

AI Generated - Transcription will contain occasional errors and omissions.

Not a report authorized by the NUSD - Click on the provided YouTube links to hear the actual dialogue.

2025-01-27, Liaison Meeting

Agenda



Duration

12:53:31

YouTube Links

- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] We'll call the City of Newark, Newark Unified School District Liaison Committee to order at 6.06 PM here. Roll call. It looks like we have all members are present. So our first item this evening is item B, appointment of chair and vice chair.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Yes, Mr. Chair, if I may comment. Is that on then? Typically what we do is we rotate the chair and the vice chair between the city and the school district. The board chair last year was Phuong Nguyen, and I know you were the vice chair, so it's common that we simply promote the vice chair to be the chair. And then, so I would make a motion that Council Member Matthew Jorgens become the chair of this committee, and then I would ask that Board Member Aiden Hill be the vice chair. That would be my motion.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] I would second the motion. Great. All those in favor, I guess? Oh, yes, we do need to, if there are any members of the public who would like to speak on the appointment of the chair and the vice chair, that would be the opportunity to do so. Seeing no comment, I will take a vote. Quickly, all in favor? Aye. Aye. So, can you see the camera? We have four votes in favor. The compensation you're going to receive is substantial. Our next item is the minutes from the October 28th to 2024 minutes. I know myself and Mr. Hill were present at that meeting, and Mayor and Governor Jones were not, so a few minutes were in the back. We were able to vote as well, so if you want to take a second to look at the minutes.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] We'll be looking for a few minutes.
- ▶ [**Kat Jones**] I don't know. It's just a approval. Sure. I move to approve the minutes from the October 28th meeting.
- ▶ [**Kat Jones**] I'll second.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] I guess we could go like this again. See any hands? Raise your hands if you're in favor. Aye. Any against? Opposed to the approval of the minutes? Seeing none, we will move on to the whole business. Item D1, the transportation survey. Actually, I did forget if there was any.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] public comment on the real that I don't see any members of the public that would like to have any comments about the draft minutes from the October 28 meeting. Seeing none, we can We will stand and move on to Item D1, Old Business. That's the Transportation Survey Fall Timeline.
- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] Mr. Chairman, Chair, I remember us discussing this. I know that we were talking about putting together a survey, and I mentioned that I would get the school district where I work in the school, that we do something like this with the city. And so I got information, and I believe that it was a lot of it that I made it forward into. Superintendent of the car. I don't know if anything has gone to people within the city, but if not, we can follow up on that. It's just as an example.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] All right. So is there a precondition set on this item?
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] No, there isn't. We are going into a survey for all of our sites in this transportation item. So we are following up with a future presentation.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] All right, that's great. I really look forward to seeing that information once it's available.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] So we can move on.

YouTube Links

- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Yes, do you see if there's any public comment on the transportation survey to see if there's any input from the public on this item? Moving on to new business, IMP1 and USD budget reduction updates.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] So thank you for that. We do have a presentation that we gave to the board last week on Tuesday on our budget reduction, essentially cutting down some of the vacant positions, rather, debudgeting those vacant positions that have been unfilled for some time, to the tune of close to about, I believe it was \$3.6 million. And we do have other services that we were able to right-size for our district with our current one-time funding that came through with COVID, extra funds, as well as other state law grants that are no longer available to us that will be sunshining here in the next fiscal year, 2025-2026. So that affects our bottom line. So it's about a \$6 million budget alignment is what we presented to the board.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Mr. Chair, thank you for that report. I raised the issue during this last campaign season, I received a lot of questions from residents within the community asking about the school, the budget situation, school size, things of that nature. And as we work more collaboratively, collaboratively together, city and school district, it's important for me as the mayor to be able to speak to my residents about what's the message, what's the plan, what do they see in the future as it relates to the school's budget, school size, and things of that nature. So I asked for this item to be placed on the agenda. I do follow all school board meetings, but I didn't have a chance to listen to the conversation. I don't watch it, but I listen to the meeting. And the budget presentation was presented in such a way that I found, from my perspective, just a little bit confusing. And it might simply be that the way we do budget in the city, the way that our cost of city budget is done at the municipal level may be different than what is typically done at a school board level. But I made some copies of some of the PowerPoint presentations that you presented to the board. And maybe this is a clarifying question that I might ask my colleague to understand it a little bit better. The first slide I looked at was the unaudited actuals. And it might just be an understanding of some terminology. So I'm assuming unrestricted revenues, that's probably your general fund, I'm assuming. Would that be, first of all, be a general fund of ours?
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] They would be. We have unrestricted and restricted. Typically, restricted goes for specific salaries, benefits, classified salaries, and so those are restricted. Unrestricted are for the services for the district, whether it be services, books, supplies, transportation, et cetera.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] And salaries as well?
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Oh, salaries are restricted.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Because your unrestricted revenue shows \$61,700,000.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Right. So you could use unrestricted funds for salaries as well.
- ▶ [] OK. Right.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] OK. And then, of course, the unexpected should expenditures would be that it gets your expense portfolio. This is the revenue, these are our expenses, and if you take a net difference between the two, that's typically where you're going to find us in terms of our overall This is a position that the school district financially, and I can explain it in a way that makes sense to them. So if I look at those figures, for example, it looks like there's just about a \$5 million differential between, and I'm looking at \$24, \$25, for example, about a \$5 million differential. If you look at \$25, \$26, it looks like there's just about an \$8 million differential. Am I reading that correctly? You are. I think that's correct.
- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] I think that this is still being reviewed at this point. And so I understand your questions and your intent. And one of the challenges I think that we face, and this is something that CTO Khatana had mentioned earlier, is that Obviously, the largest part of our budget is our personnel, our staffing. And at some point, a practice got adopted. I don't know when this practice happened or started. that essentially we would have positions that were budgeted, but that were not actually filled. But then what would happen is that we would

