

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a Reorganizational Meeting held in the Media Center on January 7, 2026. The meeting was called to order by the Board Secretary, Mr. Steven J. Lella, at 7:30 P.M. Mr. Lella 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 January 8, 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. – Board Secretary; Mr. Steven J. Lella

II. Roll Call

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

Also present: Dr. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; one staff member and eight Members of the Public.

III. Flag Salute

- The Board Secretary led the flag salute.

IV. Election Report

- The annual School Election was conducted on Tuesday, November 4th, 2025, between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M.

The results of the election, as reported and certified by the Essex County Clerk, are as follows:

Members of the Board of Education:	Mrs. Jenna Maffucci	673 votes
	Mr. Shaun Kessler	617 votes

V. Reorganization of the Board of Education

- Mr. Lella administered the Oath of Office to elected members Mrs. Maffucci and Mr. Kessler.
- Mr. Lella conducted roll call.

- Mrs. Amanda Haber, President - Present
- Mr. Raj Mehta, Vice – President - Present
- Mr. Shaun Kessler - Present
- Mrs. Jenna Maffucci - Present
- Mr. Christopher Pisacane - Present

- Election of President: Mr. Mehta nominated Mrs. Haber.

Moved by: Mr. Mehta	Seconded by: Mr. Pisacane
Ayes: 5	Nays: 0

- Election of VP: Mrs. Haber nominated Mr. Mehta.

Moved by: Mr. Pisacane

Seconded by: Mrs. Haber

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

- Mrs. Haber took over the meeting.

VI. Board Comments/President's Report

Good evening, everyone,

I want to start by thanking our board members for your continued trust and support. Serving as board president is work I care about, and I'm grateful to do it alongside such a thoughtful and committed group of people.

To our Essex Fells community, thank you for the opportunity to serve. This role is incredibly fulfilling, and it means a great deal to be part of a team that consistently shows up, works together, and provides the support needed to keep our district moving forward.

I'm very happy to welcome Mrs. Mafucci and Mr. Kessler to the Essex Fells School Board. Serving on a board of education is a true service to the community, and we appreciate your willingness to step into this role. Our work is about listening, collaborating, and offering steady support so our schools can continue to grow and thrive. We're excited to have you join us and add your voices to the work ahead.

As we begin this year as a newly seated board, it feels like an appropriate time to acknowledge School Board Recognition Month. This month serves as a reminder that board service is rooted in commitment, collaboration, and a shared belief in the importance of public education. I am proud to serve alongside individuals who give their time, energy, and care to support our schools and our community.

I also want to thank Dr. Gadaleta and Mr. Lella for your leadership and partnership. Your guidance and commitment help keep our district moving in a positive direction, and we're grateful for the way you work with us each and every day.

I look forward to continuing this important work together as we support our district and move it forward with purpose and care.

VII. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

- None

VIII. Superintendent's Report

- Dr. Gadaleta noted that January is School Board Recognition month. Dr. Gadaleta appreciates the Board and all of their efforts and values the input of all the BOE Members. She thanked Mrs. Lavoie and Mrs. Burke, and welcomed Mrs. Maffucci and Mr. Kessler.
- Dr. Gadaleta informed the Board that she had received 2 requests to serve as a mentor for an administrative internship. The Board agreed this would be acceptable.

IX. Superintendent's Resolutions

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

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): Marco Pannullo
Event: Microsoft AI World Tour
Location: New York, NY
Date: 1/21/26
Cost: \$16.00

Moved by: Mr. Mehta

Seconded by: Mr. Pisacane

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

X. Old Business / Board Discussion

- Dr. Gadaleta wanted to open the discussion on the district's enrollment. She will discuss further during budget discussions, but we are anticipating a slight increase to 260, which would be the highest enrollment we've had.

XI. New Business / Board Discussion

Mr. Lella noted the 2026 BOE Meeting Dates.

Mr. Lella let the Board know to be on the lookout for the Annual BOE Financial Disclosure Statement email

XII. Reorganization Action Items

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Reorganization Action Items #01 - 02.

1. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education adopts the New Jersey School Board Member Code of Ethics.

NOTES: Code of Ethics/Bylaws

Moved by: Mr. Mehta

Seconded by: Mr. Pisacane

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the following dates for its meetings in the ensuing year (*dates subject to change):

Wednesday January 21, 2026	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday February 11, 2026	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday February 25, 2026	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday March 18, 2026	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday April 22, 2026	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday May 6, 2026	Workshop Meeting-Budget Presentation
Wednesday May 20, 2026	Regular Meeting
Wednesday June 10, 2026	Reappointment Meeting
Wednesday August 12, 2026	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday September 2, 2026	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday September 16, 2026	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday October 7, 2026	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday October 21, 2026	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday November 18, 2026	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday December 2, 2026	Workshop Meeting
Wednesday December 16, 2026	Regular Monthly Business Meeting
Wednesday January 6, 2027 (TBD)	Reorganizational/Workshop Meeting

Moved by: Mr. Mehta

Seconded by: Mr. Pisacane

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

XIII. Public Comment

- None

XIV. Adjournment

At 7:45 PM the board made a motion to adjourn. The next **Regular Meeting** of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at 7:30 P.M.** in the media center.

Moved by: Mr. Mehta

Seconded by: Mr. Kessler

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary