

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

February 24, 2016
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called on February 24, 2016 at 6:00 p.m., in the Multi Purpose Room, Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education, 544 Pennsylvania Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Board President Charlene Bathelus presented the following statement at 6:15 p.m.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. This is a special meeting of the Board of Education. Pursuant to New Jersey Statutes and the rules adopted by the Board of Education, notice of this meeting was sent to The Star Ledger and Cablevision of Elizabeth on Friday, February 19, 2016. In addition, this notice is posted on the Bulletin Board in the lobby of 500 North Broad Street, and pursuant to this act, a copy has been filed with the City Clerk of Elizabeth.”

“I wish to extend a warm welcome to everyone present to this February 24, 2016 meeting of the Board of Education. We are here to govern, provide management oversight, and make policy for the district. The Superintendent manages the district. This is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public.”

“This meeting is being recorded and will become part of the Elizabeth Board of Education permanent record. In order that the recording will adequately reflect the proceedings, please refrain from talking while others are speaking. I also ask that you silence the sound on your electronic devices. Since it is legally mandated that these proceedings be accurately recorded, I may have to ask for order periodically should noise begin to interfere with our recording capabilities. I am pleased that you have taken time this evening to join us. Thank you for your interest in the Elizabeth Public Schools.”

“There will be a public portion for citizens to address the Board. Participants for the public portion must sign in prior to the advertised start of the meeting so that they may have the opportunity to speak. The sign-in sheet states the name, address, telephone number and reason that the person wants to comment, whether it is an agenda item or a general education comment.”

Present: Mmes. Amin, Carvalho, Miss Goncalves, Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez, Trujillo, Ms. Bathelus – 7

Absent: Messrs. Nina, Perreira – 2

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., Assistant Superintendent for Schools Rafael Cortes, Assistant Superintendent for Schools Linda Seniszyn, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer Cedeno, Co-General Counsel Jonathan Williams, Esq. of DeCotiis, Fitzpatrick & Cole, LLP, and members of the public were in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance
Pledge of Ethics

Ms. Bathelus presented the following public participation statement.

“At this time, the microphones are open for public comment to those who have signed in prior to this session. I shall call individuals to the microphones based on the order of the sign-in. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three minutes in duration. The total time of public comment shall be limited to sixty minutes. No individual is able to yield their time to another individual. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually. The following rules for public participants shall

apply: time limits will be strictly enforced, no personal attacks on individuals, no vulgar or indecent language, a person may address the Board no more than once during a single meeting, speakers should refrain from naming individuals, and comments or questions posed during public participation will not be debated. As a reminder, this is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public.”

Ms. Bathelus called upon the first public participant, Ana Texeira, to address the Board.

Ana Texeira, 575 Second Avenue, spoke about J&J Transportation bus issues.

Ms. Bathelus thanked her for her comments and called upon the next public participant, Giovanna LaRosa, to address the Board.

Giovanna LaRosa, 532 Second Avenue, spoke about special services.

Ms. Bathelus thanked her for her comments and called upon the next public participant, Maria Lorenz, to address the Board.

Maria Lorenz, 103 Murray Street, stated that a Special Services training presentation was done in the past and asked the Board to consider having them again.

Ms. Bathelus thanked her for her comments and called upon the next public participant, Lisa Lee, to address the Board.

Lisa Lee, 18 Boxwood Drive, Colts Neck, spoke about the StreetSmart Campaign for pedestrian safety for students and offered services and assemblies which are federal programs fully funded and no cost to the Board.

Ms. Bathelus thanked her for her comments and requested she give her contact information to Interim Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer Cedeno. Since there were no other citizens to address the Board, Ms. Bathelus declared this portion of the public meeting closed.

