



**Wednesday, November 8, 2023
Regular Public Board Meeting
Orange Preparatory Academy of
Inquiry and Innovation Auditorium
Roll Call 6:00 p.m.**

Minutes of **Wednesday, November 8, 2023, Public Meeting** of the Orange Board of Education held at 6:00 pm.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Shawneque Johnson is presiding over tonight's Meeting.

- Ms. Shawneque Johnson, President
- Ms. Sueann Gravesande
- Mr. Derrick Henry - **LATE**
- Ms. Samantha Crockett
- Dr. Fatimah Turner - **LATE**
- Mr. Siaka Sherif - **LATE**
- Mr. Jeffrey Wingfield
- Mr. David Armstrong
- Mr. Tyrone Tarver - **ABSENT**

ROLL CALL (5) PRESENT (1) ABSENT (3) NOT PRESENT AT ROLL CALL

ALSO PRESENT:

- Dr. Gerald Fitzhugh II, Superintendent of Schools
- Mr. Jason Ballard, Business Administrator
- Mr. Lamont Zachary, Assistant Business Administrator
- Ms. Jessika Kleen, School Board Attorney with the firm of Machado Law Group
- Mr. Oluwatitofunmi (Tito) Oshuntolu, Student Representative

2. FLAG SALUTE

A. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. *Recess Into Executive Session – Closed*

Motion to convene into Executive Session. Will Recess until 6:45 pm but no later than 7: 30pm.

Motion by Jeffrey Wingfield, second by Sueann Gravesande.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, David Armstrong, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande

Not Present at Vote: Derrick Henry, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner, Tyrone Tarver

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



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2. *Return to Open Session*

Ms. Johnson motions to close the Executive session and move into a public meeting.

Motion by Sueann Gravesande, second by Jeffrey Wingfield.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, David Armstrong, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Siaka Sherif

Not Present at Vote: Derrick Henry, Fatimah Turner, Tyrone Tarver

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE: (3)

B. SUPERINTENDENT'S PRESENTATION

Ms. Johnson introduces Dr. Fitzhugh for his Superintendent report.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Gerald Fitzhugh II, Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Fitzhugh greets the community and staff.

Dr. Fitzhugh provides the community with a presentation of district highlights such as:

● **STUDENT OF THE MONTH FOR OCTOBER 2023**

Name of School	Student of the Month	Name of School	Student of the Month
Central Elementary School	Laura Guzman Cruz	Orange High School	Josena Noel
Cleveland Street School	Ezkel Gayle	Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation	Lorena Calle
Forest Street School	Paola Chuqui Alvarez	Park Avenue School	Faith Ajebe
Heywood Avenue School	Isaiah Harp	Rosa Parks Community School	Camila Ulloa Landy
Lincoln Avenue School	Natali Garcia	STEM Innovation Academy of the Oranges	Lizbeth Torres
Oakwood Avenue School	Zeinabe Sakina Konate	Twilight U	Gilbeth Morocho Morocho

● **IMPORTANT UPDATES**

○ **NJEA CONVENTION ON NOVEMBER 9th & 10th, 2023**

- Dr. Fitzhugh reminded everyone that the Orange School District will be closed on Thursday, November 9th and Friday, November 10th as we will observe the NJEA Convention. Schools and the district office will reopen on Monday, November 13, 2023.



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o **THE ALIBIS: A ONE-ACT MURDER MYSTERY PLAY**

- Dr. Fitzhugh invited the Orange community to the Visual and Performing Arts Fall production of The Alibis: A One-Act Murder Mystery Play. Performances will be held on November 15, 16 and 17 at 6:30 pm and November 18, 1 pm and 5 pm. All performances will take place in the auditorium at Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry & Innovation. Tickets are \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door.

o **PRESCHOOL ART EXHIBIT**

- Dr. Fitzhugh invited the community to our Preschool Art Exhibit featuring artwork created by students from Orange Early Childhood Center, Scholars Academy, John Robert Lewis Early Childhood Center, Heywood, Oakwood, and Forest preschoolers. The art exhibit will take place on Wednesday, November 15, 6 pm - 7 pm at the Orange Board of Education building located at 451 Lincoln Avenue.

o **PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION**

- Dr. Fitzhugh noted that Preschool Registration will continue for the 2023-2024 school year and will take place on November 14th, 21st, and 28th. In addition, December dates are as follows: December 5th, 12th, and 19th from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM, at the Orange Early Childhood Center, 397 Park Avenue.

● **NJQSAC EVALUATION**

- o Dr. Fitzhugh shared specific areas of the evaluation that the district and the New Jersey Department of Education had to look at. The district does a pre-assessment and the state comes and looks at all of the documentation. There are five critical areas: instruction and programs, fiscal management, governance, operations, and personnel. The letter from the state will be uploaded on the website.

o **NJQSAC RATING:**

NJQSAC COMPLIANCE AREAS	SCORE (OCTOBER 2023)	NJQSAC COMPLIANCE AREAS	SCORE (OCTOBER 2023)
Instruction & Programs	81%	Fiscal Management	92%
Governance	93%	Operations	97%
Personnel	97%		

- Dr. Fitzhugh, restated what the Assistant Commissioner, Dr. Irving, from the Division of Field and Support Services wrote in the letter. "I am pleased to inform you that your district has satisfied at least 80% of the weighted indicators in each of the five areas of the NJQSAC review process and has been designated as "high performing." The Commissioner will recommend to the State Board of Education that your district be certified as providing a thorough and efficient system of education, for a period of three years or until the next NJQSAC review. Congratulations on this accomplishment."
- Dr. Fitzhugh also noted that in June of 2020, the district received the NJQSAC Evaluation. That was the first year the district had over 80% in instruction and programs. This is now the second time in 2023 that the district had over 80% in instruction and programs.



- **DYNAMIC LEARNING MAPS ASSESSMENTS**

- o Dr. Fitzhugh introduced Ms. Shelly Harper, Executive Director of Special Services, Special Education and Behavioral Intervention.
- o Dr. Fitzhugh noted that only a small portion, 1% of the school population, takes this assessment.
- o Ms. Harper explained the following about DLM Assessments:
 - DLM assessments are for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for whom general state assessments are not appropriate, even with accommodations. DLM assessments offer these students a way to show what they know and can do in English language arts, mathematics, and science.
 - DLM assessments also help parents and educators set high academic expectations for their students. Results from DLM assessments are used to inform instruction and meet accountability requirements for reporting student achievement.
 - DLM assessments are designed to maximize accessibility for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Assessments are built to allow multiple ways for students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and understandings.
 - Students taking DLM assessments have access to unique accessibility tools and supports that meet their needs and preferences. Some of these tools and supports are built into the online assessment system while others are provided by the teacher. Educators and Individualized Education Program teams decide which tools and supports a student's needs.
 - The district is allowed to test 1% of the population for this assessment. Students that are identified to take part in this assessment are identified as students who are significantly cognitive delayed. The next slide will share the indicators for participation and non-participation.
 - The following factors may not be the **sole** criteria used to determine participation in the DLM:
 - Student's disability category
 - Percent of day in special education
 - Academic and related services the student receives
 - Instructional setting
 - The following factors shall **NOT** be used to determine participation in the DLM:
 - English Language Learner (ELL) status
 - Anticipated disruptive behavior during testing
 - Poor attendance or extended absences
 - Anticipated poor performance on the general statewide assessment
 - Impact of the student's score on the accountability system
 - Need for accommodations to participate in the general statewide assessment
 - Administrative decision
 - Achievement Levels as Outlined on the DLM:
 - Emerging
 - Approaching the target
 - At target.
 - Advanced



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- Students Tested Spring 2022 and Spring 2023 by DLM Administrations (No Seniors needed to be tested)

	Number of Students Tested					Number of Students Tested			
	2021-2022		2022-2023			2021-2022		2022-2023	
	ELA	MATH	ELA	MATH		ELA	MATH	ELA	MATH
Grade 3	12	12	6	5	Grade 3	12	12	6	5
Grade 4	6	6	5	5	Grade 4	6	6	5	5
Grade 5	4	4	2	2	Grade 5	4	4	2	2
Grade 6	4	5	5	5	Grade 6	4	5	5	5
Grade 7	2	2	3	3	Grade 7	2	2	3	3
Grade 8	5	5	1	1	Grade 8	5	5	1	1
Grade 11	4	4	4	4	Grade 11	4	4	4	4
Grade 12	9	9	0	0	Grade 12	9	9	0	0
TOTAL	46	47	26	25	TOTAL	46	47	26	25

Ms. Harper noted that We realized that that is a challenging area and the district needs to look closely at the curriculum. We need to look at teacher practices and we can do this through walkthroughs and coaching cycles.

- **FACILITIES UPDATE**

Dr. Fitzhugh introduced Mr. Vasquez, Manager of Buildings and Grounds and Mr. Ballard, School Business Administrator. Mr. Vasquez gave the monthly report.

