

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

October 26, 2019
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called on October 26, 2019 at 8:00 a.m., in the iLeap Center at John E. Dwyer Technology Academy, 123 Pearl Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Board President Stephanie Pestana presented the following statement at 8:25 a.m.

“Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning. 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 October 23, 2019. 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 26, 2019 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 morning 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 may sign in up 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 (arr. 10:15 a.m.), Chevres, Hernandez, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega (arr. 11:50 a.m.), Mr. Neron (arr. 11:00 a.m.), Mrs. Pestana – 8
Absent: Ms. Bathelus – 1

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., and members of the public were in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Board President Stephanie Pestana presented the following public participation statement.

“At this time, the microphones are open for public comment to those who have signed in. 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. Pestana called upon the first public participant, Monica Godoy, to address the Board.

Monica Godoy, 328 Centre Street, spoke about a problem with her daughter at school.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer requested the parent provide her contact information.

Mrs. Pestana thanked her for her comments and called upon the next public participant, Christina Moreira, to address the Board.

Christina Moreira, 805 Gebhardt Avenue, stated that she advocates on behalf of parents, community, and even some teachers and the Board does not listen to them.

Mrs. Pestana thanked her for her comments and called upon the next public participant, Maria Lorenz, to address the Board.

Maria Lorenz, 103 Murray Street, spoke about policies and SEPTA.

Mrs. Pestana thanked her for her comments and called upon the next public participant, Jonathan Gibson, to address the Board.

Jonathan Gibson, resident, spoke about the problems of a special needs child.

Mrs. Pestana thanked him for his comments and called upon the next public participant, Kason Little, to address the Board.

Kason Little, 225 S. Seventh Street, spoke about the problem with the child.

Mrs. Pestana thanked him for his comments. Since there were no other public participants, Mrs. Pestana closed the public portion of the meeting.

Mrs. Pestana called for a ten minute recess.

Mrs. Hernandez excused herself from the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

The Board reconvened in public session.

Mrs. Pestana welcomed Consultants Dr. Adrienne Bailey and Gail Davis who will be facilitating our governance retreat.

Dr. Adrienne Bailey welcomed everyone and acknowledged the availability of the Board members and staff today for the retreat. Dr. Bailey commended the Board members for having their tenth retreat over the last three or four years. Dr. Bailey stated that the overall goal is to further the Board's effectiveness in essential areas of governance. Dr. Bailey stated that the objectives are to make the Board Goals SMART (explicit), creating a parking lot for posting off-topic items, and the key retreat themes are sustainability, coherence, and accomplishments.

Dr. Bailey stated that the first area of work is the follow-up of the June Retreat with a check in of commitments and action steps of the work plan, superintendent's evaluation, and policy monitoring procedures and committee assignments. Dr. Bailey stated that the working agreements will be scheduled for an in-depth discussion at the February 2020 retreat. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the Work Plan and its effectiveness including the process of engagement in the data for policy monitoring, educational management committee meeting to discuss the data, engagement of the Board of Education as a whole at a board meeting

and any Board action required. Dr. Bailey asked about the process of last year's superintendent's evaluation.

Mr. Williams stated that we will be following the process over the next two weeks.

Dr. Bailey thanked Mr. Williams for the update and stated that it leads to the establishment of the superintendent's goals for this year.

Dr. Bailey stated that the next area is the policy monitoring procedures and committee. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion about the policy monitoring procedures including specific procedures of the priority policies, committee assignments to address a social media policy, SEPAC policy, uniform policy, and consider policy review under the educational management committee, special education committee, and policy committee. Dr. Bailey stated that at the June 2019 retreat the Board agreed to have the *High Level Steps for Locally Initiated Board Policy Development, Implementation and Monitoring* be included as an attachment to an appropriate policy. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the items that have been put on the cloud for the Board members including the work plan, working agreements, and on-boarding for new board members. Dr. Bailey commended the Board on completing the action for the adoption of all policies recently reviewed by the NJSBA.

