



Newark Board of Education

Where Passion Meets Progress

Committee Report

Committee Name: Personnel

Location	Date	Time
Virtual	Tuesday, October 15, 2024	5:30 PM
Board Members		
Helena Vinhas– Committee Chairperson		
Daniel Gonzalez - Vice-Chair		
Josephine Garcia - Committee Member		
District Liaison & Superintendent Representative		
Dr. Yolanda Mendez		
Other District Staff		
Justine Carter		Carlos Reyes
Keith Barton		Ivette Toledo
Randy Schrader		

Meeting Summary

Committee Chairwoman Vinhas officially opened the meeting at 5:34 PM.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Mendez welcomed attendees and shared that she is in Dallas, TX, proudly representing Newark Public Schools at the Council of the Great City Schools’ 68th Annual Conference. District Goals and Action Plan for SY 2024-25, honing on Priority 1: Unified and Aligned Systems and District Goal #3 with Board Members were shared

This is in alignment with Priority 1, Unified and Aligned Systems Strategy 4: Attract and recruit highly effective and qualified staff who are excellent matches for the district, develop a pipeline of candidates for hard-to-fill areas, and provide support to all employees that enables and empowers them to fulfill their role in our mission.

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Mendez reviewed **Staffing Updates**, which included vacancies for instructional positions categorized by job title and SLTs.

Dr. Mendez reported that there are **116** instructional vacancies in the district. She reminded committee members that this number should be viewed in the context of the additional **338** instructional positions budgeted due to student enrollment increases for SY24-25. In addition, **36** vacancies were reported by schools as being covered by certified individuals, which brings the true number of vacancies to **80**.

The committee members received strong reassurance from Dr. Mendez about the proactive efforts of the HRS team to rapidly fill all vacancies, with a strong focus on critical areas such as Special Education and Bilingual positions. While the number of vacancies continues to decline, our ultimate goal is to have none, and HRS is working arduously to ensure that qualified applicants are promptly placed in classrooms. One of the strategies is to resume



successful recruitment campaigns. She added that it's worth noting that certified individuals, including coaches, department chairs, and, in some cases, vice-principals, are prepared to step in and provide comprehensive coverage for teaching positions wherever needed. It was emphasized that in all our schools, there is a licensed individual in front of our students.

We reviewed non-instructional vacancies, active job postings, Civil Service Commission (CSC) hires, and reassignments for October 2024 and SY 2024-2025.

Civil Service Commission hires were reviewed and reported. The collaborative process between HRS and hiring managers to promptly place eligible candidates into permanent roles was again discussed. This month's civil service hires were reviewed, including hard-to-staff positions such as food service workers and custodial staff. This underscores the district's unwavering dedication to attracting and retaining qualified talent in all areas.

Questions were asked, reviewed, and answered.

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It was reported that there are no personal leaves for October.

Questions were asked, reviewed, and answered.

Personnel Voting Actions were reviewed, they included appointments, co-curricular activities, renewals, transfers, resignations, and retirements reported as of October 2024.

Director Schrader pointed out that There were **66 fewer resignations** reported during the twelve months of October 1, 2022, to September 30, 2023, compared to October 1, 2023, to September 30, 2024. In the context of the discussion, it was noted that the higher number of teachers makes this statistic more significant. The continued decrease in resignations from one year to the next reflects the district's highly effective retention efforts, substantial benefits package, and successful labor negotiations.

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We then moved to Separations, for which Director Carbone provided details.

Questions were asked, reviewed, and answered.



We then moved to the last voting item:

- **Worker’s Compensation Settlement Authorizations Requests**

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Questions were asked, reviewed, and answered. As a result,

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Mendez asked Committee Board members to recommend all voting items to the entire board for approval. All board members were in agreement.

