The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
February 23, 2023

A public meeting of the Board of Education was held in hybrid format on February 23, 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 4:02 p.m., by Reginald L. Streater Esquire, President. President Streater reported/commented on the following:

- Acknowledgement of the recent outcome of the Pennsylvania School Funding trial
- Acknowledgement of Black History Month
- Recognition of Masterman Debate Team for winning the varsity public forum division at the 48th University of Pennsylvania Tournament
- Congratulations to Justin Edwards, a senior at Imhotep Institute Charter School, for being named ESPN's new Number 1 high school basketball player

- Announcement of changes being made to the organization of the meeting agenda and procedures to make Board meetings more efficient and to keep our stakeholders engaged

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

Roll Call, Minutes, Announcements

Lynn Rauch, General Counsel, announced that the Board met in Executive Session on February 9, 2023, to discuss quasi-judicial, privileged, and confidential charter school matters and today to discuss privileged, confidential, personnel, and investigation matters, and information or strategy in connection with the following: Murphy Quigley Co., Inc. v. The School District of Philadelphia, Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas, No. 220702097 (alleging breach of contract); The School District of Philadelphia v. City of Philadelphia et al., United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, No. 2:23-CV-00238 (challenging a city ordinance); The School District of Philadelphia v. JUUL Labs Inc, et al,, Multidistrict Litigation, N.D Cal., Civ. Act. No. 22-CV-08928, MDL No. 19-MD-02913-WHO (alleging violation of public nuisance law and RICO); William Penn School District et al. v. Pa. Department of Education et. al., Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court No. 587 MD 2014 (case regarding the state system of funding public education).

Ms. Rauch conducted Roll Call.

Members Present: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson *(remotely),* Ms. Wilkerson – 8

Members Absent: Ms. Egea-Hinton - 1

Attending: Tony B. Watlington, Ed.D, Superintendent, and Sophia Roach, Non-Voting Student Board Representatives

The minutes from the January 26, 2023 meeting of the Board of Education were presented for approval.

Yes: Ms. Andrews ,Ms. Danzy, Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez*,* Ms. Salley, President . Streater, Ms. Thompson *(remotely),* Ms. Wilkerson – 8

No: 0

Committee Reports

President Streater acknowledged and expressed gratitude to Horace Clouden, a member of the Parent and Community Advisory Council, for inviting him to a community event hosted by his wife and longtime advocate, Momma Gail's Community Education Network and Sister Nicole Ross's Hands Across Philadelphia. President Streater also announced that Board Member Sarah-Ashley Andrews will be serving as co-chair for the Parent and Community Advisory Council in partnership with Board Member Thompson who has led this work.

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

- Advisory Council members continue to provide support to their school communities by providing meaningful activities, support, and advocacy for families and their scholars.
- Advisory Council members provided testimony during the Speaker Portion of the January 26, 2023, by either sending in written testimony or providing live testimony on Action Items being voted upon by the Board of Education
- Advisory Council members participated in the following activity:
    - An evening with the Great Great Grandson of Fredrick Douglas
    - Participated/hosted Eagles pep rallies
    - Participated/hosted Black History events
    - Assisting getting a Girls on the Run program in a school
    - Assisted in a school having a Sneaker ball, to cultivate school-community relationships
    - Participation in the beautification of their school, led by their principal

Board Member Andrews provided an update on the Student Board Representatives, announcing that Student Board Representative Angelica "Love" Speech has notified the Board of Education of her decision to resign from her position on the Board of Education effective February 23, 2023.

Student Board Representative Sophia Roach reported on her and fellow Student Board Representative Angelica "Love" Speech's activities, sharing that Love attended the first meeting of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council and shared that students in attendance shared that they would like to see an increase in resources available for career readiness, college preparation, and life skills. Ms. Roach also encouraged students to reach out to her and Ms. Speech to share their feedback and experience.

Superintendent Remarks

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

- Leadership Announcements
- Board's Goals and Guardrails
- Superintendent's Budget Priorities
- Academic Calendar
- School Safety Investments
- Student and Teacher Attendance Updates

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

- Shavon Savage, Deputy Superintendent of Academic Services

Copies of presentations are included with meeting materials.

Presentations

President Streater invited Peng Chao, Acting Chief of the Charter Schools Office, to provide a presentation on the new charter applications. Mr. Chao's presentation included:

- An Overview of the new charter application process – Timeline of Application Release, Information Sessions, Due Dates for Letters of Intent and Applications, Public Hearings, Closure of Public Comment Window, and Board Action
- New Charter Application Summary – Three total applications (one K-8 school, and two high schools)
- Submitted Applications
    - ASPIRA Bilingual College and Career Preparatory Academy
    - ASPIRA Dr. Ricardo E. Alegria Preparatory Charter School
    - Global Leadership Academy International Charter High School
    - Perseverance Leadership Academy Charter School

- Overview of the Charter Schools Office's evaluation criteria – Academics, Organizational Capacity, Community Engagement, Finance, Facilities, and Existing Operator (if applicable)
- Overview of each new charter application – Mission, Management Company, Location, Enrollment Preferences, and Key Findings

Public Testimony and Registered Student and General Speakers

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

- Horace Clouden
- Diane Payne
- Cheryl Ann Nelson
- State Representative Stephen Kinsey
- Barbara Dowdall

Complete copies of the written testimony are included with the meeting materials.

The meeting was opened to the public for presentation of statements by registered student speakers and general speakers. Ms. Rauch provided the applicable provisions of the speakers' policy for the meeting. Ms. Rauch called student speakers first, then elected officials, followed by general speakers.

The following individuals urged the board of education to reopen swimming pools owned by the School District of Philadelphia:

- Phoebe Dougherty, student
- Ashira Rawlerson, student
- Janet Dennis, Community Member
- Ariel Presely, Community Member
- Ben Bryant, Parent/Guardian
- Horace Clouden, community member
- Leah Clouden, community member

The following individuals spoke about the need for additional security guards during school sporting events:

- Hope Ingram, Student
- Miracle Ingram, Student

The following individuals spoke about the importance of the school selection process and urged the Board to adopt a system that allows students to swap their school admissions decision based on preference:

- Phillip Dorn, Student
- Anne Dorn, Parent/Guardian

Thomas Dorn, student, spoke about the decline in PSSA test scores at Masterman High School.

Elisabeth Dorn, student, spoke about the impact of the lottery system on her family.

The following individuals spoke in support of Action Item 21 - Application for New Charter School: Global Leadership Academy International Charter High School - Added 2.16.2023:

- Farrah Ross, Student
- Shahan Owens, Student
- Caiden Brown, Student
- Dawn Chavous, Community Member,
- Dr. Naomi Johnson-Booker, Community Member
- Dr. Lisa Chiles, Community Member
- Tanchanika Austin, Parent/Guardian
- Larry Brown, Community Member
- Ariadnna Rodriguez, Parent/Guardian

Senator Anthony Williams, elected official, urged the Board of Education to do what's in the best interest of students and do what the community is asking for. Senator Williams also spoke about the disparities in school population demographics in criteria based schools and invited Board Members to visit schools in Southwest Philadelphia to understand the experiences of students in that community.

Kenneth Trujillo, community member, spoke in support of Action Item 20 - Application for New Charter School: ASPIRA Dr. Ricardo E. Alegria Preparatory Charter School - Added 2.16.2023.

The following individuals urged the Board of Education to deny the new charter school applications listed on the Board’s agenda as Action Items 20, 21, and 22:

- Ilene Poses, Community member
- Lisa Haver, Community member,
- Deborah Grill, Community member

- Lynda Rubin, Community member

Tamika Johnson, parent/guardian, spoke about her experience at Mastery Prep Elementary school and asked the Board to renew the school's charter.

