BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

September 23, 2010
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called on September 23, 2010 at 7:00 p.m., in the Multi Purpose Room, Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education, 544 Pennsylvania Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Board President Carlos Trujillo presented the following statement at 7:50 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 The Star Ledger, The News Record and Cablevision of Elizabeth on Friday, September 17, 2010. 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 September 23, 2010 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, González, Mrs. Munn, Messrs. Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo – 8
Absent: Mr. DaSilva – 1

Superintendent of Schools Pablo Muñoz, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., Board Attorney Kirk Nelson, Esq., Assistant Superintendent for Schools Jennifer Barrett, Assistant Superintendent for Family and Community Outreach Jerome Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Schools Aida Garcia, Assistant Board Secretary Donald Goncalves, Executive Director of Human Resources/Labor Attorney Karen Murray, Comptroller William Greene, and members of the public were in attendance.

Pastor Burgos gave the invocation.
Pledge of Allegiance
National Anthem
Pledge of Ethics
Core Beliefs and Commitments

Messrs. Donoso and Nazco excused themselves from the meeting.

Personnel Report – Leaves of Absence, etc.
        A motion was made by Mrs. Munn, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that the report be accepted.
        The motion was carried by the following vote:
        Affirmative: Pastor Burgos, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Mr. González, Mrs. Munn, Mr. Perreira – 5
        Abstain: Mr. Trujillo – 1
        Negative: None

Resolution – Payment for Unused Vacation Days
        A motion was made by Mr. González, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that the report be accepted.
        The motion was carried by the following vote:
        Affirmative: Pastor Burgos, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Mr. González, Mrs. Munn, Messrs. Perreira, Trujillo – 6
        Negative: None

Resolution – Payment for Unused Sick Days
        A motion was made by Mr. Perreira, seconded by Mr. González, that the report be accepted.
        The motion was carried by the following vote:
        Affirmative: Pastor Burgos, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Mr. González, Mrs. Munn, Messrs. Perreira, Trujillo – 6
        Negative: None

        Mr. Nazco returned to the meeting.

Resolution – EEA Grievances
        A motion was made by Mr. González, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that the report be accepted.
        The motion was carried by the following vote:
        Affirmative: Pastor Burgos, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo – 6
        Abstain: Mrs. Munn – 1
        Negative: None

        Mr. Trujillo 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, Mr. Trujillo declared this portion of the public meeting closed.

        Mr. Donoso returned to the meeting.

Mr. Trujillo introduced Dr. Susan Mettlen, Director of Technology and Information Systems who presented the management oversight workshop on the Technology Department.

Dr. Susan Mettlen, Director of Technology and Information Systems, stated that she appreciated the opportunity to come before the Board with members of the Technology Department staff to present the Management Oversight Technology Workshop. Dr. Mettlen stated that the presentation tonight is an overview of the different areas of the Technology and Information Systems including support of computers, systems and the network and the not so common areas as well. Dr. Mettlen stated that the one thing in common with all the areas of the Technology and Information Systems is that everything we do supports the classroom and that our goal is to help the schools create a very active, engaging environment where students can participate, get feedback and become very engaged in their learning. Dr. Mettlen stated that the two very different groups that are supported are digital natives, who are students who grew up with technology, and the digital immigrants, who are the adults at various stages in learning, accepting, and using the technology.

Dr. Mettlen introduced a video presentation created by the staff of the Technology and Information Systems department showing the behind the scenes view of the different areas of Technology and Information Systems and how it impacts the classroom.

Dr. Mettlen explained the organizational chart for the Technology and Information Systems department including that there are currently 49 positions in the department compared to 57 positions in the 2005-2006 school year and that since 2005-2006 the district has opened School Nos. 27, 28, and 31, created six new high school academies, 2 annexes, new Gifted and Talented School No. 7 and then expanded it, redistricted the entire district, and moved School No. 5. Dr. Mettlen stated that the work has been done with fewer Technology and Information Systems staff members and explained the strategy of standardizing systems and processes and focusing on a matrix organization. Dr. Mettlen stated that staff members have been cross-trained to do more than one job and for any project staff members from two or three different groups are able to assist where they are needed. Dr. Mettlen stated that some of the challenges are also related to some of our successes, that we have been able to cover additional schools with fewer people by doing more of our support remotely, that instead of doing 100% of the trouble calls by visiting the schools or offices we are now able to handle the problems by calling the person, remotely accessing the computer and electronically looking over their shoulder to tell them what to do or how to fix the problem and that very rarely do we have to visit a site except to replace hardware. Dr. Mettlen stated that because of this we have more of an emphasis to need people who have a network technology background as opposed to straight computer technology and that there is a need to grow the network technology area and not the computer technology area. Dr. Mettlen stated that because we have moved to more modern systems it is taking fewer resources to support, and that using PowerSchool has reduced the amount of maintenance that the former EDUMET system needed to run. Dr. Mettlen explained that the title Computer Data Entry Associate is no longer in line with what we are doing, that there is no more data entry by a computer staff member but that it is more of a Systems Analyst type of work. Dr. Mettlen stated that while we are learning to do more remote support, streamlining systems, and modernizing systems we have been able to develop a very small but capable group that is able to support our infrastructure as it grows.

Dr. Mettlen stated that the budget this year is lower than it has been for the last two years and that we have been able to sustain that by being very aggressive investing time and resources in preventative maintenance, standardizing equipment and software, replacing inefficient systems that were draining a large amount of resources such as EDUMET, repairing computers and equipment at our authorized hardware department while getting paid to maintain our own machines rather than sending them to another facility which gives us quicker turn-around time and saves money. Dr. Mettlen explained the 2010-2011 budget for Technology and Information Systems and stated that the three highest areas of the budget for this year are salaries, telecommunication which includes telephones, internet and network infrastructure, and maintenance which includes repair costs and maintenance contracts on various equipment. Dr. Mettlen explained that the lease purchase is 11% of the budget and is for all of the computers and

laptops in the classrooms that are on 4-5 year leases and also includes the last payment on PowerSchool. Dr. Mettlen stated that the budget for professional services includes training and outside programming, that the budget for this area used to be twice as high, that we are no longer spending $25,000 to $50,000 or more to have EDUMET do customized programming, and that with PowerSchool we are able to do it ourselves. Dr. Mettlen stated that the budget for supplies is 9% which is for consumable supplies, the budget for equipment is 8% which is for new equipment purchased and that the budget for construction is 2% and will be used for modernizing the data center which has not been upgraded for the last ten years and will be a one-time expense for at least the next five years.

Dr. Mettlen stated that most of the projects fall into six areas including academic, arts and athletics, administrative, regulatory, communications, and other. Dr. Mettlen explained that in the academic area we support and maintain 10,000 desktop PCs and MACS, 2,000 laptops, almost 600 Smart Boards and projectors, 620 academic software programs, respond to 80,000 service calls each year, process 88,000 report cards and 88,000 progress reports each year, facilitate testing of 22,000 students each year, run the academic lotteries, electronic applications and registrations, manage 22,000 active student records plus all inactive records back to 1991, support e-books and documents for libraries, support testing, and PLATO which is a computer based credit recovery. Dr. Mettlen stated that the staff also helped design, set up, and support the TV studio, graphics and printing labs and the computer labs.

Dr. Mettlen explained that in the arts and athletics area we support the NJSIAA eligibility, prepare NJSIAA reports and rosters, film sporting and arts events, provide lighting and sound support, and provide photography coverage for events. Dr. Mettlen stated that the staff post the pictures and video on the EPS website and EPS Facebook site.

