

APPROVED
Bd. Mtg. 9-20-23

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

August 16, 2023
Elizabeth, New Jersey

Board President Iliana Chevres welcomed everyone to the August 16, 2023, regular agenda/business meeting of the Elizabeth Board of Education.

Mrs. Chevres called the meeting to order and read the following statement at 7:06 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 August 10, 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 Juan Pablo Duarte-José Julián Martí School No. 28, and to our television viewers to this August 16, 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 (via on-line platform), Dorgely (via on-line platform), Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana (via on-line platform), Mr. Rivera, (arrived at 7:14 p.m.), Mrs. Chevres-6
Absent: Mmes. Carvalho, Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron.

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

A Moment of Silence was held in memory of James Heims, Former Security Director for the District.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Member Jerry Jacobs.

The Star-Spangled Banner was played.

The Pledge of Ethics was led by Board Member Jerry Jacobs.

Mr. Jacobs read a proclamation in memory of James Heims.

Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy read the following public participation 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 Medeiros, to address the Board.

Mrs. Medeiros spoke about the Opening of School in the Fall.

Mrs. Chevres thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Chevres called upon the next public participant, Khason Little, to address the Board.

Mr. Little spoke about School Policies

Mrs. Chevres thanked him for his comments.

Mrs. Chevres called upon the next public participant, Jerry Epps, to address the Board.

Mr. Epps spoke about Staff Substitute Compensation.

Mrs. Chevres thanked him for his comments.

Superintendent of Schools, Olga Hugelmeyer, asked Asst. Superintendent Rafael Cortes to further speak with Mr. Epps

Mrs. Chevres called upon the next public participant, Charles Yelverton, to address the Board.

Mr. Yelverton spoke about School Policies.

Mrs. Chevres thanked him for his comments.

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

Board President Iliana Chevres then asked Superintendent Hugelmeyer to present her report to the community.

Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer began her presentation by introducing a new feature that will begin this September called “Good Morning EPS”. This feature is an initiative to further engage with our schools, parents, Principals, teachers, guidance counselors, classroom assistants, custodians, security guards to make sure everyone is aware of the good work being done in the

Elizabeth Public Schools. The Superintendent will be visiting schools this fall to further interact with our learning communities and to discuss what is happening in the respective school but also programs that are going on district wide.

Welcome Back Letters were posted on the District Web site during the week of August 14th. With the help of the I.T. Department Mrs. Hugelmeyer will show parents how to access all the information needed so they can be prepared for their children to return to school on Friday, September 8th.

A new Transportation App is now available for parents to be able to access their child's bus schedule (s).

High School 9th Grade Orientation dates have been set.

Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy – 27 Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza (Main Theater).
August 22nd-5:30 p.m.

Elizabeth High School – Frank J. Cicarell Academy-40 Morrell St. (Main building)
August 22nd -10:00 a.m.

John E. Dwyer Technology Academy -227 Centre Street (annex).
August 29th – 9:00 a.m.

John E. Dwyer Technology Academy – 123 Pearl Street (Main Building)
August 30th-9:00 a.m.

Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Academy- 425 Grier Academy (annex)
August 23rd – 5:30 p.m.

Admiral William F Halsey Jr. Health & Public Safety Academy – 699 South Street
(Annex).
August 21st – 5:30 p.m.

Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy – 1003 North Broad Street (annex).
August 23rd – 10:00 a.m.

JVJ STEM Academy – 227 South Broad Street
August 29th - 9:00 a.m.
August 30th - 9:00 a.m.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer presented a slide which served as a notice for the Free/Reduced Meal Program. During the 2023-2024 school year, the Elizabeth Public Schools will once again offer its free/reduced meal program. The Elizabeth Public Schools offers free or reduced lunches for families with limited resources. Families can apply for free or reduced -priced meals online by clicking [Online Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application.](#), the process is easy and fast, plus it is available 24 hours a day.

The Superintendent showed a series of slides about PowerSchool, the District's Parent, Student, and School portal. Step by Step instructions were presented on how to log in and access student schedules as well as how to contact teachers through this tool. A series of tutorials will be held from late August through the end of September to help parents navigate and take advantage of all the available features within PowerSchool.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer announced that all sixth-grade students must receive the Tdap/Menactra vaccines prior to the first day of school, which is September 8th. This is a New Jersey Department of Health regulation and students will be denied access to school if their vaccination status is not up to date and complete. Parents can use their own private doctor to have their children vaccinated or avail themselves of several clinics in the area who provide free immunizations. You may visit Elizabethnjvaccine.org for further information regarding free immunizations. If parents/guardians have any questions regarding the vaccines, they should contact their respective school nurse.

The Superintendent presented a several slides summarizing the New Jersey State assessments: Access for ELLS. All English Language Learners (ELLs) in Grades k-12 are administered the ACCESS fir ELLS to determine: The level of English language that each student has acquired and the best placement for each student moving forward. ACCESS for ELLS assesses 4 language domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Scores which are compiled on a one (1) to a six (6) scale are reported for each domain and a final composite is calculated combining all four (4) sections. It should be noted that the average scores included in this assessment include all levels of English Language Learners from those newly arrived in the USA to those ready to exit ELL status.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer then spoke and presented slides about the New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment Requirement that will be implemented for the Class of 2024. Students in the class of 2024 took the NJGPA in March of 2023 as Eleventh (11th) Graders. Scores are in a range from 650 to 850 with just two (2) scoring levels:

Not Graduation Ready 650-724

Graduation Ready 725-850.

Students will be given the chance to take the NJGPA several times to achieve Graduation Ready status.

March 2023 test results showed that 73.4 % of EPS students were Graduation Ready in English Language Arts compared to a New Jersey statewide pass rate of 80.5%. In addition, 39.6 % of EPS were deemed Graduation Ready in Math vs a statewide Graduation Ready level of 55.0%. Mrs. Hugelmeyer presented a chart showing a breakdown by demographics as well as by educational program groupings.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer moved on to the second presentation of the evening which was a report to the Community on the progress of the Five (5) year Strategic Plan which was prepared for the 2022-2027 school years. As part of the process, at the end of each individual school year, the community would be updated as to the progress made towards the goals and objectives.

The Elizabeth School District concluded the 2022/2023 School Year with a total enrollment of 28,442 students housed between 37 different schools. (3 Early Childhood Centers/ 20 Neighborhood Schools/ 6 magnet Schools/ 8 High Schools). The number of students enrolled across the district steadily increased during the summer months and the Board and community will be presented revised student population figures during September.

Key Student and other pertinent Demographics:

Male 50.46 %/Female 49.46 %/Non-Binary 0.08%

Hispanic 76.1% /White 6.78%/Asian 1.59%/ Black 15.3%/Other 0.19%

General Education 60.29%/ELL 27.37%/10.24 Special Education/ 2.1% Special Ed/ELL

Graduation Rate 84.4%

Staff employed by District 4,227.

The Strategy Map for the District was shown:

Our Vision- Elizabeth Public Schools will be one of the highest performing urban school districts in the nation.

Our Promise- To provide an innovative and personalized learning environment that ensures that every child achieves excellence.

Goals -College preparedness, career readiness for every child by implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports, Professional Learning Communities, and Data Consults with the goal of creating data focused approach to continuous improvement across the district.

The Five Pillars that support the Strategic Map:

Teaching and Learning

Social and Emotional Wellness

Workforce Development

Parent and Community Engagement

Organizational Effectiveness

These are built on the foundation of Core Beliefs and Commitments, Managed Performance/Empowerment and Equity, Expectations, and Excellence.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer spoke about Goal Area #1-Teaching and Learning -Enhance Teaching and Learning to provide ALL students with personalized pathways to success. Performance Measures include:

Implementation of curriculum measured by classroom observations.

