



Committee Report Parent Engagement & Student Life Committee Meeting

Location	Date	Time
Webex	May 12, 2025	5:30pm-7:30pm
Board Members		
Allison K. James-Frison	David I. Daughety	
Louis Maisonave, Jr.		
District Liaison & Superintendent Representative		
Carolyn Granato	Samantha Lott-Velez	
Other District Staff		
Darrell Major, Truancy Manager	Jermaine Blount, Director	
Andre Hollis, Director	Edwin Mendez, Director	
Michelina Thornton, Director		
Guests		
Meeting Summary		
<p>Comments:</p> <p>At 5:31pm Committee Allison K. James-Frison opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Chair James-Frison welcomed new board members and facilitated introductions of committee members and district staff. The Strategic Plan Priorities that were identified during the meeting included Priority 2: A Rigorous and Relevant Framework for Curriculum and Instruction, Priority 3: Strength-Based and Responsive Culture, and Priority 5: Integrated System of Supports.</p> <p>At 5:38pm Director Mendez presented on district attendance data. The presentation defined the district absence categories of rare, frequent, chronic, and severely chronic by month and year. Absence data was presented for April, previous months, and year to date by district, School Leadership Teams (SLT) and schools.</p> <p>At 5:49pm Chair James-Frison inquired as to how best practices by high performing schools such as Ivy Hill with 87.2% rarely absent are being shared with other Principals. Director Mendez shared that strategies are always being shared with Principals such as utilizing student ambassadors and attendance buddies who reach out to their peers. At 5:52pm Committee Member Daughety asked for clarification on the data presented between monthly and year to date which Assistant Superintendent Lott-Velez and Director Mendez clarified. Committee Member Daughety further asked if there are any specific strategies being used for the South West SLT due to its attendance numbers. Director Mendez stated that 3 of the schools were selected for a grant to help improve attendance.</p>		

At 6:05pm Director Michelina Thornton, on behalf of Director Mary Harvey, did the Student Life presentation. During the months of April and May, high school seniors have continued to receive a multitude of acceptance letters to colleges and universities, which they have been uploading into our College and Career Readiness platform, SchoolLinks. During the month of April, elementary and middle schools celebrated Career Day by conducting various activities and lessons to teach students the importance of planning for the future and setting realistic goals. Examples include firemen, book authors, and more. On April 10, 2025, school counselors received their fourth workshop of a series, which encompassed specific training on:

How to assign the SEL Self-Assessment to students, Monitoring the progress of SEL Self-Assessment completion, and Resources to support the facilitation of the SEL Self-Assessment. The Office of Student Life is proud to present its first Middle School Social Emotional Learning Tour from April 2025 thru June 2025. The tour is composed of three well-known motivational speakers, who engage students by sharing their life experiences through music, dance, videos and even the saxophone. On April 10, 2025 Ana Osoria, Program Specialist 3 hosted the Schoolmint Enrollment Registration training for all Homeless Shelter managers. On April 3, 2025, Student Assistance Coordinators (SAC's) collaborated as a vendor with Ms. Spicer, Social Worker at University High School who hosted a Health and Wellness Fair. SAC's engaged students with Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug prevention games, as well as displayed a substance abuse information table. The April Artifacts Presentation highlights each school's activities for World Autism Awareness Day, Month of the Military Child, and NJ High School Voter Registration Week, all staff received suggested activities for April activities. Across April 10 members of the District Crisis Response Team participated in training on "Imagine How to Support Someone: Coping with Loss 101 - Understanding Loss, Grief, and Mourning; 201 - Diving into Grief through an Intersectional Lens; 301 - Skill Building, Planning, and Preparation." In conclusion, board members were invited to attend the 3rd Annual Mental Health Conference on May 30 at Montclair State University.

At 6:15pm Chair James-Frison inquired if board members are able to attend the SEL Tour. Assistant Superintendent Granato stated they are invited to attend but to inform Board Relations ahead of time so appropriate arrangements can be made. Chair James-Frison additionally requested if the committee could have a presentation on McKinney Vento and SAC's during next month's meeting. Board Member Daughety inquired if the district collaborates with the city on McKinney Vento, how many displaced students the district has, and if school links tracks other non-college pathways such as military service or trade schools. Assistant Superintendent Granato provided answers and committed to follow-up on the number of displaced students. At 6:20pm Chair James-Frison shared that some concerns on how schools are collecting graduation dues which Assistant Superintendents Granato and Lott-Velez will investigate once the schools are shared with Executive Director Deering.

At 6:22pm Director Michelina Thornton presented the Parent Engagement highlights. Examples of different events hosted by schools at each School Leadership Team (SLT) were shared. On Friday, March 28, the Office of Federal Programs and Grants held a successful Women's Wellness Summit. The event featured medical and mental health experts to share strategies for improving cardiac health, managing stress, and accessing valuable resources. South Seventeenth Street families engaged in Read Across America day that encouraged good reading habits, provided tips on embracing various genres of

literature, and insight on making reading a fun family affair. Quitman Street School parents engaged in the NJSLA Parent Workshop where they were provided with practical tools and insights to help their children feel confident and prepared for upcoming state testing. Rafael Hernandez spent a day full of literacy and engagement in their Family Guest Reader day. Families were encouraged to engage in reading together with their children to foster a love for books and learning in a supportive environment. Barringer High School families engaged in a Virtual Reality and Mathematics in the Classroom workshop where they engaged in hands on experiences and activities that mirror the learning students are experiencing in the classroom. Branch Brook School hosted an Evening of Inclusion where families gathered to discuss diversity and receive resources from community partners to plan for respite opportunities.

At 6:30pm Director Jermaine Blount shared the Office of Mentoring Services updates. On April 4 peer leaders-mentors at East Side High School facilitated an interest assembly program to recruit new students for the Peer Group Connection next school year. Peer leaders-mentors shared their experiences and the impact it made on themselves as leaders and their assigned freshmen during the year. In March, Mentor Day was held at University High School with the Three Doctors Foundation. In addition, more than 40 community volunteer mentors converged to mentor high school and select elementary school students. Saturday, May 2nd, as a culminating activity of the seven (6) week college mentorship program, freshmen students from University High School visited Montclair State University to meet with their college mentors on campus. On May 2, 2025, more than 40 distinguished members of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. brought the power of mentorship, literacy, leadership, and brotherhood to Avon Avenue Elementary School in Newark, NJ, as part of the Eastern Region's "We Read...We Lead" community service campaign.

At 6:42pm Director Hollis presented Adult Education updates. The Adult Education program is now in its 3rd year and has grown from 1 school location to 9 and features a variety of programs including English as a Second Language, Business 101, GED, Spanish, and Computer Technology. In partnership with the Newark Public Library, Adult Education is now also being offered at 3 libraries across the city.

At 6:51pm Management Specialist Majors provided the Truancy Task Force (TTF) updates. As of May 6, there have been a total of 1027 truancy pickups, 52 TTF Social Worker referrals, and 3 TTF /Newark Police Safety escorts.

At 6:55pm Chair James-Frison stated they would like to begin the parent engagement tour for school year 2025-2026 in October. Chair James-Frison also asked if PTSO and Alumni Associates President can attend one of our meetings to see how we can collectively increase parent engagement. Director Thornton shared that the back-to-school event is hosted by her department. Additionally, she shared she wants NBOE to host back to school event and to implement PTSO as partners. Director Thornton shared that the back to school event is hosted by her department.

At 6:59pm Chair James-Frison thanked everyone for their work and adjourned the meeting.