

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 April 02, 2025. 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 March 24, 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.**

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

II. **Roll Call**

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

Also present: Dr. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal and one staff member. Mr. Steven J. Lella, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary was absent.

III. **Flag Salute**

- The Board President led the flag salute.

IV. **President’s Report**

- None

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

- None

VI. **Superintendent’s Report**

- A moment was given to remember EFS Staff, Mr. John P. Viggiano and Mrs. Kelly DaCosta.
- Dr. Gadaleta explained the return of the 2 unused emergency/snow days to the 2024-25 calendar on May 23rd and June 20th.
- Take Your Child to Work Day will be next week for the children of EFS staff members, on April 14th.
- Dr. Gadaleta reviewed the School Performance Reports for the BOE Members, highlighting the footnote from the NJDOE indicating that there are inaccuracies in the reported data. Reports will be shared with the public on the district website.

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 the travel policy 6471 for Professional Development:

Staff Member(s): George Alexandris
Event: Improving Your Student’s Behavior in PE Grades K-8

Location: Virtual
Date: 5/8/25
Cost: \$295.00

Staff Member(s): Susan FitzGibbon
Event: Motivating The Unmotivated-Teaching Hard to Reach Students
Location: Virtual
Date: 5/15/25
Cost: \$295.00

Moved by: Mr. Mehta

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2024-2025 calendar revision for Memorial Day Weekend to include school closed on May 23rd and June 20th for unused snow days.

Moved by: Mr. Mehta

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

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

Essex Fells Town Hall
4/9/25 - 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Gymnasium

Moved by: Mr. Mehta

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes:5

Nays: 0

4. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Comprehensive Equity Plan Statement of Assurance for school years 2025-2026 through 2027-2028.

Moved by: Mr. Mehta

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education terminates, as recommended by the Superintendent, the contract with Alee Behavioral Health for special education services for the remainder of the 2024-2025 school year effective April 17, 2025.

Moved by: Mr. Mehta

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

VIII. **Buildings & Grounds**

- The repairs to the 4th grade classroom are complete. Dr. Gadaleta is very pleased with the results. A Worker's comp claim has been filed in relation to the classroom repairs and the staff member has returned to work.

IX. Curriculum & Instruction

- Dr. Gadaleta discussed the Summer Alignment of Standards and State Format that will need to be implemented prior to NJQSAC, incorporating all C&I requirements.

X. Finance

- Dr. Gadaleta provided an update on the 2025-26 Budget, reiterating the proposed 3.49% tax levy increase and adjustments to specific budget lines.
- The response from the State regarding the rationale to the EFS cut in State Aid was explained, including a reduction in special education students and aid in lieu costs.
- The April 16th BOE Meeting will have the NJSBA training for the BOE Members.

XI. Personnel

- There will be a RIF as part of the 2025-26 Budget, as well as a paraprofessional reduction.
- Staffing assignments for 2025-26 was explained to the BOE Members to accommodate student needs in restructuring staff positions.

XII. Policy

- The Board reviewed Policy P9205, Communication Between Parents and Staff Members, discussing the need for further regulation to support response to misconduct.

XIII. Old Business / Board Discussion

- None

XIV. New Business / Board Discussion

- The Board discussed CST Evaluation Contract Fees for missed appointments, supporting a parent fee if the Board Attorney is in agreement.

XV. Public Comment

- None

XVI. 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 and Personnel.**

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: Mrs. Lavoie

Seconded by: Mrs. Burke

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

XVII. Adjournment

RESOLVED that this public meeting of the Board of Education be adjourned at 8:21 P.M. The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at 7:30 P.M.** in the Media Center.

Moved by: Mrs. Burke

Seconded by: Mr. Mehta

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary