

**NEW JERSEY SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 3, 2019**

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Schools Development Authority (SDA or the Authority) was held on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 at 9:00 A.M. at the offices of the Authority at 32 East Front Street, Trenton, New Jersey.

Participating were:

Robert Nixon, Chairman  
Michael Kanef (Treasury)  
Bernard Piaia (DOE)  
Donna Sullivan (EDA)  
Kevin Luckie (DCA)  
Richard Elbert  
Loren Lemelle  
Lester Lewis-Powder  
Michael Maloney

being a quorum of the Board. Mr. Kanef, Ms. Lemelle, Mr. Piaia, Mr. Elbert, and Mr. Lewis-Powder participated in the meeting by teleconference.

At the Chairman's request, Lizette Delgado Polanco, chief executive officer; Roy Garcia, chief of staff; Andrew Yosha, chief operating officer; Jane F. Kelly, vice president and assistant secretary; Donald Guarriello, vice president and chief financial officer; Manuel Da Silva, vice president; Thomas Schrum, vice president; Patricia Cabrera, deputy chief of staff; and Albert Barnes, chief counsel of the SDA, participated in the meeting. Adam Sternbach of the Governor's Authorities Unit also participated in the meeting.

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Nixon, who requested that Ms. Kelly read the requisite notice of the meeting. Ms. Kelly announced that the meeting notice had been sent to the *Trenton Times* and *Star-Ledger* at least 48 hours prior to the meeting, and had been duly posted on the Secretary of State's bulletin board at 20 West State Street in Trenton, New Jersey. Ms. Kelly then conducted a roll call and indicated that a quorum of the Members was present.

### ***Pledge of Allegiance***

Led by the Chairman, the Members and all assembled stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

### ***Approval of Meeting Minutes***

The Chairman presented for consideration and approval the minutes of the Board's March 6, 2019 Open Session meeting. A copy of the meeting minutes and a resolution had been provided to the Members for review in advance of the meeting. Upon motion duly made by Mr. Luckie and seconded by Mr. Maloney, the Open Session meeting minutes of the March 6, 2019 SDA Board meeting were approved by the Board upon its unanimous vote in favor of the resolution attached hereto as ***Resolution 4a***.

### ***Authority Matters***

#### ***CEO Report***

Mr. Nixon asked Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Lizette Delgado Polanco for the Report of the CEO. Ms. Delgado Polanco gave an update on projects in design. She said that for the Camden HS project, Ernest Bock & Sons, Inc. has been issued notices to proceed (NsTP) for site, foundation, underground utilities and concrete slab work.

With respect to projects in the procurement stage, the CEO said that for Plainfield Woodland ES project, building demolition is ongoing. She reported that for the Orange Cleveland Street ES project, Epic Management, the construction manager (CM), was issued a

NTP on March 15. She added that Brockwell and Carrington Contractors, Inc., the general contractor (GC), was issued a notice of award (NOA) on March 27. For the Orange HS project, she reported that Cambridge Construction Management, the CM, was issued a NTP on March 15. She noted that Terminal Construction, the GC, was issued a NOA on March 27. In regard to the Perth Amboy HS project, she said that the procurement for design-build services was advertised on March 26.

With respect to design-build projects in construction, Ms. Delgado Polanco informed that Members that for the Irvington Madison Avenue ES project, permanent building power and gas services are connected to the building. She reported that for the Millville HS addition and renovation project, phase II structural steel has begun. For the Pemberton Denbo Crichton ES project, she said that structural steel installation is approaching completion.

The CEO said that the Elizabeth New ES, Vineland Lincoln Avenue and Newark South Street ES projects all have been closed out.

Turning to Authority events, outreach and other activities, Ms. Delgado Polanco advised the Members that she wanted to start by mentioning that on March 27 she, along with staff, joined Newark Public Schools District officials for a tour of schools in the district. She said that Newark was the 24<sup>th</sup> of the 31 SDA Districts that staff has toured since she became CEO. She explained that it was her goal to see the conditions of the schools and what the kids are dealing with on a daily basis. The CEO said that Newark has nearly 70 schools in the district, including one school, the Lafayette School, which was built in 1848 and is 170 years old. She said that staff was told by the district that schools in the City are an average of 100 years old. She noted that on the tour in Newark, staff saw a number of conditions that were very troubling. She said that there was a speech class that was being held in a classroom that has a cage outside instead of a door. She said that the kids are taking tests in rooms where the air is stale and smells of mold.

She also said that kids are learning in classrooms with smart boards that must be covered by plastic each night so that they aren't damaged when water comes into the classrooms from the leaky roofs. Ms. Delgado Polanco said that this is all unacceptable. She said that we can do better and we will do better, because our kids deserve better. She said that the SDA monthly board meetings should be conducted on the road at some of the schools. She added that what she is proposing today is that the Authority host its next Board meeting in Newark at the Hawthorne School so that the Members and staff can see what these kids are dealing with.