YouTube Links

oftentimes bring in people who were going to fill in for those people. on a part-time basis, on a full-time basis, but essentially we were double counting. And so that exacerbated the look that we had around what our actual expenditures were. The challenges that we've been trying to I don't know the right term, unravel that. And so the picture has been a little bit muddy, and I think that we're getting more clarity. But I think that there's still additional clarity that we need. I know that a year ago, we were thinking that we had a \$14 million structural deficit. think about it as massive when our total revenues were roughly \$63 million. So that was the initial picture. But I think that as staff has started to look at this more carefully, I suspect that maybe that was overstated. Now, last year, initially our commitment was to cut around \$5 million, and I think that we probably achieved that, some of it through some elimination of some of those positions that were really never going to be filled. But I think that there's still potentially some additional ones. And so what we've asked, because obviously, and I suspect, Mayor, which you can correct me if I'm misinterpreting, that the community cares about this. Obviously, they care about the school. But they also want to make sure that we're providing the necessary services that we need. to our students and to our families and our community. But also, there's a number of people that work in our district. I mean, they live in our district, but they also work in the district. And so we want to understand the potential negative impacts. And so even though the staff has presented a high-level picture of the budget in the last meeting, and potentially \$6 million in cuts, I think one of the things that we were asked was that we want to come back and have a second look at this high-level picture, which you're looking at right now. Because until we understand what really the structural deficit is, it would be irresponsible to go out and start cutting. And so I think, and although there's some timeframes that we have to meet, particularly when it comes to staffing, which is different from the city, and that in certain classifications, You have to give notice and so you have to give like a March 15th notice. And so some of it we are on an accelerated time frame. But I think that we want to be very judicious before we start to make any commitments. So our plan is in the next meeting to actually, we've asked to have a special a study session in advance to make sure that we understand the numbers as well as possible. So that's kind of my background. And the reason why I wanted to jump in is because Mr. Kidana has joined us as of August, September. And so there's some history that he may not be familiar with. But I'm not sure if that gives you a better picture of what's going on.

▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] It does.

▶ [**Aiden Hill**] OK.

▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] It does. It does. And so to applaud the district, as board member Hill mentioned, there were a number of missteps that were kind of made along the way, which resulted in a budget deficit being reduced from somewhere \$13, \$14 million down to about \$4 million. So really, congratulations on that. From the city's perspective, and from my perspective, we absolutely want you to be successful. We want you to do your due diligence. We want to make sure that any and all jobs are preserved as best we can. We also recognize, having worked in government for many, many years, I went through the 08 housing crisis where you need to be as transparent as you possibly can, not suggesting you're not, as you move forward to make sure that all the employees and our residents in our community understand Here's what the picture looks like, and we've looked under every stone, we've looked behind every wall, and this is all the revenue that we have found. These are the expenses that need to happen. But the more transparent you are in terms of the budget situation, I think the more understanding and accepting the community will be because people understand budgets and they understand numbers. And so my only mentioning of the unaudited actuals was because when I think of a budget, I really do think of here's the revenues coming in. Here's all the various expenses that we have to deal with. Here's what we're proposing to make some cuts that might help us meet our goal. So it's really more of a budget document to look at. Because I'll be honest with you, when I looked at this, it was unclear to me, as somebody that has worked on budgets, to really get a full grasp of this. Because I can't be out there giving that message if I don't get it. And that was really my takeaway from that. So to Board Member Hill's suggestion, I know you have a lot of work to do ahead of yourselves. And I think you're doing a fabulous job of making sure that we look under every rock, as I mentioned. And I'm comforted, and I'll continue to follow this. I will direct my questions to the city manager if I have questions to help me fully understand the school's budget situation moving forward if I have

YouTube Links

questions so that he can then translate those to the superintendent moving forward. So thank you for that. I'll continue to follow that so I can continue to communicate on your behalf. the direction we're going, how we are supportive of that direction. There's going to undoubtedly be a little bit of pain along the way. There always is. And we'll do our best as a city, county, school district community to always make sure that we minimize its impact on those that are most vulnerable, which It's our parents, students moving forward.

▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] So I should share those with my comments on this item.

▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Any other comments on this item?

▶ [**Aiden Hill**] I would just say again that the numbers that we looked at in our last meeting, I think we're a starting point. But we still need to do some refining. And certainly, I think that we don't want to be making any cuts until we fully understand, as you say, what the goals are, and what's really needed, and to try to be as light as possible.

▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Let me just make one other comment, having gone through this as I mentioned back in 08 when we had the housing crisis, when we were cutting millions and millions of dollars down in San Jose as part of the municipal government. And we dealt with unions down there as well. And I was so fortunate to have pretty much the president of all the various unions working in my shop. I realized that the best way to deal with unions and organizations is to be completely transparent, completely honest with people. Those that are at the low end of the totem pole who may feel vulnerable, have those honest conversations with them to say, you know, you're right. difficult situation as we look to balance our budget. And it's news that we don't want to give, but it's news that, unfortunately, we have to give so that people can make better decisions for their families moving forward. So I would certainly encourage you to continue to do that.

▶ [**Jose Quintana**] We thank you for that, Mayor, and we are doing more exploratory work that we'll bring to the board here next week on Tuesday.

▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Just one question for you. I really appreciate your comments and clarifications. I had similar questions that the mayor did. But just one other thing, I know a lot of the work is right-sizing. you know, the district to, you know, current enrollment numbers.

▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] I know when I was a student at Newark Unified, there were many more students in the district, and, you know, the challenge of prioritizing that is always, you know, it's going to be a lot of work. Just in terms of a timeline, how many, like, over how many years are we looking at, We need to eliminate all the vacant positions over this many years. Is that how you're thinking about it? Or do you think about it another way?

▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Or what's the timeline to get to a place where the district is right-sized and in line with the number of students that are in Newark-Hewlett?

▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Back to Member Hill's comment, we are still doing more exploratory work on this, but these are vacant positions that have been in place for the last fiscal year and prior to that, with our declining enrollment. So this has been an ongoing process. And so when we look at a timeline going forward, I think right-sizing right now with these vacant positions is helpful, but But there are also positions that are being consulted out. They've got consulting services that we are currently in contract with. And it's how we right-size in getting those FTs back to the district based on our current ADA. So I think it's going to take a multi-year before we actually have those FTEs back into our budget as opposed to being contracted services. So we're looking at least three years out to right-side our district.

▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] And I know, are you able to work with any kind of demographic projections? I don't know if those projections would be you know, any better than working with an astrologer on those kind of projections. But, you know, is that something that, you know, you're able to see kind of, you know, as you look, you know, five years down the road that, hey, we're here, we know, you know, we've been going down, you know, this is a Bay Area-wide trend, it's not a Newark issue. So we can expect that it's probably going to continue. Are you able to look at those kind of numbers?

