

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a Regular Meeting held in the Media Center on October 18, 2023. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, Mrs. Amanda Haber, at 7:31 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 4th 2023. Agendas were mailed to the Clerk of the Borough of Essex Fells, the Progress, and the Star Ledger.

I. Call to Order – 7:31 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
Mr. Raj Mehta- Absent
Mrs. Caragh Lavoie-Present
Mrs. Jacquelyn Burke-Present

Also present: Dr. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; 5 Members of the Public; 2 Staff Members and 1 reporter from The Progress.

III. Flag Salute

- The Board President led the flag salute.

IV. President's Report

Good evening and thank you for joining us.

The school year is really in gear now and we're off to a great start. Our sixth graders had a wonderful experience sharing their cultures with their peers during their festival this past week. The event was a beautiful way to celebrate the students and for them to show their pride in their cultures. We have many more exciting times ahead of us and that spirit of unity and inclusion that our students demonstrated will continue as a core principle of our school.

I want to thank Dr. Gadaleta for providing such an extensive evaluation of our NJSLA scores that we will be discussing tonight. As we have seen over many years, our students performed exceptionally well and that is a demonstration of the quality education being provided by our staff. Our students are not only understanding grade level concepts, but able to demonstrate understanding that outperforms the state averages. We are preparing our students for a wonderful transition into middle school, giving them a solid foundation.

Finally, I want to just thank everyone that contributed to the Kelly's corner project. It was a meaningful, tangible example of the strength of this school community. Every group came together to make it possible in order to honor Mrs. Dacosta. Throughout so many challenging times, now our students have a place to remember her in a peaceful and beautiful way. It has not only added to the beauty of our campus, but to the beauty of her legacy. I look forward to seeing our students enjoy the space for many years to come.

I urge everyone to remember that we are one very strong school community. We have a shared goal to create a wonderful student experience and a positive environment for all. Thank you.

V. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

- None

VI. Superintendent's Report

- Dr. Gadaleta thanked all the parents and staff for their support of the 6th Grade Cultural Festival.
- Dr. Gadaleta thanked the EFFD for visiting the school and meeting with the children for Fire Prevention Week.
- This week we will be celebrating Violence and Vandalism week.
- Red Ribbon Week, which is drug free awareness, will be next week.
- Dr. Gadaleta thanked the PTA for hosting the Pumpkin Hunt.
- Next week there will be Parent/Teacher conferences and a 12:45 pm dismissal. Night conferences will be offered.
- The Halloween Celebration will be October 31st, with 12 pm dismissal and 1:30 pm return for parade and class parties.
- Dr. Gadaleta went through the NJSLA Achievement scores. They will be available on the district website.
- Dr. Gadaleta mentioned the resolution approving Ms. Katsios as the 6th Grade Math & Science teacher, beginning in January 2024.

VII. Superintendent's Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01–11.

- 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): Rory Duarte
 Event: Number & Operations in Base Ten; Operations & Algebraic Thinking
 Location: Pompton Plains, NJ
 Date: 12/11/23
 Cost: \$192.82

Staff Member(s): Rory Duarte
 Event: Geometry
 Location: Pompton Plains, NJ
 Date: 3/19/24
 Cost: \$192.82

Staff Member(s): Kristen Kowalski
 Event: Grade 3 Interdisciplinary Lessons
 Location: Pompton Plains, NJ
 Date: 10/6/23, 12/1/23, 2/13/24
 Cost: \$540.00

Staff Member(s): Steven Lella
 Event: Essex County ASBO
 Location: Belleville, NJ
 Date: 9/27/23, 10/18/23, 11/15/23, 12/15/23, 1/17/24, 2/14/24, 3/13/24, 4/17/24, 5/15/24
 Cost: \$300.00

Staff Member(s): Ariella Latino
 Event: Practical Strategies to Incorporate Specially Designed Instruction Into Your Co-Teaching
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 11/1/23
 Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Ariella Latino
 Event: Best Cutting Edge Strategies for Grade 5
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 1/22/24
 Cost: \$279.00

