THE ENGLEWOOD BOARD OF EDUCATION
MINUTES – REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2026
OPEN SESSION

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. the NJ Open Public Meeting Statement was read by Mr. David Matthews, Board President.

Present at the Opening of the Meeting: Mr. William Feinstein, Mr. Jeyson Flores, Ms. Rachel Haber, Ms. Elease Wiggins, Ms. Karen Rivera, Mr. David Matthews

Absent at the Start of the Meeting: Ms. Allison Ross, Ms. Sherri Banks-Watson, Ms. Magalye Matos

Also Present: Mr. Lamarr Thomas, Interim Superintendent, Mr. Michael Steinmetz, Business Administrator, Ms. Yolanda Green, Board Attorney

Mr. Matthews asked for a Motion to move to closed.

Motion made at 6:34 P.M. by Mr. Feinstein, Seconded by Mr. Flores

All those in favor Aye

Mr. Matthews asked for a Motion to Reconvene

Motion made at 9:02 P.M. by Mr. Feinstein, Seconded by Mr. Flores

All those in favor Aye

Present at Reconvening: Mr. William Feinstein, Mr. Jeyson Flores, Ms. Rachel Haber, Ms. Elease Wiggins, Ms. Karen Rivera, Mr. David Matthews

Absent at Reconvening of the Meeting: Ms. Allison Ross, Ms. Sherri Banks-Watson, Ms. Magalye Matos

Also Present: Mr. Lamarr Thomas, Interim Superintendent, Mr. Michael Steinmetz, Business Administrator, Mr. Lester Taylor, Board Attorney

Public Comment on Agenda/Off Agenda Items

Katherine Saba - Good evening, I would like to spend a few minutes to request consideration of the busing for the middle school and the high school students. It is a twofold to decrease the distance requirement for the middle school and also to consider a trial of morning only routes for the high school. Bergen County residents commute an average of 81 minutes a day round trip to work. The Bergen County website lists that 18% of county residents commute specifically to Manhattan. Our town does not have a train service and busing and driving into the city every day can be difficult in and of itself. To have to take out the added time to drop off our child can be a matter of not getting paid or the child not getting to school. The principles here have made it very clear that attendance is the nber one push being made in the district. Busing could alleviate more than you'd think. With busing, the kids would arrive on time and in many cases early enough to get breakfast at school, which studies have shown to improve attention and retention of classwork. If a parent has multiple children in different schools and they have to drive one of them, they can't just leave

the others to take the bus. They now have to drive around the town if they have a mode of transport to drop off everyone, which would many times leave one child late for school. Those late add up. In regards to the distance reduction, the current status for the middle school is that the child must reside two miles from school. The upper schools are in the northwest quadrant of our city. It is not central at all, nor does public transportation come through Knickerbocker or Liberty. 1.5 miles away from the school is the apartment complexes next to the Porsche dealership on Grand. 1.5 miles is the VFW on Forest. Try having kids walk through deep cold and heavy rains and snow and expect them to attend school because unfortunately their parents and guardians do still have to work like the staff at our district does. I understand that we are in crisis mode and can't even pay for agendas for the school for the kids this year. But your job as board members and superintendent is to look at long-term goals. So I address you tonight to take the time and consider this for our community, for our future. Thank you.

Mr. Thomas - First of all, I want to say good evening to everyone in attendance and those online. , I want to thank you for that heartfelt and well thought out proposal concerning long-term goals and long-term effects. And so, what I can say to you very concretely is this is not the first conversation that we've had about rethinking those boundaries. And more importantly, , we are we do realize that outside of chronic absenteeism and late and things of that nature, how it impacts student learning, we are also on the other side of the ledger trying to make sense of how to , appropriate the rising cost and fuel and busing and so on and so forth. So to find that balance is not something that's invisible to us. It is not a new conversation, but I promise you after hearing this evening, we will ramp up our conversation around it. Thank you.

Mr. Matthews, Thank you. Is there anyone else online?

Public Comment Closed

Mr. Matthews, with that I would like to make the public aware of one thing. On page 17 of 31 at the bottom, we have Martine Marcellis and it should say Acting Vice Principal. So Mr. Steinmetz, please make sure that that's part of the permanent record. So that one item needed to be clarified. With that, I'm going to try something.
Well, first of all, may I have a resolution on the approval of the minutes August 4th and August 20th?

