

BOARD OF EDUCATION
(Official)

June 29, 2017
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called on June 29, 2017 at 6:30 p.m., in the Donald Stewart Early Childhood Center, 544 Pennsylvania Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Board President Stanley Neron presented the following statement at 7:00 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 The Star Ledger and Cablevision of Elizabeth on June 26, 2017. 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 June 29, 2017 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 must sign in up to the start of public participation 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, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves, Mr. Neron – 5

Absent: Mrs. Amin, Messrs. Nina, Perreira, Rodriguez – 4

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., Co-General Counsel Jonathan Williams, Esq. of DeCotiis, Fitzpatrick & Cole, LLP, and members of the public were in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of Ethics

Board President Neron 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.”

Mr. Neron called upon the first public participant, Maria Lorenz, to address the Board.

Maria Lorenz, 103 Murray Street, spoke against Source4Teachers.

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

Christina Moreira, 805 Gebhardt Avenue, spoke against Source4Teachers and spoke about an alternative software program for substitute services.

Mr. Neron thanked her for her comments and called upon the next public participant, Salaam Ismial, to address the Board.

Salaam Ismial, 513 Richmond Street, United Youth Council, spoke about an Assembly Bill A114 that would require student instruction on interacting with law enforcement and asked the Board for a resolution denouncing this bill. Mr. Ismail asked about a date for the youth summit on gun violence awareness to be held in the summer and spoke about the incident with the substitute teacher.

Mr. Neron thanked him for his comments and called upon the next public participant, Maria Echavarria, to address the Board.

Maria Echavarria, 321 Westfield Avenue, asked about swimming lessons for her child and spoke about an incident with a substitute teacher from Source4Teachers.

Mr. Neron thanked her for her comments and called twice upon the next public participant, Suzette Negron, to address the Board. Since she did not come forward, Mr. Neron called upon the next public participant, Kason Little, to address the Board.

Kason Little, student, asked when the student advisory committee will start and when will the students know about the uniforms for the Academy of Finance.

Mr. Neron thanked him for his comments. Since there were no other citizens to address the Board, Mr. Neron declared this portion of the public meeting closed.

Co-General Counsel Jonathan Williams, Esq. of DeCotiis, Fitzpatrick & Cole, LLP, explained the process that led to the renewal of the contract for Source4Teachers. Mr. Williams stated that when the original contract for Source4Teachers was coming to a conclusion this Board voted to issue an RFP and to go out and search for replacement proposals for the placement of a company. Mr. Williams stated that we received only a couple of proposals. Mr. Williams stated that we sat down and negotiated and interviewed all of the companies that submitted proposals. Mr. Williams stated that at that point in time the only company that was able to perform and go forward was Source4Teachers. Mr. Williams stated that the reason for outsourcing substitute teachers has to do with changes in the federal health care law and the fact that the district would have had to absorb huge costs associated with providing health care insurance for substitute teachers. Mr. Williams stated that the private contract with the provider solved that problem. Mr. Williams stated that we have an obligation to do our procurements and our contracts in a way which recognizes the need for scrutiny and for screening of all of the people who are involved. Mr. Williams stated that was done all three times that we did an RFP which resulted in the Source4Teachers contract. Mr. Williams stated that of course what this 27-year old substitute teacher who worked for the outside company is accused of doing no one would obviously support or condone that kind of abuse. Mr. Williams stated that the criminal justice system will bring that matter to its appropriate conclusion in due course. Mr. Williams stated that members of this Board went through the process not once but three times to select the Source4Teachers contract and required proper screening, proper criminal background checks, and proper scrutiny. Mr.

Williams stated that for anyone to suggest that any member of this Board is equally responsible for the abuse of that child is reprehensible to make such a suggestion and crosses the line of propriety and very much crosses the line of what is appropriate in this setting.

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer stated that it is important to provide some clarification. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that first and foremost, no one is more outraged by what happened than this Board and herself. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that there are interpretations that are being made that are incorrect. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that this was an individual that was a long standing sub well before Source4Teachers and a member of the Elizabeth community that committed this crime. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that this is an individual that while subbing in our schools had a perfect record and that is important to note. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that in her opinion this is attributed to mental illness and this is an individual that made the wrong decision in the way in which she approached one of our children. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that let's be clear on the facts that Source4Teachers immediately removed this individual and our district immediately removed the individual as well. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that this matter was turned over to law enforcement and the matter was then referred to the Prosecutor's Office and within twenty-four hours they acted and arrested and took control of the situation. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that it is unfortunate and it is terrible what happened but let's be clear that this is not attributed to a vendor. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that this is a member of this community who unfortunately has some very serious personal issues and as a result one of our children suffered from it. Mrs. Hugelmeyer stated that those are the facts.

Mr. Neron stated that speaking on behalf of the Board we are appalled and extremely upset at what happened. Mr. Neron stated that it is totally unacceptable when matters like this are brought to our attention. Mr. Neron stated that it was immediately handled and brought to the authorities so that it may be handled efficiently and in a timely fashion. Mr. Neron stated that we do not condone these acts. Mr. Neron stated that obviously you can screen individuals, you can test them, they can be degreed, and you can put them through the wringer but when these deplorable acts happen, they happen and it is unfortunate. Mr. Neron stated that it is up to us as administrators and stewards of this district to make sure that they are handled immediately. Mr. Neron stated that this Board definitely does not condone these actions that took place. Mr. Neron stated that we are seeking to make sure that it never happens again by addressing our principals and our staff and making sure that everyone is on high alert at all times, which they are. Mr. Neron stated that things do happen and it is unfortunate that it did happen and it never should have happened.

Mr. Neron stated that with regard to the comments for Source4Teachers our attorney and Superintendent explained the process. Mr. Neron stated that coming to the Board of Education there was a lot of education that had to take place for the members to understand the procurement process and selecting an agency that would help this district. Mr. Neron stated that it is duly noted that Jersey City is using Source4Teachers again. Mr. Neron stated that we have put out an RFP to have different agencies apply for the opportunity to provide us with substitute teachers. Mr. Neron stated that Source4Teachers was awarded the bid because they came in as the lowest bidder and provided us with the best service. Mr. Neron asked can it be better and things be improved and stated that he thinks everything can be improved on an ongoing basis. Mr. Neron stated that we need to revisit the contract and we need to make sure that we sit down with them again to make sure that the process is in place. Mr. Neron stated that we need to refine and retune and make sure we receive the best possible service from an organization that can serve this district. Mr. Neron stated that is all he can say about this situation because if you were sitting here with what we are faced with the cost and providing health care and making sure the school is fully staffed with substitutes and we don't want our schools to go without substitutes and we don't want our classes to be unsupervised. Mr. Neron stated that every Board member is constantly making sure that we are in touch with the Superintendent to make sure that if we hear anything of that nature that it is being addressed.

Mr. Neron stated that last month we approved a resolution for gun violence awareness and we want to present that resolution at the end of the meeting. Mr. Neron stated that he would

like to talk further with Mr. Ismail about the pros and cons about the bill so that we can educate the Board members and administrators on the best practices as far as rolling out this policy or act on finding a better way to educate our youth on what to do when stopped by the police. Mr. Neron stated that it is important that there is education out there for community relations when it comes to police and students.

Personnel Report – Retirements, etc.

A motion was made by Miss Goncalves, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the report be accepted.

The motion was carried by the following vote (except for F.M. and V.M. which did not receive the required number of votes):

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho (abstain- F.M., V.M.), Miss Goncalves, Mr. Neron (abstain- F.M., V.M.) – 5

Negative: None

Supplemental Personnel Report – Transfers, etc.

A motion was made by Miss Goncalves, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the report be accepted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves,
Mr. Neron – 5

Negative: None

Award of Contracts Report

A motion was made by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Miss Goncalves, that the report be accepted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves,
Mr. Neron – 5

Negative: None

Resolution – Amendment of Long Range Facility Plan and Pre-development Application – No. 6

A motion was made by Miss Goncalves, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves,
Mr. Neron – 5

Negative: None

Resolution – Amendment of Long Range Facility Plan and Pre-development Application – No. 26

A motion was made by Miss Goncalves, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves,
Mr. Neron – 5

Negative: None

Resolution – Authorizing Board President and Administrator to Approve Amendments to Lease Agreements for Properties Located at 437-439 and 441 Schiller Street

A motion was made by Ms. Bathelus, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves,
Mr. Neron – 5

Negative: None

Resolution – Authorizing Entry into Cooperative Purchasing Agreement with the County of Union
A motion was made by Miss Goncalves, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves,

Mr. Neron – 5

Negative: None

Resolution – Settlement Agreement between Elizabeth Board of Education and
Elizabeth Education Association - Grievances – Teachers’ Prep Periods

A motion was made by Miss Goncalves, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves,

Mr. Neron – 5

Negative: None

Resolution – Authorizing Entry into Cooperative Purchasing Agreement with the
County of Somerset

A motion was made by Miss Goncalves, seconded by Mrs. Barbosa, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves,

Mr. Neron – 5

Negative: None

Resolution – Approving Memorandum of Agreement between Elizabeth Board of Education and
Elizabeth Education Association Pursuant to Invoking the Doctrine of Necessity

A motion was made by Ms. Bathelus, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves,

Mr. Neron – 5

Negative: None

Resolution – Approving Memorandum of Agreement between Elizabeth Board of Education and
Elizabeth Administrative and Supervisory Council Pursuant to Invoking the Doctrine
of Necessity

A motion was made by Ms. Bathelus, seconded by Mrs. Carvalho, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves,

Mr. Neron – 5

Negative: None

Ms. Bathelus excused herself from the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Neron stated that our teachers and administrators now have a contract and that is a major accomplishment. Mr. Neron thanked the EEA, the EASC, along with our staff and Superintendent for working hard to make this possible. Mr. Neron stated that it was a long arduous process to get to this point and this is the key reason why we came together this evening to make sure that we could get our teachers a contract. Mr. Neron stated that without a contract it doesn’t show that we as a Board appreciate our teachers and administrators but it does take time. Mr. Neron stated that negotiations are a long and arduous process and they are happy to

accomplish this feat. Mr. Neron stated that it is a long time coming and finally this day has arrived. Mr. Neron thanked Joe Cortico, President of the EEA, and Ben Candelino, President of the EASC, for their hard work and their entire team. Mr. Neron wished the teachers and administrators a happy and awesome summer.

Mr. Kennedy stated that it is great that we can start off the July 1st year with a contract.

Mr. Neron stated that they will be presenting Salaam Ismail with the Resolution for gun violence awareness that was approved last meeting. Mr. Neron thanked Salaam Ismail for advocating and working so hard on this issue.

On a motion by Mrs. Carvalho, seconded by Miss Goncalves, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Barbosa, Mrs. Carvalho, Miss Goncalves, Mr. Neron – 4

Negative: None

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