Staff Member(s): Jessica Scoras
 Event: Understanding Dyslexia
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 11/1/23
 Cost: \$149.00

Staff Member(s): Laura Brutman
 Event: Practical Behavior Management Strategies for the Inclusion Classroom, K-6
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 12/15/23
 Cost: \$159.00

Staff Member(s): Kimberly Trafford
 Event: NJASL Conference (New Jersey Association of School Librarians)
 Location: Atlantic City, NJ
 Date: 12/3/23 – 12/5/23
 Cost: \$159.00

Staff Member(s): Michelle Barshay
 Event: Synergy Articulation (Sending Districts)
 Location: Fairfield, NJ
 Date: 10/27/23
 Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Lisa Massaro
 Event: Synergy Articulation (Sending Districts)
 Location: Fairfield, NJ
 Date: 10/27/23
 Cost: \$0.00

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0

2. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Statement of Assurance Regarding the Use of Paraprofessional Staff.

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 4 Nays: 0

3. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by

the Superintendent, the 2023-2024 School Improvement Panel (ScIP)/District Evaluation Advisory Committee/Professional Development:

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Michelle Gadaleta | Superintendent/Principal |
| Marisa Burger | Teacher Representative |
| Michelle Barshay | Teacher Representative |
| Candice Fitzgerald | Teacher Representative |
| Judi Reynolds | Teacher Representative |
| Amanda Haber | BOE Representative |
| Belinda O'Donnell | PTA Representative |
| Paige Daniels | Parent Representative |

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie	Seconded by: Mrs. Burke
Ayes: 4	Nays: 0

4. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2023-2024 Safety Team/Culture Climate Committee:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Michelle Gadaleta | Superintendent/Principal |
| Rebecca Santin | HIB Representative |
| Laura Quinn | Teacher Representative |
| Katie MacKenzie | Teacher Representative |
| Sue Hacker | Teacher Representative |
| Lisa Massaro | Teacher Representative |
| Dorotea Banek | Teacher Representative |
| Tracie Wiczorek | Teacher Representative |
| Mary Renz | Nurse/Teacher Representative |
| Gabrielle Steiner | PTA Representative |
| Paige Daniels | Foundation Representative |

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie	Seconded by: Mrs. Burke
Ayes: 4	Nays: 0

5. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2023-2024 District Testing Committee:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Michelle Gadaleta | Superintendent/Principal |
| LeeAnn Smith | Teacher Representative |
| Katie McNish | Teacher Representative |
| Judi Reynolds | Teacher Representative |
| Marco Pannullo | IT Representative |

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie	Seconded by: Mrs. Burke
Ayes: 4	Nays: 0

6. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2023-2024 Gifts Committee:

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Erika Pilato | Teacher Representative |
| Stefania Focarino | Teacher Representative |
| Jessica Scoras | Teacher Representative |
| Lauren Brzostowski | Teacher Representative |

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

7. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2023-2024 Threat Assessment Committee:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
Steven Lella	School Business Administrator
Anthony Tedesco	SLEOIII
Judi Reynolds	Teacher Representative
Erika Pilato	School Counselor
*LeeAnn Smith	Child Study Team Coordinator
*Update from 9/20/23 meeting to include LeeAnn Smith	

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

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

2nd Grade Brownie Troop Meeting's
 Gymnasium
 11/3/23, 12/1/23, 1/12/24, 2/2/24, 3/1/24, 4/12/24, 5/3/24, 6/7/24

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

9. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of Rebecca Katsios, 6th Grade Math and Science teacher, BA, Step 1, at the prorated salary of \$34,569, for the 2023-24 school year beginning on or about January 2, 2024, pending the usual criminal history and background check for new hires in addition to NJDOE Certification.

