

Monday, October 22, 2018 [Corrected]

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
BRIDGEPORT BOARD OF EDUCATION, held October 22,  
2018, at Bridgeport Regional Aquaculture Science &  
Technology Education Center, 60 St. Stephens Road,  
Bridgeport, Connecticut

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

Present were Chair John Weldon, Vice President Hernan Illingworth, Secretary Jessica Martinez, Joseph Sokolovic, Chris Taylor, Sybil Allen, Maria Pereira and Ben Walker. Dennis Bradley arrived subsequently as noted.

Supt. Aresta Johnson, Ed.D., was present.

### **RECOGNITIONS:**

Dr. Johnson introduced Jeremy Susi, a physical education teacher at Fairchild Wheeler. She said teachers in Bridgeport applied for funding through Donors Choose which were later funded by the Dalio Foundation. Mr. Susi was awarded \$10,000. Mr. Susi said his project proposal was written to engage physical education students with boxing gear. He said he decided to use the money to fund physical education projects at Fairchild Wheeler, Marin, Blackham and Dunbar.

Dr. Johnson said the Dalio Foundation in the past had funded charter schools, but now is funding public schools.

Dr. Johnson introduced Sheena Graham, the Harding

teacher who was selected as the 2019 Connecticut Teacher of the Year. She said Ms. Graham was also chosen for a \$10,000 award from Donors Choose. Ms. Graham said the district gives teachers the freedom to be creative and to know what is best for their students.

Mr. Bradley arrived at the meeting

Security guards Reggie Seabrook and Amirh Powell from Blackham School were recognized by the superintendent. Mr. Taylor thanked the security officers for their service. Ms. Allen thanked the officers and noted she knew Mr. Seabrook. Mr. Illingworth added his thanks.

Dr. Johnson recognized Pablo Cruz, security guard at Columbus School. Mr. Taylor thanked Mr. Cruz for his heroic effort and his keen sense of recognizing when a person wasn't supposed to be where they were.

Dr. Johnson recognized Roody Joseph for his outstanding service to the students of the district.

Dr. Johnson recognized Jordan Robinson for his outstanding accomplishments on October 22, 2018.

## **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS:**

Jinardry Fulgencio of Bassick High reported on her school. She highlighted the PTSO's organizational session for unified sports, back to school night and their work on the anti-bullying campaign. She said there are fundraising activities going in the school. The football team will play Harding this week.

Angel Rivera of Bridgeport Military Academy highlighted an

upcoming breast cancer awareness day dedicated to a school secretary, the bullying prevention workshop, fundraising and the recent open house.

Abud Hennawi of Central High highlighted a blood drive, the homecoming dance, college awareness day, recruiting for the debate team, the school newspaper, bullying prevention, and PSAT and SAT testing.

Anthony Miller of the Biotechnology School at Fairchild Wheeler reported that 95 percent of juniors took the PSAT and 97 percent of seniors took the SAT. He added that four teachers received funding for their class projects from Donors Choose and there was a student trip to the financial district in New York City.

Queston Parker of the IT School at Fairchild Wheeler highlighted the upcoming exhibition day, a National Honor Society event on Halloween, an upcoming blood drive, anti-bullying activities and breast cancer awareness activities.

Allana Marrett of Harding High reported on her school. Among the items she highlighted were the visit by Governor Malloy, Mayor Ganim, Dr. Johnson and the Board of Education to honor Sheena Graham as Connecticut Teacher of the Year. Ms. Graham and other teachers also had projects funded by Donors Choose. She said 275 students were honored for perfect attendance in September.

Mr. Weldon said English/Spanish translation services were available.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Dasha Spell said she spoke to the City Council about the

Board of Education and requested them to partner with the board, including by providing police and maintenance manpower. She said a Classical Studies student was nearly abducted recently. She said due to a security guard being out there was no coverage at one of the school's two buildings.

Crystal Aguirre of Make the Road Connecticut, a Housatonic Community College student and Harding graduate, said students are marked absent when they are late and not let into their first-period class. She said students deserve reliable transportation and equal access to school.

In response to a question, Dr. Johnson said students are no longer being kept in the auditorium for the first period in any of the high schools if they are late.

Abby Tosado, a Harding student, of Make the Road Connecticut said we would like to work with the district to address how students are kept out of first period when they arrive late to school. She said she gets a ride to school, but not everyone has that opportunity.

Frank Bachard Sr. said he was here to advocate for Jim Meszoros, who's applying for a position of security guard co-coordinator. He said Mr. Meszoros has been a security guard for the district for 25 years, been head of security for the Arena for the past 18 years, and owns his own security company. He added Mr. Meszoros was elected the head of the NAGE union.

Joseph Borges said he supported Jim Meszoros for the position of safety coordinator due to his long experience with security.

Milta Feliciano, a parent of a 10-year-old student, said she was against the unjust, forced retirement of Carmen Ayala, the supervisor for the parent aid program. She said Ms. Ayala had worked countless hours for the program, which has been nationally recognized. She said Ms. Ayala is so dedicated she went ten years without a pay increase. She thanked Dr. Johnson for speaking to her about the situation.

Ana DePaz read a statement from Alma Maya on behalf of Carmen Ayala. Ms. Maya said she had heard nothing but positive things about Ms. Ayala's work with the board. She asked Dr. Johnson to reconsider and assign Ms. Ayala to another position.

Marge Hiller noted that Donors Choose had given over a million dollars' worth of grants to Bridgeport schools and Bridgeport has received more grants than any other district in the country. She said 700 volunteers organized by the School Volunteer Association participated in the recent Read Aloud Day. She said many of the readers continue to volunteer in the schools. She urged the board to restore the funding for the School Volunteer Association

Jasmine Reyes spoke on behalf of Chenille Hernandez who wrote a statement about Carmen Ayala. She spoke out against Ms. Ayala's forced retirement and praised her work to the community and the school district. She said this was a time that teens needed mentors like Ms. Ayala.

### **APPROVAL OF BOARD MINUTES:**

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 9, 2018. The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez. The motion was approved by an 8-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Martinez,

Pereira, Walker, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of October 2, 2018, with edits. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen.

The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Pereira, Walker, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor and Ms. Martinez abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of April 23, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic.

The motion was approved by a 8-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Martinez, Pereira, Walker, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of May 21, 2018, with edits. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen.

The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Pereira, Walker, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor and Ms. Martinez abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of June 20, 2018, with edits. The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez.

The motion was approved by a 8-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Martinez, Pereira, Walker, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of June 25, 2018, with edits. The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez.

The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Martinez, Pereira, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Walker abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of June 27, 2018, with edits. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen.

The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Pereira, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Members Walker, Illingworth, Taylor and Martinez abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of June 28, 2018, with edits. The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez.

The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Martinez, Pereira, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor and Mr. Walker abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of July 2, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Pereira, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor, Ms. Martinez and Mr. Walker abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of July 2, 2018 at 7:00 p.m., with edits. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen.

The motion was approved by an 6-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Pereira, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor, Ms. Martinez and Mr. Walker abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of July 9, 2018. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen.

The motion was approved by a 6-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Martinez, Pereira, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor, Mr. Illingworth and Mr. Walker abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of July 26, 2018. The motion was seconded by Mr. Sokolovic.

The motion was approved by a 8-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Martinez, Pereira, Walker, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of July 30, 2018, with edits. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen.

The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Pereira, Walker, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor and Ms. Martinez abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of August 16, 2018, with edits. The motion was



seconded by Ms. Martinez.

The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Martinez, Pereira, Walker, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Illingworth and Mr. Taylor abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of August 21, 2018. The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez and unanimously approved.

The motion was approved by a 8-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Martinez, Pereira, Walker, Sokolovic, Bradley and Allen. Mr. Taylor abstained.

Ms. Pereira moved approval of the minutes of the Special Meeting of September 20, 2018. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen.

The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Sokolovic, Walker, Pereira, Allen and Bradley. Mr. Taylor and Ms. Martinez abstained.

Ms. Pereira asked why there was such a massive amount of minutes on the agenda. Mr. Weldon said they appeared to be from over the course of the summer. Ms. Pereira asked that future Special Meetings include the minutes of the previous Special Meeting. She said it really took a long time and was of no relevance to the public.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS/REFERRALS:**

Mr. Taylor reported on the Facilities Committee. He said today a bullet went through the window of Dunbar School but it was not school-related. He said he received an overwhelming amount of phone calls from concerned

parents. He said the random shootings in Bridgeport are detrimental to everybody and make the city an unsafe place, in particular the East End. He asked the young gangbangers to have respect for the school district.

