

**THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ESSEX FELLS, NJ
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING****WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2026****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, 2026. 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
Mr. Raj Mehta, Vice-President
Mr. Christopher Pisacane
Mr. Shaun Kessler
Mrs. Jenna Maffucci

III. Flag Salute**IV. President's Report****V. Student Liaison Report**

- William Slominski

VI. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only**VII. Superintendent's Report**

- NJ School Board Recognition Month
- Preschool/Kindergarten Registration
- Strauss Esmay Policy Update

VIII. 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): Laura Quinn
 Event: Strengthening the Executive Functioning Skills of Students
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 2/12/26
 Cost: \$169.00

Staff Member(s): Nicole Axentiou
 Event: Dealing with Challenging Behaviors Using Developmentally
 Appropriate Strategies
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 2/24/26
 Cost: \$295.00

Staff Member(s): Erica Santalla
 Event: Using AI tools to Increase the Success of Gifted Learners
 Location: Virtual
 Date: 3/17/26
 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 appointment of, Delaney Piccoli, Substitute Teacher for the school year 2025-2026, pending the usual criminal history, background check and county approval.

Moved by: Seconded by:
 Ayes: Nays:

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

P 0142.1 Nepotism (M) (Revised)
 P 0142.1C Nepotism – Charter School (M) (Revised)
 P 0174C Legal Services – Charter School (M) (Revised)
 P 0177C Professional Services – Charter School (M) (Revised)
 P 1220 Employment of Chief School Administrator (M) (Revised)
 P & R 1570C Internal Controls – Charter School (M) (Revised)
 P & R 1552 Sexual Harassment – Staff (M) (New)
 P & R 2530 Resource Materials (Revised)
 P & R 2535 Library Material (M) (New)
 P & R 9130 Public Complaints (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:

EFRD – Baseball/Softball Recreation and Travel League
3/1/26 – 8/15/26
Fields

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

- 5. RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Out-of-District Program Costs at The Deron School (Student 370784) for the 2025-2026 school year, at the following daily/yearly rates:

January 5, 2026 through June 30, 2026:

- 107 days at \$444.06/day: \$47,514.42
- Aide 107 days at \$240/ day: \$25,680.00

Total school year cost not to exceed: \$73,194.42

- Approved at December 17, 2025 meeting without Aide and estimated rate.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

IX. Business Administrator's Report

- 2024-2025 Audit Resolution
- 2026-2027 Budget Update
- SEMI Waiver Resolution
- Updated Out of District Tuition Resolution
- Parking Lot Trees

X. Business Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Business Resolutions #01-06.

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

Regular Meeting Minutes December 17th, 2025

Reorganizational Meeting Minutes January 7th, 2026

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves bills and claims for January in the amount of \$204,562.05 as certified by the Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for December as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$441,628.07 including \$412,548.28 for the gross payroll, \$8,100.39 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and \$20,979.40 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 November; **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 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, 2025.

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 2026-2027 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 2026-2027 school year.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

XI. Old Business / Board Discussion

XII. New Business / Board Discussion

XIII. Public Comment

XIV. 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: **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:

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, February 11, 2026, at 7:30 P.M.** in the Superintendent's Office.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

AGENDA

January 21, 2026

2025-2026

Teacher	Section	Total	M	F
Mrs. Axentiou	PK	17	8	9
Ms. Matullo	KM	17	7	10
Mrs. Brutman	KB	17	7	10
Mrs. Fitzgerald/Mrs. Hromoko	1FH	16	7	9
Mrs. Gann	1G	15	7	8
Mrs. Quinn/Mrs. Takkel	2QT	20	12	8
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	18	8	10
Mrs. Lodato	4L	15	7	8
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		254	132	122
Out-of-District	*	4		
FINAL TOTALS		258		
TOTAL FAMILIES		174		

*Total includes 3 out-of-district students.

1/5/2026

Fire Drills: 2025-2026

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	10/24/25	Lockdown – October 29, 2025
November	11/24/25	Shelter in Place with EFPD - November 25, 2025
December	12/10/25	Shelter in Place - December 15, 2025
January	1/16/26	
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	11/12	12/3	12/17	1/7	1/21						
TOTAL# of Reported Incidents	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0						
Number of Unfounded Incidents	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0						
Number of Founded Incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0						
Violence & Vandalism Incidents	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.