

**TRENTON BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**108 North Clinton Avenue**  
**Trenton, New Jersey 08609**  
***SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES***  
**Thursday – April 8, 2021 – 6:00 p.m.**

**Completed April 29, 2021**  
**Convened at 10:00 A.M.**

**Call to Order**

Board President Addie Daniels-Lane called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

President Daniels-Lane led the salute to the flag.

**Roll Call**

**Present:**

Gene Bouie  
Nicole Brossoie  
Addie Daniels-Lane  
Yolanda Marrero-Lopez  
Taraun McKnight  
Gerald Truehart II  
Jeannie Weakliem

**Absent:**

Sadé Williams

**Acting Superintendent of Schools** – Alfonso Q. Llano, Jr. - Absent

**Business Administrator/Board Secretary** – Jayne Howard - Present

**New Jersey Sunshine Law** - Read by Board President Daniels-Lane

The New Jersey Public Meetings Law was enacted to ensure the right to the public to have advanced notice of and to attend the meetings of public bodies at which any business affecting their interest is discussed or acted on.

On the rules of this act, the Trenton Board of Education has caused notice of this meeting by publicizing the date, time and place, therefore posted on Trenton's Webpage, the Times and the Star Ledger.

**Formal Action will not take place at this meeting.**

**Mission Statement** - Read by Board President Daniels-Lane

All students will graduate with a vision for their future, motivated to learn continually and prepared to succeed in their choice of college or career.

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**Adoption of Agenda**

Motion was made by Ms. Weakliem and seconded by Mr. Bouie to adopt the agenda. Agenda was adopted by all Board Members present.

<b><u>ROLL CALL</u></b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
Gene Bouie	X		
Nicole Brossoie	X		
Yolanda Marrero-Lopez	X		
Taraun McKnight	X		
Gerald Truehart II	X		
Jeannie Weakliem	X		
Sadé Williams	Absent		
Addie Daniels-Lane	X		

**ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

President Daniels-Lane read the Executive Session Resolution:

**EXECUTIVE SESSION RESOLUTION**  
April 8, 2021

WHEREAS, The Open Public Meetings Act, codified as N.J.S.A. § 10:4-6, et seq., permits the exclusion of the public from a meeting under certain circumstances; and,

WHEREAS, the Trenton Board of Education is of the opinion that such circumstances presently exist, indicated as follows:

Any material which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of individual privacy if disclosed.

**MATTERS/CAPTION:**

- Interview Candidates for Superintendent of Schools

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Trenton Board of Education, County of Mercer, State of New Jersey, that an Executive Session will be held on April 8, 2021 for the statutorily permissible purposes indicated in this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no formal action may be taken by the Board when it reconvenes in Open Session.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the minutes of the Executive Session with regard to the above subject matter shall be disclosed to the public at a later date and to the extent that the same is not prejudicial to the interests of the parties involved, no longer adverse to the public interest, or does not endanger any individual's right to privacy.

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Motion was made by Mr. Bouie and seconded by Ms. Weakliem to adjourn the meeting into Executive Session. **All** present were in favor, **0** opposed **0** abstentions.

<b><u>ROLL CALL</u></b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>ABSTAIN</b>
Gene Bouie	X		
Nicole Brossoie	X		
Yolanda Marrero-Lopez	X		
Taraun McKnight	X		
Gerald Truehart II	X		
Jeannie Weakliem	X		
Sadé Williams	Absent		
Addie Daniels-Lane	X		

President Daniels-Lane advised the public that the meeting will reopen at approximately 9-9:30 p.m.

**ADJOURN** 6:05 p.m. to Executive Session for the interviews of Superintendent candidates.

**REOPEN PUBLIC MEETING**

Open Public Meeting reconvened at approximately 10:30 p.m. with the following Board Members in attendance: Yolanda Marrero-Lopez, Taraun McKnight, Gerald Truehart II, Jeannie Weakliem and Addie Daniels-Lane.

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ms. Sandy Jimenez, Teacher, expressed dismay about the conduct of the Superintendent Search. She felt there has been no transparency in the process, and she asked for collaboration with the community in the search.

Mr. John Forte, Teacher, stated that the vast majority of his students feel that the District should not return to in-person instruction until September. He said there are many unaddressed issues regarding the process, including:

- Plans for closing in the event of a Covid case in the building
- Notifying parents and students of a Covid outbreak in a timely fashion
- Orientation for 10<sup>th</sup> graders who have never been in the building
- Non-sharing of sanitized equipment, specifically in Special Ed classrooms
- Need for a solid plan for reopening in September rather than May
- Informing parents of possible change in teacher for their students due to 504 plan
- Teachers need space to socially distance while their classrooms are being used by a floating teacher
- Teachers should fulfill their afternoon duties virtually so classrooms can be disinfected for the next day
- Monitoring of student movement throughout the hallways

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- Days will be spent teaching procedures and routines, which will take away from instructional time

Mr. Forte also discussed the importance of involving the Trenton Educational Association in the Superintendent Search. He said the Amazon union vote in Alabama underscores the importance of unions in preserving workspace democracy.

Mr. Len Mitnaul, Teacher, felt the Board made no effort to communicate with all stakeholders regarding tonight's meeting and yesterday's meeting. He did not feel that the meeting was advertised enough and that the Board is not being transparent.

Ms. Nicole Backlund, Art Teacher, listed her reasons for not reopening schools on May 3, including the following:

- Making parents aware that students will be coming in for a half day of instruction
- Not much real social interaction will occur
- Students must walk back home and log in for their afternoon virtual instruction, which interferes with their lunchtime
- Plans for busing need to be communicated
- Students may report to school in person on the wrong cohort day
- Students of teachers with an approved 504 need to be supervised in classroom
- Quality substitutes need to be secured and trained on monitoring students both in person and virtually
- Equipment needs to be purchased and installed prior to the proposed return date
- Teachers need quality training on how to deliver instruction to students both virtually and in person
- There is little real value to returning on May 3

Ms. Marlena Ventura, Teacher, expressed concern about the social emotional health of students. She felt the hybrid plan will not offer enough consistency for them.

Ms. Janice Williams, Trenton Education Association (TEA) Grievance Chair, said it is disrespectful of the Board Members who are absent not to listen to Public Participation. She felt that the public should have been given the opportunity to speak before the Superintendent interviews were held. She also disagreed with President Daniels-Lane's comments on April 7 regarding the Superintendent Search and how it is being conducted. She discussed past searches in which TEA was able to vet potential candidates through their many contacts. Ms. Williams reiterated a prior correspondence from TEA regarding reasons for teachers not returning to their classrooms on April 19.

TEA President Ms. Talitheia Duncan recalled President Daniels-Lane's April 7 comment regarding town hall meetings, and she stated these town halls were for the Strategic Plan that New Jersey School Boards Association helped the Board to formulate. She felt that the bargaining units were not engaged in a meaningful way in the Superintendent Search.

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Ms. Duncan also discussed how Covid has affected her life personally, and she stated that the virus affects Black and Brown people differently.

Following Public Participation, Ms. Daniels-Lane thanked the public for their comments and she stated that the Board and Superintendent will be looking at the science for the virus. She acknowledged that the situation is very trying, but the needs of the students must be considered also.

Ms. Weakliem made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:30 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. McKnight and approved by all Board Members present.

**ADJOURN** approximately 10:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Jayne S. Howard

Jayne S. Howard  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary