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

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 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. Student Liaison to the BOE Report
- Nick Lembo

VI. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

VII. Superintendent's Report
- October Awareness Weeks
- Parent/Teacher Conference Time Slots
- Halloween (10/31)
- QSAC Preparation
- NJSLA Spring 2025 Results

VIII. Superintendent's Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01–03.

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): Steven Lella
Event: NJASBO PD Programs
Location: Whippany, NJ
Date: 12/2/25, 1/13/26, 2/12/26, 3/24/26, 5/12/26
Cost: $779.05

Staff Member(s): Judi Reynolds
Event: Essex County Gifted & Talented Consortium Meeting
Location: Roseland, NJ
Date: 9/19/25
Cost: $0.00

Staff Member(s): Kristen Kowalski
Event: IXL Live Immersive Assessment & Analytics
Location: Morristown, NJ
Date: 10/9/25
Cost: $190.00

Staff Member(s): George Alexandris
Event: Innovative New Activities for Strengthening Your PE Program K-8
Location: Virtual
Date: 10/22/25
Cost: $295.00

Staff Member(s): LeeAnn Smith
Event: Stepping Stones Open House
Location: Fairfield, NJ
Date: 10/29/25
Cost: $4.04

Staff Member(s): Katie MacKenzie
Event: Helping Students with High Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders K-12
Location: Virtual
Date: 10/30/25
Cost: $295.00

Staff Member(s): Mary Renz
Event: OctoberFARE
Location: Washington, DC
Date: 11/1/25
Cost: $704.30

Staff Member(s): Candice Fitzgerald
Event: Decrease Attention Getting and Tantrum Behaviors, PK-2
Location: Virtual
Date: 11/19/25
Cost: $169.00

Staff Member(s): Lisa Massaro
Event: Elevating Reading Workshop K-2
Location: Virtual
Date: 11/20/25
Cost: $295.00

Staff Member(s): Susan FitzGibbon
Event: Brains, Behaviors, and Beyond
Location: North Caldwell, NJ
Date: 11/20/25
Cost: $150.00

Staff Member(s): Jennifer Sullivan
Event: Brains, Behaviors, and Beyond
Location: North Caldwell, NJ
Date: 11/20/25
Cost: $150.00

Staff Member(s): Maria Sazan
Event: Brains, Behaviors, and Beyond
Location: North Caldwell, NJ
Date: 11/20/25
Cost: $150.00

Staff Member(s): Belinda O'Donnell
Event: Brains, Behaviors, and Beyond
Location: North Caldwell, NJ
Date: 11/20/25
Cost: $150.00

Staff Member(s): Patricia Pakonis
Event: Strengthening The Executive Function Skills of Your Students with Special Needs
Location: Virtual
Date: 12/3/25
Cost: $295.00

Staff Member(s): Susan Hacker
Event: Conquer Math
Location: Pompton Plains, NJ
Date: 2/2/26, 3/10/26
Cost: $400.00

Staff Member(s): Pamela Banta
Event: Conquer Math
Location: Pompton Plains, NJ
Date: 2/2/26, 3/10/26
Cost: $400.00

Staff Member(s): Rory Duarte
Event: Literature in Math
Location: Pompton Plains, NJ
Date: 5/4/26
Cost: $260.81

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:

Tiny Treasures Extended School Day, Inc.
September 3, 2025-June 22, 2026
Monday – Friday 3:00pm – 6:00pm
Media Center/Gymnasium/Playground

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:

Essex Fells Police Department
November 12, 2025
November 19, 2025
5:00pm – 8:00pm
Gymnasium

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

IX. Business Administrator's Report

- 2024-25 Audit
- 2026-27 Budget
- Application for School State Aid (ASSA) – October 15th, 2025
- District Report of Transported Resident Students (DRTRS) – November 14th, 2025
- Comprehensive Maintenance Plan & M1
- Essex Fells School Board of Education Election – November 4th, 2025
- NJSBA 2025 BOE Member Annual On-line Training
- NJQSAC
- Qualified Purchasing Agent (QPA) Resolution

X. 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	September 17th, 2025
Moved by:	Seconded by:
Ayes:	Nays:

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves bills and claims for October in the amount of $145,979.51, as certified by the School Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for September as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of $397,968.86 including $370,792.88 for the gross payroll, $5,822.96 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and $21,353.02 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 Months of July, August, and June Revised.

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 July, August, September and one additional for June as certified by the School Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education authorizes the School Business Administrator / Board Secretary to utilize an account with Amazon Business for Education Purchasing.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the M1 & Comprehensive Maintenance Plan for the period FY ’25 through FY ’27 and authorizes the Business Administrator/Board Secretary to submit the Plan to the Essex County Executive Superintendent of Schools.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

7. **RESOLVED,** that the Board appoints Steven J. Lella as the purchasing agent for the Essex Fells School District for the 2025-2026 school year in accordance with

N.J.S.A.18:18A-2b as revised, and assigned the authority, responsibility, accountability for purchasing on behalf of the Board, and having the power to prepare advertisements, advertise for and receive bids, and to award contracts pursuant to N.J.S.A.18A:18A-3a(Bid Threshold) at a bid threshold up to $53,000, 18A:18A-37a-c (quotations), and 18A:18A-7 (Emergency Purchases) and prepare and issue all purchase orders in accordance with N.J.S.A.18A:18A et. seq. and applicable Board policies and regulations.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

X. <u>Old Business / Board Discussion</u>

- Use of Facilities

XI. **New Business / Board Discussion**

- 2026-2027 School Calendar
- Preschool Tuition
- Instructional Pace/Student Behavior

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, November 12th, 2025, at 7:30 P.M**. in the Media Center.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

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	10/15											
TOTAL# of Reported Incidents	0	0	0	0											
Number of Unfounded Incidents	0	0	0	0											
Number of Founded Incidents	0	0	0	0											
Violence & Vandalism Incidents	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.