- Thorough cleaning and disinfecting occurs daily for all touch points in the building (examples include but are not limited to door handles, bathrooms, entrances, exits, and handrails).
- Walk-throughs of all district school facilities.
- Meetings between the District and PCI are held regularly based on updates related to COVID-19 mandates and expectations.
- Facility projects continue so we can ensure a safe and clean learning environment for our children and staff.

- **Project Updates**

- **STEM Innovation Academy of the Oranges:** The boiler was completely installed and it was up and running prior to the heating season in which the heating season begins on October 15th.
- **Forest Street Community School:** The installation of the boiler in the existing building was completed on time for the winter months. The new HVAC units were also installed.
- **The Building Management System (BMS) was completed.** The facilities team completed their training, and now we can control the BMS remotely. BMS is a building management system that allows the district to monitor what is going on with the boiler and the HVAC systems in the classrooms. So if there is an emergency we can alert the training has been done and we're able to address it prior to entering the school day. We are moving forward trying to get that into all our buildings. Mr. Ballard is directing our team to address each issue as they are entered into the system, ensuring a safe and clean learning environment for our children and staff. Once a work



order is entered, the facilities department assigns it to the maintenance team who then resolve the issue.

- **Heywood Avenue School:** The BMS system is completed, and we can remotely monitor the boiler and HVAC units.
- **Oakwood Avenue Community School:** We installed a temporary boiler and replaced the boilers in the new wing. Boiler connections are in progress.
- **The Rosa Parks Community School:** We have removed the old and inoperable circulating pump and replaced it with a new one in time for the upcoming heating season. A temporary boiler will be installed in November in preparation for the removal of the old boilers and the installation of new high-efficiency boilers.
- **Orange High School:** In preparation for the upcoming basketball season, the Facilities team has hired a vendor to sand the entire gym floor and then add new game lines. They will apply several coats of Sikafloor, which is an oil-modified finish, giving the gym floor a high shine.
- **Brightly System:** with the Brightly System Mr. Vasquez meets with the maintenance team, and directs them to what needs to be done on a daily basis.
- The team and Mr. Vasquez, under the direction of Mr. Ballard & Mr. Zachary, will continue to meet with the Schools Development Authority and Terminal Construction to make sure that there is progress related to the Construction at the Orange High School Punch-list items and the Cleveland Street School Project.
- They will continue to update the community, staff, and Board of Education members of all progress.
- The health and safety of staff and students are at the apex of all facilities undertakings.

This concludes the Superintendent's report.

C. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT - OLUWATITOFUNMI (TITO) AYODELE OSHUNTOLU

Ms. Johnson introduced Oluwatitofunmi (Tito) Oshuntolu, Student Representative.

Mr. Oshuntolu highlighted that one paramount issue that needs immediate attention is the need for equitable opportunities for all students. This is especially crucial for those in regular classes who often lack access to essential information about scholarships, academic prospects and resources that significantly impact their educational journeys.

- Students propose ensuring equal access to vital information
- Organizing sessions on various subjects
- Hosting guest speaker events
- Expanding exposure to college opportunities for all students.



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- Reevaluating the scheduling structure to provide more time for students to move between classes
 - The limited time allocated for transitioning between classes has become a major concern for the student body. Maneuvering through the school building within short breaks between classes presents a significant challenge, especially with the congested hallways. Students often rush from one end of the building to another, contending with crowded pathways and inadequate time, which hinders their ability to arrive punctually for their next class.
 - Implementing a more extended transition period or strategically adjusting the schedule could alleviate hallway congestion and reduce the pressure on students enabling them to reach their next class in a more organized and timely manner.
- **Dress Code Adjustments**
 - Students advocate for a more flexible dress code policy that permits appropriate warmer attire during harsh weather conditions. This change would ensure students' wellbeing during inclement weather while adhering to appropriate dress guidelines.
 - A consistent and fair implementation of the dress code is crucial. It has been brought to Tito's attention that there are a few discrepancies that exist in how the dress code is enforced. Many students have reported instances where there were dress code violations, while others wearing similar or even more flagrant attire were not held accountable. This inconsistency highlights a sense of unfairness among the student body.
- **Security Measures**
 - Instances of unprofessional actions exhibited by some security personnel, such as tossing students' belongings to move the security line, which is not acceptable. Every individual within the school community deserves to be treated with respect and dignity, especially by those in positions of authority and responsibility.
- **School Lunch Programs**
 - Enhancing our school lunch program is crucial. Reassessing and improving cafeteria offerings with diverse, nutritious, and appealing meals is vital for a conducive learning environment. The students' voice must be central. Their direct experience and benefits hinge on these culinary choices. Their involvement in this process ensures meals align with their preferences, fostering an environment where students are energized and focused on learning. The current state of our school's food offerings undeniably demand immediate improvement, necessitating a significant overhaul to meet higher standards for nourishment.
- **Study Abroad Programs**
 - Programs like CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange), and SYA (School Year Abroad) could significantly enhance the educational experience for our students. These study abroad programs offer students a unique opportunity to broaden their worldview, experiencing different cultures and educational systems can be incredibly enriching and can provide students with a perspective that stays with them long after high school years. Immersing themselves in a foreign environment, not only fosters personal growth, but also offers a better understanding of global dynamics, diversity and cultural nuances.



