

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

May 27, 2014
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called on May 27, 2014 at 6:00 p.m., in the Dunn Sports Center, 151 Pearl Street, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Prior to the start of the meeting Assistant Board Secretary Donald Goncalves introduced New Jersey Assemblyman Joseph Cryan.

Assemblyman Joseph Cryan stated that everywhere he goes throughout the State he has the honor of saying that he represents the City of Elizabeth in the State Assembly. Mr. Cryan stated that people ask him why he is so proud and he tells them it's because of nights like this and young people like this who define the very best of our City. Mr. Cryan stated that we have the greatest City in New Jersey not just because of great leaders like in our school system and in our City but because of great parents, great teachers, and people who come together for a great cause. Mr. Cryan stated that nothing unites us more than our children and our children's success. Mr. Cryan stated that if you are a principal, vice principal, teacher, or parent who is here to cheer on your students you have a lot to be proud of and if you are a marching band parent you might be happy that practice is over. Mr. Cryan stated that the marching band is the best and has been recognized as the best and the students who have done such a great job in the classroom are the best. Mr. Cryan congratulated the students and stated that tonight we are celebrating excellence.

Board President Tony Monteiro welcomed everyone to our Night of Excellence and introduced Vice President Elcy Castillo-Ospina and Board members Rafael Fajardo, Jose Rodriguez, and Carlos Trujillo.

Board President Tony Monteiro presented the following statement at 6:40 p.m.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening. This is a special meeting of the Board of Education. Pursuant to New Jersey Statutes and the rules adopted by the Board of Education, notice of this meeting was sent to Worrall Community Newspapers, The Star Ledger and Cablevision of Elizabeth on Wednesday, May 21, 2014. In addition, this notice is posted on the Bulletin Board in the lobby of 500 North Broad Street, and pursuant to this act, a copy has been filed with the City Clerk of Elizabeth."

"I wish to extend a warm welcome to everyone present to this May 27, 2014 meeting of the Board of Education. We are here to govern, provide management oversight, and make policy for the district. The Superintendent manages the district. This is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public."

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

Present: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, Neron (arr. 7:25 p.m.), Perreira (arr. 7:00 p.m.), Rodriguez, Trujillo, Monteiro – 7

Absent: Ms. Bathelus, Mr. González – 2

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., Assistant Superintendent for Family and Community Outreach Jerome Dunn, Acting Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Rafael Cortes, Acting

Assistant Superintendent for Schools Linda Seniszyn, Assistant Board Secretary Donald Goncalves, Comptroller William Greene, Supervising General Counsel/Board Attorney Marvin Lehman, and members of the public were in attendance.

Mr. Monteiro welcomed Reverend Steffie Bartley, Elizabeth Public School team members, parents, friends, and most importantly the students of the Elizabeth High School Marching Band, Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy, Elizabeth High School, and Terence C. Reilly School No. 7. Mr. Monteiro stated that we are here tonight to celebrate excellence in academics and the arts as we honor these four groups of students for their exemplary accomplishments.

Mr. Trujillo excused himself from the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Yadira Lazo from Elizabeth High School Marching Band, Favrice Juin from Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy, Monica Sanchez from Elizabeth High School, and Alessandra Sommer from Terence C. Reilly School No. 7.

The *Star-Spangled Banner* by Francis Scott Key was performed by the Elizabeth High School Marching Band.

Reverend Steffie Bartley, Pastor of New Hope Memorial Baptist Church, gave the invocation.

The Pledge of Ethics was led by Sabrina Olivera from Elizabeth High School Marching Band, Constanza Silva from Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy, Tyanna Diaz from Elizabeth High School, and Angelina Santana from Terence C. Reilly School No. 7.

Mr. Monteiro recognized former Board of Education Presidents Armando DaSilva and Marie Munn who have joined us to celebrate excellence tonight.

Mr. Monteiro introduced a video presentation of the Core Beliefs and Commitments.

Mr. Monteiro introduced Acting Assistant Superintendent for Schools Linda Seniszyn.

Acting Assistant Superintendent for Schools Linda Seniszyn welcomed everyone and stated that we are proud of our students and wish to celebrate their accomplishments during this Night of Excellence. Mrs. Seniszyn stated that it is with great pride that she stands here representing the administration in this district. Mrs. Seniszyn stated that as a district our vision is to become one of the best school systems in America and with this national recognition earned by each of the four groups being celebrated we are on our way to reaching that goal. Mrs. Seniszyn congratulated the band members of the Elizabeth High School Marching Band for winning the US Bands Group 5A State and National Championships for the third consecutive year, students from Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 for receiving the National Title 1 Distinguished Award, and students from both Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy and Elizabeth High School for being ranked among the best high schools in New Jersey and America by The Washington Post and U.S. News & World Report. Mrs. Seniszyn thanked the Board of Education, administrators, teachers, parents, and students for a job well done.

Mr. Monteiro thanked Mrs. Seniszyn for her remarks. Mr. Monteiro introduced Board member Rafael Fajardo.

Mr. Fajardo commented that it is a great honor to be here on this Night of Excellence with so many young men and women in the City of Elizabeth who can achieve at the highest level if they are provided with the right tools to get educated. Mr. Fajardo stated that he is so happy to see that the Elizabeth school system is going places and we are not just going to be the Number One Urban School District in the State of New Jersey but we are going to be the Number One School District in the State of New Jersey. Mr. Fajardo stated that the students are making that dream come possible.

Mr. Monteiro thanked Mr. Fajardo for his comments.

Mr. Monteiro introduced Vice Principal of Elizabeth High School Thomas O'Donnell, Principal of Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy George Mikros, Vice Principal of Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy Jacques Gonzales, Vice Principal of Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy Valerie Delceg, Principal of Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 Jennifer Cedeno, Vice Principals of Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 Andreia Milano and Joia Dickenson, Supervisor of Music Dennis Argul, and Marching Band Co-Directors Wayne Dillon and Benjamin Schwartz.

Mr. Fajardo excused himself from the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Mr. Monteiro welcomed the National Cheerleaders Association Spirit Award winning Elizabeth High School Cheerleaders and the newest mascot of Elizabeth Athletics.

Mr. Monteiro thanked the cheerleaders and the new mascot. Mr. Monteiro introduced Board member Jose Rodriguez to recognize the Marching Band.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that the Elizabeth Public Schools is dedicated to recognizing the excellence of those who continually contribute to the district's vision of becoming one of the best school systems in America. Mr. Rodriguez stated that the Night of Excellence Ceremony was created to honor students who have performed at a prestigious level through demonstrating exceptional dedication, determination, and perseverance. Mr. Rodriguez stated that the next group of talented, dedicated young men and women and the professionals who lead them in their high caliber performances have achieved not only a State Championship Title but also a National Championship Title and are now the three time defending State and National Champions US Bands Group 5A after winning the State and National Championships in 2013. Mr. Rodriguez stated that they have gone undefeated in three consecutive seasons. Mr. Rodriguez stated that they were also the only high school group to perform this past February at the Super Bowl for Media Day and Game Day events.

Mr. Monteiro introduced the Elizabeth High School Marching Band who performed *Descarga Cubana Part 1*. Mr. Monteiro thanked them for the wonderful performance and introduced Supervisor of Music Dennis Argul.

Supervisor of Music Dennis Argul stated that he has the distinct privilege of recognizing these fine young men and women. Mr. Argul stated that Mr. Rodriguez gave accolades to the band members but he respectfully has to disagree with something Mr. Cryan said earlier for the band parents to be glad it's over because if you are a member of the band you're a member of the band staff and if you are a band parent you know it is never over but just continues into the next season. Mr. Argul stated that we use the word excellence in this district very often and it is a word that sometimes loses its luster but it is a word from the Latin which means to excel past heaven, excelsis, to go past heaven. Mr. Argul stated that he had the pleasure for the last two years to travel with these young men and women and their staff and on a daily basis that is exactly what they do for the Elizabeth Public Schools, and more so than on the competition field they just exceed every expectation and he is happy to be a part of that team. Mr. Argul invited the Elizabeth High School Marching Band to come forward for their well-deserved recognition.

Mr. Monteiro thanked Supervisor of Music Dennis Argul, EHS Marching Band Co-Directors Wayne Dillon and Benjamin Schwartz, and members of the Elizabeth High School Marching Band. Mr. Monteiro and Board members congratulated them and presented each band member with a plaque of commemoration.

Mrs. Castillo-Ospina stated that the next group of students attend Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy that was ranked among the best high schools in New Jersey and America by The Washington Post and U.S. News & World Report. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina stated that this school was ranked No. 11 in New Jersey and No. 613 in America by The Washington Post and No. 30 in New Jersey and No. 836 in America by U.S. News & World Report. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina stated that in its performance on state assessments the school attained the rankings of very high performing in academic achievement in a peer comparison, high performing in a statewide comparison, and high performing in college and career readiness when compared to its peer schools. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina introduced a video presentation of highlights from Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy.

Mrs. Castillo-Ospina introduced the Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy Choir who performed *Happy* by Pharrel Williams. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina thanked the students for a wonderful performance. Mrs. Castillo-Ospina introduced Principal of Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy George Mikros.

Principal of Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy George Mikros stated that everyone here tonight had a part in reaching our goals of achieving excellence in teaching and student learning for the Board of Education's vision to be one of the best schools in America. Mr. Mikros thanked Superintendent Hugelmeyer for her support and thanked the parents for their unconditional love and guidance and stated that this would not have been possible without the great work our teachers, support staff, and administrators do each and every day. Mr. Mikros stated that on behalf of the Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy he extended congratulations to Terence C. Reilly School No. 7, Elizabeth High School, and Elizabeth High School Marching Band for their excellent accomplishments. Mr. Mikros stated that Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy opened its doors six short years ago and has achieved success in education and is building a beautiful legacy. Mr. Mikros congratulated the students, teachers, support staff, and team members for their commitment to achieving excellence. Mr. Mikros invited the students to come forward for their well-deserved recognition.

Mr. Monteiro thanked George Mikros, Principal of Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy. Mr. Monteiro and Board members congratulated the students and presented each with a plaque of commemoration.

Mr. Neron recognized another of our high schools that was ranked among the best in New Jersey and America by The Washington Post and U.S. News & World Report. Mr. Neron stated that Elizabeth High School was ranked No. 1 in New Jersey and No. 34 in America by The Washington Post and No. 11 in New Jersey and No. 221 in America by U.S. News & World Report. Mr. Neron stated that this school has a 96% graduation rate with a total enrollment of 769 students and has attained an impressive 99% proficiency or advanced proficiency on the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). Mr. Neron stated that this school was recently identified by the State of New Jersey as very high performing in the category of academic achievement in both peer and statewide comparisons. Mr. Neron introduced a video presentation of the highlights of Elizabeth High School.

Mr. Neron introduced students in the Elizabeth High School Jazz Ensemble who performed *Blues March* by Benny Golson. Mr. Neron thanked the students for a wonderful performance. Mr. Neron introduced the Vice Principal of Elizabeth High School Thomas O'Donnell.

Vice Principal of Elizabeth High School Thomas O'Donnell stated that it is his pleasure to be here and stated that at Elizabeth High School their vision is to get their students ready to attend a top tier college. Mr. O'Donnell stated that he is proud to be here tonight on this Night of Excellence with Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy, Terence C. Reilly School No. 7, and the Elizabeth High School Marching Band. Mr. O'Donnell stated that nothing could be accomplished without having the greatest students to work with and that they truly are. Mr. O'Donnell thanked the Superintendent and the Board of Education for all of their support, thanked the parents for all they do and stated that working with them is a pleasure, and especially thanked the faculty and staff who are consummate professionals and always driving our students to do their best. Mr. O'Donnell invited the students to come forward for their well-deserved recognition.

Mr. Monteiro thanked Thomas O'Donnell, Vice Principal of Elizabeth High School. Mr. Monteiro and Board members congratulated the students and presented each with a plaque of commemoration.

Mr. Perreira stated that Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 was 1 of 59 schools throughout the country to be recognized as a National Title I Distinguished School for exceptional student achievement in 2013. Mr. Perreira stated that this designation is awarded in honor of the efforts of schools across the country in making significant improvements for their students. Mr. Perreira stated that the program has been in place since 1996 highlighting the success of hundreds of schools in the categories of exceptional student performance for two or more consecutive years and closing the achievement gap between students. Mr. Perreira introduced a video presentation of the Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 highlights.

Mr. Perreira introduced students from Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 who performed a dance routine to *One Club at a Time* by Midnight Red. Mr. Perreira thanked the students for a wonderful performance. Mr. Perreira introduced Principal of Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 Jennifer Cedeno.

Principal of Terence C. Reilly School No. 7 Jennifer Cedeno stated that it is an honor and privilege to be here at this Night of Excellence and to stand alongside dedicated staff and dedicated parents from Terence C. Reilly School No. 7. Mrs. Cedeno stated that she was proud to accept the National Title I Distinguished School Award presented in California and stood with 58 other schools as one of the best in America. Mrs. Cedeno congratulated the Elizabeth High School Marching Band, Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy, and Elizabeth High School on their excellent accomplishments and stated with our national recognition we are on our way to becoming the best school district in America. Mrs. Cedeno thanked the Superintendent, Board of Education, and administrators for their support for Terence C. Reilly School No. 7. Mrs. Cedeno thanked the teachers, support staff, and parents for their excellence and dedication to Terence C. Reilly School No. 7. Mrs. Cedeno invited the students to come forward for their well-deserved recognition.

Mr. Perreira thanked Jennifer Cedeno, Principal of Terence C. Reilly School No. 7. Mr. Perreira and Board members congratulated the students and presented each with a plaque of commemoration.

Mr. Monteiro congratulated the students, teachers, and the parents and thanked everyone for attending this Night of Excellence.

Since there were no citizens signed in to address the Board, Mr. Monteiro declared the public speaking portion of the meeting closed.

On a motion by Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, seconded by Mr. Rodriguez, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Neron, Perreira, Rodriguez, Monteiro – 5

Negative: None

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