

Minutes of **Wednesday, May 8th, 2024, Public Board Meeting** of the Orange Board of Education held at 6:00 pm.
Vice President Shawneque Johnson is presiding over tonight's Meeting.

Ms. Sueann Gravesande – **Absent**

Mr. Derrick Henry

Ms. Samantha Crockett

Ms. Fatimah Turner, Ph.D.

Mr. Siaka Sherif

Ms. Shawneque Johnson

Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield

Mr. David Armstrong – **Absent**

Mr. Tyrone Tarver – **Absent**

ROLL CALL (6) PRESENT (0) LATE (3) ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT:

- Mr. Jason Ballard, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Mr. Lamont Zachary, Assistant Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Jessica Kleen, School Board Attorney Substitute with the firm of Machado

FLAG SALUTE

Ms. Johnson motions to move into Executive Session.

Moved by Ms. Fatimah Turner Seconded by Ms. Samantha Crockett

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (3) ABSENT

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

Moved by Ms. Fatimah Turner Seconded by Mr. Siaka Sherif

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (3) ABSENT

Ms. Johnson introduces our Superintendent, Dr. Gerald Fitzhugh.

Dr. Fitzhugh has asked for a moment of silence to honor the memory of two individuals who have recently passed away. One of them is Mr. Mojtaba Kahn, a teacher at the STEM Innovation Academy of the Oranges, who passed away on April 16th, 2024. The other is Edora Teddy Gray, a former Cleveland Teacher, who was known for her passion and dedication to education throughout her career. Following the brief period of silence, Dr. Fitzhugh expresses that our thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones of Mr. Kahn and Ms. Gray and expresses that we are a close-knit community here at Orange Township Public School District, and when we experience losses, we share this information with the community as we stand as a united family.

Ms. Johnson introduces our student representative, Oluwatitofunmi Ayodele Oshuntolo (Mr. Tito).

Mr. Tito expresses that he finds it hard to fathom that this marks his penultimate meeting as a student representative for the board of education. He then goes on to describe what his experience was during his time at Orange High School.

Mr. Tito goes onto to announce that recently he received news his friend and himself have been accepted into a study abroad program in Italy, known as SYN, from August to May of 2025. While it's bittersweet for him, he expresses that this opportunity is truly incredible. Mr. Tito further expands that despite how overwhelming it was transitioning to Orange High in his second year of high school, he embraced the new opportunities that came his way. One of those opportunities was serving as a Student Representative at the beginning of this academic year and it has ignited a

passion within him and a dedication to advocate for his peers in every possible way. Mr. Tito expresses that while he is grateful for all that he has learned, there is a tinge of sadness as he prepares to leave this role behind and embark on the journey to Italy. He assures all that despite the distance, he is committed to staying connected and supporting our student body in any way he can. Lastly, he expresses that his aspiration for Orange High School is to see it gain recognition for its programs, producing students who go on to attend prestigious universities with diverse backgrounds, and empowering students to raise their voices for advocacy and progress.

Mr. Tito declares that the testing carried out at Orange High School this year yielded positive outcomes due to the diligent efforts and commitment of the students. He further urges students to better prepare for exams by fostering a culture of high expectations and open discussions on readiness and positive results. Mr. Tito emphasized his recognition of the essential role that data plays and highlighted the significance of implementing proactive steps to change these perceptions and foster a more positive environment within our community.

Mr. Tito expresses his sincere appreciation for the support and opportunities he has received, and he considers it a privilege to have served as your Student Representative. He will cherish the memories and lessons learned as he embarks on this new chapter.

The members of the Board rise to their feet, applauding Mr. Tito, while Dr. Fitzhugh conveys a deep sense of pride for him.

Ms. Johnson conveys to Mr. Tito that he is an extraordinary person and should continue to make his mother proud, as we are proud of him and will miss him. Additionally, she offers him guidance to reach out if he requires any assistance.

Dr. Turner conveys her appreciation to Mr. Tito's Mom for entrusting Orange public schools with her child. She expresses that he will certainly be missed and encourages him to stay in touch with the district as there is not solely to guide the students to college, but to support them all the way through their college journey.

Mr. Derick Henry congratulates Mr. Tito and emphasizes how pleased they are with his accomplishments. He praises Mr. Tito for the successful school lunch satisfaction survey and suggests additional investigations to guarantee improvements for the next year. Mr. Henry stresses the importance of monitoring the meals' quality and satisfaction to support academic performance. He also reiterates his appreciation for Mr. Tito's dedication.

Proposes that they keep an open chair with Mr. Tito's name tag so they can keep him here throughout the upcoming school year 2024-2025.

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the April 10th, 2024, Public Meeting Minutes.

Moved by Dr. Turner Seconded by Mr. Wingfield

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (3) ABSENT

Ms. Johnson expresses that Dr. Fitzhugh will not be presenting his presentation tonight nor the community reports. We will continue to present those during our next Public Board meeting next month.

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the April 10th, 2024, Public Meeting Minutes.

