

**TRENTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
BOARD RETREAT @ Educational Testing Service
660 Rosedale Road, Landgraf Hall – Room J203
Princeton, New Jersey 08541**

MINUTES

Thursday – August 10, 2017 – 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Friday – August 11, 2017 – 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Completed August 29, 2017

Convened at 9:27 A.M.

Call to Order

Board President Gene Bouie called the retreat to order at 9:27 a.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

President Bouie led the salute to the flag.

Roll Call

Present:

Gene Bouie

Addie Daniels-Lane

D. A. Graham – arrived at 9:30 a.m.

Fiah Kwesseu – arrived at 9:30 a.m.

Yolanda Marrero-Lopez

Jane Rosenbaum – arrived approximately 12:30 p.m.

Gerald Truehart II

Lucy Vandenberg

Heather Watson

Superintendent of Schools – Dr. Fredrick H. McDowell Jr. - Present

Business Administrator/Board Secretary – Jayne Howard – Present

Also Present – Board Attorney Perry Lattiboudere and State Monitor Dr. Les Richens

New Jersey Sunshine Law - Read by Board President Bouie

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 in the Central Services Building, 108 North Clinton Avenue, City Clerk's Office, City Hall and the Times. Anyone whose name is on the mailing list should receive a notice.

Formal action will take place at this meeting.

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Mission Statement - Read by Board President Bouie

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

Adoption Of Agenda

Motion was made by Dr. Graham and seconded by Ms. Kwesseu to adopt the agenda. Agenda was adopted by all Board Members present.

<u>ROLL CALL</u>	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Addie Daniels-Lane	X		
D. A. Graham	X		
Fiah Kwesseu	X		
Yolanda Marrero-Lopez	X		
Jane Rosenbaum		not present for vote	
Gerald Truehart	X		
Lucy Vandenberg	X		
Heather Watson	X		
Gene Bouie	X		

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

At this time, President Bouie welcomed Ms. Marrero-Lopez to the Board and expressed the Board's appreciation for her service.

BOARD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Jesse Adams, Field Services Representative from New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), discussed the following topics with the Board:

Establishment of Ground Rules for the Retreat

- Allow others to speak.
- Be open-minded.
- Respect each other's opinion.
- Step outside for phone calls or texts.
- Have fun while learning.

Board Ethics

- Required annually
- Discussion of the ten tenets and advisory opinions on a variety of cases
- Board Member actions should not break the public trust.
- Many regulations and training requirements for Board Members

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- School Ethics Commission (SEC) is responsible for advisory opinions and ethics complaints.
- Some advisory opinions are confidential, and some are released to the public (with identifying information redacted).
- Advisories released to the public are basically law.
- Board Members are covered through the district's liability insurance if the complaint relates to the execution of Board duties.
- A Board cannot file a complaint; it must be done by an individual.
- Board Members cannot act as individuals; i.e. a Board Member cannot visit a school unannounced to check on how its technology upgrade is working. Every request must be arranged through the Superintendent and with the approval of the Board.
- Following the chain of command is mandatory when dealing with complaints, up to and including the Superintendent, before an issue can be brought to the Board for consideration.

At this time and due to scheduling constraints, Mr. Adams ceded to Mr. Mike Vrancik, Director of Governmental Relations at NJSBA. Mr. Vrancik spoke about State and Federal legislative actions on education, including any threats to public education. School funding was discussed in depth. Health benefits coverage was also discussed, as were the possible effects of the sunset of Chapter 78.

Following Mr. Vrancik's presentation and a brief lunch break, Mr. Adams continued the professional development as follows:

Board Ethics

- There are some constraints on Board Members volunteering in the District they serve.
- Board Members must recuse voting on matters that pertain to their employment, etc. outside of their Board duties.

Foundations of Board Governance

- Roles and responsibilities of the Board
- Four major functions – policy making, planning, oversight and appraisal
- The difference between “what” and “how”
- Board Members must keep confidentiality.
- The Board works as a team.

What Board Members Should Know about Personnel

- There are constraints on what Board Members can see regarding personnel files.
- Board votes cannot be arbitrary and capricious.
- The Board should have a clear policy on recruiting, retaining and hiring of personnel.

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- The Board Attorney facilitates Donaldson hearings. Board Members do not question the staff member.

Parliamentary Procedures

- Leading effective meetings is the job of the Board President.
- A Board Meeting held in public is for the purpose of conducting the Board's business.
- The public comment portion of a Board Meeting is not the time for dialogue.

Voting Requirements

- The Board received a listing of statutory requirements for different types of votes.

Board Committees

- Some Boards operate as multiple standing committees, some as a committee of the whole.
- The Board discussed the benefits and disadvantages of both operating scenarios.

Due to time constraints with the retreat agenda, Mr. Adams will meet with the Board again to finish the professional development and to give the Board more of a foundation upon which to plan their governance approach going forward.

At this time, Dr. McDowell gave the Board an update on the In-District transitional program for special needs students to be held at Stokes School. Ms. Howard spoke about fiscal efficiency and maximizing the use of funds for the benefit of our students.

To close out Day One, Dr. Joseph Youngblood and Mr. William Watson from Thomas Edison State University (TESU) introduced the activities they will be facilitating on Day Two. These activities will empower Board Members to maximize their contribution to the District. Dr. Youngblood and Mr. Watson provided a framework for the next day's discussion centered on Leading, Learning and Transforming. The three areas of focus that have been identified from their research in the District are communications, an in-depth look at the organizational structure, and community engagement.

The Retreat adjourned for the day at approximately 5:00 p.m.

Day Two

The Retreat re-convened at 9:10 a.m. All Board Members were in attendance on Day Two with the exception of Gerald Truehart and Lucy Vandenberg.

President Bouie led the Pledge of Allegiance, read the Sunshine Law and recited the District Mission Statement.

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Motion was made by Dr. Graham and seconded by Ms. Daniels-Lane to adopt the agenda. The motion was **approved** by all Board Members present.

<u>ROLL CALL</u>	YES	NO	ABSTAIN
Addie Daniels-Lane	X		
D. A. Graham	X		
Fiah Kwesseu	not present for vote		
Yolanda Marrero-Lopez	X		
Jane Rosenbaum	not present for vote		
Gerald Truehart	absent		
Lucy Vandenberg	absent		
Heather Watson	X		
Gene Bouie	X		

There were no members of the public wishing to address the Board on Day Two.

Dr. Youngblood and Mr. Watson from TESU returned to facilitate the Board's discussion on Leading, Learning and Transforming. Areas of discussion were as follows:

Areas of concern gleaned from the qualitative surveys conducted with the Board:

- "Telling Our Story" – creating a narrative of what the school system should look like
- Community engagement
- Ongoing training for the Board
- Board Committee work – identifying ways to be more efficient and effective
- More productive Board Meetings
- Communicating proposed changes to the public
- Fiscal and statutory constraints on the Board's decision-making process

Eight characteristics of effective school boards (small group discussions on pre-assigned reading):

- Commit to a vision of high expectations for student achievement and quality instruction and define clear goals towards that vision.
- Have strong shared beliefs and values about what is possible for students and their ability to learn, and of the system and its ability to teach all children at high levels.
- Are accountability-driven, spend less time on operational issues and more time focused on policies to improve student achievement.
- Have collaborative relationships with staff and the community and establish a strong communications structure to inform and engage both internal and external stakeholders in setting and achieving district goals.
- Are data-savvy; they embrace and monitor data, even when the information is negative, and use it to drive continuous improvement.
- Align and sustain resources such as professional development to meet district goals.

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- Lead as a united team with the Superintendent, each from their respective roles, with strong collaboration and mutual trust.
- Take part in team development and training, sometimes with their Superintendents, to build shared knowledge, values and communication for their improvement efforts.

Adaptive Leadership:

- Requires learning.
- Identifies stakeholders.
- Steers clear of technical issues.
- Focuses on issues that drive the bottom line.
- Concentrates on the root of a problem/the big picture.
- Sets realistic goals.

In closing, a concentrated discussion ensued on the Board's direction, commitment and cohesiveness going forward.

The retreat adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Jayne S. Howard

Jayne S. Howard
Business Administrator/Board Secretary