



# Newark Board of Education

Where Passion Meets Progress

## Committee Report

### Governance Committee

Location	Date	Time
765 Broad Street (remote)	June 13, 2024	5:06 PM
<b>Board Members</b>		
H. Council, President	V. Santana, Co-Vice President	
A James-Frison, Co-Vice President		
<b>District Liaison &amp; Superintendent Representative</b>		
B. Liss, General Counsel	R. León, Superintendent	
<b>Other District Staff</b>		
H. Nazario, Chief of Staff	N. Deering, Director of Board Relations	
H. Breton, Executive Legal Assistant	Y. Severe, Executive Director, Early Childhood	
S. Carbone, Director of Labor Relations	Y. Mendez, Assistant Superintendent	
<b>Guests</b>		
N/A		
<b>Meeting Summary</b>		
<p>Call to Order: 5:06 P. M.</p> <p>The Committee received reports on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School Board Management Software</li> <li>- School Facilities / Bond Issue</li> <li>- School Leadership Councils</li> <li>- NJSBA Policy Wellness Check</li> <li>- Charter Schools: Reports, Requests, Leases</li> <li>- Superintendent's Evaluation</li> </ul> <p>Adjournment: 6:14 PM</p>		

School Board Management Software	
Lead(s): N. Deering	Priority/Strategy:

#### Comments:

The Committee continued the discussion, begun last month, of the school board management software utilized by the district, known as Electronic School Board (ESB). Ms. Deering reported that investigation of possible alternative software platforms has included review of two other programs, BoardDocs and one other. The second other platform has significantly fewer features than ESB or BoardDocs, and is not recommended. Also, the cost of BoardDocs is higher than the cost of ESB. After discussion, there was no motion to recommend a change from the Board's current software program.

School Facilities / Bond Issue	
Lead(s): R. León	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

As discussed in further detail in the Finance Committee meeting, the district is in the process of preparing applications for approval from various agencies as required to support bond financing of necessary repairs and renovations to numerous school facilities. These school renovation projects – which are in addition to replacement school projects to be funded by the Schools Development Authority -- will be selected based on the needs assessment of all district owned properties prepared by NJIT in 2022, further assessments to be conducted in coming weeks, and community input obtained in stakeholder meetings to be hosted by the Board of Education and conducted in each ward of the City. By statute, issuance of bonds by a board of education must be approved by the voters in a referendum held on the date of the annual school election or a special election date. The target date for the referendum is April 2025. Also by statute, the amount of funding that can be raised by the board through bond financing is limited to 8% of the average equalized valuation of taxable property in the district. That amount, as shown in the district’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, is approximately one billion dollars.

Item: School Leadership Councils / New Jersey Collaborative	
Lead(s): R. León	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

In the 2024-2025 school year, the district administration and Newark Teachers Union will establish a collaborative governance structure in each school, known as the School Leadership Council (SLC). Each SLC will consist of teachers, who will comprise more than 50% of the membership; the principal; and representatives of parents, students, and the community. Each will have five subcommittees: instruction and program, student support, school culture, personnel, and budget; and will have oversight and make recommendations regarding each of these areas. The development of the SLC system, and training for principals, teachers, and all involved, will be conducted by Rutgers University and an organization known as the New Jersey Collaborative, which includes approximately New Jersey 30 school districts engaged in similar collaborative governance initiatives. Research indicates a correlation between collaborative school governance and student achievement; it is gratifying have the NTU’s strong support for SLCs in our schools.

Item: NJSBA Policy Wellness Check	
Lead(s): R. León	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

Per the Board President’s request, the New Jersey School Boards Association’s Policy Services Department has conducted a policy wellness check for our board. The wellness check, a review of our policy manual and report on the condition of each policy as well as the manual as a whole, helps ensure that our district’s policy manual is up to date and complies with federal and state requirements. The NJSBA’s findings include: the district’s policy manual is neatly formatted; its numbering matches the NJSBA file code system, although there are some file codes that are not used by NJSBA; in addition to using this file code system, the manual is logically organized and receives a high grade from NJSBA for its ease of use. Also, policies are clearly written with customizations that reflect the character of the district; there are policies related to most program areas that are addressed in state monitoring as well as 21 discretionary policies which assist parents, staff and members when encountering unique situations or situations that may commonly occur in our schools. Most policies were updated in 2019, others more recently. Although the

manual is well maintained, there are a few recommendations that are both practical and substantive. The administration is reviewing those recommendations and will report back to the Committee on them in August.

The Committee reviewed the procedure for review and consideration of proposed policies and policy amendments. That procedure includes consideration by the Governance Committee and action by the full Board of Education on any proposed policy or amendment recommended by this committee. If necessary or appropriate, the procedure may also include referral by Governance to another committee for its consideration and recommendation back to Governance. The Committee discussed a request by a board member for adoption of a new policy and guidance regarding that request provided by our New Jersey School Boards Association field services representative. After discussion, the consensus of the Committee was against recommendation for adoption by the full Board of Education.

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

Gateway Academy Charter School, formerly known as People’s Prep Charter School, is scheduled to move out of the space it currently occupies at Bard Early College High School on July 15. That move is expected to occur as scheduled, making the entire school building at 321 Bergen Street available for Bard’s increased student enrollment starting in September.

In accordance with applicable charter school regulations and as advised by the Executive County Superintendent, beginning immediately all Newark resident students enrolling in charter schools will be required to first register in the district. Registration will be available on line through SchoolMint, at the Family Support Center, or at any district school. Also as required by the regulations, the district will process all registrations in a timely manner, including the assessment of residency, and based on the information provided the district will identify the specific categorical aid, such as special education aid, for which each student qualifies. Enforcement of the registration requirement has been communicated to all charter schools in the district.

Item: Superintendent’s Evaluation	
Lead(s): V. Santana	Priority/Strategy:

Comments:

Board President Council recused himself from this portion of the committee meeting. Co-Vice-President Santana is coordinating the process of the Superintendent’s evaluation, and will be reviewing with the full Board of Education (except members with conflicts) in executive session. The Board is on track to complete the evaluation by July 1 as required.

The meeting adjourned at 6:14 PM.