

The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn
119 Gorman Road
Brooklyn, CT 06234

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 a meeting in the Central Office Community Room and virtually on December 20, 2023 via Google Meet. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, Mrs. Burgess, Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans, and Mrs. Metzger. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent was also present.

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

Mrs. Buell stated that a Quorum has been established. Board members that were present: Melissa Perkins-Banas, Justin Phaiah, Kayla Burgess, Ailla Wasstrom-Evans, Deb Metzger, and Mae Lyons.

Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comment

None

4. Approval of Minutes

a. November 21, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Burgess made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes for November 21, 2023.
(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)
No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

5. Correspondence and Communication

- a. Killingly Vo-Ag presentation by Tiffany Rosen with seniors Peyton Roasen and Madelyn Provost

Mrs. Buell introduced Peyton Rosen, a senior, who gave a presentation on the Vo-Ag program at Killingly High School. Ms. Rosen stated that she is currently a senior in the Killingly Agriculture Program. Freshman year consists of rotating through all of the majors learning about Animal Science, Plant Science, Environmental Science Agriculture, Mechanics and Small Animal Science. Ms. Rosen chose Animal Science and she's learned gel electrophoresis and fetal pig dissection and she gets to travel to other farms. She also attends FFA career development events and participates in the Big E, corn maze, and community service. Ms. Rosen stated that the program helps further learning outside of school and is raising and training her own working steers. She stated that she has made a lot of friends in this program.

Mrs. Buell asked where Ms. Rosen had won a trip to? Ms. Rosen stated that she won a trip through 4-H. She had gone to Wisconsin to learn about dairy farming.

Mrs. Wasstrom–Evans asked Ms. Rosen if she had to apply for Animal Science? Ms. Rosen stated that your freshman year is exploratory, rotating through all the majors; sophomore year you get to pick your top two; junior and senior year you specialize in your pathway.

- b. Possible Grant Award Announcement (ELKS)

Mrs. Buell stated that Mrs. Wimmer, a retired Teacher, had an announcement she wanted to share with the Board.

Mrs. Wimmer stated that she is a member of the Danielson Elks. She stated that the National Foundation applied for an Impact Grant worth \$10,000, which was very competitive with 220 Lodges submitting ideas, with 40 Lodges moving to the application stage, and 9 Lodges were selected to receive the Impact Grant. Mrs. Wimmer stated that the Danielson Elks Lodge was notified last week and was one of the recipients to receive the \$10,000 Impact Grant. She stated that this will be used at the Library, Brooklyn Cares had not been established yet. They will build shelves and add books to the shelves. When the center is open, children will be able to take a book/borrow a book, there will be a reading program every month where they will read to kids, do an activity based on the book and give each child who comes a gift bag with healthy snacks. Mrs. Wimmer is hoping if the program succeeds, that it will continue.

c. Upcoming PublicEvents:

- 01/03/2024 - 5:30pm-7:30pm : BOE Budget Workshop
- 01/04/2024 - 3:45pm: Girls Basketball v. Wheeler (BMS)
- 01/04/2024 - 3:30pm: Boys Basketball at Wheeler
- 01/08/2024 - 3:30pm: Boys Basketball at Plainfield
- 01/08/2024 - 3:45pm: Girls Basketball v Plainfield (BMS)
- 01/11/2023 - 3:30pm: Girls Basketball at Woodstock Middle School
- 01/11/2024 - 3:45pm: Boys Basketball v. Woodstock (BMS)
- 01/15/2024 - NO SCHOOL - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 01/16/2024 - 3:30pm: Girls Basketball at Griswold Middle School
- 01/16/2024 - 3:45pm: Boys Basketball v. Griswold (BMS)
- 01/18/2024 - 3:45pm: Girls & Boys Basketball v. Killingly (Varsity Only)
- 01/22/2024 - 3:30pm: Girls Basketball at Wheeler (Varsity Only)
- 01/22/2024 - 3:45pm: Boys Basketball v. Wheeler (BMS)
- 01/24/2024 - 5:30-6:30pm: BOE Budget Workshop
- 01/24/2024 - 6:30pm: BOE Meeting

