

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
(Official)

November 21, 2023  
Elizabeth, New Jersey

Prior to the start of the regular agenda/business meeting of the Board of Education, which was held on November 21, 2023, at 6 p.m. in the auditorium of the Dr Antonio Pantoja, School No. 27, 505-517 Morris Ave, Elizabeth, New Jersey, Board Members, District Administration, School Staff members and the public audience were treated to the following student performances in honor of Puerto Rican Heritage Month:

The Poem “El Jibaro” by Lemon Anderson was read by Crystal Hernandez, an 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Student at Dr Antonia Pantoja School No. 27.

The Dance Routine “La Placita” was performed by students and staff members of Dr. Antonia Pantoja School No. 27. The following students participated in the dance: Gabriela Gerri Lynn Desir, Maria Antonia Serna Rios, Mariana Ocampo, Julian David Puerto Mendoza, Marion Ramirez Roman, Santiago Zapata Soto, Jacey Jasmin Linarez, Ariaiah Janai White, Emma Marie Ramirez, Lianzo Ali Soto, Willianna Angelina Gomez Restituyo, Haylee Ynfante, Makei Baaif Johnson, Mariely Madalyn Moreno, and Shylah Collins-Williams. They were joined by staff members: Victor Ariel Felipe, Diana Garcia, Amanda L Blutner, William R Oliwa, Monica Gabriela Luzardo, Gloria V. Wolan, Ilcia E. Rodriguez, Jannette Cruz Medina, Lina Ruiz, Janil Llano, Veronica Cristina Alvero, and Valerie Delceg Burgos.

Board President Iliana Chevres also recognized two Heroes of Winfield Scott School No. 2, Tyshawn Odney a 7<sup>th</sup> grade student and Linette Yanin Castro the School Nurse for their acts of Kindness and Heroism. Nurses from across the District joined in celebrating their colleague and their dedication and skills of the District nurses were also recognized by both Mrs. Chevres and Superintendent of Schools, Olga Hugelmeyer.

Mrs. Chevres honored the EHS Marching Band Parents, Guardians and Band Director. The Board president stated that the parents and guardians are so involved cheering and supporting the Band throughout the year, that tonight it was the Board and the public’s chance to cheer for them and applaud their efforts. She recognized the following people:

Miquel A. Bolivar – BAND DIRECTOR

Veronica Acevedo, Paola Aleman, Claudia Almeida, Jessica Alvarez, Jacqueline Amaya-Atiencia, Giuseppe Arcieri-BAND PARENT PRESIDENT, Janice Arcieri, Percy Arenas, Roxana Bernardo, Ibrahim Botros, Kiisha Brown-Velasquez, Wilswick Cassy, Juan Castellano, Flor Castillo, Marlene Chacach, Sandra Chavanne, Geinor Chavarria, Magally Chaves, Karen A. Chavez Salazar, Maribel Cielo, Ana Cisneros, Keisha Coleman, Lorena Consuegra, Erika Correa, Francisco Cueva, Rosana De Oliveira-BAND PARENT VICE PRESIDENT, Aurelina De Santana, Doris DeSousa, Lourdes Duran-Willmor, Flor Enriquez, Elsa Feinglass – BAND PARENT CO-Secretary, Nahyr Felix, Rafeal Felix, Maxene Fenelus, Jullissa Fernandez-BAND PARENT SECRETARY, Franqueline Flechas, Annie Flores, Diana Fuentes, Richard Gallagher, Norma Garay, Sandra Garcia, Dorota Garcia, Julia Garcia, Erica Genao, Katarina Gergelyova, Roberto Gonzalez, Maria Guaman, Wendy Guembes, Sandra Gutierrez, Anselma Guzman, Roxana Herrer, Fanny Illapa, Nizlda Jimenez, Yessenia Lopez, Julieta

Lorenzo, Martha Lovo, Eduardo Mainato, Thalyta Marques, Veronica Mata, Magaly Meilad, Evelin Mesa, Vicky Meza, Marisol Morales, Jacqueline Munoz, Maria Ochoa, Monica Palacio, Sandra Pillado, Fabiana Ramirez-BAND PARENT CO-VICE PRESIDENT Nermine Regab, Nancy Retana , Nancy Retana, Daisyvette Rivera, Xiomara Robles, Yulaime Rodriguez, Erica Romero, Feby Saleh, Chilristin Salgado, Karen Salgado, Katherine Sanchez, Sharon Santillan, Ana Sebastiao – BAND PARENT TREASURER, Sonia Segarra, Rossely Stubb, Sandra Tello, Lizette Torres, Sarita Vanegas, Fabiola Vargas, Jesus Velasquez, Melva Vera, Sandra Wagner, Walter Zelaya.