Mr. Trujillo stated that he would like to address some of the parental concerns. Mr. Trujillo stated that he is glad to hear that this initiative for pedestrian safety especially on a school level is going to take place. Mr. Trujillo stated that he was the victim of an auto-pedestrian accident when he was hit by a car when he was eight years old and is fortunate to be alive after serious head trauma. Mr. Trujillo stated that he is lucky to be alive and unfortunately we did have several students and pedestrians throughout the City that were hit. Mr. Trujillo stated that as the City gets more congested and we get more traffic this is going to happen more often. Mr. Trujillo stated that if we can keep our kids safe he thinks it is great. Mr. Trujillo stated that he agrees that there is a problem at the high school with so many kids coming out at once and perhaps education can help alleviate that and prevent an accident from happening. Mr. Trujillo stated that in reference to the pickup and drop off of the children he would like to see the administration look into this and see if this is actually the case. Mr. Trujillo stated that if this child is being picked up so late it is obviously a problem here. Mr. Trujillo stated that this is not the norm and we bus a lot of children around and it is very important that they get picked up safely and returned home safely and on time of course so that they don't lose any educational time. Mr. Trujillo stated that he would like the administration to please look into that. Mr. Trujillo stated that in reference to Ms. Lorenz's comments about the workshop he is sure that Mrs. Hugelmeier can remember, and no offense to the Panasonic Foundation, this is something we had done with the Broad Foundation. Mr. Trujillo stated that the Panasonic Foundation provides some of the same services that the Broad Foundation did. Mr. Trujillo stated that part of the Broad Foundation exercise was to go throughout the district and have each department present to the Board what they did, how they did it, and where they thought we could improve. Mr. Trujillo stated that

special services, transportation, and several others were done. Mr. Trujillo stated that he would like to see it as well and he doesn't know if it is something that can be done now through the Panasonic Foundation. Mr. Trujillo stated that perhaps we can take that suggestion and see that implemented here.

Mrs. Amin asked the Superintendent about a person who was rehired at the last meeting because she received a lot of calls from parents. Mrs. Amin stated that she is not saying names.

Mr. Williams advised her as a matter of law that tonight's meeting is a special meeting that was noticed for certain specific purposes. Mr. Williams stated that to deviate from the purposes put into the notice is to violate the Open Public Meetings Act. Mr. Williams cautioned her to refrain from bringing up subject matters that were not in the notice. Mr. Williams stated that if she were to go ahead with that it would constitute a violation of the Open Public Meetings Act.

Mrs. Amin stated that she requested a video last Friday and she is waiting for the video. Mrs. Amin stated that she knows it is a special education student involved in the video with that person. Mrs. Amin stated that she wants to make sure that she has the video and everybody who wasn't here at that point sees the video.

Ms. Bathelus stated that if any Board member would like to request something from the Superintendent you can just reach out to her and she will be able to accommodate you.

Ms. Bathelus introduced Larry Leverett, Executive Director, from the Panasonic Foundation.

Larry Leverett, Executive Director of the Panasonic Foundation, stated that this is the eighth year of a ten year partnership with the Elizabeth Public Schools. Mr. Leverett stated that the Panasonic Foundation was created in 1984 as a whole system approach to improve learning for all students in urban school districts. Mr. Leverett stated that the Panasonic Foundation is currently working with seven school districts in the United States and some of the districts have extended their partnership more than ten years. Mr. Leverett stated that the Panasonic Foundation is a leader in education reform with the support and development of practice to advance equity and excellence in public education.

Mr. Leverett introduced a video presentation of the Panasonic Foundation 30th Anniversary. Mr. Leverett stated that a lot of the footage of the video was completed right here in Elizabeth Public Schools. Mr. Leverett stated that he comes here this evening as you begin a conversation as a recently configured Board of Education. Mr. Leverett stated that in our relationship with Elizabeth we have come to respect Elizabeth for putting children first. Mr. Leverett stated that we view and have experienced Elizabeth to be a place in which the adults were united in their purpose and united in their commitment to serve children well. Mr. Leverett stated that while united in commitment we also recognize that there are many perspectives on how to serve children well and the role of the Board, the role of the Superintendent, the role of unions, and the role of the community. Mr. Leverett stated that they have seen transitions from former Superintendent Munoz to Superintendent Hugelmeyer and over the years have seen transitions in Board composition and ins become outs and outs become ins. Mr. Leverett stated that now we present ourselves to you with the hope that we can work with you to sustain the unity that has been able to produce so much progress here in the Elizabeth Public Schools. Mr. Leverett stated that progress has not only been noted throughout New Jersey but the progress that has been noted nationally. Mr. Leverett stated that they understand that change must engage the voices of all the perspectives with the hope of unifying those perspectives in support of a common mission. Mr. Leverett stated that they would like to continue to be a partner with Elizabeth as they have these conversations around how you view the future of the Elizabeth Public Schools.

