BOARD OF EDUCATION Official Minutes

Approved February 20th Board Meeting

January 14, 2025

Elizabeth, New Jersey

Board President Stanley J. Neron called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m. and welcomed everyone to the January 14, 2025 regular agenda/business meeting of the Elizabeth Board of Education and read the following statement:

"Good evening and welcome to the Board of Education Meeting of the Elizabeth Board of Education. This is a combined regular agenda and business 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 10, 2025. 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, New Jersey.

"We want to welcome everyone present here at School No. 51 and to our television viewers to this January 14, 2025, 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. So that the recording will adequately reflect the proceedings, please refrain from talking while others are speaking.

We ask that you silence the sound on your electronic devices. Since it is legally mandated that these proceedings be accurately recorded, we may have to ask for order periodically should noise begin to interfere with our recording capabilities.

"There will be a public portion for citizens to address the Board. Participants for the public portion must personally sign in prior to the start of the public participation portion 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."

We are pleased that you have taken time this evening to join us here for our Board of Education meeting. Thank you for your interest in the Elizabeth Public Schools."

Present: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Chevres, (arrived at 6:59 p.m.), Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Neron-7

Absent: Ms. Bathelus, Mr. Rivera -2

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, Assistant Superintendent for Schools, Judy Finch Johnson, Assistant Superintendent for Schools, Rafael Cortes Jr., School Business Administrator/Board Secretary Harold E. Kennedy Jr., Comptroller Rajeev Malhotra, Deputy Counsel, Heather Savage Ford, Chief of Operations, Frank Cuesta, and Co-General Counsel, Edward Kologi Esq., of Kologi Simitz Law Office, were in attendance.

A Moment of Silence was held in memory of Frank Marinaccio, Retired Bus Driver, Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Academy, Debra Lillian Carroll, Retired Administrative Secretary for the Visual and Performing Arts Department, Imperial Building and Nathaniel Burns, Retired Custodian, George Washington Academy of Science & Engineering School No. 1

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Member, Stephanie Goncalves Pestana

The Pledge of Ethics was led by Board Member, Jerry Jacobs.

The Star-Spangled Banner by Francis Scott Key was played.

Board President Stanley Neron introduced District Superintendent, Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, and asked her to present the Student Representative to the Board of Education for the month of January. Jeissy Chevez is a dedicated and hardworking senior at JVJ STEM Academy School No. 92, where she excels as a leader and advocate within her school community. Jeissy is a computer science career student who is deeply involved in school activities, serving as the secretary of student government. In this role, she works tirelessly to represent her peers and contribute to the betterment of the school environment. She is also an active member of the STEM Club, Yearbook Club, and Newspaper Club, where her creativity, teamwork, and leadership shine. In addition to her organizational involvement, Jeissy serves as a peer mentor to underclassmen, offering guidance and support to help younger students navigate their academic and personal journeys. She is also the co-chair of the Breaking Barriers Conference, demonstrating her passion for fostering inclusivity and addressing important issues within her community.

As a student leader, Jeissy is committed to advocating for change and empowering others. Her dedication to making a meaningful impact through the organizations she belongs to is a testament to her compassion, resilience, and vision for a better future. Dr. Hugelmeyer stated it was her pleasure to ask Miss Chevez to come forward and take her seat on the Dais.

Mr. Neron asked Mr. Kennedy to memorialize Miss Chevez's attendance in the official proceedings of the meeting. This was noted and Miss Cheves's attendance is recorded in this, the official minutes of the meeting.

Mr. Neron then read the following statement: Citizens may address the Board.

"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 microphone 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 60 minutes. No individual is able to yield their time to another individual. All comments shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board Members individually. Each speaker shall comply in all respects with Board Policy 9322 (copies were provided next to the sign in sheet)".

The following rules shall apply:

- 1. Time limits will be strictly enforced.
- 2. No personal attacks on individuals or the naming of individuals.
- 3. No vulgar or indecent language.
- 4. A person may address the Board no more than once during a single meeting.
- 5. Comments will not be debated.

Any person in violation of the Policy will be warned, and their comments terminated if needed. If such violation continues, this individual may be escorted from the meeting."

"As a reminder this is a meeting of the Board in public, not a meeting of the public."

Since there were no public participants signed up to address the Board, Mr. Neron closed this portion of the meeting.

Board President Stan Neron asked Schools Superintendent, Dr. Olga Hugelmeyer, to begin the community announcements for the month of January. Mr. Neron asked that each Board Member step off the dais and join him in the front row of the meeting room.

