

MINUTES OF THE PATERSON BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING

December 16, 2020 – 6:00 p.m.
Remote - Zoom

Mr. Zaydel: As everyone is signing on, I am just going to play a little slideshow that features some of the work performed and produced by students at Paterson's various schools, in preparation for the holidays.

HOLIDAY PRE-SHOW CELEBRATION

Ms. Peron: That was just the pre-show. That was the interlude into the real presentation that we are going to see in a few minutes. Commissioners, do you want us to start the next portion or do you want to start the meeting?

Comm. Redmon: You might as well continue with the next portion since they started with that first. We do not want to let the children wait.

Ms. Peron: Boris, let the show continue. I really have to give thanks to all the administrators, teachers, students, and the Department of Communications, Dan, for really collecting all of the different types of talent and products and putting them together into a wonderful presentation. We will recommend to the principals or each of their schools to place these presentations on their school websites so that parents can continue viewing them throughout the holiday break. A big shout-out and a big thank you to the Department of Academics, Associate Chief Nicole Brown and Joanna Tsimpedes, for really getting together and communicating to our wonderful administrators, school staff, and our wonderful kids to send in their display of the holidays. I'd like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa, Feliz Navidad, and enjoy the show.

STUDENT HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

Ms. Peron: Ms. Shafer, I turn it over to you.

Ms. Shafer: Thank you, Ms. Peron. Good evening, Board members, parents, and Paterson community. What you just saw is just a sampling of why we all do what we do, so that we can see the smiles on our children's faces as they are learning remotely. I want to thank Deputy Peron and her committee on putting this show together, Dan Juan from our Communications Department, but more importantly, the principals, the staff, and students. You have touched our hearts tonight. In the midst of this difficult time of the pandemic, you have brought a smile to all of us. It shows us that our principals, staff, and students will not let COVID stop our students showing their skills, talent, and excitement for the holiday. To all the students who participated, you all did a fabulous job. We miss you and we look forward to the day when we are back in school in person. Thank you, parents, for continuing to work with us. Happy holidays to everyone. Please enjoy the break and please be safe. Wear your mask, social distance, avoid gatherings and crowds, and wash and sanitize your hands. Thank you, Mr. President.

Comm. Simmons: Thank you, Madam Superintendent, and thank you, Deputy Superintendent and all that were involved in putting this presentation together. I really

enjoyed it. I will open the meeting and then I will let Board members make remarks about the presentation. Is that good with everyone?

Presiding: Comm. Kenneth Simmons, President

Present:

Ms. Eileen F. Shafer, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Susana Peron, Deputy Superintendent
Khalifah Shabazz-Charles, Esq., General Counsel
Boris Zaydel, Esq., Board Counsel

Comm. Vincent Arrington
Comm. Oshin Castillo-Cruz
Comm. Jonathan Hodges
Comm. Manuel Martinez, Vice President

Comm. Joel Ramirez
Comm. Nakima Redmon
Comm. Corey Teague

Comm. Simmons read the Open Public Meetings Act:

The New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of, and to attend the meetings of the Paterson Public School District, as well as other public bodies at which any business affecting the interest of the public is discussed or acted upon.

In accordance with the provisions of this law, the Paterson Public School District has caused notice of this meeting:

**Regular Meeting
December 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.
Remote - Zoom
90 Delaware Avenue
Paterson, New Jersey**

to be published by having the date, time and place posted in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Paterson, at the entrance of the Paterson Public School offices, on the district's website, and by sending notice of the meeting to the Arab Voice, El Diario, the Italian Voice, the North Jersey Herald & News, and The Record.

Comm. Simmons: Before we move into presentations, Board members can take this opportunity to give their remarks on the presentation.

Comm. Teague: I can start, Mr. President. I just want to congratulate the principals and all the staff that put this together. I'm sure you all know I haven't been feeling well at all these past few days, but I was not going to allow anything to stop me from seeing this presentation. I'm proud to see that even with all the changes we had to deal with this year, the students were able to adapt to all of that and still bring a holiday presentation 100% virtual. It just shows how talented our students are and we should all be proud of them. Thank you.