Dr. Bailey stated that the next agenda item is the priority areas identified from the 2017-2018 Board Self-Evaluation. Dr. Bailey reviewed the 2017-2018 priority areas including conducting effective and efficient board meetings, clear philosophy of teaching and learning, community engagement, goals and plans communicated to community, and increased opportunity for community engagement. Dr. Bailey reviewed the 2018-2019 results for the Board Self-Evaluation questions including conducting effective and efficient board meetings, clear philosophy of teaching and learning, community engagement, goals and plans communicated to community, and increased opportunity for community engagement. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the answers in the priority areas including that the questions were kept similar to the previous years to maintain a historical trend, that the answers do not fully reflect their views, changing the language of the questions so that it more accurately reflects their sentiments on what they want to accomplish as a Board, and that a more accurate picture is needed. Dr. Bailey stated that the purpose of the Self-Evaluation response delineations is to identify variance in ratings across a spectrum and the intention is for the Board to consider and discuss the results and determine where improvement may be needed. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion as to whether they have resolved the issues related to the previous answers and if there is more work to be done including what has been working and what needs to be addressed.

Ms. Davis stated that the Board needs to be clear about what it looks like, that is the meaning, and that is what we did as a Board.

Mrs. Chevres excused herself from the meeting at 9:45 a.m.

Dr. Bailey summarized the updates addressing the identified areas in need of improvement based on the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 Board Self-Evaluation results including the review of the structure of the agenda meetings for more effective and efficient Board meetings that will be finalized in January and that this will be revisited at the February retreat; staff presentations for understanding the teaching and learning philosophy will be reflected in the Work Plan and cross-referenced with the data being provided; and further discussion of community engagement will be included in the Board Goals and Work Plan.

Dr. Bailey stated that the next area of work is the Board Goals and Work Plan. Dr. Bailey stated that the SMART Goals are Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Reasonable, and Time Bound. Dr. Bailey stated that Specific includes what will be accomplished, what actions will be taken, and who needs to be included; Measurable is how will success be evaluated, what

data will measure the goal, and how much and how well; Achievable includes is the goal doable, do you have the necessary skills and resources, and if not, can you obtain them; Reasonable is how do the goals align with broader goals such as the superintendent's goals, strategic plan, and policies; and Time Bound covers the time frame for accomplishing the goals and is it realistic. Dr. Bailey reviewed the 2019-2020 Board Goals including agreeing on 2019-2020 Board governance goals along with a schedule (Work Plan); continue to monitor policies/procedures and determining if revision is needed in the priority areas of Data Dashboard, Equity, and Special Education; learn and support the district's Teaching and Learning agenda; participate in professional development through retreats and workshops; set annual calendar, complete and review Board Self-Assessment results with attention to priority areas of improvement; provide increased opportunities for community engagement with the Board; and development of the Five Year Strategic Plan. Dr. Bailey stated that the goal is to agree on the annual 2019 Board Goals and Work Plan and include correct dates.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that the updated timelines and revised report will be provided to the Board in advance of the November 7, 2019 Board agenda meeting.

Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the 2019 Board Goals and Work Plan and the timeline and whether they are SMART, specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable, and time bound. Dr. Bailey stated that the goal is to agree on the Annual 2019 Board Governance Goals and Work Plan and the updated timelines and revised report will be provided to the Board. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the goal to participate in professional development through retreats and workshops and an updated chart of the participation of each Board member. Dr. Bailey stated that the next goal is to set an annual calendar and complete and review the Board Self-Assessment results with attention to priority areas of improvement. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the review of the questions for the Self-Evaluation survey, if new questions were added there would not be trend history, and the timeline for having it completed for the Board members to take the Self-Evaluation survey in May.

Mr. Kennedy stated that in the past the questions were standardized from the NJSBA and were changed last year.

Ms. Davis explained that some of the questions may need to be revised because there wasn't clarity in a lot of the customized questions about what you really wanted people to consider.

Dr. Bailey stated that the purpose is to bring the responses to the Self-Evaluation questions to the retreat and ask what was meant about that. Dr. Bailey stated that the ultimate goal is to bring the responses here for conversation. Dr. Bailey stated that a committee should review the survey.

Ms. Davis asked if it could be completed before the February retreat.

Mrs. Pestana stated that she would assign a committee to review the Self-Evaluation survey questions.

Dr. Bailey reviewed the goal for learning and supporting the district's teaching and learning agenda. Dr. Bailey stated that for the Board members to better understand the teaching and learning agenda there will be staff management oversight presentations at Board agenda meetings with a follow-up by the educational management committee for a deep dive and then report back to the full Board.

Dr. Bailey reviewed the goal to monitor policies/procedures and the priority policy areas. Dr. Bailey stated that the purpose of policy monitoring is to surface the success, challenges, and

future steps for ensuring that the policy implementation is meeting its original intent. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the probing questions including what qualitative and quantitative information would they like to see in order to monitor each of the priority policies, what are the timeframes for receiving this information, how will the board be engaged after receiving these reports, and how will they decide if any policy action or changes in practice may be needed. Dr. Bailey led a group discussion for the data dashboard including that the reports to the Board are listed in the Goals Work Plan and will be forwarded to two committees, educational management and policy committee for review, and a report to the full board at a board business meeting. Dr. Bailey led a group discussion for the equity policy that the reports to the board need to be aligned to the policy so that the board is able to properly monitor and discuss progress as well as implementation; quarterly reports and annual reports are listed in the Work Plan; and the consultants will provide four tools that other districts have used to assist with the diversity assessment reports.

Mrs. Hernandez returned to the meeting at 10:40 a.m.

Ms. Davis stated that Dr. Fergus is coming to the district and will be able to assist with the diversity assessment reports because that is his role. Ms. Davis stated that doing the implementation plan and policy goes back to developing a procedure for monitoring and the Board members should keep that in mind when they are doing these two pieces together.

Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion about the equity policy including that the Board can determine which committee will review the data, how the information will be communicated to the full board, more frequent reports and which are reported quarterly and annually. Dr. Bailey led a group discussion for the special education policy including that reports will be provided to the board for further monitoring following review of the data; providing two years of previous data of founded and frivolous complaints filed with the Department of Education and mediations filed with the Department of Education to monitor the special education department; identifying all of the policies and identifying the intersections; the special education committee and policy committee will review the data and bring it to the regular board business meeting.

Dr. Bailey stated that one of the Board Goals is to provide increased opportunities for community engagement with the Board.

Ms. Davis requested Board President Pestana provide an overview of what the committee has talked about with community engagement and some of the decisions that they made that they want to share with the Board so they can come to some type of consensus.

Mrs. Pestana stated that she created a town hall ad hoc committee consisting of Board members Iliana Chevres, Rosa Moreno-Ortega, Charlene Bathelus and herself. Mrs. Pestana stated that the committee has suggested the following: title *Round Tables with Board* or *Round Table Conversations with the Board*, host 6 town hall meetings with one in each ward and invite each council member, every Tuesday from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., two town hall meetings each Tuesday for three weeks, four round tables at each town hall providing that four Board members are present, a flyer with all the dates and locations, each table would have one Board member to facilitate conversation and one administrator to take notes, and provide information on the town hall process. Mrs. Pestana stated that the next step is to find available dates for the town halls at the schools.

Ms. Davis led the Board members in a group discussion about the process having roundtables instead of town hall meetings including more personalized, smaller settings, and the concerns of the Board members. Ms. Davis stated that this conversation is important for the Board to see what they are capable of and what they are not capable of doing. Ms. Davis led the Board members in a group discussion of the probing questions including is the proposed plan

realistic, what does the Board hope to learn from their meetings with the community, how does the Board plan on using any and all information gathered from the community roundtables, and what deliverables/big action steps need to go on the Goals Work Plan in order to ensure effective implementation of this goal. Ms. Davis stated that the next steps include commitment with discussion at the November 7, 2019 agenda meeting. Ms. Davis stated that the agreements and deliverables to be included in the Board Goals Work Plan include finalizing the process for roundtable conversations at the November board meetings, deciding participants, agenda format, discussion topics, holding the first two roundtables, discuss feedback from the first sessions to provide opportunities to refine the process prior to the next roundtable, and develop follow-up action steps.

Dr. Bailey stated that community engagement is a process of strategic listening and involvement that informs, educates and motivates a community to play a meaningful role in deciding the future directions of their schools, for a school district it's a whole new way of dealing with its publics, and effective engagement can transform both the district and the community. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the research-based best practices in community engagement including public participation at noticed Board meetings, Board meeting location rotations, Board adopted schools, Board President weekly office hours, advisory groups/advisory committees to the Board of Education, scheduled community organization presentations for info and recognitions, focus groups, study circles, identification of key stakeholder groups and schedule meetings, and community forums including town hall, community engagement outreach meetings, timeframe of monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly to gather public input based on election districts if applicable, and content whether it is general or specific.

Dr. Bailey stated that the next area of discussion is the development of the Five Year Strategic Plan. Dr. Bailey stated that the research-based best practices in strategic planning include that the Board and Superintendent discuss the priorities and focus areas, Board and district leadership are involved in goal setting, selected members serve on district-wide strategic planning committee, the Board receives input from analysis of student, school, and district performance, review of progress on prior Strategic Plan, surveys completed by students, staff, parents, and communities, and stakeholder community conversations include round tables and focus groups, and then approval of the Strategic Plan. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of what are the thoughts and expectations regarding how the Board should be involved in the district's strategic planning process. Dr. Bailey stated that the agreements on how the Board will be involved in the strategic planning process include a work session involving the Board and Superintendent to frame the priorities and identify the focus areas with the date to be scheduled and included in the Goals Work Plan; progress report on the past five years leading to the big ideas, ability to do a reset on the current five year plan with honest conversations about the current plan and how it worked with continuity of the execution; gaining an understanding of strengths and needs of EPS from internal and external stakeholders, deliverables to the Board prior to submission to Middle States; input from principal committees; leverage external stakeholders for the purpose of strategic planning and the ability to define how agencies are working with our schools; utilizing information from ward community roundtables; receive updates on the strategic planning process at selected intervals; inserting key deliverables and dates in Board Goals Work Plan with the deadline for a June plan approval.

Ms. Davis led the Board members in a group discussion and asked what, specifically, should year 1 and year 2 look like, what do the literacy and math programs look like over five years, involvement of state agencies that can provide different types of data, and inviting the state representatives to the community.

Dr. Bailey stated that the last topic is the Board Self-Evaluation and Superintendent Evaluation for 2019-2020. Dr. Bailey stated that the goal is to set the annual calendar and complete and review the Board Self-Assessment results with attention to priority areas for improvement. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the probing questions

including do they agree with the process, questions, and timeline for the Board Self-Evaluation. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion about the Superintendent's Evaluation including was the NJSBA training helpful to the Board in understanding the NJSBA updated process and content protocols, what additional training would be helpful, is there agreement on the 2019-2020 calendar for the process, protocols, and timeline the Board will follow to evaluate the Superintendent, integration of the Superintendent's evaluation process and timeline with the Board Self-Evaluation, what are their concerns, is the Board clear on the next steps to ensure a meaningful and aligned process leading to the establishment by June/July 2020 of Board and Superintendent's Goals for 2020-2021, and who is responsible for follow-up and oversight. Dr. Bailey stated that the Work Plan calendar will be revised to reflect accurate dates and other needed changes in accordance with the NJSBA. Dr. Bailey stated that customized questions will be sent to the consultants by the Board President. Dr. Bailey stated that the 2019-2020 Superintendent Evaluation Process and Calendar will proceed according to the prior agreement utilizing the NJ School Boards Evaluation Process. Dr. Bailey stated that the protocols and alignment of the Board and Superintendent's Goals for 2020-2021 will occur with discussion and adoption of the Superintendent's Goals in June/July 2020.

Dr. Bailey commended the board members and administrators on their work. Dr. Bailey led a group discussion of the evaluation of the retreat including if the retreat objectives were met and did this retreat effectively serve your needs, how satisfied were they with the content of the material provided, were the binder resource materials useful in supporting the agenda topics and helping the board think about the retreat issues, usefulness of work products, protocols, and agreements, adequate length of the topic sessions, sufficient board member participation, and the adequateness of the facility.

Dr. Bailey led a discussion of the status of the following including automatic response to jobs from human resources, parents being able to go online and submit a concern centrally, technology using a gov pilot for a centralized system for parents that are disseminated to the departments, and a system compared to the Keys to Excellence for accessibility for parent communication with an automatic response and a response within 24 hours.

Dr. Bailey and Ms. Davis thanked the Board for allowing them to have the opportunity to serve the Board. Dr. Bailey commended the Board members and administrators on their remarkable work. Dr. Bailey stated that the dates for the next Board retreats are February 8, 2020 and May 30, 2020.

Mrs. Pestana thanked Dr. Bailey and Ms. Davis for facilitating this retreat. Mrs. Pestana thanked her colleagues and administrators for their work today.

On a motion by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, the meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Hernandez, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Pestana – 7

Negative: None

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