

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Approved April 17 Board Meeting

February, 20, 2025  
Elizabeth, New Jersey

Board President Stanley J. Neron called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the February 20, 2025, regular agenda/business meeting of the Elizabeth Board of Education and read the following statement:

“Good evening and welcome to our Board of Education Meeting of the Elizabeth Board of Education. This is a combined regular agenda and business meeting of the Board of Education. Pursuant to New Jersey Statutes and the rules adopted by the Board of Education, notice of this meeting was sent to The Star-Ledger and Cablevision of Elizabeth on February 14, 2025. In addition, this notice is posted on the Bulletin Board in the lobby of 500 North Broad Street, and pursuant to this act, a copy has been filed with the City Clerk of Elizabeth, New Jersey.”

“We want to welcome everyone present here at School No. 51 and to our television viewers to this February 20, 2025, meeting of the Board of Education. We are here to govern, provide management oversight, and make policy for the district. The Superintendent manages the district. This is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public.”

“This meeting is being recorded and will become part of the Elizabeth Board of Education permanent record. So that the recording will adequately reflect the proceedings, please refrain from talking while others are speaking.”

“We ask that you silence the sound on your electronic devices. Since it is legally mandated that these proceedings be accurately recorded, we may have to ask for order periodically should noise begin to interfere with our recording capabilities.”

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

“We are pleased that you have taken time this evening to join us here for our Board of Education meeting. Thank you for your interest in the Elizabeth Public Schools.”

Present: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, (arrived at 6:43p.m.), Mmes. Carvalho, Chevres, (arrived at 6:42 p.m.), Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Neron-8

Absent: Mr. Rivera -1

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Dr. Jennifer Cedeno, Assistant Superintendent for Schools, Rafael Cortes Jr., School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy Jr., Comptroller Rajeev Malhotra, Deputy Counsel, Heather Savage Ford, Chief of Operations, Frank Cuesta, and Co-General Counsel, Edward Kologi Esq., of Kologi Simitz Law Office, were in attendance.

A Moment of Silence was held in memory of Mathhew Navarro a pre-K student, at George Washington Academy of Science & Engineering School No. 1 and Thomas Webb a 7<sup>th</sup> Grade student at Jerome Dunn Academy, School No. 9.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Member, Jerry Jacobs.

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

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

Board President Stanley Neron introduced District Superintendent, Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, and asked her to present the Student Representative to the Board of Education for the month of January. Marsida Bila is a dedicated senior at Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy who moved to the U.S. from Albania just two years ago. Despite the challenges of adjusting to a new country, she has excelled academically, taking AP U.S. History, AP Statistics, and AP Literature this year. She is also deeply involved in the school community, serving as the secretary of the student government and pursuing her passion for dance as an elective.

Marsida has been accepted to all the colleges she applied to, including Kean University, Montclair State University, Caldwell University, The College of New Jersey, Stockton University, Rutgers University (Newark), and Ramapo College of New Jersey. Her top three choices are Kean, Montclair, and Rutgers.

Outside of school, Marsida balances work and family responsibilities, including serving as a translator for her mother and holding a job at the mall. Her dedication, leadership, and resilience make her a proud representative of Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy, where she has found a strong sense of community and opportunity.

Dr. Hugelmeyer stated it was her pleasure to ask Miss Bila to come forward and take her seat on the Dais.

Mr. Neron asked Mr. Kennedy to memorialize Miss Bila's attendance in the official proceedings of the meeting. This was noted and Miss Bila's attendance is recorded in this, the official minutes of the meeting.

Mr. Neron then read the following statement:  
Citizens may address the Board.

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

The following rules shall apply:

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

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

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

Mr. Neron called upon the first participant Mrs. Marie Medeiros.

Mrs. Medeiros spoke about Special Education matters.

Mr. Neron thanked her for her comments and asked Dr. Cedenro to meet with Mrs. Medeiros and another constituent.

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

Mr. Neron stated that to conclude our opening calendar for this evening, we would like to present a spotlight video highlighting the initiative sponsored by Board Members Charlene Bathelus and Jerry Jacobs, Celebrating Black Excellence. Throughout the month of February, Elizabeth Public Schools has been promoting the significant contributions of Black Americans here in Elizabeth and in communities across the United States. Students have been engaged through lessons, activities, events, and performances that help them to better understand and learn more about Black excellence. The full video of this initiative will be posted on our website at the end of the month.

Mr. Neron asked Dr. Hugelmeyer to present the Community updates. The Superintendent showed a series of Power Point Slides that highlighted the following:

Registration for the Early Childhood Lottery will take place from February 19<sup>th</sup> to March 21<sup>st</sup>. Parents may reserve an appointment at [links.espnj.org/ecregistration](https://links.espnj.org/ecregistration).

The application period for the Gifted and Talented Program will run from February 25 to April 4<sup>th</sup>. There will be a Gifted & Talented Information Session on February 25<sup>th</sup> at School 22 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

The Panorama Family Survey will be live between February 18<sup>th</sup> through April 16<sup>th</sup>. The survey is available in multiple languages and may be accessed by scanning the QR code on the Board’s announcements tab or via the internet: [www.surveys.pannorاماed.com/Elizabeth/spring25family/surveys](https://www.surveys.pannorاماed.com/Elizabeth/spring25family/surveys). The District wants to hear from families as your feedback is very important. Moreover, the survey can be completed in less than Five (5) minutes.

Scholarship & FAFSA Completion Nights are scheduled at Dwyer Academy on the following dates from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.: February 26<sup>th</sup>/ March 6<sup>th</sup>/ March 25<sup>th</sup>/ April 16<sup>th</sup>/ April 30<sup>th</sup> and May 14<sup>th</sup>. For Scholarships, please create a GOING MERRY account prior to attending a session [www.GoingMerry.com](http://www.GoingMerry.com) For FAFSA sessions please create a FSA ID prior to attending. Please remember to bring a laptop and tax documents. These items are a must. For more information, please contact Aimee Saluccio, the District's College & Career Coordinator at 908-436-6669 or [saluvvioai@EPSNJ.org](mailto:saluvvioai@EPSNJ.org)

The District will soon be announcing the High School Selection 2025 Information Sessions.

Dr. Hugelmeyer presented a series of slides containing Student Assessment updates.  
Spring 2024 Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

The Access for ELLs is an assessment administered to Multilingual Learners (MLS) to determine the level of English language that each student has acquired and determine the best placement for each student moving forward.

- Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is administered to Multilingual Learners with significant cognitive disabilities.
- In the 2023-2024 school year, 85 students were assessed with the Alternate ACCESS for the ELLs
- The scores became available later than the results of the ACCESS for ELLs because the Alternate test has been revised and improved and required more time to set the scoring standard.

Proficiency Level A-1 -Initiating/ Listening 24.7%/ Speaking 52.4%/ Reading 41.2%/Writing 51.3%/ Overall Score 43.0%

Proficiency Level A-2 Exploring/ Listening 12.9%/ Speaking 15.5%/ Reading 17.6% / Writing 16.3%/ Overall Score 22.6%

Proficiency Level A-3 Developing /Listening 17.6%/ Speaking 11.9%/ Reading 12.9% / Writing 18.8%/ Overall Score 15.2%

Proficiency Level P-1 Expanding /Listening 22.4%/ Speaking 10.7%/ Reading 15.3% / Writing 5.0%/ Overall Score 15.2%

Proficiency Level P-2 Expanding /Listening 22.4%/ Speaking 9.5%/ Reading 12.9% / Writing 8.8%/ Overall Score 3.8%

Total Students Tested = 85.

#### Spring 2025 Assessment Updates

Assessment – ACCESS for ELLs and Alternate ACCESS for ELLs / Dates February 3-March 31/ Participants-All Multilingual Learners (MLs).

Assessment – NJ Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment (NJGPA) / Dates March 11-14/ Participants – 11<sup>th</sup> grade students and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who have not yet taken the assessment for graduation.

Assessment – Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)/ Date -April 29/ Participants – 11<sup>th</sup> grade students and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who have not yet taken the assessment for graduation.

Assessment – Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) / Dates April 8-May 28/ Participants – Students in grades 3-8 and 11 in place of NJSLA.

Assessment – Advanced Placement (AP) / Dates May 5-16/Participants - High School students enrolled in AP courses.

Assessment – NJ Student Learning Assessment (NJ SLA) ELA, Math & Science / Participants Students in grades 3-8 & high school (specific dates per grade level are on the District Website).

Dr. Hugelmeyer presented a series of Power Point Slides that were part of the Inside EPS News from our Central Administration.

Victor Mravlag School No. 21, William F. Halloran School No. 22 and Juan Pablo Duarte-Joe Julian Marti School No. 28 were among 22 schools to be designated as a 2025 New Jersey School of Character by Character.org. Each year, Character.org and its state affiliates select schools and districts that have developed and implemented an intentional, proactive and comprehensive approach that embeds character into all aspects of school life. There were 98. state-level schools, five districts, and eight international schools selected as schools and districts of character for 2025. Elizabeth Public Schools is home to twelve district schools that have been designated as state schools of character for 2025. Elizabeth Public Schools is home to twelve district schools that have been designated as state schools of character, nine of which received national school of character honors as well. Duarte-Marti School, No. 28, with its 2025 designation, became the first district school to have received State School of Character honors three times. Victor Mravlag School No. 21 and William F. Halloran School No. 22 became the sixth and seventh district schools to have received State School of Character honors twice.

Three Elizabeth Public School students from two district schools who entered the Union County Art Educators of New Jersey (AENJ) Youth Art Month exhibit were selected to represent Union County at the State Youth Art Month exhibit at the Grounds for Sculpture in Hamilton, NJ. Seven art pieces were selected for the state exhibit from more than 70 entries that were submitted from throughout Union County. Fourth grade student, Daniel Sancho and fifth grade student, Inaaya Shakeel of Joseph Battin School No.4 and Erika Ramon of Chessie Dentley Roberts Academy School No. 30 will have their work displayed at Grounds for Sculpture on March 29<sup>th</sup> from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Additionally, students have been invited to showcase their work at the Liberty Hall Museum's Union County Youth Art Month Exhibit which will be on display from February 25 to March 19 from 2:00 to 5:00 p.,. at the Liberty Hall Museum in Union. Congratulations to our talented students and their Art Teachers, Kristine Downey and Lily Claus from School No.4 and Jana Ortiz from School No. 30 for this exciting honor.

#### March 2025 Celebrations, Acknowledgements & Commemorations in March

- March 3<sup>rd</sup> Read Across America Day
- March 2-8 National School Social Worker Week
- March 3-7 National School Breakfast week
- March 17- The Grand and Glorious celebration of St. Patrick's Day
- Month of March – American Red Cross Month
- Month of March – Irish American Heritage Month
- Month of March – Music in our Schools Month
- Month of March – National Nutrition Month
- Month of March – Gifted & Talented Students Month
- Month of March – Women's History Month
- Month of March – Social Workers Month
- Month of March – Youth Art Month

Mr. Neron commenced a review of the evening's Agenda.

Tab 1a) Official and Private Minutes (January 7 and 14, 2025) were added to the Agenda.

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

Tab 2a) Personnel Report- Mrs. Carvalho asked Mr. Cuesta if the seven (7 )teachers who had resigned would their positions be filled. Mr. Cuesta replied that yes that people would be hired to replace the retirees, but there was no specific timetable for this to be done, as some spots are harder to fill than others. Mr. Neron clarified after speaking to Mr. Cuesta that those who had resigned were not replaced in this agenda. Ms. Bathelus remarked that she saw teachers in all disciplines being hired, where she had recalled conversations that District would only be hiring teachers in areas of special need such as Math, Science, Autism etc. Mr. Cuesta said teachers were still being hired no matter what the subject matter expertise. Dr. Hugelmeyer further added that the teaching specialties that Ms. Bathelus referred to were still receiving the sign on bonuses that were implemented in the 2023/2024 School year. These subject matter areas are still considered critical need. Ms. Bathelus asked the reasons behind the moves of 17 custodians to which Mr. Cuesta responded that some are done for legal reasons, others at the recommendation of head custodians, and sometimes a custodian will request a move, but all moves are vetted and approved by the Dept. of Plant, Property and Equipment. She further asked if there was a mischaracterization under Food Services where it listed the transfer of a person from a Locker Room attendant to a Custodial position. Mr. Kennedy responded that this was an error and will be corrected.

Tab 2a) Personnel Report was added to the Agenda.

Tab 3 Tuitions Report – Mrs. Barbosa asked about the volume of out of District tuition payments this month. Mr. Kennedy explained that tuition(s) are pro-rated throughout the year based on the annual cost that the school is charging and as well by the attendance of the student (s).

Tab 3) Tuitions Report was added to the Agenda

Tab 4) Superintendent's Reports were added to the Agenda.

Tab 4a) Considerations was added to the Agenda

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

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

Tab 4c) Mrs. Moreno-Ortega expressed her thanks to the principals and teachers who have been sending Field Trips in for approval. These trips are great educational tools that can provide experiential learning opportunities for our District's students. As one of the Board members who pushed for more field trip experiences it is gratifying to see 155 Field trips on the agenda tonight.

Tab 4c) was added to the Agenda

Tab 5) Authorizations Report- Ms. Bathelus inquired whether a thank you letter had been sent out for the donation from the Collision Repair Education Foundation to the Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Academy. Superintendent Hugelmeyer assured Ms. Bathelus that a thank you letter does go out for all donations that the District receives.

Tab 5) Authorizations Report was added to the Agenda.

Tab 6) Finance and Accounting Report was added to the Agenda.

Tab 6a) Supplemental Finance and Accounting Report – Transfer of Funds was added to the Agenda.

Tab 7) Award of Contracts Report -Mrs. Carvalho inquired of the particulars of the contract with McCloskey Mechanical Contractors (Tab 7 pg. 3). Mr. Kennedy answered that McCloskey was the sole bidder and that he would check to see if there were any other vendors doing minor repairs.

Ms. Bathelus inquired about the contract with Axon -Fusus (Tab 7 page 7) and what security was being provided by this company. In Mr. Marsal's absence, Mr. Glackin replied that it was a security-based platform that the District shares with the Elizabeth Police Dept. In case of an emergency the District cameras may be shared with the Police Dept and responding officers can pin point the location of the incident via their cell phones.

Mrs. Moreno – Ortega wanted to know the background to the Contract's with Children's Literacy Initiative and Writing Revolution, Inc. (Tab 7 pg.7). Dr. Marchetti explained that this was an expansion of an existing contract with Children's Literacy Initiative for ELA students in grades K-5. This current contract focuses on Reading and now the District will be adding Writing to the program. It will become a part of Saturday programs as well as with retention and promotion. She further explained that the Writing Revolution was chosen after looking at several different consultants as the District provides further assistance with Writing throughout the ELA Curriculum for grades K-12.

Ms. Bathelus asked Dr. Dorothy McMullen regarding all the contracts on (Tab 7 & pg. 8.) which out sourced positions within the Band and Color Guard. Dr. McMullen explained that those positions which cannot be staffed from within with internal candidates must be filled with outside candidates. This was the case for all five (5) contracts on page 8 plus the first two on page nine (9). Ms. Bathelus continued her inquiries with Dr. McMullen asking about renewing and extending the contract with Learning Ally, Inc (tab 7 pg. 9). Dr. McMullen replied that this continues a relationship which provides unlimited audio book access in all K-12 Schools within the District. The final question from Ms. Bathelus concerned the contract with the National Road Safety Foundation/ Teen Kid News and did it only relate to Thomas A. Edison Career & Technical Academy. Dr. Hugelmeyer stated that the Supervisor of Physical Education, Joseph Przytula, made the application available to all schools, but Edison Tech., went through the application process and was selected to compete in The NJ Brain Injury Alliance's Champion Schools, U Got Brains Contest. Students will participate in creating a meaningful safety campaign for their peers and community. This will be shared with all the High Schools within the District.

