

**THE ENGLEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
SPECIAL PUBLIC WORK SESSION MEETING (ZOOM)
October 6, 2020
5:00 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m. and the NJ Open Public Meeting Statement was read by Ms. Cheryl Balletto, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Present: Donovan Rodriques, (Dalia Lerner arrived at 5:06 p.m.),
Michelle Marom, Brent Watson (arrived at 5:49 p.m.), Suzanne Mullings,
Samuel E. Trusty (arrived at 5:11 p.m.), Steven Berrios (arrived at 5:06 p.m.),
Molly Craig-Berry

Also Present: Robert Kravitz, Superintendent of Schools, Cheryl Balletto, Business
Administrator/Board Secretary, Christine Soto, Board Attorney

Motion by Ms. Marom; seconded by Ms. Lerner to enter closed session.

CLOSED SESSION AS NECESSARY *(Use this resolution to identify the qualified matters to be discussed)*

WHEREAS, the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A.10:4-12, permits the Board of Education to meet in closed session to discuss certain matters, now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, the Board of Education adjourns to closed session to discuss: (select one or more)

- 1) *a matter rendered confidential by federal or state law*
- 2) *a matter in which release of information would impair the right to receive government funds*
- 3) *material the disclosure of which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy*
- 4) *a collective bargaining agreement and/or negotiations related to it*
- 5) *a matter involving the purchase, lease, or acquisition of real property with public funds*
- 6) *protection of public safety and property and/or investigations of possible violations or violations of law*
- 7) *pending or anticipated litigation or contract negotiation and/or matters of attorney-client privilege*
- 8) *specific prospective or current employees unless all who could be adversely affected request an open session*
- 9) *deliberation after a public hearing that could result in a civil penalty or other loss;*

and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, the minutes of this closed session be made public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists.

Motion by Mr. Watson; seconded by Mr. Berrios to reconvene to public session.

Ms. Craig-Berry – This is our election time. We have been invited to quite a few candidates' forums. As a Board, five members cannot be attendance because it would be perceived as a quorum and we would be in violation. As a Board member, you cannot speak on behalf of the Board at the meetings. The funding for The Zone has been restored. We thank everyone who supported the funding. We would like to extend an invitation to the club leaders/advisors to the Board meetings. We would probably be doing it on the basis of three at a time.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Good Evening,

Thank you all for coming this evening. I would like to start with a follow up with a question that was raised at our last meeting. The graduation rate for the 2020 cohorts separated out by our programs are as follows: The academy graduation rate is 100% and the Comprehensive High School is 87.3%. In addition, I will be presenting tonight our AP scores by our students.

At this point, I would also like to introduce Mr. Michael Brown, who is the Director of Instruction and Technology who will be presenting information about our technology; Dr. Hollander who has developed a Band program while everyone is working virtual and has received some wonderful accolades in the Bergen Record; as well as Ms. Monica Heinze who will be sharing some information regarding our Pupil Personnel Services.

The video is available on the Englewood Public Schools website to view presentations given by Mr. Brown, Dr. Hollander and Ms. Heinze.

Mr. Kravitz presented the Englewood Public School District's 2019 AP scores. This presentation can be seen on the website.

I want to inform everyone that we have daily conversations with the health department regarding the rate of transmission and the opening plans that need to be constantly looked at. Tomorrow, central office will be meeting to discuss the process, and Thursday the principals will be working with our plan.

I would like to congratulate our teams for beginning our season and I have heard from some parents regarding the ability to view the games. I will be meeting tomorrow with Central office to discuss the possibility of this, so if you are a parent of a football player we will be contacting you soon.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CONSENT AGENDA ONLY

Ms. Bulluck - There is a policy on next week's agenda for gifted & Talented – is that replacing the IVY Program? On AP classes – please clarify do we have 600 students taking AP classes or have students taken 600 AP classes?

Mr. Kravitz – The Gifted & Talented Program is not replacing IVY. The policy is related to identifying students who are high achievers through multiple assessments.

Ms. Garcia – Gifted & Talented Program - Is it going to have its own curriculum?

Mr. Kravitz - It will be a pullout replacement program. Students will take an IQ test and other assessments. It is an additional program. It is not the traditional curriculum.

Motion by Dr. Mullings, seconded by Ms. Midgette-David to approve consent agenda.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Rodriques – Where it says public comments – I believe the agenda consists of everything not just the resolution. I'm confused as to why you've stated that the comments should be restricted to the resolution items.

Ms. Craig-Berry – The business of the Board is what we have to vote on. Immediately after, we will discuss everything else.

Mr. Rodriques - May I recommend that we add "consent agenda"

Ms. Craig-Berry - We will definitely do it going forward.

Ms. Midgette-David - I ask that we all be considered in this.

Motion by Mr. Rodriques to amend the language on the agenda to include "consent agenda"; seconded by Ms. Midgette-David.

Yes: Mr. Rodriques, Ms. Lerner, Ms. Marom, Mr. Watson, Ms. Midgette-David, Dr. Mullings, Mr. Trusty, Mr. Berrios, Ms. Craig-Berry

Motion passes by a unanimous vote.

Board Discussion – continues

Ms. Lerner – no questions/comments

Mr. Watson – no questions/comments

Ms. Midgette-David – no questions/comments

Dr. Mullings – no questions/comments

Mr. Trusty – I would like a sequence on when we can comment. An e-mail will suffice from the President.

Mr. Berrios – no questions/comments

Ms. Craig-Berry – On the October 15 agenda, we have to rescind the RFP for High School Student Support Services.

(The following resolution was presented for your consideration pursuant to Board of Education Bylaw 164.)

Roll Call Vote on the Consent Agenda – yes to all except:

Resolution #	Topic	Rodriques	Lerner	Marom	Watson	Mullings	Midgette-David	Mullings	Trusty	Berrios	Craig-Berry
21-P-19	Approval – 2020–2021 Contracted Appointments and Employment of Personnel: Full-Time/Part-Time, Certificated, Non-Certificated Employees, and Long-Term Substitutes										

21-P-19 passed by a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY OTHER ITEM

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Ms. Bulluck - I would like Mr. Kravitz to clarify the number of students that took AP classes or the number of AP classes that students have taken – there is a difference. I would also like to know the number of AP students at the Academies versus the comprehensive, and the number of students in AP classes from Englewood versus the out of district students. Is the Board planning on addressing the issues of the baseball field at the high school campus given that the city field at McKay park has been deemed unusable? What is the balance in the Title I funds? How will that money be spent? I historically have not had any issues with OPRA requests being fulfilled. Ms. Balletto has been efficient in fulfilling the OPRA requests. It is evident to me that she has been given some type of direction in regards to how she fulfills the OPRA requests. Now I have to give the name of the report that I am asking for. It is not required under OPRA law. I am going to resubmit my request for the data that I am requesting. If the Board feels it is inappropriate to supply the information, I will follow the same course of action that I did with the City and have my attorney file a complaint with the GRC against the Board.

Ms. James - Our Pre-K opening was a smooth day. We have 53 children at BFC. I want to thank Mr. Kravitz and the security team that has been phenomenal in assisting with traffic.

Ms. Espejo – I live across from the tennis court. I understand that the property is owned by the Board of Education. The last three months, we have had an influx of people coming to play. Most people are not residents of Englewood. The police have said there isn't an ordinance so there is nothing that can be done. I'm representing all my neighbors. This is affecting my neighborhood.

Ms. Fordice – I teach at the high school. We feel a lot of pressure on the reopening of schools. The idea of returning to the classroom absolutely terrifies me. I am pleading to try to figure out together – faculty, community, Board to try to best meet the needs of our students.

Ms. Sienna – Student at the high school. How can one student be able to take AP Psychology and AP Micro? Neither of those classes were available this year. How are AP courses offered in our school? We had a student counsel meeting today. We are moving forward with the BOE student representative elections.

Ms. Craig-Berry – We are looking forward to have a student representative on the Board.

Mr. Kravitz –

- There were 600 classes that were taken. The State recognizes us as one school. At the next meeting I will breakdown the AP students.
- The baseball field – I will contact the Athletic Director
- I did speak with the Police Chief and the Director of Security today regarding the tennis courts. The police chief will have more presence in the area.
- *Ms. Fordice* – I agree with you – it is a unique situation that we're in. I thank you for your hard work. We will be encompassing everyone we can.
- AP classes – it's the high school principal that makes that decision.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Rodriques – I want to thank Mr. Kravitz for inviting members of the staff to speak with us. I'm proud of the work that their doing for our students. Mr. Kravitz, when will begin getting status report on the district goals?

Mr. Kravitz - You will get an update on district goals and merit goals at the next meeting. We will continue to bring people to highlight our schools.

Mr. Rodriques - AP scores – how many three scores were there in total?

Mr. Kravitz - 60% - I don't have the exact total.

Mr. Rodriques - What percentage fall in the three score bracket? I did some research and I learned that the top universities do not accept three score.

Mr. Kravitz – I do not have the statistics for three score. Each university is different. I will get that data for you.

Mr. Rodriques – ***I would like to make a motion to amend Policy 0.168 Electronic Recording of Board Meetings – I would like to propose that we delete the section that says “executive session as an administrative aid in the preparation of minutes” and also delete “the recording shall be permanently preserved as a governmental record in accordance with the Open Public Records Act” – add instead “of public meetings.”*** (Mr. Rodriques read aloud Policy 0.168.)

Ms. Soto - Revisions of Board policy requires two different readings.

***Ms. Midgette-David* – seconded Mr. Rodriques' motion.**

Mr. Rodriques – This amendment only affects the recording of executive session meetings. It has become problematic - particularly when we may have litigation going on. The Board should take every precaution and every

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measure to ensure that the sensitive and confidential discussions do not deliberately or inadvertently end up in the wrong hands. We discuss sensitive information regarding students records, members of staff, litigation strategies and tactics – if we have this type of confidential information as a permanent record, it puts the Board at a disadvantage. It could end up in the hands of an adversary or the media. We need to protect our students' and our staff's privacy in the best way that we can. (Mr. Rodriques highlighted the section of the policy to amend.)

Mr. Midgette-David - I do not want the recordings in the hands of anyone.

Ms. Soto – The requirements of the statute is the public's rights to have minutes of the meetings available – it does not require executive session to be recorded. However, if the Board chooses to record the meetings, it becomes a public record.

Ms. Lerner – I'm ready to vote on this.

Ms. Marom – I'm ready to vote.

Mr. Watson – Can we do this peacefully? Move on.

Ms. Midgette-David - I'm with Donovan. The recording of executive session should be private.

Dr. Mullings – Asked for clarification of the amendment.

Mr. Trusty – I think that Donovan is doing an excellent job of spearheading this. Covid prompts us to revisit this policy. I also agree with Donovan that in this climate we have to safeguard ourselves, the Board, the District students, staff, and others that are discussed in private session. This change is needed. Counsel has not been accurate on this issue. There has been revisions and reversals - it has opened us up to not only confusion but also potentially somebody getting private session tapes. We are now at a place where the no has changed and it is now a grey area.

Mr. Berrios – We need to make sure that the Board is protected from someone doing something michievous. I strongly disagree that we have been misguided by counsel. I feel we have been guided the right way. We have to make sure we are following everything legally.

Ms. Craig-Berry – I disagree with Mr. Trusty. The first memo was an opinion about the public receiving the recording. That was a no. Board members can get the recording based on if they were in attendance. It was two different questions. Our executive session should be confidential. We are governed by the oath we have taken. Because of litigation, I do agree that we are in a compromising position. Everything we say and do can come back to us. I want to be transparent. There isn't anything to hide from each other. I think this step is not necessary.

Vote:

Yes: *Mr. Rodriques, Ms. Midgette-David, Dr. Mullings, Mr. Trusty*

No: *Ms. Lerner, Ms. Marom, Mr. Watson, Mr. Berrios, Ms. Craig-Berry*

Motion fails.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS (continues)

Ms. Lerner – No comments

Ms. Marom – No comments

Mr. Watson – No comments

Ms. Midgette-David – No comments

Dr. Mullings – Mr. Kravitz, I want to be clear that you reported the Academies at 100%, comprehensive at 87.3%. Which was reported to the State? Did pass/fail affect the graduation rate?

Mr. Kravitz – 85.3% was the graduation rate. It was unadjusted. The pass/fail was only for the 4th marking period. I think it had some effect.

Dr. Mullings - Until ExactPath could come into the high school are you going to use the grades?

Mr. Kravitz – No, we are looking at other assessments.

Mr. Trusty – We received two memos on different topics. We discussed that privacy during executive session would be protected. There was a memo that reversed that. I sent a memo expressing the inconsistencies in both memos. There were also two memos sent out regarding merit pay. The second memo reversed what the first one said. I sent an e-mail expressing the inconsistencies in both memos. My memos were never answered. Mr. Mathews asked a question – did we collect technology from students who graduated?

Mr. Kravitz - There was one senior who did not return his laptop.

Mr. Berrios - At the last meeting in regards to the climate change resolution that passed, you stated that one school was doing something actively about climate change. How can we move forward to establish a green team at each school that would consist of the Principal, teachers and students working collectively? When can we get AP Computer Science? We need more children in Title I districts to take AP Computer Science that would help prepare them for

the future. We had a sizeable number of students taking AP Spanish. At the elementary level, why don't we make everything dual language – that would include IVY?

Mr. Kravitz - The Green Team – Ms. Small-Bailey has won some Bergen County Utilities grants with going green. The high school was working with a not for profit to work on going green. The Middle School has a garden.

Ms. Balletto – We discussed how would it get picked up and what would be the cost to the district. It's a conversation we need to have with the City regarding recycling pick up.

Mr. Kravitz - We will bring it up with the administrators regarding Green Teams. AP Computer Science – we have a teacher who is trained. The problem we have is there is a limited schedule. It's an 8-period day – and everyone was to take the traditional classes. It limits the elective classes – the schedule is tight. I think is on the selection sheet for student to choose. As far as dual language – I am a big fan. Moving forward we should look at that model. I would love to bring in more languages.

Mr. Berrios - We have a full computer science curriculum starting at first grade that we have not touched on. It needs to be utilized. It would probably help our students with their math scores. I would urge you and the team to consider being aggressive with the computer science curriculum in our district.

Dr. Mullings – When students are not at the level that we expect and we introduce the dual language – would that help them in some way? If you can't master the language program we have – does it hinder or help?

Mr. Kravitz - The data doesn't reflect a significant difference.

Mr. Rodriques - In other districts where data shows a significant increase in student achievement because of their dual language program do they provide dual language to all their students or just a handful?

Mr. Kravitz – It's mixed. They don't use a mirrored program. The best way to do it is to start with the youngest kids and teach them the natural approach which is to start communicating with them. Around third grade they introduce grammar.

Mr. Rodriques - Our approach that others don't use such as the mirroring may need to be revisited. Is this something that the district is looking to achieve?

Mr. Kravitz - Absolutely. Provided we have the people in place to make it happen. You want your children to be bilingual by 12th grade. A few years ago, we only had 23 student taking AP Spanish. Many of those student weren't from Englewood.

Mr. Rodriques - What is the timeframe for implementing these changes?

Mr. Kravitz - Hopefully, within a year or two.

Mr. Rodriques – I would like to have it happen sooner. We should put an action plan together.

Mr. Berrios – I agree.

Ms. Midgette-David - I want more representation on the Board that a Latino reflects 49% of our school district.

Dr. Mullings – We need to recognize one of our students - 10-year old Rebecca Garcia. She won the Bergen County Sheriff's Youth Writing Contest. The topic is "What can law enforcement do to better the community?"

Mr. Trusty – AskBOE – the e-mails were active and accessible for the past two years. The legal bills – we are averaging between \$25,000-\$30,00 a month. Our budget is roughly \$150,000 and \$50,000 for special education. We are running at least double. I don't think Covid justifies a sharp increase in legal expenses. I would like the Board Secretary to create a spreadsheet so that I can analyze the breakdown as to where we are spending our money and come up with a plan to seek to decrease the money we are spending over and above the budget. When we were interviewing lawyers, we were very interested in Lester Taylor. However, we were not able to retain him because of a conflict of interest. Looking over the invoices, I see that Mr. Taylor is billing us – what was the conflict of interest that caused us not to hire him?

Mr. Berrios – I believe it was Mr. Rodriques that brought up the conflict of interest.

Mr. Rodriques – Mr. Trusty raised a very important questions. I care about the districts' money that we should use toward educating our children. It is problematic to me that we are paying a lawyer who doesn't work for this Board - because I see consultation between our Board counsel and Mr. Taylor. Someone needs to give an answer to that.

Ms. Craig-Berry – There was no real conflict with Mr. Taylor. He had conducted an investigation. During the interview process we selected Ms. Soto. Mr. Taylor is part of her firm. Because we are facing quite a few litigations, she has been working with a few attorneys. I always encourage you to e-mail your questions. Askboe was supposed to be removed. I have never logged into the Askboe e-mail and I have never replied.

Mr. Trusty - Look at the e-mail on March 8 at 10 o'clock at night and look at your response.

Ms. Craig-Berry - Ms. Balletto, when you do the chart, please include what was spent on legal fees from last year so that we can have a comparison. This is not the forum to raise any disagreements we may have. We need to have conversation on education.

Motion to adjourn at 9:40 p.m. by Ms. Lerner; seconded by Ms. Marom

PERSONNEL

21-P-19

**APPROVAL – 2020 – 2021 CONTRACTED APPOINTMENTS AND
EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONNEL: FULL-TIME/PART-TIME, CERTIFICATED,
NON-CERTIFICATED EMPLOYEES, AND LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTES**

WHEREAS, the Superintendent of Schools, after considering the recommendation of his administrative staff which included consideration of experience, credentials, and references for the following candidates for employment in the school district, has determined that the appointment of these individuals is appropriate and in the best interest of the school district, be it

RESOLVED, upon recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the following individuals be appointed to the positions indicated, as provided by the budget, in accord with terms of the employment specified:

Note: Appointment of new personnel to the District is provisional subject to:

1. Authorization from the State Department regarding a criminal background check and/or authorization from the Bergen County Superintendent's Office for emergent hiring; and
2. A medical examination including satisfactory results of the Mantoux tuberculin skin test; and
3. Valid certification appropriate for his/her employment or assignment in New Jersey; and
4. Disclosure and review of applicants employment history within the statutory time period.

N = New**LR = Leave Replacement****R = Replacement****RI = Reinstatement**

CERTIFICATED STAFF - All salaries per annum unless noted

Name	Position/Certification	Loc	Salary/Budget	Effective Dates
Gonzalez, Jennifer* (L.R. #6662)	Teacher of Elementary School K-6 Standard: Teacher of Elementary School K-6	Quarles	BA, Step 1-2 \$57,355 Budget Code: 11-110-100-101-85-101-000	10/26/2020- 04/13/2021
Mastromarino, Sandra* (L.R. #4055)	Teacher of Elementary School K-6 CEAS: Teacher of Elementary School K-6	Grieco	MA, Step 1-2 \$61,105 Budget Code: 11-120-100-101-74-101-000	10/19/2020- 06/30/2021
Williamson, Joseph* (L.R. #6259)	Teacher of Elementary School K-6 Provisional: Teacher of Elementary School K-6	Grieco	BA, Step 1-2 \$57,355 Budget Code: 11-204-100-101-40-101-000	10/07/2020- 03/30/2021

*Leave Replacement Position – Non-Tenurable Position

LONG-TERM SUBSTITUTE – CERTIFICATED

Name	Position/Certification	Loc	Salary/Budget	Effective Dates
Riess, Vitore (L.R. #7058)	Long-Term Substitute Teacher of Preschool through Grade 3 Standard: Teacher of Preschool through Grade 3	Quarles	\$286.78 per diem, Budget Code: 11-216-100-101-40-101-000	10/19/2020- 01/10/2020