

Minutes of **Wednesday, November 14, 2024, Public Board Meeting** of the Orange Board of Education held at 6:00 pm.

**Vice President Sueann Gravesande is presiding over tonight's meeting.**

Ms. Shawneque Johnson

Ms. Sueann Gravesande

Mr. David Armstrong

Ms. Samantha Crockett

Mr. Derrick Henry – **Absent**

Mr. Tyrone Tarver

Ms. Fatimah Turner, Ph.D. – **Absent**

Mr. Siaka Sherif

Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield

**ROLL CALL (7) PRESENT (0) LATE (2) ABSENT**

**ALSO PRESENT:**

- Mr. Jason Ballard, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Mr. Lamont Zachary, Assistant Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Jessica Kleen, School Board Attorney Substitute with the firm of Machado

**FLAG SALUTE**

Ms. Johnson motions to move into Executive Session.

**Moved by Mr. David Armstrong Seconded by Ms. Sueann Gravesande**

**ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT**

Ms. Johnson motions to close the Executive Session and move into a Public Meeting.

**Moved by Mr. David Armstrong Seconded by Ms. Sueann Gravesande**

**ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT**

Ms. Johnson extends a warm welcome to everyone attending the Orange Public School District Board meeting on November 13th, 2024, and introduces our Superintendent, Dr. Fitzhugh, who will deliver the Superintendent's Report.

**HIB Self-Assessment Grade SY 2023-2024** - Dr. Fitzhugh welcomes all attendees and proceeds to present the HIB Self-Assessment Grades for the school year 2023-2024, ensuring that the community and the school district are informed about the grading of our schools. He elaborates on the focus of each Core Element and highlights the highest score achieved in each category. Furthermore, he informs the audience that the overall highest score attained by any school is 78, and he continues by detailing the highest scores awarded to each school within our district.

He elaborates on the performance of our Elementary Schools, noting that Cleveland achieved 78 points, followed closely by Central with 77 points. Forest, Heywood, Lincoln, and Oakwood each scored 76 points, while Orange Early CC and Rosa Parks attained 75 points. Park Avenue School recorded a score of 74 points. In terms of our Secondary Schools, STEM Academy led with 78 points, while both Orange High School and Orange Prep secured 76 points.

**NJSLA ELA-MATH Data Update** - Dr. Fitzhugh subsequently presents his Executive Directors, Ms. Karen Harris, ELA and from the Office of Humanities and Mr. Scutari, who specializes in STEM-focused learning, to discuss the data with all attendees. He also emphasizes that there will be extensive discussions regarding the events of the previous year and the strategies to address them for the school year 2025-2026.

**District Proficiency Levels** - Ms. Harris presented the Spring NJSLA standard assessment results for 2024, revealing areas of improvement and areas for achievement. 30% of test takers were multilingual learners, particularly in grades three, four, and five. 9% of this population achieved scores that met or exceeded expectations. However, 75% of former English language learners in grades three and four met or exceeded the standards, indicating a positive trend. The overall passing rate for former multilingual learners has increased by five percentage points over the years. Students with disabilities, comprising 13.5% of test takers, have also shown improvement, with their passing rates rising by three percentage points.

Mr. Scutari shares the mathematics scores from the previous year, showing a significant improvement in performance across all grade levels. The overall increase was 4.5 percentage points, with positive growth in grades 3, 4, 6, 7, Algebra I, and Geometry. However, a slight decline was observed in grade 5. The situation in grade 8 is complex, as it may show a minor decrease due to the addition of an extra section of Algebra I for eighth graders last year. However, when a group of the highest-achieving students was removed, the performance in this course improved, with Algebra I scores surged by 11.3 percentage points, marking the district's highest results in Algebra I.

Dr. Fitzhugh praises the dedicated staff at the school, who consistently put in effort during weekends and evenings. Dr. Blanton attests to their commitment through online professional development. The hard work of the staff is yielding positive results, and the superintendent expresses gratitude to each member for their unwavering efforts. The superintendent feels incredibly fortunate to serve the school and witness their commitment to doing what is best for children, expressing heartfelt appreciation to the staff.

Mr. Scutari further adds some additional key points from this slide. He states that our Geometry scores exceeded the state average by 26 percentage points, and our growth rates in grades 3, 4, and 6, as well as Geometry, outperformed the state.

**Highlights of Schools Exceeding State Average** – Ms. Harris provides a comprehensive analysis of student passing rates at various schools, highlighting areas that have exceeded the state average. This is particularly significant for sixth grade at Heywood, as discussed in a subsequent slide.

Mr. Scutari emphasizes that numerous grade levels across various schools have exceeded state averages in Mathematics. Notably, the middle school at Heywood, along with Orange Preparatory Academy and STEM Academy, has achieved passing rates that are more than twice the state average. Additionally, Geometry at STEM Academy has experienced a 50-point percentage increase and a 40-point percentage rise. He also points out substantial improvements in passing percentages from two years prior to the previous year.

**Breakdown of Performance Levels** - Ms. Harris identifies five performance levels: "did not yet meet," "partially met," "approaching," "met," and "exceed." In grades five through eight, "approaching" students are more prevalent than "did not meet," indicating a higher percentage of students close to meeting benchmarks. To achieve "meets" status, students must secure 750 points. Schools like Forest, Heywood, Rosa Parks, and Orange Prep Academy of Inquiry and Innovation have seen progress, with a significant number of students scoring between 746 and 749.

Mr. Scutari presents a detailed analysis of the mathematics performance, indicating a trend that closely aligns with the observations made by Ms. Harris. His analysis of mathematics performance shows that 20-25% of students fall

within this approach category. Despite improvements in passing percentages, many students still fall short of proficiency or meeting NJSLA expectations. The primary focus this year is to assist students who narrowly missed the mark, such as those scoring in the 740s or 745 range. The aim is to provide additional support to help these students achieve their goals this year.

**NJSLA Science Performance Levels** - Mr. Scutari presents science scores for grades five, eight, and eleven, reflecting three years of educational instruction. In fifth grade, scores dropped from 11.3% to 9%, while in eighth grade, they rose from 6% to 6.5%. In eleventh grade, scores slightly decreased from 12.6% to 9.7%. State percentages remain below 30%, with the passing percentage for eighth-grade assessment set at 18%. These assessments present significant challenges. Nevertheless, we recognize the need for improvement and are committed to implementing strategies that will guide our students toward better performance in these evaluations.

Dr. Fitzhugh believes familiarity with ongoing scientific assessments will alleviate previous challenges. Before the implementation, students struggled to engage with language effectively, impacting science assessment results. The goal is to provide students with the best opportunity for success by exposing them to the intricacies of practice. The staff is dedicated to this important work, and Mr. Scutari emphasizes the importance of exposing students to the intricacies of practice to ensure their success.

Mr. Scutari explains that there was no statistically normed diagnostic tool for assessing science proficiency among students until last year. The NWEA, a nationally normed assessment, was implemented last year, administered to all students in grades three through eleven. This assessment gathers comprehensive data on students' proficiency in life science, space science, and physical science, as well as insights into specific scientific practices for success in assessments. The data is actively utilized, marking the first year of obtaining a complete dataset for these students, and this year we are continuing to collect data to guide our students in the right direction.

**Parent University** - Dr. Fitzhugh emphasizes the importance of students' well-being upon arrival at school, highlighting the significance of the Parent University initiative launched a few years ago. The initiative has attracted many parents participating in evening activities, such as art sessions and dance events at Orange High School. It is crucial to continue efforts with Parent University. He invites Ms. Alcantara to outline the initiatives for this year.

Ms. Alcantara announces to all that Parent University is in its third year, with four distinct academies. The Health and Wellness Academy promotes well-being, encouraging self-care for parents and community members. The Adult Learning Academy emphasizes lifelong learning, encouraging parents to broaden their knowledge. The Visual and Performing Arts Academy nurtures creativity in students from imaginative families, providing parents with opportunities to explore their artistic interests. The Academic Support Academy equips parents with strategies to become effective educators at home, enhancing their children's learning experiences.

She further adds that the university operates on a fall and spring semester schedule, with offerings launched for the fall. The university is eager to welcome more parents and community members in the future. She directs attention to the poster displayed on the slide, explaining that this poster is present throughout all the buildings, allowing parents to scan the QR code, which will take them directly to the registration site. The district's website features the Parent University section on the right side of the homepage.

**Health and Wellness** - Ms. Alcantara indicates that in the realm of Health and Wellness, we will provide two classes: House Music Dance Fitness and Drumming for Wellness.

- **House Music Dance Fitness** - This program focuses on Health and Wellness, featuring house music, dance, and fitness. The program features Latin, house, and R&B music, with a DJ contributing to its popularity. Last year, the class was offered for 12 weeks on Monday nights, but this year, there has been a request to

extend it for the entire year. The program commenced on October 28th and will continue until the end of May, taking place every Monday evening at Orange High School. We encourage you to join us; however, prior registration is required.

- **The Drumming for Wellness** - This program has fostered a community in this class, with several members returning each semester since its inception. Last semester, these participants earned their own drums as a testament to their commitment. Recently, they have resumed attending classes with their drums in hand. Notably, during the summer, they gathered in the park on several occasions to practice drumming together independently, having acquired the skills to read music from their instructor. I strongly encourage anyone who has not yet participated in a class to consider joining.

**Adult Learning Academy** – This program is hosting workshops on social change for parents this semester, led by Dr. Green. The sessions will address adverse childhood experiences and social-emotional learning, providing practical strategies for parents to implement at home. The sessions will be conducted virtually, with the final one in person. Cooperman Barnabas is collaborating on a Youth Mental Health First Aid course, which will be delivered over three Saturdays, lasting six hours.

**Visual and Performing Arts** - This program has expanded to include dance expression sessions in both fall and spring due to parental demand. Pathos Creative has started classes, and "Adventures with Artists" is led and taught by Ms. Chavarria. The Ornament Designs class is taught by Ms. Avril Vogel, an art instructor from Forest.

**Academic Support Academy** – This academy is launching a program led by Dr. Etienne, which will offer sessions in English and Haitian Creole on autism support and behavioral strategies. The program is a three-part series, with the first two virtual and the final in-person session. All classes are **FREE**, and the community of Orange is encouraged to enroll.

- **Adult ESL Classes** will be introduced soon.
- **Udemy Online Platform** will be offering thousands of self-paced courses that can be completed at your convenience.
- **College Financial Aid Sessions** will be available for parents as a result of a collaborative agreement with the Office of Special Education Behavioral Intervention.

**8<sup>th</sup> Annual District Parent Conference & Resource Fair “Parent Pride”** - The Orange High School district is inviting families to its eighth annual parent conference on November 23rd. The conference will feature workshops on math, science, and STEM, with a focus on reading readiness. The Office of STEM Focused Learning will also offer financial support for post-secondary education to parents of high school students who have experienced adverse childhood situations. The program is open to all parents, from pre-K through 12th grade, and includes bilingual sessions on knowing your worker rights by an experienced parent. Registration can be completed using QR and BIT codes. The theme for this year is Parent Pride, aiming to inspire parents to represent their schools. Attendees can expect free raffles, prizes, lunch, and additional activities.

**SEPAG Virtual Meeting** – Ms. Harper announces that the Department of Special Education and Behavioral Intervention is set to host a virtual meeting on November 20th, focusing on the ACES program. The meeting will be led by Dr. Zambrano, an internal expert on adverse childhood experiences. A panel discussion will be organized in January to further explore this topic for parents. The transitional coordinator, Mr. Andrew Littlefinger, will present on the importance of education for children. The meeting is expected to be a valuable opportunity to share resources and opportunities with parents. The Zoom information has been shared on Class Dojo for the students. If you require this information and are present, please feel free to email us at opening our schools, and we will provide

you with the Zoom details. The meeting is expected to be a valuable resource for parents and students alike.

