

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a Workshop Meeting held in the Media Center on September 6, 2023. 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 August 28th, 2023. 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  
Mr. Raj Mehta-Absent  
Mrs. Caragh Lavoie-Present  
Mrs. Jacquelyn Burke-Absent

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

**III. Flag Salute**

- The Board President led the flag salute.

**IV. President's Report**

Good Evening,

Welcome to all of those joining us tonight. The beginning of the school year is an exciting time. It's a great opportunity to set goals and to take on challenges that are new and thought provoking. In order to have a successful year, extensive thoughtful planning took place determining how to best prepare our students. I'd like to acknowledge the work that has been done by Dr. Gadaleta and Mr. Lella to prepare for this year. I also want to thank the teachers and staff who have been preparing for the students to arrive. Our PTA has been hard at work getting volunteers lined up to ensure a successful school start. The Essex Fells Foundation for Educational Excellence has been gearing up and preparing great extra experiences for students. It takes a village and we have the best village of all. As the Board of Education we are responsible for setting the policies, goals and objectives for the district and ensuring that they are being carried out. We have developed the following goals for this school year:

1. Review, update, evaluate and enforce Bylaws/Policy Manual to fit the specific needs of Essex Fells Students.
2. Provide necessary Professional Development and resources to support the health, social-emotional needs and expectations for student behaviors.
3. Provide Class III officer and state-of-the-art safety vestibule to ensure a safe learning environment for students
4. Remain committed to offering an outstanding education while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

We are committed to the students of Essex Fells and will continue to follow the guiding principles of strong character and excellence as we plan and prepare our students for the future. We are proud to start the year with the extra safety measure of the Class III officer and safety vestibule in place.

On behalf of the Board, we wish everyone a safe and happy start to their new school year.

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

- Ms. Terri DiMartini spoke on behalf of Girls on the Run of NJ East. As a resident of Caldwell, Ms. DiMartini wanted to thank the Essex Fells School for hosting GOTR at Essex Fells. She also recognized and thanked Ms. Santin and Ms. Kowalski for running the program at EFS. There will be a 5k and celebratory event on Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>. Ms. DiMartini expressed her gratitude to EFS, Ms. Santin and Ms. Kowalski.

Ms. DiMartini left the meeting at 7:36 pm

**VI. Superintendent’s Report**

- Dr. Gadaleta reported that tomorrow we are back to school for 2023-24. Dr. Gadaleta noted that we have been preparing all summer and the staff had orientation, PD and prep the last 2 days. Dr. Gadaleta also noted the introduction of Officer Tedesco to the staff. Dr. Gadaleta noted his years of extensive experience and knowledge and feels his personality will be a great fit at EFS. BTSN will be on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and picture day will be the 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Dr. Gadaleta reported on the District’s QSAC scores. We received 100% in 4 of the 5 categories. We received 90% on instruction and program. Dr. Gadaleta noted that on a positive note, it was not due to our curriculum, but truly test score related in science. Dr. Gadaleta noted that we will focus on science moving forward.
- Dr. Gadaleta informed the Board that NJSLA scores came in but she is waiting for the parent reports.
- Dr. Gadaleta provided a NJ Health update, per a Board member’s request. Dr. Gadaleta noted as an elementary school we follow the NJDOH. No mandates are expected.
- Mr. Toth asked about the Spirt meeting and introducing Officer Tedesco to the students. Dr. Gadaleta confirmed that would take place.

**VII. Superintendent’s Resolutions**

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01–05.

**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 travel policy 6471 for Professional Development:

Staff Member(s): LeeAnn Smith  
 Event: Community Practice for Teachers & Professionals of Preschool Students with Disabilities  
 Location: Virtual  
 Date: 3/19/24, 4/16/24, 5/7/24, 6/4/24  
 Cost: \$0.00

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

**2. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of Maria Sazan, Paraprofessional, for the 2023-2024 school year, at the at the salary of \$30,000.00, pending the usual criminal history and background check for new hires.

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

**3. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the second reading and adoption of the following bylaws/regulations/policies:

P 2624  
R 2624

Grading System  
Grading System

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

**4. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent the appointment of, Henry Gehman, Substitute Teacher for the school year 2023-2024, pending the usual criminal history, background check and county approval.

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

**5. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the following addition to the 2023-24 Field Trips List:

Brook Hollow Barnyard, Roseland Booton Township, NJ

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

**VIII. Business Administrator's Report**

- Dr. Gadaleta discussed Business Resolution # 1 and other donations for Kelly's Corner from the EFTA PTA and Foundation.

**IX. Business Resolutions**

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

- 1. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the Essex Fells Student Activity Account: School Store, agreement to utilize \$705.75 for the purpose of the Kelly DaCosta Memorial Library.

Moved by: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mr. Toth

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

**X. Old Business / Board Discussion**

- Dr. Gadaleta explained the summer B&G Projects: the track; the courtyard rotunda and the 6<sup>th</sup> grade donation for the paw print; sidewalk repair; security vestibule; gym floor and PTA funding; grounds maintenance; Kelly's Corner; faculty room carpet; thermostats. Dr. Gadaleta noted that the outside projects are a reflection of the inside teaching efforts.
- Dr. Gadaleta provided an update on the open 6<sup>th</sup> grade position. Only 2 resumes have been received and she will continue to advertise and consider other options.

**XI. New Business / Board Discussion**

- Dr. Gadaleta provided a draft of the 2024-25 calendar, which will be discussed at a future meeting date when all BOE members are present.
- Dr. Gadaleta thanked Ms. Santin and Ms. Kowalski for handling the GOTR program.

**XII. Public Comment**

- None

**XII. Adjournment**

At 8 :07 P.M. the Board made a motion to adjourn. The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at 7:30 P.M.** in the Media Center.

Moved by: Mr. Toth

Seconded by: Mrs. Lavioe

Ayes: 3

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella  
Business Administrator/  
Board Secretary