



Newark Board of Education

Where Passion Meets Progress

Committee Report

Governance Committee

Location	Date	Time
Virtual	December 14, 2023	5:04 PM
Board Members		
H. Council, President	V. Santana, Co-Vice President	
D. Haynes, Co-Vice President	A. James-Frison, Board Member (until 5:15)	
District Liaison & Superintendent Representative		
B. Liss, General Counsel	R. León, Superintendent	
Other District Staff		
H. Nazario, Chief of Staff	N. Deering, Director of Board Relations	
K. Montalbano, Executive Assistant	H. Breton, Executive Legal Assistant	
Guests		
N/A		
Meeting Summary		
Call to Order: 5:04 PM The Committee discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delegate Assembly Resolution - Safe Return Plan - Budget Calendar - ESB - Feedback Survey - Charter Schools: Reports, Requests, Leases - National Non-Violence Day Adjournment: 6:27 PM		

Item: Delegate Assembly Resolution	
Lead(s): A. James-Frison	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

Board Member Allison James-Frison, the Board's representative to the New Jersey School Boards Delegate Assembly, reported to the Committee on the Anti-Book Ban Resolution adopted by the Delegate Assembly on December 2, 2023. The resolution, sponsored by the Essex County School Boards Association, denounces efforts to ban books from schools and school libraries. It recommends amendment of File Code 6161.1, Guidelines for Evaluation and Selection of Instructional Materials, to establish this position in board policy. We will await guidance from the School Boards Association regarding such amendment.

Item: Safe Return Plan	
Lead(s): R. León	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

The Board is required by statute to annually review and readopt its Safe Return Plan, pertaining to school health and safety and arrangements for remote instruction when necessary and appropriate. The plan and proposed minor modifications have been reviewed in greater detail by the Instruction & Program Committee and will be on the agenda for this month's Board meeting.

Item: Budget Calendar	
Lead(s): R. León	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

Planning for the SY 2024-2025 budget has begun, with staff training on the budget process in schools and central office departments and review of district needs and resources. Preparation for school community budget meetings is also underway. A power point presentation is being created for use at all school budget meetings, to provide for consistent messaging regarding programs and initiatives throughout the district. Board members suggested wide distribution of budget information to parents and other community members, through electronic communications and hard copy backpack mail and on billboards and social media. To the extent allowed by law, these strategies will be implemented.

Item: ESB	
Lead(s): H. Council	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

Committee members discussed the suggestion to consider alternatives to the Electronic School Board system (ESB) currently in use for posting board meeting agendas and action items. Ms. Deering reported that the current contract for ESB has an expiration date of June 2024. After discussion, Committee members agreed that the Board's consideration of any change in its system should be made only after informed discussion and deliberation and with input from district staff who use the ESB system. A series of presentations by ESB and other potential vendors will be scheduled to gather information and consider any potential change.

Item: Feedback Survey	
Lead(s): D. Haynes	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

Board Co-Vice-President Haynes presented her recommendation for a system by which students, parents, staff, and other community members could provide feedback on their experiences dealing with our schools and submit any comments and concerns they may have. Committee members agreed on the potential value of such a system and discussed the means by which input would be collected, reviewed, maintained, and shared with the administration and Board members. The administration will review existing methods of receiving such input and make recommendations for any changes in response to Ms. Haynes's recommendation.

Item: Charter School Reports, Requests, Leases	
Lead(s): R. León, B. Liss	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

Charter amendment requests have been submitted by Lead Charter School and Roseville Community Charter School. Lead requests approval to expand its operations to serve students residing in Jersey City as well as Newark, and to open a facility in Jersey City; and Roseville requests approval to expand its grade levels from K-4 to K-5, with the expectation that it will request additional increases in future years to eventually serve grades K-8. Pursuant to state regulations, comments on these requests are due in January. Committee members agreed that the administration should analyze impact of the amendments, inform the Commissioner of the impacts, and take any appropriate action to protect the Board’s interests.

One other charter school development is a settlement reached with People’s Prep Charter School, which has agreed to an increase in rent in the 2023-24 school year for its lease of a portion of the premises at the former Camden Middle School, to pay a lump sum of back rent owed for its occupancy of certain portions of the premises beyond those provided by the lease, and to vacate the premises by July 2024. This will allow for the expansion of Bard Early College High School to respond to increasing demand for enrollment at that school.

Item: National Non-Violence Day	
Lead(s): D. Haynes	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

The Committee discussed a proposed proclamation establishing January 30, 2024 as a National School Day of Non-Violence and Peace. Committee members agreed to recommend its adoption. The proclamation has been distributed to all board members and will be on the agenda for this month’s Board meeting.

Item: Immigrant Students	
Lead(s): V. Santana	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

Board Co-Vice-President Santana requested that the Superintendent report to the Board on how the district is addressing the substantial increase in the number of recent immigrant students in our schools. This will be addressed in various committee meetings in coming months.

The meeting adjourned at 6:27 PM.