

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a regular session on March 18, 2015, in the Media Center of the Essex Fells School. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, Dr. Steven LoCascio, at 7:31 P.M. Dr. LoCascio read the following Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: "In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Laws of 1975, a notice for this meeting was posted at the respective offices of the Essex Fells School on March 13, 2015. Agendas were mailed to the Clerk of the Borough of Essex Fells, the Progress, the Star Ledger, and posted on the district web-site."

**I. Call to Order – 7:31 P.M.**

- The meeting was called to order by the Board President.

**II. Roll Call**

Mrs. Carol D'Alessandro, Vice-President – absent  
 Mrs. Shani Drogin – present  
 Mrs. Kris Heugel – absent  
 Dr. Steven LoCascio, President – present  
 Dr. Michele Nitti – present

Also present: Mrs. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; 3 members of the EFS staff; 1 member of the public; and 1 member of the Tiny Treasures staff.

**III. Flag Salute**

- The Board President led the salute to the flag.

**IV. Public Comment on Agenda Items**

- No comment.

**V. President's Report**

- No report.

**VI. Superintendent's Report**

- Mrs. Gadaleta informed the Board that the first round of PARCC testing is almost complete. Mrs. Gadaleta stated that the testing overall had gone well despite the small glitches on the first day on the Pearson side. Mrs. Gadaleta felt that the students and staff were well prepared and noted that the district had 100% participation. Mrs. Gadaleta was thankful to the parents for their support.
- Mrs. Gadaleta wanted to inform the public that she will not be taking a long maternity leave. Mrs. Gadaleta stated that she would come in day to day as needed and that Mrs. Reynolds and Mrs. Whitman would oversee the day to day operations in her absence. Mrs. Gadaleta also stated that the County Superintendent would check in and be available if needed.
- Mrs. Gadaleta noted that the enrollment in the upper grades is a concern that she will continue to monitor. Mrs. Gadaleta asked the Board if they wanted to continue the non-tenure meet and greet. The Board felt they only need to meet with the new staff they haven't met before. The meet and greet will take place at one of the April meetings.
- Mrs. Gadaleta wanted to mention two additional points that were not on the proposed agenda. Mrs. Gadaleta informed the Board that the Jump Rope for Heart fund raiser raised \$14,900. Mrs. Gadaleta applauded the community, the children, Mr. Viggiano and Mrs. Elłowitch for their efforts. Mrs. Gadaleta also stated that the first PTA Anti-Cyberbullying presentation had over 30 parents in attendance and was very successful.

**VII. Superintendent’s Resolutions**

**1. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the payment of the following travel related expenses in accordance with the travel policy 6471 for Professional Development:

Staff Members: Nicole Aramando, Marisa Burger, Patricia Pakonis, Laura Short  
 Event: Broad Applications of Behavior Analysis Workshop  
 Location: Caldwell College  
 Date: 4/24/15  
 Cost: \$100 per person

Moved by: Dr. Nitti  
 Ayes: 3

Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin  
 Nays: 0

**2. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Use of Facilities Requests for the following:

Girl Scouts – Kindergarten Daisy Troop  
 3/20/15 & 4/17/15; Gymnasium  
 3:10-4:30pm

Essex Fells Recreation Department – Baseball/Softball for Grades PS-8  
 3/30/15 – 6/27/15; School Fields  
 Weekdays from 3:10pm-Dusk; Saturdays from 9:00am-5:00pm

Moved by: Dr. Nitti  
 Ayes: 3

Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin  
 Nays: 0

**3. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the first reading of the following policies:

- P 0134 Board Self Evaluation (Revised)
- P 0152 Board Officers (Revised)
- P 2622 Student Assessment (M) (Revised)
- P 3212 Attendance (Revised)
- P 4212 Attendance (Revised) (formerly P 4211 – Attendance)
- P & R 3218 Substance Abuse (M) (Revised)
- P & R 4218 Substance Abuse (M) (Revised)
- P & R 5200 Attendance (M) (Revised)
- P 8630 Bus Driver/Bus Aide Responsibility (M) (Revised)
- R 8630 Emergency School Bus Procedures (M) (Revised)

Moved by: Dr. Nitti  
 Ayes: 3

Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin  
 Nays: 0

4. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the following addition(s) to the Substitute Teacher List for the 2014-2015 school, pending the required criminal history/background check:

Lisa Evangelista

Teacher (\$80/day)

Moved by: Dr. Nitti

Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the contract with Creative Speech Solutions, Mary Hybl, Maternity Replacement Speech Teacher, at a rate of \$87/hour from on or about April 14, 2015 to June 30, 2015.

Moved by: Dr. Nitti

Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the request by Emily Calistri to extend her Maternity/Disability Leave of Absence through the 2015-2016 school year.