Board President Iliana Chevres welcomed everyone to the November 21, 2023, regular agenda/business meeting of the Elizabeth Board of Education.

Mrs. Chevres called the meeting to order and read the following statement at 6:45 p.m. “Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. This is a combined regular agenda and business 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 November 8, 2023. 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, New Jersey.

“We want to welcome everyone present here at Dr. Antonia Pantoja School No. 27, and to our television viewers to this November 21, 2023, 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. The presiding officer may interrupt, warn or terminate speaking when talking becomes personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant; request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum; 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; 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.”

“We also ask that you silence the sound on your electronic devices. Since it is legally mandated that these proceedings be accurately recorded, we may have to ask for order periodically should noise begin to interfere with our recording capabilities. We are pleased that you have taken time this evening to join us here for our Board of Education meeting. 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 personally sign in prior to the 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: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, (joined via Zoom at 6:50 p.m. and arrived at the meeting at 7:10 p.m.) Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, (arrived via Zoom at 8:55 p.m.), Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mrs. Chevres-8

Absent: Mr. Rivera

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr, Assistant Superintendent for Schools, Rafael Cortes, Assistant Superintendent for Schools, Judy Finch Johnson Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Dr. Jennifer Cedeno, Deputy Counsel Heather Ford, and Co-General Counsel Michael Simitz of Kologi Simitz Law Office, were in attendance.

A Moment of Silence was held in memory of Tammy O’Farrell, Retired teacher – Cognitive Moderate, Admiral William F. Halsey Jr. Health and Public Safety Academy.

Colors were presented during the Flag Ceremony by members of the Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr. Health and Public Safety Academy Marine Corps Junior R.O.T.C.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Member, Diane Barbosa.

The Star-Spangled Banner was played.

The Pledge of Ethics was led by Board Member, Stephanie Goncalves Pestana.

Board President Illiana Chevres asked Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer to begin her Community Update. Mrs. Hugelmeyer introduced the Student Representative to this month’s meeting, Ashley Giraldo. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that Ms. Giraldo is a senior at Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy and is treasurer of the Student Government Club. In addition, she is an active student leader for the St. Jude’s Children Hospital Foundation for whom she raised over three thousand dollars and surpassed her goal by \$500.00. Ashley has a 4.3 G.P.A. while taking 3 AP courses and ranks in the top 2% of her class. She has a passion for fashion and has attended fashion workshops at the Fashion Institute of Technology since her elementary school years. Moreover, she gained admittance to F.I.T. beginning in the fall of 2024. Ms. Giraldo was also a participant in Mark Cuban Foundation’s Artificial Intelligence Boot Camp, where she learned about A.I.’s impact on social media, its application to Smart and Safe Homes, Facial Recognition and Self-Driving cars. Ashley continues to be a voice for others bringing issues to attention to the student government and cooperating with the administration at Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer invited Ms. Giraldo to the stage and to take her seat on the dais. She was presented with a pin by President Chevres to commemorate her role at this evening’s meeting. Mrs. Chevres asked Mr. Kennedy to include Ms. Giraldo’s attendance in the official record of tonight’s meeting. This was duly noted by Mr. Kennedy.

Board President Illiana Chevres asked Board Secretary Harold Kennedy to read the following statement.

Citizens may address the Board.

“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.”

Mrs. Chevres called upon the first public participant, Maria DaRassi, to address the Board.

Ms. DaRassi spoke about Special Education and I.E.P.'s.

Mrs. Chevres thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Chevres called upon the next public participant, Maria Lorenz, to address the Board.

Mrs. Lorenz spoke about the needs of her child who is a Special Education student.

Mrs. Chevres thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Chevres called upon the next public participant, Pricilla Jimenez, to address the Board.

Ms. Jimenez spoke about the costs of the high school graduation trip.

Mrs. Chevres thanked her for her comments.

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

Mrs. Chevres asked Superintendent Hugelmeyer to present her Community Update.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and reminded everyone that schools would be closing tomorrow (Wednesday November 22) at 12:15 p.m. In addition, the District and all schools will be closed on both Thanksgiving November 23<sup>rd</sup> and Friday November 24<sup>th</sup>. School Principals will be sending out communications to all families regarding the Thanksgiving Holiday period.

Report Cards for the first marking period will be available on PowerSchool through the Parent portal on Tuesday November 28<sup>th</sup>. Instructions on how to access the portal and other helpful information will be sent to parents and guardians.

It remains Flu and RSV season. The District has provided resources that are accessible through our website resources to help identify Flu and RSV Symptoms.

The Superintendent announced that Terence C. Reilly School No.7 had been ranked number 108 and William F. Halloran School No. 22 had been ranked 114 out of the 1,385 Middle Schools in NJ in the latest rankings published by US News and World Reports Magazine. This ranking put these schools in the top 9% in the state of New Jersey. In addition, William F. Halloran School No. 22 achieved a ranking of 177 among Elementary Schools and Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 was ranked 195 out of 2,294 Elementary Schools in our state as evaluated by US News and World Reports.

The Elizabeth High School Boys Soccer Team won its first outright Union County Tournament since 2008 with a 1-0 overtime victory in the County Final. Union was ranked number 13 in the state at the time. Elizabeth High finished with a record of 16-4, and those 16 victories were the most in the Union County Conference.

During the month of November, the Elizabeth Public Schools have been or will be observing and celebrating the following events, Holidays, and commemorations.

- Native American Heritage Month
- Puerto Rican Heritage Month
- National French Week which was observed from November 1-8.
- Thank you to all who served our nation as we celebrated Veterans Day on November 11th.
- World Kindness Day, which was on Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup>.
- American Education Week was from November 13 to the 17<sup>th</sup>.
- National Parental Involvement Day was November 16<sup>th</sup>.
- National Family Week is celebrated from November 19<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup>.
- The Superintendent wished everyone a Happy and Safe Thanksgiving.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer asked the Student Representative to the Board, Ashley Giraldo to present her Community Report.

Good evening, madam superintendent, board members, and all community members. My name is Ashley Giraldo and I'm a student attending Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy. I am part of the student government, holding the position of treasurer. As an ongoing believer in positive impacts, I am a continuing member of the St. Jude Leadership Society New Jersey cohort which raises money for the patients and families of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. I was also recently part of the Mark Cuban Foundation AI program, which helped me enrich my knowledge on the ever-growing platform: artificial intelligence.

Starting off the school year, Thomas Jefferson has had a very eventful beginning with many successes. Our first play of the year, Raisin in the Sun, was conducted by our wonderful and oh-so talented theater students. This play was a major hit and was enjoyed by members of the community during the end of October. Another major hit at Jefferson was our Halloween dance that had an astonishing attendance of 450 students. It was an open ticket event for all high schools in Elizabeth. We had students from Cicarell, Hamilton, as well as Dwyer. We, as a school, are always having new events for students to participate in. Recently, we had Career Day where students came dressed as their aspiring career and purchased wristbands at only three dollars to fund our end of the year scholarships given to the class of 2024. Another event being held is our second annual Operation Christmas Child, where students fill shoeboxes with items such as notebooks, stuffed animals, toys, personal care items, clothing, and accessories. This gives the opportunity for children across the world to receive the wonderful blessing of gifts during the holiday season. Students also gain 10 hours of community service upon participating. Last year Jefferson collected 357 boxes filled to the brim with all kinds of amazing items. With the help of our alumni this year, we can exceed that number as we currently have 100+ boxes filled.

As for other schools, AOF as well as STEM both had similar events with a Halloween Haunted Hallway. Halsey ROTC had a City Hall Veterans Day Ceremony, alongside Hamilton having a Veterans Day Assembly/ Marine Corps Discussion. Hamilton and Jefferson both had breast cancer awareness month, and students came on Wednesdays wore pink shirts in show of support. As well as Jefferson and FJC being part of

Relay 4 Life, which helps fundraise money alongside the American Cancer Society to help fund research for finding cures of cancers.

We have multiple fundraising opportunities at Jefferson Academy. We currently have a food drive fundraiser for those in need. Students bring in canned and nonperishable items to be donated for those in and out of the Jefferson Community. Another fundraiser example is donation of clothing items such as coats, sweaters, pants, shoes, etc... for people that unfortunately didn't have the ability to purchase any, especially for the harsh winters. I look forward to assisting with the many fundraisers/charity opportunities that will continue to be held throughout the year. It is wonderful witnessing the number of fundraising opportunities that are held at all the Elizabeth high schools to make a positive difference in our community, and even New Jersey as a whole.

CHOICE schools offer diverse educational opportunities. However, there are a few limitations for enthusiastic students to attend their desired elective course such as theater, music, dance, etc. Students face a delay in pursuing their passion until Junior year. This often occurs when students do not take honors courses during their freshman and sophomore years. These students are required to take two periods of mathematics and English freshman year their sophomore year. During those two years of block periods, these students could have joined drama and refined their acting skills. When a student goes into a CHOICE school, they expect to begin a new school year with the excitement of attending those electives, because that is the reason as to why they chose that specific school. A solution to this would be to increase the number periods in the day by decreasing the number of minutes per period and creating a nine-period day, so that students can have their desired elective starting freshman year. Another solution would be to decrease the block periods of mathematics of English to single period course, allowing the additional periods to be used towards elective courses.

The love and passion I have for art and fashion is what drew me to choosing Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy as my number one high school choice. Jefferson's artistic environment has pulled me closer into identifying the meaning of art, which has made my high school selection process easier knowing that those around me express the same love for arts as I do. Even though Fashion, as a class, is no longer offered in Jefferson, it is expressed everywhere around the school. Fashion continues to be displayed in the halls, throughout students' uniform presentations, student performances, as well as the yearly fashion show. This year, the fashion show will be taking place on April 19<sup>th</sup>, don't forget to join us.

As I mentioned before, I'm a member of the St. Jude Leadership Society and wanted to know if there was a possibility to get Elizabeth High schools to participate in the program with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital? Last year I was one of the top ten fundraisers in New Jersey, and hopefully with the help of other schools I will be able to exceed that and create a bigger impact for their mission of finding cures and saving children. Each dollar raised is to ensure that families do not receive a bill for treatment, travel, housing, or food, so they can focus on what matters most – helping their child live.

Thomas Jefferson as a whole has been able to create so many wonderful new events for our school community, for example just for the holiday season Thoams Jefferson has recently the choir students participated in celebration for the adoption day ceremony at the courthouse, on November 17. Jefferson continues its partnership with the city of Elizabeth by participating in the toys for tots' celebration on Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>, and the Christmas tree lighting Nov 28. Our students have a full production of The Mean Girls Musical, Nov 30<sup>th</sup> to Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>. Soon to come is our winter concert on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December. Ending our holiday celebration with a holiday dance welcoming students from all Elizabeth High schools on Dec.15<sup>th</sup>. At Jefferson students' academic successes are acknowledged and rewarded. Students look forward to their marking period AVID, Superintendent/Principal Scholar, and perfect attendance celebrations. This is only the beginning of an extraordinary school year, and the best is yet to come. I'm looking forward to continuing to collaborate with my fellow school representatives. Thank you all for your time, and this remarkable opportunity.

Mrs. Chevres initiated a review of items that were proposed to be on the Agenda for this evening's meeting. Board members could ask questions regarding specific items.

A motion was made by Mrs. Barbosa and seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana to amend a vote on the October 18 Official minutes to show an abstention by Mrs. Dorgely on Tab 4b page 2 for use of facilities by Zeta Phi Beta.

The motion was carried by the following vote: Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Chevres -7

Tab 1a) Official and Private Minutes (October 18, 2023) as amended were added to the Agenda.

Tab 1b) Treasurer/Secretary's Report (September 30, 2023) was added to the Agenda.

Tab 2a, & 2b) Personnel Report/Supplemental Personnel Report were added to the Agenda

Tab 3a) Tuitions Report was added to the Agenda.

Tabs 4, 4a, 4b, 4bb, 4c) Superintendent's Reports/ Considerations/Use of Facilities-Considerations/Field Trip Considerations/were added to the agenda.

Tab 5, 5a) Authorizations Report/ Supplemental Authorizations Reports - Superintendent Hugelmeyer asked that each of the Educational Directors speak to specific items within the Authorizations Report(s).

Ms. Tracey Crosby, Director of Early Childhood Education, sought authorization to make application to the New Jersey Department of Education, Division of Early Childhood Education for the 2024-2025 Preschool Operational Plan and to authorize submission of the 2024-2025 projected preschool enrollment.