Comm. Ramirez: I just want to thank everyone that participated or put in their effort and their talents to deliver this great holiday treat for all of us. I want to thank the children, the teachers, the principals, and the administration that facilitated the creation of this presentation. It really brings much needed cheer to all of us at this time of year,

especially because of all that we've been through in these last seven to eight months. Thank you very much to all who made this possible.

Comm. Arrington: I concur with Comm. Teague. He really hit on it. It's great to see how our students integrated the arts and technology together for this presentation. They adapted very well. It was an awesome presentation and I want to thank them for it.

Comm. Hodges: I am heartened by this presentation. It's just another example of the many skills and abilities of our children and our community. I want to thank the school district for putting this together and presenting this to us and for all the efforts that went into this program. I cannot thank you enough. Again, it says so much about our children and what they are capable of. We need to look for more in the future. I also want to say to Mr. Teague to hang in there, best of luck, stay safe and get well soon.

Comm. Teague: Thank you.

Comm. Simmons: Thank you, sir. Any other comments before we move into presentations?

Comm. Castillo-Cruz: Just one thing, Mr. President. I just want to commend the administration, but especially our students. This is where we see our students thrive. It's been a challenging year. They've definitely had to make many changes and adapt, but they rise to the challenge every single time and they do it in such a graceful way. I want to thank them for participating, for being involved, for being encouraged, and for spreading the holiday cheer. It has not been an easy year for many of them and even through that they continue to persist. That's the best thing about our students, about young people in general, and that's the hope we need, especially during this time of the year. Thank you so much to all the students, the ones that were in the video, the ones that participated, and all the students in Paterson who are working diligently through this new virtual way of schooling and as well to the administration, principals, and teachers that helped put this together and that continue to encourage our young people in Paterson. Thank you.

Comm. Martinez: I thoroughly enjoyed seeing all the young people. I appreciate them. Happy holidays, everybody.

Comm. Redmon: I just want to say thank you to the students and staff members that put the presentation together and wish every family in the City of Paterson a happy and safe holiday season.

Comm. Simmons: Thank you. I forgot that. Merry Christmas/HanuKwanzakah to all.

Comm. Martinez: You're going to have to repeat that. I like that.

Comm. Simmons: I want to make sure I get everyone. I don't want any articles in the newspaper.

PRESENTATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Redistricting Recommendations

Ms. Shafer: Thank you, Mr. President. At this time, I'm going to ask Neil Mapp to bring up the speaker for tonight regarding redistricting recommendations that are going to dictate our Five-Year Long Range Facility Plan.

Mr. Neil Mapp: Good evening, Mr. President, Commissioners, Madam Superintendent, Madam Deputy Superintendent. For the public, my name is Neil Mapp and I'm the Chief Officer of Facilities and Custodial Services. Today, we are presenting the redistricting recommendations to the Board for approval that we may include these recommendation objectives in the long-range facility plan. We are on the second phase of a three-phase process to revise our long-range facility plan. It's a five-year plan that's required by the Department of Education. We've completed the demographic study which gave us data on where every student in the city lives regardless of the school they attend. This second phase is redistricting recommendations based on that data, the student attendance and where they live. We are taking that data and trying to get recommendations on where they should attend school. We are ascribing school zones based on that data. I'm joined today by Donna O'Gorman of DMR Architects and Ross Haber, the consulting demographer for the long-range facility plan. I would ask that you save your comments until the end of our presentation. I kindly ask so. Before we begin, I would also like to thank Lisa Vainieri-Marshall who is the interim Executive Director of Transportation, Registration, and MIS, for lending her invaluable insight to the student registration process, the districtwide school programming, and transportation services. I'd also like to thank Ms. Susana Peron, Deputy Superintendent of Schools, for her foresight and guidance with respect to the long-term objectives for educational programming in the district. Before we start the presentation, we were looking at a small sampling of schools in the northeast and eastern sections of the city where we saw a need to reduce overcrowding and create capacity for special programming to keep students in their sending area from elementary schools through middle school. There are some things to keep in mind during this presentation. These recommendations have not yet been vetted with any of our other program groups or departments. We'll eventually get to them and introduce some of these recommendations to them and get their input. The attendance zones that will be represented here in the presentation are for students that live in those boundaries that ascribe the zone. Keep that in mind. The zones highlight where all students live in that particular zone and create ascending schools for that zone. In the northeast portion of the city, we chose this area of the city because of the new middle school that will open in September of 2021. There are opportunities to create attendance zones that feed the new middle school and will bring students back home to a neighborhood school. We also saw an opportunity to add a preschool component to this underserved area to prevent busing students across town. In the eastern portion of the city we sought to increase enrollment in the fine and performing arts offerings in that section of the city, to unify academic programs, and to redraw boundary lines to reduce enrollments and increase capacity for special programming such as bilingual, magnet and special education. We are now going to present substantiating data for our recommendations and our final observations. I introduce to you Donna O'Gorman from DMR. She is the lead architect in this long-range facility planning process.