**Bilingual Parent Advisory Council** - Ms. Harris announces that it is with great pleasure that she announces the inaugural Bilingual Parent Advisory Council meeting of this year. She strongly encourages everyone to attend and participate. This important gathering will take place in person at Rosa Parks Community School. We will provide translators to facilitate communication. It is essential for all attendees to utilize the QR code and register in advance to ensure we have an adequate number of facilitators. This meeting will be interactive, emphasizing dialogue rather than mere presentations. It is crucial for us to involve all families, particularly those of multilingual learners, so we can gain valuable insights from the community regarding how to best meet their needs. Therefore, I kindly invite you to join us on November 18th at Rosa Parks Community School, beginning at 6:00 PM.

**Students of the Month** - Dr. Fitzhugh expresses gratitude to the attendees and highlights the importance of acknowledging the students of the month. He emphasizes the dedication demonstrated daily in service to children and emphasizes the unity in efforts at 451 Lincoln Avenue. He encourages everyone to celebrate and recognize the hard work of students across all district schools. Dr. Fitzhugh announces the names of students from each school, celebrating their achievements.

**Attendance for the Month** - Dr. Fitzhugh emphasizes the importance of daily school attendance, with October attendance data showing most areas falling within the low chronic and modest chronic categories. Low chronic absences range from zero to 1.99 days, while minus chronic absences range from two to 2.99 days. The establishment of attendance committees, proactive communication with parents, and discussions about school attendance are yielding positive results throughout the district. The community is grateful to parents and staff for their collaborative efforts in ensuring children attend school every day. The cumulative absences by school for the early childhood program in October show a significant yellow highlight, demonstrating the success of the initiative initiated by Dr. Blanton and her team last year in collaboration with Fidelity. The slide also shows consistent trends in cumulative absences from kindergarten through grade seven, with low chronic or modest chronic absences indicating effective efforts. As the slide transitions to the secondary level, the majority of students are present daily, and it is crucial to persist with the campaign to offer wellness components and ensure students can compete with their peers across the state and nation.

Dr. Fitzhugh thanks the elementary and secondary teams for their dedication in ensuring consistent school attendance. The cumulative absences for October, categorized by grade level, are now at 96%, exceeding the state average by 1%. This performance is commendable.

**District Facility Maintenance & Custodial Services Updates** - Dr. Fitzhugh invited School Administrator, Mr. Ballard to provide an update on the facility. Mr. Ballard reports that the staff was acclimating to new routines in July and August, and by October, they were focusing on cleaning and disinfecting all buildings, especially high-touch areas. The flu season and allergies have led to a focus on sanitizing frequently contacted surfaces. The boiler system conversion required temperature fluctuations from October into November, but the boilers are now operational. Mr. Ballard requests patience during this transition, as it is not a straightforward process.

Mr. Ballard further communicates that the school building has experienced significant damage due to a deteriorating sea pipe. The damage was a serious concern, requiring immediate attention. The remedial work was undertaken during off-hours to minimize disruption. Additional challenges related to the sea pipe were addressed in November. The building has been functioning effectively, with no significant issues encountered. The SDA, Mr. Vasquez, and Ms. Nagel are working towards finalizing two state projects, including the high school division and Cleveland. Mr. Wesley and his team have been invaluable partners in keeping the school informed about day-to-day concerns, ensuring smooth operations.

The superintendent is ensuring the board is kept informed about the safety of students and their progress in facility undertakings. The situation is currently calm, despite past challenges. However, the weather is still early in the season, and the measures implemented over the past few years will demonstrate resilience. The superintendent is also pleased to announce that the ESSIP program has been successfully passed, indicating that significant work will soon commence. Activity will be observed in the buildings as they prepare for construction related to the ESSIP program. The superintendent encourages the board to follow their social media channels and sign up for the mobile app to stay updated on the progress of the facility.

Dr. Fitzhugh informs the Board of Education of the passing of Ms. Sherry Williams, a staff member who served as an ESS substitute at Forest Community School. He expresses gratitude for her dedication and urges everyone to keep her family in their thoughts during this difficult time. Dr. Fitzhugh requests a moment of silence to honor her memory and acknowledges her as an exceptional individual. He extends condolences to the Williams family and assures them that the administration and Board of Education are available to support them.

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Public Board Meeting Minutes.

**Moved by Ms. Gravesande Seconded by Ms. Crockett**  
**ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT**

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Closed Session Public Board Meeting Minutes.

**Moved by Mr. Armstrong Seconded by Ms. Gravesande**  
**ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT**

Ms. Johnson announces that the committee reports will now commence and extends an invitation to Mr. Armstrong and Ms. Crockett to present.

Mr. Armstrong reported that a Special Education Committee Meeting held on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, concentrated on launching a training program for special education teachers. This program is designed to align with the Individualized Education Program (IEP), highlighting the legally defensible present levels, goals, and objectives for at-risk students. A key focus is to educate teachers regarding the legal implications of IEPs and the significance of collaborative efforts within the educational team. The committee expressed appreciation for Ms. Harper and her team's exemplary work with the resources at their disposal. In light of ongoing staffing shortages in speech therapy and special education, the committee is proactively seeking solutions to these issues. The Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SPAG) is led by parents, and they are encouraged to engage actively. Information regarding the schedule for future meetings can be found on the website.

Ms. Crockett has informed that the curriculum committee met on October 29<sup>th</sup> to deliberate on two important matters. The first topic addressed was the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning a pre-college initiative with St. Elizabeth University, specifically designed for high school juniors. This program includes a summer enrichment component that enables students to earn college credits. Sophomores are eligible to participate for one week, whereas juniors can engage in a five-week program. The committee is in the process of assessing the number of participants and the logistical requirements. The second matter discussed was the district assessment calendars, which will be made accessible for all grades, ranging from kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The committee is keen to further investigate this initiative.

Ms. Johnson expresses her gratitude to Mr. Armstrong and Ms. Crockett, noting that her fellow board members are absent and unable to present their reports. Consequently, we will conclude the committee reports and move on to the next item on the agenda.

Ms. Johnson motions to motions to open Public Comments.

**Moved by Mr. Armstrong Seconded by Ms. Gravesande**  
**ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT**

### **Public Comments**

Ms. Tisa Singleton emphasizes that World Kindness Day, observed annually on November 13th, highlights the significance of kindness among individuals. Lincoln Avenue School, which accommodates over 700 students, is actively promoting this value each morning after the Pledge of Allegiance. The newly appointed community coordinator, Ms. Breon, has initiated a program to ensure that every student receives a gift prior to the holiday break. This initiative includes an engaging basketball game featuring staff members competing against community participants, an upcoming House Music Day celebration, and a holiday Toy Drive. Adults are encouraged to join in, with entry requiring either a toy donation or a \$5 contribution. The event is scheduled for November 23rd from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM in the gymnasium of Lincoln Avenue School.

The school is dedicated to spreading joy during the holiday season by promoting kindness in diverse forms. She further elaborates that kindness can manifest in various ways, such as sharing a smile, holding the door for someone, volunteering, reading to others, attending PTO or board meetings, and donating used books to the library. The school is resolute in its commitment to showcasing kindness in multiple ways and eagerly anticipates the participation of everyone.

Ms. Singleton concludes by offering a gift to Dr. Fitzhugh in appreciation of his prompt addition of the event to his calendar and his commitment to attend.

Dr. Fitzhugh conveys appreciation for the present and extends his thanks to Team Lincoln.

Ms. Alely St. Hilaire expresses gratitude to the attendees and asks about the state results report for all schools and if relaxation techniques or breathing exercises are implemented before exams. The NJSA Four Family Connections is offering support to schools in need of these resources, as they can help students manage test-related anxiety. Dr. Fitzhugh, the Senior Director of the program, is the contact person for further information. Dr. Renos' participation in the Adverse Childhood Experiences training is commendable, as she educates the community about the impact of toxic stress on children's developing brains. Understanding how stress influences growth can help children develop resilience through meaningful connections with those who can support their needs. Ms. St. Hilaire also proposes the creation of a documentary titled "Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope" to address the topic of resilience.

Ms. St. Hilaire highlights the collaboration between experts on the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) Study and Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, ensuring pediatricians in New Jersey and nationwide receive training on ACES. Dr. Robert Block, former president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, identifies ACES as the most significant unaddressed public health threat. She encourages viewers to visit YouTube to watch Dr. Burke Harris discusses ACES and recommends that we organize a panel discussion and documentary on this critical topic.

Scarlett St. Hilaire, a fifth-grade representative at Rosa Parks Community School, is voicing her classmates' concerns regarding the quality of school lunch options. Several of my peers have approached me expressing their dissatisfaction with the school lunches and have asked me to please address this issue. I plan on attending the Orange PTO meeting to bring up these concerns. In addition, I would like to propose that we consider revising the school lunch menu to offer more appealing and varied choices. I recognize that the district operates within a

specific budget for both lunches and breakfasts. However, this morning, as many of you experienced, the weather was quite cold, and the breakfast I received was hard and unappetizing, leading me to skip it entirely. I understand that some students may not have the opportunity to eat breakfast at home, which makes the meals provided at school crucial. If the food lacks appeal or nutritional value, it can hinder students' ability to concentrate and learn effectively, potentially contributing to difficulties in certain subjects.

Ms. Johnson expresses her gratitude to Scarlett for sharing her thoughts and assures her that her concerns will be taken into consideration. She encourages Scarlett to continue advocating for her classmates.

Ms. Sakeynah Sawyer thanks the board members, Dr. Fitzhugh, and the Orange Community for their contract, emphasizing the importance of fiscal respect and the broader implications. Fiscal respect ensures equitable contributions from all stakeholders, including teachers, paraprofessionals, secretaries, and security personnel, to uphold the nation's foundational ideals. The organization promotes equitable compensation and living wages, fostering an environment conducive to individual flourishing. The true worth of the contract lies in diversity, protection, and maintenance within the Orange family, fostering inclusivity, empathy, and improved working conditions, collaboration, and innovation.

Ms. Johnson expresses her gratitude to Ms. Sawyer's remarks.

Ms. Gloria Steward, a community member, expressed her concerns about the visibility of the parking area in the Administrative Building as it was difficult to see the parked vehicles tonight. She continues to express that during the presentation, Ms. Alcantara discussed the various actions being taken to support students and commends Ms. Alcantara for her efforts in fostering community connections and encourages the continuation of these initiatives. She also appreciated Dr. Fitzhugh's recognition of the staff, which contributes to the students' success and the program's effectiveness. As a grandparent of one student, she expressed concern about the small driveway used by students walking to the STEM program. She explains how the lack of a sidewalk in the area poses a significant risk to students exiting vehicles. To enhance safety, measures such as implementing a crossing guard during morning and afternoon hours may be necessary. The number of students waiting for buses or other forms of transportation adds another layer of risk. The issue warrants consideration and collaboration with the city to advocate for student safety and well-being. Lastly, she inquires about the follow-up procedures for students sent to programs outside the district should be understood, including how progress is monitored and support provided. The personal experience of students at NJIT should be considered to assess their needs and identify ways to enhance their educational journey. Ms. Steward concludes by wishing all a pleasant Thanksgiving.

Ms. Johnson motions to close Public Comments.

**Moved by Ms. Crockett Seconded by Mr. Armstrong**  
**ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT**

Ms. Johnson extends an invitation to the Student Representative, Ms. Lopez, to present.

Ms. Lopez discusses the importance of mental preparation for test-taking, highlighting the negative comments made by her peers. She shares her experience with the SAT, where she struggled with concentration. Despite this, suggests that for future tests, brief breaks of three to five minutes could be beneficial for better preparation for subsequent sections.

Ms. Johnson motions to have a Consent Agenda except item H1 to N2 including all HIB cases, home instructions, and out-of-district placements and the Human Resources agenda.



Mr. Ballard indicates that it should be noted in the record that when the bills list is approved, the board members will be endorsing the bills list while abstaining from any reimbursement related to their conference in Atlantic City scheduled for October.

Ms. Gravesande refrains from J-1 and the matters listed on the Personnel Agenda.

Mr. Winfield refrains from engaging with Montclair University, Elizabeth University, and any matters involving Jeffrey Lamb.

Ms. Johnson abstains from including the bills list, except for any reimbursements made to herself for expenses incurred during the school board conference.

**Moved by Mr. Sheriff Seconded by Ms. Crockett**  
**ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (1) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT**

Ms. Crockett announces the upcoming district's public meetings.

Public Relations Committee Virtual Meeting – Wednesday, December 4, 2024, at 4:00 pm  
Orange Board of Education Public Board Meeting – Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at 7:30 pm in the

BOE

Curriculum Committee Virtual Meeting – Tuesday, November 26, 2024, at 3:30 pm  
Facilities Committee Virtual Meeting – Monday, December 2, 2024, at 4:00 pm  
Special Education Committee Virtual Meeting – Tuesday, December 3, 2024, at 3:30 pm  
Policy Committee Virtual Meeting – Thursday, December 5, 2024, at 4:00 pm  
Finance Committee Virtual Meeting – Thursday, December 5, 2024, at 5:30 pm  
Human Resources Committee Virtual Meeting – Monday, December 9, 2024, at 4:00 pm

### **Board Comments**

Ms. Gravesande emphasizes the importance of board members being fully engaged during meetings, especially when the superintendent presents students or public comments. She believes that cell phone distractions during meetings are inappropriate and detract from the meeting's purpose. She acknowledges the board's role in managing meetings but urges board members to refrain from such distractions.

Mr. Sherif explains to Ms. Gravesande the importance of using cell phones during meetings, despite concerns about disruption. He acknowledges that some attendees may have urgent matters requiring their attention elsewhere, and he doesn't find it disruptive. He also notes that people often juggle multiple responsibilities, and there are times when immediate responses are essential. He expresses regret for any offense caused and emphasizes the importance of managing various obligations, which may require occasional cell phone use during meetings.

Ms. Gravesande addresses Mr. Sherif's concern about constant phone usage during a board meeting, highlighting that it is disrespectful to both the public and colleagues. She acknowledges the responsibilities of caring for elderly family members and children but emphasizes that constant phone usage during the meeting is problematic. Mr. Tarver states that he was among the board members who utilized his cell phone for a significant portion of the meeting. He acknowledges that while he does not write quickly, he took notes on presentations and considered commenting on resolutions but chose not to due to the positive atmosphere. He expresses concerns about low NJSLA scores and the November presentation due to Dr. Fitzhugh's absence. He clarifies that his phone use was

not personal and suggested using a laptop to convey a more respectful demeanor. He expresses a desire for everyone to understand this and extends his gratitude to anyone who may have taken offense.

Ms. Johnson thanks everyone for their kind words and invites Ms. Massoud to stand. She acknowledges her recent addition to the team and appreciates her contributions. She acknowledges her ability to take initiative without extensive training, her effective strategies, and her consistent support. She appreciates her presence and the tranquility it brings to the organization. Ms. Massoud is praised for her revitalizing efforts, streamlined processes, and introduced valuable initiatives. She appreciates her readiness to assist and her calming influence. On behalf of the Board of Education, she thanks her for her determination and growth.

Ms. Johnson extends her warmest birthday wishes to Mr. Armstrong. Additionally, she conveys her heartfelt congratulations on his anniversary.

Ms. Johnson expresses her gratitude to everyone present. She acknowledges the significant achievements within the district, highlighting the exceptional contributions of the Executive Directors. She specifically extends her thanks to Ms. Singleton for her invaluable role, noting her consistent attendance at board meetings and her willingness to pose important questions that others may hesitate to ask. Ms. Johnson emphasizes the importance of all board members, stating that their involvement is crucial to the success of the organization, alongside Dr. Fitzhugh.

Dr. Fitzhugh has appointed Ms. Terrell as the new Communications Officer at the Orange Public School District. She has developed a strategic plan for the communications department and is eager to present it to the board and community. The district is looking forward to Ruby Bridges activities tomorrow morning. Ms. Terrell's dedication and hard work are appreciated, and she is eager to guide the district in a new direction. He concludes by welcoming her to the Orange School District.

Ms. Johnson motions to have the Meeting Adjourned.

**Moved by Mr. Armstrong Seconded by Ms. Gravesande  
ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (2) ABSENT**