

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

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026

**SCHOOL BUDGET PUBLIC PRESENTATION
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

- BOE Self-Evaluation and CSA Evaluation

V. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

VI. Superintendent's Report

- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Special Education Week
- 2026-2027 Budget Presentation

VII. 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): Patricia Pakonis
Event: Strengthening the Executive Function Skills of Students
Location: Virtual
Date: TBD
Cost: \$169.00

Staff Member(s): Lauren Brzostowski
Event: Catching Up Students Who Have Fallen Behind
Location: Virtual
Date: 5/14/26
Cost: \$169.00

Staff Member(s): Katie MacKenzie
Event: Summer All In Conference 2026
Location: Union, NJ
Date: 5/28/26
Cost: \$225.00

Staff Member(s): Erica Santalla
Event: Strengthening Students Writing Skills While Significantly
Decreasing Grading Time
Location: Virtual
Date: 5/27/26
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, Christina Andrade, Administrative Assistant to the Business Administrator beginning on June 8th, for the remainder of the 2025-2026 school year at the prorated salary of \$4,141.03, pending the usual criminal history and background check.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent the appointment of, Sophie Kearny, Kindergarten Student Teacher, beginning September 3, 2026 for the school year 2026-2027, pending the usual criminal history and background check:

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

VIII. Business Administrator's Report

- June 10th BOE Meeting
- BOE Public Notices

IX. Business Resolutions

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

1. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education, after conducting a public presentation, adopts a school district budget for the FY 2026-2027 School Year 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>\$96,156.95</u>	<u>\$63,462.95</u>
TOTAL:	\$7,340,034.55	\$6,454,399.95

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that there should be raised for the General Fund \$6,390,937.00 and \$63,462.95 for Debt Service Funds for the ensuing school year (2026-2027).

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 \$45,000 and \$20,000 (for a total of \$65,000) 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 \$65,000

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

X. Old Business / Board Discussion

- May 8th Buildings and Grounds Projects

XI. New Business / Board Discussion

- Emergency Early Dismissal

XII. Meeting Open for Public Comment

XIV. Adjournment

RESOLVED that this School Budget Public Presentation of the Board of Education be adjourned at ____ P.M. The next meeting of the Board of Education will be held on **Wednesday, May 20th at 7:30 P.M** in the Media Center.

Moved by:

Seconded by:

Ayes:

Nays:

**AGENDA
2025-2026**

May 6, 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	14	8	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	131	123
Out-of-District	*	5		
FINAL TOTALS		259		
TOTAL FAMILIES		174		

*Total includes 3 out-of-district students.

4/13/2026

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	3/19/20	Shelter in Place Medical – March 3 2026 / Shelter in Place Bomb Threat w/EFPD 3/10/26
April	4/23/26	Evacuation to St. Peter's – April 15, 2026
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	4/22	5/6		
TOTAL# of Reported Incidents	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0		
Number of Unfounded Incidents	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0		
Number of Founded Incidents	0	0	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	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.