

BOARD OF EDUCATION  
(Official)

August 14, 2014  
Elizabeth, New Jersey

A special meeting of the Board of Education was called on August 14, 2014 at 6:00 p.m., in the Multi Purpose Room, Donald Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education, 544 Pennsylvania Avenue, Elizabeth, New Jersey.

Board President Tony Monteiro presented the following statement at 6:05 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 Monday, August 11, 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 August 14, 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.”

“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 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: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 7

Absent: Messrs. Neron, Rodriguez – 2

Superintendent of Schools Olga Hugelmeyer, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy, Jr., Assistant Superintendent for Schools Linda Seniszyn, Comptroller William Greene, Associate Counsel Heather Ford, and members of the public were in attendance.

Mr. González gave the invocation.  
Pledge of Allegiance  
Pledge of Ethics

Mr. Monteiro 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 signed in to address the Board, Mr. Monteiro declared this portion of the public meeting closed.

#### Personnel Report – Reappointments, etc.

A motion was made by Mr. Trujillo, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that the report be accepted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 7

Negative: None

#### Supplemental Personnel Report – Reappointments, etc.

A motion was made by Mr. Trujillo, seconded by Mr. Perreira, that the report be accepted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 7

Negative: None

#### Superintendent’s Report – Use of Facilities

A motion was made by Mr. Fajardo, seconded by Ms. Bathelus, that the report be accepted.

Mr. Perreira requested the recommendation be amended to waive the facility fees as recommended for the request made by the Elizabeth Packers and to waive all fees for the State Police recruitment.

A motion was made by Mr. Fajardo, seconded by Mr. Trujillo, to amend the original motion and waive the facility fees as recommended for the request made by the Elizabeth Packers and a waiver of all fees for the State Police recruitment.

The amended motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Monteiro – 6

Abstain: Mr. Trujillo – 1

Negative: None

#### Authorizations Report – Authorization for Research Study

A motion was made by Mr. Fajardo, seconded by Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, that the report be accepted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 7

Negative: None

#### Resolution – India’s Independence Day

The resolution was read by Mrs. Castillo-Ospina.

A motion was made by Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, seconded by Mr. Trujillo, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 7

Negative: None

Mr. Monteiro stated that he would like to read a letter for Board consideration to send to staff members. Mr. Monteiro read the letter.

A motion was made by Mr. Trujillo, seconded by Mr. González, to send the letter to the staff members.

Ms. Bathelus asked if this letter should be brought up in new business.

Mr. Monteiro responded that he has to leave early and is bringing it to the Board at this time.

Ms. Bathelus asked why the letter was being sent to all the employees and that it is a matter for School No. 9.

Mr. Monteiro stated that the Mayor's comments are an insult to all of our employees.

Ms. Bathelus stated that we never sent a letter to the entire staff.

Mr. Monteiro stated that is the reason he is bringing it for Board approval.

Mr. Fajardo stated that it should be very clear that the purpose and the action of the Board of Education a few weeks ago to address the situation at George Washington School No. 1 will remain George Washington School No. 1. Mr. Fajardo stated that we will also have a second school in this very, very large complex which is housing almost 1300 students. Mr. Fajardo stated that it is very difficult to manage, very difficult to hold everyone accountable, very difficult to guarantee the success of the students in that area and that the Board of Education took that action in order to make sure that we improve the education of the children of the City. Mr. Fajardo stated that the name of George Washington is not coming down and that was never the purpose of the Board of Education and is not the purpose of the Board of Education. Mr. Fajardo stated that we all admire and we all know who President George Washington was and that he's the Father of Our Country. Mr. Fajardo stated that no one on this Board of Education will be disrespectful to do any such thing as to take his name down from any building and that would be heresy, as far as he is concerned. Mr. Fajardo stated that it is interesting that people on this Board of Education who are not sitting here tonight in their Facebook account took credit for the action that the Board of Education took. Mr. Fajardo stated that they are not here tonight to either agree with the Board or defend the actions of the Mayor.

Mr. Fajardo stated that when we created the Jerome Dunn Academy and divided the building into two schools, two learning, specialized academies, it was done for the purpose of getting the children to learn and improve education in that area of town. Mr. Fajardo stated that what this Mayor did by attacking the way he did and he attacked that principal, he attacked the children for his own political games of divide and conquer. Mr. Fajardo stated that it is unfortunate that a leader of a City would use his position to do such a thing. Mr. Fajardo stated that he believes that the Twitter messages that the Mayor sent out should be added to this letter so that the people who get this letter will understand and see exactly what his hate message was and so the people really understand exactly what it is that he said. Mr. Fajardo stated that let those who want to defend the Mayor's actions let them get up and defend his actions so people know exactly what it is. Mr. Fajardo stated that it is very sad and is horrible that something like this is

taking place but it is all demigod politics of divide and conquer to maintain himself in power and is not done for the interest of the taxpayers and the children here. Mr. Fajardo stated that it was done at the expense of the children of this City.

Mr. Fajardo stated that he would like to know if this letter can also be sent to everybody in the City of Elizabeth or at very least to the people in the area whose children are affected by this move of the Board of Education to improve education in that area. Mr. Fajardo stated that it may be a legal question but if we can send it to the entire City it would be preferable.

Mr. Trujillo stated that when we elect you President of this Board you speak on behalf of this entire Board and that is the way we are structured. Mr. Trujillo stated that Mr. Monteiro could have sent this letter as a private citizen and he chose to do it from here. Mr. Trujillo stated that he is going to support the fact that he does send it out. Mr. Trujillo stated that when he read the comments and it wasn't just those comments there were several other comments that followed where race was injected. Mr. Trujillo stated that when the question was asked would Mr. Rafael Fajardo support the removal of the name of José Martí who is a well-known and well respected person of Cuban origin and has a lot to do with history in Cuba, or when you ask the Haitian community if they would be upset with the removal of the name of one of their heroes or anyone else. Mr. Trujillo stated that when you start to ask those questions you interject not only your personal views but your racism.

Mr. Trujillo stated that quite frankly never were we intending to remove George Washington, on the contrary, and he would never support anything like that. Mr. Trujillo stated that in fact when he thinks of George Washington and the founding fathers of this country he thinks George Washington would be proud of a Jerome Dunn. Mr. Trujillo stated that it is absurd to him that a Mayor of the 4<sup>th</sup> largest City in the State of New Jersey would even get involved with the naming of a school. Mr. Trujillo stated that he lives in that neighborhood and the Mayor has never taken any interest in his neighborhood period, never mind the education of the children in his neighborhood. Mr. Trujillo stated that the Mayor could care less. Mr. Trujillo stated that Mayor Bollwage might as well be the Mayor of Union as he lives that far away from him. Mr. Trujillo stated that the Mayor is that disconnected from Mr. Trujillo's community and just because he comes to his community on occasion and throws around a few gifts he thinks that he represents all of us. Mr. Trujillo stated that the Mayor does not speak for us.

Mr. Trujillo stated that we are proud to have the name of Mr. Jerome Dunn on a building and he has had the privilege of knowing Jerome Dunn for eight years while serving on this Board. Mr. Trujillo stated that he cannot think of a better person to name a school after and while he has been on the Board they have named a lot of schools. Mr. Trujillo stated that it is an honor to give that to Mr. Jerome Dunn in life and how many times have we named a school after someone who has passed away so many years ago. Mr. Trujillo stated that to give that to Mr. Jerome Dunn in life makes it that much sweeter. Mr. Trujillo stated that in his neighborhood where he lives people respect Mr. Dunn and they really like Mr. Dunn and they were happy and continue to be happy that we have given him this honor.

Mr. Trujillo stated that what the Mayor tried to do was to misinform people that we were going to remove the name of George Washington and that is not what we did. Mr. Trujillo stated that Ms. Bathelus was here but didn't vote for it and that she knows that wasn't the intent. Mr. Trujillo stated that what they are trying to bring attention to is that what the Mayor did was wrong and he lied and went around and told everyone we were removing George Washington's name and that we were lying and that is not what happened here. Mr. Trujillo stated that we can't stand silent and the Mayor cannot sit back and continue to attack this Board of Education and lie and expect that this Board of Education just sit here and not respond. Mr. Trujillo stated that he should apologize. Mr. Trujillo stated that he tweeted back to the Mayor and said Mr. Jerome Dunn is a great man and he should apologize. Mr. Trujillo stated that he should apologize and he never should have even brought this conversation up. Mr. Trujillo stated that the Mayor should be proud of Mr. Dunn himself and elects not to and that's fine. Mr. Trujillo stated that the Mayor went as far as to insult the man. Mr. Trujillo asked why and stated that Mr. Dunn gave 43 years of his life to education and can't imagine how many lives he has touched in the City of Elizabeth, generations of children. Mr. Trujillo stated that he has seen it personally how three and four

generations can see Mr. Dunn and be happy and he knows all their names and this is a man who really cares about his community. Mr. Trujillo stated that Mr. Dunn has given so much to Elizabeth and the least we could do is to name a school after him. Mr. Trujillo stated that he wished we could erect a new school in his name and we didn't do enough and gave him half of a building. Mr. Trujillo stated that we should have given Mr. Dunn a whole block and that he deserves that much respect. Mr. Trujillo stated that for the Mayor to sit there and insult him and expect us to stay quiet is not going to happen. Mr. Trujillo stated that he is not going to stay quiet and the Mayor hasn't heard the last from him and he is going to continue to push until the Mayor apologizes to Mr. Dunn. Mr. Trujillo stated that Mr. Dunn deserves an apology and the Board President has every right, in his opinion, to write this letter and express our concerns and has to call him out. Mr. Trujillo stated that the people in his community, in his neighborhood that surround School No. 1, they want to know this and they need to know this. Mr. Trujillo stated that the Mayor does this and hides behind a tweet account and we don't all tweet and most people don't know what the Mayor said and they need to know. Mr. Trujillo stated that they need to know who the man is and he is a bigot and a racist. Mr. Trujillo stated that Mr. Dunn deserves an apology.

