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## Board Business Meeting

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Agency: [Cleveland Metropolitan School District](#)

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## Summary

- Teachers said they feel that their calls for security are not being addressed.
- The teachers' union talked about being excluded from the search for the school district's new CEO. .

## Follow-Up Questions

- Is student and teacher safety a concern for CMSD?
- Does security really do their jobs?
- What's the point of external security cameras when most student violence starts inside the school?
- Why aren't there external security cameras at all CMSD schools?

## Notes

- The meeting was held at the John Hay Campus.
- Board members present: Anne Bingham, Robert Heard, Sara Elaquad, Leah Hudnall, Nigamanth Sridar, Lisa Thomas, Kathleen Valdez
- Minutes of the 1/10/23 meeting were voted on and approved
- Bingham introduced the building principals of the 3 schools on the John Hay campus: Mr. Odel Brown, school of architecture and design; Ms. Kendra Holloway, School of Early College High School; and Ms. Michelle Perez, School of Science and Medicine. Each principal gave a presentation of the progress and activities of their school.
- Bingham gave an update on the CEO search. Three community meetings were held Jan. 17 and Jan. 18 at East Professional Center (55 attended/40 remote), Max Hayes (56 attended/38 remote) , and JFK H.S. (66 attended/21 remote).
- Alma Advisory Group commended the participation of the Board and the community in the CEO search process. 5,711 people have visited the CEO search

website. 1,689 completed the survey. The survey is still available.

- Bingham went on to explain that Alma had conducted focus groups with students, parents, and other community stakeholders for their input regarding the search for a new CEO. One-on-one meetings were also held with these groups. More community group meetings will be held.
- CEO Gordon mentioned that it was board appreciation month. A video presentation was given honoring the board's leadership. A group photo was taken of the board members who were present at the meeting.
- CEO Gordon emphasized the importance of safety and security. He gave the board an update on safety staffing: there are 119 full-time security staff, 21 part-time; 11 new safety employees started today; 64 vacancies; the 21 part timers are being invited to receive additional training and move up to the full-time positions. Gordon stated that there are 5,400 cameras across the district; 94.6% are operational.
- Next, comments were taken from the community for about 1 hour.
  - Shari Obrenski, president of the Cleveland Teachers Union (CTU), gave an update on the CTU's experience with choosing a new CEO. She said there is a growing concern the CTU has regarding the new CEO selection process. Obrenski said that Alma lacked a clear understanding of how the Cleveland plan came to be, as well as how the coalitions formed under CEO Gordon work. Obrenski made the point that it is important that the CTU be involved in implementing policies, programs, and protocols with the board and CMSD. She said it is disappointing that Alma feels that the voices of the CTU leaders did not seem to be meaningful in the next stages of the CEO selection process. She emphasized that it isn't too late for the CTU, the board, and community stakeholders to continue to work together on behalf of the children.
  - Tracy Radich, fourth grade teacher at Joseph Gallagher and first vice president of the CTU, first gave recognition to all of the school employees and their participation in choosing a new CEO. However, in spite of their participation, she said that they felt like they (the CTU) were being "left out in the cold." Radich encouraged the board to include the CTU in the decision to choose a new CEO.
  - Ben Chronister, a teacher, said he is upset that he found out that the people who work daily with the students are not being given any kind of voice or choice in the selection process for a new CEO. He considers it impersonal and informal.
  - Michelle Jones, the CTU chapter chair at Glenville High School, expressed concerns about Aug. 17, 2022 when school started. At the end of the day,

staff witnessed a gun violence incident where a young man was killed. Jones says that they did not receive any support from their district. She discussed the trauma experienced by both staff and students due to the violence occurring in the schools, and the lack of assistance from the police. She stated that teachers are told to “teach to the test.” She inferred that the board gives them “empty promises.” She said that the teaching staff is tired. She asked for long-term, comprehensive reforms that address the needs of the diverse population surrounding the schools.

- Andrea Dockery-Murray, a teacher at John Adams College & Career Academy, CTU trustee-at-large, Ohio Federation of Teachers executive council member, and chapter chair for John Adams, [shared a story about a student, Pierre McCoy, being gunned down at the end of the school day](#). She shared that it was a very traumatic experience for both staff and students. She talked about the need for a “break” before returning to school so that they could recover from the trauma. She talked about the many “triggers” that surround the school. She said that “getting over it” it is not working. She feels that something more needs to be done.
  - Dr. Vincent Stokes said he feels the board continues to “gloss over” and not take seriously the safety and security issues with the schools.
  - Nell’vonne Woods, a student at Cleveland High School for Digital Arts, shared with the community and the board a video (audio) where he and a friend were assaulted on an RTA train. The concern was student safety on public transportation.
  - Lisa Harmon, a teacher at John Adams, spoke on the concept of “mastering” or having higher expectations for the students. She said that students are mostly apathetic to the concept. After missing numerous days from school, students are still given credit for classes not taken. Students are not prepared for “quality” jobs, college, and careers. She said she feels pressured to give students credit for something they have not worked for.
  - Don Freeman, a member of the community, made reference to Glenville High School being closed due to staff shortages. He indicated that this is a recurring situation. He inquired as to why the staff absences could not be addressed and the school opened. He referred to the closing as a “calamity.”
  - Mr. Tracy, a member of the community, addressed the board in regard to the relationship of poor education and child abuse.
  - During the business meeting, CEO Gordon presented each of the [10 resolutions to the board](#). All were voted for unanimously.
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