**Providence School Board**

**Providence School Department**

**797 Westminster Street**

**Providence, RI 02903-4045**

**REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES**

**August 21, 2024**

1. **Convene Meeting**
   1. Call to Order at 6: 00 PM

**President Rogel called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM**

* 1. Pledge of Allegiance
  2. Roll Call
  3. Superintendent’s Comments

**Dr. Javier Montañez** – **President Rogel, members of the Providence School Board and members of our school community, I am once again honored to be here with you this evening.**

**This week marks a critical reflection point in the state intervention of the Providence Schools. Two independent reports have been released; one by SchoolWorks, a nationally recognized organization and one by the Center for Education Policy Research at Harvard University.**

**These third party reports show that while there is still work to be done; progress has been made.**

**Later you will get more information from the representatives from RIDE here today, but I wanted to go over some high level information. The SchoolWorks report leveraged extensive document review, classroom visits, and stakeholder engagement with a lens towards both progress and capacity.**

**Some of the areas of progress include an increase in families’ favorable perceptions of their schools and a stronger sense of belonging among students. It also noted positive responses to enhanced professional development for educators, improved school leadership quality, an increase in the number of teachers holding certifications to better serve multilingual learners, increased efforts to hire and retain teachers of color, and the adoption of high quality curriculums.**

**This year, our revamped academic team will be focusing on having high quality instruction in every classroom, every day.**

**The report goes on to praise PPSD’s collaborative work to open new schools. We are putting the finishing touches on Pleasant View Elementary, are working on Spaziano Middle School, and will break ground on the Kizirian and Fogarty projects soon.**

**PPSD has also been commended for attendance growth, including a 12.1% reduction in chronic absenteeism. That was the largest drop by a large LEA in the state. Over the last 2 years, we have decreased chronic absenteeism by 20.9%.**

**In addition to rebuilding, the Offices of Administration, Community Engagement, Teaching and Learning, and HR are all running more effectively and efficiently, in some cases with less staff.**

**The word is getting out too. Teachers and administrators from nearby districts are applying to PPSD. We are continuing to recruit world-class talent.**

**The Harvard report that was led by a national expert Dr. Tom Kaine, notes that: PPSD has outperformed comparable districts in New England including here in Rhode Island in mitigating pandemic learning loss and now in accelerating learning.**

**We are encouraged by this but we know the work is not finished. All the signs point to continued growth this year. On the first day, we will be officially launching five redesign schools and opening the door of the newly remodeled Pleasant View Elementary School.**

**While I am never completely satisfied with the results, a sea of change is happening. And as long as we all row together, we can make Providence the destination for education.**

**What I know deep within is that I am as committed as I was on day one to make sure we build a better, more resilient school district that meets the needs of our students and families.**

**As I shared earlier, tonight, you will hear from our colleagues at the Rhode Island Department of Education. They are going to review the findings from both reports in depth.**

**Tonight, we will also meet in Executive Session to discuss my contract and evaluation. I will be honest. This is a hard job, but I am thankful for the opportunity to continue as your Superintendent as there is much work to be done.**

**I was appointed as Acting Superintendent during the summer of 2021 after serving PPSD for nearly 25 years.**

**When people speak about the 30 years of challenges and dysfunction, I know what they are speaking about because I lived it. I saw firsthand how it impacted our students.**

**Entering my fourth year in this role, I still dream of making Providence a model for urban education in America.**

**While we have come a long way, I will never forget where I came from. My lived experience mirrors the lived experience of many of our students. I have endured homelessness, I was a high school dropout, I was a GED candidate, I kept asking myself “what if”, I earned GED and I kept asking myself “what if” and eventually earned my doctorate.**

**I take pride that I am the first Superintendent in recent memory to have worked my way up through the district as a teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal and now Superintendent and I have not forgotten what it is like to be in the classroom either. I’ve shared that when I did not have a home and support system, Hope High School was a lifeline for me. I have also shared that my family is rooted here. My children attended PPSD and I have family in our district.**

**Mr. President, rest assured that I will continue to take this position seriously and give it my all. Being Superintendent is not a stepping stone for me, but an opportunity to lay stepping stones for current and future students.**

**My legacy is not my story. Our legacy is combined stories of our incredible students. A legacy that will be built by a stronger school system that helps them write the next chapter in the story of our city and beyond.**

**Board Members in Attendance:** Erlin Rogel, Travis Escobar, Melissa Hughes, Toni Akin, George Matouk, Ty’Relle Stephens, Night Jean Muhingabo, Anjel Newman and Michael Nina

**Board Member Travis Escobar arrived at 6:12 PM**

**Board Member Michael Nina left the meeting at 8:48 PM**

**This Meeting is Livestreamed on Youtube.com – Providence School Board**

**Full Board Meeting – 8/21/2024**

1. **Approve Agenda**
   1. Approval of Agenda

**At this time s Motion was made to take the Agenda out of order. The presentation followed the approval of the agenda and the Action Item was**

**Moved up as well.**

**MSV – Akin, Escobar (9-0) MOTION APPROVED**

**10.0 Presentation**

10.1 Discussion and Consultation of PPSD’s Continued Turnaround Status, Pursuant to

RI General Laws 16-7.1-5.1 regulations 200-RICR-20-05.6.1

**This presentation was presented by Dr. Kelvin Roldan, Brian Darrow and**

**Krystafer Redden of the State Department of Education**

**At this time Vice-President Escobar made a statement:**

**I move that the Providence School Board recommended to the Rhode Island**

**State Education Commissioner, in accordance with the statewide regulations**

**200-RICR-20-05-6 and RI General Law 16-7.1-5.1, that the Providence Public**

**School District (PPSD) imminently exit its current turnaround status (by the end**

**of the 2024-2025 school year). Further, we recommend that the transition**

**plan be developed and implemented to return oversight authority to the**

**Providence School Board, ensuring an effective transition back to local control.**

**This transition plan should include a designated transition period during which**

**the local school board will assume certain oversight responsibilities while**

**maintaining appropriate state guidance to ensure continued improvement and**

**stability in the district. Additionally, the transition plan should incorporate**

**meaningful community input to guide the process, ensuring that the**

**perspective and needs of the district’s stakeholders are considered and**

**addressed throughout the transition period. (A Resolution will be drafted)**

1. **Consent Agenda**
   1. Approval of Minutes 5-22-2024

**MSV – Stephens, Nina (6-0) MOTION APPROVED**

**4.0 Action Item**

4.1 Discussion and possible vote on continued state intervention of Providence

Public Schools

**A Motion was made by Travis Escobar and Night Jean Muhingabo to vote on**

**this item.**

**Roll Call Vote: Newman Aye, Stephens Aye, Munhingabo Aye, Escobar Aye,**

**Rogel Aye, Hughes Aye, Akin Aye, Matouk Aye and Nina Aye**

**(9-0) MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

1. **Public Comment**

**There was 1 public comment made by Jeremy Sencer**

1. **School Board Comments**

**There were comments made by Toni Akin, Anjel Newmann, Melissa Hughes and Ty’Relle Stephens**

1. **School Board Committee Updates**
   1. Policy Committee – Melissa Hughes
   2. Finance Committee – Toni Akin
   3. Health & Wellness – Night Jean Muhingabo
   4. CTE Committee – Travis Escobar
   5. Schools Building Committee – George Matouk
2. **Policy & Planning**
   1. School Closing Policy – 2nd Read & Adoption

**MSV – Stephens, Muhingabo (8-0) MOTION APPROVED**

8.2 Reflection and Prayer Accommodation Policy – 1st Read

**A Motion was made at this time to send back to Full Board for 2nd Read &**

**Adoption**

**MSV – Stephens, Muhingabo (8-0) MOTION APPROVED**

8.3 Use of Students Public Information Materials & Media Policy – 1st Read

**A Motion was made at this time to send back to Full Board for 2nd Read &**

**Adoption**

**MSV – Stephens, Muhingabo (8-0) MOTION APPROVED**

1. **Approval of Contracts**
   1. Learnwell Contract Consideration
   2. Star Autism Support – Contract Review

**Both Contracts were taken in block form**

**A Motion was made to Approve both contracts**

**MSV – Muhingabo, Akin (8-0) MOTION APPROVED**

1. **Presentation**
   1. Discussion and Consultation of PPSD’s Continued Turnaround Status, Pursuant to

RI General Laws16-7.1-5.1 regulations 200-RICR-20-05.61

**The item was moved up when the agenda was approved.**

1. **Executive Session**
   1. Executive Session Pursuant to Rhode Island General Laws 42-26-5(a)(2) Litigation

**This item was tabled for the September 18, 2024 Regular Board Meeting**

1. **Report on Executive Session Votes**
   1. Report on Executive Session Votes

**There were no Executive Session Votes taken as the item was tabled for the**

**September 18th Regular Board Meeting**

1. **Adjourn**
   1. Adjourn Meeting – 9:29 PM

**A Motion was made to adjourn the meeting**

**MSV – Escobar, Stephens (8-0) MOTION APPROVED**