The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
December 7, 2023

A public meeting of the Board of Education was held in hybrid format on December 7, 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:

- Reminder to members of the public that the following modifications have been made to the public comment portion of our meetings:
    - Individuals who register before the meeting, registrants in excess of the cap will be placed on an official waitlist
    - Waitlisted individuals may have an opportunity to speak if a registered speaker does not show
- Congratulations to Chief of School Safety, Kevin Bethel, on his appointment as the next Police Commissioner for the City of Philadelphia
- Congratulations to the December Seniors of the Month: Linda Basheir, a senior at Abraham Lincoln High School, and Aichata Diarra, a senior at Carver Engineering and Science
- Expressed gratitude to the Pennsylvania House Philadelphia Delegation for meeting with Dr. Watlington and President Streater on Monday, December 4, 2023 to discuss budget priorities and the progress we are making as a School District.
- Announcement of the bi-annual meeting with Mayor Kenney and City Council on December 12, 2023
- Acknowledgement of a recent visit from the Pennsylvania Department of Education Secretary Dr. Khalid N. Mumin and State Representative Stephen Kinsey to Lingelbach Elementary School
- Announcement that this week the District is holding its 13th Annual Computer Science Education Week
- Recognition of today as the first day of Hanukkah
- Announcement that Monday, December 25th, all District Schools and offices will be closed in honor of Christmas and will remain closed through January 1st for the Winter Recess. Merry Christmas to all who celebrate.
- Acknowledgement of Kwanzaa which will be celebrated from December 26th to January 1st
- Acknowledgement of December 4, 2023 as the 117th Founders' Day of the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

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 today to discuss confidential, privileged, personnel, and litigation matters, including information or strategy in connection with the following litigation: APPS and UrbEd vs Board of Education Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas # 210302041 (alleging Sunshine Act violations); Franklin Towne Charter High School vs. School District of Philadelphia et al. Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas # 213001645 (challenging hearing officer appointment).

Ms. Rauch announced that in accordance with Board Bylaw 006.1, Attendance at Public Meetings via Electronic Communications, Board Member Thompson has submitted a request to the Board President to attend this meeting via electronic communications and it has been approved.

Ms. Rauch conducted Roll Call.

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

Members Absent: Ms. Andrews - 1

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

The minutes from the November 16, 2023 meeting of the Board of Education were presented for approval.

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

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 the Board of Education Action meeting by providing testimony on Action Items during the November 16, 2023, Action meeting
- Assisting families in acquiring groceries and fresh fruits and vegetables from non-profit organizations, as food insecurities are still an issue for many families among the rising food costs.
- Participating in holiday giveaways, such as toy and coat drives, and will give out food to our families during the winter break.
- Providing homework assistance and referrals to social services to families in their school communities.
- Participating in their School Advisory Councils and Home and School meetings to improve their school communities.
- Advisory council members assisted families in preparation for report card conferences on November 27, 2023

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

- November 29th - De'Naiza attended the College Fair at 440 N. Broad St.
- December 5 - De'Naiza and Doha participated in Dr. Watlington's Student Advisory Council

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:

Zain Murtaz, student, expressed interest in better understanding how the district is working to address the current

The following students shared their experience at Franklin Towne Charter High School and urged the Board of Education not to revoke the school's charter:

- Samuel Garcia, student
- Kiara Maldanado, student
- Gabrielle Torres, student
- Meiara Staton, student

Superintendent Remarks

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

- District Recognition
    - Well wishes to all families and those who celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanza
    - Recognition of Chief of School Safety, Kevin Bethel on his recent appointment as the incoming Police Commissioner for the Philadelphia Police Department
        - Dr. Watlington invited Kevin Bethel, Chief of School Safety to share brief remarks. Chief Bethel expressed gratitude for the hard working and dedicated staff at the School District of Philadelphia and shared his plan to continue to work hard to keep our children and students safe across the City of Philadelphia. Chief Bethel also introduced Craig Johnson as the Interim Chief Safety Officer as a staple at the School District of Philadelphia who has served in the Office of School Safety for 28 years
    - Office of Communications received the 2023 PEPPERPOT Award - recognizing organizations for outstanding communications campaign and tactics

- Ongoing Priorities
    - Increase School Safety
    - Increase Student Attendance
    - Increase Teacher Attendance
    - Decrease Dropouts

- Swing Space Plan
- FY 2025 Budget Development Kickoff
    - Dr. Watlington invited Michael Herbtsman, Chief Financial Officer to provide an overview of the FY 2025 Budget

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

- Mike Herbstman, Chief Financial Officer
- Oz Hill, Chief of Operations

Copies of presentations are included within the meeting agenda.

Public Testimony and General Speakers

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

- Michael Piwonski

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:

Yameen Whitaker, parent/guardian,expressed her concerns regarding transportation for her son who has been newly diagnosed with autism.

