

# BOARD OF EDUCATION

City Hall - 45 Lyon Terrace  
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

## MEMBERS OF THE BOARD cont.

**MICHAEL J. TESTANI**  
Superintendent of Schools

### MEMBERS OF THE BOARD

**JOHN R. WELDON**  
Chairman

**BOBBI BROWN**  
Vice-Chairman

**JOSEPH J. LOMBARD**  
Secretary



"Changing Futures and Achieving Excellence Together"

**SYBIL ALLEN**

**ALBERT BENEJAN**

**SOSIMO J. FABIAN**

**JESSICA MARTINEZ**

**JOSEPH SOKOLOVIC**

**CHRIS TAYLOR**

Bridgeport, Connecticut

December 1, 2020

Board Members:

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Monday, December 7, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. via a Microsoft Teams Live Broadcast event. Public viewing access to the meeting will be made available through <https://www.bridgeportedu.net/stream>.

*Joseph Lombard*

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Joseph J. Lombard  
Board of Education Secretary

**BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION  
AGENDA OF REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING**

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**Monday, December 7, 2020 – 6:30 P.M.  
Microsoft Teams Live Broadcast Event  
Bridgeport, CT**

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Pledge of Allegiance**
- 3. Roll Call**
- 4. Public Comment (Agenda Items Only)**
- 5. Approval of Board Minutes**
  - a) 11/23/20          Special Meeting
  - b) 11/23/20          Regular Meeting
- 6. Chairman's Report**
- 7. Committee Reports/Referrals**
  - a) Educational Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
  - b) Facilities
  - c) Finance
  - d) Governance
  - e) Personnel
  - f) Students and Families
  - g) Teaching and Learning
- 8. Superintendent's Report**
  - a) General Report
  - b) COVID-19 Update
- 9. Old Business – None to be Transacted**
- 10. New Business**
  - a) Discussion and Possible Approval to Renew Facility Department Lease of Property at 1085 Connecticut Avenue in Bridgeport
  - b) Discussion and Possible Approval to Solicit Absence Management and Substitute Staffing Services
  - c) Discussion and Possible Approval of Calendar Year 2021 Schedule of Regular Public Meetings
- 11. Adjourn**

Monday, November 23, 2020

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held November 23, 2020, by video conference call, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 4:10 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon, Vice Chair Bobbi Brown, Secretary Joseph Lombard, Albert Benejan, Joseph Sokolovic, Jessica Martinez, and Sybil Allen.

Mr. Weldon said the topic for discussion was interviews to fill the board vacancy created by Mr. Illingworth's resignation. He said there were 13 candidates. Ms. Smilien was unable to attend the meeting. He noted Ilena Cotto had not dialed in as of yet.

Mr. Weldon listed the candidates: Ra'Shaun Custis; Sosimo Fabian; JoAnn Kennedy; Christine King; Jose Lopez; Tyler Mack; Tavonna McKenzie; Chantel Mendez; Tressa Pankovits; Dasha Spell; and Cynthia Torrez.

Mr. Weldon said four questions will be asked of each candidate. The first question was to tell us about yourself, your educational and professional background, and why do you want to be on the Board of Education.  
and background.

Ra'Shaun Custis said he was a graduate of ECSU and attending UB for a master's degree in social studies and to be certified as a teacher. He said he would be pursuing an 092 certificate with the hopes of being a principal. He said he would like to be on the board because he is a Bridgeport

resident and to give back to the community and be a voice for youth today.

Sosimo Fabian said he graduated from Canisius College; received a Ph.D. at Georgetown, did a post-doctoral fellowship at Hunter College and was an adjunct professor. In 2004, he graduated from CCNY law school and has been with the Corporation Counsel in New York City for 17 years. He said he had been in Bridgeport for 17 years and had sent both his children through the Bridgeport public schools. He said he wanted to be socially active and socially progressive in education, and promote the best interests of our children.

JoAnn Kennedy said she attended Waltersville School, East Side High School, graduated from Harding High School, and is currently studying at Housatonic Community College. She said two of her children graduated from Bassick High and she has experience with home-schooling and a charter school. She described her experience in the district as a volunteer parent leader; PTSO president; regularly attending Board of Education meetings; a member of the board ad hoc committee on Males of Color; a certified cheerleading coach; and a prior candidate for the Board of Education. She said she given her familiarity with the Board of Education she would be a great asset to the community and the board.

Christine King said she has been a resident of Bridgeport for over 16 years, her two children have gone through the public school system, and she has also home-schooled the children at various points. She said she is currently an educational consultant on math instruction and has an undergraduate degree from Temple University and a degree from Columbia University. She said she has been in education since 1993, having entered education through Teach for America.

Ms. King said because of her experiences and dedication to the community she wants to make sure the children, parents, and teachers have the best possible opportunities available to them. She said she viewed the board as a support to what the school district is trying to accomplish.

Jose Lopez said he was a product of Bridgeport Public Schools from K to 12 and sat as a student rep on the Board of Education. He said he received an undergraduate degree at Felician University and is working on a master's in public administration. He has been an intern in the New Jersey legislature and currently works at the Bridgeport Public Education Fund and supervises a program involving mentoring for academic achievement and college and career success program.

Mr. Lopez said he wanted to be on the board because he loves the students and the city. He said sometimes the student voice is forgotten when the board makes decisions.

Mr. Mack said he was a graduate of High Horizons, Bullard Havens, and Eastern Connecticut State University. He said he wanted to be on the board because his mission was make sure youth and especially minorities have access to their dreams. He said he was a living testament that dreams come true. He said he was 24 years old and can relate to students and faculty and staff. He said he was a lifelong Bridgeport resident who loves the city. He currently works as legislative aide to the Senate president pro tempore, Martin Looney, in Hartford. He described his work as behind-the-scenes, including food drives. He said he had a young son and he wanted to make sure he gets the best education possible.

Tavonna McKenzie said she was a current student at CCSU with a focus on special education. She said she was a lifelong resident of Bridgeport and a graduate of Central Magnet. She described working two jobs and also attending Housatonic at one point during her college career. She said she worked in the school system as a certified paraprofessional with the intention of becoming a certified teacher. She said she had experience being on a board fighting youth homelessness and gave her insight in how to allocate resources and funds

Chantel Mendez said she attended Bridgeport private schools and her daughter attended public schools from kindergarten to 8th grade, and now attends a charter school due to the underfunding of Bridgeport public schools. She said she has worked in the healthcare field and worked as a union organizer with SEIU 1199. She added she does a lot of volunteer work with Faith Acts and has built relationships with families, and has met Supt. Testani and many of the board members. She said she wanted to do the work that hasn't been done in this community.

Ileana Cotto joined the meeting. Ms. Cotto said she was born and raised in Bridgeport and was a mother of four public school students. She said she works fulltime for Bridgeport Hospital and is a fulltime college student at Housatonic. She said she would like to be on the board to be involved and to make a difference.

Tressa Pankovits said she came in Bridgeport in 2012 and became a homeowner here in 2013. She graduated from a state college in California, became a television journalist in various cities, did political work in Chicago, worked in state government in Illinois, went to law school and practiced law, and then became an education consultant. She said she

worked Haiti and in Chile as a consultant as well, and also in districts in Illinois and Texas. She said she worked on adult education with the Department of Justice and was chief of staff for an education nonprofit called Advancement Via Individual Determination. She said she currently works for the Progressive Policy Institute of Washington, D.C., doing research and writing about education policy.

Ms. Pankovits said she believed the way her career unfolded would bring a unique perspective to the board. She said she grew up in a household that was very housing and food insecure. She said we had to concentrate like a laser beam on educational outcomes.

Dasha Spell said she was a lifelong resident of Bridgeport, graduated from Bassick High School, Southern Connecticut University, and has a master's degree in counseling. She said she was licensed in mental health and addiction counseling. She has a private practice and is a program manager for a nonprofit agency in New Britain. She said she has partnered with many local school districts to do therapy work in school buildings.

Ms. Spell said she wanted to be on the board because the kids need investment and continual support. She said she knew from other districts what money and resources look like and what Bridgeport needs. She said the board has to work as a team with the city. She said she helped facilitate a day of healing this summer in Bridgeport that brought resources into the community. She said what happens in the street affects the classroom, which she saw personally as a Head Start teacher.

Cynthia Torrez said she was a graduate of Blackham School and UConn. She said she taught for four years at Curiale

School, which was probably the most rewarding four years of her life. She learned how much hasn't changed since she was a student and how much policies and practices affect the classroom day-to-day. She said she received a master's in social work at Columbia University and is now working in that field.

Ms. Torrez said she wanted to bring her perspective as a teacher and former student who understands the policies and practices that affect students, especially in the era of COVID. She said she would bring her collaboration skills and work skills to the board.

The second question for the candidates was, what do you think is the biggest challenge that Bridgeport Public Schools faces and how do you think the board should address it.

Ms. Cotto said the biggest challenge is online learning. She said not all parents have access, despite the best efforts of the schools, and the students don't have anyone to help them at home during remote learning. She said the teachers do not have the kids' attention when teaching remotely.

Mr. Custis said he was not sure what was the biggest challenge and how the board should address it because there are so many challenges and education is such a revolving door. He said we can best support the kids by giving them a supportive team. He said COVID exposed a lot of things we were not fully prepared for and made us think outside of the box on education.

Dr. Fabian said one of the biggest challenges facing education is an unwillingness to experiment. He said systemic change is needed in systems and methods. He said we need to be mindful all communities have different



needs and he advocated for controlled experimentation. He said many changes would be confronting education as we move forward.

Ms. Kennedy said she believed the biggest challenge was finance. She said with Bridgeport being the largest district in the state and the district being the largest employer in the city we need money. She said the board needs to be more creative in bringing money to our schools and making them better. She said we need people to fight for financing our children.

Ms. King said she believed the biggest challenges are not COVID, but the idea of innovation. She said Bridgeport receives a little less than half of what is received by more affluent school districts. She said authentic learning experiences for kids should be established via community partnerships, including in all grades. She said people on the board are needed to talk about innovative ideas. She urged students be given a voice in the education process.

Mr. Lopez said one of the largest issues moving forward is the achievement gap created by the pandemic. He said community resources should be leveraged to combat this via partnerships with students. He said almost every student could potentially be assisted through some sort of third party programming. He said lobbying for finance can be done more effectively by demonstrating the partnerships and the utilization of all the resources in the community already.

Mr. Mack said one of the biggest challenges that the district faces is vision. He said he believed the board should work with the superintendent to create a five-year plan, which will include goals to keep the students engaged, make the faculty and staff feel supported and listened to, and

continuous involvement of parents. He said he knows from firsthand experience when you ask for money in Hartford or grants from foundations they want plans. He said we need vision and plans to improve the chances of getting more money.

Ms. McKenzie said the biggest challenge is parent, community, board and school partnerships. She suggested incorporating board meetings and providing information to parents during parent-teacher conferences. She said parents can be made aware of resources that are available. She also suggested the creation of a teacher board that can be a liaison between parents and the board. She said another idea would be to have a board representative communicate with teachers and families and take their concerns back to the board.

Ms. McKenzie said test scores and grades are a big problem for the system, and she suggested surveys of teachers and students, and creating interactive programs that will help boost scores. She suggested the use of students who are thriving to do tutoring and receive college credit.

Ms. Mendez said she was asked the same question earlier this year at the Senate Appropriations Committee. She said Bridgeport is severely underfunded and has been so for years. She said since this is a community of black and brown children, which is beyond unfair. She said the governor gave the \$2 million last year, but the board was asking for \$7.5 million, which is not enough. She said the board could have a better relationship with the City Council to face the huge funding issue.

Ms. Pankovits said she agreed with prior speakers about innovation and vision. She said the role of the board is

support the teachers and students, but also to set the vision; to steer the boat while they row it. She said goals and metrics for success are needed, along with accountability. She said the education gap in this state has been 35 points ever since 1992 and it has not changed. She noted the challenges presented by low-income students. ELL students, and students with IEPs cannot be met by \$14,000 a year. She said students need academic growth, college readiness, improved workforce readiness, and to hold ourselves accountable.

Ms. Pankovits said the Senate Republicans in Washington have set \$70 billion for K-12 public education, while the Democrats wanted \$182 billion, which means the \$70 billion is a minimum and the district will get another large influx of money. She said she agreed with the need for a five-year plan, but the budget should be built with the new money to ensure the it is based around improving academic outcomes. She said robust interventions are going to be needed after the issues with COVID.

Ms. Spell said parents and teachers have told her that the inconsistency has impacted the students with in-person, hybrid and remote learning. She expressed concern about the social-emotional situation. Students who do not have siblings are by themselves learning at home. She said students with multiple siblings are often in the position of helping their parents raise their siblings. She said the inconsistency of not knowing what is going to happen hinders the students. She suggested looking into the possibility of using hybrid for the rest of the year to provide consistency.

Ms. Spell said the board's budget situation is very tricky because it is broken down into state, local and special grant

funding. She said if the city can give money every year to the police department, they can give money to education. She said if more money was given to education, there would be less needed for policing. She said a lot of students lack basic life skills, including basic hygiene, and community resources could be used to address this. She said as a mental health provider she knows Bridgeport is eligible for trauma resources. She noted the Lighthouse program receives a six-figure grant and it could be expanded to more schools.

Ms. Spell said we have more teachers who do not look like our students in the classroom, and the state has created a program for new graduating students. She suggested offering a contract and a housing program to new teachers.

Ms. Torrez said the biggest issue facing the community is the lack of collaboration between parents, teachers, and elected officials. She said more transparency was needed. She urged the community be mobilized to rally behind funding for education. She said she believed we were doing our best during the pandemic, but collaboration was needed to gain funding, and transparency was necessary to clarify grants and financial issues. She said the district's website was hard to navigate. She said, in short, accountability, transparency and network building was needed.

The third question was, is there a particular initiative that you would want to see pursued by the board. Mr. Weldon asked everyone to try to confine their answers to about two minutes if possible.

Ms. Cotto did not respond.

Mr. Custis said it was always going to be about the students and that's where the focus should always be. He said he

had a lot of hope for Bridgeport and the board and everyone should all work together because the stronger the team is, the better Bridgeport will become.

Dr. Fabian said he would like to see a focus on more positivity, highlighting the many success stories in the district. He said he graduated from Kennedy High School in the Bronx, which was not highly regarded, but many people from there went on to successful careers. He said instead of identifying all the problems we know exist, we should also identify the success stories accomplished from the resources that are provided.

Ms. Kennedy said the males of color are the most targeted community in the world and the school-to-prison pipeline is a real thing. She said she would like the board to focus on this. She said we need to aggressively address the issues boys have in the district. She said before COVID the district was coming close to having one hundred expulsions last year. She said there was nothing wrong with black and brown students and boys, and we need to hear their voice.

Ms. King said the initiative the board needed to address was technological inequity. She said we're seeing the fallout of this now, and goes beyond devices and internet access, but also knowledge and knowhow, including how to think and innovate about technology. She said she always believed even before the pandemic that there should be no snow days, but always a continuation of learning, which can be done remotely.

Mr. Lopez said he would like to pursue more student involvement in the board, including creating a group of high school students who could meet and tell the board its concerns. He said the City Council has been trying to

develop a similar concept. High school students could be used in mentor-like roles. He said being a student member of the board was one of the most eye-opening experiences he's had.

Mr. Mack said he believed there was a need for a five-year plan and a vision. He said an example of a goal in the plan could be greater transparency, which would create trust from parents and staff. He said the more progress people see, the more they will be engaged with the school district and be willing to provide greater funding. He said the plan created could be taken to the state and the City Council when asking for more funding.

Ms. McKenzie said the board should take the initiative to incorporate school and community liaison opportunities. She said the most thriving school systems have parents involved in their children's education.

Ms. Mendez suggested the board be more transparent with the community, because as a parent she has been on the outside looking in, and she had to use an organization like Faith Acts to understand she has the right to understand what's going on. She said the community should be kept in the loop and this would lead to greater support.

Ms. Pankovits said keeping with her theme of improved academic outcomes for students and a better shot at gaining the American Dream there have been several studies that show minorities perform better on standardized tests and other measures when they have at least one teacher who looks like them. It has been shown that if a low-income black male student has at least one black teacher in 3rd, 4th or 5th grade that there's a 40 percent less chance that student will drop out of high school. She said she knows the board is

working on this with an Equity Committee. She said there are best practices out there that can be incorporated. She said this is not only a social justice issue, but has been shown to have academic impact. She noted the use in other cities of teacher residency programs.

Ms. Spell suggested an initiative where we're invested in ourselves, and the conversation around COVID and the planning for going forward. She said January would be budget season, and the five-year capital plan and the budget have to be submitted to the city. She said the biggest issue is creating consistent plans around COVID.

Ms. Torrez said she used a mentoring program with Bassick students working with her elementary students once a week. She said she does a mentoring program for high school students now. She said the mentors could be the liaison between the parents and the students and their needs. She added kids need to see other kids like them being successful.

The final question was to please provide any closing remarks and an opportunity to ask the board questions.

Ms. Cotto did not respond.

Mr. Custis thanked the board for the opportunity and the assistance of Ms. Rita Valle. He said he learned a lot from the process and listening to everyone. He said it was beautiful we were all here for Bridgeport.

Dr. Fabian thanked the board and said the panel of applicants reflect the diversity and passion of the community. He said if selected the board would get the fullest of his

attention and a commitment to think about education in this city. He said he would support whoever gets this position.

Ms. Kennedy thanked the board and said she appreciated all the candidates. She said because of her love and compassion for this work she was almost at a loss of words. She said she loved the students and the city, and wanted to do the work.

Ms. King said she appreciated this experience. She said she understood there was quite a wealth of choices in the pool of applicants. She said it had inspired her to get further involved to make more of an impact whether she is the choice or not. She appreciated that everyone was given an opportunity to express themselves.

Ms. King asked if people could get involved in committees to support the board. She said she was willing to share her e-mail address with other candidates to continue the discussion.

Mr. Weldon said the standing board committees are exclusive to board members. He said the board could look into her idea and the idea could be referred to the Governance Committee for exploration.

Ms. Martinez said some time ago some board members suggested incorporating the participation of parents and students participation in subcommittees but it was never translated into an actual policy.

Mr. Lopez thanked the chair and the board for taking the time to conduct the interviews. He thanked the other applicants for their commitment to making sure that our students receive the best representation and are thought of



in every decision. He said he would like to reaffirm his dedication to the Bridgeport Public Schools. He said he continued to believe in the students in Bridgeport.

Mr. Mack jokingly asked the board to please pick him. He said he was very active and would love to do this. He said he said when advocating at the state capitol for more educational funding, it would seem very unlikely due to his background growing up in a household with three boys and his mom as a single parent. He said his dad passed away when he was in college, but he still pushed ahead to help the public and to excel in life. He said the forum shows there are people in the community that want to be involved that care about the future. He said he will be around and involved even if he is not picked.

Ms. McKenzie thanked the board and said it was great to have the opportunity to hear from everyone. She asked how the board works with the Democratic Party to meet goals.

Mr. Weldon said we don't interact with the local Democrat or local Republican town committees, but work with the state legislative delegation to try to come up with initiatives at the state level.

Ms. McKenzie said she was under the impression it was a Democratic organization. Mr. Weldon said local political parties selected candidates to put on the ballot for the Board of Education and other offices.

Ms. Mendes thanked the board for the opportunity and said she was honored and privileged to even be considered. She said it was good to see there are people in the community who care about the community so much that they want to be on the board. She said she will continue fighting for the

children and the funding they need even if she is not picked. She suggested there be a task force of students and parents to give input on what we would like to see happen.

Ms. Pankovits asked how responsive the state legislators are in regards to advocating for Bridgeport up in Hartford. Mr. Weldon said it varies depending on what competing priorities are. He said the last meeting was about a year and a half ago and the representatives were very receptive. He said to their credit it is not the easiest thing to do when competing against other state legislators.

Ms. Pankovits thanked the board and said she felt part of the community tonight. She said she would remain a resource to the board if she could ever provide research or legislative information, or anything that could be of assistance to the board.

Ms. Spell said she thought the panel of candidates was phenomenal. She said she ran last year for the board against Ms. Brown, Mr. Benejan, and Ms. Allen. She said she did it because she loves our kids and the community. She said whoever becomes the next board member she will support the board.

Ms. Torrez said the work does not end here. She said she began the meeting very nervous, but after hearing great ideas she thought she was at the right table. She said she hoped the work would continue and there would be collaboration.

Ms. Martinez said she was emotionally inspired and the candidates reminded her why she started to begin with. She said she took notes and all the candidates were incredible. She said Bridgeport needs a revolution, which begins with

every single one of us. She noted the attributes of the candidates, and said so many of them are politically savvy. She said this position should not be held by a typical politician. She said she was emotional because she has been discouraged from the fight for many years. She said the candidates reminded her why she never gave up as a Bridgeport parent. She said Bridgeport needs people with passion and a vision, and a sense of direction. She urged the candidates not to give up and to work beside her.

Mr. Benejan thanked everyone for applying for the position. He said they all did an amazing job. He said we're all here for the children and it is his passion. He said he believed candidates wanted the best for our children. He said he recalled Mr. Lopez being a student rep and Ms. Spell's passion for our students.

Mr. Weldon said the board would select a candidate at its upcoming Regular Meeting this evening in a public vote. He said candidates can watch the meeting via the live stream link on the district's website. Whoever is selected will receive a link to join the meeting and they will be sworn in.

In response to a question, Mr. Weldon said he consulted with the board's attorney and as a justice of the peace he can administer the oath; a witness is not needed, and it need not be done in person. He said he will file an affidavit with the town clerk that the candidate has been sworn in.

Mr. Weldon said the agenda included a notice that the board may deliberate in executive session, although it does not have to. He asked if any board member was interested in holding an executive session.

In response to a question, Mr. Weldon said the board could deliberate publicly, but doing so publicly in the Regular Meeting was not possible because it was not publicly noticed.

Mr. Sokolovic said because the discussion would involve pros and cons of individuals he believed it was best done in executive session. He motioned "*to move into execution session for discussion.*" The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen and unanimously approved.

The executive session began at 6:14 p.m.

The board reconvened in public session at 6:41 p.m.

The candidates were not present at this time.

Mr. Sokolovic moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

Monday, November 23, 2020

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held November 23, 2020, by video conference call, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

The meeting was called to order at 6:57 p.m. Present were members Chair John Weldon, Vice Chair Bobbi Brown, Secretary Joseph Lombard, Jessica Martinez, Albert Benejan, Joseph Sokolovic, Chris Taylor, and Sybil Allen. Dr. Sosimo Fabian was subsequently selected to serve on the board and joined the meeting.

Superintendent Michael J. Testani was present.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Ms. Rita Valle-Shastri reported no one had signed up to speak.

**APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:**

Ms. Allen moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of November 17, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan and approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Brown, Sokolovic, Lombard, Benejan, Martinez, and Allen. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Ms. Brown moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of November 19, 2020. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen and approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Brown, Sokolovic, Lombard, Benejan, Martinez, and Allen. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Ms. Allen moved approval of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of November 9, 2020. The motion was seconded by Mr. Benejan and approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Brown, Sokolovic, Lombard, Benejan, Martinez, and Allen. Mr. Taylor abstained.

### **CHAIR REPORT:**

The first item was nominations to fill the current board vacancy.

Mr. Sokolovic nominated Dr. Sosimo Fabian for the position.

Mr. Benejan nominated Jose Lopez for the position.

Mr. Weldon asked Ms. Valle-Shastri to send an e-mail to each member to receive their vote. The members without access to e-mail tonight were instructed to vote orally.

Ms. Allen voted orally for Dr. Fabian. Ms. Martinez voted orally for Dr. Fabian. She added every applicant was an amazing candidate and urged them to run for a board vacancy. Mr. Taylor voted orally for Dr. Fabian.

E-mail votes for Dr. Fabian were Mr. Lombard, Mr. Sokolovic, Mr. Weldon, and Ms. Brown. Mr. Benejan voted for Mr. Lopez.

Dr. Fabian was elected to the vacant board position.

Mr. Taylor left the meeting.

Mr. Weldon administered the oath of office to Dr. Fabian. He said he would file an affidavit with the city clerk's office stating he did that.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS/REFERRALS:**

Mr. Sokolovic said the Educational Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee met on November 16th. Future discussion items were discussed, which will be all-encompassing because equity issues are embedded in almost everything. The student-to-staff ratio was discussed in terms of demographics; disproportionality was found because 74 percent of teachers are Caucasian; 12 percent of staff is African-American. The Hispanic student body is 51 percent of the district and 11 percent of the staff. He said the committee would be looking into hiring practices and what needs to be done in the future.

Supt. Testani said there was a concerted effort in the last two summers under his administration to hire a more representative administrative workforce. He said a lot of work statewide has to be done statewide to grow Hispanic leaders. He noted the pipeline to administration is through the teaching ranks. He said Bridgeport was the first district in the state to have a teacher residency program, which is a collaboration with Sacred Heart University. He said the district is working with the Leadership Academy out of New York in the area of equity and diversity.

Mr. Sokolovic said he wanted to caution the board to not compare the district to how we're doing against the state, but to set the bar even higher.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Finance Committee met on November 18th. There is increased financial pressure on the nutrition department due to the shutdown. Legislative and financial priorities were also discussed; areas where advocacy is needed on the state and federal levels. He said most of the issues apply to all districts, so there should be no problem getting a coalition together for advocacy.

Mr. Lombard referred studying continuing the online participation of board members in meetings remotely even when in-person meetings resume to the Governance Committee.

Ms. Brown referred to the Governance Committee a look at a proposal to allow members of the public to participate in board committees.

Mr. Benejan said the Students & Families Committee met on November 19th. Discussion included District PAC bylaws; action plans by PACs and PTSOs and the expenditure of parent engagement funds; the parent convention; a bullying report which indicated a lack of bullying; and the comments of Mr. Planas on the ability of parents to contact executive directors if principals do not address their concerns.

Ms. Martinez suggested the board find a way that parents and students can participate in the Students & Families Committee, perhaps in an advisory capacity. Mr. Weldon said one way to do it would be to permit up to three members of the public to be non-voting members of each committee, with the committee chair choosing the representatives.

Ms. Martinez suggested revisiting the idea of adding student voices to each committee.



Supt. Testani said he has a monthly roundtable with high school students to gather information, listening to their concerns and what they like about their schools. He said parent roundtables will continue. He suggested a nonvoting ad hoc committee of the board be considered.

Mr. Sokolovic said the board had mechanisms for participation by students through student representatives. He suggested they be reactivated.

Mr. Benejan said he would be glad to welcome students and parents at the Students & Families Committee.

Mr. Sokolovic said the Teaching & Learning Committee met on November 17th. There was a special education update, along with a review of social-emotional learning and a great presentation by Mr. Young.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT/AGENDA:**

The superintendent congratulated and welcomed Dr. Fabian. He said legislative priorities were submitted through the mayor's office; last year there were three meetings with the legislative delegation. He said the state Department of Education is well aware of the district's effort to be fully in-person since the first day of school. He said he believed the district was improving every day in the new educational delivery methods.

Supt. Testani said the district has been invited to be part of the state advisory committee on chronic absenteeism due to its work in this area. He said the district made the largest gains statewide in chronic absenteeism with English Language Learners.

The superintendent said the district was fully remote beginning today. Teachers can work remotely from home today and tomorrow before transitioning into remote teaching from their classrooms. He said the standards for remote learning will be higher than in the spring. He said principals get a report on teachers' usage of Teams and they are looking at that closely.

Supt. Testani said planning is going on for phasing in in-person instruction back in January.

In response to a question about rising numbers of COVID in the district, the superintendent said the district is obligated to report any positive cases among students or staff. He said if cases continue to rise, it will be attributable to community spread, not school spread, which has been the case through the health department's contact tracing.

In response to a question, Supt. Testani said the district had worked very hard to overcome challenges with devices and connectivity. He said in the spring a great number of paper packets had to be prepared, which is no longer the case. He said almost 700 families had received Wi-Fi service through Altice and hotspots have been given out to families that did not qualify for Altice's program. He said there is work with donors to provide Wi-Fi access at the Greene's housing project and up near Trumbull Gardens. He said parents have expressed concerns about child care when they have to work, so the first chance to bring kids back to school would retrieve stress on parents.

Mr. Sokolovic said a few months ago he initiated an agenda item to rename Columbus School. The superintendent said the survey of the parents will go out next week and a survey

of the staff was done. He said staff response was 19 to 17 against changing the name. The parent survey was delayed because the school had to go remote before the rest of the district.

Mr. Sokolovic said the board could step up and suspend the policy, if need be, and rename it as a placeholder. He said the tradition is based on learning who the man used to be and not as the man is today. He said the name brings shame to our schools.

Ms. Martinez said she believed parents should be surveyed about their feelings and the challenges they are facing.

Supt. Testani said last Saturday's drive-through community event was extremely well attended. Community partners provided resources for parents and students; some brand-new winter coats were distributed. He thanked Ms. Rocha-Reaes for her work on the event.

In response to a question, Supt. Testani said asphalt plants have closed for the season. He said Mr. Nadrizny, director of public facilities, indicated he would look at temporary repairs.

Mr. Weldon said there was a discussion around developing a work plan for the board for the coming year and performance metrics for the superintendent. There was a discussion among the board of the scheduling of workshops in this area. Mr. Weldon suggested Saturday morning sessions. Mr. Lombard said more time was needed for goal-setting and less for the superintendent's evaluation.

Mr. Weldon suggested a series of two-hour sessions on upcoming Saturdays. He said he thought board members had expressed an interest in establishing its goals. Supt.

Testani said the district's goals and objectives is looked at year to year. He said the 900-page document that sits on a shelf is not what typically works in school districts. He said he could provide templates for boards of education and their goals.

Ms. Martinez said she believed the board decided long ago to establish goals, which would also help the superintendent. She said she wanted to make her year on the board count. Mr. Weldon suggested we look at what the board wants to have accomplished over the next year.

Mr. Lombard and Ms. Brown suggested incorporating some of the ideas presented by candidates for the board tonight in their interviews.

Ms. Martinez suggested the board consider an in-person meeting. The superintendent said the state restrictions on gatherings would not apply to this situation. He said the Central High library would be large enough. Mr. Lombard said he would have to participate remotely. Mr. Sokolovic said he would like the remote option as well. Ms. Martinez suggested perhaps the first meeting be done in-person.

Mr. Lombard moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

**SECOND AMENDMENT TO LEASE**

**THIS SECOND AMENDMENT TO LEASE** entered into as of November \_\_, 2020, by and between **WR CT AVENUE, LLC**, a Connecticut limited liability company with an address c/o Westrock Development, LLC, 440 Mamaroneck Avenue, Suite N-503, Harrison, New York 10528 (“Landlord”), and **THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION**, 45 Lyon Terrace, Bridgeport, CT 06604 (hereinafter, “Tenant”).

**W I T N E S S E T H:**

**WHEREAS**, Landlord and Tenant entered into that certain Lease dated December 15, 2010 (the “Lease”), for a portion of approximately 44,876 square feet in a building located at 1069 and 1085 Connecticut Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut, as defined in the Lease, (the “Premises”), which Lease was modified and amended by a certain First Amendment to Lease dated February 4, 2015 (the “First Amendment”) (the Lease and the First Amendment shall collectively be hereinafter known as the “Lease”);

**WHEREAS**, Landlord and Tenant desire to extend the term of the Lease for an additional three (3) years by amending the Lease by adding an Additional Renewal Term (as defined below).

**NOW, THEREFORE**, in consideration of the mutual premises recited above, the parties agree as follows:

1. The following Paragraph 43 is hereby added to the Lease:

43. **ADDITIONAL RENEWAL PERIOD.** Landlord and Tenant agree to extend the term of this Lease for one (1) additional term of three (3) years. The time period from January 1, 2021 until December 31, 2023 shall be known as the “Additional Renewal Term”. The Additional Renewal Term shall be upon the same terms and conditions of this Lease, except for Base Rent as set forth below. The Tenant shall have no further option to extend or renew this Lease beyond the Additional Renewal Term.

Tenant agrees to pay the “Base Rent” during the Renewal Term as set forth in the table below:

<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Annual Rent</b>	<b>Monthly Rent</b>
1/1/2021	12/31/2021	\$275,808.00	\$22,984.00
1/1/2022	12/31/2022	\$284,088.00	\$23,674.00
1/1/2023	12/31/2023	\$292,608.00	\$24,384.00

2. This Second Amendment to Lease may be executed in counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original. The captions are for convenience of reference only and shall not affect the construction to be given to any of the provisions hereof. The parties may sign this Agreement by Portable Document Format (“PDF”), and any such PDF copy shall be deemed to be an original, and no objection shall be made to the introduction into evidence of any PDF copy on grounds related to the PDF copy not being an original.

3. This Second Amendment to Lease shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of each of the parties, their successors and assigns.

4. Except as modified herein, all other terms, covenants and provisions of the Lease shall remain in full force and effect and are reaffirmed hereby.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Second Amendment to Lease as of the date first above written.**

**WR CT AVENUE, LLC**

**THE BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF  
EDUCATION**

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Jason L. Friedland**  
**Its: Manager**

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Name:**  
**Its: Superintendent**

**ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES**  
Request for Proposals

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**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC PURCHASES**  
**Margaret E. Morton Government Center**  
**999 Broad Street**  
**Bridgeport, CT 06604**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**# ?????????? – RFP – Absence Management and  
Substitute Staffing Services  
For the Period  
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024**

**Proposal Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**No later than 2:00 P.M.**

**LOCATION: Department of Public Purchases**  
**Margaret E. Morton Government Center**  
**999 Broad Street**  
**Bridgeport, CT 06604**

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## **ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES**

Request for Proposals

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### **ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES RFP SUMMARY AND TIMELINE**

**PROJECT: ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES - Request for Proposal** for the Bridgeport Board of Education of Bridgeport, CT

**DESCRIPTION:** The Bridgeport Board of Education (sometimes referred to as BBOE or District or School District or Bridgeport Board of Education) is seeking proposals from firms interested in serving as the provider of an electronic absence management system for BBOE employees (teachers, paraprofessionals, non-certified staff), substitute teacher staffing services (certified teaching staff) and substitute pre-kindergarten (PK) paraprofessionals (in designated classes) in Bridgeport public schools. The services will include the following:

- an absence management system that encompasses daily absence reporting for all teachers, classroom paraprofessionals and non-certified staff;
- placement of substitute teaching staff in the Bridgeport public schools, based on the District's substitute allocation model; and
- placement of substitute pre-kindergarten (PK) paraprofessionals in designated classes (general education classes where only one paraprofessional is assigned).

**PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** Proposals [one original and eight (8) copies] shall be submitted to the Department of Public Purchases, City of Bridgeport, Margaret E. Morton Government Center, 999 Broad Street, Bridgeport, CT 06604 and must be received no later than **2:00pm**, \_\_\_\_\_ and then, at said office, shall be publicly opened.

**COST INFORMATION:** Proposers are asked to submit a breakdown of costs by each service/deliverable identified in the RFP. The District will negotiate with the successful proposer on the addition or deletion of tasks to arrive at a final contract amount.

**CONTRACT FOR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES:** The selected proposer will be expected to enter into a Professional Services Agreement with the Bridgeport Board of Education. A sample of the contract with specific insurance requirements is provided as **Exhibit B**.

#### **PROJECT MANAGER:**

Tony Pires  
Manager, Business Operations  
Bridgeport Public Schools  
Business Office  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor - Room 320

**ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES**  
Request for Proposals

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45 Lyon Terrace  
Bridgeport, CT 06604  
203.275.1299 office  
email address: [tpires@bridgeportedu.net](mailto:tpires@bridgeportedu.net)

**THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE MAY BE ALTERED AT ANY TIME WITHOUT PRIOR NOTIFICATION IN THE DISTRICT'S SOLE DISCRETION.**

The RFP submission deadline is absolute. Proposals not received in the designated location by the date and time specified **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Point of Contact Person/Phone</u>	<u>Location</u>
RFP Released	<b>December 2020</b>		
RFP Submission Deadline	<b>January 2021</b>	<b>Laura De Moura Buyer, Purchasing</b>	
Evaluation of Proposals Completed	<b>February 2021</b>		
Notice of Intent to Award and Mail Notification of Proposed Award and Denial(s)	<b>April 30, 2021</b>		
Anticipated Contract Start Date	<b>July 1, 2021 Contingent upon fully signed contract between both parties in place</b>	Tony Pires 203.275.1299	Board of Education of Bridgeport, CT Business Office 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor – Room 320 45 Lyon Terrace Bridgeport, CT 06604

# **ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES**

## Request for Proposals

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### **Section I: INTRODUCTION**

#### **A. Background**

The Bridgeport School District has a certified teaching force of over 1500 and paraprofessional staff of approximately 400. Currently, the District utilizes Kelly Educational Services (KES) to provide the absence management system for teachers, paraprofessionals and non-certified staff. All employees report absences daily to the absence management system, AESOP.

In this system, the employee reports absences daily to AESOP electronically, by web entry or telephone. Reported absences that require supervisor approval are electronically routed to the supervisor (e.g., personal days, vacation).

#### **Substitute Teachers**

- The District authorizes the provider to assign substitute teachers to schools, based on the District model.
  - Currently, the District utilizes occasional subs and a Building Substitute allocation model, in which each school is allocated a number of Building Substitutes for a designated number of school days, either the entire school year or a shorter time period (e.g., October – May).
  - The Building Substitute is assigned by the principal, on a daily basis, to cover teacher absences.
- The District also authorizes long-term substitute (LTS) assignments for coverage of vacant positions and the absence of teachers on leave for an extended or long-term period (e.g., FMLA, workers compensation etc.)

#### **Substitute PK Paraprofessionals (general education)**

- In addition, the District will require that the provider assign substitute paraprofessionals in only one (1) category --- Prekindergarten (PK) paraprofessional --- as needed on a daily basis, to cover the absences of PK paraprofessionals in designated general education classes (general education classes where only one paraprofessional is assigned).

The contract with the current provider, Kelly Educational Services, will terminate on June 30, 2021.

This contract shall **not** be utilized as a regular source of staff, but rather it is intended to offer temporary substitute staff support as specified by the District.

## **ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES**

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#### **District Description – Summary Data**

The Bridgeport School District is the second largest school system in Connecticut, servicing approximately 21,000 students. It also ranks lowest among the Connecticut school districts on the economic scale.

There are 38 school sites consisting of 29 elementary, 7 (seven) high schools, 1 (one) alternative center and the inter-district Vocational Aquaculture School.

#### **B. Purpose**

The District is seeking a Substitute Staffing Service that will encompass the following:

- Absence Management System: tracking of absence data for all teachers, all paraprofessionals and all non-certified staff
- assignment of occasional subs, long-term substitutes and Building Substitutes to schools, in accordance with the District model, to provide substitute teaching services.
- assignment of substitute paraprofessionals, on a restricted basis, to cover occasional absences of PK paraprofessionals in designated general education classes only.
- automated time tracking and payment of the substitute personnel
- web-based daily/aggregate reporting of staff absence data

### **Section II: SCOPE OF SERVICES**

#### **A. Objectives**

The proposer should include, in the proposal, comprehensive information to demonstrate a viable plan to achieve the following objectives:

1. **Substitute Teacher Personnel:** The proposer shall provide Substitute Teacher Services in the District's schools, in accordance with the District allocation model. The awarded proposer shall not be utilized as a regular source of staff, but rather to offer temporary substitute staff placement services as required by the District.
2. **Exclusive Contract Provider – Substitute Teachers:** The proposer selected shall be the exclusive contract provider of Substitute Teachers to the District. However, in the event that the District requests a special education Substitute

## ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES

### Request for Proposals

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Teacher and the proposer is unable to provide a special education Substitute Teacher with the necessary certification(s) and qualifications within a reasonable time period, the District may locate and hire a special education Substitute Teacher with the requisite qualifications from another vendor.

3. **Non-Exclusive Contract Provider – Substitute PK Paraprofessionals (general education classes):** The proposer selected shall provide substitute PK paraprofessionals to cover the occasional absences of PK paraprofessionals in designated classes in designated schools (general education classes where only one paraprofessional is assigned). It is expected that the proposer will fill substitute assignments for occasional absence at the fill rate of 97% or higher. In the event of a long-term absence of a PK paraprofessional in a designated class, if the proposer is not able to fill the substitute assignment within two consecutive days, the District reserves the right to cancel the open position in AESOP and seek substitute coverage from an alternative vendor.
4. **Cost Structure:** The pricing submitted shall specify the DAILY RATE and HALF DAY RATE for substitute assignments.
  - a. The DAILY RATE submitted in the RFP proposal MUST BE ALL INCLUSIVE of all charges.
  - b. There will be NO payment for travel time, mileage to and from any job site and/or miscellaneous expenses.
  - c. The District is currently paying the following daily rates:
    - Occasional Sub = \$90/day
    - Building Sub = \$100/day
  - d. For long-term substitute teacher assignments (consecutive days of service in the same teaching assignment), the District is currently paying the following per diem rates:

<b>Substitute Day 1 - 20</b>	\$100
<b>Substitute Day 21 - 30</b>	\$120
<b>Substitute Day 31 -</b>	\$180

- f. The District will pay substitute paraprofessionals the following per diem rate:
    - PK Para Sub - \$85.00 Per Day
5. **Cost-Effectiveness and Operational/Fiscal Efficiencies:** The pricing structure, consisting of the billing rates to the District, should demonstrate cost savings and/or operational/fiscal efficiencies for the District.
6. **Structured Employment Process:** The proposer shall demonstrate an organizational framework that provides for a systematic, organized process for hiring, credentialing and training substitute personnel.

## ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES

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#### B. Services/Deliverables

1. **Substitute Personnel:** The proposer must provide sufficient, competent, reliable, properly qualified substitute personnel to fill authorized substitute teacher positions; and the occasional absence of substitute PK paraprofessionals in designated classes and schools.
2. **Pre-Employment Screening Requirements:**
  - a. In selecting a Substitute Teacher, the Proposer shall apply the screening and evaluation criteria set forth as required by the applicable laws of the State of Connecticut and may apply additional criteria in its sole discretion. The Proposer will act in good faith to screen, train and provide substitute personnel to the District who, if needed or applicable: (a) hold a current license and certification for the positions requested by the District, (b) have had a completed criminal history check as required by law from the Connecticut Department of Education, (c) have had a completed check of former employers where the teacher had contact with children, as required by Connecticut law, (d) is not currently on the DCF registry, (e) has not had his/her professional or occupational license or certification suspended or revoked, or has ever surrendered license or certificate while an allegation of abuse or neglect was pending or under investigation by DCF or due to a substantiated allegation of abuse or neglect, (f) have appropriate inoculations, vaccinations included COVID-19 vaccination, and tuberculosis and COVID-19 testing (in cases where a COVID-19 vaccination has not been received) as required by the State of Connecticut Department of Education or the State of Connecticut Department of Health and (g) who are educated, trained and prepared to render services in accordance with applicable laws and procedures of the State of Connecticut and this Agreement. The proposer should present to the District its detailed plan to meet such pre-screening requirements.
  - b. The proposer will act in good faith to screen, train and provide substitute PK paraprofessionals to the District who, if needed or applicable: (a) hold an Associates Degree, the equivalent of 60 college credits or the successful passing of the ParaPro Assessment Exam; (b) have had a completed criminal history check as required by law from the Connecticut Department of Education; (c) have had a completed check of former employers where the teacher had contact with children, as required by Connecticut law; (d) is not currently on the DCF registry; (e) has appropriate inoculations and tuberculosis testing as required by the Connecticut Department; and (f) are trained and prepared to render services in accordance with the applicable laws and procedures of the State of Connecticut and the contract. [COVID]
  - c. The proposer will affirm that for each substitute it has performed all required background, criminal and employee checks required by Connecticut law for

## **ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES**

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the employment of an individual who will have direct contact with children, and that should a substitute's prior employment be outside of the State of Connecticut, the Proposer will obtain a statement from the Substitute as to whether he/she is included on the abuse/neglect registry in the state or country of their prior employment.

- d. The proposer agrees that no substitute personnel will be provided to the District until the proposer complies with and completes all background and employment checks required by Connecticut law, and will provide documentation of same to the District upon request.
- e. The Proposer will conduct any additional screening that may be mutually agreed by the Proposer and the District, with an appropriate increase in the Proposer's fees if appropriate. If at any time the District or its Board of Education is unsatisfied with Substitute, the District shall promptly notify the Proposer and may preclude that Substitute from having another assignment in the District.

### **3. Performance Metrics:**

- a. **Occasional Subs: Must achieve a fill rate of at least 90% for occasional sub service.**
  - b. **Building Subs: Must achieve a fill rate of at least 95% for allocated Building Sub positions.**
  - c. **Occasional Absence – PK Paraprofessionals (general education classes): Must achieve an average fill rate of 97%.**
4. **Accountability:** The proposer shall specify the monetary benefit to be credited to the District, if the performance metric is not achieved.
  5. **Contingency Plan:** The proposer must provide a description of the process to be followed when and if the proposer cannot meet the demand for substitutes.
  6. **Absence Management/Substitute Placement:** The proposer must utilize a web-based absence management system, which generates daily reports of absences.
    - a. The absence management system is to record, when allowed by the District, substitute paraprofessionals assigned to cover PK paraprofessional absences in designated PK classes.
    - b. The absence management system must be connected electronically to the District's MUNIS personnel/payroll system, so that absences reported by District employees can be automatically recorded in the employees' MUNIS attendance tracker. In this way, the employee's time balance record in MUNIS will be kept up to date in real time.
  7. **Reporting:** The automated reporting system must include on-line and print capability for viewing/generating reports of absences and substitute coverage as follows:
    - a. Daily, weekly, monthly
    - b. By school, school level (e.g., elementary) and District-wide

## ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES

### Request for Proposals

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- c. By type of absence
- 8. **Billing:** The proposer must provide an automated billing system.
- 9. **Hosting of Computer System:** The proposer must host the computer system and assure continuous operation of the system.
- 10. **Recruitment and Training Program:** The proposer shall demonstrate the capabilities to enable the ongoing, active recruitment and effective training of an adequate number of qualified substitute personnel.
- 11. **Oversight:** The proposer must designate key contact persons and back-up contact persons who will provide oversight.
- 12. **Conduct:** The proposer and the substitutes provided by the proposer shall adhere to proper conduct at all times. Proper conduct is meant to include, but not limited to the following:
  - a. There shall be no weapons, drugs or alcohol on the premises.
  - b. No smoking on the premises.
  - c. No exterior doors are left opened or unlocked.
  - d. Professional attire
  - e. The proposer and substitute personnel provided by the proposer shall be polite and courteous at all times.
  - f. The proposer and substitute personnel provided by the proposer must adhere to any/all security standards, requirements and/or regulations of each school and the school district, including COVID-19 protocols, safe environment policies, and the like.

#### C. The proposer will be responsible for providing the following **products:**

- 1. **Timeline:** A timeline of planning and implementation activities is to be provided.
- 2. **Substitute Personnel Certifications:** In cases where special licenses or accreditations or certifications are required by State, Federal and/or local law, statute, regulation, or District Policy, proposers are required to provide a copy upon request to the District.
- 3. **Substitute Personnel References:** If requested, provide references, resumes, and/or test scores on individual substitutes.
- 4. **Proposer's Payroll for Substitute Personnel:** The proposer is solely responsible for payment of all salaries, wages, bonuses, Social Security, Workers' Compensation, taxes, Federal and State Unemployment Insurance, Liability and Workers' Compensation Insurance, employee benefits, and any and all taxes related to personnel furnished under FICA law; and shall provide Workers' Compensation for its personnel.
- 5. **Proposer's Insurance:**
  - a. **Insurance requirements:** The following insurance coverage is required to be produced to the BOE and shall be maintained and kept in force by the contracting



## ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES

### Request for Proposals

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party at its sole cost and expense. It is further understood that the contracting party shall require similar coverage, as appropriate, from every proposer and subcontractor in any tier, as the case may be, or any other person by reason of the license conferred that may enter onto the Premises on behalf of the proposer. All non-standard endorsements and provisions shall be disclosed in advance in writing to the District. The proposer shall provide evidence to the BOE, and maintain in effect for the duration of this agreement without interruption and for one year after the proposer's last activity at the Premises, the insurance coverages identified below, from insurers licensed to conduct business in the State of Connecticut and having a Moody's or Best's financial rating of A - 10, or coverage otherwise acceptable to the BOE. The proposer will not enter upon the Premises or commence any work or other activity until the required insurance is purchased, and evidence thereof is provided to the BOE. The BOE may terminate the eventual agreement if any of the insurance coverages provided lapses or is cancelled without a reasonable substitution by the proposer of coverage of similar liability and quality.

- b. **Comprehensive General Liability** (occurrence form) naming the BOE as an additional insured party by policy endorsement and insuring against claims or suits brought by members of the public alleging bodily injury or personal injury or property damage and claimed to have arisen out of operations conducted under the agreement with the proposer. Coverage shall be broad enough to include contractual liability, premises and operations, and personal injury including communicable disease transmission, with limitations of \$1,000,000 for each occurrence/aggregate with a combined single limit for bodily injury, personal injury and property damage. Exclusions for employees will be removed. The proposer or its agent shall inform the BOE in advance of any non-standard endorsements or policy provisions that may be part of the insurance contract(s). Limits may be made up of primary and umbrella or excess coverage.
- c. **Sexual Misconduct and Molestation** insuring against claims or suits brought by members of the public alleging sexual misconduct or molestation by the proposer and its employees in amount limitations of a minimum of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 combined primary and excess coverage for each occurrence/aggregate.
- d. **Comprehensive Automobile Liability** insuring against claims or suits brought by members of the public alleging bodily injury, personal injury or property damage, and uninsured motorist and claimed to have arisen out of the use of owned, hired or non-owned vehicles in connection with business naming the BOE as an additional insured party by policy endorsement. Coverage will include limitations of \$1,000,000 for each occurrence/aggregate with a combined single limit for bodily injury, personal injury and property damage. Limits may be made up of primary and umbrella or excess coverage.

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- e. **Workers' Compensation** insuring in accordance with statutory requirements including voluntary compensation, employer's liability insurance and occupational disease insurance in order to meet obligations towards employees in the event of injury or death sustained directly or indirectly in the course of employment. Liability for employee suits shall not be less than \$500,000 per claim.
- f. **Errors and Omissions** covering professional liability in an amount of at least \$1,000,000
- g. **General requirements:** All policies shall include the following provisions:
  - Cancellation notice—The BOE shall be entitled to receive from the insurance carriers not less than 30 days' written notice of cancellation or non-renewal by policy endorsement. All notices are to be given to the respective parties at the following addresses:

If to the BOE:  
Business Manager  
Bridgeport Board of Education  
45 Lyon Terrace  
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604
  - Certificates of Insurance—All policies will be evidenced by an original certificate of insurance on an ACORD-25 form reflecting all coverage required and delivered to the BOE prior to any work or other activity commencing under the agreement with the proposer.
  - Additional insured—The proposer shall ensure that the proposer and its subcontractors will arrange with their respective insurance agents or brokers to name the BOE, on all policies of primary and excess insurance coverages as additional insured part by policy endorsement except for any errors and omissions insurance coverage or workers' compensation coverage, The undersigned shall submit to the BOE upon commencement of the agreement and periodically thereafter, but in no event less than once during each year of the agreement, evidence of the existence of such insurance coverages in the form of Certificates of Insurance issued by reputable insurance companies licensed to do business in the State of Connecticut and having Best's or Moody's A - 10 financial ratings. Such certificates shall designate the BOE in the following form and manner:

## ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES

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The Bridgeport Board of Education, its elected officials, officers, department heads, employees, agents, servants, successors and assigns ATIMA  
Attention: Business Manager  
45 Lyon Terrace  
Bridgeport, Connecticut 06604

- The coverage afforded to the BOE shall be primary insurance with respect to work performed under the agreement. If the BOE has other insurance that is applicable to the loss, such other insurance shall be on an excess or contingent basis. The amount of the proposer's liability under any insurance shall not be reduced by the existence of such other insurance. The coverage afforded to the additional insured shall not apply to the sole negligence of the additional insured.
  - The cost of all deductibles on any policy of insurance to be purchased by the proposer will be borne by the proposer.
6. **Compliance with Law:** The proposer is solely responsible for compliance to all applicable laws relating to its employees, such as wage and hour laws, safety and health requirements, and the proposer shall not interfere with the Board of Education's collective bargaining obligations.
  7. **Confidentiality:** In accordance with all applicable laws, regulations, and procedures, the proposer and substitute personnel provided by the proposer shall maintain strict confidentiality of all information and records which the proposer or substitute personnel provided by the proposer may come in contact with or be privy to in the course of providing services.
  8. **Pricing Structure:** The DAILY RATE submitted in the RFP proposal MUST BE ALL-INCLUSIVE of all charges. NO additional fees may be charged. There will be NO payment for travel time, mileage to and from any job site and/or miscellaneous expenses.
  9. **Invoicing:** Invoices shall be payable within forty-five (45) days of the date of the submission of a complete invoice.

**D. The proposer will also be responsible for documenting adequate resources to achieve the specifications contained herein; specifically:**

- Identification of the persons who will take primary responsibility for oversight of the provision of staffing services to the District. Provide a resume for each person.
- Description of staffing services provided for other school districts during the

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past five years, regarded as being successful. Present evidence of daily fill rates meeting the objective set herein.

- Certification that the proposer and its staff are not barred from bidding for or entering into a contract in Connecticut.

#### **E. Implementation Timelines**

The proposer shall provide sufficient staffing to accomplish the work described in this RFP within the mandated timeframe.

**THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE, BASED ON AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE DISTRICT AND THE SELECTED FIRM AND THE SCHOOL CALENDAR.**

- Contract Start Date - Projected
- Systems Planning, Design and Implementation
- Initiation of Substitute Staffing Service
- July 1, 2021
- July – August 2021
- August 24, 2021

#### **F. Department Responsibilities**

The Department Point of Contact (POC) person will coordinate the administrative process for this RFP, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer. The Chief Financial Officer and Manager, Business Operations will be available to confer with the selected firm to review progress, discuss questions, coordinate meetings and activities with appropriate district officials, and respond to requests for data and informational resources.

### **Section III. RULES AND CONDITIONS**

#### **A. General Information**

- 1. Whom to Contact for Information** – Please direct all inquiries concerning this RFP to:

Tony Pires  
Manager, Business Operations  
Business Office  
Bridgeport Board of Education  
45 Lyon Terrace – Room 320

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Bridgeport, CT 06604  
203.275-1299  
Email address: [tpires@bridgeportedu.net](mailto:tpires@bridgeportedu.net)

There will not be a pre-proposal conference. Proposers should contact only the individual identified above for technical inquiries related to the RFP.

2. **Who May Submit Proposals** – Proposals are invited from all parties with demonstrated experience in providing Absence Management and Substitute Teacher Staffing Services to school districts.

Note: Please refer to 24 CFR 85.36 for conflict of interest provisions. Essentially, this provision prohibits employees of the City of Bridgeport or agents of the District from participating in the selection, award or administration of a contract that might go to their direct relatives or anyone in business with them or their direct relatives.

3. **Term of Contract** – The anticipated term of any resulting contract is estimated to be July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024; with two (2) one (1) year renewal options exercisable at the BBOE’s sole discretion.
4. **Budgeted Funding and Contract Award:** Proposers are asked to submit a breakdown of costs by each service/deliverable identified in the RFP. The Department will negotiate with the successful proposer on the addition or deletion of tasks to arrive at a final contract amount.
5. **Interpretations and Addenda** – The Board of Education reserves the right to amend, alter, or change the rules and conditions contained in this RFP prior to the deadline for submission of proposals. Any revisions to the RFP will be accomplished through addenda or supplements to the RFP and shall become part of the RFP. All addenda will be sent to all persons and entities to which the Department sent copies of this RFP. All revisions, addenda or supplements to the RFP shall be published on the City of Bridgeport’s electronic purchasing website, [bidsync.com](http://bidsync.com).
6. **Proposer’s Cost of Developing Proposal** – Costs of developing and submitting proposals are entirely the responsibility of the proposer and shall not be chargeable in any way to the BOE.
7. **Confidentiality of Proposals**-The Board of Education shall keep all proposals confidential until the evaluation process is completed and a contract has been executed. Submission of a proposal shall constitute an agreement to public disclosure of the proposal after the award of the contract.

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8. **Disposition of Proposals** – All proposals submitted become the property of the Board of Education and may be returned upon request, only at the option of the Board of Education and at the proposer’s expense.

#### **B. Submission of Proposals**

1. The original and eight (8) copies of the proposal must be enclosed in a sealed envelope with the name and address of the proposer. The lower left corner of the envelope should be plainly marked “**ABSENCE MANAGEMENT AND SUBSTITUTE STAFFING SERVICES**”.
2. Proposals **MUST** be submitted either by certified mail or personal delivery to:

Department of Public Purchases  
Margaret E. Morton Government Center  
999 Broad Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06604

**Proposals sent to any other office or received at any later time will not be accepted.**

3. All proposals must be received by 2:00 p.m. on \_\_\_\_\_ at the address above. Postmarks or facsimiles (FAX) transmission will not be accepted in lieu of this requirement. It is the responsibility of the proposer to ensure the proposal is submitted by the time and date and to the address specified above. The Department will reject any proposal not meeting this RFP requirement timeline.

#### **C. Contract Provisions**

1. The successful proposer must agree to all terms and conditions of any consultant contract with the Board of Education as a condition of being awarded the contract.
2. Sample contract documents containing typical provisions are shown in **Attachment 1**, and are included for reference but are subject to modification by the Board of Education prior to contract execution. Please read the sample contract carefully and take special note of the provisions related to required insurance coverage and disclosure. The selected proposer must have and continuously maintain insurance as required by the City of Bridgeport.

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#### **Section IV. PROPOSAL FORMAT AND CONTENT**

In order to be considered for an award, the proposer **must** supply all of the information requested in this section of the RFP. A proposal that fails to comply completely with these requirements will be deemed non-responsive by the Board of Education. The Board of Education, however, reserves the right to waive any immaterial noncompliance which in the Board's judgment does not compromise the overall purpose and intent of the RFP. The proposal **must** include the sections listed below and **must** be submitted in the following format and order.

##### **A. Proposal Format**

1. The proposal should be prepared simply and economically providing straightforward and concise delineation of the proposer's capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFP. Fancy bindings, colored displays, and promotional materials are neither necessary nor desired. Emphasis in the proposal should be on completeness and clarity of content. The evaluation process will not provide credit for capabilities or advantages that are not clearly shown in the written proposal.
2. All proposals **must** be submitted with an **original and eight (8) copies** on standard white paper, 8 ½ by 11 inches in size, typed in number 12 Arial font, double-spaced with each page clearly and consecutively numbered. In addition, an electronic version of the proposal must be submitted, in duplicate, in an appropriate form of electronic media; e.g., DVD, thumb drive.
3. The proposal must be submitted in the legal entity name of the proposer. The proposal must be signed by the proposer, a corporate officer, or authorized agent of the proposer.

##### **B. Proposal Cover Letter and Statement of Intent to Meet RFP Requirements**

A proposal cover letter and Statement of Intent to Meet RFP requirements must be submitted to the Bridgeport Board of Education with the proposal.

##### **C. Table of Contents**

A table of contents **must** be provided which identifies all major sections of the proposal by page number. All exhibits and attachments must also be identified and referenced by page number.

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### **D. Body of Proposal**

#### **1. Qualifications and Experience**

- (a) Statements describing background, including date established, type of ownership, location of headquarters and offices, and number of employees engaged in planning activities.
- (b) Statements describing work history and successful experience on similar projects.
- (c) Description of services that distinguish the proposer from the competition.

#### **2. Organizational Structure**

The content of this section should describe how the proposer intends to organize resources, as necessary to complete the project required by this RFP.

For staff assigned to oversee and/or work on this project, the proposer **MUST** provide the following:

- (a) Titles;
- (b) Resume describing their educational background and relevant experience;
- (c) Percentage of time to be devoted to this project; and
- (d) Indicate if the staff is an employee of the Proposer, or if she/he is a subcontractor.

#### **3. Workplan**

The workplan portion of your proposal should:

- (a) Describe the major activities and processes with timelines (consistent with the objectives delineated in Section II A) necessary to provide the services and products outlined in Section II B and II C.
- (b) Be organized by the services outlined in Section II B.

The workplan should detail any data and other information expected to be obtained through the District, as well as specific tasks or activities expected to be completed by the District.



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### **4. Costs/Bid Sheet**

Provide a breakdown of all costs associated with the performance of the Scope of Work as required in this RFP as follows.

- (a) Total costs for the project;
- (b) Total costs for each service/deliverable in Section II B;
- (c) A breakdown of costs by category

### **5. References**

- (a) Proposer must provide three letters of reference from current and/or former clients for whom the proposer has provided services similar to those required herein.
- (b) Letters of reference must include the name, address and telephone number of the individuals who provide the references.
- (c) The District will contact references. If references cannot be reached, the proposal shall be deemed non-responsive and rejected. If references obtained by the District are not favorable, the District may reject the proposal.
- (d) References will not be used as an evaluation criterion for scoring purposes.

## **Section V. SELECTION PROCESS**

### **A. Evaluation Criteria**

For detail on the body of proposal requirements, see Section IV (D).

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Points</b>
Qualifications	20
Quality of Past Success/ Experience	20
Organizational Structure	25

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Work Plan	15
Costs	20
<b>Sub-Total Possible Points</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Added Possible MBE Points</b>	<b>5 - 10</b>

The allocation formula for points for **costs** is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Lowest Bid amount} \times \text{maximum "Costs" points}}{\text{current bid amount}} = \text{points}$$

Percentages will be rounded to the nearest whole number. See below for example:

<u>Bids</u>	<u>Allocation Formula</u>	<u>Points</u>
\$100 (lowest bid)	$\$100/100 \times 20$	20
\$150	$\$100/150 \times 20$	13

**B. Evaluation Process**

Proposals shall be evaluated and a contract awarded in the following manner:

- All proposals shall be submitted to an Evaluation Committee, which shall evaluate and score the proposals. The Evaluation Committee may be comprised of, but is not limited to, the following members:
  - Chief Financial Officer
  - Executive Director, Human Resources
  - Director, Payroll/Benefits Administration
  - Manager, Budget and Financial Reporting
  - School Principal representative
  - Teacher representative
- All proposals meeting the requirements of the RFP will be rated using the evaluation criteria identified above. The Evaluation Committee **may** schedule interviews with the top candidates. Proposers will be notified of any additional required information or interviews after written proposals have been evaluated.

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The Evaluation Committee will make a recommendation based on the highest score to the Board of Education and Board of Public Purchases of the City of Bridgeport.

3. In the event that an agreement cannot be reached with the selected proposer, the Board of Education, at its sole discretion, shall have the right to negotiate with the next ranking proposer until an agreement can be reached.
4. The Board of Education reserves the right to reject any or all submittals; request clarification of any submitted information; waive any informalities or irregularities in any submittals or cancel all or any portion of the selection proceedings at any time in its sole discretion.
5. Proposals that contain false or misleading statements or which provide a reference that do not support an attribute claimed by the proposer may be rejected. If, in the opinion of the Board of Education, such information was intended to mislead the Department in its evaluation, it will be the basis for the rejection of the proposal.

**VI. MBE (Minority Business Enterprises) in order to receive any award favorable to Minority Business Enterprises (See Ch.3.12.130, City Ordinances) for goods, materials and general services, all MBE firms, for themselves and their sub-contractors, must submit a true copy of their current (no older than 2 years) State of Connecticut certification, other government certification in another City or State, or certification from one of the recognized independent organizations listed on the City of Bridgeport’s website under “Purchasing” as a minority-owned, or disadvantaged-owned business. The District reserves the right to authenticate such certification.”**

**Minority Business Enterprises Are Encouraged to Respond.** The BOE encourages Minority Business Enterprises (“MBEs”) to submit their qualifications and fee proposal. An MBE firm or a joint venture of which it is a part is entitled to Evaluation Credits if it is a Target Group for these services under the provisions of the Minority Business Enterprise Ordinance, Section 3.12.130 of the City Ordinances (“MBE Ordinance”). Target Groups (“Target Groups”) for this procurement are:

Asian Americans  
Hispanic Americans  
Caucasian Females  
Minority Business Enterprises  
Minority Female Business Enterprises  
Caucasian Female Business Enterprises

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**Non-Minority Proposers Are Encouraged to Joint Venture with Target Group Proposers.** Non-minority proposers are encouraged to form joint venture arrangements (described below) with a Target Group and the resulting joint venture will be entitled to additional points based on the extent of the Target Group's ownership interest in the joint venture as further described below.

**Additional Evaluation Credits For Prime Proposers That Are Target Group Members (10 points); Non-MBE Proposers Forming Joint Ventures with Target Groups (maximum 5 points):** Proposers that demonstrate that they are Minority Business Enterprises that constitute Target Groups, as defined in the City's Minority Business Enterprise Ordinance, Chapter 3.12.130, shall be granted an additional ten points (10) as Evaluation Credits. The Target Groups for **SUBSTITUTE STAFF SERVICES** include:

- Asian Americans
- Hispanic Americans
- Caucasian Females
- Minority Business Enterprises
- Minority Female Business Enterprises
- Caucasian Female Business Enterprises

For further information about the MBE Ordinance, Target Groups or the assignment of Evaluation Credits, please call Fred Gee at 203-576-8473.

**Evaluation Credits will be assigned to (a) proposers who are Target Group proposers defined in the MBE Ordinance or to (b) non-MBE proposers who have entered into a joint venture arrangement with a Target Group for this RFQ/RFP. The Target Groups for this solicitation are Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Caucasian Females.** A "joint venture" is a written contractual business undertaking by two or more parties who agree to contribute equity and to share risk, expertise, experience, and profits in the undertaking. The term "joint venture" refers to the purpose of the entity but not its type. A joint venture can be a corporation, a limited liability company, a partnership, individuals or groups of individuals, or another legal structure. It is typically established for a single business transaction. The joint venture agreement includes an agreement to form a new entity, an agreement to contribute equity, an agreement to share revenues, expenses and profits, and an agreement concerning control of the enterprise. Evidence of the written existence and attributes of a joint venture must be submitted at the time of bid submission. The BOE, with the advice of the Office of the City Attorney, will determine the qualifications and entitlement to joint venture status of any such entity in the exercise of its prudent business judgment, reasonably exercised.

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The points for Evaluation Credits that will be assigned shall be (a) ten (10) points to prime proposers that are Target Group members or (b) up to five (5) points to non-MBE proposers that have formed joint venture arrangements with Target Group members determined by a formula that takes the percentage of the Target Group firm's ownership interest in such joint venture converted to a percentage (e.g., .25 or 25% ownership interest x 10 = 2.5 points) to arrive at the number of points not to exceed 5.

A Target Group firm seeking Evaluation Credits must provide a certification of its minority business status and state in its qualifications statement its desire to be recognized as a minority business enterprise and to receive Evaluation Credits. A non-MBE firm seeking Evaluation Credits must (A) state the basis for seeking Evaluation Credits, (B) identify the joint venture created with a Target Group firm, (C) identify the minority firm as one of the Target Groups for the type of services or work sought by the bid, (D) identify the Target Group's percentage ownership interest in the joint venture, (E) state whether such joint venture (i) was created only for this particular bid, (ii) is now and/or will in the future be utilized for bidding, (iii) is currently utilized for bidding on both public and private work, (iv) has bid on, undertaken or completed work in the past, together with a description of such work and customer contact information, and (F) describe the Target Group's active involvement in and dollar volume of the work that the Target Group will perform as part of the services that are the subject of the bid to ensure that its participation is reasonably similar to its percentage ownership interest in such entity. Items (A) through (F) must be supported by documentation satisfactory to the City so that the City can independently verify the basis for the claim to Evaluation Credits, determine any entitlement to the award of Evaluation Credits, and determine the amount of Evaluation Credits to be awarded.

**BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS STAFF MOVEMENTS  
As of DECEMBER 03, 2020**

**I. PROBATIONARY HIRES**

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>
	No new hires	No new hires		

**II. RETIREMENTS**

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>YEARS of SERVICE</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>
1.	Linda Williams-Siler	Edison	Social Worker	30	11/30/2020
2.	James Benson	ITS	ITS	14	11/30/2020
3.	Sandra Smollen	Black Rock	Elementary	34	12/31/2020
4.	Joan F. DiMatteo	Curiale	Science	37	06/30/2021

**III. SEPARATIONS**

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>POSITION</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>REASON</b>
1.	Amber Adams	Skane	SPED	12/23/2020	PERSONAL