Ms. Pereira said the tree planting issue had not come from the Facilities Committee to the full board. She said she wanted to be sure the tree has still not been planted. Dr. Johnson said she would look into the matter and report back.

Mr. Taylor asked what difference it made if a tree is planted that the Facilities Committee has approved. Ms. Pereira said the board makes decisions, not committees.

In response to a question, Mr. Taylor said the issue of school gardens would not be put back on his agenda. Ms. Pereira referred the matter to the Facilities Committee.

Ms. Martinez said the next meeting of the Finance Committee would be on November 7th.

Ms. Pereira said the issue of restructuring Fairchild Wheeler to save a principal position was previously brought up. Dr. Johnson said the issue was under discussion at the senior leadership team.

Mr. Weldon said the Governance Committee would meet on November 19th. Agenda items would include issues around beverages in schools and procedures for entering and exiting buildings.

Mr. Sokolovic said he would be suggesting the creation of ad hoc committee on security issues. Ms. Pereira and Mr. Weldon noted board policy indicated ad hoc committees could be created by the chair or the board.

Ms. Pereira said she had had referrals in the Governance Committee since June. Mr. Weldon said those would be addressed on November 19th. She said the committee had only held one meeting since December 2017. She said it was disservice for Mr. Weldon to appoint himself chair of the committee and not have a monthly meeting.

Mr. Walker reported on the Teaching & Learning Committee. The committee met on October 16th. There was a report on a program developed by Sacred Heart University deans to recruit a cohort of district students interested in pursuing a career in education. The cohort would be enrolled in St. Vincent's College for two years and then two years at Sacred Heart University. Their fifth year would be spent as an intern in the district. Upon graduation, the cohort would be employed in the district for a commitment of no less than three years. The cost of the program will be funded through donations solicited by Sacred Heart. The fifth year will be funded out of the district's substitute teacher budget. It is estimated the cohort will be limited to ten students a year. He said the committee has asked that a four-year post-graduation commitment be considered.

Mr. Walker said John DiDonato and Veronica Lenzen reported on special education complaints that all either have corrective action being implemented or the complaints were closed. There was a structured settlement with Make the Road Connecticut. The written agreement has been vetted by the district's attorneys.

Mr. Walker said the district's interpretation and translation plans were discussed. Linguistica International and Shoreline Interpretation are used as vendors.

Mr. Walker said Ana Sousa-Martins, director of bilingual education and world languages, reported on the district's interpretation and translation plan. He said the committee asked that the contracts with the vendors be reviewed to protect the district and seek additional savings.

Mr. Walker said Roosevelt School's application to the Commissioner's Network was discussed. Principal Jacqueline Simmons presented. The item was postponed until more information could be obtained.

Mr. Walker said there was a report concerning developing a hierarchy for enrollment for the ABCD early learning center at Harding. The committee made recommendations to the executive staff concerning priority enrollment. A committee has been formed to begin developing the policy.

Mr. Walker said the RFP for the program for expelled students was reviewed by the committee, which made suggestions for clarifications and corrections. The RFP will be taken up at the next meeting on November 20th.

In response to a question, Mr. Walker said there had been issues with the Commissioner's Network in the past concerning faculty turnover. He said the committee has seen data that the results were flat in the other schools. He said clarification on this was being sought to make sure we're not giving up local control of one of our schools.

Ms. Martinez said she understood Roosevelt was doing well and just wants additional funds.

Ms. Pereira said her daughter attended Roosevelt school from pre-K to 6. She said it was one of the worst five percent performing schools in the state. She said the data

from the schools already put in the Commissioner's Network indicated massive turnover and worsening academic performance. She said the situation at Dunbar was a disaster and Luis Marin has been very bad.

Ms. Martinez said she was involved in the Marin turnaround team. She said the parent at the table didn't really have a voice.

Dr. Johnson said across the state schools that have gone into the Commissioner's Network have seen gains. She said the four Bridgeport schools that entered the network had internal issues, including building leadership. She said there is strong leadership at Roosevelt and the staff would not have to be replaced. She said the committee to develop the plan would have a variety of stakeholders, including board members.

Mr. Illingworth reported on the Personnel Committee. The committee met on October 17th. Staff turnover over the past three years was studied and the data indicated that every year the amount of turnover has decreased.

Mr. Illingworth said the committee looked at hiring procedures, which will be further discussed for presentation to the full board.

Mr. Illingworth said there was a discussion of exit interviews of employees. He said the discussion was to create a template and to use the data that is created.

Mr. Taylor said he was hearing from a lot of people who have submitted applicants that their applications are not followed through on. He said he had received numerous calls about Carmen Ayala and asked if the Personnel

Committee could look at that.

Mr. Illingworth said a hiring procedure was developed that calls for every qualified candidate to be interviewed. He said the committee could look at the position that is being eliminated, but not the specific person.

Ms. Pereira said under board policy no member is supposed to participate in helping somebody with a position or maintaining a position unless it normally comes under our direct purview, which means only directors and above. She said this applies to the board as whole as well.

Mr. Sokolovic reported the Students & Families Committee will meet on November 8th.

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

Dr. Johnson said the district was waiting a response back from the city regarding the payment of \$250,000.

Dr. Johnson said the Connecticut Department of Labor will recognize Bassick on November 16th as the second school in the state that allows students enrolled in trade courses to apply the credits towards an apprenticeship program.

Dr. Johnson said the Bassick High construction informational session was held on October 18th. She said the architects answered questions posed by the public.

Dr. Johnson said the state Department of Education has implemented a new online platform for all construction grants, projects and payments, which requires direct management by superintendents. She said she will hold monthly meetings with the school construction office.

Mr. Taylor said this was great news because Bridgeport public schools construction was lacking. He said it was about time.

Dr. Johnson described a foster grand-pal program with Career Resources that is being rolled out in the district.

Dr. Johnson said the Bigelow Foundation wants to continue to fund the summer girls' coding program at Claytor and expand it to boys as well. She said tutors from the IT School at Fairfield Wheeler participated in the program.

Dr. Johnson said the district's bullying prevention efforts are in full swing. She said orange wristbands were available tonight. She said each school has until October 30th to submit a plan on bullying prevention.

Dr. Johnson said meetings with City Council members are scheduled to be initiated in November. She said a template letter and a sample program has been provided to building principals.

Ms. Pereira said she was concerned about the growing number of teaching vacancies in the district. She said she was also concerned about the drastic increase in Skane School's pre-K students placed in foster care.

Mr. DiDonato said he could provide information tomorrow about the Skane situation.

Ms. Pereira said there were major technology issues in the Central High renovation and the new Harding. She noted there was a vacancy on the School Building Committee and recommended that Mr. Postolowski be appointed as the superintendent's representative. She said the Harding High

football field was not provided with a loudspeaker system in the construction.

Mr. Taylor said he agreed and said that's what we pay architects and engineers for, while getting an \$8 million bill. He said the board should sue to receive the loudspeaker system. He said he had nothing good to say about the School Building Committee.

In response to a question, Dr. Johnson said Mr. Postolowski is moving the district to a new type of Smart Board. She added she updated the board on a leak that occurred in the principal's office in the new Harding.

Ms. Pereira said there was no concern whatsoever at the School Building Committee about the problems in Harding such as the water leak. Ms. Allen said she didn't understand why architects and builders aren't held accountable once a building is completed.

Ms. Pereira said Mr. Nkwo, Ben Barnes and Supt. Ramos were adamant they wanted to build a new Harding for 800 students. She said she argued that point and lost the vote, however, in the end the school had to be redesigned twice and cost taxpayers almost \$10 million.

Mr. Bradley said the issue was more if there was a contract violation in the construction process. Mr. Taylor wondered if the Harding roof was leaking after two months what would happen three years down the road. He said he would have our lawyers send a letter to the builders and tell them to open their checkbook.

Dr. Johnson said she believed a letter should be sent to the School Building Committee regarding our expectations so



this doesn't happen year after year. She noted the Freon leak at Harding was not a small leak

Mr. Taylor said we'd just be sending a letter to people that just don't care. He said we have hold someone accountable, whether it's Mr. Schilling or someone else. He said we can't keep turning our cheek.

In response to a question, Marlene Siegel, chief financial officer, said the district would not be paying for the damage to the principal's office.

Ms. Siegel provided a fiscal update. She said she expected the district to prevail in the effort to secure the restoration of \$250,000 from the city to the district's budget.

Ms. Siegel said the focus is creating one campus at Fairfield Wheeler for 2019-20. There is a current issue of the Aerospace school not meeting the residency standards for out-of-district students. In order to maintain funding, a corrective action plan is required and will be submitted to the state in early November.

Ms. Siegel said total enrollment in interdistrict magnet schools was 1,879 on October 1st compared to 1,913 students last year. She said she was concerned about the decline in suburban enrollment, which was 510 compared to 549 last year.

Ms. Siegel said the transition to the Connecticut Partnership insurance plan was built into the district's budget gap plan in order to ensure health insurance savings. She said AFSCME and the trades unions will transition on November 1st. An effective date for NAGE and other unions has not yet been announced as arbitrations are underway under the auspices

of the city. She said continued participation in the current health plan reduces anticipated savings. She said as part of deficit prevention mode we are attempting to capture all accrued funds in order to build reserves.

Ms. Siegel said special education is a budget risk factor. She said concerns continue about the upward trend in special education enrollment. At the end of last school year the in-district enrollment was 17.36 percent; as of October 1st the count was 3,347 students or 16.42 percent compared to 15.1 percent at the same point last year.

Ms. Siegel said this places heightened pressure on extremely constrained fiscal resources and reduces capacity to provide services for general education students.

Ms. Siegel said the district remains in deficit prevention mode. The first formal fiscal forecast as of October 31st will be completed and posted in early November.

In response to a question, Ms. Siegel said she did not have any details regarding the NAGE arbitration process.

Mr. Bradley left the meeting.

Ms. Pereira moved to approve Items I to III on the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Mr. Illingworth and unanimously approved.

Mr. Sokolovic moved to reconsider the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Allen and unanimously approved.

Ms. Pereira moved Items I and II on the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Martinez and unanimously approved.

Mr. Taylor asked if the human resources position in Item III was posted. Dr. Johnson said it was a secretary position that was posted and interviews were conducted. Ms. Siegel said it was an entry level position. Mr. Taylor asked for permission to call Mr. Chester to ask him the question.

Ms. Pereira said she was concerned about seeing four resignations in Item IV that were going to be effective in early November. Dr. Johnson said she would update the board via e-mail if the positions were filled with certified teachers or not.

Mr. Taylor noted the HR director was not present now at the meeting.

Ms. Siegel said she expected the principals to submit certified candidates for hiring once they've been identified.

Ms. Martinez moved to approve Items III and IV on the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen and approved by a 7-1 vote. Voting in favor were members Illingworth, Weldon, Martinez, Pereira, Allen, Walker, and Sokolovic. Mr. Taylor was opposed.

### **OLD BUSINESS:**

Ms. Martinez moved to table items A and B for a special meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taylor.

Ms. Pereira noted they were her agenda items. Ms. Martinez said the board's goals were discussed at a retreat and provided in the members' packets. She said it should be discussed at length in a special meeting. She said time was needed to create timelines for the superintendent's

evaluation.

Ms. Pereira said the board gave Dr. Johnson her evaluation on August 21st and committed to coming back as a board to set her goals and objectives. She said we are four months into the school year and the superintendent does not have her goals and objectives for the current year.

Ms. Pereira said Mr. Weldon unilaterally changed the timeline of board members' submissions of the evaluation. She said she learned via the Freedom of Information Act that there were board members who did not meet the deadline. She said the board starts evaluating the superintendent again in eight months and formal goals and objectives are not in place.

Dr. Johnson said she wished to meet with each board member individually on the subject and there is one member she still needs to meet with. She asked Mr. Weldon if he could facilitate the meeting with the remaining board member.

Mr. Illingworth urged the superintendent be given the time that she requested to complete the meetings. Ms. Martinez said this is why a special meeting was needed on the subject.

Ms. Pereira said if board members were not going to fulfill their obligations they should get off the board. She said the board was supposed to meet with the superintendent by October 1.

Mr. Walker said the evaluation process had dragged on too long and has been unfair to the superintendent. He said it needed to be wrapped up.

Mr. Taylor said to insinuate that Dr. Johnson doesn't have any goals or objectives is wrong because she had a Ph.D., is quite competent, and knows how to run the school system.

Mr. Sokolovic suggested moving forward with the next step in the process without the ninth board member putting in their input.

Mr. Taylor moved the question. The motion was seconded by Ms. Allen. The motion failed to gain a two-thirds majority. Voting in favor were members Weldon, Illingworth, Martinez, Allen and Taylor. Voting in opposition were members Walker, Pereira and Sokolovic.

Ms. Pereira said the board had an obligation to the superintendent because she is entitled to her evaluation. She said we've had a lot of irresponsible behavior during the evaluation such as the four board members who did not turn in their evaluations in on time. She urged the meeting be scheduled for next week.

Ms. Martinez left the meeting.

Mr. Illingworth said he did not want to prolong this or fight, but we have to get a response from the superintendent. Dr. Johnson said she needed additional time to meet with the remaining board member.

Mr. Taylor left the meeting.

Ms. Pereira moved that *"the superintendent complete all her meetings with individual board members by Friday, October 26th. If that board member fails to do it, that we hold a special meeting next week to finalize the superintendent's*

*goals and objectives.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

In response to a question, Dr. Johnson said she’ll be prepared for the meeting date.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Mr. Weldon said there would be two Special Meetings next week.

Ms. Pereira said the proposed board goals are very general and have no teeth to them. She said putting a bunch of nice words on a piece of paper are not goals that are measurable.

Ms. Pereira said it had been an ongoing problem that the board set dates and Mr. Weldon doesn’t meet them.

Mr. Walker said he believed the board goals should be broad in scope. He said the proposed ones could have some specificity added, but the actual goals should be more broad.

Mr. Walker moved that “*we include board goals and objectives for the same Special Meeting involving the superintendent evaluation.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Illingworth and unanimously approved.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

The next item was on the Males of Color ad hoc committee. Ms. Pereira said this committee was established in early 2015. She said ad hoc committees could not meet indefinitely and there has to be something coming out of the committee for the board to take action on. She said we were

promised a white paper, but the board was told they were searching for a grant to fund it. She said this was critical work, but there had not been one policy recommendation.

Ms. Pereira said if recommendations or a report did not come out she was going to make a motion to disband the committee.

Mr. Sokolovic said he found the work of the committee to be very good, however, they hit a roadblock after the most recent election. He said they did a wonderful job at the forum held at Batalla School. He said we need the committee to keep meeting.

Dr. Johnson noted the ad hoc committee was meeting tomorrow. She said she has been in conversations with Dr. Jenkins and she will be working with the committee on the white paper as well as another forum and focus groups. She added funds have been allocated to the comprehensive high schools on the Males of Color initiative.

Dr. Johnson said the Great City Schools conference is being held this week in Baltimore and she will be attending and presenting at the meeting.

Mr. Sokolovic requested to be made an official member of the committee. Ms. Pereira said Mr. Weldon had to announce that at the next public meeting.

Ms. Pereira said she was not saying there wasn't important work to be done, but she wanted the white paper to make recommendations to the board. She said the committee would then be closed out or made a standing committee.

Mr. Illingworth asked if a board member had to chair an ad

hoc committee. He said there was a breakdown of the leadership of the committee and it should not be eliminated because one person held everything up. He said if Mr. Bradley cannot chair the committee, Mr. Weldon should appoint another chair.

Mr. Weldon said Mr. Sokolovic would be placed on the committee. Ms. Pereira said five years of nothing was too long.

Ms. Pereira moved that “*we terminate the Teaching and Apprenticeship and Higher Education Finance Ad Hoc Committees.*” The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

Ms. Pereira said these committees were formed in December 2017. Mr. Bradley is the only person on both committees and the rest of their membership is not identified. She said no meetings have been held, which made the board look bad and incompetent.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The next item was on committee chair responsibilities and requirements. Ms. Pereira said she was disturbed with what was going on with committees. She said any board member has a right to make a referral to a committee and under board policy the agenda for each committee shall include any matter referred to the committee.

Ms. Pereira said there is a consistent problem with two committees where referrals are being made and the meetings are not being held. She said these two committees were the Governance Committee and the Facilities Committee. She said board members go to the committee and Mr. Taylor is refusing to recognize board members who



have every right to participate. She said if Mr. Weldon lets Mr. Taylor do that he is no less guilty. She said Mr. Weldon needed to address this as chair.

Ms. Pereira said the parents at Classical Studies were appalled at the last Facilities Committee meeting. She said John Ricci, the director of public facilities, told her that he attended the meeting because everybody told him how outrageous the meetings are being run.

Ms. Pereira said if the chair of the Facilities Committee was not going to fulfill his obligations, Mr. Weldon should remove him and put anybody in place who's willing to do that work. She said his behavior is boorish, rude, unprofessional and in violation of board policy.

Mr. Weldon said he would address the issue.

Mr. Sokolovic moved "*to postpone to a future date Items d, e, h and i.*" The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker.

Mr. Illingworth said policy revisions should be vetted through committees after hearing from stakeholders. He said he understood Mr. Sokolovic had tried to raise the issue with different routes without success. He said the last time the board revised the 5000 Series was 2012 and a lot has changed in six years.

The motion was unanimously approved.

The next item was on the creation of a uniform policy regarding security protocols upon entering school facilities.

Mr. Sokolovic said the issue was brought to him before the end of school last year. He said a student came to a

committee and indicated they felt they were entering a prison instead of a school. He said the water bottles were merely a symptom of the problem we have. He said there is no coherent policy guiding the security officers. He said the current policy as written does not permit wide-scale bag checks. He said there were also issues around searches of parents. He said security would be happy to know what procedures to follow in each and every school.

Ms. Pereira moved that *“before we convene on this policy change that we have our law firm look at the Fourth Amendment protection to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures applied to searches conducted by public school officials.”*

Ms. Pereira said there was a policy in place about entering our buildings. She said she was concerned that the district had been violating people’s Fourth Amendment rights. She said the board asked Sgt. Collazo to come up with recommendations and bring them back to the Facilities Committee, but he never did so.

Ms. Pereira said due to the large immigrant community in Bridgeport and the many students and parents who are here unlawfully the policies can be terrifying to those individuals.

Mr. Illingworth suggested asking the superintendent to order the confiscation of water bottles be stopped at those schools where that is done.

Mr. Illingworth moved *“to amend the motion that we also ask the superintendent to suspend the current practice by certain schools of confiscating open water bottles.”* The motion was seconded by Ms. Pereira. The amendment was unanimously approved.

The motion as amended was unanimously approved.

Mr. Sokolovic moved *“to create an ad hoc committee to review and/or revise Policy 5166 and 5166.1 for presentation to the board.”*

Mr. Sokolovic said the ad hoc committee should consist of himself, a representative from security, perhaps a student from each high school, parent representatives from each high school’s School Governance Council, two teacher representatives, a police department representative, one principal from a high school and a K-8 principal.

Mr. Walker seconded the motion.

Mr. Weldon suggested the addition of Mr. DiDonato, who oversees security. Mr. Sokolovic said he agreed.

In response to a question, Mr. Sokolovic said he welcomed all board members, but he did not want to get into a situation where a quorum for a meeting was lacking.

Mr. Illingworth and Ms. Pereira said they would like to be part of the committee.

Mr. Walker suggested reducing the committee size to five people and the rest should be staff members or as needed. Dr. Johnson said she recommended a high school administrator and an elementary level administrator.

Ms. Pereira requested that a principal of one of the comprehensive high schools be chosen.

Mr. Sokolovic said the members of the committee would be

himself, Mr. Illingworth and Ms. Pereira. Mr. Weldon said Mr. DiDonato would be the staff advisor and could probably bring in security as he feels he needs to. Mr. Sokolovic said he believed a police department representative and the security officer should be at every meeting.

Ms. Pereira asked that no meetings be called before the legal opinion is received. Mr. Sokolovic said he believed work could be begin before that.

Mr. Sokolovic noted that searches that take place at airports, ballgames or entering a building are voluntary activities, while going to school is compulsory.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Ms. Pereira moved the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walker and unanimously approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John McLeod

*Approved by the board on November 13, 2018*