Ms. Donna O'Gorman: Thank you for the introduction. Neil has really given the background of what our purpose was. I also want to thank Lisa Vainieri and Ms. Peron for helping us out and going on our weekly meetings to discuss how to redistrict these areas. Can you go back to the opening slide which shows on the right-hand side the new middle school? That's a rendering of what the school is going to look like and that's slated to open in September of 2021. Our project goals are districtwide although we are focused on the area and the attendance zone that feeds into the new middle school. When we go through these goals, they are district goals, not just for this attendance zone. The goals that you see on the screen are not in any particular order because they all have the same weight. The first is to create unified academic programs throughout the district in all schools. Decrease the need for in-district

transportation in order to provide savings and decrease the number of kindergarten students who need transportation. The number you see there, 25%, represents only this attendance zone. By the recommendations that we are making and the backup, you'll see that this will reduce your transportation for kindergarten students by 25%. It creates a balance in class sizes across all buildings. It reduces the class sizes to meet the educational adequacy standards, which means some schools will have more students to bring them up the educational adequacy standards. Schools that are overpopulated, the attendance will decrease and you'll have a balance of student class sizes. This recommendation also allows accessibility and flexibility for in-district special education programs. We will show how we have net classrooms available. As Neil said, we have not talked to those departments, but we will show where there are classes available and they can identify what programs will go into these available classrooms in each school. This also shows accessibility and flexibility for in-district preschool programs and to bring students back into the district for preschool. One of the major goals is to create neighborhood attendance zones as students will be brought back into their neighborhoods where they live, where they play, and where they can walk. The other is a new bullet that everybody is clearly used to hearing now, which is social distancing. By balancing the schools when they come back to school it will assist in the social distancing needs because the schools will have a balance of student populations. I'm going to introduce Ross Haber now. As Neil mentioned, Ross is our demographer and he's with Ross Haber Associates. He's worked diligently to equalize your redistricting attendance zone. We skipped a slide. I'm going to talk about how we came to these conclusions. Ross, do you want to go from here?

Mr. Ross Haber: First of all, good evening everybody. Again, I would like to reiterate my own gratitude to the help given by district personnel in putting this together. There was an enormous amount of data and it was given accurately and timely. When you do the kind of work I do, that's greatly appreciated so again my thanks to everybody. This part of the process looked at all general education students and assigned them to a home school. The counts for each of these attendance zones are based on students in their zone. For example, if we build a zone for School No. 28 and we took a look at the counts in that school in terms of general education students and based upon building capacities and classroom availability, it assigns students to that school. Once that was done, we moved on to the next school. The process did include geocoding or matching every single student in the district to a map of the district. We actually located students at their homes so we could accurately place them. The first bullet talks about general education students. We did recognize that in these counts there are students that based upon programs such as gifted and talented or other factors may be assigned to schools outside of their home attendance zone. Throughout the process, we recognized that we are putting students into schools. Even though we would calculate them within their neighborhoods, we did recognize that at some point some of these students would be going out to other schools so we had to make sure there was room in those places for them. As I said, all calculations were based upon capacities and available classroom space. We got that data from the district and from the previous long-range facility plan. In order to calculate this, we calculated everything based upon the ASSA enrollment in the district as of October 15, 2020. One of the most important guidelines that we followed is set limitations in terms of placement. We calculated that the ceiling for students in grades 1 through 8 should be no more than 25 students. We'll show this in further slides. There should be no more than 21 students for kindergarten and 15 students for pre-k. These were the general guidelines that I followed in doing this study. This slide takes a look at the schools that we looked at. We really began with the middle school to understand where kids were coming from in that geographic region and we set up an attendance zone to meet the capacities of that school building. We found approximately 971 students residing in that zone and built the school at 100%

capacity using 41 out of 41 classrooms. This is the one school in which we did include special education along with general education. From that, we built out the feeder schools. The school that was touched and reorganized was School No. 19. It currently services students in grades K through 4. The new proposed grade levels are pre-K to 2. We removed grades 3 and 4 from that school building. The building currently has an enrollment of 360 children in grades K through 4. The proposed enrollment is 204. There are 15 full-size classrooms available in that building and this proposal utilizes 14. We are going to go into more building details. We are proposing about a 93% utilization of classrooms in School No. 19. School No. 28 is currently a pre-k through 8 school, and it's a gifted and talented school. What we are proposing is that this building is pre-K, K to 5 with all non-G&T students going to the new middle school. Grades 2 through 8 will continue to be gifted and talented. There are currently 290 students in that building. Our proposed enrollment is 658 in the new attendance zone. There are 34 classrooms available in the building, of which 31 have been utilized in this project at about a 91.18% utilization rate.

Mr. Mapp: Excuse me, Ross. May I interrupt for one hot second? I would offer some perspective that School No. 19, the square footage of that school is roughly 35,000 square feet and they have 360 students currently. The square footage of School No. 28 is roughly 120,000 square feet, nearly four times the size of School No. 19, and has fewer students. This is where we look at creating balance in classroom counts and sizes across the district. This is a prime example of where we would like to even things out between schools. Continue, Ross.

Mr. Haber: Thank you for the perspective. That was great. School No. 5 is currently a K-5 and we are not proposing any change there. What we are proposing is reducing the number of students in that school. There are currently 744 students in School No. 5. The new enrollment under the new attendance zone is 563 students. There are 36 classrooms available in the building, of which 27 are proposed in this study. Keep in mind it's not just lowering enrollment. It's also creating space for special programs. It's also making sure that we can keep the average class sizes down to the levels that I talked about in the previous slide. We talked about the new middle school. School No. 1, which is currently a Choice school and we'll get into that, currently is a pre-k through 5 school and it's being changed now to a pre-k through 2 school. That will no longer be a Choice school. It will be a neighborhood school. There are currently 234 students in that building. Our proposed enrollment is 254. We will be using 14 out of 16 classrooms at about an 87.5% rate. We are pairing School No. 1 with School No. 26. School No. 26 is currently a k-8 school and the proposed grade levels we're putting in are grades 3 to 8. The current enrollment in the school is 521. Our proposed enrollment is 459. There are 26 classrooms available, of which we are using 20 and that gives us a 76.92% utilization rate. When we were able to reduce the enrollment by combining School No. 1 and School No. 26, we looked to a neighboring school, which is School No. 21. We found that school probably had a few more students in it. The enrollment was a bit high. We were able to change the attendance on it a little bit. Take the current enrollment of 694, reduce it to 657. Out of the 38 classrooms available we were able to use 32, which gave us an 84.21% utilization rate. School No. 24, which is a fine and performing arts school, it's currently a pre-k through 8 school. We are proposing that it becomes a pre-k through 3 school for neighborhood kids, kids living inside of the School No. 24 attendance zone, and students in grades 4 through 8 are fine and performing arts students. There are currently 528 students in that building. We were able to increase the enrollment to 570. We are using 30 out of 36 classrooms at about an 83.3% utilization rate. Finally, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School is currently a K through 8 school. We are bringing it up to spec. It's been way below capacity. It would become pre-k through 8 school. There are currently 599 students in