Mrs. Carvalho questioned Mr. Luis Milanes, Director of Plant, Property and Equipment, about a contract with Lan Associates on (Tab 7 pg.9). He explained this was design and preparation work for an application to the Department of Education to be able to construct a process room at Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Academy. Her next question was also directed to Mr. Milanes regarding the renewal of a contract with NUENERGWEN, LLC. Mr. Milanes said that this vendor provides Energy procurement services for the District and assists the District in budgeting the costs of heating and air conditioning. In addition they audit energy bills and recoup costs as well as tracks Carbon Footprint data. Mrs. Carvalho asked for an analysis of the money saved and/refunded through NUENERGWEN's various programs.

Mrs. Moreno-Ortega asked about the contract with Lexia Learning Systems, Inc. (Tab 7 pg.11). Dr. Sandra Nunes explained that this program helps students who are non-English language speakers to learn the language. In response to a demonstrated need, extra attention would be given to students who needed assistance in speaking English.

Mr. Anthony DiDonato Director of Student Services responded to a further question from Mrs. Moreno-Ortega about the contract with the New Jersey Department of Health, which he explained would be a webinar for all the School Nurses in the District to discuss Prevention and Mitigation of Common Infectious Illnesses in Schools.

Mr. Kennedy referring back to questions raised about the contract with McCloskey Mechanical Contractors (Tab 7 pg. 3) stated they had been a vendor since 2019/2020 school year. McCloskey and other vendors were part of the competitive bid process through 2023/2024. However, McCloskey had been the sole bidder in both 24/25 and 25/26.

Board Member Jerry Jacobs asked for details on the contract with Code Monkey Tab 7 pg. 4. Mr. Sam Etienne, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, said that this contract was for license subscriptions to help elementary students to learn how to Computer Code.

Board Member Stephanie Goncalves Pestana questioned Mr. Milanes about the contract with Fresh & Clean Custom Painting, LLC and when the painting at Victor Mravlag School No. 21 would take place i.e., Spring break or Summer vacation. Mr. Milanes responded it would be during Spring break.

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

President Neron asked Student Representative, Marsida Bila to present her report to the community.

Good evening, Dr. Hugelmeyer, members of the Board of Education and community members. My name is Marsida Bila, and I am honored to serve as a student representative for Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy for the 2024-2025 academic year. I moved to the United States just two years ago, from a small country in Europe called Albania. Struggling with English as my second language and grieving a loss of a parent, I was able to start school and continue my education at Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy during my sophomore year. All of my classes were in English, but through Thomas Jefferson, I was able to practice my English, speak it fluently, and achieve great academic success. Now, I am proud to be in the top 8% attending students of my class, taking AP and honors courses since my junior year. As the student government secretary, I help organize various events to make school activities fun for everyone. We began the school year with our back-to-school night, where parents were

welcome to learn about everything our school offers. They had the chance to take a tour, walk around the building, and meet the teachers. Next, we had our fall play, *Peter Pan*, where our talented cast brought the story to life with their amazing performances, which the audience loved so much. Our Halloween Metal concert in October and Unplugged show two weeks ago showcased the talent of our students, who sang and played instruments, bringing energy and life to both performances. Now, we look forward to our epic rock concert later this year. Our students also performed the successful musical *Grease* at our high school for our students and all middle schoolers, mesmerizing the audience with energetic dancing and powerful acting, creating an unforgettable experience for all.

During the holiday season, the Acapella choir spread festive cheer by visiting City Hall, performing at the Christmas tree lighting in Union Square Plaza, and singing at local nursing homes, along with other performances around the school. We also organized the Operation Christmas Child, where students donated gifts and packed them into boxes. In total, we collected 197 boxes, which were sent to children across the globe. It was incredibly rewarding to see the difference we made in the lives of others. For Black History Month we are sharing a daily Black History Month quote during the morning announcements. We also organized a lot of fun activities for Valentine's Day, like wearing a red/pink shirt, sending the soda 'Crush' to a crush, and watching a movie, helping raise funds for future events. Additionally, the Student Government is hosting Jeff Tricky Tray, where we collect donations to create different themed baskets, such as food, spa, and game baskets, where people buy raffle tickets and enter them for a chance to win a basket of their choice. In the meantime, students at our high school are working hard for our spring musical, *Sister Act*, which will take place in March. The cast and crew have been rehearsing tirelessly, and we promise an amazing performance that we cannot wait to share with everyone.

Other Elizabeth Public Schools and high schools have also been occupied with various activities. John E. Dwyer Technology Academy organizes an after-school sit-and-paint every other week for their students, which brings a lot of entertainment and interaction. JVJ STEM Academy is celebrating Black History Month by visiting different elementary schools hosting a Black History Month trivia, educating students on its history. They are also hosting a Kindness Month activity, where staff members give students kindness tickets when they see acts of kindness. This activity encourages students to engage in such important activities and promote a culture of respect within the school community. At Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy, they are having a Black History Month show, which brings the community together to celebrate and learn about Black History Month through performances. They are also organizing a 'One World Festival, where students can dress up to represent different countries, allowing them to explore the diverse cultures by trying their food and learning different traditions. Frank J. Cicarell Academy had a "Dress Like The 80s" for the 80<sup>th</sup> day of school, and they are also planning the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school, where students will dress up as if they are 100 years old to celebrate the milestone. Cicarell Academy is also hosting a Black History Month show and sharing a Black History Month quote of the day in the morning announcements. J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy is arranging a "dress like a famous African American" for Black History Month to honor historical figures. Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr. Health & Public Safety Academy is organizing a soccer game between juniors and seniors, encouraging friendly competition. Thomas A. Edison Career & Technical Academy is hosting an event where senior citizens will be given makeovers by students, a heartwarming activity, as well as the ShopRite program where students learn valuable life skills that will prepare them for the future.

Thank you for allowing me to share these wonderful activities with you tonight.

Meanwhile, J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy has been celebrating Muslim American Month with a variety of enriching activities. Students participated in a Geometric Art and Design

contest, learned Arabic calligraphy, and enjoyed food from Islamic cultures. They also had the opportunity to experience costume henna tattoos and celebrated World Hijab Day by trying on hijabs, learning more about cultural traditions and fostering a greater sense of inclusion. These activities reflect the vibrancy of our High School's as a whole and their commitment to providing students with enriching experiences that extend beyond the classroom. I'm proud to represent JVJ STEM Academy and share the exciting initiatives happening throughout Elizabeth Public Schools. Thank you again for allowing me to share all the wonderful and exciting activities Elizabeth High School students and teachers worked hard to organize.

Mr. Neron thanked Ms. Bila for her report and asked for a round of applause for her. He also recognized the other student representatives in the audience and Mr. Neron complimented them for showing school spirit by supporting Ms. Bila and true leadership is helping and supporting others. Dr. Mona Wanis, principal of Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy, was thanked by Mr. Neron for appearing at and accompanying Ms. Bila to the Board meeting.

President Neron asked each Committee Chair to present their meeting recaps to the rest of the Board.

**Negotiations Committee**  
**January 13, 2025**  
**12:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Jerry Jacobs, Board Member/Chairperson of the Negotiations Committee; Stephanie Goncalves-Pestana, Board Member, Ed Kologi, General Counsel, Judge Malone, General Counsel, Dieter Lerch and Julius Consoni, Financial Consultants Lerch, Vinci, Higgins, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator, Comptroller and Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools.

Dieter Lerch briefed the committee on the analysis of percent and number of employees and salary dollars at different steps of the guides in comparison to other districts.

**Negotiations Committee**  
**January 22, 2025**  
**12:00 p.m. – 1:50 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Jerry Jacobs, Board Member/Chairperson of the Negotiations Committee; Charlene Bathelus, Board Member, Stephanie Goncalves-Pestana, Board Member, Board Member, Ed Kologi, General Counsel, Judge Malone, General Counsel, Dieter Lerch and Julius Consoni, Financial Consultants Lerch, Vinci, Higgins, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator, Rajeev Malhotra, Comptroller and Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools.

The committee discussed the EEA proposal regarding discounts to Chapter 78 and Chapter 44 contributions. A trend analysis of current health benefits enrollments and new hires and retirements was requested by the committee for the next meeting.

**Negotiations Committee**  
**January 29, 2025**  
**12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Jerry Jacobs, Board Member/Chairperson of the Negotiations Committee; Charlene Bathelus, Board Member, Stephanie Goncalves-Pestana, Board Member, Ed Kologi, General Counsel, Judge Malone, General Counsel, Dieter Lerch and Julius Consoni, Financial Consultants Lerch, Vinci, Higgins, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator, Rajeev Malhotra, Comptroller and Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools.

Dieter Lerch briefed the committee on the effect of the proposed EEA salary percentage increases over the three-year contract. The committee reviewed the agreed to proposals from the EEA to be communicated at the January 31, 2025, meeting with the EEA.

**Negotiations Committee**  
**February 7, 2025**  
**12:00 p.m. – 1:20 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Jerry Jacobs, Board Member/Chairperson of the Negotiations Committee; Stephanie Goncalves-Pestana, Board Member, Ed Kologi, General Counsel, Judge Malone, General Counsel, Dieter Lerch and Julius Consoni, Financial Consultants Lerch, Vinci, Higgins, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator, Rajeev Malhotra, Comptroller and Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools.

The committee discussed the outcome of the January 31<sup>st</sup> negotiations committee meeting with the EEA. The committee reviewed the trend analysis of current health benefits enrollments and new hires and retirements.

**School Properties Committee**  
**February 3, 2025**  
**12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Stan Neron, Board President, Maria Carvalho, Board Vice President/Chairperson of the School Properties Committee; Iliana Chevres, Board Member, Jerry Jacobs, Board Member, Michael Simitz, General Counsel, Judge Malone, General Counsel, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator and Luis Milanes, Director of Plant, Property and Equipment.

The committee was advised of a significant construction project initiated by the Benedictine Sisters at the Convent across School No. 4 Annex. A status of heating during the current frigid spell was provided by the Director of Plant, Property & Equipment. The status of ESIP air-conditioning projects in schools was discussed. An update on the vestibule safety projects was discussed. The trade contract provision for temporary mechanics was discussed. The committee requested that the student performance locations be provided to the Division of Plant, Property and Equipment. The committee inquired about the status of the vacancies in the department.

**Special Education Committee**  
**February 6, 2025**  
**12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Stan Neron, Board President, Iliana Chevres, Chairperson of the Special Education Committee; Diane Barbosa, Board Member, Ed Kologi, General Counsel, Judge Malone, General Counsel, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator, Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools and Dr. Michael Ojeda, Director of Special Services.

The committee reviewed the SEPAC events for the remainder of the school year including:

1. Wednesday, March 26 (AM and PM): Workshop for parents on guardianship (confirming availability of Union County Surrogate)
2. Saturday, May 17 (9:00am to 12:00pm): Community Fair focusing on local government and non-profit resources for families of children with disabilities

The SEPAC policy was referred to the Legal Committee for review at the upcoming February 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The committee also reviewed the extracurricular programs offerings:

- Saturday Bowling Clinic (just recently concluded)
- Saturday Soccer Athletic Clinic
- Saturday Recreation Program at George Washington Academy School No. 1
- Saturday Special Olympics

The 2025 Autism Awareness Walk is set for Saturday, April 5 (with a rain date on Saturday, April 12). Lastly, the committee also requested the district's plan for the events for the New Jersey School Boards Association Special Education Week that will take place May 12 through May 16.

**Special Education Committee**  
**February 20, 2025**  
**12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Stan Neron, Board President, Iliana Chevres, Chairperson of the Special Education Committee; Diane Barbosa, Board Member, Ed Kologi, General Counsel, Judge Malone, General Counsel, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator, Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools and Dr. Michael Ojeda, Director of Special Services, Richard Flaum, Special Counsel.

Richard Flaum, Special Counsel briefed the Committee on settlement process and proposal in an ongoing litigation matter. Briefing to the full Board during Executive Session was requested at the February 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting

The Committee reviewed revisions to the SEPAC Policy and Regulation which was referred to them by the Legal Committee.

**Finance and Accounting Committee**  
**February 12, 2025**  
**12:00 p.m. – 12:40 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Stan Neron, Board President, Jerry Jacobs, Board Member/Chairperson of the Finance and Accounting Committee; Charlene Bathelus, Board Member, Stephanie Goncalves-Pestana, Board Member, Ed Kologi, General Counsel, Judge Malone, General Counsel, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator, Rajeev Malhotra, Comptroller and Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools.

The committee discussed the current status of the 2025-2026 budget preparation process for all instructional and non-instructional departments and recently announced reductions in federal and state aid. The district was recently notified that its SEMI Medicaid aid would be reduced from \$1.8 million to \$200,000.

The district anticipates receiving a state aid notification on February 28<sup>th</sup> and the preliminary submission of the budget to NJDOE is no later than March 19<sup>th</sup>.

**Legal Committee**  
**February 13, 2025**  
**12:30 p.m. – 1:25 p.m.**

**Attendees:** Stan Neron, Board President, Maria Carvalho, Board Vice President/Chairperson of the Legal Committee; Ed Kologi, General Counsel, Judge Malone, General Counsel, Harold Kennedy, School Business Administrator and Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Superintendent of Schools.

The committee reviewed the revisions to the SEPAC Policy and Regulation provided by the Special Education Committee. The status of current litigation matters was provided

Board President Stanley Neron asked the Student Representative, Miss Marisa Bila, to present her report to the community.

Tab 9) Claims list was added to the Agenda

Resolutions 10 to 10p were added to the Agenda.

Mr. Neron stated that the President requests a motion to go into Private Session to consider matters exempt under the Open Public Meetings Act, specifically for discussion of:

Legal Matters – specifically Workman’s Compensation Case D.M. LL., settlement E.K., tenure charges L.S. D.T. and approval of E.R.I.

Personnel Matters-Personnel Report 2b, Appointment N.C., Non-Renewal L.S.

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

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

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mmes. Carvalho, Chevres, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Neron. -8

Negative: None

A motion was made by Mrs. Moreno-Ortega and seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana to return to public session at 10:42 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mmes. Carvalho, Chevres, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Neron - 8

The following items were added to the agenda

Personnel Report 2 B

Resolution – Reorganization-Approval of Job Description – Director of Food and Nutrition Services

Resolution – Resolution – Appointment of Interim Head Varsity Wrestling Coach – Nicolas P. Cilento.

Resolution – Non-renewal of Employment for Cause – L.P.S.

Resolution – Residency Investigative Results and Actions.

Mr. Neron asked for a motion and a second to adopt the following agenda

Opening Calendar

Official and Private Minutes (January 7, 14, 2025)

Treasurer/Secretary's Report (December 31, 2024)

Personnel Reports

Tuitions Reports

Superintendent's Reports

Authorizations Report

Finance and Accounting Report – Pay Vouchers

Supplemental Finance and Accounting Report – Transfer of Funds

Award of Contracts Report

Claims List

#### Resolutions:

Youth Art Month

National Nutrition Month

National School Breakfast Week

National School Social Workers' Week

Read Across America

St. Joseph's Day

St. Patrick's Day

Women's History Month

Appointing 2024-2025 Spring Sports Equipment Companies  
Renewal of McCloskey Mechanical Contractors  
Renewal of NuEnergen, LLC  
Payment for Unused Sick Days  
Payment for Unused Vacation Days  
Transfer of Maintenance Reserve Funds  
Transfer of Capital Reserve Funds  
Application for Expansion of Field House at Williams Field  
Residency Investigative Results and Actions  
Appointment of Interim Varsity Head Wrestling Coach  
Non-Renewal of Employment  
Reorganization – Job Description- Director of Food & Nutrition Services

A motion was made by Mr. Jacobs and seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana a to approve the entire Agenda.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, (with abstention on Tab 5 Donation from Groundwork Elizabeth and Tab 7 pg.2 Contract with Groundwork Elizabeth). Mrs. Chevres, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Neron (with an abstention on Tab 2 A Mr. Dulorie – AHPA Graduation Appeals Administrator) -8

Negative: none  
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On a motion made by Mrs. Barbosa and seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, the meeting was adjourned at 10:46 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mmes. Carvalho, Chevres, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Neron-8

Negative: none

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