

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

February 8, 2020
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called on February 8, 2020 at 8:00 a.m., in the iLeap Center at John E. Dwyer Technology Academy, 123 Pearl Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Board President Diane Barbosa 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 January 27, 2020. 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 February 8, 2020 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: Maria Carvalho, Iliana Chevres, Nathalie Hernandez, Jerry Jacobs, Rosa Moreno-Ortega, Stanley Neron (arr. 10:11 a.m.), Stephanie Pestana, Diane Barbosa – 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 Diane Barbosa 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.”

Since there were no public participants, Mrs. Barbosa closed the public portion of the meeting.

Mrs. Barbosa welcomed everyone to the first retreat of 2020. Mrs. Barbosa stated that it is important to understand the meaning of what a retreat is and stated that this retreat gives us an opportunity to spend time together, contemplate, and rekindle and solve real governance issues. Mrs. Barbosa stated that it helps us as Board members to discover our natural strengths and weaknesses and further develop our schools personally and as a team, a team that sits here proudly as your Elizabeth school team. Mrs. Barbosa stated that the facilitators, vice president and she worked together with administration to develop the final agenda for this retreat. Mrs. Barbosa stated that it is a step from last year's retreat into what we feel should be continuing for this year with a focus on important targeted areas of importance and Board goals. Mrs. Barbosa stated that it's time to engage in understanding communication and leave this retreat today with tools, skills, dates, taskforces, goals, and vehicles that provide us with the best governance for our district.

Mrs. Barbosa introduced Consultants Dr. Adrienne Bailey and Dr. 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 stated that it is exciting to see where we were five years ago to be able to get to this point. Dr. Bailey stated that the Board members have done an incredible job moving your governance agenda forward. Dr. Bailey asked each Board member and administrator what they are most excited about for the beginning of this new year and new decade.

Dr. Bailey reviewed the retreat norms including to be fully present, stick to agreed upon agenda topics and timeframes, respect differences of opinions, to be easy on people and hard on ideas, assume the best intentions, be as concise as possible, enable all opinions to be heard, and reach closure on the agenda topic, follow up, and next steps. Dr. Bailey reviewed the background materials including the 2015-2020 EPS Strategy Map, Promise Goals, Steps to Success, AR Strategies, review of the October Retreat, and Policy File Code 1311 Data Dashboard. 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 ensure sustainability of prior work and agreements, address Targeted Areas of Improvement in Board governance practices, and assess progress in accomplishing the 2019-2020 Board Goals with priority attention to community engagement, use of data and strategic planning. Dr. Bailey reviewed the agenda including the retreat start-up, sustainability follow-up and updates, review of targeted areas of improvement, progress of 2019-2020 Board Goals, Board Self-Evaluation and Superintendent's Evaluation for 2019-2020, and retreat closure including recommended future topics, plus/delta assessment, and next steps. Dr. Bailey stated that the accomplishment highlights include the working agreements, onboarding process, third year of self-evaluation, targeted areas for Board improvement, annual governance goals with biannual check-ins, alignment of annual and superintendent goals, professional development, updated superintendent's evaluation process, comprehensive review of policies and procedures, policy monitoring procedures, policy monitoring in priority areas, creation of equity policy and deep data dives and increased community engagement.

Dr. Bailey stated that the three key retreat themes are sustainability, coherence, and Board Goals progress. Dr. Bailey stated that the role of the Board is defined in Title 18A and the NJ Statutes and includes policy oversight, educational planning, and provision of resources. Dr. Bailey stated that the Board has made good progress on developing and monitoring the policies. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the interpretation Title 18A and the NJ Statutes of keeping the local community informed and how to engage with the public.

Dr. Bailey stated that the first area of work is sustainability including follow up and updates on the work plan on the Cloud, onboarding, regulation for policy monitoring procedures, monitoring and committee assignments to address policies for social media, SEPAC, and uniforms, Board engagement in data, and technology accessibility. Dr. Bailey stated that the

working agreements would be postponed until the May retreat. Dr. Bailey led the Board members and administrators in a group discussion of the District/Board Work Plan and Calendar, which is on the Cloud and includes the ability to focus on data pertaining to specific schools and to organize the Board's work, goals, and objectives. The Board recommended including the District/Board Work Plan and Calendar in the monthly agenda. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a discussion of onboarding for board orientation and team building activities. Dr. Bailey led a group discussion of a review of the High Level Steps for Locally Initiated Board Policy Development, Implementation, and Monitoring compared to the Bylaw and Regulation for Policy Monitoring Procedures. Dr. Bailey memorialized the establishment of annual Board goals. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a discussion of the monitoring and completed committee assignments to address the social media, SEPAC, and uniform policy. The Board members affirmed that the uniform policy was updated and adopted at the January Board meeting; the SEPAC policy was updated and referred to the special education committee for review and is on hold as a result of an update provided by the Superintendent regarding the development of the policy at a county level; and the policy committee made recommendations for a social media policy which is under review by legal counsel. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a discussion of the Board engagement in data for policy monitoring, educational management, and the whole Board and deep data dives to examine community needs and connecting to the data provided. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of technology accessibility including parent webpage updates, BoardDocs, and parent access to the district's student information system, PowerSchool. Dr. Bailey stated that the areas that will be carried forward to the May Retreat include onboarding, progress report on monitoring policies, working agreements, work plan, and technology accessibility. Dr. Bailey stated that the probing questions about the completion of action steps from the October Retreat have been addressed and we have identified what needs further attention.

Dr. Bailey stated that the next area of work is the priority areas for Board improvement based on the Board self-evaluation. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of efficient and effective board meetings including length of meeting, school and community recognitions, engaging in operations and policy, and use of the superintendent's network to explore different options.

Mrs. Pestana excused herself from the meeting at 9:40 a.m.

Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the district's philosophy for teaching and learning that provides an overarching strategy for achieving goals including implementation of management oversight presentations, communicating to the community what the focus on teaching and learning looks like, and clearly articulate the philosophy of teaching and learning in the 2020-2025 strategic plan.

Mrs. Moreno-Ortega stated that she would like to see a staff, teacher, and student survey and that the NJDOE has a climate survey and the data would be helpful.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that for the 2019-2020 School Year the climate survey was not one of the indicators on the data dashboard policy.

Dr. Bailey stated that the school climate survey is a parking lot item.

Dr. Gail Davis asked which of the Board goals is that related to and what are the strategies you set for yourself to achieve Board goals.

Dr. Bailey asked the Board members to think about how that advances on the next strategic plan.

Dr. Davis stated that the Board goal is excellence in every area and asked what does that look like.

Dr. Bailey stated that the strategic plan has more detail on what is behind each category.

Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion on the remaining priority areas for board improvement including the Board being fairly cohesive and not all votes are unanimous but there are no fixed factions; treating each other, superintendent, and public with respect; and adopting a fiscally responsible budget based on the district's vision and goals and regularly monitoring the fiscal health of the district. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion on the probing questions including are the Board members addressing the identified areas in need of improvement based on the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 self-evaluation results and what needs continued attention.

Mr. Williams stated that last year the Board dealt with a major labor agreement, budget, and healthcare change and they will not have all of them at once this year.

Dr. Bailey stated that the next area of work is the 2019-2020 Board Goals Framework. Dr. Bailey reviewed the SMART Goals including specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. Dr. Bailey stated that the next area of work is the Board Goals progress.

Mrs. Chevres excused herself from the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

Dr. Bailey instructed the Board members to engage in group work evaluating the progress of the 2019-2020 Board Goals and indicating the agreement or disagreement using the 2019-2020 Board Goals Framework to prepare the progress report. Dr. Bailey reviewed the goals including agreeing on an annual Board governance goals along with a schedule (Work Plan), monitor policies/procedures and determine if revision are needed in the priority areas including data dashboard and equity policy, 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-Evaluation results with attention to priority areas of improvement, provide increased opportunities for community engagement with the Board, development of Five-Year Strategic Plan, and monitor SPED policies/procedures. Dr. Bailey and Dr. Davis led the Board members and administrators in a group discussion of the agreement or disagreement of each Board goal and whether it has been satisfactorily completed or is the Board still working on it. Dr. Bailey reviewed the recommendations including to add revisiting priority data and outcomes with examples of interventions to the goal for monitoring policies; edit the 2020-2021 Board Goals for management oversight for teaching and learning to include deepening of the Equity indicators to include how instruction is tiered at the different levels; and including the ability to prioritize the data points under the Equity Policy and embedding the Equity Policy into the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan at the May Board Retreat.

Mrs. Chevres returned to the meeting at 12:58 p.m.

Dr. Bailey and Dr. Davis led a group discussion about the development of a Five-Year Strategic Plan for 2020-2025 including the hiring of a consultant, the process and timing with approval in September of 2020, and the framing of priorities and identification of focus areas. Dr. Bailey and Dr. Davis led a group discussion of the process of the community engagement forums including developing the structure, opening statement, setting the norms, and providing a resource table for parents. Dr. Bailey and Dr. Davis provided clarification on the nature of the meeting as a listening session and asked the Board members probing questions including how do they envision the session, what does the Board hope to learn, how will you assess the process along the way, did you get what you hoped to get from the community engagement forums and how does the Board plan on using the information gathered.

Mr. Neron excused himself from the meeting at 1:52 p.m.

Mrs. Moreno-Ortega excused herself from the meeting at 1:53 p.m.

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. 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 and Dr. Davis led the Board members in a group discussion including the change of standards, using electronic communication prior to May, the possible use of Zoom for communication, and having a conversation in July for moving the goals along.

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 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 date for the next Board retreat is May 30, 2020.

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

On a motion by Mr. Jacobs, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, the meeting was adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Carvalho, Chevres, Hernandez, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Barbosa – 5

Negative: None

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