

## The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn  
119 Gorman Road  
Brooklyn, CT 06234

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Mae Lyons, Board Chair  
Justin Phaiah, Secretary  
Ailla Wasstrom-Evans

Melissa Perkins-Banas, Vice-Chair  
Kayla Burgess  
Deb Metzger

**Mission:** The Brooklyn Schools will foster a drive for learning within each student to reach his/her greatest potential. To achieve this mission, the school will continually improve its educational programs and services to meet this community's expectations for a quality education for all.

The Brooklyn Board of Education held their monthly meeting in the Brooklyn Middle School Auditorium and virtually on January 3, 2024 via Google Meet. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, Ms. Burgess, Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans. Mrs. Metzger was absent.

Also in attendance were Patricia Buell, Superintendent, Barbara-Jean Toth, Special Education Director, Karen Hyatt, Special Education Supervisor, Donna DiBenedetto, Business Manager, Craig Barrette, Director of Facilities, Heather Tamsin, BMS Principal, Adam Bender, BMS Assistant Principal, Paula Graef, BES Principal, and Mark Weaver, BES Assistant Principal.

The Brooklyn Board of Education will hold multiple budget workshops to determine the needs and priorities for the 2024-2025 school year. There will be as many meetings as necessary to agree to a budget to be shared with the Board of Finance. Each budget workshop will be via Google Meet and the Public is welcome to attend.

We will not be able to respond to questions live, but welcome comments or questions at [budgetquestions@brooklynschools.org](mailto:budgetquestions@brooklynschools.org). Budget questions and answers will be posted on the Brooklyn Public Schools website at [www.brooklynschools.org](http://www.brooklynschools.org).

This budget will be passed by the Board of Education once they have finished discussing the budget.

Budget workshops for the 2024-2025 school year are scheduled for:

January 3, 2024	5:30-7:30 PM	March 27, 2024	5:30-6:30 PM
January 24, 2024	5:30-6:30 PM	April 24, 2024	5:30-6:30 PM
February 28, 2024	5:30-6:30 PM		

### 1. Attendance, Establishment of a Quorum, Call to Order

Mrs. Lyons began with roll call: Melissa Perkins-Banas, Justin Phaiah, Kayla Burgess, Ailla Wasstrom-Evans, and herself, Mae Lyons, were present. Deb Metzger was absent.

Quorum established. Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

## 2. Budget Discussion

### a. Department Head Presentations

Mrs. Buell stated that this is the beginning of the budget process. She stated that staff are present to discuss the Budget Priorities and Decision Making Process, which includes Successes, and Budget Planning. Mrs. Buell wanted to thank everyone for all of their efforts in putting their department budgets together to present this evening.

Mrs. Buell discussed Budget and the Decision Making Process for Brooklyn Public Schools. Mrs. Buell explained that the budget process begins with discussions between department heads/administrators and staff regarding their needs. They review Student Data: academic achievement, social/emotional and behavioral data as well as class sizes and projected class sizes to determine the needs. Mrs. Buell stated that we are currently responsible to achieve ESSA Milestones as measured by The District Performance Indexes (DPI), Smarter Balanced Growth, LAS Links Growth (NA based on our low number currently), Chronic Absenteeism, Accountability Index. She stated that while trying to remain fiscally responsible, department heads/administrators have created a presentation based on the needs of the district. Mrs. Buell stated that they will continue to address the changing legislative requirements, which is a moving target that adds to the content that we must teach, the services that they must offer as well as new changes to curriculum and programming. She stated that Brooklyn has adopted and made great progress with curriculum pacing, assessment and instruction as well as intervention. Brooklyn Public Schools has adopted numerous programs and enhanced curriculum and instruction. She explained that student enrollment is quite diverse and the specialized instruction is great. Brooklyn Public Schools continue to meet the needs of the changing demographics and have shown academic growth.

#### Current Successes:

- Special Education
  - Special Education Supervisor
  - Specialized Programs
  - RESC Evaluation Project
  - CT SEDS (getting better)
  - Staffing almost at full capacity
- Brooklyn Elementary School
  - Implementation of a new math program
  - Implementation of new literacy universal screens
  - On going work on the Science of Reading
  - Ed Sert Modules for Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

- Brooklyn Middle School
  - Full Implementation of new math program
  - Ed Sert Modules for SEL
  - Continued success with after school activities
  - Additional stations installed for the Community Fitness Course
- Facilities
  - Outdoor lighting
  - 3M Film
  - Replacement of windows
  - Refinishing of hardwood floors
  - Backboards at BES
- Technology
  - Phone System
  - Wireless Access System
  - Public Address System
  - iPads
  - Door access

Mr. Bryant, IT Director, discussed the Technology budget moving forward for the projected replacement plan, which includes:

- 5 year Chromebook replacement cycle
  - Chromebook 1:1 for grades 3-8
  - Google licensing model has increased
  - Replace Chromebooks that have expiring licenses for 2023-2024
  - Grant offset purchase cycle
  - License Model has improved with Chrome
- 5 year Windows
  - Desktops, laptops
  - Outdated operating systems (Last year of Windows 10)
  - Software compatibility
  - Refresh 15 laptops per year
  - Refresh 4 to 5 desktops per year
- 8 year network infrastructure replacement cycle
  - Intrusion prevention (Firewall)
  - Technology updates
  - Wireless controllers need replacement
  - Firewall needs replacement at the end of 2024-2025
- 4 year iPad replacement cycle
  - Add 15 new iPads
  - Purchase 15 devices a year starting year 2024-2025
- 5 to 7 year Smartboard replacement cycle
  - Started replacing Earlier 6000 series Smartboards (some software no longer working on these)

Mr. Bryant also discussed the projected replacement plan based on typical enrollment and the projected network infrastructure refresh plan.

Mrs. Tamsin and Mr. Bender presented information regarding the Brooklyn Middle School's budget drivers that impact student outcomes for the 2024-2025 school year, which include:

- Maintaining 1:1 chromebooks
- New/updated materials for Social Studies
- New/updated materials for Science
- New Universal Screen for Math and ELA
- Professional Development
  - New offerings to support implementation of math program
  - New offerings to support science resource from CSDE

Areas of Need:

- Support of differentiated professional growth of our staff
  - Instructional Coach
  - Professional development opportunities
  - Continued curriculum updates

Staffing:

- No increase in staffing
  - 5th stays at 5 teachers
  - 6th stays at 5 teachers
  - 7th increases to 5 teachers
  - 8th reduces to 4 teachers
  - Related Arts (6 teachers, 1 library para)
  - Interventionists:
    - 1 Math
    - 1 Language Arts
    - 1 Instructional Coach
- Potential Retirements Unknown

Mrs. Graef and Mr. Weaver presented information regarding the Brooklyn Elementary School's budget drivers that impact student outcomes for the 2024-2025 school year, which include:

- Science of Reading
  - Professional Learning
  - Programming
- Kindergarten Screening
- Kinder Camp
- Staff Development
  - Science of Reading
  - Paraprofessional Training
  - Related Arts
  - Mathematics
  - Curriculum/Pacing Guides
  - PBIS and SEL
  - Technology

Areas of Need:

- New Literacy Program at BES

- Science of Reading Professional Learning
- Student Social Emotional Needs

Staffing:

- Maintain all certified staff
  - 3 PreK teachers
  - 5 Grade K, 1, 3 & 4 teachers
  - 4 Grade 2 teachers
  - Related Arts (4 teachers, 1 library paraprofessional)
  - Other Staff
    - Instructional Coach
    - 2 Reading Specialists
    - 1 Math Intervention Teacher
- Retirement: Physical Education Teacher

Mrs. Toth and Mrs. Hyatt presented the Special Education budget drivers for Brooklyn Middle School, Brooklyn Elementary School and High School for the 2024-2025 school year, which include:

- Increase in referrals and eligibility
- Out of District Placements & Tuition increases
- Continuing to support in district specialized programs
- Students transferring into district transportation costs

Areas of Need:

- Speech Therapist - State Shortage Area
- Increase in students with disabilities
  - May need additional teacher

Staffing:

- Maintain all Staff
  - 13 Special Education Teachers
    - 5 Special Education teachers will be dedicated to in district
  - 2 Speech Pathologists; 1 SLPA
  - 1 Occupational Therapist
  - 1 School Psychologist
  - 1 BCBA
  - 4 Social Workers
    - May need additional teacher
- Current Staffing Shortages
  - Speech Pathologist
  - Paraprofessionals
  - Substitutes

Mr. Barrette discussed the Facilities budget drivers for Brooklyn Public Schools for the 2024-2025 school year, which include:

Utilities:

- Decrease in electricity rates due to solar
- Increase in water rates (about 3%)
- Increase in property insurance

Repairs:

- Converting out of date HVAC controls over to Siemens
- Playground equipment safety repair
- Replacing elementary refrigeration units

Labor Costs:

- Have increased due to supply and skilled labor shortages/higher labor costs

Capital Considerations:

- Fixing drainage issues front and back of 1st/2nd grade wing
- Sidewalk back of elementary school parent drop off/pickup: Funding was approved last year for sidewalks and stairs but need to add more funds

Staffing:

- Maintain current staffing

Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans asked whether the HVAC update would include air conditioning. Mrs. Buell stated that the first and second wave of HVAC funding had passed and Brooklyn was not in those waves. There is a third wave and she is hopeful that Brooklyn will be in that wave. There is a 72% reimbursement rate. Mrs. Buell also stated that the Brooklyn Middle School auditorium's air conditioning is not working and potentially two years before it will be fixed.

Mrs. Buell stated that the Administrators can be invited back at any time to answer questions and asked the Board if they had questions now they would like to ask.

Mrs. Lyons asked if anyone at the school is monitoring the buses? She knows that some of the buses are late. Mr. Weaver stated that they are keeping track of bus arrivals. Mrs. Graef stated that both Mr. Weaver and herself stay until all students have made it home. Some students are brought back to the school if no one is there to get them off the bus. She also stated that the bus company has an app and the school has an ipad, which will tell them where the buses are and that they can also hear the drivers radioing. Mrs. Buell also stated that she has been monitoring the times that buses are arriving and has had conversations with the bus company.

The Board members did not have any additional questions for the Administration at this time. The Board members and Mrs. Buell thanked the Administration and staff for their time and effort in putting together their presentations.

Mrs. Buell stated that all budget documents will be posted on the Brooklyn Schools website at [www.brooklynschools.org](http://www.brooklynschools.org). Anyone that has comments or questions about the budget to email [budgetquestions@brooklynschools.org](mailto:budgetquestions@brooklynschools.org). Budget questions and answers will be posted to the Brooklyn Schools website at [www.brooklynschools.org/announcements](http://www.brooklynschools.org/announcements).

Next Budget Workshop is January 24, 2024 at 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Mrs. Buell stated that normally she does not have a finalized number for the Board and stated that she would share the number she has with the Board.

3. Public Comment

None

4. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:13 p.m.

(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

No Discussion

**Vote Count:** 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

***Donna L. DiBenedetto***

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Interim Board Clerk