

# 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  
Nathan Richards

**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 September 22, 2021 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Mr. Phaiah, Mr. Richards, Mr. Atchinson, and Mrs. Jolley (joined at 7:08 p.m.). Mrs. Perkins-Banas was absent. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, Mrs. Tamsin, BMS Principal, Mr. Torchia, BMS Assistant Principal, Mrs. Graef, BES Principal, and Mr. Weaver, BES Assistant Principal, were also present.

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 7:06 p.m.

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approval of Minutes

a. August 25, 2021 BOE Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for August 25, 2021.  
(Phaiah/Richards)

No Discussion

**Vote Count:** 4, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Mrs. Lyons would like to move agenda items 9d and 9e up to 3b.

Motion to modify the agenda to move items 9d and 9e up to 3b.

Mrs. Buell stated that Mrs. Jolley has joined the Board meeting virtually.

(Richards/Phaiah)

No Discussion

**Vote Count:** 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

b. Advancement Plan Presentation (9d)

Mrs. Buell stated that she would like to thank the administrators at the Brooklyn Middle School, Mrs. Tamsin, Mr. Torchia, and the administrators at the Brooklyn Elementary School, Mrs. Graef, and Mr. Weaver for being present this evening.

Mrs. Buell stated she wanted to discuss the Universal Screen Data to the Board. She stated that the Board has seen this before and discussed the SBAC data as well. She stated that last year was not a normal year and when scores were distributed to districts, the State of Connecticut provided the data with caution. The assessment data is not comparable to a year ago due to not taking the test in 2020, nor can you compare it to two years ago due to everyone being in-person. She stated that some students were at home taking the test and some students were in school taking the test. Brooklyn's data is mostly categorized as hybrid, 25 to 75 percent membership days were in person and the assessment data is not comparable to any other year.

Mrs. Buell shared ELA and Math data from 2017 through 2021 with the Board. The scores are not where we would like them to be. She stated in 2020, students were not assessed and in 2021 students were assessed. Staff is aware that the performance dropped for many students both in person and at home. She stated that we are not going to build everything off this data. This data will be sent home along with a flyer that the State of Connecticut has put together about the data. She stated that the conclusions that were drawn from staff, it was easier to teach remotely and in-person for ELA and more challenging for Math.

Mr Torchia shared state data with comparable numbers with other area districts around Brooklyn. There are different numbers in different districts. Some districts chose to have all in-person, some chose to have hybrid and others were distance learning. Brooklyn's distance learners did have core instruction everyday from teachers that were there for distance learning purposes. Mr. Torchia did state that Brooklyn did a little better than other districts around Brooklyn.

Mrs. Tamsin discussed the Universal Screener that is used in the district, the STAR Assessment. She shared the fifth through eighth grade current fall performance scores. The Reading scores have decreased from pre-covid or pre-pandemic. The Math scores are similar to the SBAC test, there is still a lot of work that needs to be done. She stated that they are getting creative and thinking outside the box using every resource in the building as far as staff.

Mr. Weaver stated the elementary school data cycle is a little different from the middle school, teachers are still working on their universal screenings for STAR Reading and Math and scores listed are from the spring of 2021 and the fall scores will be updated in a few days. He stated that everyone did a good job navigating through the different learning models from last year. He stated that he is happy to have everyone back and their schedule is built around an intervention schedule to help students fill in the gaps and get students caught up.

Mrs. Graef discussed the DRA results from the spring assessment. The fall assessment will be in October. There are some students that have not been in a classroom for the last 18 months. Students are still learning to be students. She explained that the DRA is when you listen to a child read orally and ask them comprehension questions. Teachers believe this is more reliable than a child that cannot type their name on a computer.

Mr. Weaver discussed what the Brooklyn Elementary School Intervention looks like in a classroom. The schedule is built around academic intervention blocks. Each block has 2 classroom teachers, 3 reading interventionists, 1 math interventionist, and 1 Lexia paraprofessional to work on both Math and ELA skills.

Mrs. Graef discussed the students receiving intervention with the model that is in place. For example: Grade 1 has 76% of their students receiving reading intervention everyday; Math has less students. Students are getting targeted skills based on their needs. In the past, students would be pulled out of the classroom and this year intervention teachers are going into the classroom. All staff are learning from one another and they have collected more data in the past three weeks than they had in the past.

