The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
May 9, 2024

A special public meeting of the Board of Education was held in a hybrid format on May 9, 2024. 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 the Zoom meeting platform.

The meeting was convened at 4:07 p.m by Dr. Tony B. Watlington, Superintendent & Board of Education Secretary.

Opening Remarks and Announcements

Dr. Watlington provided opening remarks.

Dr. Watlington, Superintendent, made announcements concerning recording, copyright, participation in, and viewing of the meeting.

Roll Call, Minutes

Lynn Rauch, General Counsel, announced that the notice of the special action meeting was provided in the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Daily News and on the front door of the Education Center.

Ms. Rauch conducted Roll Call.

> Members Present: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms, Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, Ms. Novales, Ms. Stern, President Streater,, Ms. Wilkerson – 9
>
> Members Absent: 0
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> Attending: Tony B. Watlington, Ed.D, Superintendent, Cavance Snaith, Student Board Representative, Doha Gassem, Student Board Representatives, De'Naiza Watson, Student Board Representative

Public Testimony and General Speakers

Dr. Watlington acknowledged the receipt of and summarized one piece of written testimony submitted to the Board from:

- Cari Akula

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 general speakers. Ms. Rauch provided the applicable provisions of the speakers' policy for the meeting. Ms. Rauch called general speakers:

Cecelia Thompson, community member, spoke about the New Learning Support initiative and shared the schools feedback on the program in schools. Ms. Thompson requested that after data is collected - if the program is proven to help scholars to keep things going and if there are some glitches for the district to not discontinue the program but to fix the issues.

Lisa Haver, APPS, welcomed new Board members and shared an op-ed that she wrote in July of 2018 and thought about what the Board has accomplished in 6 years. Ms. Haver shared that this is a new opportunity to do something different and shared that we need to bring back support staff, librarians, stop privatization of schools, and urged the Board to change the status quo and stop looking at students as data points.

The following individuals spoke on behalf of CASA and in support of the leadership of President Streater and Dr. Watlington while highlighting the impact of President Streater and Dr. Watlington's leadership noting that there has been progress and highlighted Goals and Guardrails noting that increases in ELA and Math data and 6% rise in better attendance for staff, and there is a lot of progress with data points related to improved student achievement and outcomes in ELA and Math, improved drop-out rates:

- Don Anticoli, CASA
- Alonzo Fulton, CASA
- Robin Cooper, CASA

Toya Diggs-Clay, parent, expressed concerns related to policy for students to be 5 years of age before September 1st and asked who she should be speaking to in effort to get the policy changed. Ms. Diggs-Clay expressed her concerns with this policy.

Lynda Rubin, APPS, welcomed new and returning Board Members and shared the experience of children in schools regarding stressors and issues of confidence. Ms. Rubin asked the Board of Education to consider the impact of mental state of children and behaviors on student outcomes and be mindful of helping children believe that they can keep pressing forward.

Diliane Cho, district staff member, spoke about the importance of family and community engagement and shared the experience of ELL families who have been facing concerns such as discrimination and asked the Board to support and implement plans related to policy 918.

Mallory Fix-Lopez, parent, welcomed the new Board Members to their first meeting and shared that she is rooting for the new iteration of the Board. Mrs. Fix-Lopez urged the full Board to surrender their full trust to one another and shared some words of wisdom from her experience as a member of the Board of Education for the past six years. Mrs. Fix-Lopez reminded Board Members that their focus must be the kids and shared that she is excited to see their achievement. Mrs. Fix-Lopez also shared her support for President Streater to maintain his current presidency on the Board of Education,

Barbara Dowdall, APPS, spoke about the importance of basics including budget priorities such as full-day kindergarten and libraries with certified teacher librarians at every school. Ms. Dowdall spoke about why children don't learn how to read, citing the lack of school libraries and librarians. Ms. Dowdall encouraged the Board to connect with other school boards in the Commonwealth and to engage with elected officials and local advocacy groups who are advocating for the return of school libraries to all schools.

Anne Dorn, parent, spoke about the rumors related to the admissions process for Masterman.

Dr. Watlington announced that the Board would take a 15 minute break.

The Board of Education took a break beginning at 4:42pm, the meeting resumed at 5:00pm

Board Organization

Dr. Watlington, Board Secretary, led the proceedings for Board Organization and election of Board officers. Dr. Watlington asked for a motion for nomination of Board President.

Dr. Watlington opened nominations for Board President. Board Member Andrews nominated Board Member Streater as the Board President. Board Member Wilkerson seconded the nomination. No other nominations were made. After nominations were closed, the Board voted on the nomination of Board Member Streater as President of the Board.

Board Member Streater expressed gratitude for the nomination and opportunity to continue to serve as Board President.

Board Member Lam provided comments in support of Board Member Streater's nomination and expressed gratitude for his leadership thus far.

Board Member Harper provided comments in support of Board Member Streater and expressed gratitude for the manner in which Board Member Streater welcomed new board members selflessly and with a willingness to share.

The vote was:

> Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms, Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, Ms. Novales, Ms. Stern, President Streater,, Ms. Wilkerson – 9
>
> No: 0

Mr. Streater was elected Board President.

Dr. Watlington called for nominations for Board Vice President. Board Member Wilkerson nominated Board Member Sarah-Ashley Andrews for the position of Vice President. Board Member Lam nominated Board Member Novales for the position of Vice President. Board Member Novales nominated Board Member Lam for the position of Vice President.

Board Member Harper motioned to close nominations. President Streater seconded the motion.

Board Member Andrews expressed gratitude for the nomination and shared that she is interested in serving in the position of Vice President to provide stability and support as through the Boards transition as new Board Members get acclimated to their roles.

Student Board Representative Watson shared her support of Board Member Andrews nomination and shared how Board Member Andrews has supported the Student Board Representatives throughout their terms.

Student Board Representative Snaith shared his support of Board Member Andrews and shared that he believes in what she has expressed that she will do as Vice President on the Board of Education.

Board Member Stern shared that she believes any of the nominees would serve well as Vice President and as a new Board Member she feels it is important that in the transition between now and December it is important to her that the Board has the experience of two prior Board Members as the officers of the Board. Board Member Stern endorsed the nomination of Board Member Lam.

Board Member Cubbage shared that as a new Board Member it has been an interesting couple of weeks getting to know one another and expressed support of Board Member Novales.

Board Member Wilkerson expressed her support of Board Member Andrews and expressed the need to capture the voices of all Board Members in the most authentic way and emphasized Board Member Andrews ability to bring out the best in each of them.

Board Member Lam expressed that she does not believe that there is a wrong choice in this decision and shared that she believes that each of the Board Members has a lot of experience and would bring a great voice. Board Member Lam highlighted that this was a huge transition for our District over the last three years and expressed gratitude for the nomination.

Board Member Novales expressed gratitude for the members of the Board of Education and found that the last few weeks were fast paced. Board Member Novales also shared that she feels that a new pair of eyes would be great.

After nominations were closed, the Board voted on the nominations of Board Members Andrews, Board Member Lam, and Board Member Novales by stating the name of the nominee they supported. Board Member Novales received five votes and Board Member Andrews received four votes, as follows:

For Board Member Andrews: Andrews, Harper, Streater, Wilkerson - 4
For Board Member Novales: Cubbage, Jones, Novales - 3
For Board Member Lam: Lam, Stern - 2

For Andrews: Andrews, Harper, Streater, Wilkerson - 4
For Novales: Cubbage, Jones, Lam, Novales, Stern - 5

Ms.Novales was elected Vice President.

Vice President Novales provided remarks in accepting her position as Vice President of the Board of Education.

Adjournment

President Streater announced that the Board will hold its next public business on May 30, 2024 at 4:00 p.m., via hybrid format.

On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 5:24 pm.

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

Tony Watlington, Ed.D.
Superintendent