

APPROVED  
Bd Mtg 4-19-2023

BOARD OF EDUCATION

March 15, 2023  
Elizabeth, New Jersey

Prior to the start of the regular agenda/business meeting of the Board of Education, which was held on March 15, 2023, at 6 p.m. in the auditorium of the JVJ STEM Academy School No. 92, 237 S. Broad St., Elizabeth, New Jersey, Board Members, Administration, School Staff members and the public audience were treated to performances by students in celebration of Youth Art Month.

“Part of Your World” from *The Little Mermaid Jr.* was performed by Cielo Y. Arevalo, a student from William F Halloran School No. 22.

“Oh, the Things You Can Think!” from *Seussical the Musical* was performed by Students from Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy.

“When I Grow Up” from *Matilda Jr. The Musical* was performed by Students from The Saturday Arts Theatre.

“La Rebellion” by *Joe Arroyo* was performed by “Projecto Latino” students from the Saturday Arts Latin Band.

The following **STUDENT EXCELLENCE** was recognized by the Board.

**Port Authority Bus Terminal Advisory Council (PABTAC) Poster Contest Winner**

Johana Sanchez Benitez 7th Grade Student, Nicholas S. La Corte-Peterstown School No. 3  
Ethan Alexander Arroyave, 7th Grade Student, Chessie Dentley Roberts Academy School No. 30

**Union County Art Educators of New Jersey Youth Art Month Exhibit Winners**

Shaniyah Leah Rivera, 8th, Grade Student, William F. Halloran School No. 22  
Andrew Romano Cuzzi, 6th Grade Student, William F. Halloran School No. 22  
Laura Gabriela Serrano, 6th Grade Student, William F. Halloran School No. 22  
Christina Geneve Martin, 6th Grade Student, William F. Halloran School No. 22

**Art Educators of New Jersey State Youth Art Month Exhibit**

Christina Geneve Martin, 6th Grade Student, William F. Halloran School No. 22

**New Jersey Association for Jazz Education-Preliminary State Competition**

Honorable Mention, Best Soloist-Valerie Rodriguez (Drummer), 11th Grade Student,  
Elizabeth High School- Frank J. Cicarell Academy

**4th Annual Black Youth Excellence Award Winner**

Makayla Marie Lecky, 11th Grade Student, Elizabeth High School- Frank J. Cicarell Academy

## **Stars of Excellence**

Tracy C. Monteiro, Supervisor of Art, was recognized for her contributions to Excellence in the Fine and Performing Arts.

A Video celebrating Women's History Month showcasing Board Members, Administrators Faculty and Staff was presented.

Board President Iliana Chevres welcomed everyone to the March 15th, regular agenda/business meeting of the Elizabeth Board of Education.

Mrs. Chevres called the meeting to order and read the following statement at 6:59 p.m.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. This is a combined regular agenda/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 March 10, 2023. In addition, this notice is posted on the Bulletin Board in the lobby of 500 North Broad Street, and pursuant to this act, a copy has been filed with the City Clerk of Elizabeth, New Jersey.

We want to welcome everyone present here at the Katherine Johnson, Dorothy Vaughn, and Mary Jackson STEM Academy and to our television viewers to the March 15, 2023, meeting of the Board of Education. We are here to govern, provide management oversight, and make policy for the district. The Superintendent manages the district. This is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public.

This meeting is being recorded and will become part of the Elizabeth Board of Education permanent record. In order that the recording will adequately reflect the proceedings, please refrain from talking while others are speaking. The presiding officer may interrupt, warn or terminate speaking when talking becomes personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant; request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum; request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting; call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action.

We also ask that you silence the sound on your electronic devices. Since it is legally mandated that these proceedings be accurately recorded, we may have to ask for order periodically should noise begin to interfere with our recording capabilities. We are pleased that you have taken time this evening to join us here for our Board of Education meeting. Thank you for your interest in the Elizabeth Public Schools.

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

Present: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs., Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres

Absent: None

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

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Member Maria Carvalho.

The *Star-Spangled Banner* by Francis Scott Key was played.

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

Superintendent of Schools, Olga Hugelmeyer, introduced J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy principal, Mr. John Byrne, and asked him to present the student representative to the Board.

Mr. Byrne introduced senior Bryant Garcia, who will serve as the student representative to the Board of Education at this meeting. He stated that Mr. Garcia serves as the Student Government Vice President at Bollwage Academy and is an active leader in the school. In addition, Mr. Garcia is in the top five (5) students in his class and has been accepted to Rutgers University's School of Business and plans on studying finance.

Mrs. Chevres and Board members congratulated Mr. Garcia on being selected as the student representative to the Board for the March meeting and presented him with a pin and a certificate of commemoration. Mrs. Chevres asked Mr. Kennedy to include the student representative in the roll call to have the record reflect Mr. Garcia attendance this evening. This was noted by Mr. Kennedy.

Board President Mrs. Iliana Chevres read the following public participation statement:

"At this time, the microphones are open for public comment to those who have personally 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 time limit will be strictly enforced, and audio transmission will be terminated at the end of three minutes. The total time of public comment shall be limited to 60 minutes. No individual is able to yield their time to another individual. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually. The following rules for public participation shall apply, time limits will be strictly enforced; no personal attacks on individuals; no vulgar or indecent language; a person may address the Board no more than once during a single meeting; speakers should refrain from naming individuals; and comments or questions posed during public participation will not be debated. The presiding officer may: interrupt, warn or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too

lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant; request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum; request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting; call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action. As a reminder this is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public."

Mrs. Chevres called upon the first public participants, Jeremiah Laporte and Keisha Enriquez to address the Board.

Both Mr. Laporte and Ms. Enriquez spoke about JVJ Stem Academy and the accomplishments and activities taking place at this school.

Mrs. Chevres thanked them for their comments.

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

Mrs. Lorenz spoke about an incident.

Mrs. Chevres thanked her for her comments.

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

Kason Little spoke about the rights and needs of students.

Mrs. Chevres thanked him for his comments.

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

Board president Mrs. Iliana Chevres asked Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer, to provide a Community Update.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer asked Mr. Eric Zimmerman a manager at Suplee, Cooney, and Company to present the Independent Auditors Report for the year ended June 30, 2022, inclusive of the Auditor's Management Report and he stated that the District's Financial Statements are fairly stated, and that an unmodified opinion is contained within the report. Mr. Zimmerman stated that there were no findings and recommendations contained in the Auditor's Management Report and therefore no Corrective Action Plan is needed to be adopted by the Board as required by N.J.A.C. 18A:23-5 to publicly review and discuss at a public meeting of the Board of Education. Mr. Zimmerman complimented the Business Dept. and the Accounting Dept for their performance and cooperation in getting the audit completed.

Mrs. Chevres thanked Mr. Zimmerman for the Report and asked if there were any questions or comments from her fellow Board Members. Mr. Jacobs stated that this was the second year in a row that no corrective actions are needed. This shows that we are meeting our

fiduciary responsibilities and a clean audit indicates that the district is being well run. This is a testament to the work being done by the administration, Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Malhotra, Miss Jeanie Ball, and the Finance team. He also mentioned that two years ago we started a \$75 million Energy Savings Improvement Plan (ESIP) project and received interest rates of 1.5% which has now resulted in savings of millions of dollars as interest rates now hover in the 6.25% range. Mr. Jacobs thanked Mr. Kennedy and Mr. Malhotra for doing the footwork needed to secure this financing.

Superintendent Hugelmeyer proceeded with her updates, informing the Board and the audience that CBS Channel 2's Chris Wragge visited Elizabeth High School-Frank J Cicarell Academy as part of his Class Act series. Mr. Wragge recognized the efforts of the FJC students in participating/fund raising in the Relay for Life sponsored by the American Cancer Society.

Also recognized by Mrs. Hugelmeyer was the EHS Winter Color Guard team which finished second (2<sup>nd</sup>) in the 2023 Mid-Atlantic Indoor Network Class Scholastic A competition. In addition, she noted that Juan Pablo Duarte-Jose Julian Marti School No. 28 Head Secretary Maria Almeida was selected as 2023 Portugal Day Grand Marshal.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer then made a series of announcements. The Early Childhood Lottery Registration is being held from February 22 to March 24. The Gifted and Talented Program Application period is from February 23 to April 1. High Schools Info Sessions and Registrations are being held from March 20 to April 20. Individual High School Information sessions will take place at 7:00 pm at each high school on the following dates:

Bollwage Finance Academy 447 Richmond St 3/20/2023  
Hamilton Preparatory Academy 1003 North Broad Street 3/21/23  
Halsey Health and Public Safety Academy 699 South Street 3/22/23  
Dwyer Technology Academy 853 Third Avenue 3/23/23  
Edison Career and Technical Academy 425 Grier Avenue 3/27/23  
Elizabeth High School -Cicarell Academy 40 Morrell Street 3/28/23  
Jefferson Arts Academy -27 Martin Luther King Jr. Plaza 3/29/23  
JVJ Stem Academy – 237 South Broad Street 3/30/23

To ensure timely consideration of high school selections, registrations must be completed online through the PowerSchool Parent Portal from March 31 through April 20, 2023. Students will be notified of acceptance by June 2023. Descriptions of the eight district high schools may be viewed through the Your High School Selection Guide 2023 brochure on our district website at [www.epsnj.org](http://www.epsnj.org).

The New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA) will be taking place between May 10 and May 25.

Mrs Hugelmeyer presented a chart showing the timeline and subject matters being tested between May 10 and May 25.

The City of Elizabeth and the Department of Health and Human Services will be hosting a Free Immunization Clinic at the Peterstown Community Center 418 Palmer Street for Elizabeth residents only who qualify. To qualify for free vaccines, you must have Medicaid/Family Care Part A only or be uninsured. The Parent/Legal Guardian must present a valid I.D. and the Child's Birth Certificate is also required. To make an appointment please visit [Elizabethnjvaccine.org](http://Elizabethnjvaccine.org).

In honor of Women's History Month, the women of the Elizabeth Board of Education invite Elizabeth Public School team members to join them for a fun and interactive workout on Wednesday March 29<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. at the Dunn Sports Center.

Board President Chevres thanked Superintendent Hugelmeyer for her updates and called upon Student Representative Bryant Garcia to give his community update.

Good evening, Superintendent Hugelmeyer, Madame President, Board of Education commissioners, assistant superintendents, administrators, and members of the community. I am pleased to be here tonight to discuss some of the events going on in our schools.

To begin, J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy hosted their Winter Formal, where there was a DJ, photobooth, and a ping pong tournament. There was a Black History Month display in the board room of our school where students conducted research on famous African Americans who greatly impacted The United States of America. Autism students are making and selling soft pretzels as part of Life Skills class. There were relationship violence workshops that were held on February 27<sup>th</sup>, and March 2<sup>nd</sup>. We are also having our NAF Advisory Board meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup> where Bollwage will partner with corporations. The National Honor Society Induction ceremony will be held on March 21<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Byrne visited 22 different K-8 schools to provide students with information on J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy.

Frank J. Cicarell Academy hosted its 8<sup>th</sup> annual Relay for Life event. Frank J. Cicarell Academy was visited by CBS News in a featured segment, "Class Act with Chris Wragge". This relay for life event is one of the largest in the country, benefiting the American Cancer Society.

Halsey Health and Public Safety Academy is having a PT Competition (physical fitness competition), and a big inspection for the entire ROTC Unit.

Dwyer Technology Academy is having a No One Eats Alone Day. Students come to school with their parents from 5-6pm and speak about parents' accomplishments. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, Dwyer is having a student vs teachers volleyball game.

Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy is having a gaming tournament and a letter campaign in honor of social worker appreciation. They are also having an assembly for women's month.

Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy had a Masquerade Dance. They are also having a Pi Day. There is also a musical called Seussical the Musical.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to voice concerns for the student body, and I would like to mention something for your consideration regarding bringing back project graduation. After

speaking with fellow graduating seniors, we would very much like for project graduation to be held this year.

Thank you for your time tonight and have a great evening.

Mrs. Chevres asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the Community Reports.

Mr. Neron congratulated Mr. Garcia on his selection to represent the student body on the Board this evening. He concurred that Project Graduation was a great event and due to Covid it was put on hold. Mr. Neron looked forward to working with Mr. Garcia and others to reinstitute Project Graduation. Mr. Neron told Mr. Garcia he appreciated his leadership!

Mrs. Chevres called upon fellow member Diane Barbosa to present an update on Special Education Student Activities. Mrs. Barbosa stated that Special Olympics Bowling was just held, and the Elizabeth Stars did very well. The Track and Field Special Olympics is coming up and parents/students should look for updates for times place(s) etc. The Spring Soccer Clinic is underway, and a few spots are open. Please check with your case worker if you are interested. The CLIMB program at Kean University is now taking registrations and the adaptive swimming program at School 1 is accepting students. As April is National Autism Awareness Month a calendar of activities is being put together highlighting celebrations, events and activities for students and their families. Mrs. Barbosa wanted to particularly thank those parents who are reaching out to the Special Education Committee informing them of events and activities throughout the local area and state. She wanted everyone to know that members of the Special Education Committee of the Board are accessible through the Board website and that a phone number is also available that will put them in contact with a Board staff member who will relay messages, concerns, and information to them.

Mrs. Chevres thanked Mrs. Barbosa for her updates and the work she is doing on behalf of the Special Education Community.

Mrs. Chevres asked Mr. Jacobs to give an update on some financial matters.

Mr. Jacobs reported that the Finance Committee met on March 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Early Childhood Budget which was due to the state on March 10<sup>th</sup>. The Budget for the 23/24 Fiscal Year is \$47,596,540 of which the district will contribute \$7,796,000. On March 14<sup>th</sup>, the committee met to discuss the district's 2023/2024 Budget which is \$619,993,000 and reflects an increase of State Aid of \$46,000,000. Highlights include that for the sixth consecutive year there was no Tax Levy increase. In addition, the Board will be acquiring the former St. Michael's and Immaculate Conception School buildings which will provide an additional 23 Classrooms and there will be an expansion of the J.C. Bollwage Academy. The budget provides for an increase of 53 certified staff members and there are no planned program or staff cuts.

Mrs. Chevres thanked Mr. Jacobs and thanked him and his committee for all their hard work!

Board President Iliana Chevres requested a motion to go into Private Session to consider matters exempt under the Open Public Meetings Act, specifically for discussion of the following matters: An HIB Hearing D.L., Personnel Matters specifically E.M., M.V., M.G.R., and E.T., Award of Contracts-Halo Sensors, Legal matters, specifically settlement agreement R.B., Workers Compensation Matters, Property Purchase and Reorganization.

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana and seconded by Mr. Neron to go into private session at 7:52 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres -9

Negative: none

A motion was made by Mrs. Carvalho and seconded by Mr. Jacobs to return to public session at 11:03 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Dorgely, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres -9

Negative: none

The following items were added to the agenda.

Suspension Without Pay – M.G.R.

Suspension Without Pay – E.M.V.

Worker's Comp Settlement – E.O.

Worker's Comp Settlement – N.B.

Reorganization Personnel Actions

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that according to Board Policy 5131.1 Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) and New Jersey Statute 18A:37 the results of each investigation shall be reported to the Board of Education no later than the date of the next Board meeting following completion of each investigation and include any services provided, training established, discipline imposed, or other action that was taken or recommended.

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

At the conclusion of Mrs. Hugelmeyer's remarks Mrs. Moreno-Ortega asked that an analysis be given of Field Trips this year vs. prior years as well as the protocols necessary to request a field trip.

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



Official and Private Minutes (February 15, 2023)  
 Secretary/Treasurers Report for the Month of January 2023  
 Personnel Report  
 Supplemental Personnel Report  
 Tuitions Report  
 Superintendent's Report – Considerations  
 Superintendent's Report – Use of Facilities  
 Supplemental Superintendent's Report – Use of Facilities -Considerations  
 Superintendent's Report – Field Trips Considerations  
 Superintendent's Report – Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying Investigative Report  
 Authorizations Report  
 Supplemental Authorizations Report  
 Finance and Accounting Report – Authorization to Pay Vouchers  
 Supplemental Finance and Accounting Report – Transfer of Funds  
 Award of Contracts Report  
 Supplemental Award of Contracts Report  
 Miscellaneous Communication – None  
 Claims List  
     Resolution- Autism Awareness Month  
     Resolution- National Library Week  
     Resolution- Transfer of Capital Reserve Funds  
     Resolution- Payment for Unused Sick Days  
     Resolution- Payment for Unused Vacation Days  
     Resolution- Transfer of Maintenance Reserves Funds  
     Resolution- Appointing Cream -O-Land Dairies – Dairy Products  
     Resolution- Appointing Cream -O-Land Dairies – Juice Products  
     Resolution- Approval of Employment Contracts 2022-2023 (Asst. Supt.'s & BA)  
     Resolution- Appointing HPI International, Inc – 4200 Student Laptops  
     Resolution- Appointing HPI International, Inc – 2100 Student Laptops  
     Resolution- Maximum Travel Expenditure for the 2023-2024 School Year  
     Resolution- Adoption of Tentative Budget for the 2023-2024 School Year  
     Resolution- Termination of Employment – E.T.  
     Resolution- Suspension Without Pay – M.G.R.  
     Resolution- Suspension Without Pay – E.M.V.  
     Resolution- Worker's Comp Settlement – E.O.  
     Resolution- Worker's Comp Settlement – N.B.  
     Resolution – Reorganization Personnel Actions

A motion was made by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, to adopt the above agenda.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Carvalho-(abstain -Tab 5 pg. 3 Elizabeth Dept of Public Health, Resolution 10-S  
 Employment Contract J. Cedeno/R Cortes), Mr. Jacobs, Mr. Neron (abstain -Tab 5 pg. 3  
 Elizabeth Dept of Public Health, Resolution 10-S Employment Contracts J. Cedeno/Rafael  
 Cortes), Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Rivera, Mrs. Chevres (Abstain Tab 4b  
 Puerto Rico Alliance -Parade)-7

Negative: None

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

On a motion made by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, the meeting was adjourned at 11.18 p.m.

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