

**Deborah A. Bouley, Vice President of the Newburgh Enlarged City School District  
Resignation Statement, February 2, 2024**

There are nine elected members on the NECSD Board of Education. It takes a quorum, or majority of five votes to have something pass or fail. This Board's majority includes two new members who promised voters they would never allow contract extensions to senior management but did just that after getting elected. They allowed the Superintendent's contract to be extended to 2028, along with other perks, without any type of evaluation of her job performance, and they extended the contract of the Deputy Superintendent with more raises without any evaluation. Along with these two new members, are two long-time members who also voted for these extensions and raises, and they are the two remaining members of this Board up for reelection in a few months, who also gave the previous Superintendent a very expensive deal that the district just finished paying, even though that prior Superintendent has not worked in the district for years. The four minority members of this Board are resigning today.

The last financial reports for the district that I saw, that are presented in Board Docs for the public, was a Treasurer's Report for the month of September 2023 and a quarter end Student's Activity Report for September 2023. I have not seen a Revenue Status Report, Appropriation Status Report, Warrant Report, Budget Transfer Report, Food Service Report, and Fund Balance Report for anything since August. I have requested these critical reports in writing as late as a few weeks ago and have received nothing, and at the February 13<sup>th</sup> BOE meeting the budget process will begin.

We have hundreds of students at the high school who cannot read at more than an elementary reading level and are required to take an English Regents Exam written at a first- or second-year college reading level, and they need to pass this exam to graduate. These are abandoned students in my view, as no one on this Board other than the minority four members (of which I am one) have made any effort to get them screened and taught how to read properly.

We have children whose absences are not reported to Child Protective Services by this district. We have no coordinated system to report absences to authorities. All of my reports as a teacher were founded by CPS on attendance, yet there is no district wide threshold of absences triggering the reporting, as reported by the Assistant Superintendent Chief Information and Data Officer a few weeks ago. There has been no attempt by the majority of this Board to require one.

We have a current chronic absenteeism rate of almost a third of all our approximately 12,000 students (about 3,960 students). There is no uniform system that addresses this, and no system on how to teach these chronically absent students the material they missed if they return. Some students can never catch up. We have the lowest graduation rate in the county, the last time it was reported. The majority has prevented any attempts to even discuss this.

One of my major goals in becoming a Board member was to help students – to read at least at grade level, to be able to do grade level math, yet the numbers from Fall 2023 testing in this district proves that only 10% of all students tested in grades K-8 can do grade level math, and only 20% of all students tested in grades K-8 can read at grade level. The majority blocked an attempt to have this information explained to the public at the December 12, 2023, meeting. Another goal of mine was to address students with disabilities not having their annual reviews, their triennial testing and their IEPs in place at the beginning of the school year. I have been told that any discussion on special education is to be discussed once a year in June.

None of my 49 questions, presented the day I was inducted in July 2023 and subsequently resubmitted repeatedly, have ever been answered. As Board members we have an obligation to ask questions and understand answers so that we can vote effectively, provide transparency, and decide what is best for all stakeholders. Any questions asked by the minority have been ignored repeatedly, or gaslighted to the public as being intrusive, even if the answers would take one minute each to answer, if the cabinet (Superintendent's staff) was allowed to answer.

There is almost no monitoring of our district or oversight of our district by this Board in my opinion. The Superintendent has presented policy changes that are not hers to create or change, that have been approved by the same majority of five members without question. These changes have stripped the Board of Education of any real, meaningful management of the Superintendent or her staff. We cannot even visit schools unless we are approved by the Superintendent. The Superintendent is supposed to work for the Board. The Board is not supposed to work for the Superintendent.

Therefore, I will use my power, through my resignation today, to send a very loud message to the State and others, to come to Newburgh and audit. If I can't have any questions answered and cannot monitor and provide oversight, hopefully the State will decide to get the answers and where needed, demand change and monitor the progress. "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light." Luke 8:17

To those students who come to school, willing to work and learn, who follow rules and procedures and have learned how to navigate through this district, keep going. Thrive and soar. And to those students who do not attend, or who have been taught that they don't have to work to get to the next grade, or who feel entitled to many things they are not entitled to in the real world, change your mindset. You can do great things academically. It is the responsibility of the adults to teach you that you must work hard and earn it. When you can't find a solution by going straight ahead, you go around. Today's 4 resignations are a work around. I am an advocate for all students, of all colors and races and genders, not just one subgroup. That will not change going forward. May God bless you all.

Deborah A. Bouley