

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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 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

- Full Day Preschool 2025-2026
- Parent/Teacher Conferences 3/19/25-3/21/25
- LEAD Program
- End of MP2/Report Cards
- Musical - Foundation
- Fundraiser - PTA

VII. Superintendent's Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01–07.

- 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): Rosalie Takkel
Event: Into Math
Location: Virtual
Date: 3/25/25
Cost: \$0.00

AGENDA

March 19, 2025

Staff Member(s): Deana Hromoko
Event: Into Math
Location: Virtual
Date: 3/26/25
Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Patricia Pakonis
Event: Defusing Anger, Anxiety, and Aggression
Location: Virtual
Date: 3/31/25
Cost: \$295.00

Staff Member(s): Laura Brutman
Event: Into Math
Location: Virtual
Date: 4/1/25
Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Dina Mauro
Event: Increase All Your Student's Learning with Practical Timesaving Workstations, Preschool and Kindergarten
Location: Virtual
Date: 4/10/25
Cost: \$169.00

Staff Member(s): Susan Hacker
Event: Math and Science Articulation
Location: North Caldwell, NJ
Date: 4/14/25
Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Pamela Banta
Event: Co-Teaching That Works – Powerful Strategies to Accelerate Student Success in Today's Inclusive Classrooms
Location: Virtual
Date: 4/30/25
Cost: \$295.00

Staff Member(s): Pamela Banta
Event: Math Learning Disabilities
Location: Virtual
Date: 5/12/25
Cost: \$295.00

Staff Member(s): Steve Lella
Event: 2024-2025 Annual ASBO Convention
Location: Atlantic City, NJ
Date: 6/4/25- 6/6/25
Cost: \$1,126.77

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2025-2026 full day preschool program at a tuition cost of \$8,000.00.

Note: Full Day Schedule Draft

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

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

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)

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

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

Boy Scouts – Pinewood Derby
4/5/25 9:00am – 1:00pm
Gymnasium

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

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

EFFEE – Cast Party
3/24/25 7:45am – 8:30am
Gymnasium

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 – Spring Enrichment
4/15/25- 6/12/25 3:05pm – 4:30pm
Gymnasium/Classrooms/Field

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

7. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent the appointment of, Joyce Kim, Substitute Teacher for the school year 2024-2025, pending the usual criminal history, background check and county approval.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

VIII. Business Administrator’s Report

- 2025-26 Budget – Preliminary Submission
- Annual Fire Inspection

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	February 5 th , 2025
Executive Meeting Minutes	February 5 th , 2025
Regular Meeting Minutes	February 19 th , 2025
Executive Meeting Minutes	February 19 th , 2025

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves bills and claims for March in the amount of \$308,528.43; as certified by the Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for February as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$405,959.71, including \$378,133.76 for the gross payroll, \$7,997.45 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and \$19,828.50 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 January & February;

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 February as certified by the Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

5. **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Essex Fells Board of Education in the County of Essex, New Jersey, approves the 2025-2026 preliminary school district budget for submission to the Executive County Superintendent as follows:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Local Tax Levy</u>
General Fund:	\$6,809,356.58	\$6,058,214.58
Special Revenue:	\$126,462.60	0.00
Debt Service:	<u>\$99,144.00</u>	<u>\$65,435.00</u>
TOTAL:	\$7,034,963.18	\$6,123,649.58

RESOLVED that the Essex Fells Board of Education approves the total travel expenditures for the District at a maximum of \$20,000.00 for the 2025-26 school year; and

RESOLVED that the Business Administrator keep an accounting of all expenditures to ensure compliance with the approved amount; and

BE IT RESOLVED that included in the preliminary budget is the use of the adjustment for increased costs of health benefits in the amount of \$64,988. The funds will be utilized to address the additional increase in health benefit premiums.

BE IT RESOLVED that included in the preliminary budget is the use of the adjustment for enrollment in the amount of \$22,012. The funds will be utilized for supplies and materials necessary for the additional students.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Essex Fells Board of Education accepts a donation from the Essex Fells PTA and the Essex Fells Foundation for Educational Excellence in the amount of \$40,000 and \$40,000 (for a total of \$80,000) to be used for the purchase of school devices on the district's 5-year technology replacement plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following budget line be increased and that the Business Administrator be authorized to administer it:

20-190-100-610 Essex Fells PTA & Foundation Technology Grant \$80,000

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board authorizes the Superintendent and Business Administrator/Board Secretary to submit the preliminary budget to the Essex County Executive Superintendent of Schools for review and approval, to advertise the preliminary budget in the district's official newspaper, and establish a public presentation and adoption of the final budget for the 2025-2026 school year on May 7th, 2025, at 7:30 P.M.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

X. Old Business / Board Discussion

- Classroom floor repair – Insurance Claim
- Policy Discussion
 - P 5600 Student Discipline/Code of Conduct
 - R 5600 Student Discipline/Code of Conduct

XI. New Business / Board Discussion

- Snow Day Giveback (5/23, 6/19, 6/20)

XII. Public Comment

XIII. 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:

XV. Adjournment

RESOLVED that this public meeting of the Board of Education be adjourned at ____ P.M. The next workshop meeting of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 7:30 P.M.** in the Media Center.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

AGENDA

March 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	2/24/25	February 20, 2025 – Shelter in Place
March	3/6/25	March 11, 2025 – Lockdown w/EFPD
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	3/19				
TOTAL# of Reported Incidents	0	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	0				
Number of Founded Incidents	0	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	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.