- **Psat Testing Process**

- The PSAT testing process was significantly improved from this year with students arriving on time to their classroom for testing. This enhanced efficiency compared to the previous year when all students were crammed into the gym, which was not an ideal testing environment.

Tito concluded his presentation by stating the following: "I wanna emphasize my gratitude for the considerable improvements in the PSAT testing procedures. This success demonstrates our joint commitment to progress and effectiveness. While celebrating this achievement, it's crucial to recognize areas needing attention. Though challenging, addressing these areas is essential for significant progress. Dr. Fitzhugh's leadership, along with our collective efforts, will undoubtedly steer us toward a more successful future. Let's consider this success a starting point, not only for celebration, but also as motivation for further improvement and continued success in all our endeavors."

D. BOARD MINUTES

Ms. Johnson motions to approve October 11, 2023, public meeting minutes.

Motion by Jeffrey Wingfield, second by Siaka Sherif.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, David Armstrong, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Derrick Henry, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner

Not Present at Vote: Tyrone Tarver

ROLL CALL (8) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE: (1)

Ms. Johnson motions to approve October 11, 2023, closed meeting minutes.

Motion by Jeffrey Wingfield, second by David Armstrong.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, David Armstrong, Sueann Gravesande, Derrick Henry, Fatimah Turner

Abstain: Samantha Crockett, Siaka Sherif

Not Present at Vote: Tyrone Tarver

ROLL CALL (6) YEA (0) NAY (2) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE: (1)



E. BOARD RESOLUTIONS

Ms. Johnson motions to approve the consent agenda including all agenda items, HR agenda and HIB cases.

- Vice President Gravesande abstained from anything related to Jeremy Gravesande.
- Mr. Wingfield abstained from anything related to Montclair State University.

Motion by Jeffrey Wingfield, second by Samantha Crockett.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, David Armstrong, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Derrick Henry, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner

Not Present at Vote: Tyrone Tarver

ROLL CALL (8) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE: (1)

F. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Johnson requests for a motion to open public comments.

Mr. Ballard reiterated a blurb that was stated at the start of the meeting which states, “The City of Orange Township Board of Education encourages participation and input from members of the public at its board meetings. However, in accordance with board policy, verbal attacks against individual staff members or members of the board are not permitted. Persons are encouraged to address the board regarding the comments relating to agenda items or issues concerning the educational process. Public comments are limited to one per attendee for a maximum duration of three minutes. Please be advised this meeting is being recorded in live stream via the internet.”

Motion by Jeffrey Wingfield, second by Siaka Sherif.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, David Armstrong, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Derrick Henry, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner

Not Present at Vote: Tyrone Tarver

ROLL CALL (8) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE: (1)

- **Elyssa Pierre-Le Bris - Heywood Avenue School Parent:**
 - Following up on some items that she asked about during the last meeting in October concerning the Vice Principal, Mr. Murphy, and any support if Mr. Murphy is not returning to Heywood Avenue School from other members of various schools throughout the district to support Heywood Avenue School in that role.
 - There was a meeting on November 8th with the principal just about simple chat and chew. What she got from that meeting was the fact that there are staff members currently wearing multiple hats to fill in the Vice Principal role, which she does not see as being sustainable for the long run. She is concerned about staff burnout at the school from wearing too many hats.