Mr. Matthews, Okay. With that, I request a motion to approve the minutes of August 4th and August 20th

Motion to approve the minutes of August 4th and August 20th made by Mr. Feinstein, Seconded by Mr. Matthews

APPROVAL of Minutes of August 4th and August 20th
Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Banks-Watson	*Mr. Feinstein*	*Mr. Flores*	*Ms. Haber*	*Ms. Matos*	*Ms. Rivera*	*Ms. Ross*	*Ms. Wiggins*	*Mr. Matthews*
Yes	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Absent*	*Yes for the 4th Abstain from 20th*	*Absent*	*Yes*	*Yes*

Motion Passed

Mr. Feinstein made a motion to approve the Board Secretary Report, Seconded by Mr. Matthews

APPROVAL of Board Secretary Report of June of 2026
Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Banks-Watson	*Mr. Feinstein*	*Mr. Flores*	*Ms. Haber*	*Ms. Matos*	*Ms. Rivera*	*Ms. Ross*	*Ms. Wiggins*	*Mr. Matthews*
Yes	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Abstain*	*Absent*	*Yes*	*Absent*	*Yes*	*Yes*

Motion Passed

Mr. Matthews asked for a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report

Mr. Feinstein made a motion to approve the Treasurers Report, Seconded by Mr. Matthews

APPROVAL of Treasurers Report of June 2026
Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Banks-Watson	*Mr. Feinstein*	*Mr. Flores*	*Ms. Haber*	*Ms. Matos*	*Ms. Rivera*	*Ms. Ross*	*Ms. Wiggins*	*Mr. Matthews*
Yes	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Abstain*	*Absent*	*Yes*	*Absent*	*Yes*	*Yes*

Motion Passed

Mr. Matthews asked for a motion to approve the Line-Item Transfer Report

Mr. Feinstein made a motion to approve the Line-Item Transfer Report, Seconded by Mr. Flores

APPROVAL of Line-Item Transfer Report of June 2026
Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Banks-Watson	*Mr. Feinstein*	*Mr. Flores*	*Ms. Haber*	*Ms. Matos*	*Ms. Rivera*	*Ms. Ross*	*Ms. Wiggins*	*Mr. Matthews*
Yes	*Yes*	*Yes*	*Abstain*	*Absent*	*Yes*	*Absent*	*Yes*	*Yes*

Motion Passed

Mr. Matthews - I just want to remind board members that if you have any questions on any of these reports, which are routine reports, you have the ability to reach out to the business administrator prior to the meeting to answer ask any questions or even the superintendent if you prefer. These are routine reports that come up every month. with that I'm going to go to committee reports.

Committee Reports

Community Affairs and Culture Committee – Elease Wiggins, Chair
So, the community affairs and culture committee did not meet due to conflicting schedules of the board members. However, Mr. Thomas, the superintendent, and myself, we have been meeting to discuss working with different community-based organizations where we will plan events.

Ms. Rivera Point of order - Yes, We did meet on the 15th of September.

Ms. Wiggins, Oh, excuse me. I wasn't available. So, would you like to give that? Thank you. And then I'll piggy back on after that. Thank you.

Ms. Rivera, Okay. No worries. So, present were Sherri Banks, myself and the Superintendent. I think we talked about some possible plans that the superintendent has in order to do outreach to the community. he's going to be creating probably a schedule to kind of do some outreach to have conversations so that we can hear the community's voice regarding some of the needs regarding the district. I don't Superintendent Thomas, did I miss anything?

Mr. Thomas, only other thing that we talked about was the possibility of recruiting colleges who bring admissions officers with them.

Ms. Rivera, That's right. I think just being really clear as you know if we are going to host what does that mean to our kids?

Ms. Wiggins, Thank you Miss Rivera. So again like I said also meeting with different organizations throughout the community and seeing how we can create partnerships to support our students in terms of safety and again as Mr. Matthews has been saying for a long time increasing our academic rigor.

Special Education Committee – William Feinstein, Chair

Special Education committee met last night in attendance were Miss Wiggins, Miss Banks Watson, Miss Manziano, Mr. Thomas, and myself. We had a very good meeting. We talked about the new LLD class, the language learning disabilities class that will be started here next week, I believe. We also talked about the progress that we've made over the last two years. One of our goals was how do we create in district programs where we're able to retain students in district and avoid sending them out of district at a much higher cost. And we have over the last two years created eight in-house districts. So I think that's a a great accomplishment. and we talked about some other future programs that we could look at implementing in district to continue to retain our students. We also got a great update on the IEPs in the district and their classifications of each. So, will we had a great PowerPoint with all that information and that'll be uploaded to the one drive for all the board members to review and pose any questions. And then lastly, we got a brief update a legal update on the items that we had discussed in closed session tonight. Thank you.

Finance Committee – Rachel Haber, Chair

I'm going to give a a committee update on our last two meetings since I wasn't able to give a report at the last meeting. So, we had a finance committee meeting on August 18th, 2026. , everybody on the board has that agenda and the meeting minutes, and they're in the one drive. The items that I'll note from that meeting that are worth putting here on the audio for the public as well is that we discussed a few important things. one being the audit. Every year, every school district is supposed to give a to have an independent audit. And this year, the BA's office, Mr. Steinmetz, updated us on the timing of it. At the time, it hadn't started, although we just heard that it already is about to commence. So, thank you, Mr. Steinmetz, in advance for all the work that your office is going to be doing, working with our independent auditor. It starts the timing of it is that it's starting mid-September and we are required to file it by December 5th and that means that we need to have a presentation by the auditor at one of our public meetings before then and at the meeting we discussed with the auditor making sure that it can happen at one of our regularly scheduled meetings so that we don't have to schedule another special board meeting to fit that in before the deadline. So the antic we're anticipating that it'll be in the November board meeting. That's anticipated. That's not on any agenda yet, but we hope that at the November public board meeting, we'll have that presentation by the independent auditor. Another item that we discussed at that meeting was our reports, the board secretaries report, the treasures report, and the transfer report, and also the bills list. That's something that as the chair of the finance committee I hope to be on every agenda that we'll be able to review it. Although we didn't review it at that meeting. We talked about how it wasn't being approved for so long. It has been approved today. So, it's a little moot for today, but we had a whole discussion about how we can work on getting that approved and we discussed with the auditor. the auditor was actually present at that meeting different ways and the auditor actually went ahead between that meeting and our next one and I'll transition to the next meeting and spoke with some of the board members who haven't approved it to understand what some of the reasons are what can we do as a board to make sure that we have the maxim nber of board members who feel confident in the reports and that we can and can approve of it. because there's a a whole it's aside from that just being the ideal right that we all approve of the reports and feel confident in the reports. It was also there's also the statutory issue of you know we're required to have these reports approved right and if we don't the auditor clarified what the consequences would be that it could affect our governance and finance pieces of our QSAC reporting and it could I believe there was something else but that was that was the big one I remember. Oh and the third thing from that meeting that is absolutely worth mentioning is we went over our corrective action plan from our last independent audit. As you guys recall, we've had a couple really a couple years of a lot having really terrible audit findings, too many of them. And the finance committee, I'm committed to go over those corrective action plan items and we went over them and kudos to the business administrator and his office to Mr. Steinmetz, to Miss Abdul. they've been going over these items throughout the year. We were informed that two of them remain open. Some of them probably need to be a little revisited because they're ongoing. So, we can't say they're closed because they're really ongoing items. I'm happy to take a deeper dive. I'm actually hoping to as well, but we're really happy to report that only two of them are still open from 17. So, that's a very big deal. That's really good. That brings us way back to the to the what's in the scope of normal for school districts. Just so folks know, it's the average. I don't have like a hard data for it, but looking at what a lot of neighboring districts throughout the state, not just neighboring districts, most districts, if they have any, are having in the single digits of findings, right? even the low single digits some of them. So 17's not average and it's fantastic that we only have two open. So thank you Mr.

Steinmetz, and to everybody in your office for all the work for that. And a very brief update on the on the August on our September meeting. We had a meeting on September 16th. On that meeting we followed up if there was anything else on the corrective action plan followed up with the reports. And the big item to note there is that we followed up with the auditor after he spoke with several of the board members to find out, you know, what can we do to get a lot more confidence in our in our reports and he came up to us with a few different suggestions that we're still going to we're going to come back to next month at our next meeting and hopefully act on. We had a but we had updates on our state aid funding. We had an update on the budget process. You know, we talked about what the schedule will be like and we hope to have more on that at our next meeting that we'll be able to talk about what the schedule will look like for our budget process this year. And Mr. Steinmetz gave us a really good update on what the work he's doing about our to help save money in the district. I'm going to leave it at that that to help save money in the district on a bunch of different fronts. So that's my report. Sorry it's a little long. covered two different meetings and those that agenda and those minutes will be in by the end of this week.

Policy Committee – Jeyson Flores, Chair

I am also going to provide my policy committee meeting report for last month and this month. I wasn't be able to do last month. the policy committee meeting for the month of August was on August 17. the committee review almost nine policies which are reflected on this current agenda. I really would like to name all of them. I'm going to name it really quickly. you know we review superintendent duty, curriculum, curricul content, career education and academic counseling, guidance counseling, high school graduation, high school diploma, notices of board meetings and legal notices. that was last month which are reflected on this current you know resolution 27-A-15 and this month we met on September 14 we review another 13 policies which are going to be reflected on the following meeting we go over every single policy and we get a really good attendance from all the members you know were present. I wish I can find a way to share these comments and these revisions to the policies. I can tell my board members that all of them has been updated into the one drive you know notes, minutes, agenda and all the you know policies alert that's everything for the policy committee meeting. Thank you.

Mr. Matthews, Thank you, I did want to just add I was on the in the finance committee meeting and one of the things I'm not sure if Rachel went through it but there is a potential that up to $1 million and accounts payables were quote cancelled unquote so that we may and so in other words we did not receive any goods or services for up to $1 million. It could be even a slightly more in a way that's a a good thing, but in a way it's something to be concerned about because if this were the case, it it should have been presented to the board prior to a September meeting and so but we will find out exactly how much that is because we had a very contentious budget process and if we had known that perhaps even $100,000 was going to be quote cancelled then that could have gone into our budget deliberations and maybe it would not have been as contentious. But whatever the amount is that money will be available but it won't be it will be a one-shot thing. So it's not something that we can bank on as recurring revenues but we have to be careful about making sure that all these things are known to the board before they make very important decisions. So I wrote a letter to our auditor copied all the board members and of course the administration Mr. Thomas and Mr. Steinmetz, asking the auditor to look into this and see what can we do so that this is made known to the board in a more timely way most certainly before a final budget was passed. Now to get to the academic sure go ahead.

Mr. Thomas, Thank you, Mr. President. One of the things that I want to say is that although very single thing that our president just said needs to be taken into consideration and going forward, how important it is to report these things out early. Mr. Steinmetz, I do believe it was like 88 pages of accounts payable that you that you went through.

Mr. Steinmetz, Yeah. So to clarify a little bit, in June of 2025, I sat in the audience. The auditor presented the 23-24 audit. The 23-24 audit at the end of fiscal year 24-25. Then we had another audit presentation either was December or January for the 24-25 audit on time. So there was 88 pages of accounts payable that had to be rolled over at that point in time to move forward with the audit so that the audit for 24-25 was filed on time. We worked throughout the year with the entire business office and accounts payable to address that. But I also want to warn the board of something that you'd be very cautious of. And that is that if you have one-time money that you have, you should not be spending that on reoccurring costs because the next year or the next month or whenever that is, then you don't have the money for that bill. So, it's very care. You got to be very careful with onetime money and how you handle that and the money that will be identified at the end of the audit can be moved into the 2% surplus which will increase our surplus giving the district financial stability also with the concerns of a very very tight budget and the forecast that Lurch, Vincy Higgins gave us in January. Was it February when they came back? I don't know, it was approved in January, but February or March when they did the forecast and presented everything to the board, they only forecasted $438,000 of available

funds from now till the end of the year. So I I didn't feel as if the district was in a position to allocate the any funds towards future years because the budgets were so tight in terms of the current year 25-26. So, I'll just say it one time again though. You got to be very careful with onetime monies, grants, anything like that, because if you expect it to happen year after year and it's a reoccurring cost such as a salary or anything else that's reoccurring or a contract, then you're not going to have the money next year.

Mr. Thomas, Thank you for confirming with our what our board of education president just said. You know, at the end of the day, we just wanted to make it clear that there was a lot of invisible hard work that unearthed that million dollars and to our president's point that we are not going to view that as recurring revenue.

Mr. Matthews, Thank you. so with that, the academic excellence committee did meet.

Academic Excellence Committee – David Matthews, Chair

We had a very good meeting, one of the things that we've been concerned about is attendance. So, we asked one of the questions, can we look at the attendance for Greico, McCloud, Dismus for the first two weeks of school by grade level? The administration provided us with this summary and looking at how many students were absent during that two-week period of time. How many people were enrolled and that was really good because it tells me that they are looking at this. All five of our schools at present have attendance problem and this is something that as many people have said if you're not in school you're not going to learn. So, it's something that we want to continue looking at at our next meeting or at least in the November meeting if not the October one. and it's very important and also for the high school also which is which we're going to examine more in depth at the next committee meeting maybe for the first month of school. But we want the administration told us how they go about looking at these students who are absent but unexcused and believe me they're looking at it on a school level on practically a a daily basis because we want to nip this problem in the in the bud so to speak. Then we also talked about how important that the October 15th date is in terms of reporting to the state. How many kids are enrolled in the district? The number of kids enrolled in the district on that date will determine largely our state aid. So it's very important and we also want to those students that they the administration brought up that have not attended school at all that they would be unenrolled so that they would not you know count because they never showed upbut they are looking if they don't show up it's not like we say oh well Johnny didn't show up so but They're finding out why Johnny didn't show up to make sure that either maybe they moved out of state, maybe they moved in state, maybe they moved out of the country. But these are very important things for any school district and that includes contacting the parents during the first days of school. Another subject we looked at is what are they going to do with regard to improving our attendance for the 26-27 school year over the 25-26 school year and these are some of the things that they're looking at on a daily basis they also have they got a grant in NJ Department of Education invitation to join chronic absenteeism community of practice. and that's u I'm excited and that's going to be for the high school and for McCloud will participate. So this will be an addition additional way that we can monitor and get up to speed with how we tackle this absenteeism problem as well as people. One of the things we went through with the prior administration those students that are chronically late. Okay, that's just a big problem. third, do we have a road show scheduled to make presentations to select the schools to increase the nber of out of district academy class for 2027 and who's part of this marketing effort and I'm proud to say that they do the administration does and it's an ongoing thing. They're having a a open house on September 28th and October13th they are going to be visiting schools like Englewood Cliffs. They have a specific date in mind and also something that I'm in favor of. It's not an attack, but quite frankly, we have to go up against the competition of the charter school. We're spending $5 million this year on the charter school and many of those well all of those students where we're spending $5 million, they're all Englewood students. So even if we got say and I'm I'm in favor of competition, but that means we have to get our message out. We have to strengthen our academics and we got to engage the parents and say, "Hey, look at us. whatever you've heard in the past about us may not necessarily be true and it may be completely false. , so I'm happy to hear that and Michael is going to be involved. Hellegers is going to be involved with that. Also, even in Elizabeth Morrow, Our Lady of Academy, Catholic School , and, Tenafly and also what was really, exciting is engaging the seventh graders at Dismiss so that you're not waiting until 8th grade to say, "Hey, guess what? We have these programs up at the high school. We even talked about some individual individualized presentations and even some we'll have to see about how this can come about, but even some shadowing where kids that are really interested in going to the school, they could spend half a day or maybe a full day. That would have to be worked out. But we're not talking about a gargantuan number of students. Maybe we could start off with maybe 25 students, whatever.

That's up to the administration. But I think, you know, the best advertisement we can have is word of mouth. And maybe we can even have some of our current students go with us and make just like they do on induction ceremony. they talk about their experience with the school and then maybe they can get some community credit for that in the tours the shadowing brochures I add that's I'm almost finished with the agenda but you know part of marketing is having the appropriate material that is there when you are gone that can go home to the parents or that the parents can take home and study it with somebody's name on it as a contact I used to work insales So I know all this stuff. Okay. Also we now are going to have passing things pass tonight program managers for all five Academies which is very important. That's going to provide the direction for each one and you know they report to the principal of course but you know they're that that's an important thing and we given a stipend. So with that yes and there were two schools that we talked about the board having the opportunity before the end of the year to go visit and that was the Bergen County Academies in Hackesack and also the Academy in Newark.

Mr. Matthews, before we go to the Superintendents Report, I just wanted to say that unfortunately a former board member passed away Sheik Kamar he passed away about three months ago. He had been sick, and I had been talking with him, trying to get together, but he never got well enough to either go out for lunch or come by the house and have a dinner or something like that. But I talked to his widow and I'm really sorry to hear that. So, I just wanted to ask he I was on the board when Sheik was here. All three of his kids attended the Englewood school system and all three of them are either in ITC, IT or engineering. They all graduated from four-year colleges and are doing very well. I think one even has a family now so I just want to ask for a moment of silence for Sheik and his commitment to the Englewood School District. Thank you. with that, I'm going to hand it over to the superintendence report.

SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

Mr. Thomas, Thank you, Mr. President. And again, I want to just say how thankful I am to be part of a board who understands the commitment of those who have already come before us. In fact, we are standing on their shoulders and to honor them is means everything to me. With that being said, the superintendence report includes beginning with as you see on the screen an appreciation for our security officers in the Ingua public school district. could you please put your hands together for them? [applause] , I want to begin by recognizing what I believe is one of Bergen County's most thorough and highly coordinated school safety and security teams, the EPSD security department who is led by our director of security, Barrington Harris. He has instilled in us a simple but critically important philosophy and that is it's far better to implement an abundance of resources and safety protocols and later discovered that we didn't need all of them than to discover that in a moment of crisis that we did not implement enough. So, because our security team is referenced by our surrounding districts and in the county, they are well known, that commitment to preparation and vigilance and prevention is reflected every single day throughout our district. And so, to all of the brave women and men who work each day to keep our students, staff, families, and schools safe and secure, again, I thank you openly and publicly. Thank you for what you do. I'm going to move quickly through my superintendence report because we have some very significant presentations that are dynamic and important but somewhat dense. And so I also want to share if you look up at our screen moments from our convocation on August 27th. We welcomed back our staff for an exciting and festive return to Englewood public school district at our district convocation. And our focus was on reentering ourselves around what's the most important in our district, our students, our families, our staff, and our community. We also began establishing the foundation from which our district goals will emanate this year. ensuring that they're specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time bound. It's very important. The energy generated by the convocation along with the professional development that followed the day and continued into the next has contributed, excuse me, has contributed to a strong sense of enthusiasm and renewed purpose across the district. Morale is high and there's a palatable sense of excitement about the year ahead, which is what you're viewing on the screen above, we were especially honored to welcome former EPSD leaders who returned to encourage and support our future vision, including Michael Roth, Dr. Joe Bell, Dr. Henry Puitt, Peter Elbert, Dr. Elizabeth Willaum, Dr. Noel Gordon, and Rosemary Seitel, and maybe even more importantly, their commitment to helping us go forward by lending their talents, skills, and abilities where we need help. , we were also joined by nerous community leaders and advocates including our mayor, the council people, our sheriff, advocates like, , Amy Bulock, David Coleman, Dennis Bunch, Colette Walker Thompson, and many others along with our current former and some former board members and longtime EPSD supporters, including , Bill Feinstein, , Sherri Banks Watson and David Matthews who were also there. Their presence reinforced an important message that our schools do not exist apart from our community and that our schools are at the center of our community. So with that being said, I'd like to move on to an electrifying opening day that we had. But before we do that, don't go past that. I do want to share the one video that I think that would be important for you to see. It's very short around where our center is and what empowers us for the upcoming school year that was shared at the congregation. Centering begins with a simple idea that every student deserves to feel seen,

supported, and connected. It means placing students at the heart of every decision we make and creating an environment where they can grow, achieve, and thrive. But centering is more than a focus on the individual. It is a commitment to the whole. We center our students by recognizing their potential, listening to their voices, and creating opportunities for every learner to succeed. We center our relationships by strengthening the connections between students, educators, families, and our community. Because when those relationships are strong, they create something greater. A shared sense of direction, a purpose, a clear understanding of why we are here, what we believe, and where we are going together. Purpose gives us our direction. Structure gives us the systems to move forward together. We center our systems by aligning our programs, policies, resources, and partnerships around the needs of our students. But systems alone do not define a school community. culture does. We center our identity by creating a shared sense of belonging. One that connects our students, educators, families, and community around who we are and what we value. Introspective, relational, purpose, structural, cultural. Five movements, one shared commitment to centering our students. These five movements are grounded in a foundation that guides everything we do. Our vision, our mission, and our core values. Our vision is to empower a culture of lifelong learners through creativity, inspiration, and innovation. Our mission is clear to ensure every student grows to perform at or above grade level. We lead with unconditional love. We believe in the strength of family. We pursue educational excellence. And we grow stronger through community. Together, our vision, mission, values, and five movements create more than a framework. They shape how we make decisions, how we serve students, how we strengthen families, and how we move forward together. Because when we center what matters most, everything we do moves us forward together. Together we center. Together we rise. Thank you.

Mr. Matthews, Very inspirational.

Mr. Thomas, Thank you. And we want to ensure that there's high levels of specificity around everything we do from an instructional model, our core values and our goals. So we want to deal with our school district here holistically providing healing and of a clear path forward. So that leads us to what you're now seeing up here, which was an electrifying opening day, opening day for our students was short of amazing. There was tremendous energy, excitement, and anticipation for the year ahead among students, parents, and families, and staff, one example that you're seeing on the stage, you can actually hit the button while I'm talking, is , occurred at the Dr. John Grieco Elementary School here in which we're sitting where principal Gina Edone carried forth our tradition of the canyon of praise. And so what you're looking at is that our children school entered, you know, surrounded by applause and encouragement from our members of our board of education, our board attorney Lester Taylor even came out, the Englewood public police department, the fire department coaches, local business owners, city officials, our sheriff Anthony Kuritan, all of our supporters and members of the broader Inkwood community. And the celebration even brought iconic educators like Michael Brown and Joe Bell. It was a was a powerful reminder of what happens when the community literally surrounds its children with love and encouragement and our students enter those doors knowing that an entire community is invested in theirs. We had an electrifying school year start and that picture I think captures it. That picture is in my office as we speak right now. I'm thankful for those who showed up for our children on the first day of school to remind them that they are supported and protected as they enter the school year. Which leads me to our 911 commemoration at the city. As you could see here, I'm just going to condense what I was going to say and just share that there were students from both McCloud and from Janis Dismus Middle School. and both Principal Joseph Armental walked his students down and also we had Nikki Coleman our VILS Coach brought our national junior honor society students in as well. They participated. In fact, you'll even led the pledge of allegiance. Most our children introduced as what it means to be citizens, leaders, and contributors to their community. And so it awesome experience and the city manager praised the Englewood public school district because he said we had never had this many students participate. So we're very thankful for that. Which leads us to our other 911 Friday night lights and unity seats that was sponsored by the sheriff's department. And what what it is that at Dwight Mar High School when we played against Pasak Hills on 911actually it was September 18th but the Friday Night Lights football game it was an evening that honored our veterans, first responders, students, law enforcement officers and members of the broader community. And what it basically the basic premise of it is is that you know you come together and the concept is kind of simple. You bring people together. You create opportunities for respectful dialogue to build trust with people who you typically would not sit with. And that's the whole concept of the unity seats. Differing perspectives all sitting together at a community event realizing that in fact we are one. which leads me to homecoming on this upcoming Saturday Homecoming. The game has been shifted to 12 because we are trying to be a little proactive around the impending storm that might hit us and we still want to have our homecoming. So kudos to our athletic director who has been every minute. He's been minute to minute around how we can still have our game and our students for homecoming. Not least, I'm going to skip over one here. , I do want to share that at Englewood open house is in fact on the 28th at 6 pm. I'd like you to help to share to get the word out because this is an excellent opportunity for perspective students and families more about the extraordinary programs and opportunities available through Academies at Englewood. You heard over and over this evening the importance of marketing what we do here in the district and that is not only the responsibility of those who are in charge of our

website. We have to get that message out how amazing we are, how we're growing and what we expect to see happen in the near future. Before I introduce the presenters which are coming up right now, there is something else that I do want to say. Last night, I attended a meeting here in Englewood hosted by the world without exploitation, an organization committed to ending trafficking and exploitation of our children. And the evening reinforced the important of this re the importance of this reality here in our city and in our region. This isn't something that happens in some distant, you know, land or place or place. our children are always in on the radar of predators. And so I want to thank all of the community leaders that were there last night and particularly Liz Corsini who hosted and who made reference to how the Englewood Public School District has helped to prevent that from happening in times past and how they look forward to us to continue that going. With all of that being said, that is my superintendence report. I really hope that you will continue to utilize our website. We have a quality website that is more interactive than it has ever been and more of that to come. So, with that being said, please put your hands together for those who are always behind the scenes and invisible, but make these things come to life for us. With that being said, I'd like to bring to the podium our first presentation by Terresa Manziano, dynamic learning maps presentation, please.

Mr. Matthews, before you go ahead we're approaching 10:00 so I'm going to ask for our procedure is if we're going to go past 10:00 we have to get board approval for another 30 minutes. I think that all these presentations are going to be too short and to the point but may I have a resolution for to continue the meeting until 10:30 just to be sure.

Mr. Matthews asked for a motion to extend the meeting for 30 minutes.

Mr. Feinstein made a motion to extend the meeting for 30 minutes, Seconded by Mr. Flores

All those in favor, Aye

Superintendent Reports - Presentations

- Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Presentation - Theresa Manziano
- Graduation Pathway Data Presentation - Jorge Osoria
- New Jersey Graduation Proficiency Assessment (NJGPA) Results - Jorge Osoria
- End of the Year Report- Jeanette Widensky and Michael Hellegers

Full Board Discussion, Comments and Presentations may be viewed on the Englewood Public School District website.

Mr. Thomas, stopped the End of the Year Report being given by Jeanette Widensky and Michael Helleger and stated, Okay. I know you, I see the both of you you're speeding and and and I appreciate your attempt to get to the end of the finish line, but this is far too important to rush through. I want our community to understand where we have come from, what we are where we are going, and the strategies that are going to be employed. So I would just I would just like to make an executive decision right here to just put a pause and we will bring you back because at the end of the day this data is the data and it also bleeds into whether or not we made our district goal district goals. And so out of respect for our board and for our broader community, I am going to make the executive decision to put a pause here and bring you back so that we could do this properly and with the upright amount of time as well. Okay. So, thank you for the thoroughess of the beginning part of our report and for all of you board members, please support me in understanding how important it is for us not to rush through this data. Agreed. Thank you.

Ms. Widensky, Mr. Feinstein has a question.

Mr. Feinstein, Oh, no. I'll save my questions until you give the complete, I just want to request I don't disagree with Mr. Thomas's decision, but I would just request that this is going to be on the next in October and that we have no other presentations except this so that we can truly focus and dedicate on this important topic.

Mr. Thomas, Absolutely, 100%. and a modified Superintendent report to ensure that they have their time as well. Thank you.

Ms. Widensky, may I make a suggestion too? By then we will have the BOI data and I think that you're you have that's a lot of information. But by then you'll see where we ended last year and where we're moving this year like our starting point. So that's up too.

Mr. Feinstein, Can I ask one? I just want one one there. You know, we put out when these results came out, I think it's right before the school year ended with one sheet of information with the growth, right? So that's just a easy one pager that has all this information and shows the growth in each of the grades. Okay. Right. I'm asking the one that you created.

Mr. Hellegers, Yeah. So, I believe you did receive a one pager that essentially was highlighting the growth that took place.

Mr. Feinstein, Yeah. I just want to say I just want to make sure that that data is what obviously this is more in depth and detailed. But that that's that's the that was for the growth.

Mr. Hellegers, Yes.

Mr. Matthews, I just want to say one thing because we do have to vote because we're we got to end in like the next five minutes which I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for staying this late and if it's with this is Mr. Thomas's time, but if he'll agree to it when you come back in October if it's okay with him, we can discuss that. We'd like for you to go first so that you could come and this also gives us time to look over all of this so that if we have really a lot of questions, we can forward them to Mr. Thomas prior to the meeting. So, I'm really sorry that that we have to cut you short. But we only have five board members here now and and we lose one more. We don't have a quorum. So, thank you so much and we'll see you next month. With that I'm going to ask that we have a resolution to move the consent agenda.

Mr. Matthews asked for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as Amended.

Mr. Feinstein made a motion to approve the consent agenda as amended, Seconded by Mr. Matthews

Mr. Feinstein, I have a comment. I just want to take this opportunity. I know the hour's late, but I think it's important. I just want to recognize three of our staff members who have received their doctorates. I think it's worth I know it's worth it. It's important that we recognize that type of accomplishment. So I just wanted to congratulate Ms. Rodriguez, Ms. Smith, and Ms. Trustee on achieving that.

Ms. Wiggins, agreed.

APPROVAL of Consent Agenda as Amended
Roll Call Vote:

Ms. Banks-Watson	*Mr. Feinstein*	*Mr. Flores*	*Ms. Haber*	*Ms. Matos*	*Ms. Rivera*	*Ms. Ross*	*Ms. Wiggins*	*Mr. Matthews*
Yes	*Yes*	Yes	Yes	*Absent*	Yes	Absent	*Absent (left)*	*Yes*

Motions Passed

Mr. Feinstein, I just want to mention u one thing real quick again. The Homecoming is this Saturday that's very important to show our students if you can come it'll be great even if you don't stay the whole time. The second thing I just want to wish Mr. Alakone a long long-term employee of the district best wishes if I see him before he leaves I want to wish him give him a big handshake and wish him well in his future endeavors. And also I just want to say that I'm really proud of the board for renewing our board attorney. I've dealt with a number of attorneys and this firm. They're learned. They're actually funny sometimes, but they're dedicated. They know what we want to do here in this district. and we can't do it without competent, dedicated, nonsense, plain no favorites legal advice. That's on not only for the board, but for everyday items like discipline and Special Ed especially. So I just want to welcome Mr. Taylor's firm for for the foreseeable future and hopefully for the long term. Also, I just want to thank the board for approving Dr. Joanne Calabro for our assistant superintendent. She has not only been here in prior years as a a former interim and Assistant Interim Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, but I think she will add to our team and the what we're trying to do here and we look forward to working with you and we appreciate you coming out of sort of retirement and coming back to Englewood to really make a difference. With that, I'm going to skip old and new business and just ask for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Matthews asked for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Feinstein made a motion to adjourn, Seconded by Mr. Flores

All those in favor - Aye

Adjourned at 10:36 p.m.

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