



Newark Board of Education

Where Passion Meets Progress

Board Operations Committee Meeting
Josephine C. Garcia, Chairperson
Wednesday, March 19, 2025
5:30 p.m.

Committee Report

Location	Date	Time
WebEx	March 19, 2025	5:30 p.m.
Board Members		
President Hasani Council		
Josephine Garcia		
District Liaison & Superintendent Representative		
Dr. Jose Fuentes		Krystle Whitlock
Dr. Shakirah Miller		Valerie Wilson
Other District Staff		
Hasan Bullock		Dr. Tonya McGill
Quanika Dukes-Spruill		Benjamin Olagadeyo
Carlos Edmundo		Da Vonne Salley
Levi Holmes		Audra Tamayo
Vincent Hutcheson		Wali Thomas

Meeting Summary

Chair Josephine Garcia opened the meeting at 5:35 p.m.

Board Members Josephine Garcia and President Hasani Council, School Business Administrators Valerie Wilson and Dr. Jose Fuentes, Assistant School Business Administrator Krystle Whitlock, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Shakirah Miller, and other district staff were in attendance.

Chair Josephine Garcia opened the meeting with discussing the Operations Committee Meeting Norms on the Meeting Agenda.

During March's Operations Committee meeting, the identified Strategic Plan Priority was Priority 1: Unified & Aligned Systems, Strategies:

- 1.1** Organize and align departments and resources to support district priorities, strategies, and initiatives.
- 1.3** Build and implement a district-wide data warehouse complete with multi-source information and unified business rules that support real-time data integration, quality control, and data mining and analytics to improve achievement, instructional practice, and organizational efficacy.
- 1.5** Develop a capital strategy aligned with the Long-Range Facilities Plan and strategic plan to modernize all facilities, and plan for enrollment projections, academic programs, and community needs

Office of Pupil Transportation

At 5:35 p.m., Director Quanika Duke-Spruill of the Office of Pupil Transportation (OPT) presented data and an overview of the transportation resources available to eligible Newark students. Currently, 24,780 students

receive state-mandated transportation resources, which include transportation to and from school, as well as access to public transportation.

A significant portion of the discussion centered on student transportation services provided by District Omnibus Operators, including evening and weekend service. The team of 15 school bus drivers supports the district by delivering over 15 transportation services, including field trips, which resulted in a \$9,000 savings for schools in February.

The meeting also focused on professional development and training opportunities available to District Transportation personnel and vendor bus company staff. OPT emphasized the responsibilities of bus company owners, including participation in monthly meetings and ensuring staff training complies with state requirements and contractual obligations.

President Hasani Council inquired about the expected delivery date for the district's electric school buses. The committee was informed that a delivery date has not yet been provided to the district.

The Strategic Plan Priority identified is Priority 1: Unified & Aligned Systems, strategy 1.1.

Office of Food and Nutrition Service

At 5:48 p.m., Dr. Tonya McGill provided an update on lunch applications, presenting the following statistical data: As of March 12, 2025, 92.2% of enrolled students have an approved lunch application on file for the 2024-25 school year. This exceeds the district's goal of 90% participation.

Dr. McGill provided an overview of the upcoming Summer EBT program, outlining the eligibility criteria for families, the coverage period, the timeframe, and the allotment amount. She also detailed the upcoming state audit, including the schools scheduled for review and their corresponding timelines.

Chair Garcia inquired about the best way to disseminate information regarding the Summer EBT household application. SBA Wilson responded that the Parent Engagement Committee and parent liaisons at the schools would inform parents, and the information would also be posted on the district's website. Additionally, a list of students without a current application on file would be shared with the Assistant Superintendents for follow-ups.

Dr. McGill also addressed recent funding cuts to the Child Nutrition Program and discussed the district's collaboration with the Chef Brigaid/RWJB partnership.

Chair Garcia asked, "How will we measure the success of the Chef Brigaid/RWJB Partnership program?" The committee was informed that surveys are conducted, and feedback is collected from students, staff, and principals. Dr. McGill noted that, based on student input, the department is ensuring that student feedback is incorporated into the development of departmental initiatives.

Chair Garcia also inquired about engaging legislators and addressing the impact of funding cuts on the food service program. Dr. McGill will conduct outreach to inquire about drafting a letter that can be circulated within the community.

President Hasani Council asked whether the Chef Brigaid/RWJB Partnership chefs and department supervisors would rotate throughout the district to provide training to school staff. The committee was advised that both will rotate across the district and will meet with the Student Leadership Council to gather feedback on the program and meal offerings.

The Strategic Plan Priority identified is Priority 1: Unified & Aligned Systems, strategy 1.1.

Office of Safety and Security

At 6:09 p.m., the Office of Safety and Security provided a summary of the Student Safety Data System (SSDS) reports for February 2025, comparing the data to the previous academic year. The presentation highlighted significant trends and areas for improvement.

Additionally, Executive Director Levi Holmes informed the committee about the upcoming launch of the Student Safety Task Force and its positive impact on security operations.

Chair Garcia inquired about the reporting process for student incident reports. SBA Dr. Jose Fuentes outlined the guidelines and resolutions for reporting incidents and provided recommendations on effectively communicating this information to parents.

The committee was also briefed on the protocol for handling school visitors, including parents, to ensure campus security.

The Strategic Plan Priority identified is Priority 1: Unified and Aligned Systems, strategies 1.3 and 1.5.

Office of Facilities Management

At 6:23 p.m., Director Wali Thomas provided a summary of the Custodial and Head Custodian Staff training held on March 5, 2025. The training included “Right to Know,” Norovirus and other viral outbreaks, various health and safety training sessions, fire safety, and other custodial protocols/procedures.

Director Vincent Hutcheson provided an update on the installation of the remaining contactless water fountains, with only two left to be completed by April 2025. He also mentioned that a schedule for Lead Water Testing at a cohort of schools would be created and shared with school administration. This will maximize the opportunity for testing during Spring Break 2025, when the schools are closed.

Interim Executive Director Carlos Edmundo explained that water testing is not limited to fountains and bottle fillers but extends to any point of use. It was further clarified that "points of use" include Food Service Prep sinks and Nurses' sinks.

Chair Garcia inquired about the procedure the custodial staff followed for cleaning the water fountains. Director Thomas provided an overview of the sanitation procedure currently in place.

At 6:35 p.m., the committee was briefed on the February 2025 work orders, which included a detailed list organized by trade type, along with the status of each request—whether completed, in progress, or new.

Mr. Edmundo provided a summary of the Facilities Management Staff Development session held on March 5, 2025. The training, which focuses on practical skills such as active listening, clear and concise messaging, nonverbal communication, empathy, and conflict resolution, is designed to enhance employee communication and foster a culture of open dialogue and mutual respect. The training methods, including role-playing, group discussions, real-time feedback, and personalized coaching, ensure that the skills learned can be immediately applied in the workplace.

The Strategic Plan Priority identified is Priority 1: Unified & Aligned Systems, strategy 1.5.

At 7:03 p.m., the committee reviewed all Facilities resolutions and approved them for presentation to the full board for final approval. The resolutions are listed below.

- Change Order #2 South 17th Asbestos Abatement for the Roof Replacement
- Change Order #4 New Cosmetology Suite West Side High School Contract 9785R
- Change Order #12 Contract 9710 East Ward Building Envelope & Window

Replacement

- Amendment #2 Change Order #16 Façade Repair and Roof Replacement Sir Isaac Newton Contract 9475
- Award 9998R Waterproofing Avon Avenue
- Award of Building Envelope Repair and Skylight Replacement Salome Urena Contract 100021
- Lead and Paint Stabilization Peshine Avenue School Contract 10014
- Lead and Paint Stabilization Sir Isaac Newton Contract 10015
- Lead and Paint Stabilization Ann Street Contract 10016
- Renewal of Swimming Pool Repair/Maintenance Contract 9608R-R1
- New Jersey Schools Development Authority Grant Fiscal Year

The committee proceeded to have a discussion regarding the School of Architecture & Interior Design. SBA Wilson provided information regarding the project and addressed the committee's questions.

The Strategic Plan Priority identified is Priority 1: Unified & Aligned Systems, strategy 1.5.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned

**The Committee agreed to move
Resolution(s) Forward to The Full Board**

All voting items approved to be presented to the entire board

Miscellaneous

Adjournment Time

7:03 p.m.

Minutes Submitted By

Da Vonne Salley

