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2025-01-29, Special Meeting

Agenda



Duration

02:20:28

YouTube Links

 [**Kat Jones**] 6, 0, 4.

Pause: 10.2s

 [**Kat Jones**] Member Thomas, will you please take roll?


 [**Nancy Thomas**] Sure. Member Hill? Here. Member Mariano?

 [**Kat Jones**] Here.

 [**Nancy Thomas**] Member Block.


 [**Kat Jones**] Here.


 [**Nancy Thomas**] President.


 [**Nancy Thomas**] Nancy Thomas here.

 [**Kat Jones**] Here.

 [**Nancy Thomas**] President Jones.

 [**Kat Jones**] All right. President, student board member is not here because we are just in closed session tonight. Let's see. So in-person meeting practices and information. I gotta put my eyeballs on. Please see the attached meeting information provided in both English and Spanish which covers protocols for meeting practices and public comment guidelines and norms. Members of the public may observe the meeting via the NUSD YouTube channel or in person at the boardroom. Spanish translation will be available in person.


 [**Kat Jones**] Actually, I don't believe it will be available in person tonight as the meeting is basically for closed session. As of January 2025, public comment will only be conducted in person. The public will have the opportunity to address the Board of Education regarding non-agendized matters and agendized items by submitting the written comment cards. Are there any other comment cards at this time? I have two. OK. Thank you so much.

 [**Kat Jones**] All right, we are going to move to the Pledge of Allegiance. I pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, invisible, with liberty and justice for all.

 [**Kat Jones**] Thank you. All right, I have two cards for public comment on our closed session tonight.

 [**Kat Jones**] Let's see, Sarah Kieser, Kieser, excuse me, from CSEA.

Pause: 10.2s

 [**Sarah Kieser**] Hi, my name is Sarah Kieser. I'm speaking on behalf of Maria Hoeffler, our Chapter 208 CSEA president. She's unable to attend tonight's meeting. Her mother underwent surgery earlier today. Here I am again. This is all from Maria's words. Here I am again standing before all of you, disgusted, nauseous, and outright angry. How dare this board and the executive cabinet continue to tell the classified staff, the teachers,

and this community that we're trying to right-size this budget to help the district retain staff, and that we need to bear with you because these are tough decisions. Yet in the same breath, you're talking about giving another raise to the superintendent. This is outrageous. Let me be clear. If you're considering offering the superintendent a raise, it would be nothing less than a slap in the face to every hardworking staff member in this district. Your choices repeatedly show where your priorities lie, and it is not with the students or the dedicated workforce of this community. At this point, let's just call it what it is. This board is going to continue doing what benefits you, not the students. or the workforce of this district. Your actions are clear and continue to prove otherwise. I am tired of the same narrative. We need to make cuts, tighten the budget, and save. Yet somehow, money always seems to appear when it comes to the leadership salaries. This district is becoming a joke among neighboring communities. and the talk of their towns. This district has proven it doesn't know how to manage money, and that's clear from staff and community members with financial expertise who have come forward to expose the highlighted inaccuracies in budget. And yet the board seems unbothered. That alone should make you question the decisions you're making. especially when you claim the district doesn't have the money. How can we claim there is no money for staff but conveniently find it for our leadership? Let me remind this board of something that's already public knowledge shared in past meetings. So you can refresh your memory and for our new members, a reality check on the damage already done in the past few months. Let's review our recent history. Dr. Triplett was hired in July of 2020 at \$220,000 and left in February of 2023 earning \$224,000, a 2% raise of \$4,000. Michael Milliken was hired as an interim superintendent in February of 2023 for four months at \$87,600. a per diem rate of \$1,095. Dr. DeLeon was hired in May of 2023 at \$270,000, a 20% increase, justified by claims that we needed to pay for the experience and retired in April of 2024 before her three-year contract expired. In December of 2023, Ms. Backer was originally hired as the CBO and Deputy Superintendent, making \$250,000. In April of 2024, she was hired as the interim superintendent at \$270,000 and then received a 4% \$10,800 raise for her 225 days of work starting July 1st, 2024. at a per diem rate of \$1,253.57. Meanwhile, our staff are continued to be told there's no money for fair compensation. And now there's talk of yet another increase for the Superintendent Vackar for the 25-26 school year. who already makes a massive \$280,800. Are you serious? This is a joke, right? There must be hidden cameras somewhere. If this is being considered, I'm telling you now, this board had better be ready to offer the same increase to all staff. retroactive till July 1st, 2024. It's painfully obvious that this will continue and never stop. Your actions continue to alienate staff and families, dedicated employees who have been here for many years, as well as the students of this community. I can guarantee you that many of us are already looking elsewhere. And this district is at risk of losing its most valuable resources, its staff. Newark Unified School District board members and executive cabinet, you should be ashamed of yourselves.