Moved by Dr. Turner Seconded by Mr. Wingfield

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (3) ABSENT

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the April 10th, 2024, Closed Session Public Board Meeting Minutes.

Moved by Mr. Wingfield Seconded by Dr. Turner

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (3) ABSENT

Ms. Johnson motions to open Public Comments.

Moved by Dr. Turner Seconded by Mr. Wingfield
ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (3) ABSENT

Public Comments

Mr. Jaleel Israel, a resident of Newark, NJ, representing Israel United Christ and expresses his desire to actively engage with the local schools by developing a closer relationship with the school system. His main goal is to reach out to the youth to address prevalent issues such as crime, violence, and drug abuse in our neighborhoods. Mr. Israel expresses his desire to organize seminars across the state of New Jersey at our schools to provide education to young men and women on conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships, and fostering genuine care and love for others based on biblical principles. He then communicates that his organization is in search of a suitable location to host this initiative and extend invitations to law enforcement agencies and any other youth programs in our community who are interested in participating and assisting with the event.

Ms. Johnson informs him that his information will be taken down and they will be in touch, suggesting that Mr. Israel should also contact the city.

Ms. Johnson motions to close Public Comments.

Moved by Dr. Turner Seconded by Mr. Wingfield
ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (3) ABSENT

Ms. Johnson motions to approve a Consent Agenda.

Moved by Mr. Wingfield Seconded by Dr. Turner
ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (3) ABSENT

Public Relations Committee Virtual Meeting – Wednesday, June 5, 2024, at 4:45 pm
Orange Board of Education Public Board Meeting – Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at 7:30 pm in the BOE
Facilities Committee Virtual Meeting – Wednesday, June 3, 2024, at 4:00 pm
Curriculum Committee Virtual Meeting – Wednesday, May 29, 2024, at 3:30 pm
Special Education Committee Virtual Meeting – Tuesday, June 4, 2024, at 3:30 pm
Policy Committee Virtual Meeting – Thursday, June 6, 2024, at 4:00 pm
Finance Committee Virtual Meeting – Thursday, June 6, 2024, at 4:00 pm
Human Resource Committee Virtual Meeting – Monday, June 10, 2024, at 4:00 pm

Ms. Johnson announces that the Superintendent, Dr. Fitzhugh, is doing the Board Comments.

Board Comments

Dr. Fitzhugh acknowledges all teachers within our district in celebration of Teacher's Appreciation Week. He expresses his heartfelt gratitude to them for their unwavering determination and resilience in fulfilling their crucial role of guiding, nurturing, and educating our children.

Dr. Fitzhugh communicates that National Principal's Day was May 1st and expresses his gratitude to the 14 principals for their unwavering dedication and hard work in providing for the needs of both children and staff on a daily basis.

Dr. Fitzhugh announces that today marks National School Nurse's Appreciation Day and recognizes the invaluable contributions of the nurses in our district, who tirelessly provide love and care to our children.

Dr. Fitzhugh communicates that tomorrow afternoon we will have the VILS (Verizon Innovative Learning Schools) national call, where we will discuss the VILS Program implemented in three of our schools: Oakwood, Orange Preparatory of Innovation, and Orange High School. This program has greatly enhanced the students' abilities and successfully raised over 7 million dollars to support our students and staff in the district, making it a worthwhile endeavor. I recently received an email congratulating us on being recognized for the Verizon Innovative Learning School End of the Year Award, as well as the Rising Star District and School Award. He expresses that it is a testament to the hard work of our staff and students that our schools are being acknowledged in their first year of this program and states that this achievement is truly commendable.

Dr. Fitzhugh announces that we have recently received an email from Verizon Vills announcing that Carrie J Halstead, Principal of Orange Preparatory Academy, has been awarded the Rising Principals Award. He acknowledges that her dedication and effort towards the program have made us very proud and gives special recognition to the other principals, Mr. Belton and Mr. Gaines, for their exceptional hard work.

Dr. Fitzhugh has made an announcement stating that Project Lead the Way has received notification that both the STEM Innovation Academy of the Oranges and Heywood School have once more been acknowledged as distinguished schools for the academic year 23-24.

Dr. Fitzhugh communicates that in the upcoming month, Ms. Harris and Mr. Scutari are scheduled to deliver a presentation on the NJPPA outcomes, which have shown growth. He extends his gratitude to the dedicated staff at OHS and STEM for their unwavering commitment in preparing our scholars for the NJPPA.

Ms. Johnson extends her appreciation to the entire district staff and wishes to acknowledge Dr. Blanton for assuming the role temporarily until a suitable candidate was hired, thereby contributing to cost savings for the district through her unwavering dedication.

Ms. Johnson motions to have the meeting adjourned.

Moved by Dr. Turner Seconded by Mr. Wingfield

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (3) ABSENT

Discussions

Mr. Sherif thanks Mr. Ballard and Mr. Zachary for their hard work and their transparency in keeping us informed and letting them know that they are doing a good job.