YouTube Links

- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] We have looked at those numbers, especially with the new governor's mandate for TK enrollment and getting them in a little bit earlier. So those are numbers that we're looking at. So by the time they to turn five, they're in our system. But also, our online registration has been something we're trying to revamp to capture those numbers, existing students and families and new community members that are coming into the district. So it's definitely putting all the guards up and funneling everything into registration and identifying some of these different students that are in past, we have not gone ahead and made those steps. But this time, we're actually looking at our registration process starting a little bit earlier, like February 12th, Wednesday, coming up. This is where we'll have an actual and I know I'm segue into the next step here, but I think it falls in line with your question. We have an office personal dedicated here now for online registration and walk ins. We have our IT department that's helping us out with that software and how do we integrate that as well as other, you know, identifiers like Medi-Cal working with them on that. So that's going to help us out into that curve of declining enrollment that can actually be identified. Because sometimes they're not identified through the enrollment process and registrate the student. And usually it's because of the lack of direction or assistance for the district employees or the sites and really incentivizing every site personnel administrator to have every family be accounted for, not only for registration, but universal meal plans that are out there that are made available. available to every student, but it still takes an application to get that process. And so it's incentivizing every site to right-size our enrollment.
- ▶ [] All right.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Thank you. Any other comments? All right.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Then I will see if there are any comments from the public on this item. Yes. You want to jump to the microphone there? Yeah.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Yes.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_04**] Is this on? Hello? Yes, thank you. Okay, I'm... My name is Glennie Amuro. I'm a father of a son that's in the TAL program. At Bridgepoint? And I've heard talk about there's possibly a closing Bridgepoint end of school year this year, and then sending the kids to Newark Memorial.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_04**] Is there anything you can tell me about that?
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Yes, and thank you. I know that wasn't part of the budget reduction update that you gave on Tuesday, so if you want to provide that same information if you're able to.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Absolutely, and we are exploring every site. We're exploring how those cost savings can be at like Bridgepoint programs and Utilizing some of the spaces we do have some of the sites that we do have like more of a high schools like 52 acres on that and There are some areas that are not being used. There's a footprint that obviously that can be identified. Does that mean that that automatically closes Bridgepoint? No, absolutely not. We believe in adult education, believe in the continuation, and most of these students go back to our high schools. So there is an effort for us to service every student, and so that is our end goal. So whether it's at Bridgepoint or high school, those are still conversations and still exploration work for the board that we're presenting next week.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_04**] I'd like to say, I mentioned my son's in the fall program, Mr. Sung's class in the fall program, and we really love him. He's a fantastic teacher. He's got a classroom of autistic children. And I'll say this, for autistic kids, and I wouldn't include my son in this, but a lot of them, they really require stability. And for most people, it probably wouldn't be an issue moving For my son, it's not an issue, but for other kids in the class, it will be an issue. So that would be something I'd say that maybe take a look before this happens. And I understand everybody has a budget issue, and I understand the school district does too. But that's something to think about before moving those kids, if there's any possibility of not moving them.

YouTube Links

- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Thank you, Mr. Imura. And we will look at every possibility. Thank you. Very good.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Thank you.
- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] And this is responding to the question. public comment. So as Mr. Quintana has indicated, there were a number of potential cuts identified in the last meeting, but that was the first time that the board has had a chance to look at that and to think about it. But at this point, from my viewpoint, nothing has been decided. And so I think that we're weighing all of the different options and certainly understand some of the challenges around That Bridgepoint offers a very specific services, and we want to be careful and making sure that we preserve those. So, and what's the best way to do that. But again, I don't think that the board at this point has has really talked in detail about whether we
- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] We support that, or some version of that, or not at all.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Thank you for your comment. Any other comments on this item?
- ▶ [] Yes.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_00**] How many of you want to say a few questions?
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_02**] You want to come to the microphone? And he was over in Memorial High School. And here, it's completely different. So they're more tied to the kids over there. And so there are moments that are for me and all of those kids. That's why I'm here. I can only say more because it's a little difficult. I don't speak very well, but I do know some Mormon.
- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] And your son's a rich Mormon?
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_02**] Yes.
- ▶ [] OK.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_02**] He's 18 years old, yes. He started the first year over there.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] If I may, Mr. Chair, Board Member Hill is absolutely correct. When you're dealing with a budget crisis situation, every idea needs to be put up on the board. It doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to adopt that idea, but unless we identify all of our expenses, we have to put them all on the board to see how are we going to balance our budget. And you and Glenn are doing a great job, because this is where you need to be heard. as issues start being discussed at the school board, and if it appears that they may be leaning towards doing something like that, that's when you need to come back and voice your concerns because, you know, this is a democracy and your comments are important. But as Mr. Hill mentioned, There's every idea that has to go on the board. And it doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to happen, but we have to at least put it on the board because it's a budget savings opportunity for us to consider.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] And this is the right time for you to be making your voice heard on this, as the board's starting to consider these things. So hearing from you helps that make. decisions so you know we really do appreciate you coming forward today and speaking.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Ma'am, I did want to say for the record, what program in Rich Point? Tall Property. Perfect.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] And your name again ma'am? Thank you very much, Ms.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] Tala.

YouTube Links

- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Any other public comments on this item? With that, I move on to item E2. That's the facilities bond schedule.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] So we were fortunate to gather the support of the community in passing this measure O back in November 5th and that would help our facilities, infrastructure, and we had identified that prior to going out for the bond and looking at IT infrastructure, security, modernizing our existing facilities, our HVAC systems, painting, weatherproofing, if you will, some of our sites. And so we have had ongoing conversations with our bond counsel and with S&P, Sanders & Poore, for our credit rating, which It's favorable to us so that we can go for a bond issuance of \$20 million, which is partial of that \$205 million here in April.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] So that is the latest update.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Mr. Chair? Yes. Congratulations, by the way, on the passage of Measure O. It didn't pass at the same level as measure LL, but that's okay.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] We'll take 67%. No, you're absolutely right.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] I heard the discussion from your consultant who indicated that she thought it might pass between 53-56% or whatever the case may be. You certainly surpassed that significantly because Your board and the community will want our support. We are supportive of the schools. We're supportive of what you are doing here. And we want to see you be successful. So that's never going to be an issue from my perspective. And I'll continue to advocate to support revenue opportunities for the school board moving forward. But I'm also interested in the current vacant school sites and in terms of trying to understand where the school district is going relative to those sites as well. Because again, questions I hear from the community, we have the vacant snow site and we have the vacant music site. You know, where are we going with those? Collaboratively, we worked well together on the Russian school side and developed a great project out there. So I'm just trying to get a sense as we move forward with development, if you could give me some kind of sense as to where are we at with the vacant school sites and Maybe looking at a crystal ball when you anticipate in the near future bringing some development proposal to the city for some consideration. Great.
- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] So we started the process of talking about that last year and even a little bit before that as well. But my viewpoint is that this is something that we need to look at from a comprehensive perspective. And it shouldn't be done piecemeal. It shouldn't be done shoot from the hip. And I've talked with Member Thomas about this, as well as the board, that we really believe that we need to organize the 7-11 process to do a thorough evaluation, and that that also gives us the opportunity to get community input and to weigh different options. But I think that it's ultimately a very strategic decision. And it's something that the board and the community really needs to engage in and hear from a variety of stakeholders, but also from the district itself, both internal and external stakeholders. But I think that we don't want to make any premature moves at this point. But we need to get the process started, I think. So at this point, there's no commitment around this. And I know that CBO Quintana, we've We've had discussions, as well as with Member Thomas, that, again, we want to be very deliberative in this process and not just kind of go off and do stuff piecemeal.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Yeah, and I absolutely agree with that strategy. Land is valuable. And once that land is developed, it's gone. And we've made that decision at the city as well, because we will get developers that will come in and say, I'd like to develop this housing at this location. And 10 years ago, we might have been, yeah, come on in. We're happy to have you. We're much more selective now. Because we don't need to approve every housing proposal that comes into the city at this point, because we've done our due diligence in terms of developing housing. So now we can be more selective in terms of what do we really envision for that location today, tomorrow, and five years from now. So I absolutely agree with you in that regard. So it sounds like, Board Member Hill, that the first thing that the school board needs to begin thinking about, if I hear you correctly, is the 7-11 process. Would that be correct?

YouTube Links

- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] Correct.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Do you have a thought as to when you think you may initiate that process?
- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] So I know that the superintendent is putting together a schedule of study sessions. And I'm anticipating that this will probably be one of these. And so I think that we'll probably be discussing and maybe launching or authorizing the launch of something sometime in the spring semester. And one of the things that I've talked with CBO Quintana about and others about is even though we have a large portfolio of property, our business is not real estate. Right? So our business is maximizing educational outcomes. And so what we need to think about is every single asset, you know, and every single, you know, human resources that are ultimately needs to be aligned to. How are we going to maximize? And that needs to be the lens that we use. And I think it's easy to get distracted into property issues, et cetera, and then lose sight of what we're really trying to do. So I think we want to be very deliberative as we approach this.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] And I agree with that perspective. But it's important for the council to kind of get a sense as to where we're going, so that we can then communicate to the community. No, no, these are not gonna be vacant sites, they're forever. The school board's got a plan, here's what the plan kind of looks like. They're gonna have conversations moving forward, and certainly you can participate in those conversations as they appear on the school board agenda, etc. I think it's important that, again, this committee continues to work together when we get a clearer understanding as to what is it we're thinking, what are some of our ideas moving forward, so that we can all communicate that to our common community, the residents of Newark.
- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] And to your point, Mayor, that the city is one of the stakeholders. Right. So we want to make sure that we get input from from you and the council as well as we make these as we do this evaluation. Thank you.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] It's also important for us who works that big. So our portfolio of public land across all kind of government agencies isn't that vast. So, you know, as we look to, you know, change at least some of the use of that, you know, historically public land, you know, knowing what that is and being able to communicate that, you know, and why it's a good thing to our community, that's gonna be really important. All right, any other comments on, I need to... Any comments from the public on item E2? Seeing none, we can move on to item E3, centralized registration.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] So I spoke on that a little bit earlier, just on what steps we have taken to centralize and spearhead that. We will hit a curb here before we go into the end of our school year, our calendar year. But we are starting once again, launching this next, on Wednesday, February the 12th, to begin this online registration, online and at the district office here. We've dedicated offices for that, personnel that would be gathering all the data from our existing enrollment and potential new enrollments that might consider the school district. But also incentivizing our sites once again to
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] get all of our documents lined up, not only registration, but universal meal plans, anything to do with Medicare, everything that would be identifiers that would help us streamline our enrollment process.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] All right, well, thank you.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Any comments from committee members?
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] All right, are there any comments from members of the public? Seeing none, we can move on to public comment on non-agenda items. So this is if you have something to say on any item that didn't come up on our agenda this evening.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] You should feel free to come up to the mic and let us hear your thoughts.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Seeing none, we can move on to public comment, if I may, Mr. Chair. Ladies and gentlemen, we're hearing that there's a lot of fear out there in the community as a result of a lot of the issues of resulting with

YouTube Links

increased immigration enforcement across the United States. And I think as leaders in our community, and I would look at all of us as being leaders in our community, it's our responsibility to try to reduce the fear that we're hearing in our community. I've heard from some folks that children and parents, children are afraid to go to school, parents are afraid to send their kids to school. Schools need to be a safe place for all of our children and it's our responsibility as leaders in the community to assure our parents and assure our residents that they are in a safe environment when they send their children to school. You may recall that the state of California adopted a number of laws that made it specifically clear that law enforcement and our various agencies were not there to be I'm not sure what word I would use, maybe cooperate with immigration enforcement when it comes to identifying folks within our community or cooperating in that regard in terms of identifying folks that may or may not be undocumented. Now we certainly agree that immigration should focus on folks that are committing crime. We should focus certainly on people that are committing crime in our community. We have no problem and no objection with folks focusing on those because we want to reduce crime in our community. Mr. Mayor, can you talk briefly about what the state law states relative to our police department working in partnership or cooperating with immigration control?

▶ [**SPEAKER_03**] Sure, I'll make some basic preliminary comments as this item is not on the agenda, so I won't go into much detail. Well, let me begin by saying good evening, members of the committee. State law, as the mayor pointed out, I think it's a fair recitation of state law that you indicated. State law makes it very clear, and I believe this was adopted in 2018, 2019, something to that effect. It makes it very clear that local law enforcement agencies are not allowed to inquire about an individual's immigration status, and nor are any local law enforcement agencies authorized to work with federal agencies on immigration enforcement. That's fairly clear state law. I do know that the Newark Police Department doesn't break state law. There is a policy in the Newark Police Department that it does maintain. If you're a police officer in any jurisdiction, you're bound by massive volumes of policies, and this policy in particular is posted on the city's website very clear to the public, and the policy makes it abundantly clear that Newark police personnel do not cooperate with federal law enforcement agencies. The local police department, the Newark Police Department, maintains the philosophy and has been this way for many, many years. And we want to encourage those who are victims or witnesses of crime to come forward. And if the Newark Police Department were to cooperate with the federal immigration authorities, the trust would be undermined. And so that would certainly frustrate our goal, and our goal is to catch all the bad guys who violate state penal codes. It's very, very clear. And if there were some sort of role that our police department were to play with aiding and supporting immigration authorities, that would have a substantial chilling effect on that goal of having witnesses and victims come forward. That's a very clear. That policy is very clear. That we treat everybody in our community with the regardless of national origin or immigration status. That other items that are discussed in the policy, I would certainly encourage the public to take a look at that. And staff, we're working with the council and bringing items forward to really make it very clear Newark Police Department's stance on this item. And I think I said a fair amount about an item that's not on the agenda tonight, so.

▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Thank you, Mr. Padilla. And just to simply highlight the importance of the points that you've made, the city of Newark was one of the jurisdictions within the state of California that had a significantly high percentage of residents that participated in the census. And the reason we did that, and the reason why folks that might be not documented were willing to participate, Because they knew at the end of the day that there was a benefit to the community, there was a benefit to themselves in terms of additional dollars coming to the city's municipal government that would allow us to provide services to them. So we made it real clear to them and we continue to make it clear to our folks in our community that they're part of our community, we welcome them as part of our community, and we're going to continue to comply with state law. My question and my request, not question, my request, of course, is that we stay focused on that, we stay united in that, and we continue to get that message out to our communities so that we can dispel some of the fears that may be out there, rightfully so, in our community. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

YouTube Links







- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Given the importance of this issue, and they say there's a lot of empty chairs here, so this information to the community can this be displayed somewhere prominently on the city of Newark website and sent to the school district so it can be displayed on their website as well? Absolutely.
- ▶ [**Kat Jones**] And I was going to say that we have sent messages via Parent Square to our families several times in the last couple of weeks. And we will continue to do that to let them know that we want families and children to feel safe and to come to school and that we will support them.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] To voice the message from our superintendent of schools, Tracy Bacar, I'd like to read what we sent out to our community that would join you in this effort. In light of the recent national news related to immigration, I want to assure our families that we are steadfast in our commitment to our students. academics, social, emotional well-being, and their safety. California law protects our students' rights to education, regardless of their immigration status. All students, including those who are undocumented or come from immigrant families, have the right to attend public schools participate in school activities and receive a quality education without discrimination. It is vitally important to note that schools do not collect information related to immigration status. Schools must protect the privacy of their students and are prohibited from sharing personal information about students. or their family members with others.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] We are grateful to have such an amazing diverse school community and will continue to work in partnership to support our children.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] And that's a great statement. If there's opportunities in the future because we deal with such a broad community.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] If those statements can sometimes go out with both the school district and the city together on those, I think it just sends a better message that we're united in that regard.
- ▶ [**Jose Quintana**] I will convey this message to our superintendent of schools.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Thank you for letting me mention that as a non-agendized item, but the sooner we dispel the fear in our community and get folks back to feeling safe in our schools, the better we'll all be.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] Item G, future agenda items, are there any items that any committee member would like to discuss on a future agenda?
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Our policy, Mr. Chair, in the past has been that if you, because it's difficult to say today, today I want an agenda item. It's always been kind of understood that if you have an agenda item that you'd like to bring forward to this committee, you do so in 15 days of the meeting date. So that would look like about April 12th, 13th, if you have an item. That way, staff has plenty of time to prepare and bring information and request it. So obviously soon, and that would be even better, but at least by no later than April 13th, so we're not putting things on the agenda at the last minute, or staff doesn't have an opportunity to be prepared. That is still the practice, okay.
- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] And I'm just curious. from the city's perspective. Sometimes it's hard to just think without a context to say, OK, well, I'd like to add this or I'd like to add that. But what I'm curious about is from a city perspective, Are there topics that you think are important that impact you or that you care about or that people are asking you about that are related to the school district? think about as future agenda items.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] And that's why I put those two items on the agenda today were to talk about the budget and the facilities because I knew that those were important topics. All of our parents are concerned about the school district in terms of the And I hear this from the various principals that come forward and give presentations about, and a lot of this is attributed to COVID, about the number of grade levels one, two, and three that the kids may be behind. And I know your teachers are really, the principals are working really hard to get kids up to where they need to be. It'd be a topic that I'd love to have a conversation about, but that's getting down into an area that you guys are focused on that. You know what you need to do. I'm not an expert in that area, so I'm fully

YouTube Links

comfortable with you kind of managing that as you have. I think from the city's perspective, it's really the high-level things that we'd be interested in.

- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] Well, related to that, Mayor, and maybe this might be something that maybe the liaison committee would be interested in entertaining. One of the issues that we face, obviously, we've been looking at test scores. I mean, there were times when we weren't looking carefully at them. We're looking much more carefully right now. And so in whatever gets attention, you start to see effort. You start to see progress. So we're at the beginning of that. And I don't want to get over my skis here, because we have a fellow committee member here who's significantly more experienced in elementary school education than I am. But I think that one of the challenges that we're facing is that if kids don't get certain basics early on in their educational life, it becomes progressively more difficult to catch up. And so laying that foundation is very important. And one of the things that I think there's a certain train of thought or feeling that we need to figure out how to make more intervention opportunities available where there's certain instruction that's happening in the classroom. But can we supplement that outside of the classroom? And we talked a little bit about this at the board level. But one, I have some friends that are over in Colorado and who've been working very hard with the school district over there. And they were facing some similar challenges. And they created an after school intervention program that ended up actually being very successful. And you saw measurable results. And they actually did some of this on a volunteer basis and some of it through the Rotary Club. It's called Reading Palace and there's some other things too.
- ▶ [**Aiden Hill**] And I'm curious whether our committee here would like for somebody from that group to maybe come here and give a little presentation about what they've done and maybe that's something that we could figure out how to do a joint partnership. They're not, they're not certificated staff, so this is after school support. But I think that if we can get people in the community that have reading skills, math skills, the ability to do some informal tutoring, that that might just add greater, greater support to what we're doing. So that's a thought for a potential future agenda item.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] I appreciate you saying that. When you asked the question, I was going to add something similar to that. Obviously, if there's any land use issues at the school, that's something I'm going to want to see. But then any issues where there's gaps, either educational gaps in the city the library to figure out how to fill a recreation gap so we can try to figure out how to fill. That's something that maybe we could assess in the future to find a collaborative solution for.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_06**] Great. I did homework express for a while with the library and I enjoyed doing it because You really do help kids that really are in need of that one-on-one, and I certainly support those. I was talking to a former city employee, this may be before your time Mr. Boone, who indicated that there was a time back in the day when the city staff used to donate some of their time to go out and tutor kids. And somehow that, you know, maybe that program just kind of went away over a period of time. But there's certainly opportunities for us to work together in the area that you described. And I know that there's a number of organizations, whether it be Rotary Optimists, that would like to participate in some form or fashion. So I think that would be a good idea.
- ▶ [**SPEAKER_08**] I guess, so one thing I'd like to propose for our next meeting is a little bit of a change to our organization, this committee, and I guess what I'd like to do is extend an invitation for the student board members on this committee as well. You know, a lot of the things that we're just talking about, you know, that would be helpful for at least me to hear from, you know, the voice of the young person, Newark and Newark students. Right now, as a city, we don't have any standing, you know, formal opportunities to hear the voice of, you know, young Newark residents. And, you know, that's something that we're missing. We try to fill some of those gaps that maybe we can't. I think having a student voice here is gonna be really valuable. And the student board member has a long history of being a person that's provided really valuable insights to the board. And I think that's something the city can. be held by a jury. So I obviously wouldn't want to be a requirement on the student board member that I know is incredibly busy and always is. But unless there's strong objections, it's something that I'd like to send an invitation so we can.

YouTube Links

-  [**SPEAKER_06**] I think it's a good idea. I know that they have, you know, leadership programs at the high school and things of that nature. So certainly the more we connect with that organization and or the student board member that sits here, the better the message he gets out to the community that we're working together and that student board member may raise issues that are more the responsibility of the city to deal with or address or respond to than the school district. And so we're happy to hear that voice.
-  [**Kat Jones**] That would be good.
-  [**SPEAKER_08**] So I guess for the next agenda we can add an appointment of student board member to this committee. I know our next meeting will be April 28, which I know is right before AP test, so hopefully. Hopefully Ms. Lee will be able to join us. All right.
-  [**SPEAKER_08**] Any other future agenda items? All right. With that, I will adjourn the meeting.
-  [] Excellent.
-  [**SPEAKER_08**] Great.