

The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education Public Meeting Minutes January 30, 2025

A public meeting of the Board of Education was held in hybrid format on January 30, 2025. Some Board Members, select staff, and some registered speakers participated in-person, while others participated remotely. Members of the general public who did not attend in-person participated via the Zoom meeting platform.

The meeting was convened at 4:00 p.m by Reginald Streater, President.

Opening Remarks

President Streater reported and commented on the following:

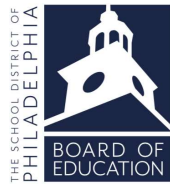
- Acknowledged the Board's new Deputy Chief of Communications and External Relations, Imahni Moise, and invited her to introduce a brief video in honor of Board Appreciation Month;
- Recognition of Board members Lam, Harper, and Cubbage who joined Dr. Watlington and Deputy Superintendent of Academic Services Dr. Jermaine Dawson on school visits to Sadie Alexander and Paul L. Dunbar on January 16, 2025;
- Recognition of Vice President Andrews, Dr. Watlington, and President Streater who attended the 40th annual national bell-ringing ceremony at Independence Mall on Martin Luther King Jr. Day (January 20, 2025);
- Recognition of Vice President Andrews who joined Dr. Watlington and District leadership for the Kindergarten Registration Kickoff at Rhawnhurst School on January 21, 2025;
- Congratulations and acknowledgement of Dr. Watlington, who was named Superintendent of the Year by the District Administration Leadership Institute;

President Streater invited Vice President Andrews to share the following announcements and updates:

- Congratulations and acknowledgement of Board President Streater who was honored with the Drum Major Award for Equity in the Educational System by the Philadelphia Martin Luther King Jr. Association for Nonviolence.
- Congratulations and recognition Board member Novales who was recently named as one of the honorees of the 2024 Powerful Latinas Award.

President Streater continued to report and comment on the following:

- Cultural recognitions which included Three Kings Day, Orthodox Christmas, MLK Day, International Holocaust Remembrance Day, and the Lunar New Year
- Recognition of our students and teacher of the month
 - Mia Mendoza who is a senior at Jules E. Mastbaum High School.
 - Dennis Paladino from Kensington Health Science Academy.
 - Mr. Ethan Feuer, English teacher and basketball coach at Kensington Health Science Academy, as January teacher of the month.



The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education Public Meeting Minutes January 30, 2025

- Recognition of Board Policy 006 titled 'Meetings' and its operating guidelines, and for the public to see and hear the Board deliberate and take official action
 - President Streater shared the Board's request that all individuals here with us tonight be respectful of every participant's time and attendance noting that When we reach each speaker portion of the agenda we will no longer be calling individuals in groups of five (5) and we will be following the speaker's list in the order in which individuals have registered.
 - President Streater also noted that in order to follow proper fire safety protocols we will be ensuring all aisles remain clear, including the center aisle during the meeting.

Announcements

Vice President Andrews made announcements concerning recording, copyright, participation in, and viewing of the meeting.

Roll Call and Minutes

Lynn Rauch, General Counsel, announced that the Board met in Executive Session on January 9th to discuss confidential, privileged labor matters and quasi-judicial charter school matters, on January 23rd to discuss confidential, privileged labor matters and earlier today to discuss confidential, privileged, personnel matters.

Ms. Rauch conducted Roll Call.

Members Present: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

Members Absent: Ms. Stern, Ms. Novales - 2

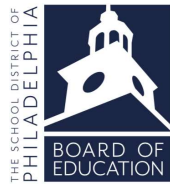
Attending: Tony B. Watlington, Ed.D, Superintendent

The minutes from the December 5, 2024 Board of Education Action Meeting were presented for approval.

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Committee Reports



The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education Public Meeting Minutes January 30, 2025

Student Board Representative Report

Alternate Student Board Representative Benny shared that he, along with Student Board Representatives Rinker and Ahmed have continued to engage in several activities aimed at learning more about the District as well as encouraging student engagement. Alternate Student Board Representative Benny noted that Student Board Representatives Rinker and Ahmed participated in several meetings related to the facilities planning process on December 10 and 18th. Alternate Student Board Representative Benny shared that he, along with Student Board Representatives Rinker and Ahmed participated in the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council Meeting on December 2nd, attended the Board's Bi-Annual City Council Hearing on December 9, participated in "The Power in Student Voice" panel hosted by the Diversity Equity and Inclusion office on December 11, attended the Board's bi-annual public hearing on December 12, and the monthly Goals and Guardrails meeting on January 16, 2025.

