



Wednesday, February 28, 2024
Regular Public Board Meeting
Orange Board of Education
Administration Building
Roll Call 6:00 p.m.

Minutes of **Wednesday, February 28, 2024, Public Meeting** of the Orange Board of Education held at 6:00 pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Shawneque Johnson is presiding over tonight's Meeting.

- Ms. Shawneque Johnson, President
- Mrs. Sueann Gravesande
- Mr. Derrick Henry - **Absent**
- Ms. Samantha Crockett
- Dr. Fatimah Turner - **Not Present at Roll Call**
- Mr. Siaka Sherif - **Not Present at Roll Call**
- Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield
- Mr. David Armstrong - **Absent**
- Mr. Tyrone Tarver

ROLL CALL (5) PRESENT (2) ABSENT (2) NOT PRESENT AT ROLL CALL

ALSO PRESENT:

- Dr. Gerald Fitzhugh II, Superintendent of Schools
- Mr. Jason Ballard, Business Administrator
- Mr. Lamont Zachary, Assistant Business Administrator
- Ms. Jessika Kleen, School Board Attorney with the firm of Machado Law Group
- Mr. Oluwatitofunmi (Tito) Oshuntolu, Student Representative

2. FLAG SALUTE

A. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. *Recess Into Executive Session – Closed*

Ms. Johnson motioned to convene into Executive Session. Will Recess until 6:45 pm but no later than 7:30pm.

Motion by Samantha Crockett, second by Jeffrey Wingfield.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Tyrone Tarver

Not Present at Vote: Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner

ROLL CALL (5) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE



2. *Return to Open Session*

Ms. Johnson motions to close the Executive session and move into a public meeting.

Motion by Jeffrey Wingfield, second by Sueann Gravesande.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner, Tyrone Tarver

Not Present at Vote: David Armstrong, Derrick Henry

ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

B. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT - OLUWATITOFUNMI (TITO) AYODELE OSHUNTOLU

Ms. Johnson introduced Oluwatitofunmi (Tito) Oshuntolu, Student Representative.

Mr. Oshuntolu extended his thanks and stated that he recently attended a Student Leadership Conference in Long Branch, NJ, and he hopes more Orange High students can participate in the future.

He discussed a topic that has been on his mind: actionable measures to better understand student perspectives. He initiated a survey, which received over 300 responses, and is excited to present the insights at the upcoming board meeting.

He also stated that during discussions, homelessness among our student body emerged as a significant concern. He is committed to presenting practical solutions, such as:

1. Establishing a support program tailored to the needs of homeless students.
2. Offering resources such as counseling, academic support, and assistance with basic needs.
3. Designating a liaison for homeless students to coordinate support services.
4. Providing access to basic needs, (food, clothing, hygiene products, and school supplies through initiatives such as food pantries, clothing vouchers, or donation drives).
5. Conducting a thorough needs assessment to identify students who may be experiencing homelessness. This assessment should include surveys, interviews and discussions with students, families, teachers and school staff to gather information about housing instability and other related challenges.

By implementing these strategies and fostering a supportive environment, we can make significant strides in addressing the needs of our homeless student population. Our job is to provide every student with the opportunity to make their dreams a reality.

Ms. Johnson agreed with Tito by stating that she looks forward to working with him on the initiative. There are a lot of our children that are homeless and we have to do better as a school district.

Dr. Fitzhugh, II stated that he wanted to give an update on the Homeless Liaison. He asked Ms. Alcantara to speak on that behalf.

Ms. Alcantara stated that the district receives funding from the American Rescue Plan Homeless and Displaced Youth Grant and Title funds, which provide for a district homeless liaison and an academic success coach. The academic success coach, Mrs. Dana Jones, works with the liaison to support homeless and displaced youth.



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Students are encouraged to reach out to Mrs. Jones if they or their peers are experiencing housing insecurity. The district can provide resources such as school supplies, mental health supports, food, and transportation. These services are currently being offered to students in need, but the district is ready to provide for more if they are made aware of the students' needs. The district's resources are not limited to the high school, and students from any district school can access them. The speaker encourages students to come forward and assures that their identities will be kept confidential. They are also available to connect students with community resources.

C. SUPERINTENDENT'S PRESENTATION

Ms. Johnson introduces Dr. Fitzhugh for his Superintendent report.

