

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a Regular Public Meeting held in the Media Center on November 16, 2022. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, Mrs. Amanda Haber, at 7:30 P.M. Mrs. Haber 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 as of January 5, 2022. Agendas were mailed to the Clerk of the Borough of Essex Fells, the Progress, and the Star Ledger.

**I. Call to Order – 7:30 P.M.**

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

**II. Roll Call**

Mrs. Amanda Haber, President-Present  
Mr. John Toth, Vice-President-Present  
Mrs. Kris Huegel-Present  
Mr. Raj Mehta-Present  
Mr. Theodore Skopak-Present

Also present: Dr. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; 1 Staff Member, and 9 Members of the Public

**III. Flag Salute**

- The Board President led the salute to the flag.

**IV. President's Report**

Good evening and thank you for joining us tonight. I want to start by thanking the community for coming out to vote in the school board election last week (or before for the early voters). It is an important opportunity to pick the representation that supports the beliefs and ideas of the citizens. I want to thank the candidates for taking an interest in serving the school and community. It is not an easy undertaking but it shows that there is deep commitment and care for what happens for our children. As our new board will assume their positions in January, I want to thank Mrs. Huegel and Mr. Skopak for their service on the board. You both have dedicated countless hours to making Essex Fells the best that it can be and we are grateful for all that you have contributed in keeping the traditions of the community in mind while also being thoughtful moving the school forward.

On tonight's agenda we will recognize various staff members for their years of dedication and service to EFS. These 8 members of our staff exemplify hard work, dedication and a level of care that is the essence of Essex Fells. While we are recognizing milestone years, we are thankful for all of our staff as we enter into our Thanksgiving holiday. On behalf of the Board I want to wish everyone a safe, healthy and Happy Thanksgiving.

**V. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only**

- None

**VI. Superintendent's Report**

- Dr. Gadaleta noted that we had a wonderful American Education Week, hosting 110 parents through Wednesday. Dr. Gadaleta thanked the parents for their support.
- Dr. Gadaleta recognized the following staff for their years of service:
  - 5 Years: Lauren Brzostowski, Laurie Fischer and Kristen Kowalski
  - 10 Years: Steven Lella and Katie McNish
  - 15 Years: Rosalie Takkel
  - 20 Years: Santiago Galindo and Kristin Gann
- Dr. Gadaleta noted that consistency in the district is important.
- Dr. Gadaleta explained the grading expectations for the district. The parent portal is open in Genesis for parents to see grades, and noted not to focus on looking at grades every day, but more to see what is being taught. Dr. Gadaleta also explained make up procedures for being out sick or on vacation.
- Dr. Gadaleta reminded everyone of the upcoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade vs. Faculty volleyball game outside on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 2 pm. All are welcome to attend.
- Dr. Gadaleta wanted to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and say thank you to our amazing, dedicated staff and families.
- Dr. Gadaleta explained the timetable for resolutions #2 and 3, noting we will try to get Mr. Finnegan as soon as possible to hopefully overlap with Mrs. Brown. Dr. Gadaleta is excited to have Mr. Finnegan as a brand new teacher.
- Mrs. Haber welcome Mr. Finnegan and wished him success and longevity.

**VII. Superintendents Resolutions**

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01 –03.

- 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 Member(s): Steven Lella  
 Event: NJASBO  
 Location: Whippany, NJ  
 Date: 11/17/22  
 Cost: \$135.81

Staff Member(s): Jessica Lodato  
 Event: Strengthening Your Special Needs Student's Executive  
 Functioning Skills  
 Location: Virtual  
 Date: 11/28/22  
 Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Danielle Butler  
 Event: NJSLS Grade 5 Numbers & Fractions Part 1  
 Location: Conquer Math  
 Date: 12/1/22  
 Cost: \$170.00

Staff Member(s): Danielle Butler  
 Event: NJSLS Grade 5 Numbers & Fractions Part 2  
 Location: Conquer Math  
 Date: 1/5/23

Cost: \$170.00

Staff Member(s): Danielle Butler  
Event: NJSLs Grade 5 Numbers & Fractions Part 3  
Location: Conquer Math  
Date: 2/1/23  
Cost: \$170.00

Staff Member(s): Danielle Butler  
Event: NJSLs Grade 5 Measurement & Data  
Location: Conquer Math  
Date: 3/6/23  
Cost: \$170.00

Staff Member(s): Danielle Butler  
Event: NJSLs Grade 5 Geometry  
Location: Conquer Math  
Date: 3/30/23  
Cost: \$170.00

Staff Member(s): Rosalie Takkel  
Event: Special Education: Accelerate Progress for Students with IEP's by  
Making the Best Use of Differentiation, Accommodations  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 12/2/22  
Cost: \$179.00

Staff Member(s): Jaclyn Carroll  
Event: Help Your Students Who Struggle with Mathematics  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 12/7/22  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Katie MacKenzie  
Event: Motivation, Mindset and Grit: Practical, Proven Strategies to  
Increase Learning  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 12/8/22  
Cost: \$159.00

Staff Member(s): Jessica Lodato  
Event: Cutting Edge Strategies for Fourth Grade Students  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 12/16/22  
Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Candice Fitzgerald  
Event: Practical Strategies for Differentiating Instruction: Making the  
Most of Student Choice and Small Instructional Groups, Grades 3-6  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 1/5/23  
Cost: \$159.00

Staff Member(s): Marco Pannullo  
 Event: TECHSPO 23  
 Location: Atlantic City, NJ  
 Date: 1/25/23 – 1/27/23  
 Cost: \$829.20

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of Padraic Finnegan, Health/Physical Education teacher, BA, Step 1, at the salary of \$57,235 which will be prorated, for the 2022-23 school year beginning on or about December 23, 2022, pending the usual criminal history and background check for new hires.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

:

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent the appointment of, Padriac Finnegan, Substitute Teacher for the school year 2022-2023, pending the usual criminal history, background check and county approval.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mrs. Huegel

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

**VIII. Business Administrator’s Report**

- Mr. Lella reported that the BOE Election results are still unofficial and that there are deadline dates for mail in ballots and Provisionals. The County hopes to certify by November 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Mr. Lella reminded the Board that at the January 4<sup>th</sup> reorganizational meeting we need to elect a new President and Vice President for the 2023 calendar year.
- Mr. Lella noted that the 2021-22 audit began this week. The due date is December 5<sup>th</sup> but there is a bill to possibly have it moved back to the first week in January as we wait for information from the Treasury Department.
- Mr. Lella reported that the 2023-24 budget process is underway, staff are putting together their requests and Mr. Lella and Dr. Gadaleta have begun preliminary discussions.

**IX. Business Resolutions**

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Business Resolutions #01-04.

1. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts the minutes of the following meeting(s):

Regular Meeting Minutes  
 Executive Session Minutes

October 19, 2022  
 October 19, 2022

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves bills and claims for November in the amount of \$217,020.64 as certified by the Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for October as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$348,837.37 including \$325,997.52 for the gross payroll, \$5,871.13 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and \$16,968.72 for the State's share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

3. **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 August, September & October;

**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 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: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

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

Moved by: Mr. Skopak

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

**IX. Old Business / Board Discussion**

- The Board discussed the graduation date for the 2023-24 school year. Dr. Gadaleta explained the consortium discussion for the calendar dates and the last day of school options. She will share this information with the EFTA. The Board discussed and felt to leave the draft as is.
- Dr. Gadaleta updated the Board on the roof project. Last Thursday the 10<sup>th</sup> a punch list was created and we will have a final walk through.

- Dr. Gadaleta noted that since our last meeting we have provided policy and a copy of the shared service agreement to the Borough. There is no further update other than the Borough is in need of an ordinance.
- Policy 9205 – Communication between parents and staff members is still being reviewed by the attorney. Dr. Gadaleta informed the Board that another incident had come up today and that she will continue to provide support to the staff.
- Dr. Gadaleta explained the training that would be provided by Handle with Care, to address restraint and de-escalation. The Board will discuss the legal review of the contract in Executive Session.

#### X. New Business / Board Discussion

- Dr. Gadaleta reported on the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the Health & PE Curriculum.
- Dr. Gadaleta discussed the rough draft of the SS curriculum, which is not yet complete. 6<sup>th</sup> grade is complete for BOE review. Dr. Gadaleta noted that the staff is still hard at work on the curriculum revision.
- Dr. Gadaleta explained the curriculum revisions in connection with QSAC. Dr. Gadaleta noted the standards that must be taught in a public school but noted how the LEA decides how it is implemented (to be age appropriate).
- Mr. Mehta commended Dr. Gadaleta for her efforts preparing the curriculum, noting that it is difficult.
- Dr. Gadaleta thanked Mrs. Brown for her help, along with Nurse Mary.
- Mr. Toth echoed Mr. Mehta's comment.

#### XI. Public Comment

- Mrs. Steiner commented on the Health Curriculum that had been taught and noted that Dr. Gadaleta did a great job notifying parents. Mrs. Steiner shared the thanks.
- Mrs. Steiner asked about the Graduation date, as she had missed the prior meeting.
- Mrs. Lavoie thanked Dr. Gadaleta for the new curriculum updates and noting the changes to the public.
- Mrs. Lavoie also appreciated the expectation of parents in regards to Genesis.
- Mrs. O'Donnell asked about curriculum and staff feelings towards certain lessons. Dr. Gadaleta explained.
- Mrs. Burke asked, in regards to the new PE teacher, who would teach health in the upper grades. Dr. Gadaleta noted the PE teacher for males and the nurse for the females.

#### XIII. Resolution to Enter Executive Session

At 8:28 P.M. the Board made a motion to enter into Executive Session discuss legal matters. The items discussed in Executive Session will be disclosed to the public when the need to maintain their confidentiality no longer exists.

Moved by: Mrs. Huegel

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

#### XIV. Adjournment

At 8:48 P. M. the Board made a motion to adjourn. The next workshop meeting of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, November 30, 2022, at 7:30 P.M.** in the Media Center.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella  
Business Administrator/