Dr. Mettlen explained that in the administrative area we support and maintain 3,496 computers, printers, and fax machines, provide training to 4,000 team members, process payroll, W-2s, vendor checks, bank and IRS transmissions, create and manage the lunch application process with a 90% return rate, support Federal, State, and internal audits, prepare finance, payroll and human resource reports, support budget prep and budget close, collect and preserve test data, ensure internal controls in human resources, payroll, and accounts payables, design, create and manage the infrastructure, operate the call center and inventory management and support telephone, internet, intranet, email and data management. Dr. Mettlen explained that the regulatory area includes collecting, processing, and transmitting Federal, State and local data, and supporting audits including KPMG, OFAC, Legislative Services, and the external district auditor Mendonca & Suarez. Dr. Mettlen stated that in the audits there were no proposals for internal control or operational comments on technology and that the KPMG auditor commented that Elizabeth was the only Abbott district in the 2008 audit that received no technology comments. Dr. Mettlen stated that the department supports research data collections at all levels, prepares and submits Federal and State reports, supports IRS compliance, and participates in Federal funding programs including School Nutrition Programs and E-Rate which generates between $800,000. and $1,500,000. each year.

Dr. Mettlen explained that the communications area includes the Alert Now message system with more than 1.2 million calls and email contacts made for absent student notification, school announcements and emergencies. Dr. Mettlen stated that this area also includes personalized mass mailings and that for the district last school year we created and processed 91,000 letters, PowerSchool parent portal, operating the call center, admission letters, lunch program applications, welcome back to school letters, team member communications, signs, posters and banners.

Dr. Mettlen explained that the department supports other projects including creating and producing videos, EPS website, EPS Facebook page which has a following of over 1,000 people, designing and producing banners, posters and signs, and providing video, sound and multimedia support. Dr. Mettlen stated that the technology staff is creating and supporting the district data dashboard and explained two examples including a grade K-2 proficiency chart and the AYP progress chart showing that the number of AYP schools has increased each year since 2004-2005.

Dr. Mettlen stated that customer service is one of the biggest areas with support for the classrooms, the offices, and parents who are asking for help with the PowerSchool parent portal.

Dr. Mettlen stated that the staff does customized training including workshops at the schools on advanced use of PowerSchool, digitally enhanced assignments, and teleconferencing between classrooms. Dr. Mettlen stated that the technology department supported the creation of the EHS Tech Team including training a group of students who are interested in technology and can now do the first level of support in their schools.

Dr. Mettlen stated that the systems supported by the department include academic and administrative, that PowerSchool is our central system and the ancillary programs such as food services SNAP program, transportation Versatrans program (formerly EduLog), and special services TieNet program get all the demographics from PowerSchool. Dr. Mettlen explained that the student information is entered once in PowerSchool and transferred to the other programs, that in the past the information was entered separately in each system. Dr. Mettlen stated that in the administrative area EDUMET is being used to support human resources, payroll, finance, and iDash which is the data dashboard. Dr. Mettlen explained that this year Outlook email is now used by everyone streamlining the communication between school faculty and administrative staff. Dr. Mettlen stated that the department supports the Internet access for the district, that there are nightly backups of the systems, that there is a 99.8% uptime, multi-layered security and remote monitoring.

Dr. Mettlen stated that the department supports PowerSchool which has the active records of more than 22,000 current students with all of their prior work back to first grade including contact information, test scores, grades, attendance, and medical issues which are kept in one place and those with access can see it very quickly. Dr. Mettlen stated that the electronic records of students here before 2008 are kept in a separate system. Dr. Mettlen stated that PowerSchool provides a high level of accountability, students in grades 6-12 have user IDs and passwords to check their grades and assignments, parents are given user IDs and passwords and that the technology department supports thousands of visits from parents and students every month. Dr. Mettlen explained three PowerSchool views including Quick Look Up which is what the parents and students see when they log in and shows the student's last two weeks of attendance, current classes, grades and assignments, "Schedule" which shows the student's Monday through Friday schedule, and "Inform" which is a data analyzer allowing the teachers and administrators to see the student's history of test scores over a number of years as compared to the standard average as well as the school and district averages. Dr. Mettlen stated that this data analyzer was not available until this past year.

Dr. Mettlen introduced Alberto Marsal, Coordinator of Network and Computer Services, to present the hardware, data center, and network services of the Technology and Information Systems Department.

Mr. Marsal stated that he appreciated the opportunity to come before the Board and that he is privileged and blessed to have the opportunity to work and lead some of the best network professionals. Mr. Marsal stated that a few years ago a hardware department was created to be able to respond quickly to the needs of the district and that we standardized computers, printers and laptops with Hewlett Packard allowing the opportunity to be part of the self contained program to work on equipment with a current warranty that breaks down and that HP reimburses the district. Mr. Marsal stated that one of the benefits of having the hardware department as an authorized computer shop allows us to report any problems before 4 p.m. and receive the new parts the next day. Mr. Marsal stated that last year 1,100 computers were refurbished and that since 2002 the department has repaired 4,700 laptops, 2,000 printers, and 12,000 desktop computers. Mr. Marsal stated that the data center located in the Mitchell Building supports the core application systems including EDUMET, PowerSchool, email, food services, and transportation. Mr. Marsal stated that a Storage Access Network (SAN) and blades servers were installed and that this year the network servers were upgraded to VMware environment (virtual servers) which enabled the consolidation of 20 servers throughout the schools. Mr. Marsal explained that the department uses Orion Software which monitors the network system and alerts the staff of any problems of equipment or power failure.

Mr. Marsal explained the history of the wide area network (WAN) from ISDN 128k, then Frame-relay 768k, then T1s 1.54, then TLS 10 megabytes, and starting in August 2010 the system is 200 times faster with 2 Gbps between buildings, and now we have the advantage to enhance

our disaster recovery plan using School No. 28 and the Mitchell Building as our disaster recovery capability sites. Mr. Marsal explained that should a disaster happen we can operate from School No. 28. Mr. Marsal stated that the focus is on the five core applications including financial services, student information system, transportation system, food services system and email system. Mr. Marsal stated that this will allow us to continue with some projects that were set aside due to bandwidth restrictions.

Mr. Marsal explained the Internet Connection was running at 45Mbps (DS3) and now we have an Ethernet 300 Mbps, that monitoring of the system showed a usage of 45 Mbps in June and with the additional bandwidth the usage in September averages 70 Mbps and peaked at 120 Mbps. Mr. Marsal explained that the Wireless Network has approximately 900 access points throughout the district and that every school has wireless capabilities. Mr. Marsal explained that there are wireless controllers to manage the wireless network. Mr. Marsal explained that the security includes multiple layers, intruder detection, Malware, Spyware, antivirus software, content filtering, VPN, VeriSign, Password policy and ProofPoint.

Dr. Mettlen thanked Mr. Marsal for his presentation. Dr. Mettlen explained that the Network is a counter rotating self-healing ring that allows us to re-route traffic as necessary. Dr. Mettlen stated that everything the district has done so far in strengthening the infrastructure and improving the customer service delivery model positions the department for the future including expanding PowerSchool, possibly replacing the EDUMET Human Resource and other modules, adding additional technical components to the curriculum, expansion of e-books, IPods, IPads, migrating remaining phones to Voice Over IP (VOIP), expanding video conferencing for education classrooms and administrative offices, and building a remote disaster recover site.

Mr. Trujillo thanked Dr. Mettlen and Mr. Marsal for the presentation and asked the Board members if there were any questions.

Mrs. Munn stated that parents use PowerSchool to see their child's scores, that there was an issue when some grades could not be seen for three or four days after the marking period ended and asked if there is a way to see if a teacher is actually using PowerSchool.

Dr. Mettlen stated that she has had parents ask the same question and explained that the teacher is not entering the grades and that they should see the information as soon as the teacher enters the information. Dr. Mettlen explained that if the term has ended and the grades have been retired to make a report card then what will be visible will be the beginning of the new quarter and the first week of the new quarter there might not be any grades. Dr. Mettlen stated that starting this year the grading policy requires a certain number of grades to be entered every week by teachers depending on the grade level and that the principals will be enforcing one of the compliance issues to make sure that teachers do not go eight weeks without entering any grades and then throw in a grade for a final. Dr. Mettlen stated that in the past when teachers kept paper grade books no one was watching and that now students, parents and administrators are watching.

Mrs. Munn asked if there were deadlines for the teachers to enter the information.

Dr. Mettlen responded that there are deadlines and that we developed a script that the principals can run to show them any teachers that have not entered a grade for that week, that progress reports are created at the close of the four week mark, and two to three days after the term ends the grade cards are sent, and that the principals are watching and the teachers are required to have a grade in for each student for each week. Dr. Mettlen stated that if parents continue to see teachers who have no grades entered for three, four or five weeks into the term then that is an issue and the parents need to speak with the principal.

Mrs. Munn asked if the district uses only one provider or are there many providers and asked if there is a back-up of the system.

Dr. Mettlen responded that there are many providers and explained that every night there is a back-up on every server and every main system, that the back-up tapes are stored off-site and that it is ongoing and continuous.

Mrs. Munn asked how many UPS are in the district and if they are tested frequently and maintained.

Dr. Mettlen explained that there is a UPS for every system.

Mr. Marsal explained that we do failing testing, that the records are kept and that most schools have a generator.

Pastor Burgos stated that two groups were mentioned in the presentation, digital natives and digital immigrants and asked for more information on the digital immigrants.

Dr. Mettlen explained that the concept of digital natives and digital immigrants refers to the fact that the children in our schools tend to be much more attune to the technology than the teachers and staff members, that the digital immigrants refer to the teachers and staff members who are learning, accepting and using the technology. Dr. Mettlen commented that sometimes this becomes an issue for the teacher because some are afraid of using the technology when the six-year-old in their class may know more than they do.

Pastor Burgos asked if there is a program to train the teachers and staff members since there is so much technology and it can be intimidating.

Dr. Mettlen explained that Rachel Goldberg runs an excellent professional development program that offers courses every month in the different technical areas and that the technology department staff members teach the classes during the day, afterschool and on weekends so that there are a lot of opportunities to learn.

Pastor Burgos asked if it is offered in every school.

Dr. Mettlen responded that the courses are offered for the whole district and the teachers come in and get credit hours for professional development training, that there has been a great response and the classes fill up. Dr. Mettlen stated that in addition to that and outside of that program the principals can contact the technology department and the staff members go to the school for custom training and explained that one school has special training sessions during their team meetings.

Pastor Burgos commented that there are a lot of students at the high school level and that there is a lot of technology equipment at the high schools and asked if broken equipment and vandalism is a significant issue and how is that being handled.

Dr. Mettlen responded that at the high school, particularly at the main complex, it is an issue and part of the problem is the equipment that is not used every day and if students have access to it. Dr. Mettlen stated that in the summer there is an accounting of everything which is repaired and replaced as needed. Dr. Mettlen stated that we really encourage the principals to make sure the teachers are checking to see if the equipment needs repairs to make sure that the equipment is in good working condition. Dr. Mettlen stated that there are technicians assigned to every building with replacement hardware in the buildings to do quick repairs, that because of budget challenges the equipment has not been replaced every year as intended and that as the equipment ages this will become more of an issue as time goes on.

Pastor Burgos asked how exposed is the equipment.

Dr. Mettlen responded that the laptop carts are locked and brought out when needed and the tablets used for the Oyster Project are also locked until needed, that a lot of the issues have been resolved after the desktop computers were moved into larger rooms used as labs where the only time students are in the lab is when they are using the equipment and being supervised by a teacher. Dr. Mettlen stated that it is not an issue in the K-8 grades where there are four or five computers and the children are very engaged and rotate through in different class periods with a teacher watching. Dr. Mettlen stated that it becomes an issue if the students have access to the equipment and are not actively engaged with the technology and that has been somewhat limited.

Mr. González thanked Dr. Mettlen and the Technology Department for the wonderful presentation and commented that he is glad that we are moving in the right direction. Mr. González stated that one thing he would like to see in the future is the replacement of the EDUMET system, that it has been replaced for the student information with PowerSchool and has been a great success, and hopefully replace the Human Resource system and Finance system. Mr. González commented that video streamlining is a possibility with the bandwidth and then the Board meetings and other events can be video streamed to our computers or cell phones. Mr. González asked if the security audits are done on a regular basis with an outside vendor.

Dr. Mettlen responded that it is done on a regular basis and explained that every time the external auditors come in they look at our daily, weekly and monthly security logs and the disaster recovery testing that is done.

Mr. González stated that disaster recovery testing is very important and to do disaster recovery in-house is more cost effective than paying $500,000. to an outside vendor. Mr. González asked about the 620 academic software programs and if we are trying to reduce the number of programs.

Dr. Mettlen explained that the number of academic software programs was a lot higher and that these are the ones that were reviewed by the supervisors and deemed to be related to the curriculum, that we own these titles and they are shared by everyone in the district. Dr. Mettlen stated that we have limited the ability of staff members to get their own software programs and that now the request for new software programs has to go through the supervisors and the elementary and secondary education department to be sure it is an appropriate purchase.

Mr. González commented that he is looking forward to the data dashboard coming on soon. Mr. González stated that he is impressed with the number of service tickets handled by the staff members, that the software to monitor the data center is very good, and that the amount of wireless access points throughout the district and at every school is exciting. Mr. González asked which anti-virus software is being used.

Mr. Marsal responded that we are using Microsoft Forefront anti-virus software.

Mr. González stated that it is great that we are finally in the 21st century for the technology systems and congratulated Dr. Mettlen and the technology staff members for their work for the district.

Mr. Nazco congratulated Dr. Mettlen and staff members for running a tight ship and commented that it is good to know that the technology department has all the systems in place.

Mr. Perreira thanked Dr. Mettlen and staff members for a good presentation and commended the technology department for its IT infrastructure. Mr. Perreira asked about vandalism.

Dr. Mettlen responded that we have had very little vandalism, that last year there were only a few cases with monitors being damaged in a school and the parents came in and were asked to compensate for the damage, that very few things get broken that way, that there were a few break-ins in the summer at a couple of schools and fortunately the equipment that was taken was older. Dr. Mettlen stated that keeping the equipment under lock and key certainly helps, that in the K-8 grades there is almost no vandalism and that there is a lot less at the high school since we moved the equipment as compared to the past three or four years.

Mr. Perreira asked how long is the life of the equipment.

Dr. Mettlen responded that every four to five years the equipment is replaced depending on whether it is a laptop or desktop, that because of the budget challenges not every year have we been able to do that, and that every year we refresh every machine to have it ready for the next year.

Mr. Perreira asked about the cost of the maintenance and if the department has looked into any cost saving measures.

Dr. Mettlen responded that every item in the budget was questioned this year and we considered not renewing the maintenance of the document scanner system. Dr. Mettlen explained that the maintenance amount also includes maintenance on the systems, that if PowerSchool goes down then we are not taking attendance or entering grades and that there are some things that we absolutely need to do. Dr. Mettlen stated that we look at the trade-off between what the maintenance cost and what potential exposure we have if something goes wrong and explained that the network system has a four hour response time which we really need. Dr. Mettlen stated that we have really tried to keep the maintenance cost down without compromising our security.

Mr. Marsal explained that Cisco has a policy for life on the equipment.

Dr. Mettlen stated that the most expensive maintenance on a system is for EDUMET which is our oldest system.

Mr. Perreira asked if the district has looked at other companies for the systems that are now supported by EDUMET.

Dr. Mettlen responded that last year a few companies came in to demonstrate their systems, that the Request for Proposal (RFP) is written, that the updated estimate for the HR module was just received this week and that a report is being prepared for the superintendent showing the advantages, disadvantages and the cost.

Mr. González stated that he would like to see the comparison and also look to other districts for guidance, and possibly getting a contractor to help with the migration so it doesn't tax our staff.

Dr. Mettlen explained that since it is very expensive to hire a company to migrate all the data one of the things we did with the PowerSchool migration was to have them migrate part of the data and then showed our staff how to do it and we did the rest and that worked out very well. Dr. Mettlen stated that we did the same with Inform, that the company moved one set of tests and showed our staff how to do it and then we did the rest. Dr. Mettlen stated that is the strategy they would like to use rather than paying a contractor to move all the data because it is very expensive and sometimes they are not that good at moving the data, that although they know their own product they don't know us or our system while our staff members know our data better than they do. Dr. Mettlen stated that we would like to use the same strategy of having them migrate part while our staff watches, that they teach our staff and are on-call if there are any problems. Dr. Mettlen stated that the migration of data is a huge issue because we need to move all of the old human resource data.

Pastor Burgos asked if all the servers were taken out of the schools.

Mr. Marsal explained that they have been consolidated and centralized in the Mitchell Building.

Pastor Burgos asked for an explanation of VM.

Mr. Marsal explained that this year the network servers were upgraded to VMware environment (virtual servers).

Mr. González stated that a very powerful computer called a blade can run multiple functions, that it can be Windows based or Unix based, that most of the fourth generation wireless systems are using virtual servers, and that one blade has the equivalent of having ten individual servers depending on the capacity.

Pastor Burgos asked about the management of the staff and overtime hours, if the overtime is after forty hours of work per week and how is it assigned. Pastor Burgos stated that the staff has been reduced from 57 to 49 and asked if it is less expensive to hire additional staff rather than pay overtime.

Dr. Mettlen stated that the total amount of budgeted overtime would cover 1 1/2 additional staff, that because of the seasonal nature of the tasks including the week before school starts, the first couple of weeks of school, and key points during the year, during the rest of the year we wouldn't need additional staff. Dr. Mettlen stated that the amount of overtime has been reduced quite a lot by preventative maintenance and that most of the overtime is incurred supporting Board meetings and events outside of the school day. Dr. Mettlen stated that in the past we had a contract funded by E-Rate to hire people on an hourly basis to do technical work running lines for the network and that saved us from using our staff to do the work after hours.

Pastor Burgos asked about the ten percent overtime rate set by the state and if the technology department is below that rate.

Dr. Mettlen stated that the overtime budget is 2% and we are trying to stay under that amount.

Mrs. Munn asked how is the strategy research done to determine the best new system for the district.

Dr. Mettlen stated that one of the strategies we are using is that we do not want to be the first large district that a company is doing, we want to see something that is proven and has worked in New Jersey with the NJ rules and reporting requirements. Dr. Mettlen stated that we are looking for a company with strong history of customer support because a lot of companies do

a great job when they are trying to sell their product but our concern is are they going to be there next year when there is a problem. Dr. Mettlen stated that we like to see the products running in another school system and talk to our counterparts. Dr. Mettlen stated that the strategy we are going to employ is probably to find the best of breed, that there probably is not one program that has the best student system, finance system, and human resource system and that if we are looking at a human resource system then let's find the best human resource system that works with the functionality that we need and the best price and then we can make the systems talk to each other.

Mrs. Munn asked how the remote support works and if the technology department can access the computer and take control of the mouse.

Dr. Mettlen explained that a typical scenario is that a staff member calls the technology department with a problem and gives us approval to remote the computer, that the staff member can see what we are doing to correct the problem and that it is training for the staff member and they are less likely to have the same issue again.

Mrs. Munn asked if the technology department is going green for the environment.

Dr. Mettlen stated that we have a document management system that allows us to scan resumes and store them, that one of the challenges in school is that we teach children how to write so there will always be a lot of paper, that we have reduced the amount of paper by having attendance and grades entered electronically. Dr. Mettlen stated that we've reduced the amount of paper on the administrative side as well.

Mrs. Munn asked if the amount of paper is being reduced on the business side with all the regulations and compliance.

Dr. Mettlen explained that we do not have paper time cards except for overtime, that attendance is taken electronically, and as we move to a new system more functions will be done electronically to reduce the amount of paper.

Mr. Donoso commented that there were 72,904 service tickets and asked what time period that was and what constitutes a service ticket.

Dr. Mettlen explained that the time period was from July 1 through June 30 of last year and a ticket could be any problem such as not remembering a password, not being able to enter a grade in PowerSchool, and not being able to get on a system.

Mr. Donoso asked if we have a comparison of service tickets from prior years and if the amount of tickets has diminished.

Dr. Mettlen explained that there are records for years back for service tickets and because we are doing more electronically there are more calls, and that two years ago teachers were not calling about attendance or grades because they were done on paper. Dr. Mettlen stated that the big change is that two years ago almost every call resulted in someone going to the classroom or office to fix the problem and now that is the exception.

Mr. Perreira asked where teachers enter grades on PowerSchool and if there is any training before school starts.

Dr. Mettlen stated that the PowerSchool system was started in April 2008, that we began with training sessions for entering attendance and in the fall there were training sessions for the high school for entering grades and the next year the K-8 schools were trained to enter grades and now teachers are putting in assignments and attaching documents they want the students to read or poems that goes along with the assignment. Dr. Mettlen explained that as the teachers are ready to learn then we can teach them more sophisticated applications.

Mr. Marsal explained that the number of service tickets is also used for accountability, that during the preparation for summer maintenance and repair a technician can image an entire school of 300 computers which becomes a service ticket.

Mr. Trujillo thanked Dr. Mettlen and Mr. Marsal for the informative presentation and commented that taxpayer dollars are being used very well. Mr. Trujillo stated that the technology department had great results in the audits. Mr. Trujillo stated that the Board members will do the best they can to disseminate the information to the community to let everyone know that we have a great technology department led by great individuals who really care about our children in the City of Elizabeth.

Mr. Perreira asked where we stand in comparison to other Abbott districts.

Dr. Mettlen stated that the auditors said we were the only technology department to receive no comments and that we had a secure infrastructure and strong passwords and procedures in comparison to others.

Mr. Perreira asked where we stand in comparison to the students' use of technology.

Dr. Mettlen stated that we are one of the districts that has an electronic student information system, that even some wealthy districts are still paper based, that one of the areas that we excel in is having computers in every classroom and our student to computer ratio is higher than the State average, that we do not have as much new equipment as the wealthier districts, and that we are doing a good job in how well the equipment is being used and how it is being tied to the curriculum.

Mr. Kennedy asked Dr. Mettlen to expand on the technology plan that was submitted to the County Office.

Dr. Mettlen explained that as part of the E-Rate Program we have to prepare a three year technology plan for approval by the County Office. Dr. Mettlen stated that she was asked to be one of the reviewers for this last year. Dr. Mettlen stated that our technology plan was one of the few districts that was approved on first reading and not returned and that it speaks highly of the team that put the plan together and participation involved between teachers, principals, and the technology staff.

Mr. Gonzalez requested a copy of the Technology E-Rate plan.

On a motion by Mrs. Munn, seconded by Mr. González, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Pastor Burgos, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Donoso, González, Mrs. Munn, Messrs. Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo – 8

Negative: None

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