

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

April 21, 2018
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called on April 21, 2018 at 8:00 a.m., in the iLeap Center at John E. Dwyer Technology Academy, 123 Pearl Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Board President Maria Carvalho presented the following statement at 8:30 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 April 11, 2018. 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 April 21, 2018 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 may sign in up to the start of the public speaking portion 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: Mrs. Barbosa (arr. 9:05 a.m.), Ms. Bathelus (arr. 9:18 a.m.), Miss Goncalves, Mr. Jacobs (arr. 8:40 a.m.), Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez, Mrs. Carvalho – 8
Absent: Mr. Nina – 1

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer and School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr. were in attendance. No members of the public were present.

Mrs. Carvalho 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.”

Since there were no citizens to address the board, Mrs. Carvalho declared this portion of the public meeting closed.

Mrs. Carvalho welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that she hopes everyone will leave here with a better understanding of board governance, come together even closer as a team, and learn a little more as how we need to work harder to move our district forward.

Mrs. Carvalho welcomed the Panasonic Foundation Facilitation Team and introduced Panasonic Foundation Senior Fellow Kaili Baucum and Senior Consultant Adrienne Bailey.

Senior Consultant Adrienne Bailey welcomed everyone and stated that they have more than 25 years of strategic coaching of school boards. Dr. Bailey stated that the Panasonic Foundation has been working with the Elizabeth Public Schools since 2008 and is coming to the end of their ten-year partnership. Dr. Bailey introduced Senior Fellow Kaili Baucum.

Senior Fellow Kaili Baucum welcomed everyone to this morning's retreat to continue their work that they have done together.

Senior Consultant Adrienne Bailey reviewed the agenda including the retreat start-up with the President's Welcome, the purpose and introduction of the Panasonic Foundation Facilitation Team, retreat norms, review of the agenda and retreat objectives, Board Self-Evaluation, Communications Working Agreements, and Board Goals for 2017-2018. Dr. Bailey stated that the retreat closure includes the next steps and the plus/delta assessment.

Dr. Bailey reviewed the general meeting norms and the background resources including the 2015-2020 EPS Strategy Map, EPS Steps to Success, Three High Leverage Strategies, Promise Goals, and Achievable Results (AR) Strategies.

Dr. Bailey stated that boards in high-achieving districts exhibit habits and characteristics that are markedly different from boards in low-achieving districts. Dr. Bailey stated that there are eight characteristics of effective school boards and asked each Board member to recite one of the *Eight Characteristics of an Effective School Board: At a Glance* based on a report written for the Center for Public Education by Chuck Dervarics and Eileen O'Brien. The eight characteristics are committing to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals toward that vision; having strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels; being accountability driven, spending less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement; having a collaborative relationship with staff and the community and establishing a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals; are data savvy and they embrace and monitor data even when the information is negative and use it to drive continuous improvement; align and sustain resources, such as professional development, to meet district goals and effective boards saw a responsibility to maintain high standards even in the midst of budget challenges; lead as a united team with the superintendent each from their respective roles and with strong collaboration and mutual trust; and effective school boards take part in team development and training sometimes with their superintendent to build shared knowledge, values and commitments for their improvement efforts.

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 present the Board with strengths, observations, areas of disagreement and next level of work priorities that were derived from the Board self-assessment survey; work towards creating a more effective and efficient Board including clarity of roles and responsibilities of Board members; and to agree on 2017-2018 Board goals and monitoring processes.

Panasonic Foundation Senior Fellow Kaili Baucum stated that in the past the Board used the NJ School Boards Association Board Self-Evaluation Form as the evaluation tool but there were no results given back to focus on.

Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that this is the first time the Board is having the self-evaluation processed and analyzed. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that in the past, the Board did the self-evaluation but the results were not analyzed and it was only self-reflective.

Dr. Baucum led a group discussion of the importance of self-evaluation. The discussion included that powerful self-assessment begins with the individual; self-reflection is vital for growth; assessing what we do, whether right or wrong, we learn regardless of the time it takes; ability to hone and identify our practices; importance of monitoring our own performance as a Board; reflecting and ensuring that we are performing our duties to the best of our ability; thinking as a team and not as an individual Board member; ability to understand each other and through the trainings we develop a comfort level; and all working with the same practices and the same end.

Dr. Baucum stated that Board members Jose Rodriguez and Stephanie Goncalves worked with the Panasonic Team to revise the self-evaluation survey. Dr. Baucum stated that the initial concerns of the self-evaluation form were that the survey was too overwhelming, needs to be concise and more direct with less questions, and be customized to our district.

Board member Jose Rodriguez stated that the committee of Board member Stephanie Goncalves, Panasonic advisors Adrienne Bailey and Kaili Baucum, and he worked on revising the Board self-evaluation. Mr. Rodriguez stated that the new survey is not so cumbersome but is compliant and they wanted to be sure that it is a tool for growth. Mr. Rodriguez stated that in almost a decade the survey hasn't changed from the more than 50 questions. Mr. Rodriguez stated that that they focused on the major topics and depending on the goals that the Board has each year, future Boards can change their goals based on the work that they are committed to. Mr. Rodriguez thanked Dr. Bailey and Dr. Baucum for the importance of the Board assessing their work as a whole and as an individual Board member. Mr. Rodriguez stated that they are recommending that the Board member self-assessment be conducted every six months.

Dr. Baucum stated that the old survey had both a group assessment and an individual assessment. Dr. Baucum stated that the new survey is customized and taken from Don McAdams survey and from other school boards.

Mr. Rodriguez excused himself from the meeting at 9:31 a.m.

Dr. Baucum instructed the Board members and administrators to work in groups to review and examine the revised self-evaluation survey. Dr. Baucum led a group discussion of suggestions and recommendations to the revised self-evaluation survey. Dr. Baucum reviewed the Board self-assessment calendar and process including the need to have a first reading of the Board Self-Evaluation in May; the electronic version of the self-evaluation form distributed to Board members right after the May Board meeting, reminder notices sent out late May, and completion and submission of survey by all Board members by June 30th.

Dr. Baucum stated that the Panasonic Foundation relationship comes to an end in June. Dr. Baucum led a group discussion of the considerations for moving forward and the implementation options of having general counsel compile the results or having someone externally conduct the process in July. Dr. Baucum stated that the presentation of the self-evaluation results could be given to the Board in August/September. Dr. Baucum stated that the development and adoption of new board goals based on the self-evaluation results could begin in August. Dr. Baucum led a discussion on the importance of continuing the work that we have committed to and identifying what we are missing.

Dr. Baucum reviewed the analysis of the results of the last Board Self-Evaluation. Dr. Baucum stated that there are three priority areas including monitoring progress, fiscal oversight, and not fully active in engaging the community in its work. Dr. Baucum instructed one group of Board members for small group discussion of community engagement including what would the

Board like to do to more actively engage the community, what specific action steps and timelines are needed, and who will be responsible. Dr. Baucum instructed another group of Board members for discussion of monitoring progress and fiscal oversight including does the work plan and scorecard satisfy the Boards' need for receiving information and monitoring progress and what is needed to ensure the full board is informed and exercising its fiscal oversight responsibilities. Dr. Baucum led a group discussion of fiscal oversight utilizing the 18-19 budget, providing Board orientation regarding the process, and monitoring and reviewing the work plan at agenda meetings. Dr. Baucum led a group discussion of why community engagement is so important and considerations for implementing a study circle of a 30 day committee to have the community member that suggested the activity to participate in the conversation; community forum/town hall meetings twice a year to provide opportunity to participate in a discussion with the public; and a student forum once per year to provide information with the purpose of educating and the students would then respond to the information.

Dr. Bailey stated that Board members Charlene Bathelus, Jose Rodriguez, and Jerry Jacobs worked with the Panasonic Team to create the Communications Working Agreement.

Ms. Bathelus stated that the committee of Board members Jose Rodriguez and Jerry Jacobs, Panasonic advisor Adrienne Bailey, and she worked on developing the Communications Working Agreement. Ms. Bathelus stated that they looked at other districts, compiled a draft, refined it, and then brought it to the whole Board and asked how they can improve it. Ms. Bathelus thanked Dr. Bailey for her help. Ms. Bathelus stated that the Communications Working Agreement has five sections including Board to Board, Board Communication to Superintendent, Board Communication to Staff, Board Communication to Community, and Board Protocol for Visiting Schools.

Dr. Bailey stated that the Communications Working Agreement is so important in terms of how you behave. Dr. Bailey instructed the Board members and administrators to work in small groups for discussion and review of all five sections to note the agreements, disagreements, and modifications suggested. Dr. Bailey suggested that they ask themselves about the communications agreement reflections including to what extent do these agreements reflect your current practices as a Board member and current practices of the Board as a whole; in what ways may have you inadvertently not practiced these agreements; what do you see as the barriers for your Board or you as an individual member in following these proposed communications practices; and how can the Board hold itself accountable to practicing these agreements. Dr. Bailey led the Board members in a group discussion of the ideas to consider including concern of individual requests to the Superintendent, who is determining the reasonability of the request, and reporting back to the Board; concern with the impact of various individual requests and the impact on the staff member that has to prepare the information; review of other models to define the role of Board President in this area; language to be added to address the issue of matters added to the agenda or board meeting; recognizing that the Board cannot react to the urgency of certain matters being added after the agenda has been set; and importance of acknowledging respect for each other in public and behind closed doors.

Dr. Baucum suggested a Board workshop on how to go from a concern, for example a constituent complaint, to management and governance.

Dr. Bailey asked how the Board as a whole and individually will hold itself accountable for these communications agreements.

Dr. Bailey stated that the last area today is the progress of the 2017-2018 Board goals. Dr. Bailey instructed one group of Board members for small group discussion of Goals 1-4 and another group of Board members for small group discussion of Goals 5-7. Dr. Bailey instructed each group member to read the assigned goals and make individual notations on the accomplishments, evidence, and in need of attention and then share their notations. Dr. Bailey

instructed each group to report to the full Board and then additional progress notations will be solicited from the alternate group members. Dr. Bailey stated that at the end of each goal statement, each Board member will assess each goal on their individual work sheets and then post their assessment on chart paper. Dr. Bailey stated that the goals include reaching consensus on a defined set of communications expectations; agree on annual Board governance goals and work plan; develop, update and monitor policies and procedures in the priority areas of data dashboard, constituent services, promotion and retention, and student code of conduct; learn and support the district's teaching and learning agenda; participate in professional development through retreats and workshops; set annual calendar, complete and analyze Board Self-Assessment with attention to priority areas of improvement including monitoring and fiscal responsibility; and provide increased opportunities for community engagement with the Board. Dr. Bailey led a group discussion and asked what more needs to be done to advance the goals.

Dr. Bailey commended the board members and administrators on their work and led the Board members in a discussion of reflection of the retreat and what went well and what changes are needed.

Mrs. Carvalho thanked the Panasonic Foundation for facilitating the governance retreat. Mrs. Carvalho stated that the next governance retreat will be June 9, 2018.

On a motion by Miss Goncalves, seconded by Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, the meeting was adjourned at 3:09 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Miss Goncalves, Mr. Jacobs, Mrs. Moreno-Ortega, Mr. Neron, Mrs. Carvalho – 7

Negative: None

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