

**THE ENGLEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES
SPECIAL PUBLIC WORK SESSION MEETING (ZOOM)
June 9, 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, Michelle Marom, Brent Watson, Angela Midgette-David, Suzanne Mullings, Samuel E. Trusty, Steven Berrios

Absent: Molly Craig-Berry, Dalia Lerner

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

Motion by Ms. Marom; seconded by Mr. Watson 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 Ms. Midgette-David; seconded by Ms. Marom

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Good Evening,

I want to thank everyone for logging in tonight.I know that Mr. Berrios will be speaking about some issues that are being spoken about in our society.

Some other notes I would like to mention is the ongoing conversation that is taking place with various stakeholders in our community to bring Internet access to our students. As of today we have distributed 1,241 computers of those number 97 have not logged on to a Wi-Fi network. As we work through our virtual learning plan we place our students into three different groups.

- Group 1 – Students who are actively participating in our virtual learning
- Group 2 – Students who are having difficulty with technology, or any other difficulties with our work
- Group 3 – Non-participating Children. These are the children are the students who have not completed any work and have not presented themselves in any of the forums for learning.

These academics concerns are exclusive of our credit recovery students who are working very diligently with their scores and required attendance. We will be presenting at next weeks meeting our summer credit recovery program for our students who are credit deficient.

This type of granular data is needed to help us as we plan forward with develop our plans for the upcoming school year.

On our agenda are employees for summer school. We ask parents to take advantage of the program. We recognize that a learning gap can exist with the switch to virtual learning. We are working with the NJDOE and our own task force to look at ways to open our schools in September as well as I am currently on the Bergen County Task Force for reopening.

As I come to the close of my report I am proud to mention two final points. LG has offered to work with our graduating students to post their faces on the LG billboard in Times Square and our receipt of our QSAC scores, which have shown an increase in several categories. we still have to look at our test results. I will present these scores on the 19th.

QSAC Scores May 2020

Instruction & Programming	76%
Fiscal Management	100%
Governance	94%
Operations	97%
Personnel	100%

Thank you

Mr. Berrios - I want to address the events that have happened recently in the United States.

As the school board of a racially diverse community, we want to address the pain and anger that our country once again faces with regards to police brutality, social injustice and racial inequality that disproportionately impacts black lives in this country. Since 1619, African Americans have endured 245 years of slavery, approximately 100 years of state supported segregation and only 55 yrs ago gained the right to vote without intimidation. From 1882-1965, The Tuskegee Institute reported 4743 lynchings in the United States. During the 1970's through the year 2000, we also witnessed the mass incarceration of women and men of color.

As a community that prides itself on racial and cultural diversity, it is imperative that we put forth our best efforts to overcome these vices. We must educate our children to become the decision-makers that will end practices and policies that continue to destroy this country.

The Englewood School District denounces police brutality, social injustice and racial inequality.

At this point, I would like to hand over the meeting to Ms. Soto.

Ms. Soto – I would like to remind the public that there are multiple ways to participant. You can e-mail at Ask the BOE as epsd.org. You can also call in - the telephone numbers are provided in an e-mail with a link to this meeting. You can raise your hand. That is how we will be accepting public comment. The chat function will not be utilized at the meeting this evening.

Mr. Berrios - In accordance with the Board's bylaws, the Board is now opening the meeting for a period of public comment. Please remember to announce your name, place of residence, and group affiliation, if appropriate. Your statements will be limited to three minutes in duration.

While the Board respects the public's right to voice any questions, concerns or criticisms it may have regarding the conduct of the Board and/or its administrations, I want to remind you that this right is not absolute, and statements that are abusive, obscene, irrelevant, overly lengthy or that interfere with the orderly progress of the meeting will not be permitted.

I want to also remind everyone that there is not privilege or qualified privilege with regard to any statements that a member of the public makes before the Board, and I caution each of you that your comments could result in legal action by a third party if you publicly disseminate information you know to be false. What this means is that while you are certainly free to exercise your right to comment on issues before the Board, such comments are considered public statements, and may be responded to or acted upon by any individuals affected by them. The Board will, of course, consider your comments as they relate to its obligation to effectively govern the Englewood Public School District, but cannot offer protection from any action that a third party may elect to pursue as a result of any statements offered during public session

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CONSENT AGENDA ONLY

Mr. Matthews – You should state the telephone number to call in. What is the name of the commencement speaker? 20-A-90 I would like you to separate the A@E students so that the public knows whether or not if we are losing students. 20-F-148 Why are we buying a school bus? The buses we have are under-utilized. Section 504 – please explain I&RS committee. 20-F-127 three individuals that do not have titles associated with their names. What do they do and what are their titles? Non-renewal of non-tenured support staff. There is no name associated with that – what is the name of that person.

Mr. Rodriques – For the record, I object to counsel running the Board meeting. This is an Englewood Board of Education. Meeting. It should be the responsibility of the presiding officer to command this meeting. I feel that the Board Counsel is running the meeting.

Mr. Berrios – This is the first time that she has spoken. I asked her to speak.

Ms. Ford – Is there an issue logging on to this call? I would like to get feedback from the people we elected about how you feel as it pertains to our district and the impact on our students. Do you agree with the Bergen County statement? I would like to hear from individual board members if you agree with the statement. What is the status of the Board goals and Superintendent goals that are due June 30 and the pieces that are due July 1. Will they be completed by the due date?

Ms. Bulluck – I appreciate the Board issuing a statement about what is happening in the country. Can the Board be cognizant with other meetings that are happening in the town. We need to pay more attention so that people can engage in the meetings.

Ms. Iris – What are the plans for the opening of schools? I'm not sending my kids back to school until I feel it is safe.

Mr. Berrios – Going forward, we will announce the call-in telephone number at the beginning of the meetings.

Mr. Kravitz –

- We are waiting for the finalized answer on the commencement speaker. We expect to announce the name next week.
- Separating the data – that would be a Board decision.
- 504 is students that need specific accommodations. It is determined by medical diagnosis.
- I&RS Intervention and Referral Services. It is a process for students that are struggling.
- F127 They were former districts in the district. They are paid from title 1 funds.
- I am appalled by police brutality. There is no reason why a gentleman should die at the hands of a police officer. It's scary. It bothers me a lot. I posted a video about it. The Englewood School District is implementing programs that involve social and emotional learning. One of the recent CDC guidelines addresses how the children are struggling with the pandemic and struggling with society and what kind of plans the schools are offering.
- There are no Superintendent merit goals this year. There are Board and District goals.
- Council Meetings – we will look at the calendar.
- We are actively looking at different models as to the opening of schools. We have a task force in our District. We have to follow the guidelines from the New Jersey Department of Education

Ms. Balletto - The District currently has two 54-passenger buses. If one of those buses breaks down, we have a hard time getting a back up from First Student. We've had to use smaller buses twice. Students had to wait at the school for the bus to come back after a run. The purpose of buying the 54-passenger bus is so we will not have a logistic problem with transporting our children timely and efficiently.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Dr. Mullings 20-A-84 Babe's transportation – Why do we keep contracting Babe's Taxi? Why aren't we using livery service out of Englewood?

Ms. Balletto – We use Babe's Taxi as a back-up for students that need to be transported. A car service must have a certification to be able transport as a school vehicle. Babe's car service has that certification.

Dr. Mullings - Have we explored other car services out of Englewood

Ms. Balletto - We did call one other service – they did not have the certification. I can have my department get a list of other services in Englewood and we will make those phone calls. We can add them to the agenda if they have the certification.

Dr. Mullings – 20-P-92 Community and Parent Involvement Specialist – How will the District handle hiring for this position?

Mr. Kravitz – We will place an ad in the paper, we will have an interview process looking for the best qualified candidate for that position. The job description mimics other districts using the pre-school grant.

Mr. Rodrigues - Summer School – when will it start and when will it end.

Mr. Kravitz - I do not have the exact dates. It will be the month of July

Mr. Rodrigues - What virtual platform will you be using?

Mr. Kravitz - In the summer school, we will be using the Teams platform. There will be some parent workshops available.

Dr. Mullings - You sent an e-mail for parents and student to attend Teams. I don't think the tone of the e-mail makes it known that it's something that the parents should really be involved. It should be more of a mandated type tone since it's going to be the main platform.

Mr. Kravitz - We can resend it with a different tone.

Mr. Rodriques – Is Teams going to be the singular platform going forward after summer school?

Mr. Kravitz – The goal is yes, we will be using it as the single platform. We will be discussing it with the Task Force.

Mr. Trusty – In terms of the graduation, when is it? Why are we confirming a speaker in the same month of the graduation?

Mr. Kravitz - We were waiting to see if graduation was going to be in person or virtual.

Mr. Rodriques – 20-A-84 – Exact Path – Can you provide the Board with data on the effectiveness of this program?

Mr. Kravitz – Some of the Exact Path reports have been uploaded in the share drive. It's very effective to track students. It offers individualized instruction, it determines weaknesses, it has a correlation to the state assessments, It can also be a remedial program for parents at home when they are working with their children.

Mr. Rodriques - Are you able to track the usage, log-in time and how many students use it? By effective, I mean is it helping parents, teachers and students to advance academic achievement.

Mr. Kravitz - We can track exact usage and log-in times. Effectiveness is based on usage. The more students that use it – the more effectiveness.

Mr. Rodriques - 20-F-114 Designation of Internet Website for Official Notification - what does this mean for the RFP responses?

Ms. Balletto - By law, you have to designate at least one place. The one place we are designating to be in compliance with that statute is our website. We post all of our RFPs and bids on our website that we publish..

Mr. Rodriques - 20-F-121 Temporary Space – Why can't we establish permanent classrooms for Quarles?

Mr. Kravitz - At that time that Quarles needed extra classrooms, the Board voted to have temporary space placed there. Every year we have to renew it.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ANY ITEM OTHER THAN CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Garcia – Is there is an update on the staff that were voted off? What is going to happen in September regarding the Principal's position at Quarles?

Ms. Ford – 20-A-86 – Danielson Framework for Teaching – It didn't produce the best picture of what teachers were doing. Why are we continuing to use this? It doesn't give you an open ended feedback on what you might want to see how a teacher is performing in the classroom and interacting with the students. What feedback did we get back from Principals and Supervisors? 20-F-139 DMHS Electronic Sign – Who will govern what will or will not go on the sign? 20-F-153 – Security Equipment at McCloud – Was the security at McCloud updated in the last 12 months?

Mr. Matthews - There should be an easier way to get to the Board agenda. It should be right there when you open up the website. The A@E numbers have always been singled out. There should be Superintendent merit goals – it's part of the contract. I would like for the Board members to comment on that. What is the number of people up for tenure this month of June and the month of July? What is the status of the State aid? How will that affect our budgeting as of right now? Were the program managers given written evaluations at the high school? Do we have any math, biology, chemistry or physics opening at the high school or the middle school? You need to give the kids a physical graduation. How many students do you have in credit recovery? How many of them are seniors? How many are graduating?

Ms. Barnes – Who will be part of the task force? How did you recruit the people on the task force? What is the end goal for the task force? Is the cleaning crew disinfecting and sanitizing. Do they have the correct chemicals?

When will we receive the packets for the upcoming school year?

Mr. Kravitz –

- There are State evaluation tools. This is the one that we use. Comments can be added.
- McCloud and Grieco did not get upgrades. Long term they will all be integrated.
- A@E - I don't think anything has changed with reporting numbers.
- Credit recovery - I do not know exactly how many students. We expect graduation rate to be 90%.
- There are openings that we are ready to fill.
- Task Force – teachers, parents, EAA, ETA, nurses, City Health Dept. and Central Office Administration.
- We can't give out bus routes or classroom assignments. We're not sure if we are going to have alternate days/split days. Much of that information will be determined by the NJDOE.

Ms. Balletto – We do have the proper cleaning solutions in the district while the buildings are not being occupied. In addition, the district has purchased a huge volume of hand sanitizers. We've ordered a spray – it's electro static – it kills any virus not just the corona virus - we have one for every school. There are a lot of different parameters for the opening of schools. We have plans in place. *Mr. Kravitz* – I would like to be on the task force.

NEW/OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Midgette-David – Prior to Covid, we voted on purchasing Dell desk tops. Now that we're looking into e-learning, do we really need desk tops? I want an audit on technology. I also want a grade breakdown of the High School and Academies.

Mr. Trusty – I agree with the reallocation of the money for the desk tops. I also agree on the audit in terms of the technology that we have in place. After we gather that data we can come to some kind of consensus if we are being proficient. If not, then we can get an outside agency to counsel us.

Mr. Berrios – This is the third meeting that Board members have expressed the need to assess the technology.

Ms. Midgette-David – Mr. Berrios, I want to remind you that initially this was your idea.

Dr. Mullings – Mr. Brown explained that those computers were for administrative purposes.

Mr. Berrios – We have two years left on our Apple contract. With an audit, we'll be able to determine what type of computers we should use.

Mr. Rodriques – Mr. Kravitz, four meetings ago and thereafter, members of this Board begged to get some information on the use of technology in the District. We have still haven't received a response from you. It's well overdue. We want to hear how our the students, teachers and parents are using technology. What are the deficiencies, if any? What can be improved? How many students are without computers and internet?

Mr. Kravitz - There are currently 97 students who have not accessed the internet. Of the 97 students, 35 have not submitted any work. We have 62 students that have issues with wifi. We have 3,200 devices in the District. We have sent out numerous calls to anyone who would like a device. We distributed those devices within 2 ½ weeks of the closing. We will be issuing more devices as we go through the summer with the intent of supplying hot spots. As far as usage, one of the things I would ask of the Board, is that the Board working together create what exactly they are looking for.

Mr. Rodriques - The consensus is an internal technology audit. Are teachers comfortable with the technology they are using? How many students receive live instruction since the Covid pandemic? What is the status of professional development for staff to use technology? Are the teachers using the technology effectively? What type of additional training to they need to make more engaging instructional videos?

Mr. Trusty – I want to agree with Mr. Kravitz that there are many layers and many angles in terms of technology. The scope is too broad for a meeting. I may take the lead in how we should go about assessing the district in terms of proficiency of technology. If we're not using Apple tools – then platforms do matter. That's worth an investigation. I'm going to start shaping what we are looking for – for the students, staff, and also for the community to interact with the district.

Dr. Mullings – I asked Mr. Kravitz for a plan to reopen. We have quite a few challenges. I would like an update. I believe there was talk about moving the 3rd grade from Grieco when we move back to in person instruction. Will there be any funding put toward cultural acceptance particularly in the younger grades when the students start to learn about different cultures. How are we going to address the grading policy? Are we considering making changes to the lower grades perhaps going back to satisfactory, unsatisfactory, etc. The task force – how will you gather information from the community. I suggested that you have students on the task force.

Mr. Kravitz – If I may respectfully as of the Board – you are nine people. It is easier for me to take instruction from a group. What is asked of me to make it attainable? There is currently one plan in the State of New Jersey. We are all working together to develop similar plans. We're trying to figure it out together. As far as moving 3rd grade – there has been no talk except by two parents at a meeting. You want your testing grades together. It's not best practice to have them in another building. We have a unique curriculum – we have authors that are specific to the demographics of our students - 48% are by African American authors, 23% Hispanic authors, some Asian authors as well as others. We've been lauded by the State for our curriculum. We have 45 people on the task force. We can add some students.

Dr. Mullings - Please share the goals and objectives of the task force.

Mr. Rodriques – The Board, community would feel comfortable if they knew there was a plan in place for instruction for the Fall. We do not have to wait for the Department of Education to issue directives in order for you to have a plan. You can amend the plan when new facts become available. What is the plan to address the achievement gap created by distance learning? We should get a clearer answer.

Mr. Kravitz – We did submit a virtual learning plan to the State as required. I can't answer what September will look like. We are constantly looking at different ways as to how we can open. We've sent out surveys. We're listening to everyone. We are not just sitting here – we are taking action and planning “what if” scenerios.

Mr. Rodriques - Please share your findings.

Mr. Kravitz - We did – it's in the shared file.

Mr. Rodriques - QSAC charts – 76% for instruction and programming – what percent for student achievement? What type of data do they use?

Mr. Kravitz - They use PARCC scores or NJSLA scores, subgroups and then set a numerical value.

Mr. Trusty – *Mr. Berrios* – I want to collect the interests and concerns from the Board to see how we can get the technology audit done. I will submit the results to you and Molly.

Ms. Midgette-David – I want an audit of what would the grades look like if the Academies and the comprehensive side were separated.

Motion to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. by Ms. Midgette-David; seconded by Dr. Mullings.