

**THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ESSEX FELLS, NJ
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2025

REGULAR MEETING – 7:30 P.M. – MEDIA CENTER

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, 2025. 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.

II. Roll Call

Mrs. Amanda Haber, President
Mrs. Jacquelyn Burke, Vice-President
Mrs. Caragh Lavoie
Mr. Raj Mehta
Mr. Christopher Pisacane

III. Flag Salute

IV. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

V. President's Report

VI. Superintendent's Report

- Nutrition Program
- PTA & Foundation Technology Grant for 2025-26
- February 18th Professional Development

VII. Superintendent's Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01–09.

- 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): Stefania Focarino
Event: NJCIE CST Training Series
Location: Virtual
Date: 2/3/25, 2/24/25
Cost: \$0.00

AGENDA

February 19, 2025

Staff Member(s): Katie MacKenzie
Event: NJCIE CST Training Series
Location: Virtual
Date: 2/3/25, 2/24/25
Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Nicole Axentiou
Event: Early Literacy, Print Awareness, Phonological Awareness
Location: Virtual
Date: 2/19/25
Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): LeeAnn Smith
Event: Utilizing PCAST to Improve IEP Meetings
Location: William Paterson University
Date: 2/27/25, 2/28/25
Cost: \$20.50

Staff Member(s): Rebecca Fogarty
Event: NJECC
Location: Montclair State University
Date: 3/11/25
Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Dorotea Banek
Event: NJECC
Location: Montclair State University
Date: 3/11/25
Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Christine Albano
Event: NJECC
Location: Montclair State University
Date: 3/11/25
Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Danielle Jaworski
Event: NJECC
Location: Montclair State University
Date: 3/11/25
Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Deana Hromoko
Event: NJECC
Location: Montclair State University
Date: 3/12/25
Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Laura Brutman
 Event: NJECC
 Location: Montclair State University
 Date: 3/12/25
 Cost: \$0.00

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent the Emergency Operations Plan for the 2024-2025 school year:

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, Charlotte Isabel for the Oak Knoll Senior Capstone Project starting May 16, 2025 for the school year 2024-2025.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

4. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, Schelli Wilson to complete 60 hours of in-school observation for Caldwell University's Certificate Program.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

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

P 5600	Student Discipline/Code of Conduct
R 5600	Student Discipline/Code of Conduct

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

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

EFFEE – The Jungle Book Musical
 3/14/25 5:00pm – 8:00pm & 3/15/25 12:00pm – 3:00pm
 Gymnasium, Media Center, Room 108, 6th Grade Hallway

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

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

WEFC – Soccer Practice and Games
3/1/25 – 6/30/25
Saturday's and Sundays
Fields

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

- 8. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of the following stipend positions for the 6th grade camp trip for the 2024-2025 school year at the contractual rate:

Dorotea Banek	Camp - \$800
Erica Santalla	Camp - \$800
Pamela Banta	Camp - \$800
Susan Hacker	Camp - \$800
Mary Renz	Camp - \$800
Erika Pilato	Camp - \$800
George Alexandris	Camp - \$800
Marco Pannullo	Camp - \$800
John Trogani	Camp - \$800
EFPD Officer	Camp - \$0

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

- 9. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the salary guide movement of Rory Duarte, Teacher, from BA +30 Step 7, \$67,935, to MA Step 7, \$68,935, effective February 1st, 2025.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

VIII. Business Administrator's Report

- 2025-26 Budget Update: Grants/State Aid
- November 2025 BOE Election Requirements
- NJ Department of Community Affairs Recreational Facility Improvement Grant

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 January 8th, 2025

Executive Meeting Minutes January 8th, 2025

Regular Meeting Minutes January 22nd, 2025

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves bills and claims for February in the amount of \$288,592.38; as certified by the Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for January as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$409,125.10, including \$381,103.90 for the gross payroll, \$7,166.44 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and \$20,237.12 for the State's share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

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 December;

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:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

4. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the transfer of funds for the month of December (additional) and January as certified by the Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education acknowledge receipt of and accepts the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) of the Essex Fells School District and the Auditors' Management Report, prepared by the auditing firm of Samuel Klein and Company for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

6. **RESOLVED** that the Essex Fells Board of Education approves the submission of the following Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program Waiver to the Essex County Office of Education:

WHEREAS, NJAC 6A:23A-5.3 provides that a school district may request a waiver of compliance with respect to the district's participation in the Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) program for the 2025-2026 school year, and

WHEREAS, the Essex Fells Board of Education desires to apply for this waiver due to the fact that it projects having fewer than 40 Medicaid eligible classified students,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Essex Fells Board of Education hereby authorizes the Chief School Administrator to submit to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools in the County of Essex an appropriate waiver of the requirements of NJAC 6A23A-5.3 for the 2025-2026 school year.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