▶ [**Sarah Kieser**] I urge you to consider your priorities and do the right thing.

Pause: 20.8s

▶ [**Kat Jones**] Thank you, Ms. Kieser.

▶ [**Kat Jones**] Carrie Sanchez-Para.


▶ [**Carey Sanchez Para (CSEA)**] Good evening. I'm Carrie Sanchez-Para. I am the CSEA Labor Relations Rep for Chapter 204, Newark. There are currently, sorry, there are currently about 184 classified bargaining unit members in CSEA Chapter 208. These members deserve respect and a living wage for the work that they do to support students, staff, and the community every day. They are tired of a lack of leadership and the constant turnover in the superintendent position in 2015 the Alameda County grand jury issued a scathing report on Newark Unified School District governance issues during the 2013 2014 school year. The investigation focused on alleged violations of the Brown Act, California Government Code, and district bylaws, and the board's responsibilities under its own governance team handbook. The report issued five findings and made four recommendations to the Newark Board of Education. In a September 17, 2015 letter from the Newark Board President to the presiding judge overseeing the grand jury report, she responded to the findings and recommendations acknowledging deficiencies and failures that, quote, negatively affected the public's


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confidence in the governance and management of the district. and agreeing that members of the board have intruded into the duties and responsibilities of the superintendent, in some cases to the detriment of the district by causing confusion about the leadership of this district. Since this grand jury report, the Board of Education has hired seven interim acting or permanent superintendents in 10 years. This turnover of leadership has resulted in instability for students staff and the community. As a board of education your main responsibility is to recruit and retain a superintendent to lead this district. There doesn't appear to be any lack of funds when compensating past superintendents with a competitive contract. As Sarah mentioned, \$235,000 for Dave Markin. Pat Sanchez made \$235,000, on and on. The lowest wages earned by classified bargaining unit employees at NUSD is currently \$15.65 an hour which is not competitive with surrounding school districts and employers. Assuming an average of six hours a day working during the academic year that totals less than \$18,500 annually without benefits. This is not a living wage in Newark. The Board of Education's last, best, and final offer of 1% as a one-time payment to classified employees averages out to \$650 per employee. How much money could this Board of Education have prioritized towards ongoing pay increases for underpaid classified employees instead of paying costly turnover and buyouts of superintendent contractors over the past 10 years? Members of CSEA Chapter 208 are tired of this Board of Education ignoring rules and laws, including the Brown Act, California Ed Code, and governance policies. Many of the well-documented concerns of the Alameda County Grand Jury raised more than 10 years ago still ring true today. Classified employees, students, staff, and families in Newark deserve better.


 [**Carey Sanchez Para (CSEA)**] Thank you.

Pause: 14.3s

 [**Kat Jones**] Thank you, Ms. Sanchez-Para. Since there are no other comment cards, we are going to adjourn to closed session.

 [**Kat Jones**] And I'm sorry, I do need to open up more docs. I had my computer die on me the other day, and so I am trying to do everything without having a computer. It's been challenging, so I apologize for the delay.


Pause: 11.9s

 [**Kat Jones**] Thank you for your patience. In closed session, we will be discussing 2.1, public employee performance evaluation, Government Code 54957, subdivision B1, title superintendent. 2.2 Negotiations with Unrepresented Employee, Government Code 54957.6, District Negotiator, Board President, Position Superintendent. We will now recess to closed session.

 [**Kat Jones**] Thank you.

Pause: 1h 51m 55s

Pause: 15m 2s

 [**Kat Jones**] All right, we have come back from closed session. We had a good discussion, but there was no action taken in the meeting tonight. And we are adjourning at 8.24. Thank you for coming tonight.