6. Administrative Reports

a. FY23 Financial Reports

Mrs. DiBenedetto discussed the expenditure report. She stated that the Board approved budget transfers that were requested by Mrs. Toth, Special Education Director, at the November meeting have been completed. The expenditures are on track; nothing new to report. Mrs. DiBenedetto stated that the auditors are scheduled for January 10 to January 13, 2023 and have been working behind the scenes at their office. She also informed the Board that the school's financial assistant, Laura Cota, had resigned and interviews were scheduled for Friday, December 22, 2023 to fill the vacancy.

b. Enrollment Report

Mrs. Buell discussed the enrollment report. There are not many changes. Total student enrollment is 1,256. Including high school students.

c. Brooklyn's Best

Brooklyn Elementary School:

- We've always said the BES is a very special place due to the people there. We even have custodial staff that check in with students that need a little extra support.
- BES just completed their next round of data meetings. We are excited to see the growth of our students in all areas. Staff are making choices for each student based on their individual needs.

- Thank you to all of the volunteers that have come out to help in our Scholastic Book Fair. Without these volunteers, this event would not be possible.
- Thank you to our PTO for organizing the raffle basket event, CCMC's PJ Day and the Holiday Store. These events go a long way in supporting our schools and children.
- Mrs. Gatlin held a craft night fundraiser for our staff to support the Brooklyn Parks and Recreation with their toy drive. The staff had an amazing time and made some adorable gnomes and wonderful memories.
- Grade 3 & 4 Chorus singing at the Ice Box after school on December 12th.

Brooklyn Middle School:

- Our Winter sports are off to a great start!
- 2 new community fitness stations have been installed and are almost ready for final touches.
- We are looking forward to our Band and Chorus concerts before winter break.
- Good Cookie October 2023:
 - 5th - Ellie Faucher, Sawyer Goodwin
 - 6th - Bianca Mercer, Sam LaFlesh
 - 7th - Sophia Nason, Henry Goodwin, & Jaden Gilmore
 - 8th - Evelyn Thayer, Ethan Laoroyal
- Lions Club Award Recipients:
 - 5th - Mackenzie Ennis
 - 6th - Ella Hynes
 - 7th - Reese Robillard
 - 8th - Gavin Lalumiere

7. Board of Education Committee Reports

Mrs. Lyons passed out the Board Committee Assignments for January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2025.

8. Board Representatives to Other Committees

None to report

9. Old Business

a. NESDEC Update

- 1/05/2024: Superintendent Application Deadline & NESDEC gathers community information; findings are summarized and presented to the BOE.

- 1/08/2024: NESDEC facilitates: application screening, checks & reading for Committee Review.
- 1/09/2024: NESDEC: **Committee Workshop #1 5:30** (Full Committee)
- 1/17/2024: NESDEC: **Committee Workshop #2 5:30**
- 1/27/2024 (Saturday): Superintendent Candidates 1st Round Interviews (top 5-8 candidates)
- 1/29-2/16: Committee selects Superintendent candidate finalists
- 2/7/2024 (5-9:00PM): Superintendent Candidates 2nd Round Interviews
- 2/21/2024 (possible date): Superintendent Finalist(s) Day Long Visit
- 2/29/2024: Final checks and agreements for Superintendent Finalist
- 03/01/2024: BOE Appoints new Superintendent

Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans asked if the NESDEC consultants review the survey results from the community at the first date scheduled? Mrs. Buell stated that NESDEC will get the number of applications out to the Board and will be able to review online. The selection will be January 17, 2023 and interviews will be in February.

Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans asked if the community members or staff are involved in the process. Mrs. Buell stated that the community and teachers/staff only take part in the survey. The Brooklyn Board of Education's job is to hire a Superintendent and to seek input, which was the survey. Every town is different when hiring a Superintendent and NESDEC are well connected with other organizations.

b. Second Reading of Policies

- 5125 Student Records; Confidentiality

Mrs. Burgess stated that the policy committee removed old language.