Parent and Community Advisory Council Report

Vice President Andrews announced the Parent and Community Advisory Council Members for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years. Vice President Andrews noted that the Board received over 50 applications and have identified the following 14 individuals: Caleila Burrell, Ulaysha Mathies-Benjamin, Anne Dorn, Jinaki Bright, Jasmine McClain Smallwood, Orien Smith-Warren, Simone Cunningham, Eugene Thomas, Jonathan Jacobs, Keisha Usher-Martin, Stacey Carlough, Shaneaka Rhoads, Series Thach, and Callie Williams.

Registered Student Speakers

The meeting was opened to the public for presentation of statements by registered student speakers. Ms. Rauch provided the applicable provisions of the speakers' policy for the meeting. Ms. Rauch called general speakers:

The following students expressed concerns regarding the Olney High School field, noting the need for necessary improvement:

- Joselyn Rodriguez, student
- Isis Rivera, student
- Anthony Pugh, student

Hazel Heiko, student, expressed concern that she is unable to have a parent/guardian sitting next to her as she provided her testimony. Ms. Heiko also shared concerns regarding a recent executive order signed by President Trump banning students and schools who receive federal funding from identifying with their



The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education Public Meeting Minutes January 30, 2025

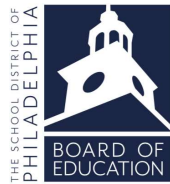
right name and pronouns. Ms. Heiko also spoke about the importance of having teachers who support their students and urged the District to reinstate Keziah Ridgeway.

Superintendent Remarks

President Streater invited Dr. Watlington to provide remarks. Dr. Watlington reported/commented on the following:

- District Recognitions
 - January as national School Board Recognition Month, National Poverty in America Awareness Month
 - January 20th - Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 - January 27th - International Holocaust Remembrance Day
 - January 29th - Lunar New Year
- Conditions for Success
 - Student Attendance - December 2024 student regular attendance was 65% - 4 percentage point increase from 2023
 - Teacher Attendance - December 2024 teacher regular attendance was 76% - 6 percentage point increase
 - Dropout Cumulative - 1,340 students who have dropped out - 362 students less compared to this time last year
- Safe and Welcoming Schools Update
 - Shared a statement maintaining safe and welcoming schools and protocols in place:
 - Immediately notify the office of general counsel;
 - Obtain documentation from the agent, such as the subpoena or warrant, which is claimed to authorize access to the school;
 - Advise the Agent that before proceeding with their request school personnel must first receive notification and direction from the Office of General Counsel. DO NOT Provide any information about students, families or staff unless directed by the Office of General Counsel;
 - Wait for further direction and advice from the office of general counsel;
 - Notify the Office of Prevention and Intervention (P&I);
 - Convene a safety team meeting and work with the p&i liaison to formulate the school crisis response plan;
 - Complete the incident report.
- Facilities Planning Update
 - Overview of Facilities Planning Timelines, Facilities Planning Process Groups, and the status of the Comprehensive Facilities Data Warehouse which has been completed.

Dr. Watlington responded to questions raised by Board Members.



The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education Public Meeting Minutes January 30, 2025

Copies of presentations are included within the meeting agenda.

Public Testimony and General Speakers

Board Member Jones acknowledged the receipt of and summarized four (4) pieces of written testimony submitted to the Board from:

- Hannah Mermelstein
- Lindsey Graham
- Charlie McGeehan
- Barbara Dowdall

Complete copies of the written testimony are included within the meeting agenda.

The meeting was opened to the public for presentation of statements by registered general speakers. Ms. Rauch provided the applicable provisions of the speakers' policy for the meeting. Ms. Rauch called general speakers:

Kristin Luebbert, community member, expressed concerns regarding Board priorities. Mrs. Luebbert also expressed concerns regarding the Office and Labor Relations and their use of power and authority following the completion of investigatory clearing staff of wrongdoings and alleged gatekeeping from the Office of Diverse Learners.

Cassandra St. Vil, community member, spoke about the impact of charter schools and concerns regarding the lack of charter school growth in the city of Philadelphia since 2018. Ms. St. Vil spoke about the current new charter school applications before the Board and asked

Maritza Guridy, parent/guardian, spoke about the importance of quality education and asked the Board to review new charter school applications based on performance and urged the board not to redirect resources for new schools if they do not have a proven track record of success

Hannah Gann, district staff member, spoke about the importance of having teachers like Keziah Ridgeway and Ishmeal Jimenz in the classroom and their impact on students' experiences. Ms. Gann expressed concerns regarding Franklin Learning Center being used to host a SWAT training on January 27, 2025.

Jethro Heiko, parent/guardian, expressed concerns regarding the alleged end to African American studies being taught in Philadelphia and called upon the Board to pledge to put schools on lockdown before any ICE related efforts are done in schools.



The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education Public Meeting Minutes January 30, 2025

Alisha Davis, community member, expressed concerns regarding the District's recent statements regarding immigration and ICE concerns. Ms. Davis questioned how is the district defining "legally required" and asked how can families trust that their loved ones are safe when Junots reported in February 2025 that the District has failed to comply with its 2021 Welcoming Sanctuary School Resolution. Ms. Davis also expressed concerns regarding the minimal training provided to teachers on how to engage with ICE.

The following students expressed concerns regarding the Olney High School field, noting the need for necessary improvement and asked for a public financial commitment from the Board for the revitalization of Olney High School field:

- Marjorie Tribbitt, Parent/Guardian
- Jorge Gonzalez, District Staff Member
- Michael Roth, District Staff Member
- Siena Childs, Community Member
- Nina Abrams, Community Member
- Brandon Holub, District Staff Member

The following individuals encouraged the Board to consider the financial implications of charter schools when considering new charter school applications:

- Susan DeJarnatt, community member
- David Lapp, community member,

The following individuals spoke and expressed support for WP-ACES, impact of WP-ACES on students' experiences and success, and the outstanding 30 million dollar bill delivered to the school from the state of Pennsylvania on behalf of the School District of Philadelphia:

- Janet Rahatt, community member
- Dr. Stacy Gill Phillips, Charter School Staff Member
- Khadijah Amon, parent/guardian

Thomas Quinn, district staff member, spoke about the importance of doing more to support and defend students and ensure that all schools have a plan in place as students fear deportation and other rights being stripped away from them by our federal government. Mr. Quinn praised the Board's policies that exist in place to support students but asked that the District provide training and refresher workshops around these policies, noting that all staff should be informed on what to do and how to keep our students safe while they are entrusted in our care.



The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education Public Meeting Minutes January 30, 2025

The following individuals spoke in support of a recently terminated employee, Michael Lewis, who served as the first black fleet manager and his impact during his time at the District.

- Felix Simon, District Staff Member
- Steven Kepner, District Staff Member

Kyle Lewis, district staff member, highlighted the Green Schools Program, a partnership between the District and the City of Philadelphia to support schools with projects that support and enhance sustainability within our schools and cities.

Tashi Grant, parent/guardian, expressed concerns regarding her family's experience at Henry C. Lea Elementary School including misconduct by her child's autistic support teacher during a DHS investigation, lack of mandatory reporting to Childline. Ms. Grant noted that staff have failed to do their duty to protect her child and the need for consequences.

Tahira Washington, parent/guardian, spoke in support of new charter school applications for expansion of high quality charter schools such as Pan American Charter.

Maddie Luebbert, community member, spoke in support of the students at Kensington Health Sciences as they pursue their mission to create the Dream Escape Library. Ms. Luebbert expressed concerns that students need to employ these resources to get a library in their school rather than having a full certified teacher librarian at their school.

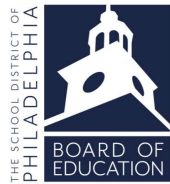
President Streater paused speaker testimony to address comments made regarding WP-ACES.

General Speakers (cont'd)

Meaghan McDonald, parent/guardian, expressed support for teaching about Palestine in schools and expressed the need to ensure teachers are supported in doing so. Ms. McDonald also spoke in support of Keziah Ridgeway, demanding that she be reinstated to the classroom.

Ilene Poses, community member, spoke about the implications of taking funds from large organizations and corporations. Ms. Poses noted that this type of action has led to a lack of transparency and urged the District to think before taking funds from foundations and large organizations.

Nick Palazzolo, district staff member, urged the District to not obey in advance, noting the White House's many executive orders including the one signed on January 29, 2025 that called for the end of "radical indoctrination in K-12 schooling". Mr. Palazzolo spoke about how this order directly threatens the current curriculum that teachers developed under the leadership of Ismeal Jimenez and asked how the District will work to protect this curriculum.



The School District of Philadelphia

Board of Education Public Meeting Minutes January 30, 2025

Barbara Dowdall, APPS, urged the District to participate in the National Council for the Teachers of English.

Lisa Haver, APPS, expressed concerns regarding being told that she needed ID to enter into the building and allowed upstairs.

Consideration of Action Items

President Streater described the process of how Action Items would be presented for consideration:

- Action Item 8 Administration's Recommendation for Termination of Professional Employees has been withdrawn by staff
- Consent agenda for the remaining Action Items, which are Action Items 1-7 and 9-29 .

Item No. 1 - Acceptance of USDA Forest Service Inflation Reduction Act – Urban and Community Forestry Grant Program (\$1,413,146) Donation Acceptance from the Friends of Hackett School (\$115,000) and from The Fund for the School District of Philadelphia (\$50,000) for the Schoolyard Improvement and Green Stormwater Infrastructure project at Hackett School (\$165,000 Total)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

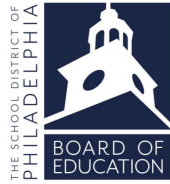
No: 0

Item No. 2 - Acceptance of HUD Community Program Funding for Tree Canopy Project (\$300,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 3 - Acceptance of PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Urban and Community Forestry grant (\$500,000)



The School District of Philadelphia

**Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
January 30, 2025**

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 4 - Acceptance of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Program Grant for Lamberton Schoolyard Improvement Project (\$500,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 5 - Adoption of Board Policies – Updated 01.27.2025

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 6. - Approval of Personnel Hires – Updated 1.23.2025

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 7 - Approval of Personnel Terminations – Updated 01.30.2025

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0



The School District of Philadelphia

**Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
January 30, 2025**

Item No. 8. - Administration's Recommendation for Termination of Professional Employees –
WITHDRAWN BY STAFF 01.30.2025

Item No. 9. - Approval of Resignations and Retirements – Updated 01.30.2025

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 10. - Settlement of Claim – R.J. v. School District of Philadelphia (\$495,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 11. - Change Orders at Various Locations (\$247,033)

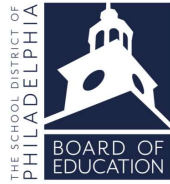
Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 12. - Capital Award for Fire Alarm Replacement at the Abram S. Jenks Elementary School (\$471,125)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0



The School District of Philadelphia

**Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
January 30, 2025**

Item No. 13. - Capital Award for the Replacement of Interior Doors at George G. Meade Elementary School (\$989,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 14. - . Capital Award to Replace and Upgrade Doors at Dr. Ethel D. Allen School (\$667,500)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 15. - Contract with Philadelphia Mural Arts Advocates (\$145,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

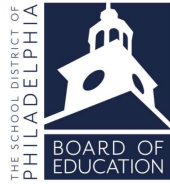
No: 0

Item No. 16. - . Ratification and Authorization of Purchase Order Contracting Authority

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 17. - Ratification of Contract with Criterion Laboratories, Inc. and Contract with Pennoni Associates for Environmental and Safety Program Training Services (\$360,000) – Updated 01.28.2025



The School District of Philadelphia

**Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
January 30, 2025**

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 18. - Ratification of Contract with Klienfelder and Contract with Various Vendors for General Environmental Services (\$5,100,000) – Updated 01.28.2025

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 19. - Ratification of a Contract with MFR Consultants, Inc. for Electronic Locker Repairs (\$150,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 20. - Contract with Influential Drones LLC for Drone Systems (\$38,392)

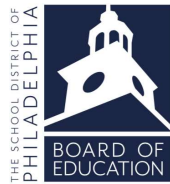
Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 21. -Ratification of Contract Amendment with the Philadelphia Police Department for Enhanced School Safety Supports (No-Cost Time Extension)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cubbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0



The School District of Philadelphia

**Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
January 30, 2025**

Item No. 22. - Ratification of Contract Amendment with R.F. Design & Integration, Inc. for CCTV Security Camera Installation at Northeast High School (\$60,507)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 23. - Contract Extension with Various Vendors - Services to Schools in High-Crime Communities as Part of the Project Prevent Grant from US Department of Education (\$110,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 24. - Ratification of Contract with The Center for Supportive Schools to Organize and Facilitate Youth Peer Mentoring Summits (\$40,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

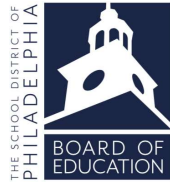
No: 0

Item No. 25. - Ratification of Contract with Vital Records Holdings LLC for Student Records (\$150,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 26. - Ratification of Memorandum of Understanding with the City of Philadelphia for the Community Schools Initiative (\$15,000,000)



The School District of Philadelphia

**Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
January 30, 2025**

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 27. - Amendment of Contract with Welligent, Inc. for STEP Program Medical Billing Software (\$123,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 28. - Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO) Conferences and Competitions (\$150,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

No: 0

Item No. 29. - . Contract with KinderSystems, Inc. for Early Childhood Education Data Management System (\$1,275,000)

Yes: Ms. Andrews, Ms. Cabbage, Ms. Harper, Mr. Jones, Ms. Lam, President Streater, Ms. Wilkerson – 7

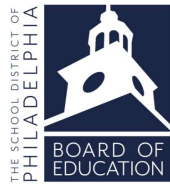
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Adjournment

President Streater announced that the Board will hold its next Goals and Guardrails Committee Meeting on February 13, 2025 at 4:00 p.m., via hybrid format.

President Streater announced that the Board will hold its next public business on February 27, 2025 at 4:00 p.m., via hybrid format.

FINAL



The School District of Philadelphia

**Board of Education
Public Meeting
Minutes
January 30, 2025**

On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 6:13 pm.

Reginald L. Streater, Esq., President
Board of Education

Tony Watlington, Ed.D.
Superintendent