7. **WHEREAS**, the Essex Fells Board of Education desires to apply for and obtain a grant from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for approximately \$43,000 to carry out projects related to updating the district playgrounds, fields, walking or bicycle trails, multi-sport courts and recreational facilities providing quality recreational space to the community.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, That the Essex Fells Board of Education does hereby authorize the application for such a grant; and, Recognizes and accepts that the Department may offer a lesser or greater amount and therefore, upon receipt of the grant agreement from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, does further authorize the execution of any such grant agreement; and also, upon receipt of the fully executed agreement from the Department, does further authorize the expenditure of funds pursuant to the terms of the agreement between

The Essex Fells Board of Education and the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the persons whose names, titles, and signatures appear below are authorized to sign the application, and that they or their successors in said titles are authorized to sign the agreement, and any other documents necessary in connection therewith.

Steven J. Lella – School Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

X. Old Business / Board Discussion

- Preschool Program Hours
- Policy Discussion

P 5512	Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (M) (Revised)
P 5533	Student Smoking (M) (Revised)
R 5533	Student Smoking (Revised)
P & R 7441	Electronic Surveillance In School Buildings and On School Grounds (M) (Revised)
P & R 9320	Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies (M) (Revised)
P 2365	Acceptable Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) (New)
P 5111	Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students (M) (Revised)
P 5516	Use of Electronic Communication Devices (Revised)
R 5516	Use of Electronic Communication Devices (New)
P 5701	Academic Integrity (Revised)
P 5710	Student Grievance (Revised)
P 8500	Food Services (M) (Revised)
P 9163	Spectator Code of Conduct for Interscholastic Events (M) (New)

XI. New Business / Board Discussion

- 2025-2026 School Calendar/Student Attendance
- Classroom floor repair
- Online Student Safety
- Primary Grade Illnesses

XII. Public Comment

XII. Resolution to Enter Executive Session

BE IT RESOLVED that in accordance with the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act (“Act”), the Essex Fells Board of Education shall conduct a closed executive session pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 for the purpose of discussing: **Legal Matters**.

It is anticipated that the length of time of this executive session will be 30 minutes and that action will not be taken in public after the executive session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the minutes of the executive session will be released when the need for confidentiality in accordance with N.J.S.A. 10:4-12 no longer applies.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

XIII. Adjournment

RESOLVED that this public meeting of the Board of Education be adjourned at ____ P.M. The next board meeting of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 7:30 P.M.** in the Media Center.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

AGENDA

February 19, 2025

2024-2025

Teacher	Section	Total	M	F
Mrs. Axentiou/Mrs. Fornini	PS/AM	11	0	11
Mrs. Axentiou/Mrs. Fornini	PS/PM	12	7	5
Mrs. Mauro	KM	15	7	8
Mrs. Brutman/Mrs. Takkel	KBT	15	7	8
Mrs. Fitzgerald	1F	18	11	7
Mrs. Gann/Mrs. Hromoko	1GH	19	11	8
Mrs. Quinn	2Q	13	8	5
Ms. Duarte/Mrs. Focarino	2DF	14	7	7
Ms. Kowalski	3K	16	7	9
Ms. Anderson/Mrs. MacKenzie	3AM	16	7	9
Mrs. Banek	4B	20	8	12
Mrs. Lodato/Mrs. Ennis	4LE	20	9	11
Mrs. Fogarty	5F	15	11	4
Mrs. Jaworski/Mrs. Brzostowski	5JB	15	11	4
Mrs. Santalla	6S	16	6	10
Mrs. Hacker/Mrs. Sink	6HS	16	9	7
TOTAL		251	126	125
Out-of-District	*	3		
FINAL TOTALS		254		

*Total includes 3 out-of-district students.

12/13/2024

Fire Drills: 2024-2025

Month	Fire Drill	Emergency Drill
August	8/27/24	August 23, 2024 – 911 call
September	9/16/24	September 12, 2024
October	10/31/24	October 16, 2024 - Shelter in Place w/EFPD
November	11/18/24	November 12, 2024 – Shelter in Place
December	12/12/24	December 17, 2024 - Lockdown
January	1/7/25 (Smoke Alarm)	January 17, 2025 – Shelter in Place w/EFPD
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
July	July 31, 2024	July 31, 2024 – Walkie-Talkie Check

HIB / V&V Report

As of Date of BOE Meeting	8/21	9/4	9/18	10/16	11/6	11/20	12/11	1/8	1/22	2/5	2/19					
TOTAL# of Reported Incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
Number of Unfounded Incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
Number of Founded Incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
Violence & Vandalism Incidents	0	0	0	0	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. Ensuring all pupils will achieve the New Jersey Student Learning 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.