

ATLANTIC CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Meeting

October 13, 2020 – 6:00pm

Call To Order The special meeting of the Atlantic City Board of Education was called to order by Mr. Devlin at 6:05pm.

Present Mrs. Bailey, Ms. Bassford (Zoom), Mrs. Byard, Mr. Devlin, Mr. Herbert, Mr. Hossain (Zoom), Mr. Islam (Zoom), Mr. Steele and Mr. Thomas.

Also present Monitor Ms. Morris (Zoom), Superintendent Mr. Caldwell, Assistant Superintendent Mrs. Yahn, Business Administrator Mrs. Ricketts (Zoom), General Counsel Mrs. Riley, Director Ms. Saunders (Zoom), Board Secretary Mrs. Brown (Zoom) and Assistant Board Secretary Ms. Wallace. (Zoom).

Statement of Notice

A notice of the special meeting was published in the Press of Atlantic City, mailed to the City Clerk and posted on the bulletin board of the CitiCenter Building at 1300 Atlantic Avenue, Atlantic City, New Jersey 08401 on October 11, 2020.

Flag Salute Mrs. Brown led those assembled in the flag salute.

Vision & Mission Statement

Vision: The Atlantic City District recognizes the urgency to provide resources to improve instruction through exemplary and diverse practices which are monitored and analyzed through student achievement data. The District has the expectation that all students will achieve the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at all grade levels.

Mission: In order to meet the needs of all students, the District is committed to increasing student learning and improving teaching in the core academic subjects by using instructional strategies aligned with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and based on Scientifically Based Research. Parents will be active partners and key stakeholders with the Atlantic City School District to support their student's intellectual, emotional, physical and social growth.

Superintendent Report – Mr. Barry Caldwell

Solicitor Statement – Three staff members were sent RICE notifications – Mr. Caldwell, Ms. Yahn and Dr. Small and all three requested their discussion be held in open session.

Board Member Comments – Mr. Devlin advised a situation was brought to his attention that occurred from March, 2015 – April, 2019 regarding child pornography, production of child pornography, possession of child pornography that he immediately forwarded to Solicitor Riley. Mr. Devlin advised some information was provided but not all and inquired why the Board was not notified of same with the situation was brought to light. Mrs. Bailey asked for clarity on who was legally notified because she was unaware of the situation and questioned if the Board could be held responsible. Mr. Caldwell advised in 2019 Kayan Frazier was not an employee of the District and was not employed by the District at that time. Mr. Caldwell further advised ESS/Source4Teachers was obligated to notify the appropriate authorities. After his substituting in the District Mr. Frazier worked for DCP&P and an article appeared in the paper in July, 2019. Mr. Caldwell advised he did not read the article or did not have prior knowledge of any misconduct. Mr. Herbert advised the District needs to follow policy and was shocked to hear that Mr. Frazier is a relative of someone who was RICED. A discussion ensued regarding District liability, the possibility of more cases being out there, the rushing of a special meeting not allowing the

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Solicitor time to properly investigate. Mr. Thomas discussed moving pieces of the puzzle, the safety of our children, proper certifications received, the need for concise understanding of the situation, questioned what the District can do to prevent this from happening again and all questions should be answered. Mrs. Riley advised a detailed timeline and description was provided to all board members at the special meeting. The process of notifying DCP&P was discussed, responses back from DCP&P, ESS/Source4Teachers questions remaining unanswered as of 5:30pm on 10/13/2020. Mr. Jeffrey Bells, Attorney for ESS/Source4Teachers advised he will get information together and forward to Mrs. Riley. A

Public Comments

The Board welcomes input from parents, students and community members and encourage participation in its meetings. Those who wish to speak during public comments must sign in prior to the public portion. The Board wishes to remind residents that public complaints and grievances concerning district personnel shall be handled in accordance with Policy & Regulation number 9130 and that personnel matters will not be discussed by the board in public. It is incumbent upon us a Board to advise the public that comments asserted that are stated in such a way as to convey to the listeners that they are factual and true, when in fact, may just be the speaker's opinion, may be considered slanderous and present the risk of liability to the speaker as well as to the Board. The Board desires to make it known that verbal abuse, threats, or other pressure tactics shall not be tolerated. In the event that inappropriate behavior becomes evident, the board shall reserve the right to limit or cease public discussion. The Board kindly asks that you limit your comments to three (3) minutes and wishes to thank you for coming and for taking your time to join us.

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Public Discussion – Ms. Mimi Nambo advised she has been an educator for 21 years with 14 years being in administration, advised substitute was hired by the board of education and advised of BOE President being a police officer accused of excessive force and the \$500,000 settlement and advised the Board to do better and choose wisely. Ms. Shalyn Neal advised she was present to support the reputation of Dr. LaQuetta Small. Mr. Bruce Weekes, advised substitutes are never contracted employees, asked why caucasian teacher who had a choke hold on a student and called students dirty monkeys may be brought back, asked how many children were involved, advised it is political retaliation and swift revenge. Mr. Weekes advised Dr. Small is a prominent African American woman and advised the launch of attacks is because Mr. Devlin did not get his way. Is executive session really about the children or 48 blocks – support other candidates other than him. Mr. Raymond Bethea Sr., addressed the character of Dr. Small as an administrator, advised she is for the kids inside and out of the schools and his hope that the matter is resolved. Mr. Steven Young advised he had difficulty entering the building and felt that was disrespectful to the public who wanted to attend the special meeting. Mr. Young advised he had a few questions, regarding policies, regulations involving code of ethics, teaching staff, nepotism, hiring processes and advised it's not about politics. Mr. Amin Geoffrey Dorsey advised he doesn't support the political hack job and the public record being out there for two years. Mr. Amin Mohammed advised we often hear accusations on character either for or against that are sometimes true or false but Dr. Small does her job well, is respected and asked what she is being accused of, all we have is our reputation. Mr. Mohammed asked for the facts to be brought to the table and don't push under the rug.