Student performance and reduction of achievement gaps as measured by formative and summative assessments.

Retention of Black and Hispanic students in ninth grade.

Key Initiatives for this goal in 2022/2023 were:

Increased the number of ELA and Mathematics instructional coaches to support schools.

Launched Learning Labs for ELA K-3 and Science K-5 Teachers.

Launched One on One Principal Program/Content Consults in ELA K-3 and Science K-5.

Expanded CLI to grades 4-5

Expanded partnership with Dr. Davida Lindsay to enhance the Amistad Initiative in K-12 classrooms via lesson planning, professional development, and classroom visitations.

Reinstated In-Person PLC's with Administrators with a focus on the NJSLA 22

Mathematics Data.

Instituted Learning Walks in all schools with a focus on Questioning and Discussion strategies.

Expansion of AVID to Schools 4, 29, 30 and Bollwage Finance Academy

Recertification of Dwyer Academy as a National Demonstration School.

The Superintendent addressed Goal Area #2 -Social and Emotional Wellness – Support the social-emotional wellness of ALL students and staff to promote a safe environment in which ALL feel a sense of belonging. Performance Measures are as follows:

Sense of belonging of students disaggregated by ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, special education, and ELL.

Suspension of students disaggregated by ethnicity, economically disadvantaged, special education, and ELL.

Improved attendance and/or reduced chronic absenteeism by the school and disaggregated by ethnicity, economically disadvantaged special education, and ELL.

Key Initiatives for this goal in 2022/2023 were:

Increased the number of ELA and Mathematics Instructional coaches to support schools.

Launched Learning Labs for ELA K-3 and Science K-5 teachers.

Launched One on One Principal Program/Content Consults in ELA K-3 and Science K-5.

Increased the number of Social Workers to support schools using ESSER funding.

Implemented Gaggle Safety Management to monitor student use of district devices to identify emotional distress in students or inappropriate use of technology that may lead to a referral for emotional support.

Shared reference guides to all schools that included strategies for cultural responsiveness and social emotional learning.

Contracted Board – Certified Behavior analyst (BCBA)

Secured Mental Health Awareness and Training (MIAT) Grant to provide dedicated team members with the capacity to train all team members on conflict de-escalation.

Expansion of the Youth Enrichment Services (YES) Program to expand services to provide one on one counseling to students in all high schools and middle school grades.

Expanded CLI to grades 4-5

Expanded partnership with Dr. Davida Lindsay to enhance the Amistad Initiative in K-12 classrooms via lesson planning, professional development, and classroom visitations.

Reinstated In-Person PLC's with Administrators with a focus on the NJSLA 22 Mathematics Data.

Instituted Learning Walks in all schools with a focus on Questioning and Discussion strategies.

Expansion of AVID to Schools 4, 29, 30 and Bollwage Finance Academy

Recertification of Dwyer Academy as a National Demonstration

2022-2023 Strategies & Actions – Continuous reassessment of social-emotional wellness supports and increases the number of counselors, social workers, and psychologists.

The hiring of seven school based social workers provides every school with full-time mental health team members.

The hiring of a District Social Worker to lead a District Crisis Team that provides additional support to the school-based crisis teams.

The hiring of a District Bilingual Social Worker to support the Multilingual newcomer students and their families.

Continued services of a District Bilingual Psychologist to support the Multilingual newcomer students and families.

Continued services of the District Community Attendance Liaison Coordinator attendance liaisons to assist schools in reducing chronic absenteeism.

Continued services of a District Special Services Guidance Counselor to support out of district students and families.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer spoke about Goal Area #3: Workforce Development – Hire, develop and retain staff to establish a highly effective and diverse workforce. Performance Measures include – Provide high-quality induction and retention programs for all new staff, teachers, and administrators. Build the instructional leadership of school principals and vice principals.

Key Initiatives for 2022-2023:

Early offer for high demand positions

Monetary incentive for Math, Science, Bilingual and Special Education positions

Orientation of New Hires conducted by Central Office

Job-embedded coaching in Science.

Leadership sessions for school administrators in ELA, Mathematics and Science

STRIDES one on one coaching in Seven (7) schools for the building equity teams and principal.

PLC Meetings with all school administrators

Developing administration by engaging One-on- One Data Consults with all school administrators with Assistant Superintendent and Director of Research, Evaluation and Assessment.

BCHA support for teachers and support staff at various schools.

BCBA support for guidance counselors' social workers teachers, and classroom assistants.

The Superintendent then addressed Goal Area #4: Family and Community Engagement – Strengthen the engagement of all members of the EPS Learning Community to improve outcomes for students and their families. Performance Measures are seen as – Increased student and caregiver sense of trust and belonging in schools and understanding of school and district expectations. Increased belief and commitment to school and district priorities among team members. Increased student and family access to support and services.

Key Initiatives for 2022-2023

Launched the Parent Education Institute by providing a variety of topics that address the needs of the community.

Engaged the PTO Presidents in community outreach and sharing information regarding the various opportunities.

Launched a virtual “Parent University Development Program by providing strategies to parents on how to support their child’s needs.

Reorganize the district’s website to be more user friendly and better leverage school websites as communication tools.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer spoke about Goal Area #5: Operational Effectiveness – Promote a culture of excellent customer service, reciprocal accountability, and continuous improvement across the district. Performance measures for this goal are meeting of performance measures established and reported on by each central office department. Implementation of long-range facilities plans.

Key Initiatives for 2022-2023

Developed a district level tutorial on analyzing NJSLA data with the use of a data protocol to be turn-keyed at school during a professional development day.

Developed a systematic approach to the implementation of quarterly Learning Walks which consisted of the development of the tool, collecting data and analyzing the data.

Expanded facilities by opening the John E. Dwyer 9th Grade Annex.

Enhancements were made to Athletic Facilities: School 23, Williams Field, Dunn Sports Center – turf fields, scoreboards, sound system and gym floor.

Repurposed common spaces into three classrooms at School 21.

Hired an additional Food Services Supervisor to provide additional oversight and support daily operations at all facilities.

Hired Security Supervisor and 2 School Safety Coordinators to provide additional oversight and support daily operations at all facilities.

Hired a Transportation Specialist.

Upgraded Traversa to a web-based system that includes GPS.

Acquired 8 new buses.

Contracted with Education Management & Staffing Solutions to assist with securing substitutes for certified and non-certified vacant positions and daily absences.

Added a Human Resources Specialist provide additional oversight and support daily operations.

Reorganized Business Department by incorporating Junior Accountants to enhance services.

Hired two Assistant Teachers in Charge of Athletics to provide additional oversight and support all athletic initiatives.

Hired a Digital Content Producer

Upgraded the internet bandwidth and speed.

Implemented backup contingency plan with two additional vendors to ensure continuity of internet and network access.

Upgraded networks across school buildings from 10gb to 40gb to support higher data rates.

Expanded services and staffing to increase efficiency in supporting schools and central office.

Provided summer and after school Boot Camp sessions related to instructional technology for staff members.

The Superintendent then presented slides showing 2022-2023 Strategies and Actions:
1) Build or renovate schools that can house students in PreK-12 and restructure instructional spaces.

Leased parochial schools to address the increase in enrollment.

Explored additional options with the Archdiocese of Newark to address future enrollment needs.

Collaboration with the School Development Authority on the construction of two (2) new schools.

2) Track, analyze, report satisfaction with services through surveys to key stakeholders and use results to improve services for schools and families.

Partnership with Panorama Education to solicit student perceptions about their school communities. Each school is provided with school-based data on equity and inclusion, student competencies, and social emotional learning as well as recommendations, to address school climate needs.

Partnership with Panorama Education to solicit parent perceptions about their school communities in the areas of barriers to engagement, family support, school climate, school safety and school fit.

Bilingual Education Parent Advisory (BEPAC) holds quarterly committee meetings and provides quarterly parent workshops. Topics included PowerSchool access tutorial, Understanding ACCESS for multilingual learners, Cybersecurity, and Social and Emotional Learning.

Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) holds quarterly meetings and provides parent workshops including Mental Health Resources Fairs for families and Guardians. SEPAC provided recommendations on how to better support families and special events such as the Special Olympics.

Mrs. Chevres thanked the Superintendent for the updates and Reports.

Board President Iliana Chevres reviewed the Pre-Meeting index soliciting questions about each section from her fellow Board Members prior to adding them to the official agenda for this evening. Each section was added to the official agenda for the meeting.

Mrs. Chevres then asked for a motion to go into private session.

A motion was made by Mr. Jacobs and seconded by Mrs. Carvalho to go into private session at 8:11 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres -6

Negative: none

A motion was made by Mrs. Dorgely and seconded by Mr. Rivera to return to public session at 11:15 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres-5

Negative: none

The following items were added to the agenda:

Resolution Appointing Acting Vice Principal Xavier E. Florencia of School #2
Resolution Appointing Acting Director of Student Services – Anthony J. DiDonato
Personnel Report 2C
Resolution – Reorganization and Job Descriptions, Division of Plant Property and Equipment
Award of Contract with Bureau of Education Research
First Reading of Attendance Patterns/Sick Leave Policy File Code: 4151/4251

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that according to Board Policy 5131.1 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) 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 each investigation and include any services provided, training established, discipline imposed, or other action that was taken or recommended.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that at the next regularly scheduled meeting after Board members receive the report of HIB investigations, the statute requires that the Board issue a decision in writing to affirm, reject, or modify the Superintendent's decision pertaining to the cases that were reported to the Board members at the last meeting.

Mrs. Chevres asked for a motion and second to adopt the following agenda.

Opening Calendar
Official and Private Minutes (July 19, 2023)
Treasurer/Secretary's Report (June 30, 2023)

Personnel Report
Supplemental Personnel Report
Tuition Report
Supplemental Tuition Report
Superintendent's Reports
Authorizations Report
Finance and Accounting Report
Supplemental Finance and Accounting Report
Award of Contracts Report
Supplemental Award of Contracts Report
Claims List
Resolutions:
U.C.E.S.C. 2023-2024 Environmental Safety Program Agreement
Five Year Curriculum Plan (2023-2028)
Curriculum Repository Inventory 2023-2024
Textbooks 2023-2024
Programs of Study, High School Offerings, High School Strand and Sequence 2023-2024
Appointing Companies for Janitorial Supplies and Services
Payment for Unused Sick Days
Transfer of Capital Reserve Funds
Transfer of Maintenance Reserve Funds
Approving Student Transportation Contract
Correction of Salary of Acting Director of Plant, Property & Equipment
Renewal of Children's Literacy Initiative, Inc. – Professional Development Coaching
Approving and Authorizing Agreement for Purchase of 117 Westfield Avenue
Authorizing Board President & Business Administrator to Execute Lease for School Purposes
Remembrance James E. Heims
Appointment of Acting Vice Principal – Xavier E. Florencia
Appointment of Acting Director of Student Services – Anthony J. DiDonato
Reorganization – Personnel Action

A motion was made by Mrs. Dorgely and seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana to approve the agenda.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres (Abstain - Resolution correcting salary of Acting Director of Plant, Property and Equipment- Luis Milanes) -6

Negative: none

Mrs. Barbosa left the meeting at 11:35 p.m.

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 Mr. Rivera, the meeting was adjourned at 11:41 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera,
Mrs. Chevres -5

Negative: none

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