Mr. Trujillo stated that Ms. Bathelus cannot sit here and say she wants to continue to change things in this educational system and abstain every day. Mr. Trujillo stated that she abstained on Mr. Dunn, she abstains on bringing back teachers, and on hiring new teachers, and she has to take a stand. Mr. Trujillo stated that is what we do here, we take a stand and we make decisions.

Ms. Bathelus asked why Mr. Trujillo is worried about who she is voting for and what she is voting on. Ms. Bathelus stated that he should stay where he is at and vote for what he wants to vote for.

Mr. Trujillo stated that he has the floor.

Ms. Bathelus stated that he should not be questioning her about what she votes for.

Mr. Trujillo stated that he has the floor and this is the time to listen.

Ms. Bathelus stated that he is not going to tell her to listen and he is not going to question her and he is not going to tell her how to vote.

Mr. Monteiro stated that Mr. Trujillo has the floor and Ms. Bathelus can speak after.

Mr. Trujillo stated that it is really sad that we live in a City where the Mayor claims to represent all of us and is really more concerned on dividing us than representing all of us. Mr. Trujillo requested that the letter be sent and suggested that it be emailed to the staff if possible and make it public. Mr. Trujillo stated that it is important that we bring light to this issue so that it doesn't happen again so the next time there is another Jerome Dunn situation perhaps he would choose his words a little more wisely.

Mr. Fajardo stated that he wanted to add that Mr. Jerome Dunn ran a community program in School No. 1 for years to help the children of this area. Mr. Fajardo stated that only God knows how many children he was able to help and Mr. Dunn kept them from going the wrong way. Mr. Fajardo stated that Mr. Dunn did this for years and years in the neighborhood.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 6

Negative: Ms. Bathelus – 1

Mr. Fajardo stated that so it is very clear he thinks that it is important that this Board of Education ratifies that School No. 1 will still be named George Washington Academy and that half of the building will also be named Jerome Dunn Academy. Mr. Fajardo made a motion that the Board ratifies that tonight and then all the Board members vote as they feel so that we are all clear as to where we stand.

A motion was made by Mr. Fajardo, seconded by Mr. Trujillo, to re-ratify the vote of the naming of George Washington Academy of Science and Engineering School No. 1 and Jerome Dunn Academy of Mathematics, Technology, and the Arts School No. 9.

Ms. Bathelus asked why we voting on this again.

Mr. Fajardo stated that he made a motion to ratify what the Board of Education did in subdividing the school into two for the benefit of the children of the Elizabethport area and calling the school as we have called it for years. Mr. Fajardo stated that he attended school at George Washington School No. 1 and that the name is being maintained, George Washington Academy, and that the other half will be named Jerome Dunn Academy

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 6

Abstain: Ms. Bathelus – 1

Negative: None

Mr. Monteiro thanked his colleagues for supporting him on this. Mr. Monteiro stated that as everyone knows we are very passionate about what we do here and if anyone attacks any member of our staff here at the Elizabeth Board of Education we are going to fight and we feel passionately about what goes on here in this district and these people work very hard day in and day out. Mr. Monteiro stated that for two years as Board President he has worked his tail off to try to unite and bring some kind of civility between us, the Board of Education, and City Hall. Mr. Monteiro stated that the people know that the Board of Education and City of Elizabeth butt heads and he has tried his darnedest and extended the olive branch time and time again to City Hall to bring us together. Mr. Monteiro stated that we are a great urban school district we could be a great urban City and we could be the best urban City that this country has. Mr. Monteiro stated that he doesn't know what the fatal attraction is in City Hall with the Elizabeth Board of Education and he cannot understand why they want to keep tearing us down and knocking down the good men and women who work here. Mr. Monteiro stated that he doesn't know how anyone wins by doing that. Mr. Monteiro stated that nothing more is wanted from this Board than to work with City Hall and to work with everyone in the City. Mr. Monteiro stated that we've got to find a way to stop this and find a way to build a bridge and make this one great City and it can be done.

The President requests a motion to go into Private Session to consider matters exempt under the Open Public Meetings Act, specifically for discussion of personnel, specifically interviews. The Board will reconvene in public to take formal action.

A motion was made by Mr. Trujillo, seconded by Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, to go into private session at 6:40 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:  
Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 7  
Negative: None

The Board reconvened in public at 7:05 p.m.

Resolution – Appointment of Interim Principal – Yvonne McGovern

The resolution was read by Mr. Fajardo.

A motion was made by Mr. Fajardo, seconded by Mr. Trujillo, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 7  
Negative: None

Resolution – Appointment of Interim Principal – Chi-hui Alfaro

The resolution was read by Mr. Trujillo.

A motion was made by Mr. Trujillo, seconded by Mr. Fajardo, that the resolution be adopted.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 7  
Negative: None

Mr. Trujillo requested that the letter the Board of Education is sending to staff members be also put on the district website and translated into Spanish and French Creole.

On a motion by Mr. Trujillo, seconded by Mr. Fajardo, the meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Ms. Bathelus, Mrs. Castillo-Ospina, Messrs. Fajardo, González, Perreira, Trujillo, Monteiro – 7  
Negative: None

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