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Virgin Islands Board of Education Emergency Meeting Minutes – February 25, 2021

I. Call to Order

The emergency meeting of the 20th Virgin Islands Board of Education was called to order at 2:05 p.m. by Chair Kyza A. Callwood. The meeting was held via teleconference.

II. Roll Call

The following were present: Kyza A. Callwood, Angel L. Bolques, Jr., Judy M. Gomez, Winona Hendricks, Terrence T. Joseph, Emmanuella M. Perez-Cassius, Shawna K. Richards, Nandi Sekou and Jeanette Smith-Barry.

St. Croix Superintendent and other representatives of the Department of Education were also present.

III. Discussion of Reopening of Schools for the St. Croix District

Chair Callwood recapped the events bringing the Board of Education to this point. Member Perez-Cassius summarized the work of the School Plants and Facilities Committee to walk through all of the schools slated to reopen and their assessment of the schools. Of the schools, the readiness of Claude O. Markoe Elementary School and the Arthur A. Richards K-8 School (housed at the St. Croix Educational Complex) were critical concerns. She reported that the Board had received the required assessments from the Departments of Health and Labor and the Fire Service, but was still awaiting the report from the Department of Planning and Natural Resources.

St. Croix Superintendent, Carlos McGregor, discussed the steps taken by the Department to prepare the schools for reopening. He reviewed the particulars of the Department's plan which included a staggered return for K-3 students and the opportunity for families to opt out and continue at-home learning.

Board members asked extensive questions of the Department representatives. The Department advised of teacher training for hybrid courses, the state of the school grounds, waivers of liability, availability of PPE's, student busing, the grace period for school uniforms and the participation of the AFT in the school tours. Superintendent McGregor and his team asked the Board to also certify COMS and AARJHS so that all schools could open and to do a walkthrough of the two schools after the meeting, since plans has already been made for media rounds and orientation.

MOTION: Member Perez-Cassius moved to extend the emergency meeting of the

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Virgin Islands Board of Education is to provide leadership and oversight, set policy and advocate for continuous improvement of the Public Education System of the Virgin Islands of the United States.

VISION STATEMENT

Each child is provided with the best quality education which guarantees academic excellence, promotes our history and culture, and builds strong local and global communities.

Board until 4:00 p.m.
SECOND: Chair Callwood
The motion was so ordered.

Deputy Superintendent Carla Bastian discussed specific efforts to address concerns at the COMS and AARJHS. Members of the Board questioned whether the meeting was rote, since the Department was on such a tight timeline for the March 2nd opening.

MOTION: Member Perez-Cassius moved to approve the reopening of Pearl B. Larsen, Juanita Gardine, Lew Muckle, Eulalie Rivera and Ricardo Richards Schools, with a conditional certificate being issued to Claude O. Markoe and St. Croix Educational Complex which will house Arthur Richards School, with a hard review date of Monday, March 1, 2021. If remedies are not to the satisfaction of the Board, it will be automatically revoked.

SECOND: Chair Callwood.

The vote was as follows:

Yea (8) – A. Bolques, Jr., K. Callwood, J. Gomez, W. Hendricks, T. Joseph, E. Perez-Cassius, S. Richards and N. Sekou

Absent (1) – J. Smith-Barry

The motion carried.

Arrangements were made for Member Perez-Cassius and committee members to visit the schools that had received conditional certification. Superintendent McGregor thanked the Board. Chair Callwood assured the Board's support of the Department.

IV. Adjournment

MOTION: Member Joseph moved to adjourn.

SECOND: Chair Callwood

The motion was so ordered. The meeting was adjourned at 3:42 p.m.

Submitted By:



Shawna K. Richards, PMP
Secretary

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