

APPROVED
Bd Meeting 2-15-2023.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REORGANIZATION MEETING

January 4, 2023
Elizabeth, New Jersey

The members of the Board of Education met for the purpose of reorganization on Wednesday, January 4, 2023

School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr. welcomed everyone to the reorganization meeting of the Elizabeth Board of Education.

Prior to the start of the official meeting, newly elected Board Member, Isaias Rivera was administered the oath of office, by City of Elizabeth Second Ward Councilman, Nelson Gonzalez.

Re-elected Board Member, Diane Barbosa was sworn in for a new term by Union County Commissioner, Lourdes Leon.

Re-elected Board Member Stanley Neron was sworn in for another term by City of Elizabeth, Municipal Court Judge, Carl Marshall.

School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr. presented the following statement at 7:12 p.m.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. This is the annual reorganization 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 and Cablevision of Elizabeth on December 23, 2022. In addition, this notice is posted on the Bulletin Board in the lobby of the Mitchell Building, 500 North Broad Street, and pursuant to this act, a copy has been filed with the City Clerk of Elizabeth, New Jersey.

There will be a public portion for citizens to address the Board. Participants for the public portion must sign in prior to the start of the meeting so that they may have the opportunity to speak. The public participation form states the name, address, telephone number of the person and the reason the person wants to comment. Each participant shall be limited to three minutes in duration. The total time of public comment shall be limited to 60 minutes.

Present: Diane Barbosa, Maria Carvalho, Iliana Chevres, Charlene Dorgely, Jerry Jacobs, Rosa Moreno-Ortega, Stanley Neron, Stephanie Goncalves Pestana, Isaias Rivera – 9

Absent: None

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., Assistant Superintendent for Schools Rafael Cortes, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer Cedeno, Assistant Superintendent for Schools

Judy Finch-Johnson, Chief of Operations Francisco Cuesta, Comptroller Rajeev Malhotra, and members of the public were in attendance.

Mr. Kennedy called for nominations for Board President.

Mr. Neron nominated Mrs. Iliana Chevres for President.

A motion was made by Ms. Barbosa, seconded by Mrs. Chevres, that nominations be closed.

The motion to close nominations was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Chevres, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera – 9

Negative: None

The following vote was taken on the election of Mrs. Chevres for President.

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Chevres, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera – 9

Negative: None

Mrs. Chevres having received the required number of votes was declared President.

Mrs. Chevres thanked her colleagues for their support.

Mrs. Chevres called for nominations for Vice President.

Mr. Neron nominated Mrs. Charlene Dorgely for Vice President.

A motion was made by Mrs. Barbosa, seconded by Mrs. Chèvres, that nominations be closed.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Chevres, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera – 9

Negative: None

The following vote was taken on the election of Mrs. Dorgely for Vice President.

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Chevres, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera – 9

Negative: None

Mrs. Dorgely having received the required number of votes was declared Vice President.

Mrs. Chevres congratulated Vice President Dorgely and invited her to say a few words.

Mrs. Dorgely thanked her family, especially her husband, her parents, her brothers and her beautiful nieces as well as her in-laws who also were in attendance for their support as she now starts her 11th year on the board. She thanked her colleagues for electing her to serve as Vice President, and she hopes her service and leadership on the Board will inspire others to serve especially those students who are the future leaders. Mrs. Dorgely stated that she knows that

change does not happen overnight or instantly but, if we continue to put the staff and students at the top of our mind, we will succeed together, no matter the challenges we may face. She then touched upon Mental Health and said the Mental Health crisis is universal. There are many faces of suicide, depression and anxiety and they effect adults, teens and children as well. We never know what others may be facing in their lives so always be courteous and kind. Please remember you matter; you are necessary, and you are loved. Please feel free to reach out to any member of our certified staff, remember they are here to help. In conclusion Mrs. Dorgely stated that as Vice President she was dedicated to making a difference in my community but more importantly to students in our district. She went on to congratulate Mrs. Chevres on her election as president and thanked her for being her running mate. She urged Mrs. Chevres to persevere no matter what obstacles come her way. Remember as “One Dream One Team” nothing can stop us.

Mrs. Chevres congratulated re-elected Board member Diane Barbosa and asked if she would like to speak.

Mrs. Barbosa said that her message tonight is simple. Gratitude and it is a message of one and togetherness! Gratitude to the community, the voters who have elected me to another term. Gratitude to the 28,000 students, 4,800 staff and the Administration that I serve. Gratitude to my running mates and my fellow Board members all of whom have different attributes which make us a great Board. Gratitude to my friends who have become family to me. Gratitude to my family, my husband who has supported me in all my dreams, my mom for being my mom, and my dad for being who he is and to my children who have taught me new definitions of two words, kindness, and inclusion. Mrs. Barbosa then stated whether you are a slow learner, or you are a fast learner you are one. Whether you work the day shift or the night shift in our schools you are one. Whether you speak in a clear voice or are hard to understand you are one, YOU are one of the most important reasons I sit here. When I took my oath earlier this evening, I felt adrenalin and when I spoke the last four words of the oath “So help me God” I knew we were not alone. We are on this path together for two very important reasons “education and our children”. We must do it together, so help us God. Thank you and may God bless the Elizabeth Public School System.

Mrs. Chevres congratulated re-elected Board member Stanley Neron and asked if he would like to speak.

Mr. Neron congratulated Mrs. Chevres on her election as Board president and thanked her for the opportunity to speak. He also thanked everyone in attendance tonight for this special moment. He is honored to yet serve again. However, tonight we have to address “The Why”. When I joined the Board ten years ago, I wanted to make changes in the District and do some much needed things. Today I continue to do this, but with an added incentive. I am a proud husband and father and I know what it is like to be a parent in a school district of thirty thousand young people, as well as the dad who is raising a young black boy in America today. My mission is very clear of what my “Why” is. I not only stand for my son but for all the children of this country and all the children of the world. We have to ingrain in them the importance of an education and that it is a right not a privilege. To our educators, you have been given the honor of educating our children, don’t take that for granted. The fact that we have a right to be educated, let us all never take education for granted and I’m talking to the students out there. To accomplish this successfully,

we must do it as we started the meeting tonight, as a community. Not one Board member, not one parent, teacher, janitor, custodian, cook, you name it, can do it by themselves. Even the president of the United States cannot do it alone, he needs the Congress and the Senate. I implore you to stand with us, your teachers, be engaged and get involved and be the village our children need to succeed in this world.

Mrs. Chevres thanked Mr. Neron for his comments.

Mrs. Chevres congratulated. Newly elected Board member Isaias Rivera on his election and asked him if he would like to say a few words.

Mr. Rivera began by relating a story that he had the prior evening with his son Noah. He had told his son that tomorrow was a big day as his dad was being sworn in as a member of the Board of Education. His son asked him why that was a big thing. Mr. Rivera responded that his Daddy wanted to give back to the Community. Mr. Rivera stated that when his parents and family moved from Ecuador they first settled in Perth Amboy and that is where he started school. At a meeting with his teacher, his mother was told that he was a lousy writer and had learning disabilities. His mother disagreed with this and thus his family moved to Elizabeth and Mr. Rivera started attending school in the Elizabeth district. Fast forward several years later and Mr. Rivera displayed his High School Yearbook. Inside was an inscription from a former teacher which said “Dear Isaias, it has been an absolute joy teaching you the past two years. I feel it’s been an honor to have you in class. Your brand of excellence mixed with humor is rare, don’t lose it! I hope you have had as good a time as I have had with you. Be happy, stay safe, and Good Luck. Think Globally, act Locally. Love Mrs. Toy.” This is the type of teachers we have here in Elizabeth. These are the type of the administrators we have here in the city of Elizabeth. Ever since I graduated college I wanted to give back to the community. Thank you to everyone who has believed in me and supported me so I could be here today. Thank you and just remember one word of positive encouragement can go a long way.

Mrs. Chevres thanked him for his comments.

Mrs. Chevres stated that she wanted to take a few moments to share her vision as Board of Education president. First, she wanted to offer congratulations to those Board members who are returning for another term as well as Isaias Rivera who is starting his first term this evening. To those returning members, our work continues in providing the community of Elizabeth with a high-quality school system. We look forward to working with Isaias and that he will be a great asset to our Board, our schools, our children and the greater community.

Being on the Board is a difficult position and requires a great deal of support from friends and especially family members. I want to thank all of my family who are always there to support me when we are giving back to the community. I love giving back to the community and on any given Saturday my family will ask ‘What are we doing today?’ I will say soccer, events, serving food here and then going here and there. They know how important it is for me to give back and they empower and support me to continue to help those who need assistance. I commend my fellow board members who share that same tireless commitment to the Elizabeth Public School family and the community of Elizabeth. It truly is inspiring to work alongside those who are dedicated to providing the highest quality education and services to Elizabeth students and their families. I know together we will accomplish many more good things together in 2023. I also want to thank the members of the

community who have blessed me with this opportunity to serve you again and make a difference in the lives of our students. I believe I share the sentiment of the Board as I want us to inspire the best in each other as we solve problems as a team. We want to partner with the community through effective communication, hearing your concerns and coming together to resolve issues. I want to make sure that the members of the community will have an opportunity to have their voices heard as well as be able to share their concerns with the members of this Board. As long as I have lived in Elizabeth, I have served the members of this community even during the most difficult of times. We have showed how strong and successful we can be when we work together. It is very important to me that we as a Board and the School District staff reach out and educate the community about the programs and services, we have such as Special Needs and our After School programs, these programs I hold close in my heart. I want to make sure that our students have the resources possible so they can have the very best experience possible. I will always be one of the strongest advocates for our students and I will do everything in my power to provide them with every opportunity for academic and developmental success. I want them to grow up to be caring, responsible and successful adults. As a Board Member and as a parent I believe in an open and sustained connection between the Board, the School District, and the families of our students. It is vital to our entire success that this connection be maintained. We will continue to offer parenting activities, expand partnership opportunities, and strengthen our instructional staff. This will help change and improve the connection between the Board and the families we serve. In closing, I want to once again, thank the residents of this great community for this opportunity. To my fellow Board members thank you for entrusting me with this great responsibility and I want you to know I take this very seriously. I will work tirelessly to ensure we have a School District we can be proud of. Thank you all for your support.

Resolution – Appointment of Co-General Counsel

A motion was made by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Introduction of Rules of Governance

A motion was made by Mrs. Dorgely, seconded by Mr. Neron, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Mrs. Chevres stated that there were many elected officials in the audience. She recognized Mayor Bollwage, County Commissioner Leon, County Commissioner Sergio Granados, Assemblywoman Annette Quijano, Councilman Carlos Torres, Councilman Nelson Gonzalez, Councilman Manny Grova, Councilman Carlos Cedeno, and Councilwoman Patricia Perkins Auguste.

Mr. Kennedy presented the following public participation statement.

“At this time, the microphones are open for public comment to those who have personally signed in prior to the start of the meeting. I shall call individuals to participate based on the order of the sign-in. Each statement, made by a participant, shall be limited to three minutes in duration. The time limit will be strictly enforced, and audio transmission will be terminated at the end of three minutes. The total time of public comment shall be limited to 60 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 participation 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.”

Mr. Kennedy called upon the first public participant, Maria Lorenz, to address the Board.

Maria Lorenz spoke about policies.

Mrs. Chevres thanked her for her comments.

Mr. Kennedy called upon the next public participant, Kason Little, to address the Board.

Kason Little spoke about an incident.

Mrs. Chevres thanked him for his comments.

Mr. Kennedy called upon the next public participant, Jonathan Yelverton, to address the Board.

Jonathan Yelverton spoke about an incident.

Mrs. Chevres thanked him for his comments.

Since there were no other citizens signed in to address the Board, Mrs. Chevres declared this portion of the public meeting closed.

Appointment of a Representative to the Union County Educational Services Commission.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the election of representative to the Union County Educational Services Commission is a statutory regulation.

Mrs. Chevres nominated Rosa Moreno-Ortega to be the representative to the Union County Educational Services Commission.

A motion was made by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, that nominations be closed.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

The following vote was taken on the election of Rosa Moreno-Ortega to be the representative to the Union County Educational Services Commission:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Official Results of the School Board Election

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Designation of Official Media Services

A motion was made by Mrs. Dorgely, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Designation of Depositories for School Funds

A motion was made by Mr. Neron, seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Insurance/Health Benefit Consultant

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, seconded by Mrs. Dorgely, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Bathelus Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Auditors

A motion was made by Mr. Neron, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Chief Medical Inspector

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, seconded by Mrs Dorgely, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Medical Inspectors

A motion was made by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Treasurer of School Moneys

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, seconded by Mr. Neron, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Schedule of Board Meetings

A motion was made by Mr. Neron, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Public Relations Firm

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres –9

Negative: None

Mr. Neron asked that the Board to recognize and applaud those students who will be the Student Representatives to the Board for the rest of the school year. Having student representation on the Board has been a long time coming and will be a positive addition.

Mr. Neron then shared his prior remarks which he had made earlier in the evening in Creole. At the conclusion of his statement, he asked that we all say a prayer for Haiti due to circumstances facing the country.

On a motion by Mrs. Dorgely, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres – 9

Negative: None

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