Monica McCleary-Echols, parent/guardian, expressed her positive experience as a parent of a student at Southwest Leadership Charter School and expressed the ways in which the school has worked to empower students and families.

Lynda Rubin, APPS, expressed concerns regarding the details included in Action Item 28 prior to it being amended on December 7, 2023. Ms. Rubin also expressed disappointment in not having enough time to understand the critical details of the program included in Action Item 28 and shared that she along with other community members want to be partners working to support the District, the Board of Education, and families.

Emithal Mahmoud, parent/guardian, expressed concerns regarding the lack of transparency regarding the school selection process and shared that her family was unaware that their child would not receive preference as a current masterman middle school student and would need to reapply to be included in the lottery for Masterman High School.

Mama Gail Clouden, community member, expressed gratitude to Chief Kevin Bethel for his service and the work that he has done for the community as a black man working to keep our schools and

communities safe. Mama Gail Clouden also spoke about the lack of diversity and urged the District to begin thinking out of the box and begin talking about ESOL in a different way. Mama Gail also spoke about the importance of having ESOL teachers who speak the same language of the students.

Leah Clouden, community member, expressed that she believes it is the job of President Streater to keep the children of the city safe and to create productive citizens. Ms. Clouden shared that all involved care about children and making sure that they are achieving academically. Ms. Clouden also shared that the District needs to provide students with skill sets beyond academics.

Kristin Luebert, district staff member, spoke about the teacher retention "crisis" and spoke about the way to foster a supportive environment for staff is to reign in abusive or incompetent principals and assistant superintendents. Mrs. Luebert urged the district to look into teacher retention rates in school and consider any patterns that may exist when examining leadership within the schools as well.

Badia Uqdah, parent/guardian, spoke about bullying and the school selection process. Ms. Uqdah shared her experience with her son being bullied at school and expressed dissatisfaction with the District's bullying policies and the way in which multiple bullying incidents were handled. Ms. Uqdah also shared that she does not feel safe with her child attending her neighborhood school. Ms. Uqdah also suggested that the District consider having liaisons available to support students and their families through the school selection process.

Anne Dorn, parent/guardian, echoed the concerns of Emithal Mahmoud regarding confusion around how to apply for the school selection process and the waiting list policy. Mrs. Dorn noted that we all benefit when children attend the schools that are right for them.

May Freda Watson, community member, spoke about the importance of unity amongst the district and families and stressed the importance of everyone working together to support children as they grow. Ms. Watson also spoke about the need for parents/guardians to teach their children at home and not lean solely on the school system to raise their children.

Lisa Haver, APPS, spoke about her recent experience at the City Council hearing, the mayor-elects education transition team and lack of district staff and leadership on that body. Ms. Haver also spoke about accountability of charter CEOs and urged the Board of Education to hold public charter hearings.

Barbara Dowdall, APPS, spoke about Action Item 4 and suggested that there may be other vendors that the District should consider to complete the proposed work provided in Action Item 4.

Other Business - Board of Education Organization

President Streater invited Dr. Watlington, Board Secretary, to lead 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. President Wilkerson nominated Board Member Streater for a second term as the Board President. Board Member Salley nominated Board Member Thompson to serve as Board President.

After nominations were closed, the Board voted on the nominations of President Streater and Thompson by stating the name of the nominee they supported. President Streater received six votes and Board Member Thompson received two votes, as follows:

> For Mr. Streater: Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton, Ms. Lam, Ms. Fix-Lopez, Mr, Streater, and Ms. Wilkerson.
>
> For Board Member Thompson: Ms. Salley and Ms. Thompson

Mr. Streater was elected Board President.

Dr. Watlington called for nominations for Board Vice President. Board Member Lam nominated Board Member Fix-Lopez for the position of Vice President. Board Member Thompson nominated Board Member Salley for the position of Vice President.

After nominations were closed, the Board voted on the nominations of Board Members Fix-Lopez and Salley by stating the name of the nominee they supported. Board Member Fix-Lopez received six votes and Board Member Salley received two votes, as follows:

> For Ms. Fix-Lopez: Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton, Ms. Lam, Ms. Fix-Lopez, Mr, Streater, and Ms. Wilkerson.
>
> For Board Member Salley: Ms. Salley and Ms. Thompson

Board President Streater provided remarks in accepting his position as President of the Board of Education.

Vice President Fix-Lopez provided remarks accepting her position as Vice President of the Board of Education.

Later in the meeting, Board President Streater introduced a motion authorizing the filing of signature cards for the elected officers of the Board with the depositories of the School District and authorization of the use of facsimile signatures for the elected President and Vice President.