**NOTE:** Letter attached

Moved by: Dr. Nitti

Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

7. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the discarding of the following projector:

Model – Epson Powerlite 460  
Serial Number – MSAF170449L

Moved by: Dr. Nitti

Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

**VIII. Business Administrator’s Report**

- Mr. Lella provided the Board with an update of the 2015-16 Budget. Mr. Lella informed the Board that this preliminary budget would be sent to the County Office for review and approval. Mr. Lella also noted that the Public Hearing and adoption of the 2015-16 School Budget would be at the May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Mr. Lella informed the Board that the boiler walk thru took place on March 17<sup>th</sup> and that bids are due to the Business Office by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 11 am. At that time Mr. Lella and the district’s architect, Mr. Robert Donahue, will open and review the bids. Mr. Lella stated he was anticipating 5 to 7 bidders.

**IX. Business Resolutions**

1. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts the minutes of the following meetings:

Regular Meeting Minutes	1/21/15
Workshop Meeting Minutes	2/4/15
Regular Meeting Minutes	2/18/15

Moved by: Dr. Nitti	Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin
Ayes: 3	Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the bills and claims for March in the total amount of **\$210,079.24** as certified by the Business Administrator/ Board Secretary; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for February as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$284,725.65 including \$265,412.96 for the gross payroll, \$4,553.01 for the Board’s share of FICA/Medicare and \$14,759.68 for the State’s share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by: Dr. Nitti	Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin
Ayes: 3	Nays: 0

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the transfer of funds for the month of February as certified by the Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.

Moved by: Dr. Nitti	Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin
Ayes: 3	Nays: 0

4. **WHEREAS**, the Board of Education has received the Reports of the Board Secretary (Secretary) and the Custodian of School Monies (Treasurer) for the month of February; and

**WHEREAS**, in compliance with N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.11(c)3, the Secretary has certified that as of the date of the reports, no budgetary line item account, in accordance with the minimum chart of accounts as established by the New Jersey Department of Education, has obligations and payments which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the Board of Education;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that in compliance with N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.11(c)4, the Board of Education certifies that, after review of the Secretary’s monthly financial report, and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, to the best of its knowledge, no major account or fund has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.11(c)4, and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district’s financial obligations for the remainder of the year; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that pursuant to P.L. 2004 C73, the Board certifies that after review of the Secretary’s monthly financial report and certification, that there are no budgetary transfers that cumulatively exceed 10% that would require the approval of the Commissioner of Education; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the financial reports for the months be accepted and shall become a part of the official minutes of this meeting.

Moved by: Dr. Nitti	Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin
Ayes: 3	Nays: 0

5. **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Essex Fells Board of Education in the County of Essex, New Jersey, approves the 2015-2016 preliminary school district budget for submission to the Executive County Superintendent as follows:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Local Tax Levy</u>
General Fund:	\$4,906,747.29	\$4,293,288.00
Special Revenue:	45,590.75	0.00
Debt Service:	0.00	0.00
TOTAL:	<u>\$4,952,338.04</u>	<u>\$4,293,288.00</u>

**RESOLVED** that the Essex Fells Board of Education hereby approves the withdrawal of \$157,000.00 from the Capital Reserve to be appropriated in the 2015-16 school year budget for the following purpose:

Boiler Replacement

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Board authorizes the Superintendent and Business Administrator/Board Secretary to submit the preliminary budget to the Essex County Executive Superintendent of Schools for review and approval, to advertise the preliminary budget in the district's official newspaper, and establish a public hearing and adoption of the final budget for the 2015-2016 school year on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 7:30 P.M. in the Media Center of the Essex Fells School.

Moved by: Dr. Nitti  
Ayes: 3

Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin  
Nays: 0

**X. Old Business / Board Discussion**

- Mrs. Gadaleta stated that she had contacted the Borough, at the Board's request, to speak at a Borough Council Meeting regarding the drop off pick up traffic pattern. The Borough did not want to have the topic on an agenda for discussion at this time, and would rather have the Mayor and Chief of Police meet with Mrs. Gadaleta. The Board wanted to point out that they are continuing to attempt to address the issue.
- The EFTA sent a 3 question survey to the community regarding interest in a staff run Before & Aftercare program. Approximately 40 responses had been received.

**XI. New Business / Board Discussion**

- Mrs. Gadaleta informed the Board that she had submitted a proposal to the Rutgers National Writing Project for 2015-16. Mrs. Gadaleta explained the program to the Board, noting the professional development would strengthen the writing skills of the staff to become better teachers.

**XII. Meeting Open for Public Comment**

- Fran of Tiny Treasurers spoke regarding the staff run Before and After Care program. She stated that she does fully support the teaching staff, but wanted to make the Board aware of her concerns of the staff not being able to obtain the enrollment numbers needed to sustain the proposed program.
- A parent spoke about a recent incident involving his child outside of the school. The parent was unsure if he was following the proper procedure, but the parent thought he could speak to a staff member in confidence. He stated that he appreciated the procedure that took place. He stated that he would expect more help from the school if the incident carried over into the school. The parent mentioned a speaker he had seen on bullying, Jeff Yalden. The parent felt a speaker such as him could help to make parents aware of such issues, which he felt is important. Dr. LoCascio told the parent the Board understands his concern and voiced his apology. Mrs. Gadaleta informed the parent that there will be a speaker on April 1<sup>st</sup> addressing cyberbullying. Mrs. Gadaleta also wanted to make the parent aware that the district does have a plan/policy in place that she and the Board are legally obligated to follow. Dr. LoCascio appreciated the parent voicing his concern and assured the parent the issue would be addressed further if necessary.

