr. Trevino led the administrators and Board members in group work to evaluate the scenario for a sample urban public school district and decide how they will proceed in developing a transition or succession plan. Discussion in work groups ensued. Mr. Trevino led the administrators and Board members in a discussion of the transition and succession plan.

Mr. Trevino stated that the Sustainability Goals, Deliverables and Work Plan need to be completed and unless you have this in place you are not going to sustain. Mr. Trevino stated the goal of the Board is to develop, adopt, and implement practices and policies that will sustain the district's reform initiatives to promote high achievement and operational efficiency. Mr. Trevino explained that the deliverables are to develop a process to sustain the reform momentum in your school district including a plan to build civic capacity, a transition plan for senior staff, superintendent, and school board, and an annual sustainability calendar and plan to monitor the district's reform progress. Mr. Trevino explained that the work plan includes the deliverable, the action/task, who will perform the task, how will it be done, the milestones and the final deadline. Mr. Trevino stated that this is important and needs to be completed to sustain how far this Board

has come and that not many districts are at your stage. Mr. Trevino congratulated the Board members and staff for sustaining all their reform work.

Mrs. Munn thanked Mr. Trevino for the wonderful training.

On a motion by Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, seconded by Mr. Donoso, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Donoso, González, Perreira, Mrs. Munn – 5

Negative: None

Harold E. Kennedy, Jr.
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary