

APPROVED
Bd. Mtg. 2-20-14

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

January 7, 2014
Elizabeth, New Jersey

Prior to the scheduled reorganization meeting of the Elizabeth Board of Education at 7:30 p.m. held in the MultiPurpose Room, Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education, 544 Pennsylvania Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey, Board President Tony Monteiro welcomed all to the meeting including Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer, Assistant Superintendent for Family and Community Outreach Jerome Dunn, Acting Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Rafael Cortes, Acting Assistant Superintendent for Schools Linda Seniszyn, Board Vice President Elcy Castillo-Ospina and Board members Charlene Bathelus, Francisco Gonzalez, Fernando Nazco, Paul Perreira, and Carlos Trujillo.

Mr. Monteiro recognized visiting dignitaries including Senator Raymond Lesniak, Assemblywoman Annette Quijano, Union County Freeholder Sergio Granados, Elizabeth Mayor Chris Bollwage, Councilmen Frank Cuesta, William Gallman, Nelson Gonzalez, Manny Grova, and Carlos Torres, former Board President Armando DaSilva, former Board member Anthony Padlo, Roselle Council President Yves Aubourg, Roselle Councilman Randy Sandifer, and Roselle Board of Education Vice President Archange Antoine.

Dr. William Greene gave the invocation.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Sarahlee Rotestan, eighth grade student at Dr. Albert Einstein Academy School No. 29.

The *Star Spangled Banner* by Francis Scott Key was performed by the Dr. Albert Einstein Academy School No. 29 Chorus.

The Pledge of Ethics was led by Sarahlee Rotestan, eighth grade student at Dr. Albert Einstein Academy School No. 29.

Mr. Monteiro introduced a video presentation of the Core Beliefs and Commitments.

Board members elect Stanley Neron and Jose Rodriguez took the oath of office administered by Senator Raymond Lesniak. Board member Carlos Trujillo took the oath of office administered by Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., School Business Administrator/Board Secretary.

Mr. Monteiro stated that we are all honored to have dedicated individuals on our team to continue the work which has already made the Elizabeth Public Schools the best urban school system in the State of New Jersey and one of the best in America. Mr. Monteiro stated that together we will continue to provide these excellent educational experiences for all the students of the Elizabeth Public Schools.

Mr. Monteiro and Board members congratulated new Board members Stan Neron and Jose Rodriguez and re-elected Board member Carlos Trujillo and presented them with a plaque of commemoration, a letter from the County Clerk and a Certificate of Election.

Mr. Monteiro introduced students from Dr. Albert Einstein Academy School No. 29 Chorus who performed *What I Did for Love* by Marvin Hamlisch, arranged by Stanley Schwartz. Mr. Monteiro thanked the students for the wonderful performance.

The members of the Board of Education met for the purpose of reorganization on Tuesday, January 7, 2014 at Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education, 544 Pennsylvania Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr. presented the following statement at 7:55 p.m.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. This is the annual reorganization 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 Worrall Community Newspapers, The Star Ledger, and Cablevision of Elizabeth on December 19, 2013. In addition, this notice is posted on the bulletin board in the lobby of the Mitchell Building, 500 North Broad Street, and pursuant to this act, a copy has been filed with the City Clerk of Elizabeth.

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

Present: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Monteiro, Nazco, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Trujillo – 9

Absent: None

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., Assistant Superintendent for Family and Community Outreach Jerome Dunn, Acting Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Rafael Cortes, Acting Assistant Superintendent for Schools Linda Seniszyn, Supervising General Counsel/Board Attorney Marvin Lehman, Assistant Board Secretary Donald Goncalves, Comptroller William Greene, and members of the public were in attendance.

Supervising General Counsel/Board Attorney Marvin Lehman stated that tonight the Board is meeting for the purpose of reorganization. Mr. Lehman stated that the Education Act requires that at the organization meeting the Board shall elect from its members a President and a Vice President who shall serve for terms of one year. Nominations will be made from among the membership of the Board present. Elections shall be by the majority of the vote present and voting which means this is the majority of the quorum. When nominations are made they do not require a second, however, in order to close nominations there must be a motion to second and then a vote to close nominations for the office of President or Vice President. To conduct the election for President, there will be the election of a President Pro Tem, and the same rules will apply for the voting process in that regard and the election of the President Pro Tem will be conducted by the Board Secretary. President Pro Tem is elected solely for conducting the election of a President.

Mr. Kennedy called the first order of business for nominations for President Pro Tem.

Mr. Trujillo nominated Mr. Nazco for President Pro Tem.

A motion was made by Mr. Trujillo, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that nominations be closed.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Monteiro, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Trujillo – 8

Abstain: Mr. Nazco – 1

Negative: None

The following vote was taken on the election of Mr. Nazco for President Pro Tem.

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Monteiro, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Trujillo – 8

Abstain: Mr. Nazco – 1

Negative: None

Mr. Nazco having received the required number of votes was declared President Pro Tem.

Mr. Nazco thanked the Board for the vote of confidence in electing him President Pro Tem.

President Pro Tem Nazco called for nominations for Board President.

Mr. Trujillo nominated Mr. Monteiro for President.

A motion was made by Mr. Trujillo, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that nominations be closed.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Monteiro, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Trujillo, Nazco – 9

Negative: None

The following vote was taken on the election of Mr. Monteiro for President.

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Trujillo, Nazco – 8

Abstain: Monteiro – 1

Negative: None

Mr. Monteiro having received the required number of votes was declared President.

Mr. Monteiro called for nominations for Vice President.

Mr. Trujillo nominated Mrs. Castillo-Ospina for Vice President.

Mr. Neron nominated Ms. Bathelus for Vice President.

A motion was made by Mr. Trujillo, seconded by Mr. Rodriguez, that nominations be closed.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Trujillo, Monteiro – 9

Negative: None

Mr. Kennedy stated that there are two candidates for Vice President and the vote will be by name.

The following vote was taken on the election of Vice President.

Affirmative for Ms. Bathelus: Ms. Bathelus, Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez – 3

Affirmative for Mrs. Castillo-Ospina: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 6

Negative: None

Mrs. Castillo-Ospina having received the required number of votes was declared Vice President.

Mr. Monteiro congratulated Mrs. Castillo-Ospina and thanked the Board members who are some of the most remarkable, dedicated, and proactive people he has ever worked with. Mr. Monteiro stated that the Board members are all elected by the citizens of the City of Elizabeth and the Board members receive no pay and they don't get any cars or expense accounts. Mr. Monteiro stated that what they do get is a lot of phone calls, all hours of the day and night, they attend numerous meetings that go into the wee hours of the morning, and they attend dozens and dozens of events and functions throughout the year. Mr. Monteiro stated that they do all of this because they love their City, their community, and most importantly they love the children and understand the importance of a really good education. Mr. Monteiro stated that they are the true definition of public servants. Mr. Monteiro welcomed the two new Board members Stanley Neron and Jose Rodriguez. Mr. Monteiro congratulated Carlos Trujillo on being re-elected for his third term on the Elizabeth Board of Education. Mr. Monteiro stated that we take our sworn duty to represent the interest of our children very seriously. Mr. Monteiro stated that our school district has received many accolades throughout the years and has received the support of many to achieve the work of our organization helping our children achieve their full potential. Mr. Monteiro stated that he believes there are a number of reasons that we have been recognized by many of these fine national organizations and why we continue to show extraordinary progress in our schools. Mr. Monteiro stated that our school board has been blessed with an extraordinary community of citizens that have been supportive of the changes that we have made throughout these years. Mr. Monteiro stated that this district is light years ahead of many urban school districts throughout our State and as a Board we are particularly proud of having the opportunity of working with such a fine group of teaching professionals and support team. Mr. Monteiro stated that the team members day in and day out help to create the certain magic that we have here in our schools and that magic is the end result of many of our children attending some of the greatest universities in our nation.

Mr. Monteiro stated that he is also very proud of the most recent change this district has made with the unanimous appointment of our new Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer. Mr. Monteiro stated that Mrs. Hugelmeyer has been with this district her whole teaching career and has been able to carry forward the best of what we have been able to accomplish over the last eight years and is already an accomplished leader in Teaching and Learning.

Mr. Monteiro stated that as Board members we are very fortunate that we have a great community, a great group of children to educate, and a dedicated workforce of administrators and union team members and all of us united for one just and important cause which is educating the future leaders of Elizabeth. Mr. Monteiro stated that is what he thinks about most when looking across the room and the importance of leadership. Mr. Monteiro stated that he is happy that there are so many elected community leaders here tonight because no matter where you stand in this political spectrum he has to believe that you must care deeply about the future of our children because he knows we all do. Mr. Monteiro stated that the hours are many, the discussions are intense, and the passion for excellence and education here in Elizabeth is extremely high. Mr. Monteiro stated that it is a journey that he is certainly committed to and he invited everyone to renew their efforts to the cause. Mr. Monteiro invited our Senator, our Mayor and all our elected officials to please join us on this marvelous journey to bring about excellent experiences and services for our children here in the City of Elizabeth. Mr. Monteiro stated that it is the right thing for Elizabeth and the right thing for all of our children.

The Board went into recess at 8:10 p.m.

The Board reconvened in public at 8:35 p.m. to continue with the meeting and take formal action.

Present: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Monteiro, Nazco, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Trujillo – 9

Absent: None

Mr. Monteiro apologized to the newly elected and re-elected Board members for not having the opportunity to give any remarks or comments and he is taking this opportunity for them to make a statement.

Mr. Neron thanked his family, friends, and citizens of the City of Elizabeth for coming out tonight to support him and the Elizabeth Board of Education. Mr. Neron gave praise to God who is the head of his life and stated that it is an honor to sit before you today as a duly elected Board of Education member and it is not just his victory but a victory for the citizens of this City and the children of this great City. Mr. Neron stated that as you know we cannot do it alone and that he stands on the backs of many precedent predecessors who came before him who fought long and hard to sacrifice and pave the way and the future for education and the future of our children. Mr. Neron stated that he promises to keep the torch lit and pass it on when the time is right. Mr. Neron stated that today is a different day in education, the traditional household has changed, the media has a stronger influence on the lives of our youth, and tough economic times has affected us all especially in education. Mr. Neron stated that our communities are constantly changing so one of the things that is clear is that it is very important that first we seek to understand than be understood as leaders, we must lead by example and understand as leaders we are here to serve and not be served. Mr. Neron stated that to make a difference we must change the atmosphere and instill confidence in our children and never be told as he was told when he was in school that he couldn't go to college. Mr. Neron stated that he stands before you as a living example that it can be done and he wants to be that example to the children here in this district. Mr. Neron stated that if we want to make a change it has to start with us and it has to start with us today. Mr. Neron stated that we have a powerful tool that we can use and Nelson Mandela once said that education is the most powerful tool you can use to change the world. Mr. Neron stated let's use it and let's start today. Mr. Neron thanked everyone for their support during the school board election as the seventh elected Haitian official in the State of New Jersey and stated that he looks forward to working with all the teachers, administrators and the children here in the district.

Mr. Monteiro thanked Mr. Neron for his comments.

Mr. Rodriguez thanked the elected officials that were here and his family and friends and stated that he couldn't do it without them and it has been a long, long journey, lots of ups, lots of downs but it was well worth it. Mr. Rodriguez stated that he ran for this position three times and finally he is here. Mr. Rodriguez stated that it is very encouraging to see how many people supported them and how passionate they were to try to get them up here to this Board of Education. Mr. Rodriguez stated that there is a lot of work to be done and thanked his colleagues and that they will have to be working together to help over 23,000 students. Mr. Rodriguez stated that one out of every five people that live in Elizabeth goes to school so we are charged to educate them. Mr. Rodriguez stated that for some of these children the only time that they eat is when they come to school and the only time that they feel safe is when they are here. Mr. Rodriguez stated that school has no longer just become about educating them and we've become almost parents, second parents, maybe the only parents that they have so it is extremely important in what we do day to day. Mr. Rodriguez thanked everyone for their support and stated that he hopes to see this room just as full as it was tonight hopefully for every Board meeting because without our public, without all of you, we really can't do much here in the City.

Mr. Monteiro thanked Mr. Rodriguez for his comments.

Mr. Trujillo thanked God for giving him the opportunity and stated that he is not an overly religious person but he does have faith that everything that goes on is way beyond our hands. Mr. Trujillo stated that we have to do our part and there is someone who guides us, a higher being. Mr. Trujillo thanked his wife and stated that, as Mr. Monteiro commented earlier, we don't get paid, we don't get a car, we do get the phone calls. Mr. Trujillo thanked his wife for putting up with him because she knows

he does this with a lot of passion and the Board members spend a lot of time doing this. Mr. Trujillo stated that he has two children who go to our school system and he and his wife are raising them here in the City of Elizabeth and that is why he does this. Mr. Trujillo stated that he believes that all children deserve a great education. Mr. Trujillo stated that he has had the opportunity over his first two terms to meet some excellent people and people who have taken the vocation of education and decided to become educators and they do an extraordinary job. Mr. Trujillo stated that education is a calling, it's not for everyone and not everyone can be an educator. Mr. Trujillo stated that the teachers and administrators touch children's lives, countless lives, and sometimes they don't notice how many lives they actually touch. Mr. Trujillo stated that he can remember every teacher that he ever had and there is something special about each teacher that he can remember. Mr. Trujillo stated that his children have that same experience as they go through school. Mr. Trujillo stated that there are so many special people that make the successes that we have had in this district possible all the way from the administration down to the kindergarten and pre-k classrooms, the food service workers, security guards, and there are so many people that make the magic happen. Mr. Trujillo stated that without them we wouldn't have 23,000 students in uniforms, we wouldn't have been able to open all these schools and we wouldn't have all the programs like extended day. Mr. Trujillo stated there are so many things that we do because the teachers are dedicated and love our children. Mr. Trujillo stated that although he has the honor of sitting here and holding the office of school board member, the truth is all the work and the kudos goes to the people who everyday leave their home and to whom we entrust our children everyday. Mr. Trujillo stated that everyday we send our children to school knowing that at the end of the day they are going to come back better people, more complete citizens. Mr. Trujillo stated that eventually throughout their journey of education, as Mr. Neron said, our job here is to make sure they are prepared for post-secondary education so they continue to follow their dreams. Mr. Trujillo stated that many of their dreams are going to be educators as we've seen throughout the district as we saw with former Superintendent Pablo Munoz and our current Superintendent. Mr. Trujillo stated that this is just the way it happens that sometimes they come back to the district and give back and it's a beautiful thing. Mr. Trujillo stated that he is in awe that the citizens of the City of Elizabeth have entrusted him for a third term and the overwhelming support is very humbling. Mr. Trujillo stated that he pledges to continue to work as hard as he can, that he does not see color he sees people, he doesn't see socioeconomics he sees people, he sees God's children in all of us. Mr. Trujillo stated that he believes if he gives 110% everyday he will receive 100% everyday and together we can make a difference. Mr. Trujillo stated that this room was full tonight and it reminds him that so many people are here either to support him or the two newly elected members of this Board. Mr. Trujillo challenged them to let us work together because if we can bring this room together the way we did tonight to celebrate our elections imagine if we can just get them to continue to believe in us and move this district forward. Mr. Trujillo stated that the sky is the limit and he is excited for a third term.

Mr. Monteiro thanked Mr. Trujillo for his comments.

Mr. Monteiro congratulated and welcomed them on behalf of the entire Board and stated that he wanted to echo what Mr. Trujillo said that we need to work together for all the children here in the City of Elizabeth.

Rules of Governance

A motion was made by Mr. Perreira, seconded by Mr. González, that the existing Rules of Governance be adopted.

Ms. Bathelus asked if we have a copy of the Rules of Governance that was provided to us.

Mr. Kennedy responded that the Rules are policies and regulations and they are posted on our website.

Ms. Bathelus asked if the two newly elected members received a copy.

Mr. Kennedy explained that we don't make paper copies anymore and they are available by policy number on our website.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 6

Abstain: Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez – 2

Negative: Ms. Bathelus – 1

Mr. Perreira asked if the new members want to have a copy of them could they be made for them. Mr. Perreira stated that the 9000 series are the rules of governance.

Mr. Monteiro explained that all of the policies are on the website.

Union County Educational Services Commission Representative

A motion was made by Mr. González, seconded by Mr. Nazco, that Mrs. Castillo-Ospina represents the Board on the Union County Educational Services Commission.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Trujillo, Monteiro – 9

Negative: None

Mr. Monteiro stated that he would be appointing Board members to represent the Board at the New Jersey School Boards Association, Urban School Boards Association, Union County School Boards Association and Board committees.

Resolution – Official Results of School Board Election

A motion was made by Mr. González, seconded by Ms. Bathelus, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Trujillo, Monteiro – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Official Media Services

A motion was made by Mr. González, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that the resolution be adopted.

Ms. Bathelus stated that she would like to amend the resolution to make Worrall Community Newspaper of Union County Local Source be the designated official paper of the Elizabeth Board of Education and add that the Star Ledger be the designated official newspaper. Ms. Bathelus stated that it is her understanding that the one that we have now is distributed weekly and not throughout the City of Elizabeth and is only done periodically. Ms. Bathelus asked Mr. Lehman if it is supposed to be done weekly.

Mr. Lehman responded that it is up to the Board to decide if they want to change it.

Mr. Kennedy responded that we have certifications from the Worrall Community Newspaper that they do distribute in the City of Elizabeth.

Ms. Bathelus stated that she has never received something from that newspaper.

Mr. Monteiro stated that he has a subscription from them.

Mr. Kennedy stated that you can subscribe to the paper and it is sold in the City of Elizabeth. Mr. Kennedy explained that it has been challenged before and we have approval from the Union County Superintendent's Office. Mr. Kennedy stated that it is a valid newspaper in the City of Elizabeth.

Ms. Bathelus asked if he knows where it is distributed.

Mr. Kennedy responded that it is in stores in the City of Elizabeth.

Mr. Trujillo asked if there is a cost savings by using the Local Source than the Star Ledger.

Mr. Kennedy responded that there is a significant cost savings in doing our legal advertisements in the Worrall Community Newspaper as opposed to the Star Ledger.

Mr. Trujillo stated that apart from using the newspaper we also use other media such as our website.

Mr. Kennedy responded that we also distribute the legal notices to City Hall just as we read in our opening statements.

Mr. Trujillo stated that there are other ways of the public being informed of meetings that are occurring and actually saving the district money.

Mr. Monteiro asked Mr. Lehman for the record if the Worrall Community Newspaper is a weekly newspaper that has been certified.

Mr. Lehman responded yes.

Ms. Bathelus asked Mr. Kennedy to provide the cost savings of both.

Mr. Kennedy responded that he would provide it.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that he understands that there would be a cost savings but some of our community does not have access at home at least to the internet. Mr. Rodriguez asked if it would be possible spending a little bit more money but being able to reach out and be more transparent to the community by adding the Star Ledger also. Mr. Rodriguez stated that he understands that we would be spending more of the taxpayers' dollars but at least reaching more because even though this Community Newspaper is certified he is in agreement with Ms. Bathelus that he has never seen this newspaper but that really isn't the point and he does believe that at least Star Ledger or something that is more local or at least more visible within Elizabeth would be more appropriate.

Mr. Monteiro stated that it is a subjective opinion of what people read.

Mr. Rodriguez asked if we could table this until we receive the cost savings.

Mr. Trujillo stated that there was a motion to move it the way it is and a second.

Ms. Bathelus stated that she amends the motion to delete the Worrall Community Newspaper and add the Star Ledger as the primary.

Mr. Lehman stated that there is a motion pending that is on the table right now and you should not be able to amend it without the consent of the maker of the motion.

Ms. Bathelus asked who made the motion.

Mr. Kennedy responded that the original resolution was moved by Mr. González and seconded by Mr. Perreira.

Ms. Bathelus stated that Mr. Lehman said that the person who made the motion can allow me to amend the motion.

Mr. Lehman added if he so desires.

Mr. González stated that the motion stands as it is.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo (negative- Star Ledger), Monteiro – 6

Abstain: Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez – 2

Negative: Ms. Bathelus –1

Resolution – Designating Depositories for School Funds

A motion was made by Mr. Trujillo, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 6

Abstain: Ms. Bathelus, Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez – 3

Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Special Counsels

A motion was made by Mr. Trujillo, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that the resolution be adopted.

Ms. Bathelus asked if is there a way that we can get a listing of what services each of these attorneys or special counsel provide to the Board.

Mr. Monteiro asked if she would like to see the RFP proposals that are available in Mr. Kennedy's office.

Ms. Bathelus responded correct.

Mr. Kennedy explained the RFP process and stated that the attorneys listed on this resolution are the results of the recommendation of the committee.

Ms. Bathelus asked if she can have a copy of that because she wants to know what services each provides.

Mr. Kennedy stated that there is a requirement for professional services we have to post in the newspaper showing the name of the firm, the amount we are paying them, and the services provided.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 6

Abstain: Ms. Bathelus, Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez – 3

Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Insurance Consultant

A motion was made by Mr. González, seconded by Mr. Trujillo, that the resolution be adopted.

Mr. Trujillo asked if this is the same firm that we have been using.

Mr. Monteiro responded that it is the same firm.

Mr. Trujillo stated that he is extremely happy that they have the opportunity to work with us again because they have saved us millions of dollars over the years. Mr. Trujillo stated that we have an obligation by contract to provide benefits for our employees and the cost changes every year. Mr. Trujillo stated that this consultant has saved us millions and allowed us to keep teachers in the classroom. Mr. Trujillo urged his colleagues to vote in the affirmative to continue to use this firm.

Mr. Monteiro stated that at the last Finance Committee meeting when the negotiations were going on between the pharmaceutical companies and this consultant that the savings was in the proximity of between \$300,000 to \$400,000.

Mr. Kennedy responded that the cost savings was \$600,000.

Mr. Rodriguez asked if the faculty and staff have access to the insurance consultants and if they are able to speak with them if they have any issues in terms of paying premiums.

Mr. Monteiro explained the services of the insurance consultant and that he finds proposals equal or better than what we currently have. Mr. Monteiro stated that the employees do not meet with them.

Mr. Trujillo stated that they are part of a collective bargaining unit that bargains on their behalf and we agree on the terms of that contract and our obligation as a Board is to provide them the services we agreed to in the contract. Mr. Trujillo stated that it is our obligation on the other end that we make sure that we get the benefits at the best cost possible and that is what we have been able to do through this consultant. Mr. Trujillo stated that as Mr. Kennedy said in one line and there are several lines in insurance and prescription is one of them we were able to save over \$600,000. and that is money that goes right back in the classroom and allows us to keep our teachers in the classroom.

Mr. Monteiro stated that if you look at what other municipalities or other boards of education do particularly here in Union County many only serve by brokers only. Mr. Monteiro stated that what this does is add another layer and level of actually being competitive and not just providing one product and one particular cost. Mr. Monteiro stated that Gary Koppele from ICA has done an incredible job over the last several years.

Mr. Kennedy stated that it is not only health but also our commercial liability package for our buildings. Mr. Kennedy stated that one thing that is unique about this situation is that this is the fee we pay him to do the work of negotiating and getting the best price so he is not tied to any insurance company on a broker percentage basis.

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 7

Abstain: Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez – 2

Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Auditor

A motion was made by Mr. Perreira, seconded by Mr. Trujillo, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo – 5

Abstain: Ms. Bathelus, Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez, Monteiro – 4

Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Chief Medical Inspector

A motion was made by Mr. González, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Monteiro – 5

Abstain: Ms. Bathelus, Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez – 3

Negative: Mr. Trujillo – 1

Resolution – Appointment of Medical Inspectors

A motion was made by Mr. González, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo (negative-Guillermo Munoz), Monteiro – 6

Abstain: Messrs. Bathelus, Neron, Rodriguez – 3

Negative: None

Resolution – Treasurer of School Monies

A motion was made by Mr. González, seconded by Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 6

Abstain: Ms. Bathelus, Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez – 3

Negative: None

Resolution – Schedule of Meetings

A motion was made by Mr. Perreira, seconded by Mr. González, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Trujillo, Monteiro – 9

Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Communication Consultant

A motion was made by Mr. Perreira, seconded by Mr. Trujillo, that the resolution be adopted.

Mr. Neron asked if there is a cost.

Mr. Kennedy responded that his proposal came in at \$175. per hour.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Perreira, Trujillo – 5

Abstain: Ms. Bathelus, Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez, Monteiro – 4

Negative: None

Mr. Monteiro stated that Olga Hugelmeyer was appointed Superintendent of Schools who is going to serve this district for the next four years.

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer stated that she is honored and humbled to serve the students, families, team members, community and tonight most especially she is honored to serve our Elizabeth Board of Education. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that her roots run deep in Elizabeth and her love and passion for educating our children go even deeper. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she is the story of an Elizabeth student who imaged the possibilities and she is just one of many stories of what can possibly happen in education and she grew up in Elizabeth and graduated from Elizabeth High School. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she understood early on that education was the great equalizer as she witnessed how Elizabeth teachers beginning with her mother who taught for over twenty years in Elizabeth was able to open the doors of opportunity for students. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the Elizabeth teachers showed her the nobility of her profession and the great joy both given and received when knowledge is shared and futures are planned. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she consciously and deliberately made a decision to return to Elizabeth to teach and began her career at Peterstown School No. 3. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she has worked in education for close to twenty wonderful years and the last few years having served as the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she owes a debt of gratitude to our school board who offered her the opportunity to serve as the Superintendent and voted unanimously on her appointment in December. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that our school board is committed to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and they have defined clear goals toward that vision. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that our board is accountability driven and focused on policies to improve student achievement. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she believes this evening marks the beginning of a wonderful opportunity for all of us to join together in an effort to help our children achieve their dreams much the way this board has supported her.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that in her experience over the years in Elizabeth she would have to say that our board is best characterized as having strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn and of our school system and its ability to teach all children at high levels. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the support of this board has translated into giving her the opportunity to select many of the team members who will be part of this cabinet as they move together to do the hard work for our schools throughout the City of Elizabeth. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that Assistant Superintendents Jerome Dunn, Linda Seniszyn, and Rafael Cortes will be working with school level professional learning communities in the coming year and are charged with working with teachers and administrators to examine practice and student learning outcomes in these areas. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that we are in the process of putting into place a plan that articulates our next level of work for the next five years.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that as a Superintendent she seeks to include all as a vital resource and a guiding voice as together we write the next chapter of the Elizabeth Public Schools. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that vision for Elizabeth Public Schools of becoming the nation's best pulls us toward our future and it is where we want to be five years hence and it is through the dedication and hard work of all of our team members that we help to ensure that our students graduate from our high schools college and career ready. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that when the vision pulls us toward our future then the mission is our driver and very succinctly our mission is to ensure that our schools and our system are pursuing high expectations and supporting academic excellence and equity for all of our children. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that in education today a culture of shared responsibility and leadership is essential and fostering learning communities for teachers and principals individually and collaboratively continues to reflect on and improve their practice. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that developing knowledgeable and inspired leadership that is relentlessly focused on aligning all functions toward the goal of improving classroom instruction is the key to raising achievement while closing the achievement gap. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that it is our job and we will do whatever it takes and what this says is that each of us matters in the district's ability to complete the mission. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the work that we do our individual

and collectively matters in student success and the focus for our school district revolves around the centrality of the classroom, the instructional core where teacher, student, and content meet. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that we recognize that to look at and improve the instructional core has to be done collaboratively.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the next chapter of the Elizabeth Public Schools will be written together with our Elizabeth Board of Education members and the community at large. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that she envisions a culture of our daily work that includes collaboration, conversations, and reflection. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that we will together define the possibilities for student learning and we will strive to ensure that the next generation of Elizabeth leaders in education and government come from the Elizabeth Public Schools. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that together we will work to ensure that every child achieves excellence.

Mr. Trujillo thanked the Superintendent for having the courage to accept the position. Mr. Trujillo stated that our former Superintendent, Pablo Munoz, decided that his career path was going to lead him to another district and after we had done so much good work with him and really turned this district around and we're heading in the right direction and the children are starting to benefit from the education they deserve. Mr. Trujillo stated that we found ourselves looking at a crossroads of looking for continuity, we want to continue that success, and we didn't have to look far. Mr. Trujillo stated that we know Olga's heart is in the right place, she enjoys being here, and she understands the challenges. Mr. Trujillo stated that she was part of all the change and right there with Mr. Munoz and she has the respect of her colleagues and the ability to lead this district and to continue all the success and continue the progress that we have made here in this district. Mr. Trujillo stated that he is honored to be able to have another three years to work by her side and he pledged to support her ideas and her hard work and he hopes to have much continued success throughout the years. Mr. Trujillo thanked Superintendent Olga Hugelmeyer for accepting the challenge.

Mr. González stated that as senior member of the Board he is happy that Olga accepted the challenge to lead the district. Mr. González stated that he has worked with Olga for the last eight years and knows the caliber of the person she is and will be bringing all this great work and staff that she chose to get us where we are today. Mr. González welcomed Olga and on behalf of the Board to support her ideas and changes that she would like to implement to get us further. Mr. González stated that he knows she will do a fantastic job and he looks forward to working together and moving this district even further ahead.

Mr. Nazco stated that he has had the pleasure of working with Olga for about seven years. Mr. Nazco stated that the Board members and those in administration and in the schools know her very well but for those in the community who don't know her or haven't gotten a chance to know her she is a tireless worker who is eternally dedicated to the education of our children here in Elizabeth. Mr. Nazco stated that he couldn't think of a better replacement for Mr. Munoz and under her leadership we are going to be able to take this school district to the next level and really become one of the best school districts not only in New Jersey but in America. Mr. Nazco wished Olga good luck and stated that the Board members support her.

Mrs. Castillo-Ospina thanked everyone for attending tonight and it is a very special night here at the Board. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina stated that everyone's support is needed for our new Superintendent. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina stated that she has been in education for twenty years and education is the best thing we can give our children. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina stated that education can move them ahead and in the Elizabeth Public Schools we have the tools, we have the people, we have the administrators to do it. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina stated that she is pleased to say that there have been different countries in South America who have visited us and they tried to get us to teach them the strategies of what we used so they could mold the school systems in South America. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina stated that she is very proud to have

Mrs. Hugelmeyer continue the work along with the staff and that it is team work with all of us working together. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina stated that she is here to support the Board one hundred percent.

Mr. Perreira thanked everyone for being here tonight and congratulated the new Board members and Mr. Trujillo for being elected to his third term. Mr. Perreira congratulated Mrs. Hugelmeyer and thanked her for accepting such a task. Mr. Perreira stated that you have to have courage to not only want this position but it requires courage to take on this type of level of task and duties that she has accepted. Mr. Perreira stated that he is very excited to see what she is going to bring to the table and that we have done a lot of great work. Mr. Perreira stated that he has visited other districts across the area and there is nothing that compares between services rendered, facilities, technology, and so many things that our children get that they don't have anywhere else. Mr. Perreira stated that we still have a lot of challenges to overcome and he looks forward to seeing what Olga and her staff present to us as a roadmap. Mr. Perreira congratulated Olga and wished her good luck.

Mr. Rodriguez congratulated Mrs. Hugelmeyer and stated that it was too bad that he was not able to actually vote on her appointment but he does love that she is from the district, went to school here so that she has that passion. Mr. Rodriguez stated that he knows that matters a lot that it is not just a job but something that she loves to do. Mr. Rodriguez stated that he has always said that this district was a good district and he cannot wait to move it from good to great and even better. Mr. Rodriguez stated that we all know that we have some challenges and he can't wait to get to work on those and fixing those issues and making this a great district. Mr. Rodriguez congratulated Mrs. Hugelmeyer on being our Chief School Administrator.

Mr. Monteiro stated that he has had the pleasure over the years of serving on the Elizabeth Board of Education and that they have been fortunate and blessed over the years in this district to have such an incredible amount of talent and an extraordinary group of administrators here in this room and it is incredible how hard they work day in and day out. Mr. Monteiro stated that over the years a lot has been written and a lot has been said about the Elizabeth Board of Education and a lot of times he doesn't care. Mr. Monteiro stated that what he does care about really happens here in our district, he cares about the truth, and he cares about the hard work that Olga and her team do day in and day out to serve this district. Mr. Monteiro stated that his hat goes off to these people who work so hard and stated that the passion and the fire that Olga has and the dedication and the love of education is so obvious to those who come in contact with Olga as it was to Pablo and as it is to all of you. Mr. Monteiro stated that it doesn't just stop here with our administrators and this talent of people and that it goes so far as our secretaries, our custodians, our food service workers, our security and they work hard. Mr. Monteiro stated that he makes it a point every time he visits a school to step into a kitchen because people don't know how hard they work serving 800 to 1,000 children and how little pay some of these people make working a few hours. Mr. Monteiro stated that he has appreciation having worked in both the private sector and public sector and we don't appreciate them enough. Mr. Monteiro stated that Mr. Munoz created a system that turned this system around and it is like turning a cruise ship around and put this district going in the right direction. Mr. Monteiro stated that Olga is a different Superintendent and rightfully so and Olga is a team builder and will pick up this ball and we are going to run it into the end zone because our work is not done here. Mr. Monteiro challenged the new Board members to work together and that they may have their differences and we may not always agree and we are not supposed to and that is what a democracy is but we all do it for the right reasons to serve this community, the community that he was born and raised in and loves to this day. Mr. Monteiro congratulated Olga and stated that he looks forward to working with Olga and we know great things are ahead for this district and remarkable things ahead with this team she has assembled.

Mr. Monteiro presented the following public participation statement.

“At this time, the microphones are open for public comment to those who have signed in prior to this session. I shall call individuals to the microphones based on the order of the sign-in. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three minutes in duration. The total time of public comment shall be limited to sixty minutes. No individual is able to yield their time to another individual. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually. The following rules for public participants shall apply: time limits will be strictly enforced, no personal attacks on individuals, no vulgar or indecent language, a person may address the Board no more than once during a single meeting, speakers should refrain from naming individuals, and comments or questions posed during public participation will not be debated. As a reminder, this is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public.”

Mr. Monteiro called upon the first public participant, Maria Echavarria, to address the Board.

Maria Echavarria, 321 Westfield Avenue, congratulated the two new Board members and Superintendent. Mrs. Echavarria stated that maybe something can be done in April for Autism Awareness Month.

Since there were no citizens signed in to address the Board, Mr. Monteiro declared this portion of the public meeting closed.

Mr. Monteiro asked if there was any old business to discuss. Since there was no old business to discuss Mr. Monteiro asked if there was any new business to discuss.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that he has a question and he doesn't want this to be a reflection on Mrs. Hugelmeyer. Mr. Rodriguez stated that we had an Interim Superintendent and asked if we had a candidate search.

Mr. Monteiro stated that we did and have been working with the Panasonic Foundation.

Mr. Rodriguez asked how many candidates were there for the Superintendent position.

Mr. Monteiro stated that we did not conduct a national search and explained that the Educational Management Committee discussed the candidates we had right here in our district. Mr. Monteiro stated that he is a big believer in the products that are home grown. Mr. Monteiro stated that we have incredible talent right here in our schools and we didn't have to go far to look for what we have right here in house.

Mr. Rodriguez asked if there was only one candidate for the position.

Mr. Monteiro stated that candidates were discussed.

Mr. Rodriguez asked how many applicants were there for the position.

Mr. González stated that the main duty of the Board is to appoint a Superintendent. Mr. González stated that the Panasonic Foundation guided the Board and it's our duty and we can select whoever we feel is going to lead the district, we can do a search if want, we can keep someone interim for a certain amount of time and we have the power and duty to select the next leader. Mr. González stated that as Mr. Monteiro said we didn't have to look far because we knew that we had the talent right here so why go through the struggle and expense when it is right here.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that he agrees and again this is not at all a comment on what type of job Mrs. Hugelmeyer will do. Mr. Rodriguez stated that he is absolutely sure she will do an excellent job and would have loved the opportunity to vote for her. Mr. Rodriguez stated that he is questioning the process in terms of was there a candidate search and that he knows you don't have to but one of the major roles we have is to pick a Chief School Administrator. Mr. Rodriguez stated that he was just wondering and we didn't advertise and there were no candidates.

Mr. Trujillo stated that as he recalls we consulted with the Panasonic Foundation who we have a ten year contract with and they came in and they are very knowledgeable in this field and they had suggested to us the various options. Mr. Trujillo stated that through the Education Management Committee the option was to appoint Interim and giving it further thought with the recommendation and consultation of the Panasonic Foundation we felt there was no need to search because there was an agreement that Olga was the right fit. Mr. Trujillo stated that we found there was no need to interview any further because we had our Superintendent right before us and that puts us far ahead of a lot of other districts. Mr. Trujillo stated that if you know Mr. Munoz's history he was courted for a long time by a head hunter to go and we didn't want to have that happen to us and we knew we had a very capable woman within the district right in our midst and these opportunities don't come often so we had to either pull the trigger or we were putting ourselves in the position where we might actually lose Olga Hugelmeyer to another district. Mr. Trujillo stated that good Superintendents are in demand, quality educators are in demand, and in Elizabeth we want the brightest and the best and sometimes that means looking right under our noses, we have them right here. Mr. Trujillo stated that he understands that Mr. Rodriguez is concerned about the process but we are very fortunate to be able just to look right here and have the leader that we can all agree on is the right person.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that he had even asked his Superintendent about her and they had met and he was really happy and everything he has heard about her is great and he is excited to work with her. Mr. Rodriguez stated that this is not about her at all and that it is about the process and he found it kind of shocking that there was no external search.

Mr. Monteiro stated that he wanted to clarify when Mr. Rodriguez said there was no search. Mr. Monteiro stated that there was no search nationally and when we say there was no search that is sort of being untruthful. Mr. Monteiro stated that there was a great deal of discussion and most of it takes place behind closed doors in private session with our Educational Management Team and is by far the single, biggest decision a School Board makes to select the school Superintendent. Mr. Monteiro stated that the Superintendent then selects her team of Assistant Superintendents and administrators. Mr. Monteiro stated that the selection of Superintendent is the line where governance ends and the Superintendent manages the district. Mr. Monteiro stated that there was a lot of discussion as even a search in-house went on and a lot of names were spoken about and discussed and we have an incredible pool of people right here in our district. Mr. Monteiro stated that he is a big believer in being home grown, born and raised in Elizabeth, and Olga came to this City when she was three and attended schools here in Elizabeth as Pablo did. Mr. Monteiro state that we are fortunate enough to have someone come back to the City where they were raised and educated and come back and want to serve in this capacity in our City and who knows our City better than those born and raised here. Mr. Monteiro stated that he personally would have been against an outside search unless that would have been the last recourse. Mr. Monteiro stated that once you get to know the administrators throughout the district from principals on down to supervisors and directors, they are going to be quite impressed with the people we have right here in Elizabeth School District and we couldn't be any prouder. Mr. Monteiro stated that it wasn't really a hard choice and as we said in the beginning it was a unanimous decision and he doesn't think anyone would not recognize how hard Olga has worked over the years with Pablo and this team and we are incredibly fortunate and blessed to have this extraordinary leader serve us right now. Mr. Monteiro stated that there

was a great deal of discussion, thought, and process and then Olga was appointed as Acting, and then as Interim and she didn't get appointed the next day after Pablo left.

Mr. González stated that the next time the Panasonic Foundation is here and they are here on a monthly basis that maybe they can spend a little bit of time with them to see the kind of work they did when they briefed them and guided them on the search for the Superintendent.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that he would have liked to have seen a search and at least see if there were any candidates that at least would have expressed interest.

Mr. Monteiro stated that for the record and for the two new Board members and those at home this Board is completely transparent and there is nothing that they shouldn't be able to ask for and see through Mr. Kennedy's office if it is management business or through the Legal Department and they can have his cell phone number to call at any time or visit him at his office as so many others do. Mr. Monteiro stated that it is important that there should be total and full transparency and he does not want them to feel or believe that something may go on.

Mr. Perreira stated that one of his biggest issues when Mr. Munoz decided to leave the district and pursue a career in a different district was an eye-opener because it was something they went through in training with CRSS and the Broad Foundation. Mr. Perreira stated that there were issues that we saw other districts having and we just had the luck to having someone run our district for eight years and with the cooperation of the Board was able to put the district where it is today and the fact he left created a big void. Mr. Perreira stated that when he looked at that situation he realized we had a person here in the district that held possibly if not second to the Superintendent it was the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning and she was basically responsible for most of the decisions in regards to curriculum and anything that is being presented to students across the district whether it be technology or anything else. Mr. Perreira stated that personally he was against changing the course because when you bring someone new from outside they are not going to see the view or the mission the way that someone that has been here for twenty years views it and you do not want to change the course of direction and the way the district is going right now. Mr. Perreira stated that he is very happy the way the district is going right now and we have a lot of work but he is sure we are in the right direction and he didn't see any need to go any other reason to go any further when Olga was the right person.

On a motion by Mr. Nazco, seconded by Mr. Perreira, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. González, Nazco, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Trujillo, Monteiro – 9

Negative: None

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