

**THE ENGLEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
SPECIAL PUBLIC WORK SESSION MEETING (ZOOM)
November 10, 2020
5:30 p.m.**

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. and the NJ Open Public Meeting Statement was read by Ms. Cheryl Balletto, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Present: Donovan Rodriques, Dalia Lerner (was present for closed session only), Michelle Marom, Brent Watson (arrived at 6:33 p.m.), Angela Midgette-David, Suzanne Mullings, Samuel E. Trusty, Steven Berrios

Absent: Molly Craig-Berry

Also Present: Robert Kravitz, Superintendent of Schools, Cheryl Balletto, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Caitlin Pletcher, Attorney (on behalf of Christine Soto, Board Attorney)

Motion by Ms. Lerner; seconded by Ms. Midgette-David 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 to reconvene to public session by Mr. Watson; seconded by Ms. Midgette-David.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Ms. Carroll Sanchez, Supervisor of Curriculum & Instruction, gave a presentation on Curriculum, Instruction, Assessments and Federal Grants (see video on EPSD website).

Mr. Kravitz - I thank everyone on the team as we continue to update and work hard. It's not an easy task when we implement a new curriculum.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON NOVEMBER 19, 2020 AGENDA ONLY

Ms. Thompson – With the uptick of the corona virus in New Jersey, what do you plan on doing?

Mr. Kravitz – We work regularly with the Englewood Health Department. We are aware of the uptick in our region. In Englewood, specifically, there are more cases. As we go through this, Mr. Fedorko works regularly to contact trace. I am concerned with sports. The football season has been postponed. We are looking into the safety of Winter sports. We will keep everyone updated.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Rodriques – 21-A-24 What is BCSSSD-Brownstone?

Mr. Kravitz – It is an out-of-district Bergen County Special Services District. Brownstone is a school for a special education student. I cannot legally comment on the specific program. I'll defer to Ms. Pletcher. I can forward the program at a later date.

Mr. Rodriques - Can you tell us more about Newsela?

Mr. Kravitz –It does on-line news captions. It goes from kindergarten to 5th grade.

Mr. Rodriques - I want to commend you and the district for the influx of software.

Mr. Rodriques - Home Instruction – what is the function during Covid-19

Mr. Kravitz - We develop a list every year – only if we need them. There are special education students that may need them.

Ms. Marom – No questions/comments.

Mr. Watson – No questions/comments.

Ms. Midgette-David – 21-F-39 – A large amount of carryover. What will it be spent on? I'm assuming that it has to do with Covid.

Ms. Balletto – Last year, the original Title I budget had Instructional Coaches. Only three were hired for the year. The other large remaining balance was the After School Program. Some of Title III money would have been spent on the After School Program as well.

Mr. Kravitz – We want to bring in a bilingual Instructional Coach to help with technology. That money can be spread out between Title I and Title III.

Ms. Balletto - This resolution is allowing the prior year carryover to be budgeted with this year's allocation.

Dr. Mullings – 21-A-24 – UNSilence – please explain what this is.

Mr. Kravitz – A program out of Chicago that will be working with our Middle School Students. It talks about difficult conversations regarding drug abuse and how to have open conversations with family. It is a program for social and emotional learning. It stirs the conversation for students, families and faculty.

Dr. Mullings - How are these programs vetted?

Mr. Kravitz - The building Principal submitted this particular program.

Mr. Trusty – No questions/comments.

Mr. Berrios – No questions/comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ON ANY OTHER ITEM

Ms. King – Dual Program – There is no supervisor. Ms. Gil was not replaced. How are the teachers functioning without a supervisor? This program was an award winning program. The program has changed. The book they are using is more for the Spanish speaking student than the non-speaking Spanish student. A lot of children are dropping out of the program. We need to re-evaluate to make it the award winning program it used to be. We definitely need a supervisor.

Mr. Kravitz – We are starting to look at it for next year. The model has changed significantly. We use similar to a mirror program. We are planning on restructuring so that we use all of our district staff in the proper way.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Rodriques – Amistad Curriculum – I would love to see an example of a lesson. Can you arrange for a presentation?

Mr. Kravitz – It has been in our curriculum for two years. I will try to get some lesson plans from teachers to present.

Mr. Rodriques - What is the district student assessment policy?

Mr. Kravitz - We track our students with assessments. Usually each grade level creates a confirmative assessment. We also use ExactPath as our assessment tool in the beginning, middle and end of the year. ESL students take the Access test at the end of every year. We have district assessments, we have confirmative assessments developed by the district and we have State assessments.

Mr. Rodriques -How are we ensuring equity in testing particularly during virtual learning and specifically in the lower grades?

Mr. Kravitz – Because we use multiple assessments, that is the comparison that we use to determine if there is equity.

Mr. Rodriques – How do we weight an on-line test versus homework? How does that affect certain students in our district?

Mr. Kravitz - For example, when a student takes an ExactPath test that does not go into a student's grade. The grading policy that we created last year that said that students that are not performing well cannot be assessed on a traditional model of a test. You have to reevaluate the student based on the student's type of learning style. The teacher is permitted under the grading policy to give them an oral exam. They would then get a passing grade because they can explain it. Let's measure the knowledge.

Mr. Rodriques – Dual Language Program – It appears to me that the Dual Language Program is used as a substitute program for an ESL Program for children who are English learners. It ignores students who want to learn Spanish. Am I correct?

Mr. Kravitz – No - In each of our buildings, we have ESL instruction, we have One-Way for students who need intensive sheltered language instruction, and we have Dual Language.

Motion by Mr. Rodriques; 2nd Dr. Mullings to naming the entrance to the DMHS “Black Lives Matter”

Whereas, the Englewood Board of Education is deeply committed to fostering a thriving educational community which recognizes that each and every student matters.

Whereas, the Englewood Board of Education wishes to contribute to the conversation in the Englewood Public School District and Community about social justice and the heightened awareness to the systemic racism that has existed in our nation along with the emergence of the Black Lives Matter Movement against racial injustice in America.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, the Englewood Board of Education names the main entrance to the Dwight Morrow High School “Black Lives Matter Way”.

Therefore, Be It Resolved, the Superintendent of Englewood Public Schools and Board Secretary are authorized and directed to do any and all lawful acts as may be necessary or appropriate to accomplish this resolution.”

Mr. Berrios – I need to let the public know that we do not have a naming policy although we approved a naming of the track and field last spring. This is something the Board promised we would do but we did not get to it.

Ms. Pletcher – We want to make sure that this is on Board property and we’re doing it right.

Mr. Rodriques – This is not about where to put a sign post – it’s about naming an entrance way.

Mr. Watson – I think this is more of a city matter. It should be in the city where it will be more prominent.

Ms. Midgette-David - I need more information on this. I think we should work together on this and come up with the proper procedure.

Mr. Trusty – I have a personal theological and philosophy conflict.

Ms. Marom – I am going to change my vote to no. I feel more comfortable to do what Teaneck did. I feel we need to put more thought into it.

VOTE:

Yes: Mr. Rodriques, Dr. Mullings

No: Ms. Marom (changed her vote from yes to no), Mr. Watson, Ms. Midgette-David, Mr. Berrios

Abstain: Mr. Trusty

Motion fails with those Board members present.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS (continued)

Ms. Marom – Cheryl, can you give us an update on the electronic sign?

Ms. Balletto – There were two minor changes on the sign. I’m sending a new drawing tomorrow and then we will be up and going. Due to Covid, it has taken as long as it has. We want to get this done before the winter.

Ms. Marom - Any update on the Financial Audit RFPs?

Ms. Balletto - They get opened on November 17.

Mr. Watson – No comments.

Ms. Midgette-David – No comments.

Dr. Mullings - Ms. Sanchez’ presentation – I’m not hearing elements that are important in terms of curriculum goals. What is the performance improvement plan imbedded in the goals that will improve the performance of the students and bring them up to the level beyond not needing expectation in math and English. If she did address it, I did not come away with that clarity. Mr. Kravitz, can you help me understand? We did have this discussion last meeting. What is the goal and how do we get past 45% of the student body being below the standard requirements?

Mr. Kravitz – We have rewritten the curriculum. Over the past two years, we have come to where the curriculum is sound. It is not a quick fix. It takes time to build the district up. There’s a difference between compliance and student achievement. Moving forward we will focus on the student achievement piece.

Dr. Mullings – When you say the curriculum is sound – do you mean in terms of compliance?

Mr. Kravitz - In terms of depth and breadth of it – what needs to be taught on each grade level. We focus on hitting all of the standards that the teachers need to learn. It is not an easy fix to build a district that had the lowest QSAC scores and test scores. We’re talking about retraining all of the staff to make sure they are all in compliance and understand how to expand on teaching math.

Dr. Mullings – There should be imbedded in the formulation of the curriculum that targets a plan or some pathway to get us over the hump. We have been talking about low test scores for some years now. We talked about changing curriculum – it was good before to some degree in your eyes – it didn’t work and it’s still not working. At what point do we get a return on investment in the time we put into building a sound curriculum if its not delivering results in terms where we are as a district. The goal is to bring up the district and that includes all our students. How do we come to the conclusion that it is sound and we do not have results to support that?

Mr. Kravitz - You can look at incremental growth in some areas. The data suggests that it takes 8 to 10 years for a district to turn around – that’s with consistency – to change a district from a failing to a successful district.

Dr. Mullings - Which point are we in the 8 to 10 years?

Mr. Kravitz - I would say from my inception – the curriculum booklets had blank pieces of paper. It takes at least of year to build it. It takes a year or two of professional development. It takes evaluation of teachers, administrators – it takes a whole process. I never said it would be an overnight fix.

Mr. Trusty – I think Mr. Kravitz justifies or helps support the need for a grade audit. Legal bills – this month we have a bill for \$51,280.59. Based on our initial draft – in three years we have never reached this level of bills in one month. I am requesting the invoice and a breakdown. I hope the majority pay close attention to how our bills are escalating.

Mr. Berrios – We will keep a watchful eye on that. Computer Science – I think we need to be more pronounced and become more aggressive in our curriculum and integrating it with math. The climate change resolution – were we able to get recycle cans in the classrooms.

Ms. Balletto - I worked with Mike Hunken on this. We are putting recycling bins in all the classrooms. We are working with the town for pick ups.

Mr. Berrios – Mr. Kravitz, Advanced Placement – We should develop a task and dig into academic affairs because we have concerns around Dual Language. I also have concerns about the IVY Program. On the comprehensive side in our honors program – should we consider making two AP courses or having students take at least one or two AP courses as a requirement on the comprehensive side? What are your thoughts?

Mr. Kravitz – There is a large debate requiring AP courses. Right now it is an option. We should be running an Education Academy for Dwight Morrow students – for students that want to go into the field of education. We can develop our own pipeline of teachers. We have partner universities that are willing to work with us. We have talked about pipelines for police and firemen – FDU has a criminal justice program. When students have to take credit recovery it takes away the fun courses that we can offer them. Blue Ribbon Schools are achieved by academics and being innovative. Giving students an ROTC Academy will give them an opportunity when they graduate. We have the pieces in place but we keep getting sidetracked.

Ms. Midgette-David - The Dwight Morrow children that take the AP courses – they take honors classes but have the same teacher that teaches AP simultaneously but they are not getting credit for college. That's unjust to me.

Mr. Kravitz - The only way you can get credit is If you pass the AP test. You can't take both. There is differentiated instruction.

Motion to adjourn at 8:39 p.m. by Mr. Watson; seconded by Ms. Marom