

# The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn  
119 Gorman Road  
Brooklyn, CT 06234

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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 February 24, 2021 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, Mrs. Hackbarth. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, and Mr. Otto, Board of Finance, were also present. Mr. Atchinson and Mrs. Jolley were absent.

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](mailto: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 7:03 p.m.

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approval of Minutes

a. January 27, 2021 BOE Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 27, 2021.  
(Perkins-Banas/Hackbarth)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

4. Correspondence and Communication

a. Thank you letter - Miss Roberts

Mrs. Buell stated she sent a thank you letter to Miss Roberts with My Community Church for the very generous winter clothing donation, which would benefit the Brooklyn Middle School community.

b. Thank you letter - Ms. Bohman

Mrs. Buell stated she sent a thank you letter to Ms. Bohman for the very generous donation of handmade hats in memoriam of her friend, Brenda Provost, which will benefit the Brooklyn Middle School students and the Brooklyn community.

c. Thank you letter - Mr. Kohl/Killingly Quiet Corner Lions Club

Mrs. Buell stated she sent a thank you letter to Mr. Kohl with the Killingly Quiet Corner Lions Club for the generous donation of ten boxes of food that he donated to the Brooklyn Public Schools, which will be distributed to our Brooklyn families in need.

d. Thank you Letter - Mrs. Kristen Rodman

Mrs. Buell stated that she sent a thank you letter to Mrs. Rodman for her generous donation of two hundred (200) KN95 masks to the Brooklyn Public Schools, which will be distributed to staff as needed to ensure the continued safety of our community.

e. Woodstock Academy - February Head of School Award

Mrs. Buell stated that she received a recognition letter from Mr. Sandford from Woodstock Academy stating that a Brooklyn student, Esmeralda Kasneci, was chosen to receive the February Head of School's Award.

## 5. Administrative Reports

a. Brooklyn BOE Expenditure Report

Mrs. Buell discussed the expenditure report. She stated that we are spending at the expected level. Some of the line items are showing negative balances that will be offset with revenues still coming in from excess costs. Expenditures are being watched carefully.

b. Budget Transfers

Mrs. Buell stated that she will wait another month to do the budget transfers. She stated that she still has time and is managing grants and other offsets.

c. Enrollment Report

Mrs. Buell discussed the enrollment report. She stated that there are a mix of

students that opt-out or have gone to distance learning and we have had more families move to homeschooling this year than in previous years. Enrollment has reduced and Mrs. Buell anticipates that those students will return in a normal learning environment.

Next year's 9th grade high school choice:

- Woodstock Academy: 41 students
- Killingly High school: 12 students
- Killingly Vo-ag: 1 student
- Ellis Technical High School: 17 students
- Norwich Free Academy (NFA): 2 students
- QMC: 3 students
- ACT: 1 student

d. Brooklyn's Best

**BES**

1. The grade levels are writing persuasive essays to The Ice Box convincing them to create classroom flavors. They have been so convincing. The Ice Box has created all of them!
2. Solar panels are up and running.
3. We have completed our winter universal screens and are beginning to analyze the data.
4. Our first virtual Career Day was a huge success!

**BMS**

1. Good Cookie Awards December 2020:  
**Grade 5:** Cassidy Rosinski  
**Grade 6:** Edward Purcell, Finley Hamilton  
**Grade 7:** Jaelyn Knox, Caleb Mowrey  
**Grade 8:** Reese Newson, Kelsey Pabon  
**Distance Learning:** Evelyn Thayer (Grade 5); Bronson Eddy (Grade 6);  
Karina Clavell (Grade 8)
2. Good Cookie Awards January 2020:  
**Grade 5:** Brenna Howard  
**Grade 6:** Reagan Scheck, Brayden Briere-Jones  
**Grade 7:** Jonathan Pomroy, Aaliyah Grenier  
**Grade 8:** Lillian Beausoleil, Hannah Wiggin
3. Staff Good Cookie Award Recipient:  
Mrs. April Kyllonen was recognized by fellow staff members for going above and beyond to support our distance learning students and in support of our library.
4. Quarter 1 Lions Club Award Recipients:  
**Grade 5:** Aaden Khamphoukeo  
**Grade 6:** AJ Raymond  
**Grade 7:** Ivan Cheng  
**Grade 8:** Janaesia Gary

5. Good Cookie and Lion Club Awards were delivered to the homes of recipients by Mrs. Tamsin, Mr. Torchia, Ms. Malone and Mr. Baccaro to recognize the hard work and positive attitude of these students.
6. 8th grade teacher Mrs. Salvas delivered Valentines from grade 8 students to Pierce Rehabilitation Center.
7. BMS has created a Booster Club with volunteers working to fundraise for a Community Fitness Course to be installed on the upper field near the Middle School. Our kickoff fundraiser includes Krispy Kreme Donuts, BMS mugs and locally roasted coffee.

6. Board of Education Committee Reports

Nothing to report

7. Board Representatives to other Committees

Nothing to report

8. Old Business

a. 2021-2022 Budget Planning Review

Mrs. Buell stated that the Board of Education has been working on the 2021-2022 Brooklyn Public Schools' Budget. There are some new grants that are available to the district, ESSER funds, which will be used for learning loss to help students recover some of their skills. There is another budget meeting March 24, 2021 and the budget will be presented to the Board of Finance on March 31, 2021.

The Superintendent's proposed budget for the 2021-2022 school year started at a 4.21% increase over last year. Based on changes that were made to the budget and support from grants, the budget has been reduced down to a 0.55% or \$19,279,236, which is an increase of \$105,245 over the 2020-2021 school year for the Board to consider.

9. New Business

a. Update Brooklyn Education Model

Mrs. Buell stated that we are currently in a hybrid learning model. In order to return to full in person, she stated we are following Addendum 4 where our cases per 100,000 needs to be closer to 10/100,000 over a 14 day period. We were also advised by the CDC and DPH to try to maintain 6 feet distancing. If we are not able to do so, we should ensure that we maximize the other mitigation strategies. Mrs. Buell stated that there are staff who would like to wait until we have vaccinations, but if the numbers are low enough to meet the guidelines we could return March 8, 2021.

Mrs. Buell stated that she and administration are discussing with the athletic director the options for spring sports. We have discussed allowing track, softball and baseball. Considerations include: practices based on cohort. By the time the competitions start, hopefully we will be in full opening. We may need extra buses for these events. If there is a positive case, the entire team will quarantine. It will also impact students in the school as well. Masks will be worn by athletes and spectators. Spectators may be limited based on space at events. These will be outdoors and should be manageable.

Mrs. Buell stated with the end of the year activities, DPH has cautioned us that we still need to remain vigilant about protecting our students and staff as the virus is still out there and the variants are much more contagious. They recommend that we wear masks at all times when we are outside of our house. They recommend that we plan for end of the year activities like we had last year such as drive through graduations and limited contact with those outside of your cohort.

b. Pre-employment Physicals and Drug Test

Mrs. Buell stated the Board passed a policy for pre-employment physicals and drug tests previously. Mrs. Buell wanted to share with the Board the cost per new hire will be \$181.00 to the Board of Education, which includes the pre-placement physical and 5 panel drug testing.

Mrs. Lyons asked if there is any concern with discrimination with this kind of physical and can the Board have the report? Mrs. Buell stated that they probably won't receive the full physical but a report stating that they are fit to do the job they are being hired for based on the job description.

Mr. Phaiah asked that if the job description states they need to be able to lift 50 pounds and climb, is that what they'll be tested for? Mrs. Buell stated that is what the person will be assessed for.

c. CABE upcoming events

Mrs. Buell shared CABE upcoming events with the Board. CABE is still doing webinars and other events are happening.

10. Public Comment

Kayla Burgess wanted to say thank you for the update for the hopeful return on March 8th. It has been a challenging time for her family personally with her daughter being in kindergarten. In recent communication to the district referencing substitute teachers and the need for substitute teachers, she asked Mrs. Buell to elaborate how the need for substitute teachers becomes a concern for full time in person versus the hybrid model. If a teacher is quarantined, it affects both hybrid A and B the same. She does not understand how there is a need for substitute teachers. If there is a good week with the Thursday

report this week and if there is a jump next week, she asked how will Mrs. Buell be approaching that? How will that affect your decision for the March 8th opening?

Mrs. Buell asked Mrs. Lyons if she would like her to respond to Mrs. Burgess? Mrs. Lyons gave permission if Mrs. Buell was ready to respond.

Mrs. Buell stated that public comment is an opportunity for the public to share their thoughts or ask questions of the Board of Education. There is not time for a back and forth discussion. There are times, time permitting, if there are answers to questions that they may be able to answer on the spot, there are times that the Board will permit or respond themselves. Mrs. Buell wanted to respond to a few questions that were raised.

Mrs Buell stated that substitute teachers are needed in the hybrid model and when we return to full in person. One of the differences is when we are in a hybrid model, we can put two small classes together in the gymnasium and share a teacher. If we are full in person and the teacher goes out, it is harder to put two classes together of 17 or 18 students, it is less manageable. Mrs. Buell stated we need subs now. One of the other concerns is when we go full in person and closer than 6 feet, the possibility of transmission of the virus could happen. Mrs. Buell stated when the numbers change slightly, it is a range of numbers, for example in hybrid the range is 10-25/100,000 cases in the town. Mrs. Buell stated she knows there were 9 cases last week, if there are 6 cases this week, we will still be in the range. She is watching the numbers in the community, cases are decreasing.

Amy Landis, Fairway Drive, is wondering when the kids return in a couple weeks to full in person, will the middle school return to switching classes? Mrs. Buell stated that she anticipates remaining in cohorts for a while.

## 11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:47 p.m.  
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiiah)  
No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

*Donna L. DiBenedetto*

Donna L. DiBenedetto  
Board Clerk