

Minutes of **Wednesday, June 11, 2025, Public Board Meeting**
of the Orange Board of Education held at 5:30 pm.

President Shawneque Johnson is presiding over tonight's meeting.

Ms. Shawneque Johnson
Ms. Fatimah Turner, Ph.D.
Mr. David Armstrong
Ms. Samantha Crockett
Ms. Sueann Gravesande
Mr. Tyrone Tarver
Mr. Siaka Sherif
Ms. India Williams
Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield

ROLL CALL (9) PRESENT (0) LATE (0) ABSENT

ALSO PRESENT:

- Mr. Jason Ballard, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Mr. Dwayne Ortiz, Assistant Business Administrator/Board Secretary
- Ms. Jessica Kleen, School Board Attorney Substitute with Machado Law Group

FLAG SALUTE

Ms. Johnson motions to move into Executive Session.

Moved by Mr. David Armstrong and Seconded by Mr. Siaka Sherif

ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) ABSENT (2) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

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

Moved by Mr. David Armstrong Seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield

ROLL CALL (9) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) ABSENT (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson opens the meeting with a formal welcome and invites Dr. Fitzhugh, Superintendent of Schools, to present a plaque to the Student Representative, Ms. Ramos, in recognition of her service.

Dr. Fitzhugh addresses the attendees, expressing gratitude on behalf of the Board of Education and the administration to Ms. Ramos for her dedicated service as the Student Representative for the 2024–2025 academic year. He invites her to the front and reads the inscription on the commemorative plaque:

"On a successful year as the 2024–2025 Student Representative within the Orange School District, your tenacity and transparency created a space where student voices were heard, appreciated, and acted upon. You are to be commended. We wish you the very best as you move to new heights. Presented on June 11, 2025, in partnership — the Orange Board of Education and the Orange School District."

Dr. Fitzhugh highlights Ms. Ramos's leadership within the Orange High School ROTC program, commending her exceptional commitment and influence throughout the District. He concludes by thanking her for her contributions and invites members of the Board of Education to offer their remarks.

Ms. Ramos thanks the Board of Education for the opportunity to serve as Student Representative, describing the experience as an honor and a valuable learning opportunity. She expresses appreciation for the support she received and shares that the leadership skills gained will stay with her throughout her life.

Dr. Turner thanks Ms. Ramos for her service and encourages her to learn from both the positive and challenging aspects of her experience. She advises Ms. Ramos to use the good to grow and the challenges to inspire change. Dr. Turner reaffirms the Board's support and expresses confidence in Ms. Ramos's continued success within the Orange School District.

Ms. Johnson invites Dr. Fitzhugh to proceed with the Superintendent's Report.

Dr. Fitzhugh delivers the Superintendent's Report, providing an update on the Verizon Innovative Learning Initiative. He notes that, despite his absence at the previous meeting due to travel, the program has expanded to include Rosa Parks Community School and Cleveland Street School, serving Grades 5-7. Dr. Fitzhugh acknowledges Board member Ms. Sueann Gravesande for her instrumental role in advancing the initiative.

With the support of Ms. Alcantara, the executive team, and school principals, the district has applied to extend the initiative to all remaining schools serving Grades 5-12. Dr. Fitzhugh expresses optimism about the district's future.

Students of the Month Report - Dr. Fitzhugh begins by recognizing the Students of the Month from schools across the district. He then highlights an important upcoming event: a visit from Verizon representatives to Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation. He emphasizes the leadership role of the student tech support team during the visit's panel discussions and expresses pride in their involvement. Dr. Fitzhugh notes that the visit will start promptly at 8:30 a.m. and requests the Board and community's best wishes for the district's continued success in demonstrating effective use of Verizon's resources and expanding the program.

District Goal Number One: 21st Century Integration SY 2024-2025 - Dr. Fitzhugh provides an update on the district's mathematics goal, which aims for 60% of students to meet or exceed their growth targets by May 2025. He reports that current data shows the district is exceeding this goal, with 65.8% of students meeting their targets across various assessments, including i-Ready and NWEA MAP. He credits this progress to targeted professional development and invites Executive Director, Mr. Scutari to speak further on the support provided to educators.

District Goals Update-Mathematics - Mr. Scutari explains that the district's math scores exceed national averages, marking a significant achievement. He attributes this success to professional development focused on student-centered learning, including the use of rich tasks and collaborative problem-solving. These strategies encourage deeper understanding and active engagement in mathematics.

District Goals 2025-2026 - Dr. Fitzhugh presents the District Goals for the 2025–2026 school year, emphasizing their role in guiding professional development and academic support across the district. He outlines four key goals:

1. **21st Century Integration**
2. **Community Engagement**
3. **Facilities, Finance, and Staff Support**
4. **Social and Emotional Supports**

He underscores that Goal 4—Social and Emotional Supports—is foundational to the success of all other goals. Dr. Fitzhugh reviews several slides to elaborate on each goal and their intended impact.

Goal #1: 21st Century Integration - Dr. Fitzhugh outlines the district's continued focus on strong instructional practices, meaningful technology use, and professional development. He highlights progress in digital access, including a one-to-one device program and the Verizon partnership. The district aims for a 5%

increase in student achievement across math, ELA, and science by June 2026, and for all students to engage in digital-age learning experiences.

Goal #2: Community Engagement - Dr. Fitzhugh emphasizes the district's commitment to strengthening communication with families and the broader community. Efforts include weekly newsletters, phone blasts, and expanded use of digital platforms such as Parent Square and the district's mobile app. A website redesign is also underway to improve accessibility and innovation.

He highlights events like Parent University, STEM fairs, and the annual Color Run as examples of active community involvement. The district also continues to support parent and student councils, which provide valuable feedback on areas such as instruction, wellness, and school meals—helping inform ongoing improvements.

Goal #3: Facilities, Finance, and Staff Support – Dr. Fitzhugh highlights efforts to retain staff, including a recently secured grant led by Ms. Nancy Masoud, which was submitted within hours and awarded to support staff retention initiatives. He emphasizes the importance of developing a fiscally responsible budget that supports schools, staff, and students. Mr. Ballard, the School Business Administrator, is recognized for ensuring financial accountability and keeping the district fiscally sound.

Key priorities include:

- Funding professional development, special education, and wellness programs.
- Promoting innovation and transparency in budgeting across departments and schools.
- Fostering a collaborative culture where staff, parents, and community members participate in decision-making.

Dr. Fitzhugh underscores that student and staff wellness is foundational to success and must remain central to all initiatives.

Goal #4: Social and Emotional Supports – Dr. Fitzhugh emphasizes the vital role of counselors and social workers in supporting students, staff, and families, calling their work foundational to student success and well-being.

Key initiatives and highlights:

- Ongoing partnerships to provide support services across all grade levels, including pre-K.
- Early learning focus: Dr. Blanton and her team are praised for promoting social-emotional growth through dramatic play, critical thinking, and language development in pre-K students.
- Whole-child approach: The district is committed to addressing students' emotional needs alongside academics at all levels—pre-K, elementary, and high school.
- Community feedback encouraged: Families are urged to complete surveys to help the district improve and expand supports.

Overall, the goal centers on fostering a nurturing, emotionally supportive environment that helps students thrive.

Empowering Educators - Ms. Nancy Masoud, Executive Director of Human Resources, shared that Orange Public Schools was selected as one of only 12 districts in New Jersey to receive the Teacher Climate and Culture: Empowering Educators competitive grant, totaling \$79,662. This opportunity came on May 15, the day after a board meeting, when Ms. Masoud was alerted about the grant with only hours left to apply. With Dr. Fitzhugh's support,

she submitted the proposal within 90 minutes, focusing on improving teacher retention, wellbeing, and work-life balance.

The grant aims to reduce administrative burdens, restore instructional time, and strengthen school culture. The district will launch Saturday Spark Sessions, paid professional development days designed to move tasks like lesson planning, grading, and data review to Saturdays—freeing up time during the school week for direct student interaction.

Orange will also send four educators to a statewide institute on July 29 to help design a statewide playbook, based on the district’s implementation. The program includes three core pillars:

1. **Reclaiming instructional time (by shifting non-instructional tasks to Saturdays),**
2. **Enhancing teacher wellbeing, and**
3. **Strengthening climate and culture through collaboration and professional growth.**

The SPARKS framework (Streamline, Plan, Accelerate, Reclaim, Knowledge-share, Support) will guide the work, and the grant funds will support stipends for teachers and staff participating in the initiative. A survey will be administered to measure its impact over time. Teachers interested in participating will apply through a stipend-based application process.

Seal of Biliteracy - Dr. Fitzhugh announced that 59 seniors earned the 2025 NJ Seal of Biliteracy, more than doubling the number from 2023. He highlighted this as a result of rigorous academic support and high expectations, reflecting the district’s commitment to bilingualism and language proficiency. A press release celebrating this milestone is available on the district website.

Scholarship Updates - Dr. Fitzhugh announced that students from Orange High School have earned over \$14.7 million and STEM Innovation Academy over \$15.2 million in academic scholarships, totaling more than \$30 million—up from \$26 million last year. He credited this achievement to a districtwide team effort, thanking staff from pre-K through 12th grade for supporting student success.

Project Lead the Way - Heywood Avenue School and STEM Innovation Academy were named Project Lead the Way Distinguished Schools for the 2024–2025 school year. This national recognition honors their commitment to expanding student access, engagement, and achievement in transformative, hands-on STEM education. Dr. Fitzhugh credited the instructional staff’s dedication and expertise for this accomplishment.

Attendance Update - May 2025 - Dr. Fitzhugh highlighted a continued positive trend in student attendance, with over 3,300 students having fewer than 8 absences and a district-wide attendance rate of 96% in May—above the 95% goal, despite breaks and allergy season. He credited parents, staff, and the wider school community for their efforts, especially at the early childhood and secondary levels where chronic absenteeism has significantly declined over the past three years. Ongoing efforts such as automated messages, parent outreach, and attendance committees were recognized as key contributors.

June Facilities Update - Mr. Ballard reported that daily cleaning and maintenance continue across all schools, with most work orders resolved promptly. Concrete repairs, electrical updates, and baseboard replacements were completed at various sites. Emergency A/C units were installed at Heywood Avenue School following a parent concern, demonstrating a responsive team effort. Digital LED signs are being installed districtwide as part of ESSIP facility upgrades. Work with the SDA is ongoing, and the new Cleveland Street School has been a success. The district anticipates a very active summer of construction, asking for community patience as work is completed in time for the new school year.

Superintendent's Closing Announcements - Dr. Fitzhugh informs families that school supply lists are available on the district website and will remain accessible through the upcoming website update. He urges everyone who has not yet signed up to download the Orange App, emphasizing its importance for receiving timely district communications. He also encourages the community to follow the district's social media channels for quick updates.

He honors the memory of Ms. Mabel A. Guthrie, a dedicated former educator and counselor in the district, who passed away on May 23, 2025, at the age of 95. A moment of silence is held to recognize her lasting impact on the Orange school community.

Mr. Ballard introduces the annual financial audit and representatives from PKF O'Connor Davies. He praises their high standards and accountability and then hands the presentation to Mr. Bronco.

Mr. Bronco and Ms. Rio from PKF O'Connor Davies present the district's annual financial audit and thank Dr. Fitzhugh, Mr. Ballard, and Mr. Ortiz for their assistance. The audit reviews multiple departments and evaluates the financial statements for accuracy in accordance with US GAAP. They issue a modified opinion due to missing records for capital assets but give clean opinions in other areas. Two material weaknesses are identified: one in the financial statement close process and one in the payroll process. The audit also includes federal and state compliance testing, with one improved finding related to the school state aid application. Additionally, three less severe findings require corrective action. The auditors open the floor for questions from the board and community.

Board member Mr. Tarver raises concerns about the audit presentation not being initially shared in detail with the full board, as he believes is required by statute. He notes that in past years, full board presentations were more detailed. District leadership, including Ms. Kleen and the auditors, clarify that the current format meets statutory requirements and is consistent with previous years.

Mr. Tarver then questions the district's explanation for payroll-related audit findings, arguing that the issue stemmed from an internal decision to switch payroll systems without adequate staffing, rather than simply a staffing shortage. Dr. Fitzhugh and Mr. Ballard respond, explaining that the system transition began when the district was fully staffed, and that despite early issues, all staff were paid on time. Mr. Ballard emphasizes that the team worked long hours to ensure this. They acknowledge errors occurred due to non-HR staff entering payroll data during a leadership transition, but all discrepancies were corrected.

Ms. Kleen concludes by clarifying that the audit findings pertain to the 2023–2024 year and not to the current HR leadership.

Mr. Tarver questioned the management response to Finding 2024-004 (Payroll), disagreeing that staffing shortages were the sole cause. He also raised concerns about Finding 2024-001 (School Food Services) and incomplete financial records. **Ms. Aiorio** clarified these were repeat issues from previous years, and progress had been made despite ongoing challenges.

Ms. Gravesande noted improvement in audit findings, which decreased from over 20 to 6. She and others praised Mr. Ballard for his work.

Mr. Tarver also asked about Finding 2024-003 (School Lunch Aid) and ongoing concerns about unrecorded City Hall facility use payments, which auditors said did not meet their materiality threshold.

Mr. Sherif asked whether any financial staff were implicated; auditors confirmed no misconduct was found.

Ms. Gravesande asked Mr. Ballard when the Corrective Action Plan would be ready.

Mr. Ballard stated the Corrective Action Plan is in progress and will be presented in August, with a draft submitted to the state within 30 days. He explained that many issues are already being addressed through the district's new Genesis system, which improves integration and oversight between HR and finance. He noted ongoing upgrades, such as transitioning timesheets to digital. Despite system challenges and staffing changes, all employees and vendors were consistently paid—even during a cyber incident.

Ms. Johnson and Dr. Turner acknowledged the reduction in audit findings from nearly 30 to 6 over several years, crediting improved systems and leadership. Dr. Turner emphasized focusing on facts, not opinions, and encouraged Mr. Ballard to continue his work confidently.

Auditors confirmed the board may contact them directly with further questions.

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the April 29th, 2025, Public Budget Hearing Minutes.

Moved by Mr. David Armstrong Seconded by Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield

ROLL CALL (9) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the May 6th, 2025, Public Budget Hearing Minutes.

Moved by Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield Seconded by Dr. Fatimah Turner

ROLL CALL (5) YEA (0) NAY (4) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the May 14th, 2025, Public Board Meeting Minutes.

Moved by Mr. David Armstrong Seconded by Ms. Samantha Crockett

ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (2) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the May 14th, 2025, Executive Session Meeting Minutes.

Moved by Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield Seconded by Dr. Fatimah Turner

ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (2) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson opens the Committee Reports and invites Ms. Crockett to present the Curriculum report.

Curriculum Report – Ms. Crockett shared that the Curriculum Committee met on May 28th, 2025. The committee reviewed NJGPA Spring 2025 outcomes to support graduation planning, the NJIT dual enrollment MOU, and district goals for the 2025–26 school year. They also discussed the Radium Girls Sundial Memorial campaign, a student-led initiative from the book club. Planning is underway for design, fundraising, and community engagement. Ms. Crockett noted that approval of the project plan is requested so work can continue.

Mr. Tarver requested that the Curriculum Committee report be shared with all board members, noting it was not included in the agenda. Ms. Crockett agreed to do so.

Ms. Johnson invited Mr. Siaka to present the Finance Report.

Finance Report – Mr. Sherif shared that the Finance Committee met on April 5th, 2025, with all members present except Dr. Turner. The committee reviewed financial balances, the bill list, and an increase in facility use requests. They discussed the audit report and posed many questions to understand the findings. As a result, 34 finance-related

resolutions were brought to the board for approval. He noted that the district's finances are healthy and highlighted the Finance Department's efforts to secure grants for facility repairs and cost savings.

Mr. Ballard added that the district's financial progress is the result of strong teamwork. He acknowledged the contributions of key staff, including Mr. Zachary, Mr. Ortiz, Ms. Nagel, Mr. Vasquez, Mr. Dorsey, Ms. Masoud, and Ms. Alcantara. He emphasized that none of the financial improvements would be possible without the collaboration and support of the Board, who approve the pursuit and acceptance of grants.

Public Relations Report – Dr. Turner shares that the Public Relations Committee met on June 4th, 2025. The meeting, which is broadcast live on Facebook, highlights positive developments and partnerships across the district and city. She encourages the public to tune in to hear about the district's ongoing achievements.

Highlights from the meeting included the recent tennis tournament, celebrations around Orange Week, and recognition of students graduating with Associate's degrees. Dr. Turner invites Ms. Alcantara to briefly share more on the accomplishments of those students during the meeting.

Ms. Alcantara shares updates on Orange Week, now in its eighth year, celebrating the spirit and pride of the Orange community. It began with a district-wide Spelling Bee, followed by a student tennis tournament—part of a USTA-funded program initiated three years ago that integrates tennis into PE classes and afterschool programming.

Throughout the week, family engagement events centered on literacy and STEM have taken place, culminating in a STEM Festival and Color Run in Orange Park. The festival is a collaboration between the Office of STEM Focused Learning and the Office of Innovation, with support from the military and ROTC.

She also highlights the Essex County College dual enrollment program, which allows selected students to begin earning college credit starting in 9th grade. This year, 12 students graduated with both a high school diploma and an associate's degree. The program spans all four years of high school and is made possible by dedicated staff and ECC faculty, ensuring students are college-ready upon graduation.

Dr. Turner thanks Ms. Alcantara for her detailed update and acknowledges the team effort behind the successes shared. She emphasizes that the Public Relations Committee exists to highlight student achievements, recognize teacher contributions, and showcase community partnerships. She reaffirms that the committee is committed to celebrating the positive work happening throughout the City of Orange, united in its mission to support and uplift students.

Ms. Johnson thanks everyone for the committee meeting presentations and then motions to open Public Comments.

Moved by Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield Seconded by Mr. Siaka Sherif

ROLL CALL (9) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Public Comments

A councilwoman requests an update on a prior request regarding meeting space for her Girl Scout troop, noting they are a nonprofit and the troop consists of district students. She highlights that rental costs are too high and asks the Board to reconsider offering space free of charge.

Ms. Johnson suggests exploring city venues. The councilwoman responds that district schools offer familiarity and safety. Ms. Kleen explains the district has a contractual agreement with another Girl Scout troop, which limits the Board's ability to accommodate new requests. The councilwoman expresses concern over lack of response. The

Board agrees to follow up, and Ms. Kleen offers to speak privately to clarify the legal matter. Some board members express that this is their first-time hearing of such a contractual restriction.

Dr. Nelson praises Orange Week, Lincoln Avenue’s arts program, and Parent University. As a parent of a Daisy in Girl Scout Troop 20268, she highlights the value the troop brings to the community. She shares concerns about the current meeting location at the library, citing unsafe pedestrian conditions and parking challenges. She urges the Board to consider allowing the troop to meet in school facilities for safety, convenience, and community-building.

Mr. De La Rosa, a bilingual teacher and Orange resident, expresses pride in Orange students and highlights the importance of supporting multilingual learners (MLLs). He notes that while Orange High School has achieved record Seal of Biliteracy numbers, younger bilingual students (grades 5 and below) are not on track due to the absence of a proper bilingual program. He stresses the need for targeted instruction for students with interrupted schooling and clarifies that Lincoln Avenue is fully staffed with bilingual teachers, indicating this is not a staffing issue.

Ms. Bell, a 20-year Orange High School math educator and President-Elect of the Orange Education Association, shares her appreciation for the district's collaborative spirit, recalling Dr. Fitzhugh's recent statement about working together on behalf of educators. She raises two questions directed to Ms. Masoud: (1) regarding the Climate and Culture Grant—asking how many staff members can attend the training, what the selection criteria are, and whether it includes all staff categories or just teachers; and (2) regarding the Employee Assistance Program—inquiring about its current utilization rate and whether there are set goals for engagement. Dr. Fitzhugh congratulates Ms. Bell publicly and invites her to schedule a meeting with him and Ms. Masoud to continue the conversation and strengthen collaboration moving forward.

Mr. Jean Baptiste praised the superintendent and shared his daughter’s positive experience at Orange High School. He criticized the board for mishandling a Girl Scout troop’s facility request, claiming political bias is preventing fair treatment. He urged the board to support the troop leader, who is serving all children, including her own in the district.

A student from Rosa Parks Community School, Dacheler Evra, expressed concerns about ongoing issues with boys’ bathroom stall locks and gym water coolers not functioning properly. He thanked the board for fixing some water coolers but noted problems remain, especially after PE when students struggle to find water. The board acknowledged the issues and shared plans for upgrades and repairs.

Ms. Sawyer, an OEA representative at Lincoln Avenue School, expresses gratitude for the board’s collaboration during the 2024-2025 school year. She highlights significant progress made, including prioritizing health and safety protocols to protect staff and students. She emphasizes the district’s efforts to standardize evaluation protocols across all schools, ensuring consistency, clarity, and accountability. Ms. Sawyer also applauds the improved mediation process between staff and administration, which has created a more transparent, quicker, and equitable way to resolve issues.

She commends Human Resources for transforming into a transparent and supportive resource hub that empowers staff through professional development, support systems, and clear pathways for growth, including opportunities for support staff advancement. Looking ahead, Ms. Sawyer expresses enthusiasm for expanding multilingual programs and offering additional professional development opportunities to support certified staff and enhance instructional quality. The board and Dr. Fitzhugh respond appreciatively to her detailed and positive remarks.

Ms. Tisa Singleton from Lincoln Avenue School expresses appreciation for the strong collaboration between the board and OEA this year. She presents a symbolic gift—a shirt with the message "United for Student Success"—highlighting the shared priority of student achievement. The shirt’s design features books representing the board and shaking hands symbolizing the union, with the slogan “Orange Board plus OEA equals stronger schools.” She

emphasizes the importance of continuing to uphold the “three Cs” — collaboration, communication, and commitment — to ensure ongoing student success.

Ms. Johnson motions to close Public Comments.

Moved by Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield Seconded by Mr. David Armstrong

ROLL CALL (9) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson invites two representatives from Whitsons, Dennis Thomas (VP of Strategic Growth) and Mark Kern (VP of Operations), to speak to the board. They highlight their 29-year history as a minority-owned food service company working with many districts. They emphasize a tailored approach to meet student preferences, including dietary needs like halal and vegan options, promising quarterly updates to the board on their services.

Ms. Johnson challenges them to prepare food samples for students from different schools to get genuine feedback, stressing that the food should be what students actually eat daily, not “board member food.” Mr. Thomas agrees and mentions training students interested in culinary skills.

Dr. Turner and Dr. Fitzhugh affirm they will hold Whitsons accountable for community involvement, nutritional quality, and regular school visits if the contract passes. Mr. Armstrong notes students are already vocal about food quality, with the board committed to listening to their feedback to make informed decisions.

Ms. Johnson motions to proceed with a Consent Agenda.

Moved by Dr. Fatimah Turner Seconded by Ms. David Armstrong

ROLL CALL (9) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Mr. Tarver thanks Whitsons representatives and asks for clarification on what the contract covers. Mr. Dorsey explains the contract includes breakfast, lunch, afterschool snacks, a supper program for 21st-century program schools, and catering for meetings.

Ms. Johnson confirms Whitsons will provide catering for board meetings. Mr. Ballard adds that Whitsons will also offer lunch options for teachers and staff to purchase, filling a previous gap.

Mr. Tarver inquires about hiring current food service employees. Mr. Dorsey says existing staff will have the opportunity to apply and interview with Whitsons, which is a union shop. Mr. Ballard clarifies current food workers are employed by the vendor, not the board, so hiring decisions rest with Whitsons.

Questions about the number of employees confirm staffing will match or slightly exceed current levels due to new facilities opening. Staffing numbers are determined by student population and meal periods, based on a formula and state-approved RFP process.

Ms. Gravesande asks about how teachers will purchase meals. Mr. Ballard defers to Whitsons but notes their proposal includes a system allowing teachers to buy meals, with proceeds supporting the food program.

Mr. Tarver raises concerns about transparency and access to the fee schedule tied to the revised Policy 7510. He argues that the current version lacks a visible fee schedule and that neither BoardDocs nor Facilitron provide it. He also believes the Girl Scouts should have qualified for free facility use under the prior policy.

Ms. Gravesande and Dr. Turner emphasize that board members are expected to review materials in advance and reach out with questions before meetings. Ms. Kleen suggests the Business Office locate the original resolution approving the fees, noting most members had already reviewed the schedule.

Mr. Sherif requests clarification on language in Policy 7510 to prevent subjective decision-making. The board confirms updates have addressed his concern.

Mr. Tarver also questions the organizational chart in Resolution N-3; Dr. Fitzhugh confirms all listed positions report directly to him.

Board members call for efficiency, preparation, and respect during meetings.

Mr. Ballard initiates a roll call vote following a motion to adopt the consent agenda.

Moved by Dr. Fatimah Turner Seconded by David Armstrong

ROLL CALL

Board Member	YEA	NAY	ABSTAIN
Mr. David Armstrong	All agenda items		Anything pertaining to SPAN
Ms. Samantha Crockett	All agenda items		Anything pertaining to Braven
Ms. India Williams	H1-H21, K1-K6, L1-L2, O1-O6		F1-F6, J1-J34, L1-L2, M1-M6, N1-N3
Mr. Siaka Sherif		N-1	
Mr. Tyrone Tarver	J-11, K1-K6, L-1, L-2, J-34	N-1	Remaining agenda items
Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield	All agenda items		Anything pertaining to Montclair State University, St. Elizabeth University & Rutgers University
Ms. Sueann Gravesande	All agenda items		Anything pertaining to Jeremy Gravesande
Ms. Shawneque Johnson	All agenda items		
Ms. Fatimah Turner, PhD.	All agenda items		Anything pertaining to Montclair State University, St. Elizabeth University and Seton Hall University

Mr. Ballard motions to approve the walk-on resolution for interlocal agreement with the city of Orange Township.

Moved by David Armstrong Seconded by Siaka Sherif

ROLL CALL (7) YEA (0) NAY (2) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE

Ms. Johnson thanks Whitsons and congratulates them, expressing excitement to work together. Dr. Turner emphasizes the importance of community involvement. Ms. Johnson mentions scheduling a meeting after Woodson takes over on July 1st to coordinate next steps and suggests leaving contact cards. She also looks forward to seeing them at the upcoming event in Atlantic City in October. Mr. Sherif adds a lighthearted note, reminding everyone they can come by anytime to taste the food, signaling eagerness and engagement.

Ms. Johnson announces the upcoming district's meetings.

Public District Meetings

Public Relations Committee Virtual Meeting – Wednesday, August 6, 2025, at 4:00 pm

Closed District Meetings

Curriculum Committee Virtual Meeting – Tuesday, July 29, 2025, at 3:30 pm

Facilities Committee Virtual Meeting – Monday, August 4, 2025, at 4:00 pm

Special Education Committee Virtual Meeting – Tuesday, August 5, 2025, at 3:30 pm

Policy Committee Virtual Meeting – Thursday, August 7, 2025, at 4:00 pm

Finance Committee Virtual Meeting – Thursday, August 7, 2025, at 4:00 pm

Human Resources Committee Virtual Meeting – Monday, August 11, 2025, at 4:00 pm

Board Comments

Mr. Sherif expresses gratitude for the meeting, highlighting that debating, disagreeing, and agreeing is part of their process, with the majority vote representing everyone. He acknowledges the significant improvement reflected in the audit results, appreciating the hard work of the Human Resources Department and specifically thanks Ms. Masoud for her contributions. He also praises Dr. Fitzhugh for her impactful work both inside the district and beyond, congratulating her on a recent award. Mr. Sherif shares a personal story about his children's academic success as evidence of the district's progress and growth. He closes by thanking the administrators, affirming that the board stays attentive to their work, and bids goodnight..

Dr. Fitzhugh closes the meeting by wishing all fathers a happy Father's Day, expressing personal excitement for the upcoming Sunday celebration. He congratulates the graduates, noting the STEM Academy graduation on June 18th and Orange High School graduation on June 20th, reminding everyone to book next year's dates. He wishes everyone a happy summer. Dr. Fitzhugh shares that Montclair State University has selected him as the 2025 recipient of the Jennifer James Robinson Award for Equity and Excellence in Education, with the ceremony on June 23rd. He looks forward to attending and continuing to expand the district's vision for bringing in great teachers and students. The Board members join in congratulating him.

Mr. Tarver thanks Ms. Masoud for her work in the district and acknowledges several resolutions he voted yes on. He shares a personal update about health challenges but expresses gratitude for reconnecting recently with students, parents, and long-time staff. He promises to visit the district more often moving forward. He congratulates Dr. Fitzhugh on his accomplishments and district progress, noting that he wishes meetings were more frequent since he has ongoing concerns to address, which he plans to raise over the summer through correspondence. Mr. Tarver reflects on his 30+ years of experience in board and corporate settings, emphasizing the importance of respectful dialogue and the decision-making process, even if he disagrees with the majority. He encourages board members to ask questions within their allotted time. Finally, he welcomes the student representative, hoping she gains valuable insight into governance and board operations, and wishes her well in her future endeavors.

Dr. Turner thanks Mr. Tarver for his positive and helpful remarks. She expresses deep gratitude to Ms. Sawyer and Ms. Singleton for their detailed and honest feedback, saying their comments moved her emotionally and made her feel truly seen and appreciated. She acknowledges the challenges and criticisms the board faces but emphasizes that the board members are doing their best with the resources they have, going above and beyond. Dr. Turner stresses the importance of collaboration and encourages continued honest dialogue, both positive and critical. She specifically thanks Ms. Masoud for her work and acknowledges the passion of Ms. Kleen, Mr. Armstrong, and Ms. Williams in advancing special education. Dr. Turner shares some disappointment that certain special education-related agenda items (H-2 and H-3) may not have received full board support but encourages the board to keep pushing forward. She closes with heartfelt thanks and pride in the district's progress.

Ms. Johnson motions to have the Meeting Adjourned.

Moved by Mr. David Armstrong Seconded by Mr. Siaka Sherif

ROLL CALL (9) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE