

BOARD OF EDUCATION
GLASSBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GLASSBORO, NEW JERSEY

Special Meeting
September 20, 2021

Call to Order: President Calvo called the meeting of the Glassboro Board of Education to order at 6:32 p.m. at the Glassboro High School

Statement of Public Notice of Meeting in accordance with New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act: President Calvo announced that public notice of the meeting has been made in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, Laws of 1975.
Notice included the time, date and place of the meeting and to extent known, the agenda.

Members Present: Mr. Hughes, Mr. Stephens, Ms. Ricci, Ms. Roth, Dr. Tattersdill, Vice President Volz and President Calvo.

Members Absent: Mr. Esgro, Ms. Longley

Visitors: 173
Flag Salute: The Flag Salute was given by all present.

President's Report
President Calvo thanked the bus drivers, faculty, administration, the board and the parents. Discussed issues the schools are facing with transportation, the shortage of bus drivers and asked for feedback. View the communication as "unacceptable". Explained the purpose of the meeting is to explore the issues in regard to Transportation, discuss proposed strategies and solicit feedback to improve services and ensure safety.
Introduced one of the school solicitors, Bill Morlok Introduced the Superintendent of schools, Dr. Mark Silverstein and his plan and strategies for navigating through our transportation challenges. Introduced Dr. Robert Preston, Chief Academic Officer, who discussed the impact on instruction relative to the recommendations. Introduced the recently appointed Business Administrator, Lisa Ridgway who discussed the availability of funds to support these strategies; and lastly, introduced the representatives of the Delsea Regional School District, who over the past two years engaged in a Shared Services Agreement in Support of Student.

Report of Superintendent of Schools
The Superintendent regretted the frustration and accepted the responsibility to ensure improvement. Stated the communication was ineffective. Reminded everyone of the new Covid testing requirements coming in place in the next weeks and with increasing Covid-19 cases, steps we take may

be mitigated bus drivers needing to go in quarantine. Made changes in the schedule to ensure secondary students get home before their younger siblings which took minutes away from instruction. He is focus on transportation and instruction and Human Resources has been instructed that bus driver applications should get high priority. Also discussed the following:

- a. Staffing and Retention – Talked about incentives and/or bonuses (subject to collective bargaining).
- b. Expanded Hours and Routes (6 hrs./day)
- c. Prompt & Consistent Communications – Bowe was commended for using school messenger. Parents will receive regular e-mails from building principal in regard to bus delays.
- d. Shifts in Bus Numbers Assign to Students & Routes
- e. Safe Routes to Schools – Crossing Guards –Appreciative of Governing Body for the hire of a new crossing guard along Fish Pond and Delsea Drive
- f. Legislative Support –The NJDOE is surveying districts for their needs and is looking for any legislative support. Participates in Executive County Superintendent survey will encourage the governor to support what comes out of the survey.
- g. Parental Contract Payments-Parent Transportation – Obtained approval of the Executive County Superintendent to offer transportation at 100.00 per month to eligible parents. If approved by the board this may start during the month of October.
- h. Reduced/ Centralized Pick-up/Drop-Off Locations – This may required parents to walk a greater distance. We are exploring bus tracking “ apps” for parents and optimization of Transfinder.
- i. School Start/End Times for several schools.

J. Instructional Schedules

Report of the Chief Academic Officer

Dr. Preston discussed of the following:

- a. Reduced the number of minutes per block at GIS and GHS – Temporary and restoration on schedule will be restored once more drivers are hired.
- b. Rowan has agreed to allow students to remote into class.
- e. Guidance working on flexibility in schedule adjustments.

Report of the Business Administrator

Ms. Ridgway reported the following:

- a. The shortage of bus drivers is a nationwide problem.
- b. Shortage of bus drivers is due to many reasons some of them being unplanned resignations before the start of the school year, concerns with Covid, contentious mask/vaccination mandates, shift in careers to private sectors with higher wages and signing bonuses, high competition among other school districts and timeline of Hiring Process.
- d. The importance to be prepared in case of a potential exposures of drivers that would prompt a quarantine, illness, or other time off and their ripple effects.
- c. Explained the Share Service agreement with Delsea and how they have expanded to include a Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator and Dispatcher.
- d. The reassigning of a secretary to the Transportation Department

Report of the Delsea Regional District Representatives

Joe Collins addressed the issues with Transportation.

Board Comments

No comments and no questions

Opportunity for Public to address the board.

President Calvo moved, seconded by Ms. Ricci that the floor and (chat box) be open to the Public to address the Board.

Roll call vote

All Ayes

Motion Carried 8-0-0

Speakers

Mindy Smith – Stated that is uncomfortable with masks being taken down to speak. Against the way of solving transportation issues. Bus passes not being recorded. Stated Glassboro is the only district to shorten their day in the state. Asked why not looking at other ways?

Dr. Preston responded – Decision was the lesser of two evils. It was either grab & go bags lunches at the end of the day or shorten the school day.

Pete Calvo stated that bus passes need to get out early.

Dr. Natalie Kautz commented that dismissing students early equals 133 hours of missed instruction for the whole year and over a month of missed instruction. Seniors are not passing the standardized and how is that ok? Bus driver shortage is not new, not coming up with alternative solutions. Suggested to stagger days for younger students, late busses, virtual instruction. Plan A (the hiring of Bus Drivers) is a failure.

Pete Calvo responded that more drivers are coming and the change in times are temporary. For remote instruction, the state makes that call is not ours.

Suzanne Tuttle stated that it was said on the media that buses were 2 hours late, but her child was 4 hours late. Her child was dropped off at 5:45pm in a minibus and that was unacceptable. Had a terrified child at home and there was no communication from Superintendent until 2 days later. Stories that messaged privately, complained about Transportation Coordinator. Stated that parents were communicating but not Transportation. Stated that Deptford put out an apology the 1st day. Stated that drivers are leaving due to the shared Services and that no one wants to work for poor management and that there is poor logistical planning.

Pete Calvo responded that he does not engage in Social Media.

Suzanne stated that students are supposed to be in school for an amount of time and that it is not up to the kids to adjust themselves. It is poor management and there is no way they did not see this coming.

Dr. Preston answered that he discussed this with the County and legally, is 4 hours of instruction a day. Also, that we were unaware of the shortages and that Delsea is trying to make the adjustments.

Dr. Silverstein talked about the August meeting and shortage.

Deborah Filippone stated that grandchild got home 2.5 hours late crying because was hungry and had an accident on the first day of Kindergarten. Stated that the wonderful teachers made him want to go to school the next day. The other grandson had no orientation at Intermediate and on his first day felt overwhelmed and didn't know where to go. There was no list for the buses, and he went home to a house where no one was there. Had no key, and no one home. Concern for safety.

Ms. Ridgway responded that issues with the bus list has been worked out and corrected. Buses needs to cover for other buses when they are out. Drivers have been in communication with Base (office).

Pete Calvo stated that everyone needs to know which buses are they on.

Mr. Reynolds stated that Safety is the biggest issue. The first day the bus never showed up in the morning, but it dropped the student 3 miles away from home. On the second day, the student was dropped at Delsea and Masso instead of Stanger Ave. On the 3rd day driver told him no way to go down. No sidewalks. Stated that shared services with Delsea is not working and this is a safety issue. Letters are not good on Fridays. Stated that sent an e-mail to everyone and no one

responded. Said that Washington Twp got his stuff together and they did not shorten their hours.

Pete Calvo responded that they would look into the sidewalk issue. Also stated that Washington Twp is a larger district. The reason for this meeting is to present strategies and trying to get feedback. Governor needs to provide guidance and the district needs the support in case virtual learning is an option. If streets are unsafe, they need to know that as well. District to follow up with Mr. Reynolds.

Mary Jackson stated her concerns on the shortage of the classes and would like the classes to be longer and by bringing them in earlier. Re-work the schedule. Students are losing time with Teachers to work together one on one. Students are missing 45 minutes and can be impactful.

Dr. Preston responded early bird, high achievers. Stated that solicited feedback from students and 74 are better than 84 . Is exploring schedules that would be 45 to 50 minutes in the future. Will look into Title I funds for additional instruction.

Tyesha Jefferies stated that is a new resident to Glassboro. This is her second meeting. Educator for 25 years. Has a 10th grader in the High School and does not get Transportation. Worried about safety. Stated that Washington Twp did not know how to treat black people. Transportation issues are happening in her district and everywhere. Likes what she sees so far. Teachers in the district are advocates for her son who has an IEP. Superintendent needs to be a little more vocal.

Peter Calvo appreciated the comments on transparency. Issues on transportation are nationwide.

Mr. Steven stated that he is a proud Glassboro resident and has 6 years of upper management. Stated the issues are post-pandemic and asked what we can do differently. He is not going anywhere and stated this is a crisis. Suggested “Follow the bus” app and asked why they can’t just drive the students to another bus stop. Said the logistics is everything and wants to know what to do going forward.

Mr. Calvo stated that Transportation issues are not going anywhere. Number of parents wants an app to track the bus. Need to start prioritizing this.

George Weeks, our Director of Technology explained we have the capability thru Power School under school messenger to e-mail, text and call parents as long as parents are submitting their cell phone number and accept receiving messages.

Mr. Calvo thanked Mr. Weeks for clarifying Power School and discussed being a board member and having Board meetings with no audience, no engagement etc. and if you can’t come then you can pull copies from the agenda/minutes.

Mr. Weeks did research with Ms. Williams and only 100-200 parents have accepted the opt-in to text messages.

Mr. Calvo asked the parents to please make sure they are opting-in to text messaging and to check their e-mails.

Tina Cianfrani wants e-mails to be straighten out.

Ms. Ridgway mentioned the purchase of bike racks for Intermediate so students can ride their bikes to school. Also mentioned that they had a sync for Power School last night and changes made after that will not be changed in Power School.

Mr. Calvo mentioned the County and Police to make traffic changes in order to get buses to exit better.

Melissa Eaton discussed map of bus routes and apps to track buses.

Pete Calvo shared the new times for schools. Stated that all student on buses has an assigned seat but they choose to seat on the floor to avoid seating with other students and re-assured parents this will not continue going forward. Explained that some students don't want to listen to drivers/authoritative figures.

Dr. Natalie Kautz suggested a form of Communication on the website and/or suggestion box centrally located.

Dr. Silverstein suggested the use of the concerns suggestion link that is already established.

Alexis Brown stated he is a graduate & resident with 2 kids in the district. Has a 5 year old at Rodgers with no issues this year and bus driver Marie has helped. Wants parents to have notice when changes are made to Rodgers.

Ms. Ridgway asks parents to contact transportation either by email or phone.

Close Opportunity to for Public to address the Board

President Calvo second by Mr. Stephens that the floor and (chat box) be closed to the public regarding addressing the Board.

Roll Call vote

All Ayes
Motion Carried 8-0-0

Closing Statement

Mr. Calvo wants comments into a document that BOE can use. Would like to know how we can remedy our current issues and have equitable classes. Wants specific feedback for Power School from the IT department. Would like summaries for BOE Wednesday meeting.

Dr. Silverstein appreciated the feedback & candor. Stated that we will make mistakes along the way but we want to get it right.

Mr. Hughes stated that communication from buildings is getting better.

Ms. Volz stated that Staff is willing to go past the extra mile.

Adjournment:

Mr. Calvo moved, seconded by Mr. Hughes that the meeting adjourn at 9:15pm.

The motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Ridgway

Business Administrator/
Board Secretary