Minutes of a regular public meeting of the East Orange Board of Education held on Tuesday, May 26, 2020 at 5:01 p.m. via Zoom.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Tucker read the following notice:

Please take notice that this is a Regular Public Meeting of the East Orange Board of Education. The purpose of this meeting is for the Board of Education to take action on the resolutions as indicated on the agenda. Notice of this meeting has been posted and announced in accordance with the law. Said notice was published in the newspapers and a copy of this notice has also been filed with the Office of the City Clerk of East Orange.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL:

Ms. Darlene Clovis – Absent (Arrived 5:14pm)
Mr. Cameron B. Jones, Sr. – Absent
Mrs. Tashia Owens Muhammad – Present
Ms. Andrea McPhatter – Present
Mr. Wayne R. Stackhouse, Jr. – Present
Mrs. Marsha B. Willkerson – Present
Ms. Terry S. Tucker – Present

Also Present: Dr. Deborah Harvest, Assistant Superintendent of Operations
Ms. Anita Champagne, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Services
Ms. Beth Brooks, Board Secretary/School Business Administrator
Ms. Marissa McKenzie, Director of Labor Relations & Employment Services
Mr. Ramon Rivera, Counsel (Scarinci Hollenbeck, LLC)

IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Leah White -leahwhite13@verizon.net
Thank you, again, for the opportunity to present my question for a proper response. During these last three months of the COVID19 Pandemic, there has been many government leaders having forums of information that leave room for the public to ask questions and share concerns. Those leaders, and/or the experts on their panels, will provide a RESPONSE to those inquiries. These responses are done in REAL TIME. If they don't have an immediate answer or response to the inquiries, they will get back to the public once they obtain the answers to give a proper response. The Board has also given the public this forum—to ask questions and/or share concerns that desire proper responses. On the recent occasions where the public have written emails and letters for the Board's response, and to date, we have not received real-time responses. While the many emails read on the Board Meetings of May 12th and May 16th, pleading for the Board to reconsider and pause their plan for the “District Transformation” until AFTER this pandemic, (to lessen the mental trauma of our CHILDREN), the Board had no response. NO RESPONSE???
You looked at your ZOOM cameras with what appeared to be no expressions of concern. No expressions of empathy?? Why does the Board feel like silence is a proper response to the public's concerns? The public, and most importantly the CHILDREN of the City, deserve a proper response.

Shaniquah Hester -shester1988@gmail.com
This year has been difficult on us all. Especially our children. The children were asked to make a huge adjustment from standard learning to virtual learning due to the Coronavirus. Then their spring break was cut knowing that break was much needed. Moreover, Carver students are going to a new building that will be shared with an unfamiliar and unknown program and a new principal. Not only that, they were told that all their hard work for quarter 4 will not count. The adjustment of working from home is a great deal for any adult, how can you expect a child to handle all that has taken place, not including other personal issues that may have taken affect due to the pandemic? I asked similar questions during the last board meeting. I spoke with Ms. Champagne via email prior to that board meeting. I would like to hear from others on this matter and what measures were taken in decision making, especially regarding the grading system. Since I have received that email, I have been back and forth with allowing my children to continue remote learning, I haven't only because the Teachers worked hard to prepare lessons, but it doesn't make the problem just go away! I will like this matter to be reconsidered. I understand clearly others faced hardships. Just imagine what obstacles families had to face and overcome to see that their child or children were able to participate in remote learning.

Stacy Robinson-McConnell -stacy630@gmail.com
Since the Governor is allowing outdoor graduations for the class of 2020, will you start planning something for all the graduates, including 8th graders and elementary graduates?

Sharon Vincent -s.vincent@eastorange.k12.nj.us
On August 13, 2019, the Superintendent of Schools presented “The East Orange Interim New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC)” to the Board of Education for approval. The East Orange School District conducted self-assessments for the following NJQSAC areas:

a. Instruction and Program
b. Fiscal Management
c. Governance
d. Operations
e. Personnel
IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC – CONT’D

Sharon Vincent -s.vincent@eastorange.k12.nj.us
The district’s self-assessment was submitted to the Essex County Office to be verified.

Question 1: What scores did the district give itself, and what scores did the Essex County Office award East Orange for Program and Instruction and Personnel? Both of these areas have a profound effect on student achievement.

Question 2: Did the Curriculum and Instruction Department and the Division of Labor Relations and Employment Services have to develop Improvement Plans?
Please release to the East Orange School District stakeholders a copy of the following: Notification to the East Orange School District that it did not meet the comprehensive review’s requirements and must begin improvement activities, according to N.J. A.C. 6A: 30-5.2.

Ashley Paris – Teacher Assistant - Banneker
With all concerns and questions regarding the matter of the reorganization plan; My question is why does the Board feel that they don’t have the right to respond to the community that they are suppose to serve? We the teachers, parents, and employees are stakeholders and to be fair; I like to be heard, but love to have my concerns and questions responded to in the same respectful way that you decided to make changes that has affected all concerned. You might have the authority to make difficult decisions and I get that; just don’t dismiss the community by ignoring our concerns regarding this issue. thank you

Jacqueline Owens -Jacqueline.owes@eastorange.k12.nj.us
With COVID-19 taking over, we have lost valuable time to help our students of the East Orange School Community grow. This pandemic has not only effected the students but has effected the entire world physically, mentally, and emotionally. A seed only has the potential to grow, if it is planted properly. As stakeholders, we are the solidifying soil, water, and sunlight that helps the students sprout and flourish. I have many concerns about the decisions being made for the upcoming school year that were not addressed from the previous meeting about the significance of relocating some principals rather than all. Although change promotes growth, again I ask, how will this change ensure our students success? Who are the best people to make informed decisions about reopening the specific schools? How will you ensure that this change will be effective? If this change is not effective, what changes will be made? Who is held responsible for the consistent low score across the district? Why are staff members being warned about possibly being summoned to work in person when the governor has not lifted the mandate? How can you ensure that the safety protocols in place are the guidelines provided by the CDC when they have not been published for schools as of yet. My concern is only and will always be for the students. As a new member of the East Orange School community who loves their school, students, parents, and school community I would truly appreciate your answers.

Virginia Jeffries -jeffriesv@aol.com
Board Members;
Good afternoon. I have concerns. They are as follows:
1. DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION PLAN
The District Transformation Plan is in essence a restructuring plan for the East Orange School District. The following is posed:
a. Was there a financial analysis done?
b. When was a financial analysis done?
c. Who did the financial analysis?
d. Was a financial analysis ever presented to the Board?
e. What is the financial cost to the East Orange School District for this plan?
f. What is the financial savings to the East Orange School District?
g. Was the District Transformation Plan in the approved budget for 2020-2021?
h. Is this plan circumventing any corrective action plans placed on the East Orange School District?
2. BOARD RETREAT - AUGUST 2018
Soon it will be 2 years since the August 2018 Board Retreat.
.a. Why have the minutes not been submitted for the Board to vote on?
b. When will the minutes be approved by the Board?
As always a timely response is welcomed.

Samaad Montigue -samaadmontigue@gmail.com
School board members serve as representatives and advocates for their community, prioritizing the needs and interests of students and the public school system.
This opening sentence should be said at every board meeting called by the East Orange Board Members. Instead we see live on our devices the Board President and members rolling their eyes when WE the parents of this school district raise concerns about your accountability and transparency.
How dare you treat the people of East Orange as 5th class citizens. The roles and responsibilities of this board panel is in the best interest of the public (Parents, children and teachers), not your side deals with corrupt vendors you added to the last board agenda. The people of East Orange need to vote for our Board Members and President right away. Without a voice for the voiceless, a backbone for the weak and a leg for those who can’t stand up for themselves are not represented in what you see on your phones, tablets or desktops. Look at our representation on your screens. No one is for us! They’re all are for themselves and their political agendas.
What’s your legacy when it’s all said and done? How will you be remembered? I can say this.
All of your behaviors from Dr. West, Dr. Harvest, Ms. Champagne, Board Members and any member is this senior cabinet reflects the same cabinet at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Time to Rise!!!
V. RETIRE TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Tucker read the following:

Be it resolved that the Board of Education will immediately retire to executive session to review and discuss:

1. Human Resource Discussion as a Whole
2. Superintendent’s Update on Confidential Matters
3. Other Topics up for Discussion
4. Review of Caucus Minutes
5. Update from General Counsel
6. Update from Workers’ Compensation Counsel
7. Privileged Considerations from Board President

Minutes of this meeting will be released when the matters discussed are no longer confidential. The Board will resume the business portion of the meeting at or about 9:30 p.m.

On a motion of Ms. Marsha B. Wilkerson, duly seconded by Ms. Andrea McPhatter, the members of the Board of Education voted to retire to Executive Session at 5:13 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Ms. Darlene Clovis – Absent (Arrived 5:14pm)  
Mr. Cameron B. Jones, Sr. – Absent  
Mrs. Tashia Owens Muhammad - Yes  
Ms. Andrea McPhatter – Yes  
Mr. Wayne R. Stackhouse, Jr. - Yes  
Mrs. Marsha B. Wilkerson - Yes  
Ms. Terry S. Tucker – Yes

VI. RECOMMENCE PUBLIC MEETING

On a motion of Ms. Andrea McPhatter, duly seconded by Ms. Darlene Clovis, the members of the Board of Education voted to resume the Public Session at 10:37 p.m.

ROLL CALL: Ms. Darlene Clovis - Present  
Mr. Cameron B. Jones, Sr. – Absent  
Ms. Tashia Owens Muhammad – Present  
Ms. Andrea McPhatter – Present  
Mr. Wayne R. Stackhouse, Jr. - Present  
Ms. Marsha B. Wilkerson – Absent  
Ms. Terry S. Tucker – Present

Also Present: Dr. Deborah Harvest, Assistant Superintendent of Operations  
Ms. Anita Champagne, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum Services  
Ms. Beth Brooks, Board Secretary/School Business Administrator  
Ms. Marissa McKenzie, Director of Labor Relations & Employment Services  
Mr. Ramon Rivera, Counsel (Scarinci & Hollenbeck, LLC)
VII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Tucker read the following notice:

The East Orange Board of Education will hold its next SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING Thursday, May 28, 2020, at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom. The Board of Education will retire to Executive Session after “Comments from the Public” in which they will discuss matters pertaining to negotiations, personnel and/or litigation. The Board will resume the regular public meeting at or about 8:00 p.m.; immediately following the Executive Session.

On the motion of Ms. Darlene Clovis, duly seconded by Ms. Andrea McPhatter, the members of the Board voted to approve to adjourn the meeting:

ROLL CALL:  
- Ms. Darlene Clovis - Yes  
- Mr. Cameron B. Jones, Sr. - Absent  
- Ms. Tashia Owens Muhammad - Yes  
- Ms. Andrea McPhatter - Yes  
- Mr. Wayne R. Stackhouse, Jr. - Yes  
- Ms. Marsha B. Wilkerson - Absent  
- Ms. Terry S. Tucker - Yes

The meeting adjourned at or about 10:39 p.m.

Beth Brooks, Board Secretary

BOARD APPROVED