The meeting then moved to Non-voting items:

Director Schrader provided an update on

A. Benefits: and reminded committee members of the

- a. **NBOE Well Central Office Health and Wellness Fair** which will take place on Friday, October, 25, 2024, at Central Office. This event will bring a myriad of wellness and health vendors available to our employees, including screenings and free vaccinations. In addition, there will be music, chair massages, raffles, meditation, and direct access to NBOE representatives and providers. Dr. Mendez congratulated Director Schrader on a great job of continuously bringing wellness opportunities to our employees.

Questions were asked, reviewed, and answered.

At this time, Director Carbone provided updates on

B. Labor Negotiations, which included discussions on

- a. **NTA (Public School Nurses)** - We had a negotiation session with the NTA 9/24/24 at which some progress was made. We are attempting to schedule more sessions in the coming weeks. And
- b. **Local 68 (Custodians)** - We had an initial negotiations meeting with Local 68 on 9/26/24. We had our first official negotiations session on 10/10/24, wherein non-financial proposals were exchanged. Another meeting is scheduled on 10/29/2024.



Chairperson Vinhas and Committee Member Garcia raised some questions regarding the NTA negotiations. Assistant Superintendent Dr. Mendez and Director Carbone stressed that, due to the confidential nature of the ongoing negotiations, there is limited information available to share at this time. However, they both reiterated that, by statute, school nurses' salaries are guided by the teachers' salaries guides. Our district has recently negotiated one of the most generous contracts with the teachers' union, and the new salary guide is highly competitive in the state. They further clarified that certification and years of service are among another determining factor when it comes to compensation.

Committee member Garcia noted that our new teacher salary guide is second to none and requested to have a Personnel Committee member added to the negotiation table for future meetings. Chairperson Vinhas supported this request, which was welcomed by Assistant Superintendent Dr. Mendez and Director Carbone.

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Questions were asked, reviewed, and answered.
we then moved on to:

D. Recruitment Efforts Director Carlos Reyes updated committee members on Recruitment and Educator Effectiveness, noting the following:

- **Hiring Fairs for October:**
 - Montclair State University on October 9, 2024 **AND**
 - NJIT on October 30, 2024

During this time of the year, a lot of these events are designed to present internship opportunities, we attend these events to recruit interns, who will potentially join our district upon graduation.

As is relates to

- **Educator Effectiveness, the following activities are planned:**
 - Traditional Mentor Training on October 3, 2024 - Every new hire must have a mentor. Professional development was provided to all mentors in the district, where we shared best practices, recommendations, and strategies to help our new hires. This helps improve our retention efforts as retention is the new recruitment. By supporting our new teachers with great mentors, we increase their chances of staying in our district.
 - New Teacher Center (NTC) Mentor meeting on October 2nd & 3rd - This exciting training opportunity is offered to at least one mentor in every building. Through our collaboration with NTC, we equip mentors with additional techniques and strategies to better support our new hires. They then become ambassadors of knowledge, sharing these valuable insights with their fellow mentors to create a more supportive and empowering environment for our new teachers.
 - New Teacher Induction PD # 2 on October 8, 2024 - Our second professional development session is tailored to support our new hires and enhance employee retention efforts. Done in collaboration



Roger León
Superintendent

Newark Board of Education

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with Teaching and Learning and Montclair State University. Teachers could choose professional development tailored to their individual needs in partnership with their school administrators.

- SIP Meeting with all SIP members on October 22, 2024 -This training is for all members of the School Improvement Panel. During the training, we will review expectations and best practices to support daily operations in the school building. One of the key topics we will focus on is providing support for new teachers and working on retention strategies.
- Framework Evaluation Committee meeting with NTU on October 11, 2024 - This was the first meeting conducted this year as we continue to review the framework evaluation process and expectations for the year.
- New Administrator Training (Rescheduled) on October 30, 2024 - During this training, new administrators will be equipped with best practices to provide unwavering support to all teachers through observation, feedback, and coaching. This includes support for both new and veteran teachers.

Questions were asked, reviewed, and answered.

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Chairperson Vinhas adjourned the meeting at 6:31 pm.