Dr Hugelmeyer began by saying, that to commence our presentations this evening, we wish to express our profound gratitude to a remarkable group of individuals – the esteemed members of the Elizabeth Board of Education. These nine dedicated volunteers generously dedicate countless hours to ensure that every student in our district has the opportunity to thrive academically and personally.

In observance of School Board Recognition Month, we are honored to present a framed resolution signed by Governor Phil Murphy to each of our Board members as a token of our sincere appreciation for their unwavering leadership, tireless dedication, and the invaluable sacrifices they make in service of our students and schools.

Mr. Neron thanked Dr. Hugelmeyer for the framed resolutions and then stated that to conclude the presentations from our opening calendar this evening, he would like to share a video showcasing the continued partnership between the Elizabeth Police Department and Elizabeth Public Schools. In continuing with his youth mentoring initiative with Elizabeth Police Department Chief of Police Giacomo Sacca, Elizabeth Public Schools students will again have the opportunity to participate in valuable mentoring sessions.

Throughout the academic year, dedicated officers will engage with students from several district schools, guiding them in cultivating essential life skills such as patience and perseverance. Through engaging educational and interactive sessions, students will foster positive relationships, develop a strong sense of civic responsibility, and experience significant growth academically, socially, and emotionally.

At the conclusion of the video, Mr. Neron asked Mr. John Swisher a Partner with the District's auditing firm Supple Clooney and Company to come forward to present the audit report for the 2023-2024 school year." Mr. Swisher informed the Board that he was pleased to report that there were no findings in the Audit Report. The finding that had been reported in the prior year's audit, with the calculation for the Food Services Enterprise Fund had been rectified through a corrective action plan. Mr. Swisher stated that they had done a comprehensive review of Payroll and Accounts Payable, and all was found in good order. In addition, a review of the District's Financial Reserves indicated that these Reserve accounts were being funded properly. Board Member Jerry Jacobs thanked Mr. Swisher for their work and inquired, was this the first time we had a totally clean audit? Mr. Swisher replied that there had been several Findings Free audits prior to 2022-2023 school year. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Swisher thanked Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Malhotra, and the Accounting and Business office staff for their help and cooperation in getting the audit completed in a timely manner.

Mr. Neron asked Dr. Hugelmeyer to return to giving the Community updates. The Superintendent showed Power Point Slides that highlighted the following:

There will be a Wreath-Laying Ceremony on Wednesday -January 15, 205 @ 4:00 p.m. at the MLK Monument at Winfield Scott Plaza outside City Hall here in Elizabeth. It will feature students from Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy, Winfield Scott School No. 2 and the EHS Marching Band and Color Guard as we celebrate and memorialize the life and accomplishments of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Schools and the District administrative offices will be closed on Monday, January 20th., in observance of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday.

Registration for the Early Childhood Lottery will take place from February 19th to March 21st.

The application period for the Gifted and Talented Program will run from February 25 to April 4th. There will be a Gifted & Talented Information Session on February 25th at School 22 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Dr. Hugelmeyer presented a series of Power Point Slides that were part of the Inside EPS News from our Central Administration.

J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy's NAF Academy of Finance has been recognized as a Model Distinguished status academy by NAF for the eighth year in a row. Each year, NAF academies are evaluated through a rigorous process to ensure the highest level of support to students. Schools are scored in four major categories, including Academy Development and Structure, Advisory Board, Program of Study (Curriculum and Instruction) and Work -Based Learning. The scores earned for each of those categories are combined to produce an overall score for the school. The Model/Distinguished status, achieved by both Bollwage Finance Academy's NAF Academy of Finance and John E. Dwyer Technology Academy's NAF Academy of Information Technology, highlights the unwavering dedication of their respective educators, advisory board members, support staff, and administrators in providing high-quality career focused educational experiences for our high school students.

Alexander Hamilton Preparatory Academy Alumnus Joseph Quinn-Vitabile was one of 111 high school and college students from all of New Jersey's 21 counties to be selected as a Governor's STEM scholar for 2025.

Mr. Quinn Vitabile is a third-year computer science major and physics minor at Montclair State University. He recently interned at Johnson & Johnson Technology Services in the area of reliability operations and cloud computing, where he developed software tools for Application Maintenance Leadership and an infrastructure - provisioning automation tool for Amazon Web Services managed databases.

Governor's STEM Scholars (CSS) is a public -private partnership with the Research & Development Council of New Jersey, the Office of the Governor, the New Jersey Department of Education and public and private research institutions. GSS works to sustain and strengthen New Jersey's STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) talent pipeline by introducing the state's STEM students to the R&D and STEM ecosystem.

On January 11th, Elizabeth athletics honored the 1984 and 1985 Minutemen basketball teams on the 40th anniversary of their respective County and state Championship runs. The 1984 team won the Union County Tournament with a 57-42 victory over Plainfield and the 1985 team won the Union County Championship with a 70-56 victory over Rahway as well as the Group 4 state championship with a victory over Camden. Both teams

were guided by NJSIAA Hall of Fame coach Ben Candelino during his first two seasons as coach of the Minutemen. The Minutemen would win 9 county tournaments, seven North 2, Group 4 sectional titles, 5 Group 4 championships and Tournament of Champions title in 1990 with a 65-61 victory of St. Anthony's during Coach Candelino's tenure.

Mr. Neron commenced a review of the evening's Agenda.

- Tab 1a) Official and Private Minutes (December 19, 2024) were added to the Agenda.
- Tab 1b) Treasurer/Secretary's Report (November 30th, 2024) was added to the Agenda

Tab 2a) Personnel Report was added to the Agenda.

Tab 3) Tuitions Report was added to the Agenda

Tab 4) Superintendent's Reports was added to the Agenda.

Tab 4a) Considerations was added to the Agenda

Tab 4b) Use of Facilities was added to the Agenda

Tab 4bb) Use of Facilities - Considerations was added to the Agenda

Tab 4c) was added to the Agenda

Tab 5) Authorizations Report was added to the Agenda

Tab 6) Finance and Accounting Report – Mr. Jacobs questioned some transfers regarding Mechanics accounts. Mr. Malhotra explained he separated temporary mechanic expenses from the plant overtime account that included custodians and others. This was done to give better visibility to maintenance expenses. The reclass included expenses incurred from July 2024 through December 2024.

Tab 6) Finance and Accounting Report was added to the Agenda.

Tab 6a) Supplemental Finance and Accounting Report – Transfer of Funds was added to the Agenda.

Tab 7) Award of Contracts Report -Mrs. Moreno Ortega had questions on the first two contracts: VIP Community Services Inc, and Therapeutic Learning Connections, LLC, both of which are Title 1 Parent and Family Engagement Workshops. Mrs. Moreno-Ortega asked how topics were determined. Dr Kathy Badalis replied that surveys are conducted, and menu choices are given to parents and schools to determine topic coverage. She further explained that sessions are in person and the contractors providing the workshops do give out contact information as well as additional information that parents and members of the community can source through the respective school's guidance departments.

Tab 7) Award of Contracts was added to the Agenda.

Tab 9) Claims list was added to the Agenda.

Standing Committees

- Educational Management Committee Stephanie Goncalves Pestana - Chairperson Maria Carvalho Rosa Moreno-Ortega
- Legal Committee Isaias Rivera – Chairperson Maria Z. Carvalho Illiana Chevres
- Finance & Accounting Committee Jerry D. Jacobs - Chairperson Charlene Bathelus Stepanie Goncalves Pestana
- School Properties Committee Maria Z. Carvalho- Chairperson Illiana Chevres Jerry D. Jacobs
- Special Committees Negotiations Jerry D. Jacobs-Chairperson Charlene Bathelus Stepahanie Goncalves Pestana Isaias Rivera
- Special Education Committee Illiana Chevres-Chairperson Diane Barbosa Isaias Rivera

Representatives

- Union County Educational Service Committees-Jerry D. Jacobs
- Urban School Boards Jerry D. Jacobs
- Union County School Boards Association Isaias Rivera
- New Jersey School Boards Association Rosa Moreno-Ortega

Board President Stanley Neron asked the Student Representative, Miss Jeissy Chavez, to present her report.

Good evening, Dr. Hugelmeyer, members of the Board of Education, and community members. My name is Jeissy Chevez, and I am honored to serve as the Student Representative for JVJ STEM Academy for the 2024-2025 academic year. In addition to my role as Student Government Secretary, I am a senior peer mentor and actively involved in various clubs, all of which have kept me deeply connected to the programs and activities at STEM. This year has been an exceptional year for JVJ STEM Academy, filled with meaningful initiatives that reflect our school's commitment to both academic excellence and community engagement. We began the school year by organizing a "Pink Out" event along the Elizabeth River Trail in support of Cancer Awareness Month. It was heartwarming to see students and staff come together to participate, sharing personal stories that made the experience truly impactful.

Our school's focus this year has been to empower students to actively contribute to the community, help their peers, and prepare for a successful future. Some of our recent efforts include a Thanksgiving food drive, organized through the combined efforts of our Student Government, the Elizabeth Police Department PBA Local #4, the Elizabeth Education Association, and our Transition Program. The drive provided non-perishable food items to students and community members in need. Similarly, we held a Holiday Toy and Coat Drive, where students from both our main and annex buildings donated toys and coats to be given to anonymous students during the holiday season. At STEM, we believe that creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment is key to a successful academic experience.

As a relatively new school, STEM has been consistently finding new ways to improve school culture. We were recognized as one of only 30 Microsoft Incubator schools in the U.S., and we held our first-ever Black History Month tour last year. JVJ STEM has only improved since. Thanks to the work of our administrators and guidance team, we have developed several programs that help students thrive both academically and personally. One such initiative is our Senior Peer Mentor Program, which helps first-year students at the annex transition into high school by providing them with the tools and guidance they need to navigate their early years successfully. Another exciting development is our Agricultural Engineering Club, where students use indoor gardening systems to grow and harvest crops. The club, led by our dedicated educator Ms. Serralheiro, has received numerous grants to expand its operations, providing students with hands-on experience in agriculture. We also dedicated time during our Week of Respect to promote kindness, inclusivity, and respect across our school community. The week featured a variety of activities, including daily mystery guest speakers making announcements on respect, with prizes awarded to homerooms that correctly identified the speaker. In addition to promoting health awareness, STEM also provides students with valuable academic opportunities. During Red Ribbon Week, our school hosted impactful health and wellness presentations, raising awareness about the dangers of drug abuse across all grade levels. Students were engaged and empowered to make informed choices about their health. We also welcomed college admission counselors to our school, offering students a chance to learn more about the college environment and the admissions process. This opportunity gave students a firsthand look at what their future could hold, helping them make more informed decisions about their post-graduation paths.

Elizabeth Public Schools' other high schools are also thriving with a variety of exciting and impactful events. Students at Thomas Jefferson Arts Academy recently participated in a successful Paint Night, where both students and adults created artwork based on themes like *Pokémon* and *Starry Night*. This creative event brought the community together while allowing participants to express their artistic talents. Additionally, Jefferson's production of *Grease* was a standout success. The cast performed the show first at local elementary schools, bringing the classic musical to younger students, and then staged the full production at their high school. The performance was a testament to the dedication and hard work of their talented theater students. At Thomas A. Edison Career and Technical Academy, students are actively participating in a community food drive. Anyone wishing to donate can contact the school's secretary. The collected food is shipped to School Seven and then sent to the Elizabeth Port Community Center, helping families in need this holiday season. Meanwhile, J. Christian Bollwage Finance Academy has been celebrating Muslim American Month with a variety of enriching activities. Students participated in a Geometric Art and Design contest, learned Arabic calligraphy, and enjoyed food from Islamic cultures. They also had the opportunity to experience costume henna tattoos and celebrated World Hijab Day by trying on hijabs, learning more about cultural traditions and fostering a greater sense of inclusion.

These activities reflect the vibrancy of our High School's as a whole and their commitment to providing students with enriching experiences that extend beyond the classroom. I'm proud to represent JVJ STEM Academy and share the exciting initiatives happening throughout Elizabeth Public Schools. Thank you again for allowing me to share all the wonderful and exciting activities Elizabeth High School students and teachers worked hard to organize.

Resolutions 10 to 10n were added to the Agenda.

Mr. Neron stated that the President requests a motion to go into Private Session to consider matters exempt under the Open Public Meetings Act, specifically for discussion of:

Legal Matters – specifically Workman's Compensation J.C., V.C., and potential litigation (Attorney-client privilege)

Personnel Matters-E.N. and Reorganization.

The Board will reconvene in public and may take formal action.

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana and seconded by Mrs. Barbosa to go into private session at 7:37 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Chevres, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Neron. -7

Negative: None

A motion was made by Mrs. Carvalho and seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana to return to public session at 9:09 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Chevres, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Neron - 7

The following items were added to the Agenda:

Resolution -Settlement of Worker's Compensation Claim – J.C.

Resolution - Reorganization

Resolution - Appointment of Interim School Business Administrator Rajeev Malhotra.

Resolution – Termination of Employment – E.D.N.

Mr. Neron asked for a motion and a second to adopt the following agenda

Opening Calendar Official and Private Minutes (December 19, 2024) Treasurer/Secretary's Report (November 30, 2024) Personnel Reports Tuitions Reports Superintendent's Reports Authorizations Report Finance and Accounting Report – Pay Vouchers Supplemental Finance and Accounting Report – Transfer of Funds Award of Contracts Report Claims List

Resolutions: Appointment of Architects Appointment of Construction Managers Appointment of Engineers Appointment of Environmental Consultants Appointment of Special Counsel Acceptance of Audit Year Ended 2023-2024 Requisition for Taxes National School Counseling Week Payment for Unused Vacation Days Career and Technical Education Month Children's Dental Health Month African American Heritage Month Transfer of Maintenance Reserve Funds Nathaniel Burns Remembrance Workers' Comp Settlement - J.C. Appointment of Interim Assistant School Business Administrator- Rajeev Malhotra Reorganization Termination of Employment E.D.N.

Dr. Hugelmeyer presented the H.I.B. report for the January meeting

1.) Pursuant to Board Policy 5131.1, Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying, and New Jersey Statute 18A:37, "The results of each investigation shall be reported to the Board of Education no later than the date of the next board meeting following completion of the investigation and include: 1) Any services provided; 2) Training established; 3) Discipline imposed; or 4) Other action taken or recommended by the chief school administrator."

2.) Since our last Board of Education meeting on December 19, 2024, and through January 9, 2025, our school counselors, and school based social workers have completed 31 HIB investigations. Of these investigations 12 cases were Founded for HIB as per New Jersey law. There were 15 males, 24 females, 35 regular education students and 4 special education students that were the alleged victims. There were 19 males, 16 females, 29 regular education students, and 6 special education students that were the alleged offenders. Of the 12 cases Founded for HIB, 3 cases were Founded based on Race/National Origin, 3 cases were Founded based on Color, 2 cases were Founded based on Sexual Orientation, 2 cases were Founded based on Gender and 7 cases were Founded based on "Other" identifying characteristics. Of the services provided and actions taken for these investigations, there were 14 skill development lessons/trainings, 26 counseling sessions, 3 behavioral interventions, 8 referrals for outpatient mental health treatment, 2 changes of classroom, 2 administrative counseling sessions, 11 in school detentions, 18 parent conferences, 6 out of school suspensions, 2 referrals to outside agencies and 3 cases are continuing to be monitored.

3.) The HIB statute further requires that at the next regularly scheduled meeting after board members receive the initial report of HIB investigations, that the Board issue a decision, in writing, to affirm, reject, or modify the superintendent's decision pertaining to the 45 cases that was reported to you at the last Board meeting

on December 19, 2024. In order for you to do so, the investigation summaries from those investigations which were reported to you at the last board meeting have been provided for your review prior to voting

Mr. Neron asked that Item 4d HIB Report be added to the agenda.

A motion was made by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana and seconded by Mrs. Moreno-Ortega to approve the entire Agenda.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, (with abstention on Tab 4b Items 1&4:Elizabeth Fire Dept use of Williams 2/16/25 and Elizabeth PAL Wrestling tournament at Edison Technical and Vocational Academy Gym on 2/8/2025), Chevres, with an abstention on Tab 4b Item 2 Puerto Rican Alliance use of TJAA theater 4/28-5/2/25and May 3rd) Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Neron with an abstention on Tab 4b Items 1&4:Elizabeth Fire Dept use of Williams 2/16/25 and Elizabeth PAL Wrestling tournament at Edison Technical and Vocational Academy Gym on 2/8/2025, Tab 2 A Mr. Dulorie – Sub Administrator Saturday Athletic program -7

Negative: none

Mr. Neron thanked everyone for attending a very successful meeting to start the calendar year. He announced that the Board will be taking performances and special presentations on the road to neighborhood schools. The regular monthly/ agenda business meeting will be held at the Donald M. Stewart Center for Early Childhood Education School No. 51. President Neron reminded everyone of the ceremony honoring Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. at 4:00 p.m. at the Dr King Monument. He added that the full version of the presentation for National Mentoring Month will be available on the District web site. Mr. Neron informed the audience to continually check the District web site for current updates on Parent workshops and all the activities for family and students.

Mrs. Moreno-Ortega thanked everyone for the individual recognition and the framed mementos that she and her colleagues received for National School Board Month. She congratulated her fellow Board members for having their hard work recognized and appreciated. Further she thanked the Superintendent for all the good and hard work she does for the district.

Mr. Neron thanked Mrs. Moreno -Ortega for her comments and asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

On a motion made by Mrs. Barbosa and seconded by Mrs. Goncalves Pestana, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

The motion was carried by the following vote:

Affirmative: Mmes. Barbosa, Carvalho, Chevres, Mr. Jacobs, Mmes. Moreno-Ortega, Goncalves Pestana, Mr. Neron-7

Negative: none

Harold E. Kennedy, Jr.

School Business Administrator/Board Secretary