Minutes of a regular public meeting of the East Orange Board of Education held on Thursday, May 28, 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 – Present
Mr. Cameron B. Jones, Sr. – Absent (Arrived 5:03pm)
Mrs. Tashia Owens Muhammad – Absent (Arrived 5:13pm)
Ms. Andrea McPhatter – Absent (Arrived 5:05pm)
Mr. Wayne R. Stackhouse, Jr. – Present
Mrs. Marsha B. Willerson – 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
Since the Board of Education is playing a game of semantics with the citizens of the City of East Orange, and since the Board President, Terry Tucker, stated in the May 26, 2020 Board Meeting, that the Board is not "obligated" to respond to "comments"; however, "going forward", the Board will respond to comments posed "in question form". Therefore, I submit the following questions for the Board's immediate response:

1) Why does the Board feel like silence is a proper response to the public's concerns, whether posed as a 'question' or in 'comment form'?

2) In your own words, how does the Board feel their proposed 'District Transformation' is going to positively lessen the traumas that the City's children have (and still are) already endured during the COVID19 Pandemic and increase test scores?

3) In the wake of the CDC's guidelines for school systems to return to building-based learning, what is the Board's realistic timetable for the City's School System to safely return to the 'brick and mortar' edifices, and what are the Board's plans to facilitate this effort?

4) What are the Board's beliefs on 'Family Engagement in the Educational System' and how that effects the performance of our children when testing?

5) What are the Board's plans to increase their visibility to the people they took an oath to serve in order to encourage a two-way dialogue between them and those constituents; thus, increasing their involvement in their children's education? Thank you for the space to ask the above questions, and the public looks forward to hearing the Board's responses.

Patryce Burgess -pnburgess@gmail.com
My name is Patryce Burgess. I have been serving Students with Autism grades 3-5 in a self-contained classroom for the last five years at Benjamin Banneker Academy. What special considerations has Board of Education made for students returning into classrooms in which the CDC guidelines for social distancing is almost impossible? Some of our students have needs that require physical contact such as toileting, and physical therapy. Some of our students don't have the capacity to consciously observe some of these guidelines. What considerations has the Board made to protect both the students and the teachers and support staff who serve them, while ensuring that the students receive the full range of their necessary services? Please respond to this question. Thank you!

Jacqueline Owes - 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. My other questions were also not answered in the previous meetings. 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 will you ensure that this change will be effective? If this change is not effective, what changes will be made in the 2021-2022 school year? Who is held responsible for the consistent scores across the district? 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? Why are chrome books being returned when teachers can engage with students over the summer? Who is collecting and ensuring the chrome books are safely stored and sanitized? Don't our students who are less fortunate and our bilingual community deserve the right to use them over the summer?
IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC – CONT’D

Jacqueline Owes - Jacqueline.owes@eastorange.k12.nj.us
What is being done for the students over the break? Will we actually get a response or will be left on hold for hours to closed out with an adjournment? My concern is only and will always be for the students and the positive growth of the East Orange School Community.

Marcia Hines - marcia.hines@eastorange.k12.nj.us
With COVID-19 making itself present this year, I am very proud of how our school was able to transition from physical learning to virtual learning. With the summer approaching, my concern is about the Chrome books being returned to schools. As an effective stakeholder, I have every intention on keeping consistent communication with my students over the summer. Here are my questions concerning this matter:

What are children going to use to communicate and grow throughout the summer?
What was the purpose of all the additional programs being purchased, if the students will not have access to keeping the Chrome books over the summer?
What is the Board of Education putting in place to keep student engaged in learning in the summer? What is the Board of Education putting place to distress kids during the summer? What is the Board going to do for those students who only get meals at school?
Will there be a summer meal program? What is the district doing to promote the growth overall of our students?
Please reconsider this decision, so that students have the opportunity to be engaged, to learn, and grow throughout the summer and possibly going into the new virtual school year.

Sania Grandchamp – Sania.Grandchamp @eastorange.k12.nj.us
Would the Board please kindly advise its stakeholders on remediation plans and summer program plans in the works for the Haitian Bilingual Community?
Are any virtual summer programs planned for Haitian Bilingual children as you have planned for Special Education?
Why are Chromebooks being collected when it is aware of the digital divide and the needs of our community? As there is already a corrective action plan in place for the Bilingual program, would it not serve a better purpose if the Chrome Books were to remain in the hands of our students and families allowing them continued access to Online learning platforms?

Sharon Vincent – s.vincent@eastorange.k12.nj.us
According to N.J.A.C. 6A: 8-4.4, the district board of education shall provide appropriate instruction to improve skills and knowledge for students performing below established levels of proficiency in any content area either on the statewide or local assessment. Recently our student performance on statewide assessments is significantly below state standards.

The Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction is to provide leadership and support to principals to facilitate school improvement. Guidance and support include planning, direction, oversight, and professional development for all district instructional programs and staff.

Question 1: What are the appropriate instructional programs provided to improve skills and knowledge for students performing below established expected levels on the state tests?

Question 2: Did the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction provide support to staff?

How?

Question 3: What are the programs to be offered to the Bilingual and ESL students over the summer months to address some of the problems faced by these learners?

Shatyra Bussey - shatyra.bussey@eastorange.k12.nj.us
Hello Members of the Board,
I hope this letter finds you and you families safe and well. My name is Shatyra Bussey, I am a Teacher’s Assistant at Banneker Academy. My question concerns what strategies will be implemented to support learning over the summer? COVID 19 has highlighted many disparities and opportunity gaps minority populations and urban districts have faced in our transition to distance learning. As a district, how are we going to address those issues? If virtual summer school is not an option, should the chrome books be collected? We already see the effects of the achievement gap pre COVID 19. This gap will only continue to grow, denying our children the opportunity to globally compete. If our students are ill equipped now, increasing testing scores will be null and void in the future. Are these issues not taken into consideration? I think we would be doing a disservice to our needy student body by collecting these devices. God only knows what the last couple of weeks have looked like for some of our students, what is the plan to address some of the mental health concerns as well? Do we even know what September looks like right now? What is the plan to reenter the school building? It seems like much emphasis is being placed on minute issues as opposed to the real issues of concern.

Thank you in advance for addressing my concerns

Saraphine Jeanlouis - ninajeanlouis@gmail.com
What is the Board doing to ensure the ELL community still has access to the educational material over the summer with summer programs being shut down? Will there be a computer loaning system put into place for all students to prepare for future pandemics and to maintain safety going forward with COVID-19 still taking lives daily? Will the Board actually answer the publics’ questions or will we be left on hold again to be hung up on?
IV. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC – CONT’D

Virginia Jeffriesjeffriesv@aol.com
Board Members; Good afternoon. I have concerns. They are as follows:

1. 0528BOEMEETING@EASTORANGE.K12.NJ.US
There is as of this afternoon a misdirect to the 0526BOEMEETING@EASTORANGE.K12.NJ.US for anyone to submit “COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC”
   a. Will these submissions be retrieved and read into the record?
   b. Will people have to resubmit their comments?

2. BOARD RETREAT - AUGUST 2018
Earlier this month the minutes to the Board Retreat of August 2018 were not posted on the East Orange Board archives. However the minutes were recently posted as of this Wednesday May 27, 2020. These minutes have omissions to them. Specifically Board President Terry Ticker and former Board member Vernon Pullins, who is currently a 3rd Ward City Councilperson, promoting Board employee Sharonda Allen to Mayor Ted Green. Board employee Sharonda Allen has asserted on the record her ties to Mayor Ted Green and a City Councilperson.
It is required that the Board Members vote in a public meeting to have the minutes approved so that the minutes can become a public record.
When did this vote take place?

3. BOARD RETREAT - AUGUST 2019
Annually the Board does a Board Self Evaluation.
Where are the results of the Board Self Evaluation?

4. DISTRICT TRANSFORMATION PLAN
The restructuring of the schools and massive shifts of personnel that are not limited to principals, administrators, teaching staff and etc. prompts the following questions:
   a. What instructional programs at the Pre-K, K grade level are being eliminated?
   b. What instructional programs at the 1st - 8th grade level are being eliminated?
   c. What instructional programs at the 9th - 12th grade level are being eliminated?
   d. What new instructional programs will be at the Pre-K - K grade level?
   e. What new instructional programs will be at the 1st - 8th grade level?
f. What new instructional programs will be at the 9th - 12th grade level?
As always a complete timely response is welcomed and warranted.

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. Tashia Owens Muhammad, duly seconded by Mr. Cameron B. Jones, Sr., the members of the Board of Education voted to retire to Executive Session at 5:23 p.m.

ROLL CALL:  Ms. Darlene Clovis – Yes
            Mr. Cameron B. Jones, Sr. – Yes
            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. Tashia Owens Muhammad, the members of the Board of Education voted to resume the Public Session at 7:48 p.m.

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

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Tucker read the following notice:

The East Orange Board of Education will hold its next SPECIAL PUBLIC MEETING Thursday, June 4, 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 Mr. Cameron B. Jones, Sr., duly seconded by Ms. Tashia Owens Muhammad, the members of the Board voted to approve to adjourn the meeting:

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

The meeting adjourned at or about 7:51 p.m.

Beth Brooks, Board Secretary

BOARD APPROVED