that building. We're bringing the enrollment up to 1,148. There are 57 available classrooms. We will be utilizing 52, which is a 91.23% rate. This is a summary of the changes. We are going to go through some detail on all these schools in the next few slides. Let's take a look. First of all, the genesis of this whole thing really was the opening of the new middle school. We are able to take all the middle school students who go to Don Bosco and they are going to come back into this school. It will be their neighborhood middle school. All of the children in inside that black line in grades 6 through 8 are going to be assigned to the new Joseph A. Taub School. Referring back to one of the earlier slides from Lisa, this will cut back somewhere between 15 and 17 buses. At \$50,000 a bus, that's quite a bit of annual savings for the school district. It's not the main reason for doing it, but it's certainly a benefit. As you see here, we are going to have 266 general education kids in sixth grade, 251 in seventh, and 277 eighth. We are going to need a total of 33 sections. That's 11-11-11 and you'll see the average class size will be 24, 23, and 25. There are 96 special needs children who will be assigned to this building. We'll need eight sections for that with an average of 12 students per class. The total enrollment projected is 971. The total rooms available is 41, meaning that we are at 100% utilization.

Ms. O'Gorman: I just want to say one thing about the special education. This is the one school we have identified the eight classrooms for special education. They are eight available classrooms. If your school had another population growth they could go into this school, but this is one of the schools where we've identified the special education classrooms. We talked about having a meeting with that department to see where the students who are not in middle school where those programs will be attending. When Ross goes through the other slides, you'll see net rooms available. This one particularly says zero. The others you'll see numbers in. Those are the rooms that will be discussed. Not only could they be special education, but what type of IEP's or students they want to put in each school.

Mr. Mapp: We want to also talk about the boundaries that are established here creating feeder schools to that middle school.

Mr. Haber: These are all reestablished attendance zones. If you take a look, the three main feeder schools to the new middle school are School No. 5, which is that pink zone and that's a redesigned zone; School No. 28, which is green and a redesigned zone; School No. 19, which is the pre-k through 2 school zone; and School No. 27. All the children living in those three zones who are in grades 6 through 8 will attend the new middle school. Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 who live in School No. 19 zone will have already been dispersed to the other three schools. They will be fed from those schools. Again, all students coming from this area will be fed into the Joseph A. Tab School and those numbers are indicative. All 971 are students who live within that blackout line, which is the new middle school attendance zone. This is School No. 19. In School No. 19, we created for growth purposes four sections in grades K, 1, and 2. There are four sections of kindergarten, four sections of grade 1, and four sections of grade 2. Based on the kids that lived there now, it's an average size of 14 for kindergarten, 18 for first grade, and 15 for second grade. We would anticipate those numbers to grow. In addition, we have two sections of pre-k. We topped pre-k at 16. Once we went over 15, we needed to create two sections. Currently, we are projecting a total enrollment of 204 students. We will need 14 rooms to accommodate these students and we have 15 rooms available, leaving us a net of one. A net of one allows us to bring a special needs class back into that school building. It's not a room that's not being used. It's a room that is dedicated to bringing in special needs children and having a special needs program in there. It's really up to the department to determine what level of IEP or what classification goes in there. If you take a look at the map, you see two black lines

dividing it. It just means that students in grades 3-5 in that zone that's outlined will attend School No. 27. Then eventually those students will go into middle school. The lower zone is for students in grades 3 through 5 who attend School No. 5. Those students are split at the end of grade two, one group going to School No. 27 and the other going to School No. 5. This is School No. 28. School No. 28 is a K through 5 school for neighborhood students. Students in grades 2 through 8 are also gifted and talented students. The students in the top row, the 18, 29, 29, 45, 37, 43, and 44, will stay in School No. 28 through eighth grade. The remaining students at the end of fifth grade will go to the new middle school. This is a neighborhood school through grade 5 and it's a districtwide school for gifted and talented in grades 2 through 8. There are 658 students in the school, 649 regular education and 9 pre-k. As Neil said in the earlier summary slide, this school has very low enrollment right now although it has a good deal of classroom space and square footage. Again, that's the overview of School No. 28. School No. 5 remains a k-5 school, but the attendance zone has been shrunk to reduce the enrollment. We are talking about grades k through 5 in that building. We have a total projected enrollment that exists in that zone now of 563 students. There are 36 net rooms in here. As I look at this, not only can those net rooms be used for special needs or other kinds of programs, they can also be used for class size reduction. For example, we are a little high in kindergarten here. It's possible to take one of those rooms and lower the class size in kindergarten back to the 21 level. This was just an automatic calculation. Those net rooms are for special education or class size reduction. It gives the district a lot of options, not the least of which is the ability to start thinking about bringing out-of-district special needs students back into the district. It's one of the benefits of this project going forward. School No. 27 is a proposed pre-k through 5 school building. You can take a look at the very good class size established here. This school has 77 pre-k students living in the zone. We created six sections of pre-k in this building. The ceiling for pre-k is 15 students per class. We have no more than 15 students. We are using 27 out of 36 classrooms, which gives us a net of nine. This school absorbs students from grades 3 through 5 from 19 attendance zones, and students in grades 6 through 8 will attend the new middle school. Here's what we talked about. We talked about changing School No. 1 and School No. 26. As I said earlier, School No. 1 is currently a Choice school. We are proposing that this become a neighborhood school and be paired with School No. 26. In School No. 1, as we see in the bottom, existing grades K through 5 is Choice school. I don't want to misstate that. Does it remain a Choice school in grades K through 5? It's a neighborhood school is K through 5, right?

Ms. Lisa Vainieri-Marshall: No. What you are proposing is for School No. 1 not to be a Choice school anymore.

Mr. Haber: I don't want that line to be misled. It's an existing school K through 5 Choice school. That's true. It's existing, but it will not be. It will be a neighborhood school going forward based on our proposal. As you can see above there, we have one net classroom open in that school building with 92.86% classroom utilization. We might want to use that one net room to reduce kindergarten enrollment, but that's the choice of the district. That flexibility is there. In School No. 26, currently existing is grades k through 8 as a neighborhood school. We are now proposing to turn it to a grade 3 through 8 neighborhood school. I don't know if you can see it. Can you go over to the map with the pointer? I just want to point out that the blackout line is the current combined attendance zones for School No. 1 and School No. 26. The green extension going past that was we were able to do student counts in there and move students from that area over to School No. 21 for the purpose of reducing enrollment. The next slide will show that. School No. 21 now has a total enrollment in K through 8 of 650. There will be 657 students in that building. We are using 32 out of 38 classrooms at 84.21%

classroom utilization and as you can see across the board the class size in that building becomes very good. That is the new School No. 21 zone. The purpose of the change in that zone was just enrollment reduction. It benefits School No. 1, School No. 26, and School No. 21. School No. 24 is proposed to be a pre-k, k, 1, 2 and 3 for neighborhood students and grades 4 through 8 for fine and performing arts students. Students in grades 5 through 8 who live in the School No. 24 attendance zone will then attend School No. 30, the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School. This provides an opportunity for increasing the number of students in the fine and performing arts program. If we go to the next slide on schools, we see that the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. School will now be brought up to capacity. We will be using 52 out of 57 classrooms and still allowing for a net of five classrooms, which may be used for introduction of special needs programs or, if necessary, class size reduction. The proposed grades 4 through 8 come from School No. 24. It's important to note that students currently enrolled in the magnet program at School No. 16 that live in the Martin Luther King Jr. School attendance zone will remain at School No. 16. That's about 131 students. That is the detail of all of these changes. We turn it back to Donna to do the conclusion and next steps.

Ms. O'Gorman: As you see, our recommendations offer students an opportunity to enroll in the fine and performing arts, School No. 24, which Ross had already mentioned. It increases the ability for students to attend neighborhood schools. We are bringing them back to their neighborhoods. We know that there are reasons for certain school students. There are always exceptions, but we are trying to equalize and balance the schools and programs and where the students live. In the end, it will result in fewer students having to be transported, saving the district money on transportation, but also saving the students the time of being on a bus. The next steps after this, Neil mentioned that this was phase two of a three-phase process. In early January, we will convene with the long-range facility committee stakeholders, if this is accepted, to identify what facilities will need some additional work, maybe to bring in bathrooms for pre-k and K, and what other types of facility improvements we need to do. We will then update and submit the long-range facility plan to the New Jersey Department of Education, which needs to be done every five years. We are due to do our five-year projection. Once it's approved, the next step is to implement that approved long-range facility plan. Lisa has requested that we share the attendance zone maps and data with central registration so we will be doing that after this is approved. That will help them with transportation and assigning students to attendance zones and local neighborhood schools. In conclusion, we have questions and answers.

