



Public Schools of Plainfield New Jersey

Office of Community Engagement

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PLAINFIELD BOARD OF EDUCATION ELECTED THE FIRST LATINA/LATINX PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD AND WELCOMED THREE NEW MEMBERS

Plainfield, NJ – January 5, 2022 – The Plainfield Board of Education made history at its reorganization meeting on Tuesday, electing the first-ever Latina/Latinx president of the Board. Josely Castro was elected unanimously after her nomination was presented by former Board President Eric Andrews. Ms. Castro received “yes” votes from all the nine members of the Board, following the Oath of Office by the three newly elected members, Sarah Virgo, Victor Webb and Hanae Wyatt.

All three new members won their seats in the 2021 November elections. The election results are posted [on Board Docs on the District website](#).

Mrs. Wyatt, Mrs. Virgo and Mr. Webb replaced outgoing members John C. Campbell, Emily E. Morgan and Richard Wyatt, who served two terms each. The three new members will commence a three-year term which expires in 2024.

Rashon Hasan, Business Administrator and Secretary of the Board, administered the Oath of Office to the new members and chaired the meeting until the new President of the Board was elected. Ms. Castro thanked the Board for their vote of confidence and went on to chair for nominations for Vice President of the Board. Mrs. Wyatt, nominated by Pat Hembree won by a majority vote.

The first order of business for the newly elected Board was to approve the Consent Agenda. All members voted unanimously to accept the agenda.

Before privilege of the floor, Dr. Diana Mitchell, Superintendent of Plainfield Public Schools, offered her congratulations to the new board. “Congratulations Madam President and Madam Vice President. Welcomed Mrs. Virgo and Mr. Webb, I’m looking forward to serving with you and the students and families of Plainfield as Champions for Students.”

Ms. Castro addressed the meeting for the first time as President of the Board and stated she was super excited with the addition of the three new board members whom she has met individually. “Their passion and their dedication toward the community showed that they are able to do whatever it takes to help our students be the best versions of themselves.”

Ms. Castro urged the Board to work together, to be accountable, and to set priorities based on the real needs of the District. She welcomed Mrs. Wyatt and said that as Vice President of the Board, she will rely on her to help ensure the agenda items are consumable and comprehensive. “We will anticipate Board members questions and try our best to ensure our priority agenda items are backed by research and data.”

Ms. Castro said she looks forward to discussions about updating policies, bringing back subcommittees, communicating and working together effectively, adopting a strategic plan, and submitting the District and Merit Goals for 2021-2022 as soon as possible. She concluded, “So let’s not do better, let’s be better.”

After the meeting on her election as the first-ever Latina to the Board, Ms. Castro said, “It’s an incredible honor to be elected as the first Latina/Latinx President for the Plainfield Board of Education. As President, I promise to work diligently with board members and the administration to set and accomplish goals that will benefit every child in our community. My hope is that the Plainfield Latinx community feels empowered to participate in this process through representation. I look forward to working together to improve the quality of education in Plainfield.”

Ms. Castro was born and raised in Plainfield and attended Plainfield High School. She graduated from Rutgers University with a Bachelor’s in Business Marketing and received her Master’s in Marketing from the New School, a private research university in New York, N.Y. She is currently a software engineer with Accenture, a public consulting firm. She resides in Plainfield with her parents who are from Mexico and El Salvador and two siblings.

Following Ms. Castro, Jack Virgo, the son of Board Member Sarah Virgo, took advantage of the privilege of the floor to congratulate his mother. “I just want to congratulate my mom Sarah Virgo. She worked hard, driving and going to each school in the cold. We, really all, worked hard. Like my dad said and Mrs. Wyatt said in her speech, “education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world. So, I now these three will do as much as they can to help out the community and all education.”

Richard Wyatt, III, the son of Board Vice President Mrs. Wyatt said, “I want to say congratulations to my Mom, Mr. Webb and Mrs. Virgo. I wish the entire school board good luck and success in the new year.”

Mr. Wyatt said his last meeting of the BOE in December was bittersweet because he did not accomplish all that he wanted to accomplish, but he felt confident the new board members all have what it takes to do the job. To his wife, he said, “you have been working for this, stay encouraged and like the nurturer you are, take care of our babies not just our three children but all the 8,000 children in the District.”

Ms. Icilda Richards, mother of Mr. Webb, who has been working at Emerson School for 29 years, said she is proud of her son and knows her son has been supportive of the District and the Plainfield community for many years. “His heart is for the children. I thank God to see my son accomplish what he has set out to do.”

About the new Board Members:

Sarah Virgo

Mrs. Virgo is a healthcare professional specializing in education and communications at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center (MSK) in New York City, N. Y., a community activist, wife and the mother of two school-aged children. She attended Ridgewood High School in Port Richey, Florida. She attended Saint John's University, in N.Y., and graduated with honors from John Jay College of Criminal Justice in N.Y., where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Political Science.

Victor Webb

Mr. Webb is a Plainfield High School alumnus and a former scholar athlete in football, soccer and track and field. He attended Kean College (now Kean University) where he joined the AmeriCorps, a service organization that allowed him to work with elementary school students and serve as a mentor and tutor. He completed AmeriCorps and went on to establish the National School and Community Corp in Plainfield two years later. As program coordinator, he created programs that supported staff and students in the classroom at Maxson, Woodland and Washington Community School. Later, he worked for the American Red Cross as Director of Youth and Volunteer Services in Plainfield, where he built strong relationships with county and state officials establishing groundbreaking programs in schools throughout the county. Currently, Mr. Webb is administrator for a non-profit organization.

Hanae Wyatt

Mrs. Wyatt is a community leader and youth advocate who lives in Plainfield with her husband, Richard Wyatt Jr., former BOE Member and President of the Board, and their three children. She attended Plainfield Public Schools until the tenth grade and participated in the many sports and extra-curricular activities that included basketball, softball and track. She graduated from Rahway High School in 2004. Mrs. Wyatt attended Morgan State University graduating with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Biology. She was employed by the City of Plainfield from 2009 to 2021 where she served in the Plainfield Action Services Division, the Division of Parks & Recreation, and the Division of Inspections. Mrs. Wyatt is currently an entrepreneur.

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