Mr. Weaver discussed the reflection process, discussing the data. They looked at last year's data and formed intervention groups. The intervention groups have been going into classrooms and working in small groups and discussing the data. Students will stay in their groups for six week cycles. He stated that teachers are already collaborating with each other.

Mr. Torchia discussed the SRBI Flow Chart for the middle school academically and socially emotionally. Tier 1 is usually where 80% of the students are in this category. Coming out of the pandemic, that is not the case according to the data. He stated that they need to work on closing the gaps from the past 18 months,

which will take possibly two years. Mr. Torchia stated with the Tier 2 intervention, FLEX is already built into the schedule every other day and meets 2 to 3 times a week. Interventions can happen in the classrooms. There is reference to social emotional in Tier 2 as well. There are some students that have not been around big groups in a while and being back with peers can be difficult where some intervention is needed in that area as well. He stated that quarterly, they will be reviewing the data as a team. Tier 3 intervention meets 4 to 5 times a week, which is supported by the math and ELA interventionists and data will be tracked biweekly. If students are not making progress, a referral to a PPT will be recommended.

Mrs. Tamsin shared the middle school's current intervention numbers for Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention numbers. She stated we have a new full-time math interventionist that has taught mathematics in both middle school and elementary school. She stated that there have been interesting conversations where students are stating they want extra help and kids are advocating for themselves. They are seeing growth already.

Mr. Torchia discussed the middle school Pacing and Monitoring, which is to make sure they are following along with the pacing that was set. He stated pacing has been slower than anticipated due to attention spans being shorter. Mr. Torchia shared the Assessment Calendar on what the first quarter looks like with the Board.

Mrs. Buell thanked the administration teams and asked if there were any questions by the Board.

Mrs. Lyons stated that she couldn't believe her 2nd grader said she had 5 teachers.

Mr. Richards wanted to commend all administrators on the effort being made. A few years ago, they discussed having a plan and the execution until everything came to a halt. He likes the collaboration happening across grade levels. He stated to continue to encourage staff and stay motivated. He knows we will catch up, just keep reinforcing with staff and stay on task.

Mr. Torchia stated that teachers have been working very hard for over a year and a half. Mr. Torchia stated it is not just what they are doing, it is what everyone in the community is doing.

c. Update on Fitness Course at Brooklyn Middle School (9e)

Mrs. Tamsin stated that the Booster Club met on Monday, September 20, 2021 for an update. They raised \$3200 running the lemonade stand for the Lebanon Lions Club at the Brooklyn Fair. Currently, they have raised \$25,000 out of the \$100,000. Mrs. Tamsin reached out to the company and is hoping to have the first station on order. She stated that there are a couple businesses in town that are

interested in purchasing a full station. She is hoping to have 3 out of the 10 stations started and hoping to break ground before winter.

#### 4. Correspondence and Communication

##### a. Thank You Letter - Staples

Mrs. Buell stated that she sent a thank you letter to Staples for their generous donation of three large boxes of assorted school supplies to the Brooklyn Elementary School.

##### b. Connecticut State Department of Education Assessment

Mrs. Buell stated that the Connecticut State Department of Education will be sending a letter to parents with the assessment results, "Back Together This Fall." If parents have any questions after receiving the assessment, they are encouraged to reach out to teachers or administrators with their questions.

Mrs. Buell stated that she received the Statewide Summative Assessment Report for the Connecticut State Department of Education, a reference of how to look at the data.

##### c. 2020-2021 Annual Report - Woodstock Academy

Mrs. Buell stated that she received the annual report from Woodstock Academy and she included it in with the packet of handouts and it has been posted to the Town of Brooklyn's website. The annual report highlights what they do at Woodstock Academy and some of the successes.

#### 5. Administrative Reports

##### a. Brooklyn Enrollment

Mrs. Buell discussed the enrollment report, numbers are slightly down from August, which could be due to students not returning to in-person learning or have moved out of the district. She stated Brooklyn Elementary School is down by 18 students, Brooklyn Middle Schools is down by 2 students, and homeschooled students are up by 1 in each school. The overall high school enrollment numbers are down by 6 students. She stated that October 1st is the State's cutoff for high school enrollment. Special education students who have come in and left the district are high. Since the beginning of the school year, 6 students have left the district and 18 students are coming into the district.

Mrs. Lyons asked if it is the younger age groups coming in? Mrs. Buell stated that approximately 5 students are high school age, most are in the younger range. She stated that Birth to three numbers are slightly high. If students are turning three

years old and require special education services then the Birth to Three program needs to be in place..

Mrs. Lyons asked if they were talking about raising the age up to five? Mrs. Buell stated there was talk, nothing has come of it as of yet.

b. FY22 Financial Reports

Mrs. Buell shared the expenditure report. She stated that salaries have been encumbered for the school year. It's still very early, Mrs. Buell is projecting that we are on track for this fiscal year.

c. 2020-2021 Budget Report

Mrs. Buell stated that we did close out the 2020-2021 school budget. She stated that \$211,453.76 funds were unexpended and returned to the Town in 2020-2021. This was communicated to the Board of Finance on September 15, 2021. Mrs. Buell stated that there were some cost savings in transportation, heating, and additional grant funding through covid funds.

d. Brooklyn's Best

**BES**

- Well attended Open House
- Successful Kinder Camp with over 50 students and families
- Intervention is off to a good start
- Instructional coach is getting staff into others classrooms

**BMS**

- Open House was well attended
- Thank you to United Services for attending Open House and giving out information to families
- High School Choice Fair is September 22, 2021. We have had a great response for attendance by local schools
- Fall sports are off to a great start!
- Booster Club has raised about \$25,000 towards our Community Fitness Course. We are looking to purchase our first station soon! Thank you to the staff members who ran the lemonade stand provided by Lebanon Lions Club at the Brooklyn Fair. \$3200 was raised and donated by the Lions Club.
- We have had a smooth start to the school year!

6. Board of Education Committee Reports

Nothing to report

## 7. Board Representatives to Other Committees

Mr. Phaiah reached out to Mrs. Trivella in regards to attending the EASTCONN meetings. He stated that the meetings are held the last Tuesday of every month at 5:30 p.m. in Hamden, Connecticut.

## 8. Old Business

### a. Policies - Second Reading

Mrs. Buell stated that this is a second read on the following policies:

- **Policy 0521 - Nondiscrimination Policy**  
Mrs. Buell stated this policy is required by CAFE and is in compliance with CAFE's guidance. She recommends the Board approve this policy with legal references and not include the regulation portion of this policy.
- **Policy 4118.11/Policy 4218.11 - Personnel Certified/Non-Certified, Nondiscrimination Policy**  
Mrs. Buell stated that this policy is guidance from CAFE and recommends the Board accept and approve this policy and replace the current policy.
- **Policy 1110.1 - Community Relations**  
Mrs. Buell stated that this policy is one of our current policies with minor changes, removal of older dates. This policy is about parent involvement with a change with increasing parent conferences, especially with covid situations. Mrs. Buell recommends the Board adopt and approve this policy with changes.
- **Policy 3542.43 - Food Service Policy**  
Mrs. Buell stated that the Board adopted this policy a few years ago. She stated that the Brooklyn Public Schools are not charging for meals this year, meals are still free. This policy still needs to be implemented. Mrs. Buell recommends that the Board adopt and replace this policy and include the alternate language in Box 1, do not include Box 2, and remove the section on secondary students.
- **Policy 5113 or 5113.2 - Attendance Policy**  
Mrs. Buell recommends that the Board approve Policy 5113 not 5113.2. This policy includes a new category where families can allow mental health days (2) excused, cannot be back-to-back or near a holiday/vacation. She recommends to not include the "Note" in the top box, do include the information in the bottom box page (b).

Mrs. Lyons asked if this is something they allow or recommend or are they just allowing the students if we didn't have a policy, people would still do it? Mrs. Buell stated that people that still do it, it is called an excused

absence by law and we need to adjust our policy. There are only certain reasons for excused absences. There is still a maximum of ten (10) excused absences, two (2) are excused mental health days.

- **Policy 6159 - Special Education Policy**

Mrs. Buell stated that this policy is an update to special education. Prior to last year, students who needed special education services aged out at the age of 21. Now, students are allowed to receive special education services until they are 22 years old.

- **Policy 5131.911 - Students, Hazing, Bullying and Safe School Climate Policy**

Mrs. Buell stated that there is a slight change where the Safe School Climate Committee needs to include school personnel, teachers, medical and mental health personnel from the school. Mrs. Buell redacted the high school student section due to there not being a high school student on our policy. Mrs Buell recommends the Board accept this policy with the changes.

Motion to adopt, approve or update the following policies: Policy 0521, Policy 4118.11, Policy 4218.11, Policy 1110.1, Policy 3542.43 with the alteration accepting the alternate language in Box 1, and omitting language in Box 2, adopting Policy 5113 with updated language, approving Policy 6159, and adopting Policy 5131.911.

(Richards/Phaiah)

No Discussion

**Vote Count:** 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

## 9. New Business

### a. Building Project PMA Proposal and RFP Services Contract

Mrs. Buell stated the Building Committee did not have a quorum to meet last night, Tuesday, September 21, 2021. She stated there is one more outstanding invoice and a change order was missed. The Board will need to revisit the motions from last month.

Mrs. Buell stated that she received a proposal from CSW to contract with them to find a vendor for the operations and maintenance (O&M) provider will protect the Town's investment into the solar array by ensuring the projected ZREC revenue and utility savings are achieved. This is accomplished through remote monitoring of the system, annual inspections and reactive maintenance visits. The O&M provider will monitor the systems production, identify production issues, and analyze site data to determine root causes. Once a year a team of technicians will visit the site to conduct a visual inspection of all components, ensure wiring



connections are secure, and check equipment outputs. Costs are anticipated to be around \$5,000 to \$6,500 per site per year.

Mr. Richards asked if there was anything in the proposal that was a shock or anything that we should think about? Mrs. Buell stated that there was not and stated if the Board was in agreement to move forward, she will reach out to CSW letting them know the Board is ready to move forward.

b. Narcan Policy - First Read

Mrs. Buell stated that she included the Narcan Policy 5141.213 as a first read. She stated that they have spoken with their medical advisor. If there ever is an emergency, we'd be glad to have this policy in place. She hopes to never need or use it. There is no cost to have Narcan.

Mrs. Lyons asked if it is the same as EpiPens, is there a shelf life? Mrs. Buell stated that there is and they will expire.

Mr. Richards asked if it requires specialized training with our nurses? Mrs. Buell stated that the middle school nurse has had training and believes the elementary nurse has had it as well. Mrs. Buell stated she received training through SERAC.

Mr. Richards was concerned about the liability, would it cause more harm if administered incorrectly? Mrs. Buell stated that it won't harm anyone, it reacts only if you have a drug in your system.

c. Boiler discussion at Board of Finance

Mrs. Buell stated after the last Board of Education meeting, she sent letters to the Board of Finance and the Board of Selectman in regards to the HVAC system and the boilers. The Board of Finance discussed that they are aware of the need to replace two boilers at Brooklyn Elementary School and two boilers at Brooklyn Middle School. They are aware that we may need to begin to seek bids for this project prior to next year's budget approval for the Town in order to complete the project next summer.

Mr. Phaiah stated he spoke to the Board of Selectman in regards to the boilers needing to be replaced. He stated they thought they would be able to use ARC funds and they didn't qualify. He stated our capital needs to be put in for the Town Meetings and it was included in time for this year. He believes we will get the boilers come spring when we do our capital budget.

Mrs. Buell stated in order for the boilers to be approved, go out to bid, get contractors and be put on the schedule, it might be too late to wait for voting for a budget in June. The project may not be able to be done next summer.

Mrs. Lyons asked if the boilers are dangerous due to starting a fire or leak, then there would be a town meeting? Is there anyone that has come in to look at them? Mrs. Buell stated that we do have a maintenance contract. When the capital budget was being put together last year, their recommendation was that the boilers will not last much longer. They did not say they were dangerous.

d. District Advancement Plan Presentation

Mrs. Buell discussed the District Advancement Plan, which outlines the District Goals. She stated staff have narrowed their focus and identified what needs to be improved upon based on the data. The data is inconsistent when looking at last year's data. She stated the focus on the advancement plan is to track what the progress is for the year and how we intend to measure it. Mrs. Buell stated there will be a midyear intervention report and an end of year intervention report. She is creating a data dashboard that she is hoping to have updated monthly. The best way to monitor progress is to measure. Everyone has the same focus: what does core instruction look like; how do we administer it; how do we monitor and assess it; how do we adjust when there are struggling students.

Mr. Richards commented on how we have talked about having a plan and now we have a plan. He likes how Mrs. Buell talked about starting to measure it and executing it. Now that the plan is here, we need to execute the plan, see how effective it is and get it to where it needs to be. He knows the math scores are a concern as a district. He stated to continue keeping an on the measuring and pivot or adjust to keep moving forward.

10. Public Comment

None

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:31 p.m.

(Jolley/Phaiah)

No Discussion

**Vote Count:** 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

***Donna L. DiBenedetto***

Donna L. DiBenedetto  
Board Clerk