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

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 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. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

VI. Superintendent's Report

- 2026 NJSLA Score Delay
- Back to School Night/Book Fair
- Picture Day
- School Closed 9/21
- Special Education Monitoring – Cohort 4

VII. Superintendent's Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01–15.

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: Build with Gemini
Location: Manhattan, New York
Date: 8/26/26
Cost: $23.00
Staff Member(s): Steven Lella

Event: NJASBO – Monthly Workshop Meetings
Location: Whippany, NJ
Date: 9/22/26, 10/6/26,11/12/26,12/15/26,1/12/27,2/16/27, 3/11/27, 4/13/27
Cost: $1,686.48

Staff Member(s): Erika Pilato
Event: NJ School Counselor Association Conference
Location: East Brunswick, NJ
Date: 10/5/26 & 10/6/26
Cost: $333.78

Staff Member(s): Rory Duarte
Event: Meeting All Learners, Every Day A Differentiation Deep Dive
Location: Virtual
Date: 10/14/26
Cost: $85.00

Staff Member(s): Lisa Massaro
Event: Building Strong Foundations
Location: Virtual
Date: 10/21/26
Cost: $85.00

Staff Member(s): Kristen Kowalsi
Event: IXL Live
Location: Morristown, NJ
Date: 10/28/26
Cost: $139.00

Staff Member(s): Nicole Axentiou
Event: Play Project's Level 1 – Foundation of Play for Students w/ASD
Location: Virtual
Date: 10/22/26 & 10/23/26
Cost: $367.87

Staff Member(s): Christina Andrade
Event: NJASBO – Administrative Assistant Program
Location: Whippany, NJ
Date: 11/12/26
Cost: $209.81

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of the following stipend positions for the 2026-2027 school year at the contractual rate:

Patricia Pakonis	Afterschool Supervision
Susan Hacker	Afterschool Supervision
LeeAnn Smith	Afterschool Supervision
Susan FitzGibbon	Afterschool Supervision
George Alexandris	Afterschool Supervision

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the $2,300.00 donation from the 2026 6th Graduating Class to be used towards the purchase of the outdoor scoreboard.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

4. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of MPSYCH Evaluations, LLC, School Psychologist, for the 2026-2027 school year, at the following hours and rates:

Psychological Evaluations	$450.00 each
Planning and IEP Meetings	$125.00 per meeting

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, Kaitlyn Chase, attending Caldwell University, to observe three instructional hours at Essex Fells School.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, Sonny Marsh, to fulfill his West Essex Work Study Program at Essex Fells School beginning Thursday, September 17, 2026, within the custodial department, 3 hours daily for the 2026-2027 school year.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

7. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2026-2027 School Improvement Panel (ScIP)/District Evaluation Advisory Committee/Professional Development:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
Jamie Wallace	Teacher Representative
Michelle Barshay	Teacher Representative
Candice Fitzgerald	Teacher Representative
Judi Reynolds	Teacher Representative
Kimberly Trafford	Teacher Representative
Amanda Haber	BOE Representative
Brittany Maurillo	PTA Representative
Sarah Kessler	PTA Representative
Lindsay Farkas	EFFEE Representative

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

8. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2026-2027 Safety Team/Culture Climate Committee:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
Erika Pilato	HIB Representative
Gabriella Day	School Counselor Representative
Sue Hacker	Teacher Representative
Pamela Banta	Teacher Representative
Rebecca Fogarty	Teacher Representative
Lisa Massaro	Teacher Representative
Nicole Axentiou	Teacher Representative
John Trogani	Teacher Representative
Brittany Maurillo	PTA Representative
Sarah Kessler	PTA Representative
Lindsay Farkas	EFFEE Representative

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

9. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2026-2027 District Testing Committee:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
LeeAnn Smith	Teacher Representative
Kimberly Trafford	Teacher Representative
Judi Reynolds	Teacher Representative
Marco Pannullo	IT Representative

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

10. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2026-2027 Behavioral and Bomb Threat Assessment Committee:

Michelle Gadaleta	Superintendent/Principal
Steven Lella	School Business Administrator
Anthony Tedesco	SLEOIII
Judi Reynolds	Teacher Representative
Erika Pilato	School Counselor
LeeAnn Smith	Child Study Team Coordinator
Marco Pannullo	IT Coordinator

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

11. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the 2026-2027 Assessment Schedule:

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

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

6th Grade Car Wash
5/22/27 9:30am – 1:00pm
Rain date 5/23/27 9:30am – 1:00pm

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

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

EFPD – Movie Night
10/9/26 5:00pm – 10:00pm
Fields/Blacktop

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

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

EFFEE – Fall 2026 Enrichment Programs
10/6/26 – 12/10/26
Gymnasium, Classrooms and Fields

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

15. RESOLVED that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the second reading and adoption of the following bylaws/policies/regulations:

P 1230	Superintendent's Duties (M) (Revised)
P 2200	Curriculum (M) (Revised)
P 0162	Notice of Board Meetings (Revised)
P 0162.01	Legal Notices (M) (New)
P 1643	Family Leave (M) (Revised)
P 2260	Equity in School and Classroom Practices (M) (Revised)
P & R 5111.13	Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students – Choice School District (M) (New)
P 5561	Use of Physical Restraint and Seclusion Techniques for Students with Disabilities (M) (Revised)
P 6112	Reimbursement of Federal and Other Grant Expenditures (M) (Revised)
R 6115.01	Federal Awards/Funds Internal Controls – Allowability of Costs (M) (Revised)
P 6115.02	Federal Awards/Funds Internal Controls – Mandatory Disclosures (M) (Revised)
P 6311	Contracts for Goods or Services Funded by Federal Grants (M) (Revised)

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

VIII. Business Administrator's Report

- November Board of Education Election
- 2025-26 Audit

IX. Business Resolutions

RESOLVED that the Board of Education approves Business Resolutions #01-03.

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

Regular Meeting Minutes	June 17th, 2026
Executive Meeting Minutes	June 17th, 2026
Regular Meeting Minutes	August 12th, 2026
Moved by:	Seconded by:
Ayes:	Nays:

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves an additional bills and claims for June in the amount of $57,964.50 and September in the amount of **$352,980.74** as certified by the Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for August as certified by the Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of $93,564.44 including $87,103.94 for the gross payroll, $4,149.46 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and $2,311.04 for the State's share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by:	Seconded by:
Ayes:	Nays:

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the transfer of funds for the months of May (2 additional), & June, as certified by the Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.

Moved by:	Seconded by:
Ayes:	Nays:

X. Old Business / Board Discussion

- BOE Photo
- Grade Level Parent Meetings with Superintendent

XI. New Business / Board Discussion

- Roof Leak
- New Wave Environmental

XII. Public Comment

XII. 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 Matters,** 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:

XIV. 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 Meeting, will be held on **Wednesday, October 7, 2026, at 7:30 P.M**. in the Superintendent's Office.

Moved by: Seconded by:

Ayes: Nays:

2026-2027

Teacher	Section	Total	F	M
Mrs. Axentiou/Mrs. Dillon	PK	17	6	11
Mrs. Brutman	KB	17	11	6
Mrs. Quinn	KQ	17	10	7
Mrs. Fitzgerald	1F	17	10	7
Mrs. Gann/Mrs. Hromoko	1GH	17	10	7
Ms. Duarte	2D	16	9	7
Ms. Matullo/Mrs. Takkel	2MT	16	9	7
Ms. Kowalski	3K	20	9	11
Ms. DiGiacomo/Mrs. Brzostowski	3DB	20	8	12
Mrs. Banek	4B	14	6	8
Mrs. Lodato/Mrs. Focarino	4LF	14	6	8
Mrs. Jaworski	5J	17	10	7
Mrs. Fogarty/Mrs. Mackenzie	5FM	16	8	8
Mrs. Santalla	6S	18	10	8
Mrs. Hacker/Mrs. Banta	6HB	19	11	8
TOTAL		**255**	**133**	**122**
Out-of-District	*	5		
FINAL TOTALS		260		
TOTAL FAMILIES		170		
***Total includes 5 out-of-district students.**				**9/8/2026**

Fire Drills: 2026-2027

Month	Fire Drill	Emergency Drill
September	September 14, 2026	Lock Down with EFPD – September 9, 2026
October		
November		
December		
January		
February		
March		
April		
May		
June		
July		
August		

HIB / V&V Report

As of Date of BOE Meeting	8/12	9/2	9/16												
TOTAL# of Reported Incidents	0	0	0												
Number of Unfounded Incidents	0	0	0												
Number of Founded Incidents	0	0	0												
Violence & Vandalism Incidents	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.