



Newark Board of Education

Where Passion Meets Progress

Committee Report

Parent Engagement & Student Life Committee Meeting

March 17, 2025

Location	Date	Time
Webex	March 17, 2025	5:41pm-7:18pm
Board Members		
Josephine C. Garcia	Allison K. James-Frison	
Dawn Haynes		
District Liaison & Superintendent Representative		
Carolyn Granato	Samantha Lott-Velez	
Other District Staff		
Mary Harvey	Jermaine Blount	
Giancarlo Tello	Edwin Mendez	
Michelina Thornton		
Guests		
Yolanda Johnson, Representative for Parents Educating Parents		
Meeting Summary		
Comments:		
At 5:41pm Assistant Superintendent Carolyn Granato opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. The Strategic Plan Priority that was identified during the meeting was Priority 3: Strength-Based and Responsive Culture.		
At 5:42pm invited guest speaker Yolanda Johnson made a presentation titled Pathway to Citizenship Initiative. Ms. Johnson shared valuable recommendations to assist our families and students. Highlights of the presentation included having the district create a district hotline, a crises response team, family emergency plans, developing support systems, protecting immigrant students with anti-bullying and harassment policies, and establishing a safe zone oversight committee. Board member James-Frison followed the presentation by sharing immigration related information she learned at a recent conference.		
At 5:53pm Assistant Superintendent Carolyn Granato provided a debrief on the Parent Engagement Tour that occurred in February. The Parent Engagement Tour focused on 3 subjects: Know Your Rights, How to Prepare Yourself in Case of Detention, and Vote 16.		

Chair Haynes inquired on which schools have a wellness space and to ensure the process does not feel punitive. Ms. Haynes also inquired on the Vote 16 curriculum and how it has been implemented. Director Harvey shared some district events but referred the question to be better answered by Teaching & Learning. This section concluded with establishing Harriet Tubman as the location for the April Parent Engagement Tour.

At 6:08pm Director Mary Harvey presented the Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB) information. Highlights included activities and service learning projects done during Random acts of Kindness Week and included a report of the HIB data from February.

At 6:12pm Director Michelina Thornton presented the Parent Engagement highlights. Examples of different events hosted by schools at each School Leadership Team (SLT) were shared. One district highlight was Harriet Tubman's Father In The Schools Night Family workshop where fathers and father figures had the opportunity to dance with their daughters and take home resources from the Premier Table.

Chair Haynes inquired on how NBOE working on turnout and parent engagement, SEL workshops, and library cards. Director Thornton responded that schools do targeted workshops based on need. As an example, she shared that one school may identify their grades 1-3 are not doing well in Math so host a workshop on it which will have different attendance expectations than other events. Director Thornton also shared that SEL workshops are being targeted at schools this way when appropriate. Director Harvey confirmed that 3rd graders are all receiving library cards.

Board member James-Frison inquired as to how NBOE is tackling college preparedness and providing one on one engagement for first generation college students. Director Harvey stated the district hosts various presentations and fairs on FAFSA, including the recent college fair on March 18th that was hosted at Prudential Center. She also shared that school links is utilized, students receive assistance with writing a personal statement, and all students meet with a school counselor individually to discuss the college process and next steps. Chair Haynes inquired as to how employees at the re-engagement center will be funded in the next fiscal year. Chair Haynes and Board member Garcia agreed to discuss at a later time.

At 6:36pm Director Mary Harvey presented department updates on Elementary, Middle School, and High School Guidance Counselor trainings and events. Additional updates were shared on Social Worker 2s, Homeless / Displaced McKinney Vento, Student Assistance Coordinators, and Mental Health & Wellness. Highlights included a March 4 annual Student Support Services Conference with the theme "The Power of Advocacy: Shaping the Future of Students". The conference emphasized strategies for support staff to effectively advocate for students. Keynote speakers featured Algernon Hall, an alumnus of West Side High School, and renowned national speaker Reggie Dabbs.

At 6:26pm Director Jermaine Blount shared the Office of Mentoring Services updates. A department highlight is that members of the Brick City Chapter, AAL of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc, engaged young men at Roberto Clemente Elementary School in Yoga and Meditation mentor session. Board member James-Frison inquired if any sororities would be involved as well, which Director Blount answered in the affirmative.

At 7:08pm Assistant Superintendent Carolyn Granato shared details of an upcoming Office of Special Education event in collaboration with Faith Evans. A breakfast will be held with the theme "A morning of Strength & Support: Celebrating Mothers of Children with Autism".

This event will offer a supportive space to connect, share experiences, and find encouragement over a warm meal with fellow mothers of students with autism.

At 7:09pm Director Edwin Mendez shared the Attendance information for February across the district by grade, SLT, and schools. One highlight included an Attendance Spirit Week celebrating twin day on February 12 which encouraged everyone to find a friend or staff member and dress as twins to hold each other accountable to attending school daily.

At 7:18pm Board Member Garcia thanked everyone for their work and adjourned the meeting.