> Yes: Ms. Danzy, Board Member Egea-Hinton, Ms. Lam, Ms. Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, Mr. Streater, Ms. Thompson, President Wilkerson – 8
>
> No: 0

Consideration of Action Items

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

- Action Item 8 Administration's Recommendation for Termination of Professional Employees - WITHDRAWN 11.30.2023

- Action Item 24 Amendment of Contract with Multiple Vendors - Interpretation and Translation Services ($2,400,000) - WITHDRAWN BY STAFF 12.07.2023

- Consent agenda for the remaining Action Items, which are Action Items 2-7, 9-23 and 25-28

Item No. 1 - Review of Board Policies (REVIEW - NO ACTION)

Item No. 2 -Adoption of Board of Education Public Meeting Schedule 2024

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 3 - Acceptance of Donation of City Funding from the Philadelphia Authority for Industrial Development ("PAID") and License for Strawberry Mansion Community Development Corporation (Strawberry Mansion CDC) and Strawberry Mansion Neighborhood Action Center (Strawberry Mansion NAC)

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

No: 0

Item No. 4 - Contract with The DT Firm for Government Relations Consulting ($528,125) - Updated 11.30.2023

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 5 - Contract with Scantron for Survey Printing, Mailing, and Processing ($90,000)

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

No: 0

Item No. 6 - Approval of Personnel Hires (Updated 12.01.2023)

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

No: 0

Item No. 7. Approval of Personnel Terminations (Pending)

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

No: 0

Item No. 8 -Administration's Recommendation for Termination of Professional Employees - **WITHDRAWN BY STAFF 11.30.2023**

Item No. 9. - Approval of Resignations and Retirements (Pending)

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

No: 0

Item No. 10. - Amendment to Contracts for Contracted Special Education Teachers ($13,904,920)

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

No: 0

Item No. 11. - Contract with T-Mobile, USA, Inc. for Cellular Communications Services, Equipment and Support ($1,000,000)

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

No: 0

Item No. 12. - Contract with CNI Sales, Inc. for Networking and Communications Infrastructure Equipment and Support ($8,200,000)

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

No: 0

Item No. 13. - Energy Performance Contract with Johnson Controls Inc. for GESA 1 Phase 4 at the Fitzpatrick Elementary School - ($21,604,300)

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

No: 0

Item No. 14. - Capital Award for the Elevator Modernization at Overbrook High School ($1,240,200)

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

No: 0

Item No. 15. - Capital Award for Electrical Upgrades at Marian Anderson Neighborhood Academy (formerly Chester A. Arthur School) ($3,928,900)

Board Member Salley expressed a need to understand the total spend of capital improvement projects currently taking place.

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

No: 0

Item No. 16. - Capital Award for Exterior Renovations at Kensington High School ($7,615,000)

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

No: 0

Item No. 17. -Contract with Various Vendors for Furniture and Equipment for the Renovated Science Labs at Parkway Northwest High School ($150,000)

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

No: 0

Item No. 18. - Amended Contract with Mobilease Modular Space, Inc. at Various Locations ($600,000)

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 19. - Change Orders at Various Locations ($710,816)

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 20. - Amendment to Contract with Joseph A. Deluca Advisory & Consulting Services LLC for Program Management Services for the Office of Environmental Management Services ($4,290,000)

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 21.- Amendment to Contract with Tetra Tech, Inc. for AHERA Management Program ($5,320,492.89)

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 22. - Amendment of Contracts with M&M Lawn Care East, Inc. and Townscapes, Inc. - Landscaping Services ($800,000)

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 23. - Amendment of Contract with Vital Records Holdings, LLC ($300,000)

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

No: Ms. Thompson - 1

Item No. 24. - Amendment of Contract with Multiple Vendors - Interpretation and Translation Services ($2,400,000) - **WITHDRAWN BY STAFF 12.07.2023**

Vice President Fix-Lopez noted that while Action item 24 was withdrawn she looks forward to the return of the action item.

Item No. 25. - Contract with Bluum USA, Inc. for Purchase of Evolv Express Weapons Detection System for Minimally Invasive Weapons Detection Scan Pilot ($97,553)

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

No: 0

Item No. 26. - Amendment of Contract with Institute for the Development of African American Youth, Inc. for Expansion of Safe Path School and Community Safety Corridor Program ($699,174)

Board Member Thompson expressed a desire to have data to better understand the impact of the program proposed in Action Item 26.

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

No: 0

Item No. 27. - Contracts with Various Vendors on the PEPPM Cooperative Agreement - Technology Equipment and Peripherals - $2,475,000

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

No: 0

Item No. 28. - Contract with Neubauer Family Foundation and Philadelphia Academies, Inc. for Support and Expansion the 9th Grade On-Track program ($2,604,064.65) (Added 11.22.2023/Updated 12.06.2023)

Board Member Lam expressed concerns for the need of the action item given prior authorization given by the Board of Education in June 2023.

Yes: Ms. Danzy, Ms. Egea-Hinton, Vice President Fix-Lopez, Ms. Salley, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 6

No: Ms. Lam, Ms. Thompson - 2

Adjournment

President Streater announced that the Board will hold its next public business on January 25, 2024, at 4:00 p.m., via hybrid format.

On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:03 pm

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

Tony Watlington, Ed.D.
Superintendent