Ms. Delgado Polanco reported that the SDA continues to grow its social media following since staff launched these accounts in September. She said that, in total, the SDA has more than approximately 3,300 followers across all its social media accounts including: approximately 1,600 followers on Facebook, which is up from about 500 reported at the last meeting; 415 followers on Twitter, up from 357; on Instagram, 775 followers, up from 579; and on LinkedIn, 490 followers, up from 452. She added that, along with the Authority's website, social media has been a very successful communications tool to help the Authority communicate with stakeholders about the Authority's events as staff visits the districts.

The CEO said that, since the previous Board meeting, the Communications team has helped to generate a number of articles on the new CBRE Heery contract for Camden HS. She added that, in February, articles about the contract appeared in NJBIZ, ROI-New Jersey and the Camden Courier Post.

With respect to the External Affairs Department, Ms. Delgado Polanco advised the Members that on March 12 the Authority's Community Partnerships Department attended the Newark State of the City address. She said that on March 22 the Authority was a featured speaker on Rutgers Radio to talk about the SDA's business initiatives for reaching out to small business. She added that on March 24 the Authority's Community Partnerships Department

attended the Plainfield State of the City address. She also advised the Board that on March 28, the Authority's Community Partnerships Department hosted a Roundtable meeting with local Trenton non-profits.

In continuing, Ms. Delgado Polanco said that on March 28, the Authority's Community Partnerships Department attended the Perth Amboy State of the City address and, also on March 28, the SDA attended several meetings in Newark. She added that on March 29 the SDA attended the African American Chamber of Commerce and Statewide Hispanic Chamber of Commerce "Unity Breakfast" at which the SDA offered remarks. She said that she is really proud that the SDA is getting out into the districts in which the Authority is working and building.

The CEO informed the Members that on April 9 the SDA will be hosting a Dayton Avenue Educational Complex information session in Passaic. She said that on April 11 the Authority's Business & Workforce Diversity Department will attend Essex County's "Small Business Procurement Expo" event. She said that, also on April 11, the Authority's Business & Workforce Diversity Department and Borden Perlman Insurance Company will be co-hosting an event entitled "Insurance Insights: Reclaim your Competitive Edge". Ms. Delgado Polanco advised the Members that on April 16 the Authority will be a featured speaker at the NJ Alliance for Action meeting in Middlesex County. She added that on April 18 the Authority will be hosting a roundtable meeting with Camden and their local stakeholders.

In continuing, Ms. Delgado Polanco reported that April 24 the SDA will participate in a District Tour of Hoboken with Superintendent Christine Johnson. She said that on April 30 the SDA will participate in a District Tour of Jersey City with Superintendent Walker and, also on April 30, the SDA will be hosting the Perth Amboy HS information session. She advised that on May 2 the Authority will attend the Middlesex County Regional Chambers of Commerce's

“Community Leaders of Distinction” and staff will be able to speak about the work being done at the Authority.

### *School Review Committee*

**Change Order – Epic Management, Inc.; Extension of Existing Regulations: Notice of Re-adoption (without Amendments) - Procurement of Architects, Engineers, Land Surveyors and other Professional Services Consultants, N.J.A.C. 19:38C; Extension of Existing Regulations: Notice of Re-adoption (without Amendments) - Procurement of Goods and Services, N.J.A.C. 19:38D**

Mr. Nixon asked Mr. Luckie to provide the report of the School Review Committee. Mr. Luckie reported that the School Review Committee met on March 18, 2019 at which time three items were discussed. He said that the first item for Board consideration is a change order for Epic Management, Inc. (Epic) for the Luis Munoz Marin School project (Marin School). He reported that the Marin School is a 172,000 square foot facility in the Newark Public Schools District educating approximately 927 students in grades Pre-K through 8. He said that in 2016 the Department of Education and SDA identified conditions at the Marin School for advancement as an emergent project. He explained that the emergent project identified for the Marin School involved replacement of five gas-fired HVAC units that provide cooling to several windowless educational spaces, including the cafeteria and library. Mr. Luckie said that in February 2018, Epic was engaged to perform all work associated with the replacement of the five units through the Authority’s general construction task order contract. He added that Epic’s engagement included the limited design work necessary to obtain permits from the Department of Community Affairs and the replacement-in-kind of the existing units. Mr. Luckie said that, during the course of replacing the five units, it became clear that additional work was needed to accommodate installation of two of the new units. He informed the Members that the SDA requested and received a price proposal from Epic in the amount of \$17,533.00 to furnish and install all work necessary to modify the curbs and ductwork for the two units. He noted that this

became Change Order No. 3. He said that since the value of Change Order No. 3 singularly exceeds 10% of the contract value, Board approval is required. He added that funding for Change Order No. 3 is available within the construction contingency established in the Emergent Project Charter approved by the SDA CEO in January 2018.

A resolution pertaining to this matter was provided to the Board for review in advance of the meeting. Upon motion duly made by Ms. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Piaia and with Mr. Lewis-Powder abstaining, Change Order No. 3 for Epic Management Inc. for the Newark Luis Munoz Marin School project was approved with the Board's unanimous vote in favor of ***Resolution 6a.***

Next, Mr. Luckie said that the Committee is recommending an Extension of Existing Regulations and a Notice of Re-adoption (without amendments) for the Procurement of Architects, Engineers, Land Surveyors and other Professional Services Consultants. He reported that in March 2012 the Board approved for final adoption regulations governing the Procurement of Architects, Engineers, Land Surveyors and other Professional Services Consultants by the Authority. He added that the Rules were formally published in the New Jersey Register on April 4, 2012 and that they are due to expire on April 4, 2019. He said that the Rules address requirements for prequalification, advertisement, evaluation and selection in procurements for professional services consultants; procurements for title insurance companies, appraisers, and experts; and also specify procedural and other requirements. Mr. Luckie explained that State agencies and authorities can utilize a Notice of Re-adoption process to seek additional time to review or modify existing rules or to ensure that underlying rules do not expire while the agency pursues substantive amendments through the normal proposal, publication, public comment and adoption process. He said that the Notice of Re-adoption process effectuates the re-adoption of rules and automatically extends the rules for seven-years. He explained that management intends

to draft any amendments needed to correct or improve the Rules and to submit any proposed amendments to external entities for review and validation before seeking Board approval for a proposed re-adoption with amendments to the Rules. He added that, pending expiration of the Rules on April 4, 2019, the Authority sent a Notice of Re-adoption to the Office of Administrative Law to meet the statutory 30-day filing requirement. He noted that the processing of the re-adoption and extension is suspended pending the Board's ratification of the Notice. Mr. Luckie said that management is seeking the Board's ratification of its filing of the Notice of Re-adoption to extend the expiration of the Rules. He explained that the proposed Notice of Re-adoption process will involve no amendments or modifications to the Rules and, upon re-adoption, the Rules will remain in their current form. He said that management recommends that the Members ratify the Authority's use of the Notice of Re-adoption process to effectuate the re-adoption and approve an extension of the Rules.

A resolution pertaining to this matter was provided to the Board for review in advance of the meeting. Upon motion duly made by Mr. Maloney and seconded by Mr. Nixon, the Extension of Existing Regulations and Notice of Re-adoption (without amendments) for the Procurement of Architects, Engineers, Land Surveyors and other Professional Services Consultants were approved with the Board's unanimous vote in favor of ***Resolution 6b***.

Next, Mr. Luckie said that the Committee is recommending an Extension of Existing Regulations and Notice of Re-adoption (without amendments) for the Procurement of Goods and Services. He said that in March 2012 the Board approved for final adoption regulations governing the Authority's Procurement of Goods and Services. He reported that the Rules were formally published in the New Jersey Register on April 4, 2012 and are due to expire on April 4, 2019. He explained that these Rules address requirements for prequalification, advertisement, evaluation and selection in procurements for professional services consultants. Mr. Luckie added

that the Rules also address general provisions and requirements for the procurement of goods and services. He informed the Members that management is utilizing the same Notice of Re-adoption process that was utilized in connection with the rules that were just discussed and is seeking the Board's ratification of its actions to date. He said, again, that the same Notice of Re-adoption process will be utilized in connection with these rules and that there will be no amendments or modifications to the Rules. He advised the Board that, upon re-adoption, the Rules will remain in their current form. Mr. Luckie added that management recommends that the Board ratify the Authority's use of the Notice of Re-adoption process to effectuate the re-adoption and approve the extension of the Rules.

A resolution pertaining to this matter was provided to the Board for review in advance of the meeting. Upon motion duly made by Ms. Lemelle and seconded by Mr. Nixon, the Extension of Existing Regulations and Notice of Re-adoption (without amendments) for the Procurement of Goods and Services were approved with the Board's unanimous vote in favor of ***Resolution 6c***.

### ***Public Comments***

The Chairman then opened the Public Comments portion of the meeting.