Mr. Leverett introduced Senior Consultants Andrew Gelber and Adrienne Bailey who are two of our most experienced consultants and we also feel that they will be continuing to work with you if you should choose us to be a partner with us as you go forward as a Board of Education working in unity with multiple perspectives that can be harmonized into an agreement on what is best and what best serves the children.

Ms. Bathelus thanked Mr. Leverett.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that we began our journey several years ago with a clear focus on expectations and excellence. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that there were various policies that were developed in order to ensure that we were setting the appropriate standard for our district for our students. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that a couple of years ago we incorporated a third E, equity, to our expectations and excellence. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that it is reflective of the work that we have been doing with our partners from the Panasonic Foundation to ensure that we are addressing all of the needs of all of our children.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that as part of the policy that was developed and the courageous conversations that took place during the course of our time together the Core Beliefs and Commitments for the Elizabeth Public Schools was developed with a clear focus on what it is that we believed we should establish for our students, our teachers, our leaders, our families, and for our teams. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that tonight we are focusing on the commitment statements that we have made as an organization. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that for our students we believe all students can learn and achieve at high levels regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, neighborhood, household income, or home language. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the commitment that we have made is that ALL means ALL and we will narrow the achievement gap of students by providing a high quality education to ensure that ALL of our students are college and career ready. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that is very much at the basis of the conversation this evening with regard to the steps that we are taking through our district's strategic plan to ensure that our students are college and career ready. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that our commitment for teachers is that we believe that teachers are central in a child's life and having an effective teacher is the single most important thing to ensure student success. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that our expectation of our leaders is that they will exemplify and support practices that promote high levels of achievement for all of our students. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the family component was added two years ago and is reflective of the work of the current Board of Education which was a focus on family. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the family commitment is that we are committed to engaging parents and their caregivers in their children's education and we will develop a coordinated strategy that enables parents and caregivers to play an active role in building and sustaining family support for their children's learning and academic success. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that an example of that was the implementation of parent academies and the opportunity to host at various school sites and present important topics of information to our parents to be able to better inform our community with regard to our district initiatives and issues that are important to you as a community. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that our commitment to team, which is all of our personnel at our schools and central office, is that every member of the Elizabeth Public Schools team will make a measurable contribution to the success and achievement for all students by ensuring equitable distribution of resources throughout the organization.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that Senior Consultant Adrienne Bailey shared with her a picture of two images of three children with three boxes to stand on while watching a baseball game and it is reflective of equality and what it is the children are attempting to be able to do. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that in the first picture the third child is not standing on a box and is not able to see the game and is not able to accomplish what the other two children are. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that in the other picture the third child is standing on two boxes and all three children can see the game. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that we refer to those two boxes as the tool box and it is the opportunity to be able to ensure that we are providing our children, to be able to boost them, and that they are moving to that next level and have the same opportunities available to them as all children. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that is a way in which we use this image to be able to

address the issue of attaining equity. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that a lot of people in our organization in the very beginning interpreted equity as having the same resources in place. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the conversation this evening is going to center on what it is that the Elizabeth Public Schools means in terms of being able to ensure that we are providing equity to all children.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that last year we launched a very powerful statement, every child achieving excellence. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that it is reflective of our commitment to our children and is a commitment to ensuring the 3 E's. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that it is a commitment to ensuring the high expectations and excellence in an equitable manner to all children, all 27,000 children. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that it begins with a commitment to providing personalized opportunities for every student and ensuring that we are maximizing those opportunities for all children to be engaged and the understanding that translates to ensuring that we know what the appropriate supports are that all children can be successful and we are able to meet our objective. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that we reflect on some of the strengths of the organization over the course of time and we celebrate the fact that our graduation rate rose by 8% since 2011 to 72.5%, that our advanced placement enrollment has grown since 2011 from 963 to 2,546 which is a growth of 246%, and that the number of students taking the SAT has increased over the past three years from 720 to 2,450. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that this is reflective of a clear commitment to ensuring that our students are college and career ready. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that our work is not done and our work is not complete.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer thanked our partners from the Panasonic Foundation beginning with Dr. Leverett for the opportunities that she has had to be able to enrich her personal professional development and the work with Senior Consultants Andrew Gelber and Adrienne Bailey in being able to work with our team to develop the Strategy Map which was introduced to our Board earlier this summer. Mrs. Hugelmeyer explained the 2015-2020 EPS Strategy Map including that the foundation is focused on the Core Beliefs and Commitments, Managed Performance/Empowerment, and Equity, Expectations and Excellence. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that our vision is that the Elizabeth Public Schools will be one of the highest performing urban school districts in the nation and our promise is to provide an innovative and personalized learning environment that ensures that every child achieves excellence. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that our goals are for college preparedness, career readiness and on-time graduation for every child. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that achieving academic excellence includes providing a high quality instruction and a rigorous curriculum, promoting high expectations, and closing the achievement gap. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the achievement of a focused workforce includes recruiting a diverse, high capacity team, invest in developing all team members, and supporting performance growth and improvement for all. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that innovation and technology include producing globally competitive students, ensuring equitable access to personalized learning, and promoting a culture for digital learning. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the parent and community engagement includes increasing family engagement, strengthening community partnerships, and providing parent/guardian education opportunities. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that a safe and caring environment includes promoting social, intellectual and physical wellness, ensuring safety and security, and enhancing intervention, prevention and response programs. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that organizational effectiveness includes establishing a high quality customer service environment, effective data analysis, and optimizing district performance by strengthening processes and systems.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer explained the vision for our parents and what is the intended outcome for our children in order to prepare them to be college and career ready. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the charge of this team is to evaluate the current state of the data that we use and the analysis that has been conducted in order to provide the appropriate recommendations to ensure that all schools have access to timely data that will drive decision making not only at the district level but at the school and classroom level. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that our strategy team has been charged with being able to infuse those exemplary research based strategies. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the heart of education is charged with being able to promote social and emotional learning skills to make sure students are college and career ready by ensuring that all students have the critical skills such as collaborating with others, monitoring their own behavior, and are

making responsible decisions. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that charge of our strategic plan leadership team which is our Board is to create the connection between the superintendent's administrative leadership of the Strategic Plan and the Board's governance of the Strategic Plan, defining what that connection is and being able to properly assess the work that we are engaged in and to ensure that we are progressing towards our goal.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that for the immediate future this translates to a two-year action plan and what is expected by the end of 2017 including to have 100% of our students to have highly effective principals, at least 60% of our students have highly effective teachers, and over 90% of our students have at least 90% attendance. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that there is a clear focus on language arts literacy ensuring that we understand the profiles of each and every child and we are able to work at our program through this.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the measure of success over five years in terms of implementation of our Strategic Plan includes our commitment to have 100% of our Elizabeth public school graduates meet the requirement to enter a two or four year college, technical school, service to our nation, or to hold a license or certificate enabling them to enter the workforce. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the second measure of success is 90% of our Elizabeth public school students will enroll in at least one advanced placement course before graduating and maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher throughout high school. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that lastly, 90% of our Elizabeth public school students will graduate on time. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that these are the goals that we have set for ourselves and that we expect that we will accomplish over the next five years. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that over the past year she has reviewed our current data in terms of where we are in relation to these goals but this Strategic Plan will propel us forward. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that there is tremendous work that is being undertaken at this present time which she looks forward to presenting to the Board.

Ms. Bathelus thanked her for the presentation.

On a motion by Mr. Rodriguez, seconded by Miss Goncalves, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Mr. Williams stated that for members of the public who are in attendance tonight everyone should be informed that the remainder of the evening is intended to be devoted to workshops and discussions of smaller groups of the individual Board members. Mr. Williams stated that it is for that reason that the special public meeting of the Board would adjourn now so Board members can break into smaller groups. Mr. Williams stated that members of the public should be advised that this is for the purpose of workshop exchange of information and that the smaller groups will not be interacting with each other. Mr. Williams stated that there will be no further action taken by the Board this evening and that there will be a strict compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Amin, Carvalho, Miss Goncalves, Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez, Trujillo, Ms. Bathelus – 7

Negative: None

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