

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a Regular Public Meeting held remotely on August 18, 2021. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, Mrs. Kris Huegel, at 7:31 P.M. Mrs. Huegel 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 8th, 2021. Agendas were mailed to the Clerk of the Borough of Essex Fells, the Progress and the Star Ledger, and posted on the district's website."

**I. Call to Order -7:31 P.M.**

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

**II. Roll Call**

Mrs. Kris Huegel, President-Present  
 Dr. Steven LoCascio, Vice President-Present  
 Mrs. Amanda Haber-Present  
 Mr. Raj Mehta-Absent  
 Mr. Theodore Skopak-Present

Also present: Dr. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and 59 members of the public.

**III. Flag Salute**

- The Board President led the salute to the flag.

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

- None

**V. President's Report**

Good evening, everyone-

Thank you for joining us tonight. I hope you have all been enjoying your summer. It is hard to believe that it is only 3 weeks until the beginning of the new school year. Dr. Gadaleta, Mr. Lella, Mrs. Rivera, Mrs. Evangelista, Mr. Thomas and our buildings and grounds staff have been hard at work getting the buildings ready for the September opening. The administration has also been hard at work navigating the changing face of the pandemic to determine the best plan for EFS. The administration and Safe Return Committee have used guidance from the NJDOE, CDC, our local health department, and our school physician, Dr. Nitti in this effort. Last year the successful outcome of EFS being able to remain open for in-person instruction with minimal closures was a result of everyone in our school communities' cooperation with the pandemic rules and regulations that were in place. With continued collaboration and cooperation from our community, we are anticipating another excellent year at Essex Fells School. EFS will be following all mandates set forth by the Governor pertaining to the opening of schools. Rest assured that the board is committed to providing the safest and healthiest learning environment to our students and staff, with not only their physical health, but their social and emotional health in mind. Dr. Gadaleta will be sharing the proposed safe return plan in detail later in this meeting. We appreciate your understanding that plans are subject to change, based on the health situation in Essex Fells, our surrounding community and state.

We are happy to share the welcome news that we have reached a tentative agreement with the teacher's association regarding their contract. I would like to extend heartfelt thanks to everyone who worked on finding a mutually satisfactory resolution: Mrs. Haber, Mr. Mehta, Dr. Gadaleta, Mr. Lella, Mr. Fogarty, Mrs. Gann, Mrs.

Brutman, Mrs. McNish, Mrs. MacKenzie, Ms. Craveiro, the EFTA's representation, and the mediators. We appreciate all the time and attention all of you put into contract negotiations.

We hope you have a safe, healthy, and fun rest of your summer.

## **VI. Superintendent's Report**

- Dr. Gadaleta reported that the BOE and EFTA have reached a tentative agreement regarding negotiations.
- Dr. Gadaleta noted a change to the 2021-22 school calendar.
- Dr. Gadaleta informed the Board that she would be taking her annual Stronge Evaluation training.
- Dr. Gadaleta reported that the prior 2 years of State testing had been waived, but would be returning this year for baseline scoring.
- Dr. Gadaleta thanked Dr. Barretti (resolution #18) for his donation to EFS.
- Dr. Gadaleta noted that a new family was moving into town and will address residency.
- The Tiny Treasures program will be operational this year.
- Dr. Gadaleta reported to the Board that the carpeting would be replaced in 2 classrooms in the lower buildings, and 2 sinks and 2 touchless water filling stations will be installed before school resumes.
- Staff Orientation and PD will be September 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- The Safe Return Committee meeting will be on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Dr. Gadaleta will provide a side by side comparison of last year and this year's safety protocols.
- Policy 1648 from last year has been abolished and replaced with 1648.11
- Dr. Gadaleta shared vaccine initiative information.
- Dr. Gadaleta will be providing school tours for families on August 31<sup>st</sup>, and Ms. Lipper and Ms. Santin will be available to meet with children as preparation to returning for the school year.

## **VII. Superintendents Resolutions**

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01 – 18

- 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): Marissa Burger  
 Event: Teaching Strategies – PreK Curriculum  
 Location: Virtual  
 Date: TBD  
 Cost: \$165.00

Staff Member(s): Tracie Wieczorek  
 Event: Teaching Strategies – PreK Curriculum  
 Location: Virtual  
 Date: TBD  
 Cost: \$165.00

Staff Member(s): Katie MacKenzie  
 Event: 3 Stages of Learning: Number & Operations in Base Ten and  
 Operations & Algebraic Thinking  
 Location: Conquer Mathematics, Pompton Plains  
 Date: 9/20/21 & 10/27/21  
 Cost: \$320.00

Staff Member(s): Candice Fitzgerald  
Event: Number and Operations – Fractions & Geometry  
Location: Conquer Mathematics, Pompton Plains  
Date: 11/29/21 & 4/5/22  
Cost: \$320.00

Staff Member(s): Rory Duarte  
Event: Wilson Reading System Intro Course  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 9/13/21 – 9/15/21  
Cost: \$600.00

**Staff Member(s): Rory Duarte**  
**Event: Wilson Reading System, Level I Certification**  
**Location: Virtual**  
**Date: 9/17/21**  
**Cost: \$2,000.00**

Staff Member(s): Danielle Butler  
Event: Wilson Reading System Intro Course  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 9/13/21 – 9/15/21  
Cost: \$600.00

Staff Member(s): Danielle Butler  
Event: Wilson Reading System, Level I Certification  
Location: Virtual  
Date: 9/17/21  
Cost: \$2,000.00

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

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

WEFC – Fall 2021 Soccer Practice/Soccer Games  
9/1/21 – 11/20/21  
After School & Saturday/Sunday

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

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

- P 1648                                      Restart and Recovery Plan (Abolished)
- P 1648.11                                The Road Forward COVID-19 – Health and Safety (New)
- P 1648.02                                Remote Learning Options for Families (Abolished)
- P 1648.03                                Restart And Recovery Plan – Full-Time Remote Instruction (Abolished)
- P 0131                                      Bylaws, Policies, and Regulations (Revised)

- P 1521 Educational Improvement Plans (M) (Abolished)
- P 1649 Federal Families First Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response Act (M) (Abolished)
- P 2421 Career and Technical Education (Revised)
- R 2421 Vocational - Technical Education (Abolished)
- P 3134 Assignment of Extra Duties (Revised)
- P & R 3142 Nonrenewal of Nontenured Teaching Staff Member (Revised)
- P & R 3221 Evaluation of Teachers (M) (Revised)
- P & R 3222 Evaluation of Teaching Staff Members, Excluding Teachers and Administrators (M) (Revised)
- P & R 3223 Evaluation of Administrators, Excluding Principals, Vice Principals, and Assistant Principals (M) (Revised)
- P & R 3224 Evaluation of Principals, Vice Principals, and Assistant Principals (M) (Revised)
- P & R 4146 Nonrenewal of Nontenured Support Staff Member (Revised)
- P & R 5460.02 Bridge Year Pilot Program (M) (New)
- P & R 6471 School District Travel (M) (Revised)
- P 8561 Procurement Procedures for School Nutrition Programs (M) (Revised)

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**4. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the proposed Merit Goals for Dr. Michelle V. Gadaleta in the 2021-2022 school year, for submission to the County Office of Education.

**NOTE:** Merit Goals Attached

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**5. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the proposed Merit Goals for Steven J. Lella in the 2021-2022 school year, for submission to the County Office of Education.

**NOTE:** Merit Goals Attached

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**6. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Board of Education Goals for the 2021-2022 school year.

**NOTE:** Merit Goals Attached

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**7. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the District/Superintendent Goals for the 2021-2022 school year.

**NOTE:** Goals Attached

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**8. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the revised 2021-2022 School Calendar.

**NOTE:** Revised Calendar Attached

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**9. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the School District Professional Development Plan and Statement of Assurance for the 2021-2022 School Year.

**NOTE:** Copy in Superintendent’s Office

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**10. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the District Mentoring Plans and Statement of Assurance for the 2021-2022 School Year.

**NOTE:** Copy in Superintendent’s Office

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**11. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Official Release for the 2019-2020 School Year of the *NJDOE School Self-Assessment for Determining Grades under the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights District and School Grade Report*.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**12. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the submission of the ESEA application for Fiscal Year 2021-22 to the County Office of Education and accepts the grant award in the amount of \$10,797.

Title I-A	\$10,797
Title II-A	\$0
Title IV-A	<u>\$0</u>
Total	\$10,797

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**13. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2021-2022 School Improvement Panel (ScIP)/District Evaluation Advisory Committee/Professional Development:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
LeeAnn Smith	Teacher Representative
Marisa Burger	Teacher Representative
Michelle Barshay	Teacher Representative
Candice Fitzgerald	Teacher Representative
Judi Reynolds	Teacher Representative
Kris Huegel	BOE Representative
Cindy Mehta/Nicole Skopak	Parent Representatives

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**14. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2021-2022 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
Lauren Brzostowski	Teacher Representative
Mary Renz	Teacher Representative
Tracie Wiczorek	Teacher Representative
Cindy Mehta/Nicole Skopak	PTA Representatives
Gemma Diaco	Foundation Representative

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**15. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2021-2022 District Testing Committee:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
LeeAnn Smith	Teacher Representative
Jackie Castellano	Teacher Representative
Judi Reynolds	Teacher Representative
Nicole Criscione	Teacher Representative
Marco Pannullo	IT Representative

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

16. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2021-2022 Report Card Revision/Portal Committee:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
Katie McNish	Specials
Tracie Wiczorek	Preschool
Molly Livio	Kindergarten
Kelly Mitchell	First Grade
Laura Quinn	Second Grade
Kristen Kowalski	Third Grade
Sue Hacker	Fourth Grade
Monica Craveiro	Fifth Grade
Nicole Criscione	Sixth Grade

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

17. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2021-2022 Safe Return Committee:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
Gemma Diaco	EFFEE
Barbara Luca	EFFEE
Nicole Skopak	PTA
Cindy Mehta	PTA
Kris Huegel	BOE
Raj Mehta	BOE
Mary Renz	School Nurse
Michelle Nitti	School Physician
Theresa DeNova	DOH Official
Nicole Criscione	EFTA
Laura Brutman	EFTA
Steven Lella	BA
John Thomas	B&G
Judi Reynolds	Lead Teacher/504/I&RS Coordinator
Jackie Castellano	Technology Coordinator
LeeAnn Smith	CST Coordinator
Edward Davis	Mayor
Darren Volker	EFPD
Tina Rivera	Administrative Assistant
Lisa Evangelista	Administrative Assistant

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

18. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the resident donation of \$200 **from Dr. Baretto to be applied to the Art Therapy Program.**

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

**VIII. Business Administrator’s Report**

- Mr. Lella provided an update on all B&G projects from the summer.
- Mr. Lella informed the Board of 2 more fraudulent unemployment claims.

**IX. Business Resolutions**

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Business Resolutions #01-05.

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

Regular Meeting Minutes                      May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Regular Meeting Minutes                      May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
 Executive Session Minutes                      May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Regular Meeting Minutes                      June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
 Executive Session Minutes                      June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Regular Meeting Minutes                      July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Regular Meeting Minutes                      July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
 Executive Session Minutes                      July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves additional bills and claims for June in the amounts of \$34,474.16, \$27,598.92, \$1,061.68 and \$7,944.15; for July in the amount of \$196,366.93 and August in the amount of **\$240,360.73** as certified by the Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for June as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$468,649.60, including \$436,386.53 for the gross payroll, \$12,366.69 for the Board’s share of FICA/Medicare and \$19,896.38 for the State’s share of FICA/Medicare.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for July as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$66,339.90, including \$61,742.96 for the gross payroll, \$2,801.24 for the Board’s share of FICA/Medicare and \$1,795.70 for the State’s share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

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 May;



**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. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

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

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve appropriating additional fiscal year 2021 Extraordinary Aid funding to the 2021-22 school budget in the amount of \$159,823 to line account 11-120-100-101-01; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Essex Fells Board of Education acknowledges that it did not include an estimated Extraordinary Aid payment in the 2020-21 school budget and received an award of Extraordinary Aid in the amount of \$159,823; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that NJAC 6A:23A2.13(d)6 provides that a district Board of Education may, at any time without commissioner approval, appropriate surplus generated from state revenue such as Extraordinary Aid, that has been excluded from the excess surplus calculation in the prior year.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio                      Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5    Nays: 0

**X. Old Business / Board Discussion**

- Dr. Gadaleta noted that we are still patiently waiting on NJDOH guidelines for public schools to be released.
- Dr. Gadaleta shared the district’s Safe Return Plan.
- Mr. Skopak asked if there was an update to the traffic study. Dr. Gadaleta reported there was no update at this time but will follow up with the EFPD.
- Dr. Gadaleta informed the BOE of the summer 2022 roof project timeline.

**XI. New Business / Board Discussion**

- The BOE discussed returning to in person meetings beginning with the September 15<sup>th</sup> BOE Meeting. We will prepare for a live stream option as well.

**XII. Public Comment**

- Mrs. Belinda O’Donnel asked about the move from 6 feet to 3 feet in classrooms. Dr. Gadaleta noted the square footage in each classroom allows for us to do this and move 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades back to the classroom from the media center and gymnasium.
- Mr. Toth asked Mr. Lella a question regarding capital reserve balance.
- Via chat, Mrs. Bronstein thanked the BOE and all those involved on the safe return plan.

**XIII. Resolution to Enter Executive Session**

At 8:28 P.M. the Board made a motion to enter into Executive Session to discuss legal matters and 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: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

**XIV. Adjournment**

At 8:49 P.M. the Board of Education made a motion to adjourn. The next meeting will held on **Wednesday, September 1, 2021** at 7:30 P.M. virtually

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mr. Skopak

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella  
Business Administrator/  
Board Secretary