At the Chairman's request, Mr. Keith Benson addressed the Board. Mr. Benson stated that he is the president of the Camden High School Parents Association and advised that he sits on the executive committee of the Camden East Committee of the NAACP. Mr. Benson thanked and complimented the Board and the Governor for their great selection of the current CEO. He said that very few agencies in the United States live out their creed and live out the Declaration of Independence. He said that inclusion and diversity are very important in a fair and moral society. He said that his organization thinks the world of Lizette (the CEO) and supports her. He said that his organization is not in support of the attacks that have appeared in the press and that he has come to let everybody know that the CEO should be retained and that she should be

allowed to expand. Mr. Benson said that he would like to see the diversity on the (SDA project) sites that the CEO has at the SDA--not just diversity at the work sites but also with the contractors. He thanked the CEO and said that she has made “the promise of America real”. He said that he speaks for all 40 chapters of the NAACP throughout the State. Mr. Benson asked the Board to continue with Lizette, and to continue and expand the great work that is being done with diversity.

Mr. Nixon then invited Mr. Francisco Cortes to the podium. Mr. Cortes advised the Board that he is the President of the New Jersey Veterans Chamber of Commerce (Chamber). He said that the Chamber represents 400,000 men and women who bravely served our country--many who are diverse business owners in the community. He referenced a 2015 New Jersey law which set aside 3% of the State’s budget for service-disabled owned businesses. He advised that, since 2015, zero dollars have been awarded to our brave men and women who serve their communities in the State of New Jersey. Mr. Cortes said that one of the reasons the Chamber was created was to support veterans businesses. He advised that, since inception, the Chamber has engaged with many organizations in New Jersey, including the SDA. He said that the SDA, with its leadership and through its CEO, was one of the first agencies that opened its doors to the veteran community and helped push opportunities that were not afforded before. He said that, like him, many business owners are Latinos looking for opportunities, not handouts. He said that the SDA has provided opportunities and the Chamber stands by the SDA and its leadership for that reason. He thanked the Authority for supporting those that have served their country. Mr. Nixon thanked Mr. Cortes for his service.

Next, the Chairman invited Mr. Lorenzo Hall to the podium. Mr. Hall said that he is the President of Newark Local 617 which represents approximately 950 of the folks in the Newark public schools. He stated that the East Side High School, probably the largest school in Newark,

has three elevators--none of which work. He said that there are over 1,000 children in the building. He described other problems with Newark's school facilities including broken toilets, leaks and collapsing roofs. He described the smell of urine in school buildings and light fixtures in need of repair/replacement. Ms. Delgado Polanco indicated that the SDA would look into these issues.

Mr. Nixon then asked Mr. Manuel Segura to the podium. Mr. Segura said that he is a former Trenton City Councilman and a member of the Dominican-American Elected and Appointed Officials Caucus of New Jersey (DAEOC-NJ). He advised that he is also a former member of the Trenton School Board. Mr. Segura said that as a former school board member he is very familiar with the deterioration of schools. He said that he fought for a new Trenton Central High School and is very happy that there will be a new, state of the art high school. He said that he has known CEO Delgado Polanco for 25 years and referenced her contributions in both politics and the community. Mr. Segura recognized her support in his Trenton mayoral run and referenced her efforts in fighting for the rights of people to be equitably paid. He applauded Ms. Delgado Polanco for visiting the schools, which no one else ever did, in order to see what is happening. He noted his support of his "sister" and quoted César Chávez who said "si se puede, yes we can and si se puede, yes we will".

The Chairman invited Mr. Ameer Natson to address the Members. Pastor Natson advised that he is the Lead Pastor of The Better Life Church at the Cineplex movie theater in Newark. He said that his ministry has been acknowledged as the fastest growing church in the history of the State of New Jersey. He also noted his appearance on the Celebrity Chef show and his experience as a chef to a number of celebrities. He said that he is a product of Newark's public education system and serves with the National Action Network under the leadership of the Reverend Al Sharpton. He said that he was here to celebrate the leadership of SDA. He said that

he, the Reverend Al Sharpton and Pastor Steffie Bartley, who spoke at the last Board meeting, are committed to using their influence to see that inclusion and fairness are happening within the SDA. He stated that he is a man who survived the struggle of an impoverished school system. He provided an overview of his background and his struggle to run a culinary program in a Newark school (GW Carver) that did not have proper heating or air conditioning. Pastor Natson said that he also has been to many other school districts and seen state of the art educational facilities. He noted the unfairness of this situation. He expressed gratitude for the Governor and CEO Delgado Polanco and her commitment to fairness and equality. He said that it is not fair to be bashed or ridiculed. He quoted from the Bible and said that, representing the National Action Network, he will use every ounce of influence that he has to see that we combat what has been going on in the state for way too long-- a lack of inclusion, fairness and equality. He advised that the National Action Network is watching carefully and looking to see fairness across the board. He said that they are not asking for more than their fair due.

Next, Mr. Nixon asked Mr. Stan White of Camden to address the Board. Mr. White said he is a retired community outreach specialist. He said that he wanted to talk about equity. He said that he doesn't want sympathy for the Camden or Abbott Districts but, rather, simply wants what is given to everybody else. He asked if the Board has taken the initiative to address the mold, asbestos, and lead issues in Camden's schools. He asked if the Chairman has seen pictures of those three things in Camden's schools. He said that the SDA should be doing a full forensic report on the public schools and referenced the series on charters schools that is currently in the news. He said that he's not knocking charter schools or renaissance schools but asked where the money went. Mr. White said that somebody needs to be indicted. Mr. White said money was sent to help the district but was given to charters and even to a village for teachers for Newark and Trenton charters. He asked who directed the money to the charters. He said that SDA is all

about building buildings and making life better for the kids but asked if anyone is being held accountable for wrongdoing. He asked for equity.

Mr. Nixon said that no SDA money has been spent to build any private or charter schools and that the Authority is fully committed to addressing the issues that plague Camden and the other districts within its purview. He added that SDA is certainly aware of those issues and, through its capital plan, is addressing them as quickly as possible. He noted that there are problems that are district responsibilities. He said that SDA seeks to ensure that everyone is doing their share.

Mr. Nixon asked Dorothy Sheppard to address the Board. Ms. Sheppard introduced herself and said that she is the president of Local 3 cafeteria workers in Newark, New Jersey. She said that she is before the Board on behalf of her workers. She said that they are working in poor conditions, notably problems with drainage and kitchen flooding when it rains. She added that the conditions in the Cleveland Avenue ES kitchen facilities are so bad that the workers are unable to prepare food products there and cannot even wash the fruit. Ms. Sheppard said that the workers have to contend with equipment that is very old, outdated and no longer functional. She spoke of the need for new equipment for the schools, adding appears that everything is being overlooked. Ms. Sheppard said that many of the children need an adequate meal at school because many times they are not eating what they should eat at home. She said that a nice balanced meal cannot be provided if the workers do not have what they need to prepare it. Ms. Shepard said the food service workers in Newark need help in order to properly feed the children.

The Chairman asked Pastor Amir Khan of Camden to address the Board. Pastor Khan said that first he would like to address the Chairman about his statement that no money from SDA has gone to charter schools. He asked the Chairman to check into the Lanning Square

property. He said that the community rallied around the Lanning Public School and then close to \$10 million in SDA money went to cleaning off that land. He said that now in its place is the Kipp-Norcross School. Mr. Nixon said that the SDA does not build private schools, adding that he is aware of the history of the program.

Next, Pastor Khan addressed the CEO and said that the speakers are all here to speak in defense of and to show support for the management team that she has put in place. He said that he is a pastor but that he was a businessman for the last 40 years. He said that he's been very successful and has had multi-million dollar businesses for the past 40 years. He described his business ventures. He said that he has dealt with business people for many years and with the SDA management team for the last 6-8 years. He said that he's recently had much more success with the current SDA management team, given their professionalism, follow through, and expertise, than with any SDA team in the past. He said that when he reads the articles about SDA hiring people who don't know about business, he figures it's just "fake news". He said the SDA deals primarily in urban areas and noted the importance of having people come in to the districts who are professional and look like the complexion of the community. He said that he and the NAACP and the National Action Network are 100% supportive of CEO Delgado Polanco and her team and think they are doing an outstanding job.

The Chairman asked Pastor Mark Broach to address the Board. Pastor Broach introduced himself and said that he is the pastor of the Deliverance Center in Trenton. He said that, recently, sister Lizette came to a pastors' meeting and the passion and energy that she showed gives a reason to hope again-not only for the pastors but also for the people that they serve. He said that the old Trenton Central HS (TCHS) had issues of sewage running into the cafeteria and the kids that attended the high school were so used to it that it didn't affect them whatsoever. He advised the Board that when suburban children came to TCHS to take their SATs they had to postpone it

because they were becoming sick. Pastor Broach said that there still are schools that remain in as bad or worse condition than TCHS. He said that there is hope with the leadership of Ms. Lizette and the crew that's around her. He added that the pastors will continue to work on the Trenton Public Schools to make sure there is a better environment for learning.

Next, Mr. Nixon asked Mr. David Barie to address the Board. Mr. Barie advised the Board that when he was employed by the SDA he worked on emergent projects and referenced some of the projects with which he was involved. He said that he no longer has enthusiasm for the SDA and asked that the Members bear this in mind as they listen to what he is about to say. He then made lengthy critical comments about the SDA's Vice President of Corporate Governance and Legal Affairs. He also offered disparaging remarks about the Vice President of Real Estate Services and Pre-Development, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Executive Officer. Mr. Nixon asked Mr. Barie to refrain from making personal comments. Mr. Barie said that he was attempting to make public comments and "speak truth to power".

The Chairman asked Mr. Sameer Shah to address the Board. Mr. Shah said that he worked for the SDA for 16½ years before he was terminated in 2018. Mr. Shah said that he felt sorry for Ms. Delgado Polanco after four of her executives took issue with the veracity of the statement she made at the last Board meeting. He said that during testimony before a legislative committee, (former SDA Chief of Staff) Albert Alvarez said that he directed the SDA firings and linked the firings with the hirings to bring in Ms. Delgado Polanco's family and friends. He said that Mr. Alvarez stated that the CEO gave him the delegated authority to fire directors and employees. He asked the Chairman, in his investigation, to check if the delegated authority form was signed by Ms. Lizette Delgado Polanco or not. He said that he is currently working in non-Abbott schools and focusing on an analysis comparing the cost of building non-Abbott schools with the cost of building SDA schools with taxpayers' dollars. He explained to Ms. Delgado

Polanco that, prior to her coming to the SDA, he was targeted by the executives. He cited examples of this claim. Mr. Shah said that the entire organization is dysfunctional and its vice presidents are going against Ms. Delgado Polanco. He then addressed the Chairman and said that in the eight weeks prior to his termination he was promoted and demoted after having his best evaluation at the organization. He asked the Chairman to extend his investigation and review of the hirings to include the firings. He named two Vice Presidents that he believes recommended his firing. Mr. Shah then addressed Ms. Delgado Polanco and said that if she wants to survive, it's time to step up and take action. He said that he was the first person in the Authority to help Mr. Alvarez bring minorities into this program. Mr. Shah then alleged that an SDA Vice President was directly involved in directing the former HR Director to tamper with his personnel files. He added that, prior to the HR Director's firing, he asked for the status of his promotion and was told they were cleansing the files of every employee to present them to the new administration. He said that, at the direction of this Vice President, his promotion was stopped. He said that the Chairman needs to step up and stop the hostile environment that SDA's executives have created.

The Chairman invited Manisha Mehta to come to the podium. Ms. Mehta advised that she has a masters degree in public administration and an MBA from Rutgers University. She said that she has come to speak as a concerned citizen about how she was affected by the hiring practices of this administration. She said that in early 2018 she met with an SDA Vice President and expressed her desire to join the Authority. She said that she was encouraged to apply for a position at the SDA whenever a job became available. She advised the Board that in July 2018 she applied for a SDA Cost Analyst Position that was posted and received a call indicating that she would be contacted with an interview date. Ms. Mehta said that she never received a call-back so she called the SDA again and was asked to resend her application. She said that she was

informed that hiring was on hold at that time (September 2018). She said that she eventually was advised that the SDA had her application but that there was a hiring freeze in effect. She said that she is before the Board waiting for her fair chance. She said that everyone is talking about how this administration is all about fair chances and being inclusive and diverse. She said that she felt that she was being sidelined. Ms. Mehta said that she started reading all the news (about the SDA) in the paper in February. She said that while she was at the (SDA's) front door seeking a fair chance to be hired, there was a back door entry and more than 34 people were hired. She said that she feels flabbergasted that she was treated very unfairly. She said that she is a very concerned citizen and asked the Board Members to please look into the hiring practices at the SDA.

The Chairman asked Pastor Ramon Collazo to address the Board. Pastor Collazo introduced himself as the Pastor of Santa Isabel Lutheran Church in Elizabeth. He described the police presence at the public schools that his son has attended in Elizabeth. He said that he has observed that there are four high schools located close one to another and noted that a police presence is required in the afternoon since the children at all four schools are dismissed at the same time. He asked why these schools are built so close to one another when Elizabeth is the fourth largest city in New Jersey. Pastor Collazo said that he is sometimes contacted to establish roundtables which motivate the community. He explained that these forums provide the opportunity for community leaders and parents to talk about all of the things that are happening in their children's schools. He said that there has not been an opportunity before to bring before the Board all of the things that the parents, teachers and schools are faced with and he thanked the Board and Ms. Delgado Polanco for providing this. He said that actually going into the different districts could bring more justice and equity into determining the amount of money that

is distributed for new schools and for planning because the people in the different districts can inform the process. Pastor Collazo thanked the Board and asked that they keep up the good work.

The Chairman invited Ms. Ronsha Dickerson to come to the podium. Ms. Dickerson advised that she was wearing “3 hats” and would be taking off each hat as she spoke. She advised that she was representing the Journey for Justice Alliance (JJA), a national alliance covering 40 cities across the country (representing black and brown cities), driven for school improvement. She said that, as a national organizer, she is able to go into schools across the country in areas that look like Camden and Newark and to see the suffering due to the conditions. She noted that the schools are not failing but, rather, we have failed. She said that there is a national crisis of old schools becoming land graft for charter proliferation. She explained that this helps the public schools to fail due to a budget crisis. She said that JJA created a report (Report) showing course comparisons. Ms. Dickerson stressed that this Report was not to undermine the great work of the NAACP and the great leader Thurgood Marshall.

Ms. Dickerson said that schools lack the items they need to create opportunities for inspiration. She explained that the Report measured wealthy rich white students’ schools against poor black and brown children’s schools showing that the poorer community schools’ structure couldn’t support what the white communities could. She noted that the Report includes Newark, Paterson and Camden. She then advised that she is a co-founder of the Camden Parent Union, a focus group of community organizers that fight for equity for Camden. Next, Ms. Dickerson discussed Camden High School (CHS). She said that it felt like CHS was stolen from the community because it was a manufactured crisis—i.e., you have a state takeover, an appointed superintendent and an advisory school board with no vote for the public. She said that you then take the number one school, a historical school in the city, and say “we’re going to create a state of the art public school”. She questioned the benefit of this. She said that while CHS is under

construction the children are in other facilities that are not suitable for high school students. She stated that there has been a drop in CHS enrollment and that the site of the new CHS is like a funeral. Ms. Dickerson said that she would now address the Members as the mother of 6 children who went through the Camden public school system. She added that she also is a product of the Camden public school system. She said that her children went to Forest Hills schools where they had to eat and have gym in an all-purpose room where the ceiling was leaking dirty water captured in a kiddie pool. Ms. Dickerson then asked the SDA to investigate all of the Abbott/SDA Districts, especially Camden which is always treated like the stepchild while everyone knows that it is the most politically corrupt city in New Jersey. In conclusion, Ms. Dickerson said that she wanted everyone to walk away knowing that diversity is important and to recognize that these children are left the middle of a war zone if we do not respect and promote schools that serve as opportunities for inspiration.

At this time, Mr. Maloney left the meeting.

Next, the Chairman invited Ms. Debra Coyle to come to the podium. Ms. Coyle said that she is the Executive Director of the New Jersey Work Environment Council that is part of the Healthy Schools Now (HSN) Coalition. She explained that she was before the Board to address what she has read in the papers. She said that it is her understanding that all the money left with the SDA has already been allocated to projects and that there is no money left for future projects. She said that she does not need to describe conditions at school facilities as, given the testimony heard this morning, Lizette and her leadership team are well aware of them. She noted her concern that the SDA, the agency tasked with building new schools, is out of money which delays correcting conditions in the schools in the Abbott districts. She advised that HSN is advocating for more funding for the SDA. She said that this is about the children and about the school staff that are exposed to these conditions day in and day out. She said that while

representing HSN and as a mother, she was speaking to another mother, who has a child in an Abbott (SDA) school district whose child does not want to go to school because it is too hot in the school. She said that temperatures in older schools fluctuate greatly and do not adjust to the heat or the cold. She noted that, with climate change, there will be more days of 90 degree weather and it is unacceptable to have a child crying not because they don't want to go to school to learn but, rather, because of the temperature. She stated that it is a moral obligation to find the money for our kids. She said that the other public commenters spoke about equity, justice and fairness which also is about opportunity. She stressed that we need to give all the children in the state of New Jersey the opportunity to learn in a healthy environment.

The Chairman then invited James Harris to the podium. Mr. Harris said that he represents the New Jersey Association of Black Educators (NJABE). He noted that this is his first time attending an SDA meeting but it will most certainly not be his last. He explained that he was present to speak in support of Lizette Delgado Polanco as the executive director of the Authority. He said that he is very concerned when he reads front page stories in all the newspapers about political matters that have nothing to do with improving the schools for the kids that are stuck in old buildings in the 31 poorest school districts in the state. He said that something happened in November 2017 that resulted in a change of leadership. He stated that everyone knows that when political parties change there are personnel changes. He said that this is nothing new going from Republican to Democratic leadership. He said that the people who sat on the Boards of most of these organizations for 8 years were appointed by the Governor. He said that for African-Americans and Latinos, there was hatred, racism and discrimination that was plainly visible. Mr. Harris stated that the SDA is part of a Supreme Court mandate to fix the poorest 31 school districts in the state to make them equal to the wealthiest school districts and offered that the borrowed money reportedly was not well spent. He questioned whose responsibility it was for

ensuring the adequate use of public money. He said that state government, through the Treasury, was responsible and questioned why no one was brought to justice. Mr. Harris said that the children in these schools are hurting. He said that he is a graduate of South Side High School, now the Malcom X Shabazz High School, in Newark. He said that the school has the capacity for 1,200 children but that the school population is down to 500 because the charter schools have built new buildings and the public schools have gotten nothing. He said that, when talking about leadership, his organization is hoping that with the new leadership will come diversity and inclusion--something that was completely absent for many years. He said that he can understand why people are getting upset that they are losing their jobs and suggested that people lost their jobs because they didn't do their jobs. He stated that the NJABE is not in favor of mistreating employees but that when individuals are mistreated there should be someplace they can go to get legal redress. He stated his belief that there is some emotion when a new director comes into any organization and takes a snapshot to see what is happening. He stated that the report is that the SDA didn't do a good job in many instances so there had to be some change. He said that he is happy to see changes. Mr. Harris said that he is not recommending mistreatment of employees but that he wanted to talk about who gets the jobs to build schools in urban areas. He said that he has looked at the schools being built. He added that it that doesn't look like the people who live in the communities are building the schools. He asked who gave the contracts to white organizations that don't have Black and Latino people on the job. He said that he wanted to pay attention to the unions because there are some that are not racially diverse. He suggested taking a look at the steel workers union which is the union that the President of the Senate comes from. He said to take a look at the operating engineers. He asked why the SDA gives out so many contracts to unions and organizations that don't have a diversity component. He said that most contracts have an agreement to abide by affirmative action and inquired as to who monitors to

ensure that this happened and, if it did not, what the punishment was. Mr. Harris said that 94% of the African Americans that voted, voted for the Phil Murphy Team not Steve Sweeney and not George Norcross. He said that the fighting has to stop so that the children can get a free, competitive education in a global economy. He then asked where the Board's black representatives were. The Board Chairman indicated that they were participating by teleconference. Mr. Harris said that they need to be present so that the public optics can look a little bit better than they do right now. Mr. Harris asked, with New Jersey one of the most racially diverse states in the United States and the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> wealthiest state, how one can reconcile that Camden is the poorest city in the country. He said that he believes that some of that money that went into Camden never got to the people. He said that he wants to know what checkbook or bank account that money went into--federal and/or state. He said that the children need to be in comfortable, safe and modern facilities so that they can take the tests and be competitive. He then spoke about schools that have buckets inside when it rains. Mr. Harris said that the NJABE wants the SDA organization to do the right thing for all of the people in the state of New Jersey. He said that NJABE supports Lizette and her team and that they will be back because the children are at stake.

Finally, at the Chairman's request, Ms. Kelly read a letter from Ms. Rosie Grant of Paterson, New Jersey. Ms. Grant had submitted a letter to the SDA Board on the Authority's website on April 1, 2019. Copies of Ms. Grant's letter were distributed to the Members of the Board and executive staff. Ms. Grant wrote:

Dear SDA Board Members,

My name is Rosie Grant and I am the Program Director for Paterson Education Fund in Paterson NJ. Paterson Education Fund's Mission is to stimulate community action for change in

the Paterson Public Schools, so that every child achieves high standards. We welcome positive systems changes that provide more opportunities for our children to learn and succeed.

I am writing to offer my support for the current leadership and direction of the SDA. Additionally, I fully support the SDA's bid for additional funding and hope to help in the effort to keep the SDA independent and viable. Although there have been some issues in the past, many districts, both urban and suburban, are desperately waiting for new facilities and see this new administration as a ray of hope.

I would like to thank you for the SDA built schools in Paterson. Our 2005 Long Range Facilities Plan highlighted the need for 13 new schools to ease overcrowding and replace crumbling buildings. Since then, Paterson received 6 new schools and additions to 2 others. However, the need is still dire. Paterson still needs 11 new building (sic). In the existing buildings, classrooms are overcrowded and many of our science labs are not fully functional and do not meet current academic needs. There are 13 schools over 100 years old. Because of the need for additional classrooms, not every school has a gym or cafeteria. Some have neither and some have a multi-use space commonly known as a "gymna-café-torium" a combination of gymnasium, cafeteria and auditorium. Three spaces that should serve three distinct purposes and should be available to different groups of student simultaneously.

Additionally, there is increasing demand for vocational education, but the district has no space available. As you may already know, the county technical schools are now focused on technology information systems and high level career academies so that there are very few opportunities for students who want tradition (sic) vocational opportunities.

Recently, for the first time in many years, SDA staff visited Paterson schools, and others, to get first-hand knowledge of our facilities conditions. They have participated in statewide education coalition meetings and are developing a plan to meet our children's need as mandated

by the courts in the Abbott v. Burke decisions. Please know that you have the community's support in advocating for funds from our legislators, maintaining the organization's independence and protecting all our children's future.

### *Adjournment*

There being no further business to come before the Board, upon motion by the Chairman and with unanimous consent, the meeting was adjourned.

**Certification:** The foregoing represents a true and complete summary of the actions taken by the Board of the New Jersey Schools Development Authority at its April 3, 2019 meeting.

*/s/ Jane F. Kelly*  
Assistant Secretary