Superintendent's Report

- Dr. Fitzhugh highlighted the scholarships received as of February 2024:
 - Last month we had a total of **\$8.5 million** in scholarships.
 - **OHS** is at **\$7,753,589**.
 - **STEM** is at **\$4,383,280**.
 - A grand total of **\$12,136,869**

Dr. Fitzhugh provides the community with a presentation of district highlights such as:

- **STUDENT OF THE MONTH FOR JANUARY 2024**

Name of School	Student of the Month	Name of School	Student of the Month
Central Elementary School	Ashley Japon Tene	Orange High School	Leina Neptune
Cleveland Street School	Jayden Garcia	Orange Preparatory Academy	Oscar Vasquez
Forest Street Community School	Ariah Lambert	Park Avenue School	Neveah Holman
Heywood Avenue School	Rodlin Paul	Rosa Parks Community School	Therese Akemda
Lincoln Avenue School	Stefany Rogel Barillas	STEM Innovation Academy of the Oranges	Emelyn Morales
Oakwood Avenue Community School	Danna Semanate Quishpe	The Twilight Program	Jah-Fir Morris

Dr. Fitzhugh stated that the district is proud of all of our scholars, both here and beyond this meeting.

- **STRATEGIC PLAN CORE FOCUS AREAS**

Dr. Fitzhugh highlighted the Strategic Plan Core Focus Areas. Dr. Fitzhugh's Strategic Plan with the detailed Core Focus Areas are available on the district website: <https://www.orange.k12.nj.us/domain/3344>

- **Core Focus Area One: Strong Home-School Community Connection** Establish and communicate a shared vision for family-school engagement by a committee of stakeholders, led by the Superintendent of Schools. An example of that was Tito's report and Ms. Alcantara's response, showcasing the establishment of the home and school connection.
- **Core Focus Area Two: Student Universal Supports** Develop a district wide universal learning support system that addresses barriers to learning and teaching and eliminates the



predictability of outcomes for all students based on race, gender, socio-economic status, learning modality, language, or sexual orientation. Work together with parents, caregivers, and community partners to help schools meet the needs of the whole child.

■ **Core Focus Area Three: Human Capital and Job-Embedded Professional Development**

Establish a model to recruit, support and develop newly hired teachers and staff through coaching, peer collaboration, fellowships, residencies, and mentorships. The State of New Jersey requires us to have new teachers with mentors. The district looks at differentiated instructional practices in the classroom, in order to make sure that folks have what they need predicated on data.

- **Core Focus Area Four: Rigorous and Relevant Curricula and Instruction** looks to continue to identify, develop, and implement inclusive evidence-based and college career ready standards align pre-K through grade 12. The district does a lot of curriculum revisions over the summer with curriculum writers in the district, and we have to make sure that our curriculum is aligned to the state standards.

● **OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION**

Dr. Fitzhugh introduced Ms. Shelly Harper, Executive Director of the Office of Special Education and Behavioral Intervention. Ms. Harper gave her presentation.

■ **Core Values of Special Education**

- Special Education is at the core of how schools address the needs of students with disabilities and provide support in helping students achieve annual goals outlined in the IEP's.
- Special Education provides a process of learning for students with exceptional needs.
- Special Education programs and practices are designed for students who require modified lessons, special equipment, related services and/or care within or outside of the traditional classroom.

■ **Department Goals/Special Education Law**

- Continue to implement and refine the Coaching Cycle for special education self-contained programs.
- Enhance and expand on the Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) practices for students with Autism.
- Expand on intervention strategies and targeted supports that are specifically aligned to the student's classification and disability.
- Develop and implement Executive Function Skills for students.
- Increase opportunities for project-based learning in the special education self-contained programs.
- Provide professional development on SEL specific to students with disabilities.
- Increase members of the Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG)
- Increase program options to meet the needs of increasing population
- Add a specific child study team to work with students placed out of district
- Increase professional development for teaching staff and aides
- Streamline I&RS/RTI programs and provide additional resources and training to this area
- Strengthen transition and post-18 programs



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- Increase PSD classes
- Review budget and allocation

■ **Special Education Programs by School**

School	Program
Central Elementary School	Inclusion In-class Support
Cleveland Street School	In-class Support LLD Program
Forest Street Community School	Inclusion In-class Support
Heywood Avenue School	Inclusion MD Program
Lincoln Avenue School	In-class Support LLD Program BD Program
Oakwood Avenue Community School	MD Program
Park Avenue School	In-class Support Autistic Program MD Program
Rosa Parks Community School	In-Class Support
Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation	Inclusion Resource Replacement MD Program LLD Program
Orange High School	Inclusion Resource Replacement Mild Cognitive Program LLD Program
The Twilight Program	In-Class Support

■ **Special Education Core Groups**

- **School Support Personnel**
 - Social Worker
 - School Psychologist
 - Learning Consultant
 - Speech Pathologist
 - Occupational Therapist
 - Physical Therapist
 - Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)
- **Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**
 - Under IDEA, school districts are required to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to every eligible student. FAPE means special education and related services that:
 - Are provided to children with disabilities at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge;



- Include preschool (age 3) and up to age 21. Age 18 is normal – to age 21 is not.
- Are provided in keeping with an individualized education program (IEP) that meets the requirements of IDEA.
- States must also educate disabled students in the least restrictive environment (LRE), which means with their peers in a general education classroom, to the maximum extent possible.
- **Timeline:**
 - Within 20 calendar days of written request for referral, an identification meeting must be held to determine if evaluations are warranted
 - Evaluations, determination of eligibility, and implementation of IEP, if appropriate, must be completed within 90 calendar days from receipt of the written referral
 - Exceptions to the 90-day timeline include:
 - Student moves to a different district during evaluation time frame and parents and District agree to extend deadline
 - Parents repeatedly fail or refuse to make the student available for the evaluation
- **The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team:**
 - Parents
 - Others with Knowledge or Special Expertise about the Child
 - A Person Who Can Interpret Evaluation Results
 - Special Education Teacher(s)
 - Student (as appropriate)
 - Regular Education Teacher
 - School System Representative
 - Case Manager
 - **"IEP"** means a written plan which sets forth present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, measurable annual goals and short-term objectives, and describes an integrated, sequential program of individually designed instructional activities and related services necessary to achieve the stated goals and objectives. This plan shall establish the rationale for the student's educational placement and serve as the basis for program implementation.
 - **Program Options:**
 - District not required to provide the best or most expensive program.
 - The District must provide, in the least restrictive environment, a placement meeting all program requirements and related services set forth in IEP, that provides meaningful educational benefit.



- **Advising Parents of their Rights - Copy of the Procedural Safeguards:**
 - Districts have an affirmative and legal obligation to advise parents of their rights.
 - Provide parents with Procedural Safeguards one time per school year, and upon:
 - Initial referral
 - Parental request for evaluation
 - Receipt of State complaint
 - Receipt of first due process in school year
 - A recommended change of placement due
 - Parental request
 - 34 C.F.R. 300.504
- **PRISE:**
 - Parental Rights In Special Education
 - Booklet explaining special education process and the rights of students and parents
 - Must be given to parents as listed on handout
- **Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG)**
 - A Special Education Parent Advisory Group, or SEPAG (sea-pag) is a state-mandated, district-level, parent-driven group charged with providing input to the local school district on system-level challenges in Special Education and related services.
 - “Each district board of education shall ensure that a special education parent advisory group is in place in the district to provide input to the district on issues concerning student with disabilities (N.J.A.C. 6A:12-1.2 (h)).”
 - The regulation allows parents and school district leaders to create and run an advisory group that meets local needs. SEPAG requirements open the door to collaboration that can make a difference.
 - A SEPAG should be structured to benefit all students with disabilities, not just a single group of students, or a single issue. The more inclusive a SEPAG is, the more opportunities there are to achieve positive outcomes.
 - A SEPAG gives parents the opportunity to provide direct input to their school district about policies, programs, practices, and services that have an impact on students with disabilities and their families. An effective SEPAG can increase the proactive involvement of families by inviting input that can be used to shape local special education policy.
 - Help improve educational outcomes and well-being for all students, including those with disabilities
 - Help identify unmet needs
 - Help shape the development of programs, services, and policies;
 - Improve district culture and climate.



- **OFFICE OF INNOVATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Dr. Fitzhugh noted that February is Career and Technical Education Month. He introduced Ms. Faith Alcantara, Executive Director of the Office of Innovation & Community Engagement. Ms. Alcantara gave her presentation.

Ms. Alcantara highlighted the CTE Programs:

Accounting <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Intro to Business Accounting● Accounting I● Accounting II	Audio Visual Technology & Film <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Intro to Digital Media● Digital Media● Filmmaking	Culinary <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Basic Foods● Diet & Nutrition● Food Service Prep
Entrepreneurship <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Business Finance● Marketing● Entrepreneurship	Graphic Arts <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Graphic Arts● Web Design● Graphic Arts Production	Health Sciences <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Dynamics of Healthcare in Society● Fundamentals of Health & Wellness● Emergency & Clinical Care
ROTC <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Naval Science I/II● Naval Science III● Naval Science IV		

Ms. Alcantara highlighted the following:

- Students who are graduating high school must have five credits in career and technical education.
- OHS has over **675** students enrolled in one or more of the courses.
- She emphasized that for each program, one of the goals is to ensure that students not only have a rich experience at the high school, but they understand the post-secondary opportunities in each program. This helps students to pursue postgraduate work, whether that be at college, technical school or the military. Students will be able to graduate from high school with credentials that will allow them to go into the workforce.
- Ms. Alcantara showcased pictures of students in different programs engaging in hands-on activities:
 - **ENTREPRENEURSHIP:**
 - Job shadowing and mentorship at the Ernst and Young Islam facility.
 - Montclair State University Entrepreneurship Conference for Women Entrepreneurs.
 - Two hours to develop a business concept and pitch it to two executives at Morgan Stanley.
 - **AUDIO VISUAL:**
 - Students go to Drew University every year in November to create films in 24 hours.
 - Six films were created this year at Drew University's campus.
 - One film was all Spanish with subtitles in English.
 - Students filmed and edited those films in 24 hours in collaboration with film students at Drew University.



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- A red carpet event to celebrate those students was held at Orange High School.
- **CULINARY:**
 - The culinary program is a valuable part of our high school's curriculum, and one of OHS' longest-standing programs.
 - Students went to a restaurant school in Philadelphia, where they learned about the admissions process, courses, and available scholarships.
 - Culinary students visited OECC and taught preschoolers how to make certain items, which they all got to eat.
 - The activity allowed high school students to engage with younger students, develop their teaching and leadership abilities, and created well-rounded individuals ready for the future.
- **GRAPHIC ARTS:**
 - OHS students created professional-looking posters using Adobe Photoshop, showcasing their skills in graphic arts.
 - The posters are part of a project for a CTE Health Fair, for which students were tasked to create marketing materials.
 - Students attended college tours to enhance their learning.
 - Students visited Kean University's graphic arts program and took a full tour, followed by an EOF and admission presentation.
 - Students also went to the Guggenheim Museum in New York to understand the connection between their classwork and the artwork presented in museums.
- **HEALTH SCIENCE PROGRAM:**
 - Students in the Health Science Program created t-shirts with the anatomy of all the organs, providing a visual representation of what they are learning in class.
 - Eighth grade students participated in our CTE middle school exploration program that took place in January. The students learned how to use some CPR skills.
- **ROTC:**
 - Cadets participated in a competition at Linden High School.
 - An Air Force Recruiter came in and took them through a series of PE exercises that mimicked the yearly physical fitness tests that military members have to take.
 - The Cadets experience a flight simulation at iFLY.
 - On March 5th, the Naval ROTC Program participated in Annual Military Inspection (AMI).
 - Every region has a Navy commander who inspects the units. This year, the district has 103 cadets who have been training for this opportunity all year. During the inspection, the cadets will demonstrate their leadership skills and military drill and protocol. The event is student-led, with the chief standing in the background. The annual military inspection is an impressive display of leadership and discipline. The community, including the Orange Police Department, Orange Fire Department, and city Council Board, provides great support.



