

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

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 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. President's Report

V. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

VI. Superintendent's Report

- NJSLA Student Recognition
- Back to School Night/Book Fair
- Picture Day
- School Closed 9/23 & 10/2
- MVG Re-Certification for Stronge Interrater Reliability Of Teacher Evaluation
- Curriculum Revision Approval

VII. Superintendent's Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01–16.

- 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: Conquer Math
Location: Pompton Plains, NJ
Date: 9/15/25, 10/15/25, 11/17/25, 12/16/25, 1/16/26, 2/25/26
Cost: \$1,200.00

Staff Member(s): Lauren Brzostowski
Event: Foundations of Teaching the Holocaust
Location: Virtual
Date: 10/29/25
Cost: \$0.00

Staff Member(s): Kristin Kowalski
Event: Conquer Math
Location: Pompton Plains, NJ
Date: 10/8/25, 11/14/25, 1/21/26
Cost: \$650.00

Staff Member(s): Jessica Ennis
Event: Conquer Math
Location: Pompton Plains, NJ
Date: 11/18/25, 12/17/25
Cost: \$400.00

Staff Member(s): Erika Pilato
Event: HIB Training
Location: Toms River, NJ
Date: 12/8/25
Cost: \$234.93

Staff Member(s): LeeAnn Smith
Event: CAI Third Annual Conference
Location: Virtual
Date: 1/29/26, 1/30/26
Cost: \$296.00

Staff Member(s): LeeAnn Smith
Event: Essex County Director Roundtable
Location: West Orange, NJ
Date: 9/16/25, 10/21/25, 11/18/25, 12/16/25, 1/20/26, 2/17/26, 3/17/26,
4/21/26, 5/19/26, 6/16/26
Cost: \$47.00

Staff Member(s): Steven Lella
 Event: Association of School Business Officials
 Location: Belleville, NJ
 Date: 9/24/25, 10/29/25, 11/19/25, 12/12/25, 1/21/26, 2/25/26, 3/25/26,
 4/22/26, 5/13/26
 Cost: \$300.00

Staff Member(s): Steven Lella
 Event: NJASBO PD Program
 Location: Whippany, NJ
 Date: 9/24/25, 10/29/25, 11/19/25, 12/12/25, 1/21/26, 2/25/26, 3/25/26,
 4/22/26, 5/13/26
 Cost: \$300.00

Staff Member(s): Marco Pannullo
 Event: NJECC Mileage
 Location: Montclair, NJ
 Date: 9/19/25, 10/17/25, 11/14/25, 12/5/25, 1/16/26, 2/6/26, 3/10/26,
 3/11/26, 4/10/26, 5/15/26, 6/6/26
 Cost: \$55.46

Staff Member(s): Kimberly Trafford
 Event: NJECC Mileage
 Location: Montclair, NJ
 Date: 9/19/25, 10/17/25, 11/14/25, 12/5/25, 1/16/26, 2/6/26, 3/10/26,
 3/11/26, 4/10/26, 5/15/26, 6/6/26
 Cost: \$55.46

Staff Member(s): Mary Renz
 Event: Annual School Health Conference
 Location: Somerset, NJ
 Date: 10/22/25
 Cost: \$295.00

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

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

EFRD – West Essex Little League
 September 19, 2025-October 31, 2025 – Fields
 Monday – Sunday 4:30pm – 7:00pm

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

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

EFFEE – Fall 2025 Enrichment
October 7, 2025-December 18, 2026 – Gymnasium/Classrooms
Monday – Wednesday 3:25pm – 4:25pm

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:

EFFEE – Color Run
10/19/25 – Fields
8:00am – 2:00pm

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:

EFRD – Youth Basketball
November 10, 2025 – March 23, 2026– Gymnasium/Restrooms
Monday – Friday 5:00pm-8:00pm/Saturday 8:00am-1:00pm

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent the appointment of, Ashleigh Grenici, Substitute Teacher for the school year 2025-2026, pending the usual criminal history, background check and county approval.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

7. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent the appointment of, Rawan Anabtawi, Substitute Teacher for the school year 2025-2026, pending the usual criminal history, background check and county approval.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

8. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent the appointment of, Elizabeth DeStefano, Substitute Teacher for the school year 2025-2026, pending the usual criminal history, background check and county approval.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

9. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education, as recommended by the Superintendent, extends thanks to the Bobroff Family for their basketball hoop donation to the school the school.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

10. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2025 Language Arts and Mathematics Curriculum:

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

11. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the classroom observation of a first grade teacher by Isabella Hilario, of Essex County College on September 25, 2025.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

12. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2025-2026 School Improvement Panel (ScIP)/District Evaluation Advisory Committee/Professional Development:

Michelle Gadaleta
 Jamie Wallace
 Michelle Barshay
 Candice Fitzgerald
 Judi Reynolds
 Amanda Haber
 Lauren Mastria
 Lindsay Farkas

Superintendent/Principal
 Teacher Representative
 Teacher Representative
 Teacher Representative
 Teacher Representative
 BOE Representative
 PTA Representative
 EFFEE Representative

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

- 13. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2025-2026 Safety Team/Culture Climate Committee:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
Erika Pilato	HIB Representative
Gabriella Day	School Counselor Representative
Laura Quinn	Teacher Representative
Katie MacKenzie	Teacher Representative
Sue Hacker	Teacher Representative
Pamela Banta	Teacher Representative
Dorotea Banek	Teacher Representative
Mary Renz	Nurse/Teacher Representative
Sandra Oubina	PTA Representative
Lindsay Farkas	EFFEE Representative

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

- 14. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2025-2026 District Testing Committee:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
LeeAnn Smith	Teacher Representative
Kimberly Trafford	Teacher Representative
Judi Reynolds	Teacher Representative
Marco Pannullo	IT Representative

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

- 15. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2025-2026 Threat Assessment Committee:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
Steven Lella	School Business Administrator
Anthony Tedesco	SLEOIII
Judi Reynolds	Teacher Representative
Erika Pilato	School Counselor
LeeAnn Smith	Child Study Team Coordinator

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

- 16. 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 0173	Duties of Public School Accountant (Revised)
P 0174	Legal Services (M) (Revised)
P 0177	Professional Services (M) (Revised)
P & R 1570	Internal Controls (M) (Revised)
P 1620	Administrative Employment Contracts (M) (Revised)
P & R 6111	Special Education Medicaid Initiative (SEMI) Program (M) (Revised)
P 6220	Budget Preparation (M) (Revised)
R 6220	Budget Preparation (Revised)
P 0141.3	Board Member Number and Term – Regional School District (New)
P 0141.4	Board Member Number and Term – County Vocational School District (New)
P 0143	Board Member Election and Appointment (Revised)
P 1636.01	Notification of Promotion, New Job, and Transfer Opportunities (New)
P 1648.15	Recordkeeping for Healthcare Settings In School Buildings – Covid-19 (M) (Abolished)
P 2422	Statutory Curricular Requirements (M) (Revised)
P & R 5117	Interdistrict Public School Choice (Revised)
P 5339.01	Student Sun Protection (M) (New)

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

VIII. Business Administrator's Report

- Buildings and Grounds Update
 - i. Water Fountain
 - ii. Media Lighting
 - iii. Scoreboard

IX. Business Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Business Resolutions #01-03.

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

Regular Meeting Minutes	August 13 th , 2025
Executive Meeting Minutes	August 13 th , 2025
Regular Workshop Minutes	September 3 rd , 2025

Executive Workshop Minutes

September 3rd, 2025

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves additional bills and claims for September in the amount of \$458,355.51, as certified by the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for August as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$85,197.76 including \$79,325.14 for the gross payroll, \$3,631.84 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and \$2,240.78 for the State's share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

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

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

X. Old Business / Board Discussion

- Full Day Preschool Launch
- Birthday Celebrations
- Gaggle/Neptune Navigate

XI. New Business / Board Discussion

- Survey Results for 6th grade Privilege Participation
- Social Skills Improvement System (SSIS) Outreach and Support
- Visitors and Volunteers

XII. Public Comment

XIII. Adjournment

RESOLVED that this public meeting of the Board of Education be adjourned at ____ P.M. The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, October 15th, 2025, at 7:30 P.M.** in the Media Center.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

AGENDA

September 17, 2025

2025-2026

Teacher	Section	Total	M	F
Mrs. Axentiou	PK	16	7	9
Ms. Matullo	KM	17	7	10
Mrs. Brutman	KB	17	7	10
Mrs. Fitzgerald/Mrs. Hromoko	1FH	15	7	8
Mrs. Gann	1G	15	7	8
Mrs. Quinn/Mrs. Takkel	2QT	19	12	7
Ms. Duarte	2D	20	12	8
Ms. Kowalski/Mrs. MacKenzie	3KM	15	9	6
Mrs. Focarino	3F	14	8	6
Mrs. Banek/Mrs. Ennis	4BE	17	8	9
Mrs. Lodato	4L	16	7	9
Mrs. Fogarty	5F	20	10	10
Mrs. Jaworski/Mrs. Brzostowski	5JB	20	8	12
Mrs. Santalla/Mrs. Banta	6SB	16	12	4
Mrs. Hacker	6H	14	10	4
TOTAL		251	131	120
Out-of-District	*	3		
FINAL TOTALS		254		
TOTAL FAMILIES		170		

*Total includes 3 out-of-district students.

8/18/2025

Fire Drills: 2024-2025

Month	Fire Drill	Emergency Drill
August	8/22/25	AED/Fire alarm Tests – August 22, 2025
September	9/15/25	Evacuation to Bleachers – September 12, 2025
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
July	7/17/2025	Silent Alarm Test – July 3, 2025

HIB / V&V Report

As of Date of BOE Meeting	8/13	9/3	9/17												
TOTAL# of Reported Incidents	0	0	0												
Number of Unfounded Incidents	0	0	0												
Number of Founded Incidents	0	0	0												
Violence & Vandalism Incidents	0	0	0												

ESSEX FELS 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.