**XIII. Resolution to Enter Executive Session**

The Board resolved to enter into Executive Session at 8:06 P.M. to discuss contractual negotiations, staffing and HIB. The items discussed in Executive Session will be disclosed to the public when the need to maintain confidentiality no longer exists.

Moved by: Dr. Nitti  
Ayes: 3

Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin  
Nays: 0

The Board exited the Executive Session at 9:25 P.M. and returned to the regular public meeting.

Moved by: Dr. Nitti  
Ayes: 3

Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin  
Nays: 0

**XIV. Adjournment**

The public meeting of the Board of Education was adjourned at 9:25 P.M. The next **Workshop Meeting** of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, April 1, 2015** in the Superintendent’s Office and the next **Regular Meeting** will be held on **Wednesday, April 15, 2015** in the Media Center.

Moved by: Dr. Nitti  
Ayes: 3

Seconded by: Mrs. Drogin  
Nays: 0

**Enrollment Count: 2014-2015**

Teacher	Section	Total	M	F
Mrs. Quinn/Ms. Burger	PS/AM	13	8	5
Mrs. Quinn/Ms. Burger	PS/PM	13	4	9
Mrs. Gann	KG	15	9	6
Ms. Mitchell/Mrs. Short	KM/S	13	6	7
Mrs. Brutman/Mrs. Hromoko	1B/H	14	9	5
Mrs. Massaro	1M	14	9	5
Ms. McMahon/Ms. Almeida	2M/A	12	5	7
Mrs. Perry	2P	10	4	6
Ms. Cervino	3C	11	6	5
Mrs. Reynolds/Ms. McLain	3R/M	10	5	5
Mrs. Barshay	4B	13	3	10
Mrs. Hacker/Mrs. Calistri	4H/C	12	3	9
Mrs. Banek/Ms. Belmont	5B/B	11	5	6
Ms. Craveiro	5C	12	7	5
Mrs. Buonomo	6B	19	8	11
Ms. Dalton/Mrs. Whitman	6D/W	20	8	12
Total		212	99	113
Out-of-District		4+		
<b>FINAL TOTALS</b>		<b>216</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>113</b>

+ Total includes 4 out-of-district students

**Fire Drills: 2013-2014**

Month	Fire Drill	Emergency Drill
September	9/8/14	Lockdown 9/16/14
October	10/8/14	Shelter in Place 10/2/14
November	11/12/14	Lockdown 11/19/14
December	12/15/14	Lockdown 12/9/14
January	1/29/15	Lockdown 1/20/15
February	2/25/15	Shelter in Place 2/27/15
March	3/11/15	Lockdown 3/13/15
April		
May		
June		

**HIB / V&V Report**

As of Date of BOE Meeting	9/17/14	10/15/14	11/19/14	12/17/14	1/21/15	2/18/15	3/18/15
TOTAL # of Reported Incidents	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Number of Unfounded Incidents	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Number of Founded Incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

**ESSEX FELLS SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT**

The Essex Fells School is a very special public elementary school enrolling boys and girls in preschool through the sixth grades. Pupils enjoy small classes and a total school population of approximately two hundred and fifty.

The size of the school is a wonderful asset as it allows a strong sense of community and offers teachers and pupils many opportunities to form bonds of collegiality, identification and support. It also supports the concept that every adult in the school is responsible for every child.

The comparatively small faculty is also a benefit. The faculty as a whole are the decision making body on all questions of teaching and learning. Teachers find it easy to share experiences and act consistently across pupils' entire academic program. The combined efforts of the staff work to support a pupil centered approach to education.

Essex Fells teachers are encouraged to try new ideas, to work collaboratively with colleagues, and to participate fully in all aspects of schooling.

The mission of the school is etched in the mortar of the original schoolhouse with the words Studies Pass Into Character.

The primary goals of an Essex Fells education include:

1. Developing in all pupils the capacity to think critically and communicate effectively through a mastery of written and spoken English.
2. Motivating all pupils to recognize and develop their academic abilities in order to build character and to achieve their full potential.
3. Teaching children to value themselves, their peers and their teachers.
4. Establishing a respect for and a strong sense of responsibility to the physical, social, and aesthetic world around them.
5. Nurturing a love of country and a pride in our American heritage and citizenship.
6. Communicating a love of scholarship and continued interest in life-long learning.
7. Insuring all pupils will achieve the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at all levels.

To secure these common goals, the Essex Fells staff of professional educators recognizes that the collaborative engagement of the children in the learning process is the key to intellectual development. Dedicated teachers create classrooms that are alive with cooperative learning activities and child-centered problem solving routines. Children are encouraged to explore, to question, to make decisions, and to express opinions in a supportive learning environment. Teachers also model their own commitment to learning by continuing to earn advanced degrees. On-going professional development is acknowledged as the foundation for promoting outstanding pupil achievement.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella  
Business Administrator/  
Board Secretary