

Approved 1-25-24.
Board Meeting

BOARD OF EDUCATION REORGANIZATION MEETING

January 3, 2024
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, Re-elected Board Member, Maria Carvalho was sworn in for a new term by City of Elizabeth, Chief Municipal Prosecutor, Anabela Dacruz-Melo.

Re-elected Board Member, Jerry D. Jacobs was sworn in for another term by City of Elizabeth, Councilwoman-At- Large, Patricia Perkins-Aguste.

Re-elected Board Rosa E. Moreno-Ortega was sworn in for another term by City of Elizabeth, Second Ward Councilman, Nelson Gonzalez.

School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr. presented the following statement at 6:45 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 22, 2023. 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 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.

Mrs. Carvalho nominated Mrs. Charlene Dorgely for President.

A motion was made by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, 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. Dorgely for President.

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

Negative: None

Mr. Kennedy announced that Mrs. Dorgely having received the required number of votes was now declared President.

Prior to addressing her fellow board members and constituents, Mrs. Dorgely wanted to recognize the dignitaries in the audience:

- Elizabeth Mayor Chris Bollwage
- Chairman of the Union County Commissioners Sergio Granados
- Union County Commissioner Lourdes Leon
- Elizabeth City Councilwoman at Large Patricia Perkins-Auguste
- Elizabeth City Councilman at Large Manny Grova Jr.
- Elizabeth City Councilman for the Second Ward Nelson Gonzalez
- Elizabeth City Councilman for the First Ward and City Council President Carlos Torres
- Plainfield City Councilperson at Large, Elect Julianne Cherry
- Roselle Borough Councilperson Isabel Sousa
- Reverend Pastor Eric Charles of the Peniel Church of God
- Reverend Dr. Wanda Lundy of the Siloam-Hope First Presbyterian Church
- Sisters of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority

Mrs. Dorgely began her remarks by thanking God for this moment in time. It was eleven years ago today, January 3rd, 2013, when I was first sworn in as a member of the Elizabeth Board of Education. A lot has changed, and a lot has occurred in all those years. I want to thank my family and friends for their unwavering support, you have been my rock. I also want to offer my profound appreciation to outgoing Board President Illiana Chevres for your unwavering support, guidance and mentorship in my growth as a leader and the progress of the District. Thanks again for all your help. To my colleagues, administrators, staff, teachers, and students I

want to thank you for all your support since 2013. You are the backbone of the District and I am truly thankful for your dedication and support. During my last term as president in 2016, I initiated several programs and initiatives that are still reaping benefits today. As president once again, my focus remains on engagement and transparency. My vision is that every child be able to see themselves represented throughout our diverse district. What I stood for in 2013 and all the years after, I still stand for today. I'm committed to equality for every child no matter what their classification. I want every student to have every opportunity to succeed and be given every advantage, no matter what school they attend in our district. I'm always open to every respectful comment, concern, and recommendation. As you can see today, green is the color of freshness and hope. It is often used to symbolize rebirth and renewal. "L'union fait La Force" - There is Strength in Unity. My hope for this year is that we as a Board unite as a team with each Board Member contributing to a specific initiative throughout the year. Let's truly make it a remarkable year with an unwavering commitment to respect, communication, and transparency. Again, thank you for your enduring support and may God Bless you all.

Mrs. Dorgely called for nominations for Vice President.

Mrs. Chevres nominated Mr. Stanley Neron for Vice President.

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

The motion was carried by the following vote:

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

Negative: None

The following vote was taken on the election of Mr. Neron for Vice President.

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

Negative: None

Mr. Neron having received the required number of votes was declared Vice President.

Mrs. Dorgely congratulated Vice President Neron and invited him to say a few words.

Thank you all and Happy New Year to everyone. It is indeed a pleasure to serve in this capacity as I have now been on the Board for ten years. I want to thank everyone out here in the audience for all their support. Thank you to my colleagues, the administrators, the staff and most importantly to the community we serve. Indeed, it is important to understand that this is a selfless job, its not about me, its not about me being appointed vice president or someone being appointed president. It's about the community and the children we serve, it's about the empathy that we must walk with and act upon when making decisions and governing in this District. It is a true honor to continually serve this great city, and its children and to inspire hope. As the president mentioned earlier, "L union fait La Force", there is strength in unity and as we celebrate Haitian Independence Day, we always remember that. Let us come together to establish the business of the people, the

business of our children, and we make sure they get what they need each and every day. Let us make sure that each and every child has an opportunity for an equitable education, not by just by saying it, but by acting upon it. Thank you to my colleagues for all for your years of dedication and thank you to the administrators, staff and teachers who are on the front lines each day. We know that is not an easy task. Thank you, thank you, thank you and we look forward to continuing to serve you. God Bless you all.

Mrs. Dorgely congratulated re-elected Board member Maria Carvalho and asked if she would like to speak.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked and congratulated Mrs. Dorgely on her election as Board president. She thanked all the dignitaries and elected officials who are in attendance tonight. We cannot do the work we do without your help and support. By being here tonight you continue to demonstrate that support and that you will be with us as we do our work. To my amazing family that has supported me along this nine-year journey, my husband, my dad, my mom, Dylan, Brian and Gabby and my mother-in-law, thank you for all your love and support and for keeping me grounded. Mrs. Carvalho then spoke in Portuguese “Obrigada Pela Vosso Apoio Sempre”. To the chief prosecutor for the City of Elizabeth, Anabela Dacruz-Melo thank you for swearing in tonight. You are such a strong role model for all our youth. I think it is important for the children of Elizabeth to know there is a strong woman in charge. To my fellow Board members for the Board of Education of the City of Elizabeth, Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator and Board Secretary, Harold E. Kennedy Jr., members of the Elizabeth Public Schools central administration, members of the community here in the audience and all those watching from home, welcome. It is a great honor to once again be sworn in as a member of this Board of Education. I would like to thank those members of the Elizabeth community who put their faith in me to serve another term. It was nine years ago that I began this journey and as I enter my fourth term my passion is just as strong. My reason for serving remains the same: to help ensure that the children of Elizabeth reach their full potential, become successful, and take on the mantle of leadership here in our community and beyond. During my years on the Board, I have been so fortunate to witness many great achievements of our students, our schools, our district team members, and our district as a whole and I know more great achievements are in our future. I have been equally fortunate to work with members of the Board who I sit beside tonight, knowing they share the same passion I have for serving this community and seeing the children in our schools succeed. I look forward to continuing the work in progress we as a Board have been committed together to doing over the last several years. I want to thank the team members of the Elizabeth Public schools for their work and dedication in making our schools a special place for our students, while providing a high-quality education. We have seen many of our students’ graduate, including my own boys. Our students are prepared for college and career success, thanks to your commitment to educational excellence. I will continue to support your efforts to provide our students with skills, knowledge, and great educational experiences that will guide them to achieving their dreams tomorrow. Thank you all again for making this possible and allowing me to fulfill my passion to serve the great City of Elizabeth, our community, and our children.

Mrs. Dorgely congratulated re-elected Board member Jerry D. Jacobs and asked if he would like to speak.

Mr. Jacobs thanked Mrs. Dorgely and thanked Mrs. Carvalho for her remarks which he believed said it all. I would like to thank the community first and foremost for your support, for your support of me and my colleagues as we diligently work as hard as we can for the children of our district, as our children are the most important things. Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is the most important weapon with which to change society”. This holds true for every member of this Board, who know our children are our future. I really do appreciate and have from the bottom of my heart, the trust you have placed in us to accomplish this mission. I would like to thank my family and my friends and Councilwoman Perkins-Auguste who swore me in earlier tonight. She has always been at my side since day one and I sincerely appreciate that. I would also like to thank my colleagues here on the Board, the administration, the Superintendent, Mr. Kennedy, the Assistant Superintendents, everyone involved in the administration and most importantly our students, staff, and teachers.

Mrs. Dorgely thanked Mr. Jacobs for his comments.

Mrs. Dorgely congratulated re-elected Board member Rosa E. Moreno-Ortega on her re-election and asked her if she would like to say a few words.

Mrs. Moreno-Ortega congratulated Mrs. Dorgely on her election as president and thanked outgoing president Illiana Chevres for the job she did as president. I want to thank God, my husband Alejandro who is here tonight, my son Joseph, my daughter Marianna and my dad who inspired me, as well as my wonderful Board family. You all know that I don’t have family here, so you my fellow Board members who sit by me, are my family. I appreciate your trust in me to be in this position and I look forward to continuing the important work we have undertaken in recent years as a Board and as a school district. There are many great challenges ahead, but I am confident since I am surrounded by such dedicated and exceptional people that we will do well. In short, I want to thank the residents of Elizabeth for all your support and for giving me this opportunity to serve you. I want to thank Second Ward Councilman Nelson Gonzalez who has supported me from day one. I recognize the great responsibility of serving on this Board and I will do everything I can for our students, so that they receive the excellent education they deserve in a safe environment. We as a Board will continue to support our great superintendent, our great administrators, teachers, and support staff throughout the year. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the teamwork we have and none of this would be possible without it. Thank you to everyone who has supported this Board, our school district and especially our students. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega then repeated the above comments in Spanish.

Mrs. Dorgely thanked Mrs. Moreno-Ortega for her comments.

Resolution – Appointment of Co-General Counsel

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, Chevres, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Dorgely – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Introduction of Rules of Governance

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

The motion was carried by the following vote:

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

Negative: None

Mrs. Dorgely 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 microphone 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 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:

1. Time limits will be strictly enforced.
2. No personal attacks on individuals.
3. No vulgar or indecent language.
4. A person may address the Board no more than once during a single meeting.
5. Speakers should refrain from naming individuals.
6. Comments or questions posed during public participation will not be debated.

The presiding officer may:

1. Interrupt, warn or terminate a participant’s statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.
2. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.
3. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person’s conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
4. Call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action.

As a reminder this is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public.”

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

Resolution – Appointments to Standing Committees

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana and seconded by Mrs. Moreno-Ortega to confirm the appointments to the Standing Committees of the Elizabeth Board of Education.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

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

Negative: None

Resolution – Official Results of the School Board Election

Resolution – Designation of Official Media Services

Resolution – Designation of Depositories for School Funds

Resolution – Appointment of Insurance/Health Benefit Consultant

Resolution – Appointment of Auditors

Resolution – Appointment of Chief Medical Inspector

Resolution – Appointment of Medical Inspectors

Resolution – Appointment of Treasurer of School Moneys

Resolution – Schedule of Board Meetings

Resolution – Appointment of Public Relations Firm

A motion was made by Mr. Neron, seconded by Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, that the above resolutions be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

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

Negative: None

Prior to the close of the meeting, Reverend Pastor Eric Charles said a prayer of Benediction.

On a motion by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Mr. Rivera, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 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