Dr. Dorothy McMullen, Director of Special Projects asked for authorization for Elizabeth Public School Students attending the 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade Saturday programs to participate in the Mantra Percussion Residence from November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2023, to May 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. Additional authorization was sought for the Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy Choir to participate in the Union County Adoption Day event on Friday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Authorization was also requested for students in art and music classes in grades 6-12 to participate in the creation of wooden displays of Holiday's around the World Snowflakes project to be displayed in Winfield Scott Plaza.

Dr Sandra Nunes, Director of Bilingual and ESL Education, recommended that Elizabeth Public Schools in partnership with CALTA 21 and the Center for Visual Arts of New Jersey be authorized to apply for an IMLS Museums of America Grant.

Mr. Samuel Etienne, Director of Equity and Inclusion sought authorization for several students to pursue Independent Study/Extended Learning Opportunities for either 2.5 or 5.0 credits.

Assistant Superintendent, Judy Finch Johnson, informed the Board that she had 212 Fund Raising Requests that were seeking approval/authorization tonight.

Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Jennifer Cedeno sought authorization for Nicholas S. LaCorte, Peterstown School No. 3 to apply for Re-Certification for New Jersey School of Character (NJSOC) and National School of Character (NSOC). In addition, Dr. Cedeno asked for authorization for students in the Robert Morris School No. 18 Fifth Grade Chorus to participate in the Newark Liberty International Airport Community Tree Lighting ceremony at Terminal A on Friday, December 1, 2023. Dr. Cedeno expressed her gratitude for a \$1,000 donation from MANJ to the music program at Robert Morris School No 18. choir, plus the donation of 23 instruments valued at \$12,485 from the Jazz House Kids to the band program at Chessie Dentley Academy School No. 30.

Tab 5) Authorizations Report was added to the Agenda.

Tab 5 a) Supplemental Authorizations Report was added to the Agenda.

Tab 6) Finance and Accounting Report was added to the Agenda

Tab 6a) Supplemental Finance and Accounting Report was added to the Agenda

Tab 7, 7a Award of Contracts Report/Supplemental Award of Contracts report.

Ms. Crosby recommended a contract with Karen Nemeth to provide a Professional Development session for 60 Pre School CDA's on December 4<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Anthony DiDonato, Director of Student Services, asked for approval for a contract with Special Agent Timothy McMahon of the Drug Enforcement Administration to conduct a program called "Hidden in Plain Sight". In addition, Mr. DiDonato sought approval to enter into a Data Agreement with the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to provide the Elizabeth Public Schools with data on our students Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the New Jersey Financial Aid Alternative Application.

Mr. Etienne recommended three separate contracts with CodeHS Inc., National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity, and Leverett Education Counseling for Professional Development opportunities to enhance access to equity training as well as computer training at Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy. Also Mr. Etienne recommended that the Elizabeth Board of Education enter into a partnership with the City of Elizabeth Health & Human Services and the Office on Aging to provide work-based learning experiences, career exposure and student internship opportunities for High School Students at Thomas Edison Career and Technical Academy.

Dr. Michael Ojeda, Director of Special Services had several recommendations of Contracts, for Nursing Services for individual students and a contract with Northern Regional Educational Services Commission to provide home instruction for 2 Special Education students. In addition, Dr Ojeda recommended that we rescind two Nursing contracts due to changes in circumstances.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer provided a summary of the contract approval requests that Dr. Daphne Marchetti, Director of Elementary and Secondary Education, had placed before the Board. These included contracts with Agile Mind Educational Holdings, Inc, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Carnegie Learning, and Inspired Instruction, LLC.

Tabs 7 and 7a were added to the Agenda.

Tab 8 Committee Reports

**Special Education Committee**

November 2, 2023

12:00p.m. – 1:00p.m

**Attendees:** Iliana Chevres, Board President; Charlene Bathelus-Dorgely, Board Vice-President; Diane Barbosa, Board Member/Chairperson of Special Education Committee; Maria Carvalho, Board Member; Edward Kologi, General Counsel; Judge Malone, General Counsel; Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator, Dr. Michael Ojeda, Director of Special Services and Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools

The SEPAC policy was reviewed, and the Director of Special Services explained that the membership of SEPAC was established at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. The committee discussed the agenda at SEPAC meetings on August 29<sup>th</sup> and October 25<sup>th</sup>. In addition, the committee reviewed the proposed agenda items for the Open SEPAC Meetings to be posted on the district website, which are scheduled for January and May. The dates will be finalized following our December meeting based on committee interest. Topics for the January meeting may include high school choices and college/career fair opportunities. The topic for our May meeting will be adult guardianship, presented by our county surrogate. The committee discussed scheduling pictures with Santa at a centralized location to invite parents and special needs students and the annual visit to the schools. Additionally, community events were discussed, including the annual ice-skating event at Warinanco Park scheduled for December 9, 2023. Flyers will be distributed announcing both events.

The Director of Special Services reported on developing a Frequently Asked Question (FAQ) page to be listed under our [Back to School Parent Resources](#). A Report on Community-Based Instruction and Alternate Pathways to Success was presented to the committee. Currently, the supervisors are using *Community-Based Learning: Engaging Students for Success and Citizenship*, a report from the Coalition for Community Schools, as part of our professional learning community. The report analyzes opportunities for community-based learning in the following areas:

- Academically Based Community Service
- Civic Education
- Environmental Education
- Place-Based Learning
- Service Learning
- Work-Based Learning

For the 2022-2023 school year, we will assess how these opportunities best fit in our K-12 pipeline and pilot the following work-based learning trips in our high school transition program at JVJ STEM Academy (No. 92). Lastly, the committee received Field Trip updates regarding recreational trips for students.

The committee requested the following items for the next Special Education Committee meeting scheduled to take place on December 7 at 12:00 p.m.

- Update on services provided by Trinitas/Robert Wood Johnson Hospital and current challenges.
- Programs offered to students.

### **Finance Committee**

November 8, 2023

12:00 p.m. – 1:15p.m

**Attendees:** Jerry Jacobs, Board Member/Chairperson of Finance Committee; Maria Carvalho, Board Member; Stan Neron, Board Member; Edward Kologi, General Counsel; Judge Malone, General Counsel; Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator; and Rajeev Malhotra, Comptroller.

John Swisher, Partner Suplee, Clooney & Company briefed the Committee on the recent communication sent to the Board as required under Generally Accepted Auditory Standards. The Letter of Governance allows the Board to discuss directly with the Auditor any concerns regarding fraud, significant unusual transactions or related party transactions that would be potentially valuable in the audit process. No issues or concerns relating to the audit were communicated to the auditor.

As a follow-up to the Committee's meeting on October 11th meeting, ESIP Financial reports and Construction Reports were presented. The ESIP project of \$80,805,173 is funded as follows:

ESIP Capital Financing	\$31.5 million
Capital Reserve	\$ 1.29 million
SDA Grants:	\$ 9.5 million
ESSERS II	\$10.4 million
ARP	\$23.8 million
NJHVAC Grant	\$ 4.4 million

Thru October 2023 \$33,209,069 has been expended by the District under the ESIP program. The Construction Report was reviewed including the percentage of completion reports and timelines for completion. Going forward the Committee requested that the monthly Financial Report and Construction Report be shared with the Committee.

A schedule of District Warehouse vehicles was presented to the Committee. The District maintains 46 vehicles, including 3 District owned garbage trucks. The District is waiting delivery on a cargo van and a freezer truck as Electric Vehicles from the state grant including:

- Electric Garbage truck
- Electric Freezer trucks
- Electric Delivery trucks

The committee requested the following items for the next Finance Committee meeting scheduled to take place on December 13 at 12:00 p.m.

- A report on the effect on building rooms that the HVAC projects under ESIP might have.

### **Education Management Committee**

November 20, 2023

4:00p.m. – 5:00p.m.

**Attendees:** Iliana Chevres, Board President; Jerry Jacobs, Board Member, Rosa Moreno Ortega, Board Member, Stephanie Pestana, Board Member, Edward Kologi, General Counsel, Judge Malone, General Counsel, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator and Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools

The committee reviewed the Demographic Breakdown of Gifted and Talented Schools, Magnet Schools and High School Academies for school years 2018-2019 through the current school year.

The demographic breakdown categories include Asian, Black, Hispanic, White and Other for 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 were discussed by the members of the committee. The schools that were reviewed included the Gifted and Talented Schools No. 7 and No. 22, and the Magnet schools included School Nos. 8,26,29 & 30. The High School Academies included Hamilton, Dwyer, Halsey, Jefferson, Bollwage, Edison, EHS and JVJ STEM.

The district total enrollment increased from 28,341 to 28,377. Currently, the percentage of Asian students is 1.6%, Black 15.0 %, Hispanic 76.6%, White 6.6% and Other 0.2%.

The committee discussed the acceptance criteria for Gifted and Talented and the High School Academies and it was noted that JVJ Stem Academy has the longest wait list of the 8 high school academies.

The committee requested the following item for the next Education Management Committee meeting scheduled to take place on December 6 at 4:00 p.m.

- A report on the demographics of current applicants.

Tab 9) Claims List was added to the Agenda.

Resolutions 10 to 10h. Mr. Michael Rijo, Director of Transportation, spoke about Resolution 10c which acknowledges the District completed all requisite Bus Evacuation drills and is in compliance with NJAC. 6A: 27-11.2

Resolutions 10 to 10h were added to the Agenda.

Mrs. Chevres thanked all the Directors in attendance for their participation in the meeting and sharing their insights and expertise.

Mrs. Chevres asked for a motion to approve the Agenda.

A motion was made by Mrs. Barbosa and seconded by Mr. Jacobs to approve the Agenda.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Mrs. Carvalho (with an abstention on Tab 7 pg. 3 Partnership with City of Elizabeth Health and Human Services & Office of Aging), Mrs. Dorgely, (with an abstention on Tab 9- Claims List -Charlene Dorgely misc. expense), Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Chevres -7

Negative: none

Mrs. Chevres then asked for a motion to go into private session, specifically for discussion of Legal matters, Workers Compensation -M.C. Personnel Matters, specifically Interviews, and disciplinary action. The Board will reconvene in public and may take formal action.

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana and seconded by Mrs. Barbosa to go into private session at 8:25 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Chevres -7

Negative: none

Mr. Neron joined the meeting via Zoom at 8:55 p.m.

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana and seconded by Mrs. Dorgely to return to public session at 9:25 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mmes. Goncalves Pestana, Chevres -7

Negative: none

The following items were added to the Agenda:

Resolution - Settlement of Workers Compensation Case – M.C.

Resolution – Appointment of Interim Coordinator of Mechanics – Luis J. Ferreira

Resolution – Suspension without Pay – A.I.C.R.

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana and seconded by Mrs. Moreno-Ortega to approve the additional Agenda items.

The motion was carried by the following vote: Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mmes. Goncalves Pestana, Chevres -8

Negative: none

Mrs. Chevres asked Mrs. Hugelmeyer to present the H.I.B. Report for the month of November.

1.) Pursuant to Board Policy 5131.1, Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying, and New Jersey Statute 18A:37, “The results of each investigation shall be reported to the Board of Education no later than the date of the next board meeting following completion of the investigation and include: 1) Any services provided; 2) Training established; 3) Discipline imposed; or 4) Other action taken or recommended by the chief school administrator.”

2.) Since our last Board of Education meeting on October 18, 2023, and through November 20, 2023, our school counselors, school based social workers and Supervisor of Anti-Bullying completed 58 HIB investigations. Of these investigations 26 cases were Founded for HIB as per New Jersey law. There were 25 males, 41 females, 57 regular education students and 9 special education students that were the alleged victims. There were 48 males, 34 females, 67 regular education students, 14 special education students and 1 non-student that were the alleged offenders. Of the services provided and actions taken for these investigations, there were 14 skill development lessons/trainings, 53 counseling sessions, 3 targeted behavioral interventions, 12 referrals for outpatient mental health treatment, 5 classroom changes, 6 changes of school placement, 4 administrative counseling sessions, 10 in school detentions, 29 parent conferences, 2 referrals to outside agencies, 25 out of school suspensions, 1 professional development training and 9 cases are continuing to be monitored.

3.) The HIB statute further requires that at the next regularly scheduled meeting after board members receive the initial report of HIB investigations, that the Board issue a decision, in writing, to affirm, reject, or modify the superintendent's decision pertaining to the 39 cases that was reported to you at the last Board meeting on October 18, 2023. In order for you to do so, the investigation summary from the investigation, which was reported to you at the last board meeting, has been provided for your review prior to voting.

Welcome to the Public Hearing on Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) and our Student Safety Data System Reporting for the period starting January 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2023.

In July 2011, the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights was signed into law as P.L. 2010, chapter 122.

In accordance with this law, all New Jersey public school districts must designate the first full week of October of each year as a “Week of Respect.” During the Week of Respect, school districts are expected to organize activities, including but not limited to, age-appropriate instruction and opportunities for student discussion on conflict resolution, issues of diversity, and tolerance.

A resolution was put before the Board in September declaring the week of October 3-8, 2022, Week of Respect. Each of our schools planned appropriate activities for this week.

In fulfilling the reporting requirements pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-46, two times each year between September 1 and December 31 and between January 1 and June 30, the school board shall hold a public hearing at which the Chief School Administrator will report to the Board of Education and the public any acts of harassment, intimidation and bullying which occurred during the reporting period.

From January 1, 2023, through June 30, 2023, there were 335 HIB investigations completed by appropriate school staff. Of those cases investigated, 117 were confirmed cases of HIB and were affirmed by

board members. The following Anti-Bullying Specialists, Anti-Bullying Specialist Alternates and Anti-Bullying Coordinator conducted these investigations:

- Dani Iemola
- Nafeesa Freeman
- Ada Flores
- Michele Zuber
- Dinorah Mejia
- Fabi Ramos
- Andreia Giuca
- Maria Brito
- Maureen Creagh
- Susana Mateo
- Tyler LaMons
- Chanise Hurst
- Desann Brown
- Meghan Courtney
- Jessica Vasto
- Denise Uniacke
- Sofia Verma
- Jasmine Lee
- Yomaira Carrero-Iglesia
- Kailey Monteiro
- Cindy Goncalves
- Daniel Kaingu
- Tanya Santucci
- Jessica Ortega
- Shayra Bustamante
- Kathy Amato
- Melvin Luciano
- Maria Cabrera
- Antonio Sapio
- Nagwa Elsamra
- Sara Laface Apreda
- Sarah Brown
- Meghan Lewandowski
- Briana Tanga
- Daniela Grinienko
- Kenyetta Jackson
- Colleen Reynolds
- Lourdes Soto
- Theresa Zucosky
- Ana Reis
- Lauren Cortes
- Christine Flaherty
- Johanna Ojeda
- Kerry O'Connor
- Laura Bellevue
- Cindy Lichtenstein
- Briana Kane
- Wendy Maravi

- Jessica Sofranko
- Steven Zografos
- Christine Rappa
- Christopher Lopez
- Lisa Baginski-Matlosz
- Edson Martinez
- Imani Lewars
- Jameela Abdus-Salaam
- Ishmael Medley
- Jessica Sepulveda
- Karen Slusher
- Safiyyah Howell
- Guadalupe Ferreiro
- Judy Valdez
- Felice Fabiano
- Joseph Sanchez
- Nicole Webb
- Lauren Delgado,
- Heather Savage-Ford and,
- Peter Vosseler

Of the Founded cases for HIB, there were 15 incidents based on race/ethnic origin, 7 incidents based on color, 1 incident based on religion, 2 incidents based on ancestry, 7 incidents based on sexual orientation, 16 incidents based on gender, 1 incident based on gender identity or expression, 11 incidents based on a mental, physical, or sensory disability, and 109 incidents based on other targeted bases.

Of the Founded incidents, 82 incidents were verbal. 31 incidents were physical. And 22 incidents involved an electronic communication.

For all HIB investigations there were 132 out of school suspensions, 90 in school detentions, 34 classroom changes, 11 changes of school placement, and 58 administrative counseling sessions.

Additional services such as in-school/virtual counseling, skill development assignments, classroom SEL lessons, referrals for outside treatment resources, referrals to outside agencies, parent conferences and behavioral intervention plans were offered to involved students.

Between January 1, 2023, and June 30, 2023, the district provided appropriate HIB training to school counselors and social workers, and to new staff and support staff in the district. The district also provided the two-hour State required HIB training, for each five-year developmental period, to certified staff throughout the district. Additionally, the district provided extensive and specified in-person and virtual training to the Anti-Bullying Coordinator and to all Anti-Bullying Specialists and their alternates. Non-certificated staff also received training. New school level administrators and new HIB staff received training in the HIBster reporting program.

From January 1, 2023 through June 30, 2023 there were 1032 total incidents districtwide, which includes 490 incidents of Violence, 56 incidents of Vandalism, 334 Substance Abuse incidents, and 48 Weapons incidents. The displayed chart has a breakdown of these incidents, per school.

Is there anyone who would like to comment on tonight's report?

Mrs. Chevres asked if any Board members have questions or comments. Being none, she asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

On a motion made by Mrs. Dorgely, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: The motion was carried by the following vote: Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mmes. Goncalves Pestana, Chevres -8

Negative: none

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