- 6159 Individualized Education Program/Special Education Program

Mrs. Burgess stated that the policy committee removed old language and added additional state statutes.

- 6162.51 Survey of Students

Mrs. Burgess stated that the policy committee is replacing this policy with CAGE's sample policy.

Mrs. Metzger pointed out a typo in paragraph 4, line 1: "the Board **or** Education," should be "the Board **of** Education."

Mrs. Burgess made a motion to accept policies 5125, 6159 and 6162.51 with revisions recommended during discussion.
(Burgess/Perkins-Banas)

Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans stated that the acronyms of PPT and IEPs are used in paragraph 3 and the definitions in paragraph one and two for planning and placement team (PPT) and individualized education program (IEP) should not be deleted.

Mrs. Burgess made a motion to amend the original motion and add the definitions back into the policy.

(Burgess/Perkins-Banas)

No further discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

10. New Business

a. Discussion regarding Kindergarten Age

Mrs. Buell stated that kindergarteners will need to be age 5 prior to September 1st in order to attend kindergarten. The Board held a discussion. The Board also held a discussion on the preschool age.

Mrs. Buell stated she will inform parents and community members of the updated Connecticut General Statute with the following guidelines:

- January 2, 2024: Share information again about the changes in PA 23-208 through school messenger, school's social media, and school website
- Develop simple waiver request that parents can complete by March 15, 2024
 - 2023: 10 children in Brooklyn Public School's pre-kindergarten fall in this category
 - Assessment: Performance level 3 (PL3): average % students earning PL3 over the last three years is 43% (36.28%, 44.2%, 48.6%)
- Children whose parents requested a waiver will be evaluated during April, 2024
- Families will be notified of waiver results no later than May 1, 2024

Mrs. Buell recommends that the Brooklyn Board of Education adopt the criteria that students must be age 3 before September 1st to be enrolled in preschool. Students with an IEP who require services are permitted to be enrolled on their third birthday. Mrs. Burgess stated there is no waiver for preschool.

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to adopt the criteria that students must be age 3 before September 1st to be enrolled in preschool. Students with an IEP who require services are permitted to be enrolled on their third birthday.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0
Unanimous vote to approve

b. Review Residency Information

Ms. Buell stated that the review of residency information is being postponed until the next Board meeting so that it does not influence the upcoming hearing.

c. Discussion of the Reading Waiver

Mrs. Buell discussed the Reading Waiver being denied and shared current practices and next steps with the request for reconsideration of Brooklyn's waiver. She stated Brooklyn is currently using Teachers College and stated that schools that use Teachers College did not get approved. Mrs. Buell stated she wrote a letter to the State of Connecticut with a request for reconsideration of the Reading Waiver. She also shared with the Board a comparison and summary information of programs approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). She stated that Brooklyn is already implementing three quarters of what the State requires. The two programs the State will accept are Bookworms and Wit & Wisdom. Brooklyn will need to select a new program. She stated that there is a Right to Read grant for \$142,000, which will help with the cost of a new program. Mrs. Buell stated that they will continue to improve reading instruction and outcomes for students while being compliant with the CSDE.

11. Public Comment

A member of the audience stated that teachers are having to give more diagnostic testing. She likes that other States are making sure that schools are in compliance and wanted to know where Brooklyn stands.

Mrs. Buells stated that public comment is for the Board to listen to comments, not to respond/answer questions. Mrs. Lyons gave Mrs. Buell permission to comment.

Mrs. Buell stated that last year, staff and administrators had training on the Science of Reading. There were multiple training sessions to try the program and collect data. She stated that this year, more staff will be included in the training content with experts in classroom support, conversations with data teams and can seek Instructional Coach feedback.

Mrs. Wimmer, Wauregan Road, Brooklyn, retired teacher, stated that the State mandated programs include intervention and she knows that teachers are already having professional development. Mrs. Buell stated that all programs being used have intervention, iReady assessment tools and reading intervention tools.

12. Adjournment

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to adjourn at 8:20 p.m.
(Burgess/Metzger)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna L. DiBenedetto

Donna L. DiBenedetto

Justin Phaiah, Board of Education Secretary

Date