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- **CISCO:**
 - Students have the opportunity to take the Cisco Networking Academy curriculum and earn credentials.
 - Mr. Jason Cordes, IT Manager, spoke to the students about his career trajectory. He also discussed alternative professions that don't require a college education and the potential income. This initiated a great discussion, emphasizing the multiple opportunities available to students, regardless of their chosen path.
 - A professor from NJIT was present to inform students about the computer programs offered at the university. Specifically, the focus was on Cybersecurity, an area where Mr. Jean, who is part of NJIT, has expertise. By bringing in a representative from NJIT, students gained insights into career opportunities and the benefits of joining a university.
- **CAREER & TECHNICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION (CTSO):**
 - Part of CTE programming as identified by Perkins to ensure that students have opportunities for leadership during afterschool programs.
 - Health Occupation Student Association (HOSA)
 - Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)
 - Command Structure for ROTC
- **INDUSTRY VALUED SKILLS/CREDENTIALS:**
 - CTE programs require students to earn dual credit or industry-valued credentials.
 - CTE programs require advisory boards, which must include specific members. These members are: parents, students, higher education institutions, industry partners, teachers, guidance representatives, and special education representatives. The agencies that serve on these advisory boards vary based on their areas of specialty. This requirement ensures that CTE programs receive input from various stakeholders.
 - Culinary students can earn a ServeSafe Food Service Manager certification.
 - Graphic arts students can earn an Adobe Photoshop certification.
 - Digital media students can sit for the Adobe Premiere Pro certification exam.
- **WORK BASED LEARNING:**
 - The CTE Program offers various opportunities for students to engage in work-based learning and is focused on providing students with opportunities for internships, apprenticeships, and job shadowing.
 - Students are able to earn dual credits through partnerships with universities such as Rutgers, Hudson County Community College, Fairleigh Dickinson University, and Syracuse.
 - The program ensures that they have a number of guest speakers as a part of their university partnerships to meet the work-based learning requirement.
 - One such opportunity is a partnership with Cooperman Barnabas Medical Center, where students shadow executives and professionals. In the last cohort, one student shadowed the CEO, and another student was offered a summer internship with an IT specialist.
 - The program also offers a middle school exploration program for seventh and eighth graders, with the next session scheduled for April. The school's digital media students



recently created a film in 24 hours for a film book, and in March, they will be hosting a documentary film booth, with the film to be screened at SOPAC.

- OHS Tornado Alumni, Chef Pimping comes in and does demonstrations. She has a strong following on Instagram, and does work with the Food Network and Whoopi Goldberg.

- **COSMETOLOGY:**

- For school year 2024-25, the cosmetology program at OHS is expanding to include a three-course sequence aimed at state licensing upon completion.
- An application will be submitted to the state to approve this new program of study, with the support of Dr. Fitzhugh, Mr. Ballard, and the board.
- A classroom will be transformed into a salon-like environment for this program. Admission to the course will be a selective process.

- **FACILITIES UPDATE**

Dr. Fitzhugh introduced Mr. Vasquez, Manager of Buildings and Grounds. Mr. Vasquez gave the monthly report.

- **Project Updates**

- I meet with the custodial staff daily to ensure covid cleaning and disinfecting mandates are met.
- We have applied for additional PPE equipment, including gloves, masks, and hand sanitizers.
- In terms of facilities, we have ongoing projects.
- We are preparing for winter and addressing issues related to older buildings, such as repairing pipes and making minor roof repairs.
- We had an issue with the sewage system in the new addition at the high school, but construction crews were able to resolve it over break.
- Our team has been working hard to ensure that our schools are safe and well-maintained.
- We have been replacing pipes, repairing roofs, and addressing any issues that arise in a timely manner.
- At Rosa Parks, we have installed three new boilers and are waiting for the final inspection.
- We had an issue with the sewage system at OHS, but it has been resolved.
 - The new addition is now fully functional and the restrooms are working properly.
- The renovation project at Cleveland Elementary School is on schedule.
 - The walls are going up, the ceiling grids are being installed, and painting has begun.
- We are monitoring our work order system and addressing any major issues immediately.
- We are working closely with the SDA terminal construction to keep up-to-date on the progress of Cleveland and to finish the high school punch list.
- We are committed to maintaining safe and well-maintained schools for our students, staff, and community.
- We will continue to address any issues that arise and to work hard to ensure the success of our district.



- **ATTENDANCE PRESENTATION FROM THE MONTH OF JANUARY 2024**

Dr. Fitzhugh gave the Attendance Presentation.

Absences Category	Cumulative Days Absent for the Month of January 2024
Low Chronic Absences	0 to 4.99 days
Modest Chronic Absences	5 to 6.99 days
Significant Chronic Absences	7 to 8.99 days
High Chronic Absences	9 days or more

*Students are chronically absent when excused or unexcused absences are equal to or greater than 10% of the total number of days enrolled in the school year.

For the month of January, the district had a total of 96% with the state average of 95%.

- The majority of students are in the low to moderate chronic absence range, with work still needed for attendance teams.
- Blasts are sent at 10 a.m. to inform parents of student absences.
- It is crucial to update information in the Genesis parent portal for grade and attendance tracking.
- In January, the early childhood program showed improved attendance due to initiatives by the Office of Early Learning. However, there is a continuous effort to ensure parents understand the importance of pre-kindergarten attendance.
- For kindergarten through seventh grade, many students are in the low chronic absence realm, with phone calls and meetings conducted for those in the significant or high chronic range.
- A bilingual outreach group was established to assist students outside of school-level attendance committees.
- The district average daily attendance rate had one dip in January but was otherwise good.
- High school students are eager to attend school, and attendance efforts are ongoing to ensure students are present every day.

Dr. Fitzhugh reminds everyone to follow the district on our social media platforms for up-to-date information. We are available on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. By doing so, you will receive real-time updates about our district.

Additionally, Dr. Fitzhugh encourages everyone to download the Orange app. This app will provide emergency alerts and news stories, which will be delivered right to everyone's phone.

Mr. Draper, Communications Officer, will ensure that the website is regularly updated with relevant news.

Dr. Fitzhugh concluded his Superintendent's report.



D. BOARD MINUTES

Ms. Johnson motions to approve January 3, 2024, reorganization minutes.

Motion by Siaka Sherif, second by Jeffrey Wingfield.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner, Tyrone Tarver

Not Present at Vote: David Armstrong, Derrick Henry

ROLL CALL (5) YEA (0) NAY (2) ABSTAIN (2) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the January 10, 2024, public meeting minutes.

Motion by Jeffrey Wingfield, second by Siaka Sherif.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner

Abstain: Tyrone Tarver

Not Present at Vote: David Armstrong, Derrick Henry

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (1) ABSTAIN (2) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the January 10, 2024, closed meeting minutes.

Motion by Jeffrey Wingfield, second by Fatimah Turner.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner

Abstain: Tyrone Tarver

Not Present at Vote: David Armstrong, Derrick Henry

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (1) ABSTAIN (2) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

E. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Johnson noted that there were no Committee Reports for the February 28, 2024 meeting.

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Johnson requests for a motion to open public comments.

Motion by Siaka Sherif, second by Jeffrey Wingfield.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner, Tyrone Tarver

Not Present at Vote: David Armstrong, Derrick Henry

ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

- Aisha Samuel - 401 Highland Terrace, Orange, NJ



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Ms. Samuel brought up the issue of student safety during a discussion about starting school two hours late. She noticed approximately 20 students outside Forest Street School at 9:40 am, before schools opened at 10:00 am. Ms. Samuel asked if it was possible to have security or staff present earlier to provide shelter for students who had nowhere else to go. She was uncomfortable having other students in her car due to safety concerns. Ms. Samuel believes that having someone at the school an hour before the opening time would be beneficial for students who cannot stay at home.

● **Ms. Elana St. Helair**

Ms. Elana St. Helair advocated for mental health in schools, highlighting the mental health challenges faced by children in the United States.

- In 2021, leading children's health organizations declared a national state of emergency regarding child mental health, and the US Surgeon General issued an advisory on youth mental health.
- The crisis is severe: half of mental health disorders appear before the age of 14, and 79% manifest before 24. Approximately 20% of children aged 3 to 17 in the US struggle with mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorders.
- In February 2022, New Jersey had 86,000 children with major depressive disorders, 42,000 of whom did not receive proper treatment.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among individuals aged 10 to 14.
- Educators are overwhelmed by the complex mental health needs of students, facing challenges due to being overworked, underpaid, and insufficiently trained to help struggling children.
- Governor Murphy has responded by inviting school districts to work with Rutgers University's Center for Comprehensive Mental Health to address students' mental health needs.

Ms. St. Helair addressed several questions to the Board:

1. When the district received your weekly reports from the New Jersey Department of Education, did the NJDOE fail to inform the district about the requirements of when and how to apply?
2. Can the board please elaborate to the public why the Orange School District was unable to participate in the program directed by the board of New Jersey?
3. Did the Orange School District receive mental health funds to be allocated? If so, what is the amount and how did the district make use of those funds?
4. Please elaborate on what the current mental health practices are to parents so they can be informed.

Ms. St. Helair stated, "I requested for the Trauma Informed Team to be present here because I want to know why they have not made recommendations for the schools to be trauma informed. Trauma informed does not mean you have to be a trauma expert. It means having an understanding and knowledge that when kids are acting out, they



are acting out their emotional needs. So the job of the schools and the parents are to be educated on the emotional needs of the child. So we as a collective can respond to the need not to suppress their behaviors.”

Ms. Johnson advised Ms. St. Helair that the board did take into account all of her questions and they will have questions answered at the next board meeting. She also requested that the Trauma Informed Team be present at the next board meeting.

Dr. Fitzhugh stated that he has to ask the The Trauma Informed Team if they are able to attend the next board meeting due to their contractual time and obligations.

Ms. Johnson motions to close public comments.

Motion by Fatimah Turner second by Siaka Sherif.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner, Tyrone Tarver

Not Present at Vote: David Armstrong, Derrick Henry

ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

G. BOARD RESOLUTIONS

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the consent agenda including all agenda items, HR agenda and HIB cases.

- Vice President Gravesande abstained from anything related to Jeremy Gravesande.
- Mr. Wingfield abstained from anything related to Montclair State University.

Motion by Jeffrey Wingfield, second by Fatimah Turner.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner

Abstain: Tyrone Tarver

Not Present at Vote: David Armstrong, Derrick Henry

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (1) ABSTAIN (2) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

H. BOARD COMMENTS

Ms. Johnson asked Dr. Turner to announce the upcoming District Meeting dates.

District Meetings - Public

1. Public Relations Committee Virtual Meeting - Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at 4:45 pm
2. Orange Board Education Public Board Meeting - Wednesday, April 10, 2024 at 7:30 p.m., held at Orange Board Of Education, Administrative Building, Board Conference Room, 451 Lincoln Avenue, Orange, NJ, 07050. Will Recess until 6:45pm, but no later than 7:30pm



Wednesday, February 28, 2024
Regular Public Board Meeting
Orange Board of Education
Administration Building
Roll Call 6:00 p.m.

- a. *Ms. Johnson noted that the board chose not to have a March Public Board Meeting nine days after the February 28, 2024 meeting.*

District Meetings - Closed

1. Curriculum Committee Virtual Meeting - Tuesday, February 27, 2024 at 3:30pm
2. Facilities Committee Virtual Meeting - Monday, March 4, 2024 at 3:30pm
3. Special Education Committee Virtual Meeting - Tuesday, March 5, 2024, 3:30pm
4. Policy Committee Virtual Meeting - Thursday, March 7, 2024, at 4:00pm
5. Finance Committee Virtual Meeting - Thursday, March 7, 2024, at 5:30pm
6. Human Resource Committee Virtual Meeting - Monday, March 11, 2024, at 4:00pm

Ms. Johnson asked if the board had any comments.

- Dr. Turner commended Tito stating that he is beyond impressive. His presence is powerful. She commended the way that he controls his meetings and gives eye contact to his audience. She reminded Tito and the audience that the content that he presents is extremely helpful. Dr. Turner closed by saying, "I wanted to encourage you to continue the good work and be a mentor and a leader, not just to your peers, but to us all."
- Mr. Wingfield also commended Tito and his parents and gave his thanks to them. He also thanked Dr. Fitzhugh for the CTE Program and looks forward to seeing what's going to happen next.
- Ms. Johnson expressed gratitude to the teams who have been working tirelessly, day and night, even during breaks. She commended Dr. Fitzhugh, Mr. Cortez, Mr. Ballard, and Mr. Zachary for their excellent work and dedication. She thanked Dr. Fitzhugh for being an outstanding Superintendent. She extended her gratitude to the Executive Directors, and gave special recognition to Ms. Harper, highlighting how pleased she was with the Special Education program the district has in place. Finally, she encouraged families to reach out if they need help regarding the reopening of schools, by emailing their concerns, and the district will do its best to address them.

Ms. Johnson moves to have the meeting adjourned.

Motion by Fatimah Turner, second by Sueann Gravesande.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner, Tyrone Tarver

Not Present at Vote: David Armstrong, Derrick Henry

ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE