

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

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 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 7th, 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

- Robert Spellman

VI. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

VII. Superintendent’s Report

- Safety Team Meeting
- SCIP Team Meeting
- Measurement of Academic Progress (MAP)
- New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA)
- Peter Pan Jr.

VIII. Superintendent’s Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01–08.

- 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): Judi Reynolds
Event: 2026 NJAGC Conference
Location: Somerset, NJ
Date: 4/17/26
Cost: \$339.65

Staff Member(s): Deana Hromoko
Event: Restorative Practices in the Classroom – Build Better Relationships
and More Effectively Manage Student Behavior
Location: Virtual
Date: 4/30/26
Cost: \$295.00

Staff Member(s): LeeAnn Smith
Event: All In for Inclusive Education Summer Leadership Conference
Location: Union, NJ
Date: 5/28/26
Cost: \$190.88

Staff Member(s): Steve Lella
Event: NJASBO
Location: Atlantic City, NJ
Date: 6/3/26-6/5/26
Cost: \$1,295.63

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:

EFPD – Police Exam
4/6/26 - 9am-1pm
Gymnasium

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of Susan FitzGibbon, Kindergarten Teacher, BA, Step 1, for the 2025-2026 school year, beginning March 19, 2026, through June 30, 2026, at the pro-rated salary of \$21,267.52.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

4. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the approval of the SLP contract for the 2025-2026 school year beginning March 23, 2026.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the addition of Ort Farms to the 2025-2026 Field Trip List.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the donation to the Student Council of 16 water bottles from the Scolnick and Mazzara families from the TREP\$ program to be used as future prizes.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

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

EFFEF – Spring 2026 Enrichment Programs
4/21/26 – 6/10/26
Gymnasium & Classrooms

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

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

EFFEF – Musical Cast Party
3/20/26 – 3:00pm – 3:45pm
Gymnasium

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

IX. Business Administrator's Report

- 2026-27 Budget/State Aid Figures
- Dumpster Gate Damage
- Gymnasium Air Conditioning Control Panel

X. Business Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Business Resolutions #01-05.

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

Regular Meeting Minutes	February 25 th , 2026
Executive Meeting Minutes	February 25 th , 2026

Moved by:	Seconded by:
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Ayes:	Nays:
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2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves bills and claims for March in the amount of \$279,109.20 as certified by the Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for February as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$405,442.65 including \$377,680.00 for the gross payroll, \$6,423.33 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and \$21,339.32 for the State's share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by:	Seconded by:
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Ayes:	Nays:
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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 January and February.

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 February as certified by the Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

5. **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Essex Fells Board of Education in the County of Essex, New Jersey, approves the 2026-2027 preliminary school district budget for submission to the Executive County Superintendent as follows:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Local Tax Levy</u>
General Fund:	\$7,142,506.00	\$6,390,937.00
Special Revenue:	\$101,371.60	0.00
Debt Service:	<u>\$96156.95</u>	<u>\$63,462.95</u>
TOTAL:	\$7,340,034.55	\$6,454,399.95

RESOLVED that the Essex Fells Board of Education approves the total travel expenditures for the District at a maximum of \$20,000.00 for the 2026-27 school year; and

RESOLVED that the Business Administrator keep an accounting of all expenditures to ensure compliance with the approved amount; and

BE IT RESOLVED that included in the preliminary budget is the use of the adjustment for increased costs of health benefits in the amount of \$85,302. The funds will be utilized to address the additional increase in health benefit premiums.

BE IT RESOLVED that included in the preliminary budget is the use of the adjustment for enrollment in the amount of \$126,256. The funds will be utilized for supplies and materials necessary for the additional students.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Essex Fells Board of Education accepts a donation from the Essex Fells PTA and the Essex Fells Foundation for Educational Excellence in the amount of \$35,000 and \$20,000 (for a total of \$55,000) to be used for the purchase of school devices on the district's 5-year technology replacement plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following budget line be increased and that the Business Administrator be authorized to administer it:

20-190-100-610 Essex Fells PTA & Foundation Technology Grant \$55,000

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board authorizes the Superintendent and Business Administrator/Board Secretary to submit the preliminary budget to the Essex County Executive Superintendent of Schools for review and approval, to advertise the preliminary budget in the district's official newspaper, and establish a public presentation and adoption of the final budget for the 2026-2027 school year on May 6th, 2026, at 7:30 P.M.

XI. Old Business / Board Discussion

- Unused Snow Days
- NJQSAC
- 25-26 Repairs

XII. New Business / Board Discussion

- West Essex Senior Service
- NJFW Archery Grant/Program
- Workman's Comp
- Accident Report

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: **Legal Issues and HIB Report**. It is anticipated that the length of time of this executive session will be approximately 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 regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, at 7:30 P.M. in the Media Center.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

AGENDA

March 18, 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	16	7	9
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		255	132	123
Out-of-District	*	4		
FINAL TOTALS		259		
TOTAL FAMILIES		174		

*Total includes 3 out-of-district students.

3/16/2026

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	Lock Down with EFPD – January 16, 2026
February	2/11/26 – Fire Alarm 2/13/26	Shelter in Place with EFPD – February 24, 2026
March		Shelter in Place Medical – March 3 2026 / Shelter in Place Bomb Threat w/EFPD 3/10/26
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	2/25	3/18				
TOTAL# of Reported Incidents	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1				
Number of Unfounded Incidents	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Number of Founded Incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Violence & Vandalism Incidents	0	0	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.