

**New Jersey State Board of Education  
Minutes of the Special Meeting  
Busch Campus Center  
Multipurpose Room AB  
Rutgers University  
604 Bartholomew Road  
Piscataway, NJ 08854**

**January 8, 2014**

**Presiding:** Mr. Arcelio Aponte, President

**Secretary:** Christopher D. Cerf, Commissioner

**PRESENT CONSTITUTING A QUORUM**

Dr. Ronald Butcher  
Mr. Joseph Fiscaro  
Mr. Jack Fornaro  
Ms. Edithe Fulton  
Dr. Ernest Lepore  
Dr. Dorothy Strickland

**ABSENT**

Mr. Mark Beidron  
Ms. Claire Chamberlain  
Mr. Andrew Mulvihill  
Mr. Peter Simon

**CONVENING**

Arcelio Aponte, president, State Board of Education, convened the public meeting with the reading of the resolution pertaining to the public session of the State Board meeting as it complies with the Open Public Meetings Act.

**WHEREAS**, the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act was enacted to insure the right of the public to have advance notice of and to attend the meeting of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted upon, and

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with the provisions of this act, the State Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting to be published by having the date, time and place thereof posted in the Department of Education, Secretary of State's Office and notice also having been given to the State House press corps, the Governor's Office and the State Board agenda subscribers, now therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that by adopting this resolution the State Board of Education states its intention to convene a public meeting to conduct the state's business on Wednesday, January 8, 2014.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

### **ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

#### **State Operated School District Annual Reports**

##### **A. Newark City Public Schools Annual Report**

Commissioner Cerf introduced Ms. Cami Anderson, Superintendent, Newark City Public Schools who provided her annual report to the State Board. Ms. Anderson's updated the State Board on the status of student achievement, facilities and operations of the district. Ms. Anderson highlighted key accomplishments that have occurred during her tenure from 2011-2014. Specifically, Ms. Anderson showcased improvements in academic achievement, teacher quality and school leadership. She also stated that she has transformed the Central office to focus on supporting schools, parents and families. Further she stated that 10 Renew schools have been opened to replace 12 of the lowest performing schools; 5 new district schools have been opened including Eagle Academy for Young Men and Newark Academy for Girls. Ms. Anderson stated that she has launched a citywide high school choice process that provides more equitable access to magnet and new schools and admits more students to their school of choice.

Ms. Anderson also presented the district's goal for 2014-2017, One Newark: 100 Excellent Schools which is her plan to ensure that all students in Newark are in excellent schools and thriving communities, and are on the path to excel in college and 21<sup>st</sup> century careers. She stated that the district faces the challenges of chronic under achievement, declining enrollment, on-going fiscal challenges and an un-level playing field with respect to school facilities. She also stated that to make good on the promise for One Newark, the following must occur:

1. Implement a common accountability framework that holds all schools – both district and charter – to the same standards
2. Maximize a universal enrollment system that ensures equity and transparency, while creating an easy to understand enrollment process for families
3. Fix our crumbling schools by investing in 21st century learning environments, making difficult decisions about which facilities we must divest and which facilities we will prioritize, and holding the State accountable for solutions that break through the red tape
4. Advocate for policies, including waivers from existing statutes, that will allow us to consider quality along with years of service while making decisions about “right-sizing” our workforce
5. Support Newarkers who may be impacted by district transitions through education, job training, and other support
6. Ensure there are excellent schools and no vacant buildings in every ward by collaborating with high-performing charters and consolidating NPS' resources to run fewer, better schools
7. Grow NPS' capacity to innovate in order to meet diverse student needs, which will require us to invest in new priorities and to stop funding the failed policies and actions from the past

## **B. Camden City Public Schools**

Commissioner Cerf introduced Mr. Paymon Rouhanifard, superintendent, Camden City Public Schools who provided his first report to the State Board. Mr. Rouhanifard updated the State Board on the status of student achievement, facilities and operations of the school district. Specifically, Mr. Rouhanifard stated that Camden schools are the lowest performing schools in New Jersey. He also stated that Camden has 23 Priority Schools or schools with the lowest school-wide proficiency rates in the state. He further explained that he focused on three areas- Teaching and Learning, School Safety and Climate and Community Engagement during his first 100 days as Superintendent.

