

Well there's some Approved April 23rd
Board Meeting

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

February 19, 2026
Elizabeth, New Jersey

Board President Maria Z. Carvalho called the meeting to order at 5:48 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the February 19, 2026, regular agenda/business meeting of the Elizabeth Board of Education and read the following statement.

“Good evening and welcome to our Board of Education Meeting of the Elizabeth Board of Education. 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 February 13, 2026. 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 School No. 21 and to our television viewers to this February 19, 2026, 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. So that the recording will adequately reflect the proceedings, please refrain from talking while others are speaking.”

“We 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.”

“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 public participation portion 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.”

“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”

Present: Dr. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mmes. Chevres, Clervoyant-Noel, Mr. Jacobs, (arrived at 5:50), Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Carvalho -9

Absent -0

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Dr. Jennifer Cedeno, Assistant Superintendent for Schools Mrs. Judy Finch-Johnson,

Assistant Superintendent of Schools Mr. Rafael Cortes, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr. Assistant School Business Administrator Rajeev Malhotra, Deputy Counsel, Heather Savage Ford Esq, and Co-General Counsel Michael Simitz Esq., of Kologi Simitz Law Office, were in attendance.

Mrs. Carvalho asked everyone to please stand for a Moment of Silence in Memory of:

Mayda Delfina Aldama, Personal Assistant, Madison-Monroe School No. 16

Roxanne Soto, Network Technician, Division of Technology and Information Systems,
James P. Mitchell Building

Donald Stewart II, Personal Assistant, iPrep Academy School No. 8

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Member Charlene Bathelus.

The National Anthem was played,

The African National Anthem was played.

Mrs. Carvalho introduced Lourdes Leon, a member of the Board of Union County Commissioners and former Board of Education member and newly elected Union County Commissioner Stan Neron to this evening's salute to Black History Month.

The Pledge of Ethics was led by Stephanie Clervoyant-Noel.

Mrs. Carvalho asked Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, to introduce the Student Representative to the Board for the month of February.

Savannah Abreu is a senior at Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr. Health & Public Safety Academy. She proudly serves as one of the eight Student Board Representatives for the Elizabeth Public School District. In this leadership role, Savannah collaborates closely with school administrators and district leaders to represent the student body, ensuring that student perspectives are heard, valued, and thoughtfully considered in decision-making. She is deeply committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where all students feel respected and empowered throughout their school experience.

Savannah has remained actively engaged in her school community. She is a dedicated member of the Elizabeth High School Swim Team and also participates in a swim clinic, where she continues to strengthen her skills and mentor younger swimmers. Known as a "big sister" both on the team and in her personal life, Savannah naturally embraces a nurturing leadership role—supporting teammates, encouraging others, and serving as a steady source of motivation, particularly beyond competition and in everyday interactions.

Savannah is also an active participant in Halsey's Marine Corps Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (MCJROTC) program, where she holds the rank of Cadet Captain and serves as an integral member of the program's chain of command. Her leadership reflects discipline, accountability,

and service. In addition, she is a NJSEEDs Access Changes Everything College Scholar and a member of the Youth Enrichment Services (YES) Program, further demonstrating her dedication to academic excellence and personal growth.

Beyond school, Savannah is passionate about global awareness and service. She plans to study International Relations in college, inspired by her commitment to human rights and global advocacy. She aspires to volunteer with organizations such as UNICEF in the future and has already taken meaningful steps toward that goal by presenting to a Human Rights Committee, using her voice to address issues that impact communities both locally and globally. Service is also a family tradition for Savannah. She and her family regularly visit orphanages, where they spend time playing games with children and building genuine connections. These experiences have shaped her perspective, strengthened her compassion, and deepened her desire to serve others. Savannah demonstrates a strong dedication to her academic pursuits while also contributing to the planning of various school events. Her efforts consistently aim to create enjoyable, meaningful, and memorable experiences for the student body. Through her steady leadership, service, and heartfelt commitment to others, Savannah proudly and effectively represents her peers at Halsey. In recognition of her quiet dedication and unwavering commitment to others, she has been honored as Halsey's Unsung Hero.

Mrs. Carvalho asked Mr. Kennedy to memorialize Ms. Abreu's attendance in the official minutes of the meeting which was noted and Ms. Abreu's attendance is recorded in this, the official minutes of the meeting.

Good evening and welcome to the Board meeting here tonight at School No. 21. We are here at School No. 21 tonight at the suggestion of Board Member Jerry Jacobs as a way to highlight and acknowledge their Black History Month programs and want to again applaud School No. 21 students and the students from our other schools for the nice program they provided prior to our meeting.

Before beginning this evening's agenda, I wanted to share some remarks. As Board President, I value the importance of community engagement and seek to understand and address the issues that are most important to our community members. In recent weeks, we have recognized issues that have been the topics of conversation within our learning community and greater Elizabeth community, and we felt it was important to provide an update and clarify information pertaining to those issues.

The snow and sustained below freezing temperatures over multiple weeks really put a strain on our community. Thanks to the efforts of our municipal government, Elizabeth Public Schools team members, and local organizations, we have been able to manage issues that have arisen to keep our students learning in safe and caring environments.

I would like to thank Mayor Bollwage for providing free use of the public parking garages along with our neighbors at St. Hedwig's for allowing use of its parking lot to help ensure our team members could arrive to work and focus on providing an excellent education to our students. I would also like to thank our transportation director Mike Rijo and his team for the extraordinary efforts they made in overcoming challenging conditions to make sure our students continued getting to and from school and that team members could be shuttled to and from their job sites where needed.

The bitter cold also had its effect on school sites, especially TCUs at School No. 16 and School No. 22, which experienced plumbing or heating issues. Upon learning of these mechanical issues, students and team members were quickly relocated to their respective main buildings where they continued regular learning activities, ate meals, had use of bathrooms, and took naps on the cots brought over from the TCUs in the case of our youngest learners.

Thanks to the fast and efficient response of our plant and property team, these issues were promptly diagnosed and addressed, and students and team members were able to return to their classrooms within a day or two. Thank you Plant, Property & Equipment Director Luis Milanes and his team for their tremendous work in addressing these issues and cleaning up at all of our schools to ensure we could open after only one day of being closed. The outstanding collaboration between central administration, transportation, plant and property and city government made such a quick and safe return to school possible.

Speaking of safety, another issue that has been discussed in various communities is related to the photography company Lifetouch, who has been contracted to do school pictures of students and team members at our schools. Recent reports have called into question their data privacy and security practices. As a measure of precaution, Elizabeth Public Schools will be pausing its remaining photography sessions with Lifetouch for the 2025-2026 school year. Central administration will work with the remaining schools who have not yet taken their school photos on alternative solutions and will continue to gather more information in support of our schools whose sessions have already taken place to determine whether these concerns have any validity. As always, our top priority is the safety and wellbeing of our students and our team members. That concludes my remarks.

Mrs. Carvalho then read the following statement:

Citizens may address the Board.

“At this time, the microphones are open for public comment to those who have signed in prior to this session. I shall call individuals to the microphone based on the order of the sign-in. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three minutes in duration. The total time of public comment shall be limited to 60 minutes. No individual is able to yield their time to another individual. All comments shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board Members individually. Each speaker shall comply in all respects with Board Policy 9322 (copies were provided next to the sign in sheet)”.

“The following rules shall apply:

1. Time limits will be strictly enforced.
2. No personal attacks on individuals or the naming of individuals.
3. No vulgar or indecent language.
4. A person may address the Board no more than once during a single meeting.
5. Comments will not be debated.”

“Any person in violation of the Policy will be warned, and their comments terminated if needed. If such violation continues, this individual may be escorted from the meeting.”

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

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the first participant, Jona Jeannoute, to address the Board.

Ms. Jeannoute spoke about students who fall behind and how they can be helped to catch up.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Danielle Bruno Arlequin , to address the Board.

Mrs. Arlequin spoke on ICE and deportation.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Christina Moreira, to address the Board.

Mrs. Moreira spoke about the Immigration Policy, ICE and OPRA requests.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Kason Little to address the Board.

Mr. Little spoke about concerns with student protest against ICE in the district.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked him for her comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Andrea Ildefonso, to address the Board.

Ms. Ildefonso, former student, spoke about ICE information and School Administration issues.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Maria Medeiros, to address the Board.

Ms. Medeiros spoke about immigrants, ICE and student safety.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Diana Tabor, to address the Board.

Ms. Tabor, a former student, spoke about the Board's concern relating to students and ICE.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Leandro Torres, to address the Board.

Mr. Torres, a former student spoke about EHS-FJC Academy and School Administration issues

Mrs. Carvalho thanked him for his comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Carlos Villavicencio, to address the Board.

Mr. Villavicencio spoke about ICE and safety for students.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked him for his comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Jennifer Devia, to address the Board.

Ms. Devia spoke about threats made against her by an employee and concern regarding ICE.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Rene Garay, to address the Board.

Mr. Garay, a former student, spoke about ICE and Police and School Administration issues.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked him for his comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Bianca Gambetta, to address the Board.

Ms. Gambetta, a student at JVJ spoke about the number of tests juniors have to take and requested they be reduced.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Julia Ortiz, to address the Board.

Mrs. Ortiz spoke about concerns with ICE.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Lily Benavides, to address the Board.

Mrs. Benavides spoke about concerns with School Administration and ICE.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked her for her comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Gyms Dunbar, to address the Board.

Mr. Dunbar spoke about concern with School Administration and ICE.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked him for his comments.

Mrs. Carvalho called upon the next participant, Paola Aleman, to address the Board.

Ms. Aleman spoke about concerns with School Administration.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked her for her comments.

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

Board of Education President Maria Carvalho began a review of the evening's Agenda

Mr. Kennedy stated that: Board Vice President Stephanie Goncalves Pestana has a Motion. She stated "I move that the vote taken to approve the Agenda at the January 22, 2026, Board Meeting be amended to reflect that Board Members Carvalho, Clervoyant-Noel and Chevres votes on the Agenda Resolution relating to the Superintendent's Contract be rescinded and entered on the record as Abstentions. I ask for a second.

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana and seconded by Ms. Bathelus, that the votes made by Board Members Carvalho, Clervoyant and Chevres regarding the Superintendent's contract be rescinded and be entered as abstentions.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Dr. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mmes. Chevres, Clervoyant-Noel, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Carvalho -9.

Negative: none

Tab 1a) Official and Private Minutes (January 6, 2026) were added to the Agenda.

Tab 1b) Treasurer/Secretary's Report (December 31, 2025), was added to the Agenda.

Tab 2a) Personnel Report – Dr. Hugelmeyer asked Mr. Cuesta to present a summary of the Personnel Report. On this evening's report for the Board's consideration and approval, Mr. Cuesta stated that, there are 13 retirements and he congratulated all the retirees with a special recognition to Mary K. Nigro who is retiring after 28 years as teacher in the District. In addition, there was 1 resignation and 1 promotion for an administrative secretary, as well as twenty (20) appointments. Among those who were appointed were 4 teachers, 1 guidance counselor, 1 Social worker, 1 School nurse, 2 Administrative Secretaries, 1 Security Guard and nine (9) Classroom Assistants. Mr. Cuesta stated in order to qualify for an Assistant's position, the candidate must have forty-eight (48) college credits or pass a state exam. However, with the recent hires, seven have bachelor's degrees, one passed the Paraprofessional test, and one has a Master's Degree. This points out the quality of the candidates that Elizabeth is able to hire. Moreover, there were 18 transfers that were either promotion, resignations, personal requests and confidential legal reasons. Thirty-One teachers received salary increases as a consequence of obtaining their Master's Degree or reaching 6th year level which requires an additional thirty credits over and above their Master's Degree.

Mr. Cuesta went on to highlight the work his staff does to support teachers and staff. There have been 85 provisional teachers from both the traditional as well as the alternate route that the Human Resources Department has assisted with paperwork completion, filings with the state and guidance to help them navigate the two-year State Certification process. In addition, from the beginning of the school year in September 2025 through Feb 19th he also pointed out that Human Resources Department processed 109 Leaves of Absence and reviewed over 900 medical certificates for people who were out of work for three or more consecutive days. Moreover,

Ninety -nine teachers and one Administrator have been reimbursed for course completion via the Board's tuition reimbursement program. One hundred Forty teachers and five Administrators are in process of taking courses and programs that will be reimbursed under this policy. Mr. Cuesta further stated that two hundred eighty-two Workers Compensation incidents were reviewed. of which one hundred seventy-one were "reportable only" while one hundred eleven were under "case management". In conclusion Mr. Cuesta praised his dedicated team for the outstanding work they do for the District.

Mrs. Goncalves Pestana asked that page 12 of tab 2a be tabled and brought into private session.

The Board President thanked Mr. Cuesta and his team are for the great job they do and the Board understands that it is a difficult task to run Human Resources.

Tab 2a) Personnel Report with exception of page 12 was added to the Agenda.

Tab 3) Tuitions Report was added to the Agenda.

Tab 4a) Considerations Dr. Hugelmeyer shared that there were extensive professional opportunities that the District's Directors and Supervisors were going to be attending, in the weeks and months ahead. The Supervisor of Visual and Performing Arts will be attending the Music Educators Education Conference from February 19th to February 21. In addition, the Director and Supervisor of Early Childhood Education will be attending the NJSPA Early Childhood workshop on February 25th. A team from the JROTC program at William F Halsey Health and Public Safety Academy will be participating in a Rifle meet in Clayton, DE., at the end of February. Our Director of Curriculum and Instruction along with two Principals and two Vice Principals will be attending the NJPSA FEA Equity Education Summit. In March, Athletic Director Mr. Ben Candelino and the Supervisor of Athletics, Marty Luc will attend the Directors of Athletics Association of New Jersey Convention. Members of the Elizabeth High School Color Guard will be competing in the WGI World Championships Competition in Dayton Ohio. Mr. Jacobs added that he was very proud of all the accomplishments and the leadership role that District has assumed within the state, in complying with the Amistad Mandate. He invited all the teachers, staff, colleagues, students, their families and members of the public to attend the Amistad Forum on February 26th at 7:00 p.m. at School 30

Tab 4a) Considerations was added to the Agenda.

Tab 4b) Use of Facilities - Board President Carvalho mentioned that this is the time of year the Use of Facilities Requests for indoor accommodations are at a high level. It was noted that school programs always take precedence over outside requests. Ms. Bathelus sought clarification on a request to use School 30 specifically the dates of usage. Mr. Kennedy was able to ascertain that the request asked for Mondays from February 23rd through April 27th.

Tab 4b) Use of Facilities was added to the Agenda.

Tab 4bb) Use of Facilities was added to the Agenda.

Tab 4c) Field Trips was added to the Agenda.

Tab 4d) HIB Report was added to the Agenda.

Tab 5) Authorizations Report – Board Member Rosa Moreno Ortega, asked if Provisional teachers mentioned on page 6 were the same as Alternate Route Teachers. Dr Hugelmeyer said that all teachers begin their careers as Provisional Teachers and participate in a two year program that includes mentorship and guidance before they become certified teachers. Mrs. Moreno Ortega also highlighted the fact that the Division of Special Services will be hosting a Special Education Community Resource Fair on March 14th, 2026 at School No. 28. Furthermore, she stated that School No. 9 would be applying for the Donors Choose Grant. Mrs. Moreno Ortega asked the Superintendent to inform the Board if the Grant application is successful.

Ms. Bathelus asked Assistant Superintendent Judy Finch Johnson to explain the protocols and timelines for PTO Fund Raising submissions for approval by the Board. Mrs. Finch Johnson explained that all requests should go through the respective principals of each school. The principals should in turn send them to Mrs. Finch Johnson's office for review and approval. This process should be completed by two Fridays prior to the Board Meeting. In emergent situations where the request has been submitted after the deadline Mrs. Finch Johnson will ask the Superintendent for verbal approval. It was Mrs. Finch Johnson's opinion that Fund Raising requests be in the purview of the School Principals know their building, the staff, and students and can best understand what fundraisers are appropriate and viable for their school.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Jennifer Cedeno Acknowledged donations from the Greater Elizabeth Chamber of Commerce and its affiliate member NJ Wonders foundation for scholarships, the Boyertown Area Schools Music League for supplies, equipment and trips and the ILA Local for 100 hats and Pizza.

Mrs. Finch Johnson reported that there were 140 Fundraisers on tonight's agenda for approval, they run the gamut from Movie and Karaoke nights to online popcorn sales, to apparel sales to dances and a cornucopia of other events and sales.

Superintendent Hugelmeyer was pleased to announce that students in middle school grades and high school would be participating in the Teen Arts Festival at Union College of Union County New Jersey. In addition, students and faculty, from Admiral William F. Halsey Jr Health and Public Safety would be hosting a soccer game at the Dunn Center where they would be facing the Elizabeth Police Dept. She concluded her remarks by reminding families that the Division of Special Services will be hosting a Special Education Community Resource Fair on March 14th, 2026, at School No. 28.

Tab 5) Authorizations Report was added to the Agenda.

Tab 6 and 6a) Finance and Accounting Report/Supplemental Finance and Accounting Report were added to the Agenda.

Tab 7) Award of Contracts Mr. Kennedy explained that the contract with Magic Touch Construction is for the completion of the Vestibule Construction Project that began with funding from a COPS Grant. The balance of the cost of the project is being covered with funds from NJSDA. He also said that the contract with E.I. Associates is for a much-needed upgrade to the entrance of School 16. Board Member Isaias Rivera said the Educational Services Commission (a Buying Co-op) had audit issues and would they need to be amended. Mr. Kennedy stated that he was going to ask that two contracts be pulled from this evening's agenda that had been sourced through the Educational Services Commission. Mr. Jacobs complimented Mr. Rivera for his keen eye and asked the Business office to review the contracts that were executed through the Educational Service Commission where the District might have been over charged. Mr. Kennedy said he was awaiting guidance from the County Superintendents office on how to proceed. Mrs. Carvalho asked if the contract regarding the Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy

that was through the Educational Services Commission, be brought into private session. She further asked that Director speak to the Board prior to private session. The Board would also seek guidance from Co-Counsel, Mr. Ed Kologi.

Tab 7) Award of Contracts Report was added to the Agenda.

Mrs. Carvalho introduced Student Representative, Savannah Abreu, and asked her to give her report to the community.

Good evening, Board members, Superintendent Dr. Hugelmeyer, and community members. My name is Savannah Abreu, and I am honored to serve as the Student Board Representative for Admiral William F. Halsey Jr. Health & Public Safety Academy. As a proud Halsey student, I take great pride in representing a school that prepares students not only for graduation, but for real careers, leadership, and meaningful futures.

This year, Halsey has experienced strong growth both academically and through our hands-on programs. Walking through our hallways, you see students in uniforms representing MCJROTC and Nursing, serving as symbols of discipline, commitment, and career readiness. We have expanded our Advanced Placement course offerings, allowing students to earn college credit while still in high school. In addition, ASVAB testing is provided at our school, giving students the opportunity to explore military and career pathways while receiving guidance and support as they plan their futures.

Our MCJROTC program was once again designated a Naval Honor School, marking the sixth time in seven years that we have earned this distinction. Our drill, rifle, and physical fitness teams have competed in five competitions this year, earning multiple top-three finishes, including first place overall in both armed and unarmed divisions. Cadets also serve our community by volunteering at events such as the Memorial Day Parade and School Board meetings. In addition, our upperclassmen cadets — including seniors and juniors — visit the 9th Grade Annex to mentor and interact with incoming ROTC freshmen. Through these visits, they help younger students better understand the program, share their experiences, and ease their transition into both ROTC and high school life. This mentorship reflects the broader mission of our 9th Grade Annex, which is designed to build a strong academic and leadership foundation for incoming students as they transition confidently into high school and gain early exposure to our career-focused programs.

Within our Health Occupations Program, students pursue six pathways: EMT, Hospital Technician, Unit Secretary, CNA, the Rutgers program, and our new Home Health Aide certification. Our CNA program proudly maintains a 99% pass rate. Students are preparing for clinical rotations at Trinitas Regional Medical Center, competing in HOSA for future health professionals, and earning college credit through Rutgers University this spring.

Beyond academics, Halsey continues to build a strong sense of school spirit and community through events and student-led initiatives. From themed dress days to our Winter Eve Celebration and Community Game Night, these experiences create meaningful opportunities for students and families to connect. In December, our Student vs. Staff basketball game brought excitement and friendly competition to the school, strengthening school spirit and creating lasting memories.

That same collaborative energy extends to our greenhouse program, where students are preparing for spring planting in anticipation of a February plant sale featuring fruits, herbs, and vegetables grown by our own hands. Our after-school Music Club is also partnering with the Dance Club to orchestrate a Black History celebration at the end of the month, featuring African dance and live drumming to celebrate culture, unity, and student creativity.

Fundraising efforts across all grade levels further reflect student involvement and responsibility. Seniors host chocolate sales and pretzel sales, juniors organize Valentine's Day snack sales,

sophomores coordinate plant sales, and freshmen participate in restaurant fundraisers with Chipotle and Panera. These efforts directly support enriching experiences beyond the classroom. Snack sale proceeds helped fund a trip to see *The Great Gatsby*, allowing students to engage with literature in a live theatrical setting. Additional funds supported a visit to the Grounds for Sculpture, where students explored art in a meaningful, hands-on, and immersive environment. In sum, growth happens every day at our school — in classrooms, nursing labs, competitions, performances, community events, and even in our greenhouse. From freshmen to seniors, students develop leadership, discipline, creativity, and real-world skills that prepare us for life beyond high school.

I am proud to represent a school where opportunity is visible, achievement is measurable, and student voice is valued.

Thank you for your time and for allowing me to represent my school and my peers.

Board President, Maria Z. Carvalho asked for Committee Reports.

Special Education Committee Report

February 5, 2026

12:00 p.m. – 12:35 p.m.

Attendees: Diane Barboa, Board Member/Chairperson of the Special Education Committee; Stephanie Goncalves-Pestana, Board Vice President, Iliana Chevres, Board Member, Ed Kologi, General Counsel, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator and Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools.

The Committee discussed the recent parent workshop offered at the ESEPAC meeting noting a record attendance of 63 participants, which reflects positive community engagement. The committee emphasized the importance of collaboration and shared experiences among community members, while also planning upcoming events, including a resource fair scheduled for March 14th at the Dunn Sports Center and the rescheduling of the Special Olympics Bowling event. The Committee expressed an interest in obtaining further feedback from ESEPAC and a special invitation be extended to the April Board Meeting.

Further discussions included updates in-district special needs student enrollment, leading to a reassessment of classroom needs and budget discussions. Lastly, the Committee reviewed the Special Services newsletter and webpage and found it to be easily accessible and very informative. The Committee suggested that future newsletters be incorporated in the monthly Community Updates.

Education Management Committee Report

February 9, 2026

4:00p.m. - 5:15p.m.

Attendees: Stephanie Goncalves-Pestana, Board Vice President/Chairperson of the Education Management Committee Meeting, Iliana Chevres, Board Member, Charlene Bathelus, Board Member, Stephanie Clervoyant-Noel, Board Member, Ed Kologi, General Counsel, Harold

Kennedy, School Business Administrator and Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools.

The Committee reviewed chronic absenteeism data, state calculation changes, corrective action plan requirements, and a proposed Technology Department's reorganization. The committee examined the State's updated chronic absenteeism definition—including a 90-day enrollment threshold established in 2024–25 and removal of the year-end active-student requirement—and examples of per-student and per-school calculations using the 10% (18-day) threshold for a 180-day year. District chronic absenteeism improved from 15.8% to 14.3% year-over-year, with several schools reaching single-digit rates; schools above 10% must submit CAPs and use parent surveys to identify barriers. Panorama survey data and student clustering were described as tools for targeted Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. Examples of interventions include incentives such as Positive Behavior Support in Schools. The Committee reviewed an elementary school plan and a high school plan in detail, showing subgroup trends (notably a decline for Black students) and root causes such as medical, family, transportation, and engagement issues.

The committee then considered an IT reorganization creating two coordinator roles—Network Cybersecurity & IT Infrastructure and Computer Operations & Applications—reviewing job descriptions, supervisory scope, and core responsibilities to separate cybersecurity and application functions. Members agreed to present the reorganization and job descriptions to the board. Lastly, the committee also requested attendance data for the district and reviewed preliminary work on a student cell phone policy.

Finance & Accounting Committee

February 11, 2026

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Attendees: Jerry Jacobs, Board Member/Chairperson of the Education Management Committee Meeting; Stephanie Goncalves-Pestana, Board Vice President, Stephanie Clervoyant-Noel, Board Member, Michael Simitz, General Counsel, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator, Rajeev Malhotra, Assistant School Business Administrator, Luis Milanés, Director of Plant, Property & Equipment, Riannon Ellis, NuEnergen, LLC and Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools.

The committee reviewed New Energen's analysis of the district energy program, with Riannon Ellis presenting services, historical budgeting, consumption trends, supplier/hedging actions and Energy Track invoice data capture. She summarized New Energen's scope—annual energy budgeting, commodity procurement for electricity and gas, demand response participation and revenue, curtailment, and invoice auditing—and reported a cumulative net underspend of approximately \$5.5–\$5.7 million from 2018 to the present, attributing results to active monitoring, hedging and market interventions.

Discussion focused on New Energen's hedging philosophy and contract structures (block-and-index, timing during shoulder months), drivers of a marked consumption decline since 2018 (ESIP projects, equipment changes, building automation scheduling, COVID-related occupancy shifts), and operational demand response logistics including automation to shed HVAC loads. The district's demand response history (participation since 2012 and growth to

about 20 schools). Finally, the committee discussed current supply position with gas fixed through September 2027 and electricity blocked through April 2026.

School Properties Committee

February 17, 2025

12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Attendees: Iliana Chevres, Board Member/Chairperson of the School Properties Committee; Stephanie Goncalves-Pestana, Board Vice President, Charlene Bathelus, Board Member, Jerry Jacobs, Board Member, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator, Rajeev Malhotra, Assistant School Business Administrator, Luis Milanes, Director of Plant, Property & Equipment and Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools.

The Committee reviewed the focus areas from last year and discussed the goals for the current year. The focus areas include oversight of the Long-Range Facilities Plan and Budget, overseeing groundbreaking of new facilities, exploring beautification projects, reviewing existing partnerships with the county and city to create a sustainability plan, and exploring grant opportunities to fund special projects.

The Committee reviewed the district's snow management plan and debriefed the outcome of the recent snowstorm. The Committee requested to review custodial responsibilities during snowstorms. A request was made for contractual language. The committee reviews the current status of all construction projects and current vacancies in the department. The Committee requested a breakdown of custodial substitute appointments by year.

Tab 9) Claims List was added to the agenda

Tab 10 Resolutions 10 through 10n. were added to the agenda.

Mr. Kennedy stated that every year the Board of Education affirms and acknowledges the Code of Ethics. Mr. Kennedy led the Board members in a reading of the following Bylaw File Code 9271, Code of Ethics for New Jersey School Board Members.

“In accordance with N.J.S.A.18A:12-24.1 the Board shall see that all members of the Board receive training in understanding and adhering to the Code of Ethics and shall discuss it annually at a regularly scheduled meeting. Each member shall sign documentation that he/she has received a copy of it and has read and understood it.

The members of the board of education recognize that they hold authority not as individuals but as members of the board. In order to make a clear public statement of its philosophy of service to the students of the district, the board adopts this code of ethics.

- A. I will uphold and enforce all laws, state board rules and regulations, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes should be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.
- B. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools which meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex or social standing.

- C. I will confine my board action to policymaking, planning and appraisal and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.
- D. I will behave toward my fellow board members with the respect due their office--demonstrating courtesy, decorum and fair play at all public meetings and in all public statements.
- E. I will refrain from inappropriate conduct in public meetings and in making public statements, refraining from any disparagement of my fellow board members or others on a personal, social, racial or religious basis.
- F. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.
- G. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action which may compromise the board.
- H. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.
- I. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. But in all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its schools.
- J. I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief school administrator.
- K. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.
- L. I will refer all complaints to the chief school administrator and will act on such complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

Mr. Kennedy asked if there were any questions or comments and explained the acknowledgement of receipt that needs to be signed and submitted by each Board member.

Mrs. Carvalho stated the following: The President requests a motion to go into Private Session to consider matters exempt under the Open Public Meetings Act, specifically for discussion of:

Personnel Matters specifically, Reorganization, Revised Job Descriptions

Legal Matters specifically, Settlement Agreement M.S., Workers Compensation; V.L.K, and Award of Contracts

The Board will reconvene in public and may take formal action.

A motion was made by Ms. Bathelus and seconded by Dr. Barbosa to go into private session at 8:06 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Dr. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mmes. Chevres, Clervoyant-Noel, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Carvalho. - 9

Negative: None

Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools, gave a tape-recorded message regarding the following district announcements.

I'd like to begin with an announcement regarding our early childhood lottery registration that just opened yesterday, February 18th, and will run through March 19th.

Also, I'd like to announce that we have our gifted and talented program application that opens on February 25th and will run through April 10th. We have a gifted and talented information session that is scheduled for February 25th at School No. 22 and that will take place at 5:30 in the evening.

We also would like to announce that we have our high school selection information sessions that will be announced very shortly. This will be an opportunity for our families or parents of our eighth grade students to be able to participate in the information sessions at the various high school academies and make the decisions together with their children with regard to where they will attend the following school year. So, this information will be made available very soon. Next we have our district financial aid nights that have been ongoing. We have a few sessions that are coming up. In fact, this evening we have a session and next March 5th, March 24th, April 21st, and May 12th at John E. Dwyer Technology Academy. These information sessions are critical. It's an opportunity for our students and their parents to learn about financial aid, to be able to learn about available scholarships. Presentations will be made available in both English and in Spanish. And as a reminder, we would like our students to bring their laptops to these sessions. It'll afford our guidance counselors the opportunity to work closely with our students in preparation for their applications to colleges.

And next we present our insight inside EPS our news from central.

We'd like to begin with our Hamilton senior that received a full scholarship through QuestBridge. Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy senior Yusra Lawal was awarded a full scholarship to the University of Pennsylvania through the 2025 QuestBridge National College Match. And this is a national program that connects high achieving high school seniors from low income backgrounds with full four-year scholarships to 55 of the nation's top colleges. A special congratulations to our Hamilton Preparatory Academy senior.

And next we would like to share that the Elizabeth public schools partnered with Montclair State University for friends' day and this initiative has been in place for over 10 years where Montclair

University has hosted over 100 students with disabilities. Students from the various school districts such as ours are invited to participate in a study by the student led organization that sponsors this amazing opportunity through the department of campus recreation. A fun-filled day of activities for students involving games, arts and crafts, swimming, basketball, and dancing. And what is wonderful is that each child is paired with two college students that accompany the student throughout the course of the day. Wonderful opportunity to have participated in and witnessed for yet for another year. The great opportunity offered to our students.

Next, we would like to showcase the Elizabeth Public Schools having participated in the King Wreath laying ceremony at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Monument outside of our Elizabeth City Hall. The committee with the support of the Elizabeth Public Schools held a wreath laying ceremony on January 15th at the Dr. Martin Luther King monument in front of our city hall. In attendance was our mayor, Mayor Bollwage, our Elizabeth Board of Education President, Maria Carvalho, our Elizabeth Public Schools director of curriculum and instruction, Samuel Etienne, the Mount Teman Church, Reverend George Britt, and of course our Union County Commissioner, Stanley Neron, who provided remarks at the ceremony.

Next we have our Cicarell, Hamilton, Dwyer, JVJ Academies that make the 2025 AP honor role. Students from these high school academies were among New Jersey schools to earn a place on the College Board 2025 AP school honor roll. The AP honor roll recognizes schools at the bronze, silver, gold, and platinum tiers for meeting or exceeding criteria. And that criteria includes college culture, college credit, and college optimization. So very proud of our high school academies having received this important designation. Congratulations to all of the hard work of our administrators, our teachers, and most importantly our students.

Hamilton students received the web Dubois scholarship award. One of our Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy students, Steven Blair was the recipient of this prestigious award, an exceptional honor that recognizes his academic achievement, his motivation and his future potential. The W.E.B. DU Bois Scholars Institute program through the ALA initiative was created to expose students to STEM at an early age by providing high achieving 10th and 11th grade students with a supportive science-driven academic and professional network. The intent is to promote diversity and inclusion in the STEM fields. And the program offers students new and exciting opportunities to explore science, technology, engineering, and mathematics while preparing them to become the next generation of innovators.

We'd like to be able to celebrate our National School Counseling Week. Our Elizabeth Public Schools joined districts from throughout the country celebrating the National School Counseling Week which helped our district focus on public attention on the unique contribution of our counselors within our school system. This is sponsored by the American School Counselor Association, and it highlights the tremendous impact school counselors have in helping our students achieve school success and plan for a career.

This year the theme was school counselors amplify student success, and we'd like to be able to thank all of our counselors and be able to showcase them to our community.

So, we have Kassandra Carelli, school counselor from George Washington Academy School No. 1 and Fabi Ramos, school counselor from Nicholas S. La Corte-Peterstown School No. 3 Annex. Next we have Andreia Giuca, school counselor from Joseph Battin School No. 4 and Christopher Beaty, school counselor from iPrep Academy School No. 8.

We are honoring Cindy Lichtenstein school counselor from Christopher Columbus School No. 15 Annex and Malaisha Pierre-Louis, school counselor from Nicholas Murray Butler School No. 23, Jasmine Lee-Barnes, school counselor from Chessie Dentley Roberts Academy School No.

30, and Safiyah Howell together with Jill Aller, both school counselors for J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy.

Tamara Guzman, together with Monica Sarmiento, both school counselors for John E. Dwyer Technology Academy and Tara Johnson, school counselor for Elizabeth High School- Frank J. Cicarell Academy.

And next we would like to honor the Elizabeth Minutemen Boys Basketball coach, Philip Colicchio, for having earned his 600th -career win. We're celebrating his victory over Chester High School and the Battle by the Bay in Atlantic City. On February 7th we presented Coach Colicchio with a board resolution honoring the milestone achievement. And in attendance were Board Members Jerry Jacob and Stephanie Clairvoyant Noel, School Business Administrator Harold Kennedy, myself, as well as our athletic director Ben Candelino. It was a wonderful evening where our basketball team was in attendance and as well as our cheerleaders as we celebrated on February 11th at the Thomas G. Dunn Sports Center. Once again, Coach Colicchio, my sincere congratulations.

And next, we were recently made aware that the Elizabeth freshman boys basketball team were undefeated and our Union County champions. This team that's led by head coach Neil Pascual completed a preseason and captured the Union County tournament champion with a 58- 48 win over New Providence. Our congratulations to the team.

Next, we would like to highlight our Admiral William F. Halsey Health & Public Safety Academy senior Izabelle Silva Rebelo who had selected as a candidate for the U.S. Presidential Scholar in Career & Technical Education by the U.S. Department of Education. The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964 by executive order of the president to recognize and honor some of our nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative, and performing arts.

In 2015, the program was again extended to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields. Each year, up to 161 students are named presidential scholars, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students. Only 20 of the 61 presidential scholars selected each year are from the career and technical education category. Rebelo was among 141 overall students and five in the category of career and technical category who were selected as candidates from the State of New Jersey. We're incredibly proud of our Halsey Academy senior, Izabelle Rebelo. Congratulations again.

Elizabeth High School-Frank J. Cicarell Academy class of 2022 graduate Luciana Martinez has been nominated for the television academy foundation's 45th college television awards. The college television awards have recognized excellence in student production. Martinez is now a senior at Montclair State University. Received a nomination in the news category for her work as a director and producer on the 30-minute special FOCUS: Our Mental Health. In addition to showcasing student production, the college television awards are an entry point for career in television and media, and college television award nominees become part of the television academy foundation's alumni family and they have the opportunity to participate in year round networking opportunities. Winners will be announced during a red carpet awards ceremony on March 28th at the television academy in North Hollywood, California. So, congratulations to our former graduate from Elizabeth High School, Luciana Martinez.

And this concludes our announcements for the month of February. And it's been an honor to be able to present this to our community.

Ms. Bathelus left the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

A motion was made by Mrs. Chevres and seconded by Dr. Barbosa to return to public session at 10:05 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Dr. Barbosa, Mmes. Chevres, Clervoyant-Noel, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Carvalho -8

Negative: None

The following were added to the Agenda
Revised Job Description – Warehouse Laborer
Settlement Agreement – M.S.
Settlement Agreement Workers Comp – V. L-K.
Resolution for Reorganization – Technology Department
Table of Organization and Job Descriptions
Change in Job Title – School Counselor

Mrs. Carvalho asked Superintendent Hugelmeyer to present the H.I.B. Report for February

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

2.) Since our last Board of Education meeting on January 22, 2026, and through February 12, 2026, our school counselors, school based social workers and Supervisor of Anti-Bullying have completed 53 HIB investigations. Of these investigations 20 cases were Founded for HIB as per New Jersey law. There were 33 males, 30 females, 50 regular education students and 13 special education student that were the alleged victims. There were 54 males, 25 females, 58 regular education students, 18 special education students, and 3 non-students that were the alleged offenders. Of the 20 cases Founded for HIB, 9 cases were Founded based on Race/National Origin, 1 case was Founded based on Sexual Orientation, 1 case were Founded based on Gender, 1 case was Founded based on Gender Identity & Expression, and 14 cases were Founded based on “Other” identifying characteristics. Of the services provided and actions taken for these investigations, there were 16 skill development lessons/trainings, 45 counseling sessions, 5 behavioral interventions, 10 referrals for outpatient mental health treatment, 5 changes of classroom, 2 changes of school placement, 5 administrative counseling sessions, 13 in school detentions, 35 parent conferences, 2 referrals to outside agencies, 1 professional development training, 21 out of school suspensions, and 11 cases are continuing to be monitored.

3.) The HIB statute further requires that at the next regularly scheduled meeting after board members receive the initial report of HIB investigations, that the Board issue a decision, in writing, to affirm, reject, or modify the superintendent's decision pertaining to the 46 cases that were reported to you at the last Board meeting on January 22 , 2026. In order for you to do so, the investigation summaries from those investigations which were reported to you at the last board meeting have been provided for your review prior to voting.

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

Opening Calendar
Official and Private Minutes (January 6, 2026)
Treasurer/Secretary's Report (December 31, 2025)
Personnel Reports
Tuition Reports
Superintendent's Reports
Authorizations Reports
Finance and Accounting Report – Pay Vouchers
Supplemental Finance and Accounting Report – Transfer of Funds
Award of Contracts Report
Claims List

Resolutions:

Revised Designation of Depositories for School Funds
Approving Contract with Honeywell International, Inc.
Transfer of Capital Reserve Funds
Transfer of Maintenance Reserve Funds
Youth Art Month
National Nutrition Month
National School Breakfast Week
National School Social Workers' Week
Read Across America
St. Joseph's Day
St. Patrick's Day
Women's History Month
Payment for Unused Sick Days
Payment for Unused Vacation Days

A motion was made by Dr. Barbosa and seconded by Mrs. Goncalves-Pestana to approve the entire agenda.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative -Dr. Barbosa (with an abstention on Tab 7 pg. 2 and pg. 4 Contracts with Valenca Restaurant) Mmes. Chevres, Clervoyant-Noel, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Carvalho (with an abstention on Tab 4a Considerations item 6 Samuel Etienne to attend Equity Educational Conference on March 5th, 2026.). -8

Negative: none

Mr. Jacobs thanked Dr. Hugelmeyer, the Assistant Superintendents, Dr Wansaw, faculty and the student performers who put together tonight's Black History Month celebration. He closed his remarks by stating "Black History is American History.

Board President Carvalho thanked all those who came to or watched tonight's meeting. In addition, she specifically thanked all the public speakers and reassured them that the Board listens to their concerns. In closing she thanked School No. 21 for hosting this evening's events.

On a motion made by Dr. Barbosa and seconded by Mrs. Chevres, the meeting was adjourned at 10:13 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Dr. Barbosa, Mmes. Chevres, Clervoyant-Noel, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Carvalho -8

Negative: none

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