(President Streater announced that there was a shooting near Blaine elementary school and some members of the District's senior leadership team have left the meeting to tend to the developing situation.)

Ken Schamberg, community member, spoke about policies that negatively impact substitute teachers throughout the District.

The following individuals urged the Board of Education to allow students who were otherwise denied attendance to W.B.Saul High School and the impact of the new school selection process on school enrollment data:

- Gili Ronen, Parent/Guardian,
- Teeyona Crumpton, Parent/Guardian

Timothy Boyle, district staff member, asked the Board of Education to table action item 18 Adoption of Academic Calendars SY 2023-2024 & SY 2024-2025 - Added 2.7.2023/Updated 2.9.2023 and invited the Board to attend parent teacher conferences at Science Leadership Academy Middle School.

Barbara Dowdall, community member, raised concerns regarding audience proximity to the Board of Education during the meeting expressing concerns regarding staff seating in the auditorium and limited opportunities for parking close to the education center. Ms. Dowdal spoke about the impact that this has on individuals who would like to attend the Board of Education meetings in person.

(Mama) Gail Clouden, community member, expressed exhaustion in having to continue to try and understand what is being discussed and the importance of the District doing better to support students.

A break was taken at 8:07pm and the meeting resumed at 8:36pm

<u>Consideration of Action Items</u>

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

- Action Item 14 Board Approval of the School District of Philadelphia's Five Year K-12 School Counseling Plan was withdrawn from the agenda by staff.

- Group 1 includes charter items, which are Action Items 19-22.

- Group 2 includes priority items, which have been identified by President Streater to be pulled out of the consent agenda at the request of Board Members. These are:
    - Action Item 6
    - Action Item 18

- Group 3 includes the remaining items of the consent agenda which are Action Items 1-5, 7-13, 15-17 and 23.

Item No. 1. Approval of Personnel Hires (Updated 2.16.2023)

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

No: 0

Item No. 2. Approval of Personnel Terminations (Updated 2.23.2023)

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

No: 0

Item No. 3. Administration's Recommendation for Termination of Professional Employees (Updated 2.23.2023)

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

No: 0

Item No. 4. Approval of Resignations and Retirements (Updated 2.23.2023)

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

No: 0

Item No. 5. Contract with Executive Search Firms ($470,250) - Updated 2.22.2023

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

No: 0

Item No. 6. Contracts with Providers for Federally Funded Services to Non-Public Schools ($138,000,000)

Board Member Thompson asked a clarifying question to understand why this item was not included in the agenda for the Intermediate Unit 26. Board Member Salley asked a clarifying question to understand how the funds are distributed and when. Vice President Fix-Lopez raised a point of information to understand the role of the School District of Philadelphia in the proposed contracts. Michael Herbstman, Chief Financial Officer, provided a response.

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 6

No: Ms. Salley, Ms. Thompson - 2

Item No. 7. Authorization of Education Payments to Other Educational Entities ($20,600,000)

Board Member Salley asked a clarifying question to understand how the funds are distributed and when. Michael Herbstmans, Chief Financial Officer, provided a response.

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

No: 0

Item No. 8. Settlement of Civil Action - Murphy Quigley Co., Inc. v. The School District of Philadelphia ($171,560.22)

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

No: 0

Item No. 9. Ratification and Authorization of Purchase Order Contracting Authority - Calendar Year 2023

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

No: 0

Item No. 10. Change Orders at Various Locations ($579,978)

Board Member Salley expressed concerns regarding the timeframe of data being provided in this action item.

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

No: 0

Item No. 11. Agreement for Service - WFGD Studio, LLC ($20,300)

Board Member Thompson asked clarifications questions to understand how the proposed tool will integrate with other tools the District currently has. Shavon Savage, Deputy Superintendent, provided a response.