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

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

P 1524	School Leadership Councils (Abolished)
P 2270	Religion in the Schools (Revised)
P 3161	Examination for Cause (Revised)
P & R 3212	Attendance (M) (Revised)
P 3324	Right of Privacy (Revised)
P & R 3432	Sick Leave (Abolished)
P 4161	Examination for Cause (Revised)
P & R 4212	Attendance (M) (Revised)
P 4324	Right of Privacy (Revised)
P & R 4432	Sick Leave (Abolished)
P & R 5111	Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students (M) (Revised)
P & R 5116	Education of Homeless Children and Youths (Revised)

P500 Food Services (M) (Revised)

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

11. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of Kristin Gates, Paraprofessional, for the 2023-2024 school year, at the at the prorated salary of \$24,000, starting on November 1, 2023, pending the usual criminal history and background check for new hires.

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

VIII. Business Administrator’s Report

- Mr. Lella noted that the auditors will begin on October 19th. The GASB information that has been delayed in the past by the Treasury Department is available this year, keeping to the December 5th due date at the moment.
- Mr. Lella noted that the School Board Election will be on November 7th. Mr. Mehta is running unopposed.
- Mr. Lella recognized the donation’s from the Mitchell Family, the PTA and the Foundation for Kelly’s Corner

IX. Business Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Business Resolutions #01-07.

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

Regular Meeting Minutes	September 20 th , 2023
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Regular Workshop Minutes	October 4 th , 2023
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Executive Workshop Minutes	October 4 th , 2023
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Moved by: Mr, Toth

Seconded by: Mrs. Lavoie

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

2. RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves bills and claims for October in the amount of \$284,804.25, as certified by the Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for September as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$382,763.74 including \$356,751.67 for the gross payroll, \$5,757.03 for the Board’s share of FICA/Medicare and \$20,255.04 for the State’s share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by: Mr, Toth

Seconded by: Mrs. Lavoie

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

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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 July & August;

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, Toth

Seconded by: Mrs. Lavoie

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

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

Moved by: Mr, Toth

Seconded by: Mrs. Lavoie

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves a donation from the Mitchell Family in the amount of \$1,000.00 to line account 20-100-100-720-050 for the purpose of Kelly's Corner.

Moved by: Mr, Toth

Seconded by: Mrs. Lavoie

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves a donation from the Essex Fells PTA in the amount of \$3,000.00 to line account 20-100-100-720-050 for the purpose of Kelly's Corner.

Moved by: Mr, Toth

Seconded by: Mrs. Lavoie

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

7. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves a donation from the Essex Fells Foundation for Educational Excellence in the amount of \$4,224.80 to line account 20-100-100-720-050 for the purpose of Kelly's Corner.

Moved by: Mr, Toth

Seconded by: Mrs. Lavoie

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

X. Old Business / Board Discussion

- Dr. Gadaleta again recognized the hiring of Ms. Katsios.
- Dr. Gadaleta revisited the PTA & EFFEE Communication. Since the last meeting there has been concern about emails being sent by the PTA, and the BOE discussed. Dr. Gadaleta will review all correspondence before it goes out, but will not be rewriting the messages. The BOE agreed that was sufficient.
- The Board will discuss the 2024-25 Calendar at the November meeting when the full Board is present.
- Dr. Gadaleta noted that we are to update our Safe Return Plan for 2023-24 every 6 months, until September 2024.

XI. New Business / Board Discussion

- None

XII. Public Comment

- Mrs. Skopak asked about the calendar the date of graduation. Dr. Gadaleta noted the future discussion was for the 2024-25 calendar and that the 2023-24 calendar is all set.

XIII. Resolution to Enter Executive Session

At 8:14 P.M. the Board made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss negotiations. 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. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

XIV. Adjournment

At 8 :39 P.M. the Board made a motion to adjourn. The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, November 1, 2023, at 7:30 P.M.** in the Media Center.

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 4

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary