

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

October 17, 2014
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called on October 17, 2014 at 6:00 p.m., in the Multi Purpose Room, Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education, 544 Pennsylvania Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Board Vice President Elcy Castillo-Ospina presented the following statement at 6:40 p.m.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. This is a special meeting of the Board of Education. Pursuant to New Jersey Statutes and the rules adopted by the Board of Education, notice of this meeting was sent to The Star Ledger and Cablevision of Elizabeth on Tuesday, October 14, 2014. In addition, this notice is posted on the Bulletin Board in the lobby of 500 North Broad Street, and pursuant to this act, a copy has been filed with the City Clerk of Elizabeth.”

“I wish to extend a warm welcome to everyone present to this October 17, 2014 meeting of the Board of Education. We are here to govern, provide management oversight, and make policy for the district. The Superintendent manages the district. This is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public.”

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

“There will be a public portion for citizens to address the board. Participants for the public portion must sign in 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, Messrs. Fajardo, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez,
Mrs. Castillo-Ospina – 6

Absent: Messrs. González, Trujillo, Monteiro – 3

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

Dr. William A. Greene gave the invocation.
Pledge of Allegiance
Pledge of Ethics

Resolution – New Elementary School No. 22 Submission of Street Vacation to NJ Schools Development Authority

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

Mr. Fajardo stated that it is important that this resolution be read into the record so the public here and at home understands the meaning of this resolution and how important it is. Mr. Fajardo read the resolution.

Mr. Fajardo commented that we are going to be building another new school in the City of Elizabeth to educate 880 students and is going to be located right behind School No. 22 in the field that exists there now. Mr. Fajardo stated that we expect construction on the brand new school will start in the next four or five months if not sooner. Mr. Fajardo stated that what has just occurred is that by moving this resolution and second the Board is going to take action. Mr. Fajardo stated that City Council just approved on Tuesday, October 14th the vacation of a street that runs through the middle of the field. Mr. Fajardo stated that the street never existed but only existed on paper so City Council had to take action in order to vacate a street. Mr. Fajardo stated that the street was there only on paper but was never there but it did not allow us to go ahead with the construction of a school because it was a street on paper and had to be vacated. Mr. Fajardo thanked City Council for taking the action that it took because the State of New Jersey will be providing to the City of Elizabeth another \$45 million plus to build another brand new school. Mr. Fajardo stated that what this means is that our students will have further opportunity to get a great education and what it means to this City is that this City will continue to be a shining star at the vanguard of education in the State of New Jersey and in the country. Mr. Fajardo stated that people who live in this area and particularly people who live in the City of Elizabeth will be hired to teach our own children and they will have good jobs so they can pay their mortgages and have a good living in this wonderful City of Elizabeth. Mr. Fajardo stated that this is a great opportunity for the district, for the children, and for our City that another brand new school is going to be built.

Mr. Fajardo stated that lastly he would like to say that we also have a high school under construction and that will be seventeen new schools including the parochial schools that have been closed down. Mr. Fajardo stated that we opened School Nos. 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 50, 51, 52, new Academic High School and New School No. 22 under construction, St. Adalbert's, St. Vladimir's, St. Hedwig's, Blessed Sacrament, St. Catherine's, and St. Patrick's. Mr. Fajardo asked where else in the State of New Jersey and for that matter, where else in the country, has such progress been done. Mr. Fajardo stated that it is a great thing that we are continuing the progress in the City of Elizabeth for our children. Mr. Fajardo stated that no wonder why we are becoming one of the best districts not just in the State of New Jersey but in the country.

Mrs. Castillo-Ospina thanked Mr. Fajardo for his kind words and stated that the Elizabeth Public Schools is moving ahead and we should be proud. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina stated that we have an excellent Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, staff, teachers, custodians, security, and everyone who works for the Board preparing everything for our students' education. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina stated that they should be proud to live in a City like Elizabeth.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Messrs. Fajardo, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina – 6

Negative: None

Mr. Rodriguez thanked City Council and stated that when this building opens it will be our 37th school in the district.

Board Vice President Castillo-Ospina 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.”

Mrs. Castillo-Ospina called twice upon the first public participant, Enrique Maseda, to address the Board. Mr. Maseda did not come forward.

Mrs. Castillo-Ospina called twice upon the next public participant, Maria Vindas, to address the Board. Ms. Vindas did not come forward.

Since there were no other citizens signed in to address the Board, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina declared this portion of the public meeting closed.

Mr. Fajardo stated that he would like the public to know and understand the importance of this meeting because we have a Board of Education meeting on Thursday of next week. Mr. Fajardo stated that we finally got approval from City Council for allowing us to go ahead. Mr. Fajardo stated that we thank City Council, as he did when he spoke earlier, for approving the change of the street so we can move forward with the construction of the new school. Mr. Fajardo stated that if we wait another week then it's another week that we lose and actually we had a lot of pressure to get this done within a month, if not the monies would have gone away. Mr. Fajardo stated that City Council approved this and we thank them again.

Mr. Fajardo stated that with all the new schools that we built this is the type of thing that we did. Mr. Fajardo stated that we didn't wait for a meeting a month away or three weeks away. Mr. Fajardo stated that we took action immediately and we met at six o'clock in the morning, seven o'clock in the morning, to make sure that we had a courier to go to Trenton that day to carry the budget and documents. Mr. Fajardo stated that when they came back with any changes that needed to be made or any Board action that needed to take place we took immediate action. Mr. Fajardo stated that as a result that is one of the reasons why we were able to take advantage of the original \$8 billion that was available to the State of New Jersey. Mr. Fajardo stated that we just didn't stay back, sit back and wait for the next meeting. Mr. Fajardo stated that this Board of Education took action and he was very blessed to be part of that and we understood the process. Mr. Fajardo stated that is why this meeting was called by the President of the Board because he understood the expediency to make sure that this got to Trenton on Monday morning. Mr. Fajardo stated that this is the reason why we are having a special meeting tonight. Mr. Fajardo stated that we don't have to wait another week to get our children the necessary school that they deserve to continue the progress in our schools.

On a motion by Mr. Perreira, seconded by Mr. Rodriguez, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Messrs. Fajardo, Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina – 6

Negative: None

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