The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
October 19, 2023

A public meeting of the Board of Education was held in hybrid format on October 19, 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, Mallory Fix-Lopez, Vice President.

Vice President Fix Lopez reported and commented on the following:

- Announcement that the Board's meeting agenda for the evening has been rearranged to hear first from registered speakers followed by a vote on priority items for this evening - Action Item 22 - Resolution of the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia, Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of Tax and Revenue Anticipation Notes of the School District in Fiscal Year 2024 and Action Item 23 - Authorizing The Issuance of General Obligation Bonds, Series A of 2023

- Acknowledgement of Action Item 1, the Adoption of Board Policies noting that this action item is a culmination of many months of working on the revision of 13 policies, the elimination of one and the creation of four new policies.

- Expressed gratitude to everyone who came out to the Public Hearing held on October 5, 2023 at Thomas Edison High School.

- Acknowledgement of families and students attending the Mathematics, Civics and Sciences Charter School to share that the District and Charter School Office staff are working to support the school community through the school selection process

- Congratulations to Joyce Abbott, a retired School District of Philadelphia Educator, who was recognized by the City with a street named in her honor on September 26th

- Congratulations to Karen Rufino, an art teacher at William H. Hunter School, who was named Outstanding Elementary Teacher of the Year by the Pennsylvania Art Education Association.

- Acknowledgement of Todd Corabi who was given the 2023 SHAPE PA Health Education Teacher of the Year Award

- Acknowledgement of Jeffrey Brown was named the 2023 SHAPE PA Middle School Physical Education Teacher of the Year.

- Congratulations to Teresa Fleming who was selected as the 2023 Transportation Director of the Year by School Transportation News.

- Announcement that the Board has resumed its school visits for the year, and have visited Warren G. Harding Middle School (October 12) and KIPP Philadelphia Octavious Catto (October 17).

- Acknowledgement of October as National Bullying Prevention Month, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender History Month, Native American Heritage Month. Indigenous People's Day on October 9th, National Principals Month, October 5th is World Teachers Day, and October 10th was World Mental Health Day

- Acknowledgement and congratulations to two special weddings on the Board of Education team team: Board President Reginald Streater and Staff Member Tracy Horger

Opening Remarks

Board Member Lam 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 today to discuss confidential, privileged matters and information or strategy in connection with the following litigation: Sample-Oates vs School District of Philadelphia et al., Philadelphia County of Common Pleas No. 230401226 (alleging discrimination and tort causes of action); Memphis Street Academy Charter School v. The School District of Philadelphia, United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, No. 22-CV-2760 (challenging a surrender clause in the schools charter and alleging civil rights claims); Franklin Towne Charter High School vs. The School District of Philadelphia and Board of Education Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas No. 2310064 (challenge to the Board of Education's appointed hearing officer in the Franklin Town revocation proceedings).

Ms. Rauch conducted Roll Call.

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

Members Absent: President Streater - 1

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

The minutes from the September 21, 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, Ms. Wilkerson – 8

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Public Testimony, Registered Student, and General Speakers

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

- Six members of the Franklin Towne Charter High School Community
- A student of Franklin Towne Charter High School

- Barbara McDowell Dowdall

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 student speakers first, followed by general speakers:

The following individuals spoke about the importance of schools having librarians:

- Jennifer Lowman, community member
- Deborah Grill, community member

Lynda Rubin, community member, expressed concerns regarding charter school laws, salary and compensation of leadership, and challenges with oversight for charter schools who fail to sign their charter agreement but continue to operate.

Tammy Brown, community member, expressed pleasure on behalf of her firm as they serve as the benefits consultant for the District.

Diani Safdeye, parent/guardian, expressed concern regarding the District's response to the current war taking place in the Middle East and expressed the importance of educational institutions taking a stance in the rise of anti-semitism in our community and asked the District to take a stand in educating students as well.

Lawrence Jones, community member, expressed disappointment in the Board's response to the report released on October 6, 2023 related to the Board's independent investigation involving allegations of racially discriminatory effects of the charter renewal process.

Lisa Haver, community member, spoke about the importance of protection for charter school students and accountability for charter school leaders noting that the Alliance for Philadelphia Public Schools have been strong advocates for this over the past few years. Ms. Haver also spoke about the need for public charter school renewal hearings and procedures. Ms. Haver also urged the Board to break their silence regarding charter school matters.

May Freda Watson, community member, commended Dr. Watlington for the work that he has done since beginning his term as Superintendent and expressed faith in the Superintendent's team to make a difference for the children in the City of Philadelphia and expressed the need for us to listen to the students and learn from them.

Presentation

Vice-President Fix-Lopez invited Dr. Watlington to present relevant information related to the priority action items on this evening's agenda - Action Item 22 - Action Item 22, Resolution of the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia, Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of Tax and Revenue Anticipation Notes of the School District in Fiscal Year 2024 - Added 10.3.2023 and Action Item 23 Authorizing The Issuance of General Obligation Bonds, Series A of 2023 - Added 10.3.2023.

Dr. Watlington invited Mike Herbstman, Chief Financial Officer to provide a presentation on the Tax and Revenue Anticipation Notes and General Obligation Bonds. Mr. Herbstman shared that the General Obligation Bonds would be used to support the capital programming while the TRAN is needed to continue on with general operating expenses.

Board Members engaged in a question and answer session asking clarifying questions to better understand the District's cash flow.

Consideration of Priority Action Items

Priority Items:

- Action Item 22, Resolution of the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia, Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of Tax and Revenue Anticipation Notes of the School District in Fiscal Year 2024 - Added 10.3.2023
- Action Item 23, Authorizing The Issuance of General Obligation Bonds, Series A of 2023 - Added 10.3.2023

Item No. 22 - Resolution of the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia, Authorizing the Issuance and Sale of Tax and Revenue Anticipation Notes of the School District in Fiscal Year 2024 - Added 10.3.2023

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

No: 0

Item No. 23 - Authorizing The Issuance of General Obligation Bonds, Series A of 2023 - Added 10.3.2023

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

No: 0

Committee Reports

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

- Advisory Council members participation in Board of Education Action meeting by providing testimony on Action Items during the September 21, 2023 Action meeting
- Aided their school communities in the following ways:
  - Advisory Council Members provided information and assistance in obtaining groceries and fresh fruits and vegetables from many non-profit organizations, as food insecurities are still an issue for many families.

- Advisory Council Members provided homework assistance and referrals to social services to families in their school communities.
- The Advisory Council shared their perspectives and those of their school communities on the SchoolSelection process as going well.

- The Advisory Council provided feedback from their school communities on the leveling process, sharing the heartache leveling causes the students and staff, advising the Board to call for the district to share another way to begin this process sooner or discontinue this process.

Student Board Representative De'Naiza Watson reported on her and fellow Student Board Representatives Cavance Snaith and Doha Gassem activities throughout their first month as Non-Voting Student Board Representatives. Student Representative Watson reported that throughout the month, she along with her fellow student board representatives have participated in the following activities:

- October 3, 2023 - Doha and Cavance participated in Dr. Watlington's Student Advisory meeting
- October 5, 2023 - Cavance participated in public hearing at Thomas Edison High School
- October 12, 2023 - De'Naiza participated in Goals and Guardrails Committee Meeting
- October 14, 2023 - All student board representatives attended the K-12 School Fair
- October 16, 2023 - All student board representatives met with Mayor Kenney

Superintendent Remarks

Vice-President Fix-Lopez invited Dr. Watlington to provide remarks. Dr. Watlington reported/commented on the following:

- District Recognition
  - Recognition of Board Member Joyce Wilkerson as one of the 5 award finalist for the Green Garner award recognizing outstanding contributions to urban education

- District Leadership Update
  - Appointment of the following individuals:
    - Dr. Nathalie Nérée, Chief of Special Education and Diverse Learners
    - Dr. Anh Nguyen, Assistant Superintendent, Opportunity and Innovation Network
    - Laureal Robinson, Assistant Superintendent, Learning Network 3
    - Dr. Kahilila Johnson, Deputy Chief of Talent Management

- Overview of SY22-23 Preliminary Performance Data and Highlights
  - Improvement in 13 of 17 academic areas

- Ongoing Priorities
  - Increase School Safety
  - Increase Student Attendance
  - Increase Teacher Attendance
  - Decrease Dropout Rates

- Enrollment Driven Resource (Leveling) Review

- School Selection Process for SY 23 - 24

Board Members engaged in a question and answer session to better understand the trends shared in student and teacher attendance, the District's plan for leveling, strategies being used to ensure that

families are aware of the school selection process for both criteria based schools and for families looking for alternative options beyond their catchment. Board Members also asked questions regarding the monitoring of student dropout rates and trends, strategies being used to support school safety efforts, efforts being employed to support students in Algebra I based on the Goals and Guardrail report that showed a 10% decrease in achievement.

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
- Alexandrea Coppadge, Chief of Communications & Customer Service
- Kevin Bethel, Chief of School Safety

Copies of presentations are included within the meeting agenda.

Consideration of Action Items

Vice-President Fix-Lopez described the process of how Action Items would be presented for consideration:

- Action Item 4 Administration's Recommendation for Termination of Professional Employees WITHDRAWN BY STAFF 10.12.2023

- Action Item 6 Contract with Benefits Consultant: Marsh & McClennan Agency ($750,000) WITHDRAWN BY STAFF 10.19.2023

- Consent agenda for the remaining Action Items, which are items 1 -3, 5, 7-21

Item No. 1 - Adoption of Board Policies

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 2 - Approval of Personnel Hires (Updated 10.12.2023)

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

No: 0

Item No. 3 - Approval of Personnel Terminations (Updated 10.19.2023)

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

No: 0

Item No. 4 - Administration's Recommendation for Termination of Professional Employees - **WITHDRAWN BY STAFF**

Item No. 5 - Approval of Resignations and Retirements (Updated 8.17.2023)

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

No: 0

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

Item No. 7. Amendment of Contract with ABM Industry Groups, LLC - 440 Building Management ($500,000)

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

No: 0

Item No. 8 - Amendment of Contract with Miller Environmental for Cleaning of Oil Storage Tanks ($100,000)

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

No: 0

Item No. 9. - Amendment of Contracts for Richard R. Wright School for General Construction, Plumbing, Mechanical and Electrical Services for Major HVAC Renovation - No Cost Time Extension

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

No: 0

Item No. 10. - Amendment of Contracts for the Provision of Moving Services by Wayne Moving and Storage Company, Inc., T & N Van Service and Affiliates, and All Seasons Global Solutions ($1,500,000)

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

No: 0

Item No. 11. - Amendment of Contracts with CAD Electric, Inc. for the Provision of Electrical Services at W.C. Bryant School - No Cost Time Extension

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

No: 0

Item No. 12. - Change Orders at Various Locations ($946,261)

Board Member Salley asked clarifying questions regarding how progress in trends will reduce the overall spend and number of change orders the Board sees month to month. Dr. Watlington committed to providing the Board with a response.

Board Member Lam requested for total additional compensation by vendor and if any of the cost may have been avoidable.

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 13. - Ratification of Contract with Jefferson University($30,000)

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

No: 0

Item No. 14. - Memorandum of Understanding with Access Matters ($1,200,000)

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 15. - Ratification of Memorandum of Understanding with Big Brothers Big Sisters

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

No: 0

Item No. 16. - Contract with Follett School Solutions, LLC - Destiny Library Manager ($50,000)

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

No: 0

Item No. 17. - Contract with Public Health Management Corporation, Research & Evaluation Group - Data Analysis and Evaluation Support ($40,000)

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

No: 0

Abstention - Ms. Egea-Hinton (*personal*) - 1

Item No. 18. - License Agreement and MOU with Share Food Program - Supplemental Food Distributions for Families and Associated Farm-Focused / Healthy Eating Learning Opportunities

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

No: 0

Item No. 19. - Occupational Advisory Committee Members for the 2023-24 School Year - Career and Technical Education Programs

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

No: 0

Item No. 20 - Capital Award for the Provision of Electrical Services by Lex Electric Company, Inc. at the Fanny Jackson Coppin School ($3,526,336) - Added 10.3.2023

Board Member Salley asked a clarifying question to understand why this school is the only school receiving these electrical upgrades. Dr. Watlington committed to providing a written response to the Board.

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 21 - Contract with NCS, Pearson Inc. for Universal Gifted Screener ($320,000) - Added 10.3.2023

Board Member Salley asked clarifying questions to understand if the universal screener is known to work well for diverse student populations. Dr. Watlington committed to providing a written response to the Board.

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

No: Ms. Salley - 1

Adjournment

Vice President Fix-Lopez announced that the Board will hold its next policy committee meeting on November 2, 2023 at 4:00 p.m @ 440 N. Broad St. Philadelphia, PA 19130 in a hybrid format.

Vice President Fix-Lopez announced that the Board will hold its next public business meeting on November 16, 2023, at 4:00 p.m., via hybrid format.

On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:13pm

Mallory Fix-Lopez, Vice President
Board of Education

Tony Watlington, Ed.D.
Superintendent