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- The other question, which was also brought up during the last meeting regarding moves for teacher retention for those well-seasoned teachers who are there to keep them there, and what efforts are being made to recruit new teachers. For those teachers who do want to move on, she checked the district website, the HR portion of the district website. It doesn't seem to be updated as far as hiring is concerned. Also, the Applitrack portion of the website also seems to be outdated.
- Traffic during dismissal time also still seems to be an issue. She knows that the principal is trying to help out with that as far as being outside more, but it just seems as though dismissal time is still an issue as far as parents adhering to the procedures.
- **Tay Jones - Roberts Road, Orange (Heywood Avenue School Parent):**
 - Had some concerns after speaking with the principal at Heywood Elementary today as well, regarding the library for the students. It seems like the students only have access to the library in the sense where they can actually borrow books and take them home during part half of the school year. That is concerning to especially wanting students to read more. He recognizes that a lot of students don't have access to books at home. He wanted to raise that point so that hopefully they would have access to the library and the ability to borrow throughout the school year.
 - He also had some concerns about security and drop-off in the morning and pick-up in the afternoon. He has not visibly seen staff outside of the building in the morning. When parents are trying to drop their students off and follow the traffic flow with the police officers outside, with younger students, parents can't trust that the children will walk exactly where they need to go. It would be helpful if there are some adults outside who can make sure the students go to either the blacktop or in the main entrance, if that is where they are supposed to go.
 - Also assistance is needed with the traffic flow for the vehicles during pickup, because that tends to be very chaotic as well.

Ms. Johnson motions to close public comments.

Motion by Siaka Sherif, second by David Armstrong.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, David Armstrong, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Derrick Henry, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner

Not Present at Vote: Tyrone Tarver

ROLL CALL (8) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE: (1)

G. BOARD COMMENTS

District Meetings - Public

1. Public Relations Committee Virtual Meeting - Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 4:00 pm
2. Orange Board Education Public Board Meeting - Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 7:30 p.m., held at Orange Preparatory Academy of Inquiry and Innovation, 400 Central Avenue, Orange, NJ, 07050. Will Recess until 6:45pm, but no later than 7:30pm



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District Meetings - Closed

1. Curriculum Committee Virtual Meeting - Tuesday, November 28, 2023 at 3:30pm
2. Facilities Committee Virtual Meeting - Monday, December 4, 2023 at 3:30pm
3. Policy Committee Virtual Meeting - Thursday, December 7, 2023, at 4pm
4. Finance Committee Virtual Meeting - Thursday, December 7, 2023, at 5:30pm
5. Human Resource Committee Virtual Meeting - Monday, December 11, 2023, at 5:30pm

Ms. Johnson asked the board to make a comment. Ms. Johnson stated, "I do wanna congratulate our three successful board members that will be returning in January 2024. I also want to say, Tito, you are phenomenal and we welcome you. Thank you. We're so happy to have an engaged Student Representative. Your concerns with your fellow classmates is our priority. So we are gonna be working very closely together to make sure that the needs are met in the school so everyone can feel like you do. Thank you so much. I wanna say thank you to the staff. You guys are amazing. Thank you for sticking next to Dr. Fitzhugh. Dr. Fitzhugh, you are great. Your staff is wonderful."

Mr. Ballard stated, "Before we take our vote to close, I just wanna say two really quick things. Number one, thank you to all the board members for their support. Without you guys, all of the things that this district does would not be able to get through from the new boiler work. It's a lot of hard work that went into getting that stuff done, but because of your affirmative votes, we're allowed to retrofit these buildings that have needed some attention for quite some time. So thank you to each and every one of you for all that you do. We know that this is an unpaid job and sometimes could be considered thankless, but we really do value and appreciate you all."

Ms. Kleen, Board Attorney responded to the questions raised during Public Comments by stating, "Dr. Fitzhugh and I will be discussing some options. We've already been talking about it. I can't really tell you why I'm involved, but I am. So, hopefully we'll have an update for you in the next few weeks and obviously we appreciate all your feedback and I know that it's on his mind and on the Board's mind to do what's best for all the kids and in particular, your concerns as you bring them to them. The question was from a member of the public about the administration at Heywood and what the long-term plan is, because right now their Vice Principal is covering a maternity leave in another building. And, the question from the parents was, well, they had concerns about how they feel like that is working out without a Vice Principal. And they're asking us how long is that gonna take and what is our plan to make sure that Heywood runs well in the interim. I think that summarizes that pretty well. And then there was an issue with traffic, which is the Business Administrator's problem, and he will look into that and he will get you all an answer as well."

Ms. Johnson moves to have the meeting adjourned.

Motion by Siaka Sherif, second by Sueann Gravesande.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Yea: Shawneque Johnson, Jeffrey Wingfield, David Armstrong, Samantha Crockett, Sueann Gravesande, Derrick Henry, Siaka Sherif, Fatimah Turner

Not Present at Vote: Tyrone Tarver

ROLL CALL (8) YEA (0) NAY (0) ABSTAIN (0) NOT PRESENT AT VOTE: (1)