Mr. Mapp: Before we get there, may I? What we've done was to look at small samplings of areas within our school district to see where we can develop and increase capacity for specialized programs, not just sped, but bilingual, magnets, and other specialized programs that we have. I just want to say the diversity that exists in our community is an important feature of this district. It's imperative that we bring balance to our schools and give every student the opportunity to participate in the district's educational programming offerings. We are doing this. You can take this methodology of trying to increase capacity and superimpose it on any section of the city, and that's what we intend to do going forward in order to make our schools more efficient in providing these educational programs and services. Are there any questions?

Comm. Hodges: School No. 1 has been a Choice school for decades and they cherish that academic program. Where does that parental group go for specialized training that they anticipate at School No. 1?

Mr. Mapp: What's your question?

Ms. O'Gorman: Where will those students go for the specialized programs? This is a pre-k to five. Neil, do you want to answer this or do you want me to answer it?

Mr. Mapp: It's currently pre-k to 5. After fifth grade, the specialized programs end. Is that what you're saying?

Comm. Hodges: No. They end now because you are moving a Choice school.

Mr. Mapp: Even though they go after fifth grade.

Comm. Hodges: Where do they go now? It's no longer going to be a Choice school.

Mr. Mapp: This is one of our recommendations. We are asking to now think beyond the Choice schools because we are allowing students to not only go from pre-k to 2 in their neighborhood, but to then go to grades 3 through 8 in their neighborhood, as opposed to going outside or switching schools.

Comm. Hodges: I think they are more interested in the academic programming in School No. 1, as opposed to their neighborhood school. Otherwise, they would go to School No. 26. The reason why I'm bringing this up is because this has been an issue with the school before.

Mr. Mapp: Like the fine and performing arts program, if that's a special program that we choose to continue there and expand, then that's something we can look at also, much like School No. 24. We are choosing to increase the enrollment there for the fine and performing arts.

Comm. Hodges: I would hate for us to lose a Choice program. We don't have many in the district and any loss of them would be a problem.

Comm. Arrington: I want to echo what Dr. Hodges just said about School No. 1. I visit School No. 1 many times and spend time there. It is a special school and to take away that status of a school choice and change that program, I would have to process that. I think that school is really working well. To change that makes me wonder.

Comm. Simmons: When would this have to be approved? I know you said earlier that this is a lot to take in. When would this need to be approved?

Mr. Mapp: These are recommendations that we can move forward to the long-range facility planning effort. There we can have further conversations on whether or not it moves forward.

Comm. Hodges: Would there be an opportunity for parents to weigh in on this discussion?

Mr. Mapp: Certainly. The committee of stakeholders will include parents, clergy, members of the community, etc.

Comm. Redmon: Can we suggest that we combine both meetings and switch this over so the Board will have an opportunity to absorb what's being presented to us? This was a lot.

Comm. Simmons: Which meetings? This will ultimately be a part of the five-year facility plan, right?

Comm. Redmon: Which is fine. We still would have input from the community. Can we have another special meeting just regarding this topic by itself?

Comm. Simmons: We can do that.

Mr. Mapp: You'll have a second opportunity to opine on this when we bring forth the recommendations from the long-range facility plan. Nothing is final at all. It's just putting it as an agenda item in the long-range facility plan to be discussed and fleshed out. Yes, we take your concerns into consideration and we definitely bring it forth to the committee.

Comm. Hodges: I would really like to hear from parents, particularly the School No. 1 parents, who consider that to be a loss of their programming and their opportunities. Having heard from them before when it was proposed, I kind of anticipate what's going to happen. I'm concerned about that element of the program.

Comm. Arrington: I want to go back to School No. 1. Again, echoing what Dr. Hodges is saying, we are increasing the number of students by 20, but we are changing the grade level. I'm just trying to understand the value of the 20-student increase, but losing the school choice. What is that getting us?

Comm. Simmons: I think that's exactly what Dr. Hodges is saying. I think having the parents weigh in is what you need to hear before you can make a decision.

Comm. Hodges: Over and above that, I'm concerned about the loss of that program. I understand concern from the parents, but whether or not they appreciate what's going on, I don't want to see the loss of that kind of programming. I'm concerned about that. I do appreciate what you've done for the rest of the presentation, but the loss of that programming does concern me immensely.

Comm. Arrington: I know you know this, but we run the PNP program out of there. There are some special things going on at School No. 1. I believe the violin program runs out of there, if I'm correct.

Ms. Peron: It does. It runs out of School No. 1, School No. 26, and Norman S. Weir.

Comm. Simmons: Any other questions?

Comm. Martinez: I believe this presentation was emailed already. I think if we all have an opportunity to really sit down with it, look at it, and write down any questions, we can circle back at a later date. I just want to make sure that we're not locking in to any of this just yet before we are able to flesh it out a little bit more thoroughly. I do appreciate the efforts here. Pulling all of this apart and putting it back together the way you did was a large task. But I think the Board definitely needs some time to mull this over, look at it a little bit more, and then we can continue the discussion. I do thank you all for your efforts. This is very well done.

Ms. O'Gorman: Thank you. Keep this in consideration when you look at it. You're looking at it from your knowledge of the parents. We are looking at it from what works with numbers and to equalize and balance the school classes. We would take in your considerations and your comments and then we are going to meet with the stakeholders. Neil will set up several meetings with whoever those stakeholders are in that community. We'll try to go through the questions and get the best balance for the

district. I do have to add that this was a very tough year. Your opening students were amazing and this was a very tough act to follow. I commend you. It was really enjoyable. Thank you.

Mr. Haber: I want to thank you all also. Thank you for paying attention. I do appreciate questions. We were looking at this from a data point of view. As a former educator myself, I understand that education is the priority so I appreciate the last comments.

Comm. Simmons: Thank you.

Ms. O’Gorman: Neil, we’ll follow up with you tomorrow. If there are no more questions, I’m wishing you all a very happy, healthy, and safe holiday season.

Mr. Mapp: Thank you for your indulgence. It’s a lot of data to take in.

Comm. Martinez: Yes, indeed. If anyone is traveling tonight, please be safe. It’s treacherous out there right now.

Comm. Simmons: It really is. In the words Brian Gumble, let’s move on. I believe that was it for presentations, correct Madam Superintendent?

Ms. Shafer: That is the end of the presentations.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

It was moved by Comm. Martinez, seconded by Comm. Redmon that the Public Comments portion of the meeting be opened. On roll call all members voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

Ms. Rosie Grant: Good evening Commissioners and thank you for this opportunity. Good evening to you also, Madam Superintendent, staff, and members of the community. First, I want to say what a wonderful student presentation we saw today. The artwork was great. Their research work was phenomenal. Really good presentation overall! Kudos to the students and the adults who worked with them! I did recognize some of the voices who were on this meeting. Kudos to you as well! Job well done! I would like to request a copy of the facilities presentation that we just saw. I have the same concerns about parent voice in decision making. This is something that this district has been committed to in the strategic plan by which we are operating. I join in with the Board members in encouraging that there are parent meetings, not just for School No. 1, but for all the schools before these decisions are made by the Board. I also have concern about School No. 24. I remember that the performing arts program was put in place so there would be feeder to Rosa Parks High School for Fine and Performing Arts. I would hope that would still recruit kids from across the district and not just the kids in that School No. 24 catchment area. Besides that, I would like to wish everyone good health and strength and wellbeing for the coming holiday season. I hope along with you that the new year will bring us reason for hope and resilience. Thank you so much.

Ms. Shaye Brown: Good evening Commissioners, Superintendent Shafer, and Paterson Public School administrators. Thank you for extending remote instruction and learning. I don’t think any of us were prepared for this pandemic and we still aren’t. Prayers to anyone who has lost a family member or friend to this virus. Superintendent, in October, I asked about what could be done for staff that has young children or elderly high-risk family members to care for in the event of a hybrid school opening. You