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

No: 0

Item No. 12. Contract with Center for Supportive Schools ($223,000)

Board Member Thompson asked clarifying questions to understand which curriculum product the District intends to use and how data will be collected. Board Member Salley asked for clarification as to why there are only two schools selected in this initiative. Rachel Holzman, Deputy Chief of Student Rights and Responsibilities, and Abigail Gray, Deputy Chief of School Climate and Safety provided a response.

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

No: 0

Item No. 13. Contract with Research for Action ($879,000)

Board Member Thompson asked clarifying questions regarding how schools and students are going to be selected, how will the data be qualitative or quantitative, and how it will tie into MTSS. Dr. Tony Wolford, Chief of Research, Evaluation and Accountability, provided a response.

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

No: 0

Item No. 14. Board Approval of the School District of Philadelphia's Five Year K-12 School Counseling Plan - WITHDRAWN 2.23.2023

Item No. 15. Ratification of Contract Amendment for Multiple Healthcare Providers Reimbursement ($60,000)

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

No: 0

Item No. 16. Ratification of Memoranda of Understanding with The Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania- Various Programs at Penn-Alexander and Henry C. Lea Schools ($500,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 5

No: 0

Abstentions: Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, Ms. Thompson - 3

Item No. 17. Amended Contract with 12 PLUS - Postsecondary Supports - Kensington Health Sciences Academy ($120,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Abstentions: Ms. Thompson -1

Item No. 18. Adoption of Academic Calendars SY 2023-2024 & SY 2024-2025 - Added 2.7.2023/Updated 2.9.2023

Board Member Thompson ask if the Board can divide the action item into two items in an attempt to vote on the proposed calendar item for SY 2023-2024 and SY 2024-2025 separately. Dr. Watlington, Superintendent, provided a response.

A motion was made and seconded to amend to split the Action Item into two Action items, one for each school year.

Board Members Danzy, Lam, and Salley and Vice President Fix-Lopez asked Board Member Thompson to provide clarification around why she was moving to divide the action item into two parts. Board Member Thompson provided a response expressing concerns of the impact of an extended winter break in SY 2024-2025 on families who experience homelessness and financial insecurities.

Board Member Andrews asked for the rationale behind the decision to make the winter break two weeks rather than one for SY 2024-2025. Vice President Fix-Lopez expressed a need for the Board to align with its policy to consider the calendar for two school years together. Board Member Salley asked a procedural question to understand the implications of the vote on the motion made to divide the action item. Board Member Danzy asked clarifying questions to understand the District engagement process regarding the calendar and specifically the surveys sent to families. Evelyn Nuñez, Associate Superintendent - Elementary Schools, provided a response.

The motion to amend failed by a vote of:

Yes: Ms. Thompson - 1

No: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

After the motion to amend failed, Board Member Lam asked for clarification to understand why school ends on two consecutive half days. Board Member Salley asked clarifying questions to understand the data for the surveys to understand if the data is representative of all populations served by the District. Vice President Fix-Lopez asked for clarification that the weekday in which the holiday falls was considered in making a decision to provide an extended winter break. Board Member Thompson expressed concerns regarding the impact of an extended winter break and asked that the District provide data to show that they received feedback from low income families and neighborhoods throughout the District. Evelyn Nuñez, Chief Schools Officer, provided a response. The Board then voted on Action Item No. 18, to adopt academic calendars for SY 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 6

No: Ms. Salley, Ms. Thompson - 2

Item No. 19. Application for New Charter School: ASPIRA Bilingual College and Career Preparatory Academy - Added 2.16.2023

Board Member Danzy asked a clarifying question to understand if the applicant has an opportunity to revise and resubmit the application for another review. Board Member Salley asked a clarifying question to understand if the applicant has an opportunity to respond to feedback on the application. Board Member Thompson asked to better understand when findings about the new charter school application is made available to applicants. Peng Chao, Acting Chief of Charter Schools provided a response.

A motion was made and seconded to deny the new charter Application of ASPIRA Bilingual College and Career Preparatory Academy and to adopt an Adjudication in support of the denial.

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

No: 0

Item No. 20. Application for New Charter School: ASPIRA Dr. Ricardo E. Alegria Preparatory Charter School - Added 2.16.2023

A motion was made and seconded to deny the application filed for a new charter school to be known as ASPIRA Dr. Ricardo E. Alegria Preparatory Charter School, and to adopt an Adjudication in support of the denial.

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

No: 0

Item No. 21. Application for New Charter School: Global Leadership Academy International Charter High School - Added 2.16.2023

Board Member Thompson asked a clarifying question to understand what documentation was presented by one of the individuals who spoke during the meeting. Board Member Lam asked clarifying questions to understand the grounds for denying the proposed application. Board Member Danzy asked a clarifying question to understand if the applicant has an opportunity to revise and resubmit the application for another review. Peng Chao, Acting Chief of Charter Schools provided a response. Board Member Salley asked a clarifying question to understand if the Board is able to propose a motion to approve the proposed application. A motion was made and seconded to break to go into executive session. The motion failed by a vote of:

Yes: Ms. Lam, Ms. Salley, Ms. Thompson - 3

No: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Vice President Fix-Lopez, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson - 5

A motion was made and seconded to deny the application filed for a new charter school to be known as Global Leadership Academy International Charter High School, and to adopt an Adjudication in support of the denial.

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 6

No: Ms. Salley, Ms. Thompson - 2

Item No. 22. Application for New Charter School: Perseverance Leadership Academy Charter School - Added 2.16.2023

A motion was made and seconded to deny the application filed for a new charter school to be known as Perseverance Leadership Academy Charter School, and to adopt an Adjudication in support of the denial. Board Member Thompson asked a clarifying question to understand if a charter school applicant must have a school facility. Peng Chao, Acting Chief of Charter Schools provided a response.

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

No: 0

Item No. 23. The School District of Philadelphia v. JUUL Labs, Inc. Multidistrict Litigation and Ratification and Authorization of Wagstaff & Cartmell, LLP, Kirton McConkie PC ($3,217,443) - Added 2.21.2023/ Updated 2.22.2023

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Danzy, Ms. Lam, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7
No: Ms. Thompson - 1

New Business

Board Member Thompson shared that she would like to see a more robust discussion regarding Item No. 14, Board Approval of the School District of Philadelphia's Five Year K-12 School Counseling Plan, withdrawn for the February 23, 2023 agenda. Board Member Thompson also shared that she would like to receive an updated Title I plan in an adequate amount of time for the Board to review before voting.

Board Member Lam requested that Dr. Watlington share any considerations being made regarding proposed solutions for the school selection process for this current school year.

Vice President Fix-Lopez asked that the District provide a comprehensive plan highlighting the work that is being done to address public safety and health concerns. Vice President Fix-Lopez also asked that the District include information on how the School District of Philadelphia is working with city officials to work collaboratively to address these concerns.

Board Member Salley asked that Dr. Watlington provide additional information to help the Board better understand immediate budget priorities to understand how this year and next year's budget address these challenges with the number of students who are not on grade level. Board Member Salley requested an FAQ to include history and current status of strategy as it relates to communities request to reopen local swimming pools across the city. Board Member Salley also asked for additional information to understand the concerns regarding under enrollment in schools like Saul High School and the impact on their school budget. Board Member Salley also requested follow up to comments by student speakers regarding a need for additional safety officers to be present during school sporting events.

President Streater noted that building a collaborative meeting with the City Education Committee is important and proposed a plan for a biannual retreat among the Board, the District, and City Council's Education Committee in order to engage more frequently than the twice a year briefing at City Hall. President Streater also asked for additional information to understand what the District will do for our high schools now and in the future especially as it relates to neighborhood high schools serving the direct needs of the communities they serve (i.e. CTE and otherwise).

Adjournment

President Streater announced that the Board will hold its next public business meeting on March 23, 2023, at 4:00 p.m., via hybrid format.

On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:27 p.m.

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

Tony Watlington, Ed.D.
Superintendent