

**SPECIAL BOARD MEETING OF THE ELK TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2020 AURA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL VIRTUAL MEETING.**

Purpose: 2020-21 SCHOOL YEAR SPECIAL BOARD MEETING FOR AUGUST  
SEE PAGE (S) \_\_\_\_\_ OF MINUTES AGENDA

Special Note: THE MEETING APPROVED AND PRE-SCHEDULED BEGAN 6:30 P.M.

Board Mem.	Ms. Danielle Bland	Mrs. Mary Snively
Pres.	Mr. Wayne Howard	Mrs. Angelique Stoney-Siplin
	Mr. J. Wilson Hughes, Jr.	Ms. Courtney Vance
	Mrs. Joyce Massott-Burnett	Mrs. Jennifer Wirtz
	Ms. Cheryl Potter	

Admin. Pres. Dr. Piera Gravenor, Superintendent, Mr. Joseph Collins, Business Administrator/Board Secretary, Dr. Melissa Williams, Assistant Superintendent

Statement: As President of the Elk Township Board of Education, I hereby certify that all provisions of the "Open Public  
Regular Meeting Law" P.L. 1975, Chapter 231, have been met. Notice of this meeting was mailed to "The South Jersey  
Session: Times", "The Sentinel", as well as to the Municipal Clerk of Elk Township.

Pledge: Mr. J. Wilson Hughes, Jr. led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mission Statement: Mr. J. Wilson Hughes, Jr. read the following statement:

We strive to educate students and assist them in realizing their full potential as responsible, productive, contributing members of society by providing an educational environment in which students are challenged, differences are valued, and excellence is expected.

**CITIZENS**

Open Public: Motion by Mrs. Angelique Stoney-Siplin, seconded by Ms. Danielle Bland to open the first public portion

Voice Vote:

Yes – 9 No – 0 Abstentions – 0

Motion carried unanimously

Mr. Mario Montanero NJEA representative introduced himself and stated that he was representing Ms. Sonya Cramer. He read a prepared statement to the Board:

Dear Elk Township Board of Education members:

Please accept this written statement tonight via my NJEA UniServ Representative, Mario Montanero. While my preference was to appear before all of you personally during public session to apologize for something I communicated and to clarify what my intentions were in communicating it, UniServ has advised me to submit a written statement through my representative instead.

I have worked as a teacher for 23 years and for Elk Township Public Schools since [2001]. I love my job as a teacher. I love working with the children of this district. I have been proud to call this my professional home for the last 20 years. I have poured my heart and soul into this job. I have always done everything in my power to provide every single student in my classroom with the best, most supportive education possible and to teach with acceptance and inclusion.

I understand that a Facebook post I recently shared has caused upset in our community. For that, I am truly sorry. It was never my intention to cause pain or distress to anyone. Although I recognize that my intent does not and cannot change how that post was received, I want to take this opportunity to clarify that my only intention was to honor the life of a five-year old boy, who was roughly the same age as the students I teach, by sharing images of

him. It was not the first time that I have shared photos of children who are involved in tragedies because those stories touch my heart.

Unfortunately, in this instance I responded emotionally to the image without taking the time to read the context of the original post, which minimized the deaths of Black Americans, falsely claimed that the terrible tragedy involving this particular child received no media coverage, and used profane and offensive language. Over the last week, I have spent a lot of time reflecting on the power of words and images and decisions we make emotionally, and how this power is enhanced in an age of social media. In short, it was an awakening to my need to become an ally to the fight for racial equity.

I take full responsibility for sharing a post that I should have recognized as offensive. If I could undo my decision to repost it, I would.

Because I cannot undo that decision, what I can offer is a genuine apology from the bottom of my heart; a promise that the opinion attached to the image I shared, by the person who originally posted it—someone I do not know at all—does not reflect my core values as an educator, my personal beliefs, or the way I run my classroom. I personally commit to reaching out to anyone in the community who wants to express their concerns about the post, to listen to them, and to work with them to ensure that teachable moments regarding social justice will be available to others who need them.

With this:  
Please accept my sincere apologies.

Respectfully,  
Sonya Cramer

Close Public: Motion by Mrs. Jennifer Wirtz, seconded by Mrs. Angelique Stoney-Siplin to close the first public portion

Voice Vote:  
Yes – 9 No – 0 Abstentions – 0

Motion carried unanimously

**Executive Session:**

Aprv. –  
Open  
Executive  
Session  
6:45 p.m.

Motion by Mrs. Angelique Stoney-Siplin, seconded by Mrs. Joyce Massott-Burnett to enter into the executive session to discuss matters as listed.

**ELK TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION  
Resolution Authorizing Executive Session**

**WHEREAS**, N.J.S.A 10:4-12 allows for a Public Body to go into closed session during a Public Meeting, and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Education of the Elk Township School District has deemed it necessary to go into closed session to discuss certain matters which are exempted from the Public; and

**WHEREAS**, the regular meeting of this Board of Education will reconvene at the conclusion of closed session, at approximately 7:58 p.m. this evening.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Education of the Elk Township School District will go into closed session for the following reason(s) as outlined in N.J.S.A. 10:4-12:

1. Personnel

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Education hereby declares that it's discussion of the aforementioned subject(s) may be made public at a time the Board Attorney advises the Board of Education that the disclosure of the discussion will not detrimentally affect any right, interest or duty of the School District or any other entity with respect to said discussion.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board of Education, for the aforementioned reasons, hereby declares the public is excluded from the portion of the meeting during which the above discussion shall take place and hereby directs the Board Secretary to take the appropriate action to effectuate the terms of this resolution.

I, Joseph Collins, Board Secretary do hereby certify the above to be a true and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the Elk Township School District Board of Education at their meeting held on August 27, 2020.

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Joseph M. Collins,  
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Voice Vote:

Yes – 9 No – 0 Abstentions – 0

Motion carried unanimously

Aprv. - Close Executive Session  
7:58 p.m.: Motion Mrs. Danielle Bland., seconded by Mrs. Jennifer Wirtz to close executive session

Voice Vote:

Yes – 9 No – 0 Abstentions – 0

Motion carried unanimously

Aprv. Open Second Public Portion: Motion by Ms. Cheryl Potter, seconded by Mrs. Jennifer Wirtz to open the second public portion

Voice Vote:

Yes – 9 No – 0 Abstentions – 0

Motion carried unanimously

Aprv. Close Second Public Portion: Motion by Mrs. Angelique Stoney-Siplin, seconded by Mrs. Jennifer Wirtz to close the second public portion

Voice Vote:

Yes – 9 No – 0 Abstentions – 0

Motion carried unanimously

Aprv. Meeting Adjourned  
8:00 p.m.: Motion by Mrs. Angelique Stoney-Siplin, seconded by Mrs. Mary Snively that the meeting be adjourned  
8:00 p.m.

Voice Vote:

Yes – 9 No – 0 Abstentions – 0

Motion carried unanimously

Respectfully Submitted,

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Joseph M. Collins,  
School Business Administrator/Board Secretary