Mr. Rouhanifard stated that he visited all 26 of Camden's schools to observe the teaching and leadership practices and build relationships with school-based staff. He also stated that the School Climate Survey conducted last summer found school safety and climate to be an area of critical concern in Camden. He further stated that as a result of the survey, the district completed a full security audit, updated security plans for all schools and provided training on emergency preparedness.

Mr. Rouhanifard stated that he also listened and learned from all members of the Camden community through town halls, focus group events and feedback from teachers via suggestion boxes placed in schools about the best path forward for Camden's schools.

Mr. Rouhanifard highlighted the preliminary steps that he has taken this year. He hired 5 new turnaround principals, started the school year with 100% of vacancies filled, and won a 5 year, \$5 million dollar SLP grant to support the development of a residency-based school leadership development program. He also invested \$5 million dollars in new textbooks for students and classrooms and provided intensive summer development institutes to all educators. He further established technology pilots in three schools to explore the use of instructional technology in classrooms to ensure that the PARCC pilot schools are prepared for computer-based testing this spring.

Mr. Rouhanifard stated that all school security plans have been updated, more than 100 new security cameras installed, and a partnership with Camden City and the Camden County Police Department has been developed to establish safe corridors for students traveling to and from school.

Mr. Rouhanifard stated that he established a breakfast program and is piloting a dinner program for after school students as well as a Positive Behavior Support in Schools to promote positive behavior and improved school climates.

Mr. Rouhanifard stated that Parent and Community Centers are being established in partnership with the Office of the Mayor to ensure parents have access to clear information about educational options for their students. He also stated that he is actively re-engaging recent dropouts through a home visit campaign and of the 350 students who have recently dropped out, more than 50 students have been reenrolled. He further stated that he launched an RFP seeking additional Renaissance school project applicants to partner with the district starting in the fall of 2014 and is supportive of the takeover of Freedom Academy by Democracy Prep to improve rigor and school quality.

Mr. Rouhanifard stated that based on the findings of during the transition period, a strategic plan will be finalized and released later this month to address the concerns that voiced by the student's families and the community regarding academic rigor, school-level resources, school safety, building quality and access to information. He also stated that following the release of the strategic plan, he will re-engage with families at the school level to discuss how the strategic plan commitments will improve education options for all students in their community.

### **C. Paterson Public Schools Annual Report**

Commissioner Cerf introduced Dr. Donald Evans, superintendent, Paterson Public Schools who provided his annual report to the State Board. Dr. Evans updated the State Board on the status of student achievement, facilities and operations of the school district. Specifically, Dr. Evans outlined the school district's priorities, goals and accomplishments. Dr. Evans stated that the Paterson Public School District has embraced a college-ready mission for its 29,000 students. He also stated that over the past two years, the school district has aligned the high schools with this mission by transforming all large traditional high schools into twelve small thematic programs and converting all high schools to "schools of choice". He further stated for the 2012-2013 school year, the district identified seven transformation objectives aligned with its strategic plan *Bright Futures* and developed a system-wide plan to further sharpen its focus. The objectives were intended to build healthy school cultures, redesign critical processes and procedures, build capacity among staff at all levels, implement a robust assessment system, develop a performance-based teacher and administrator evaluation system, implement high impact academic interventions for low performing students, and implement the new State Common Core Standards.

Dr. Evans stated that the research-based strategies and interventions implemented to meet these objectives have resulted in improvements in academic and process outcomes. He stated that the district's graduation rate using the cohort method for the 2013 graduating class grew to 72.1% as compared to 66.4% in 2012, 64.3% in 2011 and 50.4% in 2010. He also stated that the district has achieved its highest score ever for first-time takers of the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) with increases in proficiency for both language arts literacy (LAL) and mathematics. He further stated that the district's HSPA LAL scores grew from 59.5% in 2011 to 66.4% in 2012 to 71.8% in 2013 with 88.6% of general education students at or above proficient.

Dr. Evans stated that HSPA mathematics scores have increased from 30.9% in 2011 to 46.6% in 2012 to 49.7% in 2013 with 60.7% of general education students at or above proficient. He also stated that the percentage of graduates who have been accepted to and plan to attend a 2 or 4 year college/university has grown to 70.8% in 2013 from 55.9% in 2011. He further stated that the percentage of students in Grades 3-8 performing at or above proficient in language arts increased from 35.5% in 2010-11 to 40.1% in 2012-13, from 49.1% to 52% in mathematics and from 58.7% to 61.2% in science.

Dr. Evans stated that for the 2013-2014 school year and beyond, the district will continue to implement research-based school improvement practices and strategies that will continue to generate increased outcomes while sustaining current increases. He also stated that the district will address other critical areas in need of improvement including its Special Education and

English Language Learners programs, updating and revising the strategic plan, maintaining fiscal stability, and developing a long-term facilities plan.

#### **D. Jersey City Public Schools Annual Report**

Commissioner Cerf introduced Dr. Marcia Lyles, Superintendent, Jersey City Public Schools who provided her annual report to the State Board. Dr. Lyles updated the State Board on the status of student achievement, facilities and operations of the school district. Specifically Dr. Lyles highlighted that since August of 2012, she met with district and school staff, union leadership, community members, parents, elected officials and students. She stated that she analyzed district data, curriculum, professional development and curricular/co-curricular programs as well as operational policies and practices including finance, facilities, transportation and human resources. She further stated that this analysis has led to the establishment of the district *Mission and Mandate*.

Dr. Lyles stated the five pillars of the mission and mandate are: Ensure that programs, practices and policies prepare students for college and career; Close all gaps with targeted support for those with the greatest need; Recruit, retain and develop talented and dedicated school and district staff and leadership; Ensure that the form and function of the organizational units are designed to yield the greatest outcomes for our students; and Ensure that parents and community are authentically informed and engaged.

Dr. Lyles stated that over the past two years the district focused its efforts to: Ensure that programs, practices and policies prepare our students for college and career by increasing College Awareness and Preparation; Establishing partnerships with the College Board; and Establishing PSAT/SAT Day, administering either the PSAT or Sat to all high school students on October 14th, during the school day. She also stated that the district introduced Springboard College Prep Curriculum in grades 6 and 9 in targeted schools to provide more rigorous curriculum that will prepare more students to take AP courses in HS, joined National Student Clearinghouse to track college persistence data and conducted an Advanced Placement (AP) Diagnostic report to identify student and staff preparedness for AP courses. She further stated that the district prepared for implementation of Common Core and PARCC assessments, aligned all curriculum to the state Standards, assessed technological readiness for PARCC, installed Wi-Fi in all schools and involved teachers in curriculum design and professional development to prepare for new curriculum and assessments.

Dr. Lyles stated that the district has implemented Instructional Innovations and developed a partnership with Liberty Science Center to create an innovative elementary STEM Program. She also stated that Project Child, an innovative model of instruction for elementary students engaging them in differentiated learning centers that immerse students in project-based learning experiences has been expanded. She further stated that Small Learning Communities which organize teachers around a group of students so that they can work collaboratively to better reach each student has been enhanced.

Dr. Lyles also stated that she reorganized Central Office staff to focus on schools and address their needs. She also assigned Supervisors and support staff to directly serve schools.

Dr. Lyles stated that to assist in closing gaps Enterprise Zones have been created for six of the most challenged elementary and middle schools to provide focused support. She also stated that in collaboration with the Regional Achievement Center walkthroughs and professional development activities have been conducted. She further stated that the district is increasing its use of data to inform instructional decision making while engaging school leaders and staff in data conversations to better support all students and target greater support to students most at-risk.

Dr. Lyles stated that monthly meetings with principals of targeted high schools have been implemented to identify students at risk of dropping out and sharing appropriate interventions to help them stay in school. She also stated that 9th grade Academies have been expanded. She further stated that she has redesigned the admissions process for the early childhood program and implemented a sibling preference program.

Dr. Lyles stated that she is working on the recruitment, retention and development of talented staff and school leadership. She is also working to ensure the form and function of the organizational units yield the greatest outcomes for the students. Dr. Lyles further stated that she created an Office of Family and Community Engagement to ensure that parents and the community are authentically informed and engaged.

Dr. Lyles highlighted the following goals for each of the five pillars:

- Ensure that the **programs, practices and policies** from Pre-K to 12 prepare our students for college and career and are research-based, rigorous and equitably accessible to all.
  - Support Instructional Innovations
  - Redesign Dual Language Program
  - Implement Spring Board curriculum in targeted Middle and High Schools
  - Develop STEM partnership for Elementary Schools
  - Create 9th grade Academies
  - Implement blended learning models with technology based instruction
  - Prepare students for 21st Century Success
  - Develop capacity to meet the rigor of the Common Core
  - Implement AP and pre-AP courses beginning in MS
  - Strengthen CTE pathways
  - Move into a digitized environment
  - Implement instructional practices that improve academic outcomes
  - Use Strategic Support Teams to identify instructional needs and provide appropriate Professional Development
  - Support teachers in drawing on multiple sources of data to inform instruction
  - Prepare to use digital tools to enhance instruction
- Ensure that the **GAP is closed** with targeted support for those students and schools with the greatest needs
  - Meet the needs of every learner
  - Train teachers in specific strategies for special needs and at-risk students

- Implement comprehensive co-teaching training program
  - Provide targeted training to Pre-K teachers on supporting language development of ELLs
  - Identify most high-leverage instructional needs to inform PD
  - Increase promotion and graduation rates
  - Develop 9th grade academies
  - Identify at-risk or off-track students early and provide interventions
  - Provide more opportunities for seat-time and credit recovery
  - Implement revised Promotion Policy
  - Implement effective Response to Intervention Strategy • Identify best approaches to RTI and best tools to assist
  - Develop RTI strategy and handbook
  - Support teachers in all schools in identifying student needs and addressing them
- Ensure a **system of support and accountability** as we **recruit, retain and develop** talented and dedicated school/district staff and leadership
    - Ensure that every class has an effective teacher and every school has an effective leader
    - Develop systems to streamline recruitment and hiring process
    - Create online resources to help educators improve practice
    - Develop leadership development opportunities for teachers
    - Provide coaching for new principals
    - Effectively implement new evaluation systems • Provide professional development and guidance on new evaluation system for teachers and administrators
    - Continue training on the Danielson Framework and Stronge Model
    - Increase ability of users to use online tools efficiently and effectively
    - Develop Professional Learning Communities (PLC) • Develop online forums and resources for teachers
    - Organize time in schools to allow PLCs to meet
    - Identify tools and resources on effective PLCs
- Ensure a **safe, well-maintained, nurturing environment** that meets the **social, emotional and intellectual** needs of all students
    - Ensure a clean, safe and fully functional environment
    - Regularly survey school leaders on the cleanliness of their schools
    - Implement a daily inspection program
    - Improve response time for repairs requested by schools
    - Create an environment for learning • Develop social and emotional skills component of the report card;
    - Strengthen anti-bullying program
    - Create opportunities to develop students' self-efficacy and conflict resolution skills
    - Implement district-wide breakfast program
    - Revise the Code of Conduct

- Engage students more productively • Increase variety of enrichment programs
  - Promote an appreciation for physical fitness, health and safety
  - Develop wider array of options for students
- Ensure that **parents and community are authentically informed and engaged** and that we tap into the rich resources they can provide
    - Improve communications with family and community • Revise website to be more user-friendly
    - Increase outreach to parents and the community throughout the year
    - Identify most effective strategies for communicating with families
    - Become more family friendly
    - Provide training for staff on effective family engagement
    - Develop a Parent Portal on the JCBOE website
    - Develop brochures to help parents understand what their kids are learning by grade
    - Engage parents as partners in their children’s education
    - Develop brochures to help parents understand what their students are learning by grade
    - Provide training for parents on curriculum and helping their children
    - Create online resources to help parents support their students

**ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion duly seconded and carried the State Board of Education adjourned its January 8, 2014 public meeting at 1:55 p.m.

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Christopher D. Cerf, Commissioner  
Secretary, NJ State Board of Education