

The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn
119 Gorman Road
Brooklyn, CT 06234

Mae Lyons, Board Chair
Keith Atchinson, Secretary
Tana Jolley

Melissa Perkins-Banas, Vice-Chair
Justin Phaiah
Carolyn Hackbarth

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 virtually on December 16, 2020 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, and Mrs. Jolley. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, was also present. Keith Atchinson and Carolyn Hackbarth were absent from the meeting.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Brooklyn Board of Education will conduct a virtual meeting in accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B.

To support public participation the documents will be posted on the
Town of Brooklyn Website as well as the Brooklyn Public
Schools Website.

You are encouraged to send questions or comments to buell@brooklynschools.org prior to the meeting.

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

Quorum established. Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:11 pm.

Mrs Lyons stated they would like to add an agenda item 10a. Executive Session:
Attorney Client Privileged Information Regarding Board of Education Designation of
Designated High Schools.

Motion to approve to add item 10a. to the agenda.
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)
No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Mrs. Lyons stated they would like to add an agenda item 9d. Review of Temperature
Controls for Brooklyn Elementary School.
Motion to approve to add item 9d. to the agenda.
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)
No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Mrs. Lyons stated they just received notification that there was a Woodstock Academy student from Pomfret that passed away today. She stated they would like to have a moment of silence for the student. Mrs. Lyons stated that the Board sends their condolences to the family of this student.

2. Public Comment

Amy Landis asked why she can not see all of the Board of Education members that are participating in the meeting? She stated that she can only see Mrs. Perkins-Banas and Mrs. Lyons.

Mrs. Perkins-Banas stated that they may be participating by phone or have their video off. Both Mrs. Jolley and Mr. Phaiah stated they were participating using their phones.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. November 24, 2020 BOE Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 24, 2020
(Phaiah/Perkins-Banas)
No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve

4. Correspondence and Communication

a. Thank you letter - Mr. & Mrs. Goodwin

Mrs. Buell stated that she sent a thank you letter to Mr. and Mrs. Goodwin for their generous monetary donation towards the fees for an online program called Generation Genius. Their donation is a great assistance to Mrs. Jung's 4th grade distance learning class.

b. Thank you letter - Ms. O'Connor

Mrs. Buell stated she sent a thank you letter to Ms. O'Connor for her generous donation of \$1,000 in honor of her husband's memory to offset the negative lunch balances. Mrs. Buell stated that Ms. O'Connor has generously donated multiple years in a row to the Brooklyn Public Schools and appreciates her financial support and interest in our schools.

5. Administrative Reports

a. Brooklyn BOE Expenditure Report

Mrs. Buell discussed the expenditure report. The year to date expenditure report shows that we are projected to spend on track to what has been budgeted. There

have been some additional expenses this year, as well as some cost savings. Mrs. Buell stated she has received some grant funds to help offset some of the costs.

b. Enrollment Report

Mrs. Buell discussed the enrollment report. The enrollment has not changed much from November. Mrs. Buell stated that enrollment is up by 3 students and 2 students left the district to be homeschooled. She stated that we have a total of 49 students being homeschooled, which is a reflection of some of the challenges and concerns around the covid-19 virus. Mrs. Buell stated that in the spring, they will be conducting portfolio reviews for all the homeschooled students. It will be a new practice, but something that the Brooklyn Public Schools should be doing. She stated that the families have registered as homeschooled students and know who they need to follow-up with.

c. Brooklyn's Best

BES

1. IIC students have had a very successful transition to their new teacher, Ms. Corbin with the support of Karen Hyatt.
2. Students and staff have successfully transitioned to Distance Learning.
3. We have received communication that we were approved for the AQIS grant to support us through the NAEYC accreditation process.
4. 27 staff members will be participating in Paint Night to support the Brighter Christmas Fund.

BMS

1. Good Cookie Awards:
Grade 5: Calianne Worth, Elijah McKenna, and Abigail Langevin
Grade 6: Tomas Gutierrez, and Kendal Ternowchek
Grade 7: Owen Lamontagne, and Kloe Pike
Grade 8: Ricky Bradley, and Lydia Orlowki
2. We started a Good Cookie Award for staff as well! Staff nominate colleagues based on their contribution to the positive school climate at BMS. We select randomly from the submitted forms and provide all feedback to the staff members for them to hear that people recognize their efforts on behalf of the BMS community. The November recipient is Matthew Kiefer. "Matt provides continuous support to all of his students while creating dynamic lessons both live in person and through video. His skills build rapport with students and we are lucky to have him on the grade 7 team."
3. The attendance rate during distance learning has been over 90% every day and in most cases over 95%! We continue to work hard to engage students while in distance learning.

6. Board of Education Committee Reports

Mrs. Perkins-Banas stated that the Brooklyn Parks and Recreation met on Monday, December 14, 2020. The Toy drive and the Coat Drive were very successful this year. There were 750 coats that were given to children in need and they also received thousands of dollars for the Toy Drive. Mrs. Perkins-Banas stated that it is amazing how generous the Northeast part of Connecticut is. She also stated that the Spring/Summer brochure will be coming out soon and hopefully they will be able to offer summer camp again with the vaccines for covid-19 starting to come out.

Mrs. Lyons stated that the Solar Committee met last week to approve bills and it looks like the elementary school is just about finished and the middle school is approximately a month out.

7. Board Representatives to other Committees

Nothing to report

8. Old Business

a. PV Update

Elementary School:

This project has achieved substantial completion, and the witness test has been performed. The Certificate of Compliance has been provided to Eversource. We are awaiting delivery of the Permission to Operate (PTO) document from Eversource, at which point the system can be energized and will be fully operational. Once the (PTO) is delivered the ZREC registration process can begin. This takes about 6 weeks as it involves three different agencies to complete the process, but this system will be operational during this time.

Outstanding Items:

The educational monitor has not yet been mounted in the school's lobby. The contractor will coordinate with the Town to identify the preferred mounting location. The ZREC meter has not been delivered yet by Eversource, but this will not hold up energizing the system.

Project Delays:

The delay in energizing this project was a result of a longer than expected lead time on the rapid-shutdown-devices. There was a nearly 6 week window when the contractor was waiting for delivery of this product to complete the installation.

Middle School:

This project has not yet achieved substantial completion. All electrical equipment has been installed from the rooftop down to the main electric room. The rapid shutdown devices are installed. The racking (panel mounting structure) is

assembled, and attachments to the roof are being installed this week by the roofer. Once the attachments are complete, the modules can be secured. This is the last major milestone.

Outstanding Items:

Waiting on completion of the roofing attachments, mounting of the solar panels, and installation of the educational monitor. The ZREC meter has not yet been delivered by Eversource. Performance of the witness test and submitting the Certificate of Compliance have not been completed. The contractor anticipates completing these tasks by the end of January.

Project Delays:

The roof warranty is held by the roofing manufacturer Garland. In order to insure the roof warranty remains in full effect after the installation of the solar project all attachments must be installed by a Garland certified roofer. Coordination with such a roofer has proven difficult from a scheduling standpoint. In addition, specialized rivets for the attachments had a longer than expected lead time.

- b. Policy Updates - second read
 - i. Policy # 3541.5
 - ii. Policy # 3542.22
 - iii. Policy # 4211
 - iv. Policy # 4111.1/4211.1

Mrs. Buell stated that this is a second read on these policies. She stated if the Board has any discussions, they can discuss them or any changes they would like to make, they can recommend the changes. The Board had no further discussions or changes they wanted to make.

Motion to approve Policy #3541.5, Policy #3542.22, Policy #4211, and Policy #4111.1/4211.1.
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

- c. Update: 2021-2022 Brooklyn School's Calendar

Mrs. Buell stated that she did survey staff and community on the 2021-2022 Brooklyn School's calendar for their input. She shared the draft #3 calendar with the Board that shows the staff and community input. The draft #3 calendar shows the most popular choices of the survey. Mrs. Buell stated that the first day of school most chose to start was on September 1, 2021 instead of starting the week before, which would align with Woodstock Academy and Killingly High School calendars. Mrs. Buell stated that we have been accustomed to starting the last week in August, but if we were to start a week earlier it would shorten the summer vacation for families. The benefit of being in line with the high schools

is the cost for bus transportation. Mrs. Buell stated that it will be a decision the Board will need to decide on how to start the calendar year. Another change on the draft #3 calendar is Veteran's Day. In the survey, more were requesting not have school on Veteran's Day. Mrs. Buell stated that it has been about 5 years since Brooklyn has been in school on Veteran's Day and there have been Veteran ceremonies in the schools and other activities. Woodstock Academy is in school on Veteran's Day, Killingly High School is not in school. Mrs. Buell stated that the last day of school changes based on when we start school and if we are in school on Veteran's Day. We are in school for 182 days.

Mrs. Perkins-Banas stated she likes the idea of being in school on Veteran's Day. It gives the students the opportunity to learn from the Veteran's and is a valuable experience.

Mrs. Lyons stated she has always heard good things about the programs and students getting more out of being in school than out of school.

Mrs. Perkins-Banas stated she isn't sure about starting a week earlier in August, it takes away from the summer.

Mrs. Lyons asked about February 22, 2021 where it used to be vacation week. There was discussion about the professional development day for February 22, 2021.

The Board would like Mrs. Buell to prepare a draft #4 for the Board to approve at the next meeting.

9. New Business

a. Update Brooklyn Education Model

Mrs. Buell stated that we are currently in a distance learning model. She stated there were numerous discussions on the half day hybrid model where students would be coming in everyday. It was more of a hardship than a benefit for families. The distance learning model is working much better than in the spring. The longer the distance learning goes, the harder it is for some students to stay connected. Mrs. Buell stated she is hoping to be back to full in person as soon as we can. She stated they are planning a new hybrid model where Monday will be a remote learning day and then ABAB strictly for core academics. The remote days will have check-ins with related arts teachers and have more independent work. She stated that it seems parents are more comfortable with this hybrid plan than the half day hybrid plan. Mrs. Buell stated she will continue to monitor the covid numbers. There are some concerns around the holidays and people being exposed and contracting the virus on top of the peak that is expected to be coming.

Mrs. Lyons asked if there has been a date set for when we will start back in school. Mrs. Buell stated that we are planning to return to the hybrid model. She stated that there have been several conversations around the state about schools being in remote distance learning for a period of time after the holidays. Some feel it should be. There has been strong research and numbers that state that even if the community spread is high, it does not always mean it will impact the schools. Mrs. Buell stated that the flow chart shows that when you are in the red in the community, you should reduce the density. Reducing the density is the hybrid model. She stated if the community spread is high, we should be able to return in the hybrid model. Mrs. Buell stated the biggest challenge is the administration piece where there are not enough teachers due to so many quarantining. Mrs. Buell stated that after Thanksgiving if we were not in the remote distance learning model, she would have needed to close the schools due to not having enough staff.

b. Request for reimbursement for high school tuition for Marianapolis Preparatory School

Mrs. Buell stated she has received a request from a parent to pay for a private school tuition for Marianapolis Preparatory School. It is the same request that Mrs. Buell shared with the Board previously. She stated that at the last meeting, November 24, 2020 the Board made a motion for the BOE Policy #3340 which is as follows:

BOE Motion: The Brooklyn Board of Education would like to continue to designate Killingly High School and Woodstock Academy as designated high schools. Any parent wishing to send their child to a non-designated public high school must submit a written request to the Superintendent. We authorize the Superintendent to approve placement in another accredited public high school if it meets the needs of the student and does not exceed the cost of a designated high school contingent upon parents agreeing to provide transportation at no cost to the district.

Mrs. Lyons asked if there was any new information for the Board to consider at this time. Mrs. Buell stated that she does have communication that she would like to review with the Board, which is the reason to add the agenda item to go into executive session. Mrs. Buell stated that they will review the letter during the executive session from the Board Attorney.

Motion to suspend action on this matter until the Board has a chance to review all the information that is available to them.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

c. 2020-2021 Enrollment Projection Report from NESDEC

Mrs Buell reviewed the 2020-2021 Enrollment Projection Report from NESDEC. She stated that NESDEC provides this report annually. She reviewed a few of the highlights for the Board: Pre-k through 4th grade numbers have gone down over the past few years; Kindergarten through 8th grade there is a decline of 38 with 49 students being homeschooled; 9th grade through 12th grade also has a decline of 20 students. For the Projection Report, NESDEC looks at the birth rates to project student enrollment. Mrs. Buell stated that in 2020, the enrollment for kindergarten through 12th grade is 1,278 students and they are projecting 1,345 students for 2025.

d. Review of Temperature Controls at BES

Mrs. Buell stated that we had an upgrade to the environmental controls, which are the heating controls for our schools. The upgrade was needed to be able to set the controls of the temperatures in different rooms and be able to monitor if something went wrong. Our Director of Facilities can monitor the heat in all the rooms remotely so if something should happen he will know. Mrs. Buell stated that there was never an update to the preschool/kindergarten wing. She stated that they can no longer access that system to control it and some rooms are much warmer than others. Mrs. Buell stated that they would like to put it on the same environmental control system. She stated that Mr. Graef requested bids from five different companies that are contracted with the state to do work on this particular system. One of the quotes is from the company that originally installed the system and the other company is a new company. Mrs. Buell stated that they recommend using Sarracco, which is the lowest bid and also the original company that installed the system. She stated the funding will come from equipment repairs and building repairs line items.

10. Public Comment

Amy Landis stated she noticed that the new business item added is going into executive session regarding Marianapolis tuition. She stated that she is curious to what they will be discussing since she has two high school students who attend Marianapolis, which is a \$28,000 savings to the Brooklyn Schools. She believes there are five other students that attend Marianapolis as well. She understands that the executive session is not in public, but if they are making decisions about Marianapolis she's wondering if other individuals who are attending Marianapolis will be privy to the potential decision and why they are not making a choice in regards to these issues.

Mrs. Lyons stated she believes the Board will be making a decision, but they have information that is attorney client privileged information that they need to discuss.

Mrs. Landis stated if they are willing to pay for one tuition to Marianapolis, she's wondering how that affects everyone else that may potentially send their child to a private school and pays their own tuition. She stated that they pay tuition to NFA, Parish

Hill, Killingly, and to Woodstock Academy, which Marianapolis isn't that far from the Academy. Mrs. Landis said she is just making it known.

Brian Russo stated he is a parent to a student at Marianapolis. He furnished an attorney letter to Mrs. Buell and asked her to forward it to the Board. He asked if she was able to give that letter to each member of the Board for review tonight. Mrs. Buell stated that the Board did receive the letter. Mr. Russo thought that it would be considered additional or new information. He stated that Mrs. Lyons asked earlier if there was new information. He believes the attorney laid out their case and there are other parents in the meeting as well. His concerns were that they have all the facts and information. He stated he is not familiar with executive sessions. He asked if it means they meet behind closed doors on this issue and come to a vote or would that be in a public meeting.

Ms. Buell stated that executive session allows the Board to go behind closed doors and have a discussion about attorney client privileged information. She stated this is what the Board is choosing to do. They made a motion to do that. Any decision they would make would be outside where they would end the executive session, come out of the executive session and if they choose to take action they would do that is a public session.

Mr. Russo asked if this would take place this evening or in another meeting.

Mrs. Buell stated it appears that they will take some form of action tonight. She stated they will come out of the executive session and the Board will make a decision or a vote.

- a. Executive Session: Attorney Client Privileged Information regarding Board of Education designation of Designated High School

Motion to go into executive session to discuss attorney client privileged information regarding Board of Education designation of designated high school at 8:06 p.m. and to invite Superintendent Buell to attend.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Motion to come out of executive session and enter into the Board of Education meeting.

(Perkins-Banas/Jolley)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Mrs. Lyons stated that they are officially out of executive session and back into the Board of Education meeting at 8:33 p.m. She stated that they are ready to make a motion or a vote.

Motion that the Board of Education will not take a vote to approve the payment of tuition to a private school and that the Board of Education will request legal guidance from the Board attorney before acting on this request.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:34 p.m.

(Jolley/Perkins-Banas)

No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna L. DiBenedetto

Donna L. DiBenedetto

Board Clerk