The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
November 16, 2023

A public meeting of the Board of Education was held in hybrid format on November 16, 2023. Some Board Members, select staff, and some registered speakers participated in-person, while others participated remotely. Members of the general public who did not attend in-person participated via Zoom meeting platform.

The meeting was convened at 4:00 p.m, Reginald Streater, President.

Opening Remarks

President Streater reported and commented on the following:

- Expressed gratitude to Vice President Fix-Lopez for chairing the October 19, 2023 Board of Education meeting in his absence
- Acknowledgement and congratulations to Mayor-Elect Cherelle Parker
- Acknowledgement and congratulations to the newly elected and reelected members of Philadelphia City Council

President Streater invited Board Member Andrews to provide brief remarks on the recent passing of Mr. Flenard Pulley, a former teacher in the District.

President Streater resumed his opening remarks and shared the following:

- Acknowledgement of American Education Week, recognizing the dedicated educators and employees who make a profound difference for students and families
- Recognition of November as National Homeless Youth Awareness Month, Native American Heritage month, National School Psychology Week, Veterans Day, Diwali, and Thanksgiving
- Announcement of the Board's monthly school visits to the following schools: KIPP - Philadelphia Octavius Catto Charter School, Eleanor C. Emlen School and William L. Sayre High School.
- Recognition of Vice President Fix-Lopez and Board Member Wilkerson who represented the Board at the Council of Great City Schools' 6th Annual Fall Conference
- Recognition of October Teacher of the Month: Danielle Farley, an Art Teacher at Lankenau Environmental Science High School
- Recognition of October Seniors of the Month: Jada Collins and Yesenia Perez
- Recognition of John Smith III (the third) for being named a Finalist for the 2021 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching
- Recognition Lillian Izzard, Principal at Edison High School, for her impressive efforts at Edison High School
- Acknowledgement of Central High School graduate Donovan Dixon, who recently received a Rhodes Scholarship to study at the University of Oxford in England

Announcements

Vice President Fix-Lopez made announcements concerning recording, copyright, participation in, and viewing of the meeting.

Roll Call, Minutes

Lynn Rauch, General Counsel, announced that the Board met in Executive Session on November 2nd to discuss confidential litigation matters including information and strategy in connection with the following litigation: Jane Doe vs. School District of Philadelphia et al Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas # 2204-1107 and United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania # 22-3947 (cases asserting civil rights and negligence claims), on November 9th to discuss privileged and confidential charter school matters, and today to discuss confidential, privileged, personnel, and litigation matters information or strategy in connection with the following litigation: Jane Doe vs. School District of Philadelphia et al Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas # 2204-1107 and United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania # 22-3947 (cases asserting civil rights and negligence claims), LGH (presuit alleging civil rights violations), Tanner vs. School District of Philadelphia United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania #23-02189 (alleging constitutional violations).

Ms. Rauch conducted Roll Call.

Members Present: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez*,* Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson *(remotely),* Ms. Wilkerson *(remotely),* – 9

Members Absent:

Attending: Tony B. Watlington, Ed.D, Superintendent, Cavance Snaith, Student Board Representative, De'Naiza Watson, Student Board Representative

The minutes from the October 19, 2023 meeting of the Board of Education were presented for approval.

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez*,* Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 8

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Committee Reports

Board Member Thompson provided a report from the Parent and Community Advisory Council, including:

- Advisory Council members participated in our Board of Education Action meeting by providing testimony on Action Items during the October 19, 2023, Action meeting
- Advisory Council members also participated in our Board of Education's November 2, 2023, Policy Committee meeting
- Advisory Council members participated in the Board of Education's November 9, 2023, Goals and Guardrails meeting

- The Advisory Council did not meet for November 2023
- Advisory Council members aided their school communities in the following ways:
    - Providing information and assistance in acquiring groceries and fresh fruits and vegetables from non-profit organizations;
    - Participating in turkey dinner giveaways to families to ensure they have a greatThanksgiving holiday;
    - Providing homework assistance and referrals to social services to families in their school communities;
    - Assisting in providing winter wear (coats, hats, gloves) and participating in winter and other clothing drives;
    - Participation in School Advisory Councils and Home and School meetings in an effort to improve their school communities.
- One advisory council member provided a presentation to students aspiring to a career in the arts on the importance of credit, money management, invoicing for their services,and homeownership, at the November 4, 2023, Project 440 College Fair for Musicians at the Kimmel Center

Board Member Lam provided a report on the work of the Policy Committee noting that the Policy Committee met on November 2, 2023 to discuss and review the District's proposed changes to the following policies:

- Policy 210 - Use of Medication/Medical Technology
- Policy 210.1 - Possession/Use of Emergency Medications
- Policy 217 - High School Graduation Requirements
- Policy 324 - Personnel Files
- Policy 804 - Mandatory Instructional Time
- Policy 815 - Acceptable Use of Internet, Technology, and Network Resources

Board Member Lam also shared that the District's presentation also included the proposed elimination of Policy 314.1 - HIV Infection in Employees and the addition of two new policies including:

- Policy 829 - Information Security
- Policy 314 - Employee Evaluations

Board Member Lam noted that the Committee recommended all these changes to our Policy Manual come before the Board for a first reading at the December 7, 2023 Board of Education meeting.

Student Board Representative Cavance Snaith reported on her and fellow Student Board Representatives De'Naiza Watson and Doha Gassem activities throughout the last month. Student Representative Snaith reported that throughout the month, he along with his fellow student board representatives have participated in the following activities:

- November 2nd - De'Naiza, Cavance, and Doha participated in the Policy Committee Meeting
- November 9th - De'Naiza and Cavance participated in the Goals and Guardrails Committee Meeting

Registered Student Speakers

The meeting was opened to the public for presentation of statements by registered students speakers. Ms. Rauch provided the applicable provisions of the speakers' policy for the meeting. Ms. Rauch called the following student speakers:

Sarah Julia Marion, student, spoke about the importance of civic education and expressed frustration regarding the lack of civic education within school curriculums.

Samantha Santos, student, spoke about the importance of the Voter Champion program and advocated for the program to become more widespread across the District.

The following individuals advocated for the Green New Deals for District schools and spoke about the importance of having a plan to help combat the environmental crisis taking place in District Schools that consist of the following demands: safe and clean schools, climate disaster plans, comprehensive environmental plan, healthy and sustainable lunches, and pathways to green jobs:

- Benise Lyra Bacani, student
- Betsy Okrent, student

Superintendent Remarks

President Streater invited Dr. Watlington to provide remarks. Dr. Watlington reported/commented on the following:

- District Recognition
    - American Education Week
    - November as Family Engagement Month
    - Sister City International Opportunity for Students
        - The World Affairs Council of Philadelphia is inviting 4 district students and one educator to participate in Sister City international opportunity in Frankfurt, Germany in May 2024
    - November 14 - M/WBE Vendor Fair

- SY 2022-23 Results
    - SY 2022-23 Supporting Goals and progress made toward the following priority areas:
        - Safety (Safe Pathways) (+7 sites)
        - Student Attendance (+3%-pts)
        - Teacher Attendance (+7%-pts)
        - Dropouts (-265)
        - Graduation Rate (4-Year Cohort) (+3%-pts)
    - SY 2022-23 Academic Goals in the following academic areas have been finalized
        - PSSA/PASA Proficient
        - PSSA/PASA Below Basic
        - Keystone Proficient
        - Keystone Below Basic
        - NOCTI Proficient
    - Academic Goals Progress:
        - Increased in 13 out of 17 areas
        - Remained flat in 1 out of 17 areas
        - Declined in 3 out of 17 areas
- Priority Areas
    - Increase School Safety
    - Increase Student Attendance
    - Increase Teacher Attendance
    - Decrease Dropouts

- Facility Update
    - Southwark Update

Board Members engaged in a question and answer session to better understand work that the District has been doing to connect with community partners to support student attendance concerns. Board Members also asked questions to understand how the District is defining its floor strategy (as it relates to teacher and student attendance) and what comes next. Additionally, Board Members asked Dr. Watlington for clarity around the range of data that exist within student achievement and outcomes along with information on strategies being employed to support students who are performing at or above grade level as well as the ways in which the District is working to determine goal targets for incremental progress throughout the duration of the District's strategic plan.

Dr. Watlington invited the following individuals to respond to questions asked by Board Members:

- Dr. Tonya Wolford, Chief of Evaluation, Research & Accountability
- Dr. Jermaine Dawson, Deputy Superintendent of Academic Services
- Kevin Bethel, Chief of School Safety

Copies of presentations are included within the meeting agenda.

Presentation

President Streater invited Peng Chao, Chief of Charter Schools to provide a presentation.

Mr. Chao provided a brief presentation on the new charter applications process and shared that the Charter School's office received four letters of intent and one submission of a new charter school application. Mr. Chao shared that the Charter School's Office has begun evaluating the received application and hearings for the new charter school application process will take place on Wednesday, December 20, 2023 and in January 2024.

Board Members asked clarifying questions to better understand the new charter school application process.

Public Testimony and General Speakers

Board Member Salley acknowledged the receipt of and summarized written testimony submitted to the Board from:

- Seven (7) members of the Franklin Towne Charter High School Community
- Sarah Caswell
- Congressman Joe Hoeffel and Ariana Jimenez

Complete copies of the written testimony are included within the meeting agenda.

The meeting was opened to the public for presentation of statements by registered students, elected, and general speakers. Ms. Rauch provided the applicable provisions of the speakers' policy for the meeting. Ms. Rauch called general speakers:

The following individuals spoke about the impact that Southwest Leadership Charter School has had on their students and families including school safety. These individuals asked the Board of Education to reverse their decision not to renew the schools charter:

- Julia Coulibaly, Parent/Guardian
- Chris Fuentez, Philadelphia Police Department
- Leigh Purnell, Charter School Staff Member

Allison Eife, Charter School Staff Member, spoke in support of Franklin Towne Charter High School sharing her experience as a former student and now educator at the high school and urged the Board to renew the schools charter.

Martina Barbour, Community Member, spoke about the importance of having libraries in all schools to help students foster joy and interest in reading. Ms. Barbour spoke about the impact of children having access to reading materials within their school community and advocated for libraries and librarians at all schools.

The following individuals spoke about the importance of students having access to voter registration information and thanked several members of District staff, teachers, and Board Member Fix-Lopez for their partnership and support in raising awareness and bringing access to student voter registration. The following individuals urged the District to etch voter and civic engagement programs into the District's curriculum:

- Thomas Quinn, District Staff Member
- Justin Villere, Community Member

The following individuals urged the Board of Education to reject all new charter school applications and urged the Board of Education to hold public non-renewal hearings :

- Illene Poses, APPS
- Lisa Haver, APPS
- Lynda Rubin, APPS

Larry Gain, Community Member, spoke on behalf of the Bartram Alumni Association seeking support from the Board of Education and School District of Philadelphia to continue celebrating the Bartram Alumni Wall of Fame and Excellence devoid of any friction with the current administration.

Barbara Dowdall, APPS, spoke about mayor-elect Cherelle Parker's proposal for year-round schooling and urged the Board to continue the proposal. Ms. Dowdall also spoke about the importance of school libraries, school playgrounds, safe welcoming buildings with air quality, affordable out of school summer programming, and

Tameko Torres, Community Member, shared an interest in being a part of the strategic partnerships to support students in school with tutoring students, providing homework support and mentorship.

Anne Dorn, Parent/Guardian, spoke about student achievement results (PSSA) for the first class at Masterman selected by the new lottery system.

May Freda Watson, Community Member, spoke about the importance of allowing students to explore the things that interest them and cultivating their skill sets beyond learning.

Mama Gail Clouden, Community Member, spoke about the importance of upholding standards for students. Mama Gail also spoke about the importance of keeping good teachers and staff members in our District.

Dr. Watlington recognized Dr. Nathalie Nérée as the newly appointed Chief of Special Education and Diverse Learners and welcomed her to the School District of Philadelphia.

Consideration of Action Items

President Streater described the process of how Action Items would be presented for consideration:

- Action Item 3 Approval of Personnel Terminations - WITHDRAWN BY STAFF 11.14.2023
- Action Item 6 Contract with Benefits Consultant: Marsh & McClennan Agency ($750,000) WITHDRAWN BY STAFF 11.06.2023
- Action Item 11 Capital Award for Major Renovation at William Dick Elementary School ($7,337,000) - WITHDRAWN BY STAFF 11.6.2023
- Consent agenda for the remaining Action Items, which are items 1-2, 4-5, 7-10 and 12-17.

Item No. 1 - Acceptance of Donation from Philadelphia Eagles Playground Build (valued at $220,000), License and Right of Entry Agreements with Field Turf, Inc. and George Ely and Associates, Inc. (no cost), and Philadelphia Mural Arts Advocacy ($100,000) at Stephen Girard Elementary School

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 9

No:

Item No. 2 - Approval of Personnel Hires (Updated 11.9..2023)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 9

No:

Item No. 3 - Approval of Personnel Terminations - **WITHDRAWN BY STAFF 11.14.2023**

Item No. 4 - Administration's Recommendation for Termination of Professional Employees (Updated 11.16.2023)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 9

No:

Item No. 5 - Approval of Resignations and Retirements (Updated 11.16.2023)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 9

No:

Item No. 6 - Contract with Benefits Consultant: Marsh & McClennan Agency ($750,000) - **WITHDRAWN BY STAFF**

Item No. 7. Settlement of Claim - L.G.H.

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 9

No:

Item No. 8 - Capital Award for the Provision of Professional Supplemental Staffing ($10,000,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 8

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 9. - Capital Award for Structural Repairs at Clara Barton Elementary School ($5,538,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 9

No:

Item No. 10. - Capital Award for Bathroom Renovation at Francis S. Key Elementary School ($1,424,470)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 8

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 11. - Capital Award for Major Renovation at William Dick Elementary School ($7,337,000) - WITHDRAWN BY STAFF 11.6.2023

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 9

No:

Item No. 12. - Amendment of the Contract with Hyde Electric Corporation for Electrical Services for the Fire Alarm Replacement at Horace H. Furness High School - No Cost Time Extension

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 9

No:

Item No. 13. - Amendment of the Contract with Hyde Electric Corporation Providing Electrical Services for the Electrical Upgrades at Vare-Washington Elementary School - No Cost Time Extension

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 9

No:

Item No. 14. - Change Orders at Various Locations ($2,317,818)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 8

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 15. - Contract with R. F. Design and Integration, Inc. for Security Camera Installation ($500,980)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 9

No:

Item No. 16. - Approval of Release and Settlement Agreement with Aspira Bilingual Cyber Charter School (“Aspira Cyber”), Payment of Funds by Aspira Cyber to settle withholding requests to PDE, Payment of Funds by the School District to settle the 2022-2023 Reconciliation, and withdrawal by Aspira Cyber from Commonwealth Court litigation and other PDE appeals - Added 11.14.2023

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 8

No: Ms. Salley, - 1

Item No. 17. - Settlement of Claim – Jane Doe (Added 11.14.2023)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton , Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 9

No:

Adjournment

President Streater announced that the Board will hold its next public business and reorganization meeting on December 7, 2023, at 4:00 p.m., via hybrid format.

On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:42pm

Reginald L. Streater, Esq.,President
Board of Education

Tony Watlington, Ed.D.
Superintendent