

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 on April 24, 2024. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, Mrs. Burgess, Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans, and Mrs. Metzger.

Also in attendance were Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, Mrs. DiBenedetto, Business Manager, Mrs. Graef, BES Principal, Mr. Weaver, BES Assistant Principal, Mrs. Tamsin, BMS Principal, Mr. Bender, BMS Assistant Principal, Mrs. Violette, BES Instructional Coach, Mrs. Crawford, BMS Instructional Coach, Mrs. Dehls, Drama/Chorus Teacher, and cast members of Lion King Jr.

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. Lyons 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. March 27, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes for March 27, 2024.

(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

5. Correspondence and Communication

a. Recognition Drama Students

Mrs. Buell stated that the drama students did an excellent job this year with the production of The Lion King Jr. Mrs. Dehls, Drama Instructor/Music Teacher at Brooklyn Middle School, and the cast and crew were dressed in their costumes and performed/sang The Circle of Life for the Board. Mrs. Dehls introduced the cast and crew to the Board and stated that the students have been working very hard and completely run by students. Mrs. Buell thanked all of them for all their hard work. Mrs. Lyons handed out a gift to each of the students.

Mrs. Lyons asked if Mrs. Dehls made all the masks the students were wearing. Mrs. Dehls stated that she did make the masks. The costumes are shared with Mansfield Middle School's Drama Program, which was organized by Mrs. Tamsin for the previous few year's productions.

Mrs. Buell stated she was impressed by the talent of the students and thanked the students for coming.

b. Recognition CAPSS Award Recipients

Mrs. Buell recognized the following students who were CAPSS award recipients that was held at Killingly Public Schools on March 26, 2024:

- Omar Barillas-Mundo
- Brynn Choruzek
- Cameron Ferra
- Ethan Laoroyal

Mrs. Buell stated that this award is given to the top two students in grade four and grade eight. She stated that it is a very proud moment for Brooklyn Schools.

c. Curriculum Walk by Administration

Mrs. Graef stated that the administration had a conversation in regards to the curriculum and wanted to share it with the Board. She stated that curriculum is always a work in progress and it is reassessed every year to see what improvements are needed.

Mrs. Graef discussed the Points of Pride for the Brooklyn Elementary School:

- Updated guaranteed classroom experiences
- Implementation of UFLI & Heggerty
- Implementation of iReady Classroom Mathematics Program (K-4)
- mCLASS data to prioritize small groups and interventions
- Weekly grade-level meetings to review/reflect on current practices and pacing guide

Mrs. Tamsin Discussed the Point of Pride for the Brooklyn Middle School:

- Horizontal and vertical curriculum design for each grade level
- Identification of priority standards across grade levels and content areas
- Development team cohesiveness through the curriculum process
- The document has been updated for the new programs being used and adjusted
- Will serve as a helpful tool to support new teachers in district

Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans asked what does horizontal and vertical curriculum design mean? Mrs. Tamsin stated it is a comparison of achievement across grade levels and subjects. Mrs. Graef stated that at the elementary school it is slightly different due to the grade level teachers teaching every subject. She stated that horizontal refers to everyone on the grade level and vertical refers to different grade levels.

Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans asked how students who are not keeping up with the pace, how are they assisted? Mrs. Graef stated that in Tier I, every student receives the same instruction, it doesn't mean that every student is going to master the content, this is the subject that they are going to be able to learn.

Mrs. Buell discussed the importance of reflection in this process. It allows teachers and administrators to determine what is working and what is not. She stated that this is beneficial for refining the material, which is an ongoing process.

Mrs. Buell stated that she is very proud of Brooklyn's teams and administrators that work together to put together the curriculum. It is a large amount of work that is very beneficial.

Mr. Weaver stated that when he started in the district about eight years ago, there was no pacing guide in place. Teachers were all following the same curriculum, but there was not a focus on reflection and refining. He stated that these improvements occur over a long period of time.

Mrs. Graef gave credit to Brooklyn's instructional coaches for their involvement and assistance to ensure all classrooms are learning the same concepts.

Mrs. Wastrom-Evans stated that it appears that the return on investment for administrative burden is worthwhile.

Mrs. Graef responded stating that it is not only an administrative burden, but that it also falls on the teachers. There is a significant amount of work that occurs beyond their working hours to accomplish these reflections.

Mrs. Crawford, the Instructional Coach for the Middle School, discussed the pacing guide. Each map of the pacing guide displays each grade level in the school, and demonstrates what units will be taught throughout the school year. Within each unit is a hyperlink that includes individual documents related to the unit being taught. They also provide essential questions and priority standards that the teachers should be teaching and additional resources.

Mrs. Buell asked what an essential question is. Mrs. Crawford responded stating they are the targeted questions and objectives that are being taught, and what do the students need to know before moving on. She stated that these are skills that students need to be successful, and what is needed by educators to provide support. There is a need to know what students are learning and understanding.

Mrs. Violette, the Instructional Coach for the Elementary School, discussed the pacing guide. The biggest difference at the Elementary level is there are five teachers teaching the same concepts. The teachers are focusing on reflection. Reflection includes determining what is going well and what needs improvement. She stated that there has been an improvement in teachers focusing on the reflection component. She stated that the biggest improvement seen was vocabulary at the elementary level.

Mrs. Watstrom-Evans asked if there was room for teachers to teach their passions? Mrs. Violette stated teachers are able to be creative with how they teach the material to students. Mrs. Graef added that the units are broad enough so that teachers can provide their own method of teaching, but the material has to be consistent amongst classrooms.

Mr. Weaver discussed the next steps for the Brooklyn Elementary School:

- Additional time to work on/modify curriculum
- Implement small group work into curriculum documents
- Identify lessons for appropriate math intervention
- Incorporate ELA and math concepts into the Unified Arts curriculum
- Analyze data to determine next steps for instruction
- Revisit science, social studies and unified arts curriculum

Mr. Bender discussed the next steps for the Brooklyn Middle School:

- Continue to collaborate and improve instructional strategies
- Need additional time to work on/modify curriculum
- Balancing instruction of reading/writing standards from year to year
- Updating and expanding our library of resources both physical and digital for research and assessment
- Continue to develop assessments

- Update and modify as educational trends change and develop

Mrs. Wastrom-Evans asked if teachers need more time, but only have a finite amount of time, what do they sacrifice to make the time? Mrs. Graef stated that teachers focus on the priorities, and that it is a balancing act. There is not always enough time to cover what needs to be done, but do the best they can. Mrs. Tamsin also stated that focusing on momentum can be beneficial for increasing productivity in planning during professional development days.

Mrs Buell stated that she wanted to weigh in on the question about teacher's time. She stated that there is a restriction by contract, and adding days results in a financial burden. There is an opportunity for summer work, which has been done through grant funding in the past. She also stated that they can look at the school calendar to determine if it is beneficial to include more half days for teachers to have time for planning instruction, which would impact students and parents. Mrs. Buell stated that administrators and teachers are doing an amazing job, their work is invaluable, and are providing a viable curriculum to students. Mrs. Buell thanks administrators, teachers and the Board for their continued support for this ongoing work.

Mrs. Lyons stated that it is very complicated to find more time for teachers, where adding a half day may not be enough time and it can become expensive to add a full day. She added that student time is important.

d. Resignations

Mrs. Buell stated that she received resignations from the following staff:

- Paula Graef
- Adam Bender
- Cecilia Stallone
- Sonya Buccheri
- Rachel Mackewicz
- Hanna Forsten

Mrs. Buell wishes teachers and administrators well and success in their future endeavors.

6. Administrative Reports

a. FY23 Financial Reports

Mrs. DiBenedetto discussed the expenditure report. She stated that there are no changes from last month, expenditures are remaining on track and is watching the

bottom line closely. Mrs. DiBenedetto stated that they are continuing to pay invoices for the items that have been encumbered.

Mrs. Buell added that they are looking into the HVAC project to update the systems in both the schools. This is expected to be a significant cost for the school, and is hoping to receive grant funding in order to move forward with the project. She stated that it is critical that we move on with the project, and the inspections need to be completed as well as the drawings for funding. The inspections are also a legislative requirement. She stated that additional ARPA funding from the Town was requested, and was approved for approximately \$70,000. Mrs. Buell also stated that the Middle School Auditorium does not have air conditioning and it is not cost effective to repair.

b. Enrollment Reports

Mrs. Buell discussed the enrollment report. The Brooklyn Elementary School increased by 4. The Brooklyn Middle School increased by 1, high school students decreased by 1 and out of district students increased by 1. Total student enrollment went from 1,251 to 1,256.

c. Brooklyn's Best

Brooklyn Elementary School:

- The District Literacy Leadership team has completed the review of the Wit and Wisdom. The team is involved in an intense review process with the State Department of Education and Hill for Literacy.
- Pre-K students celebrated their letters with a parade/scavenger hunt around the building.
- Azul String Quartet held an assembly for grades 3 & 4 students at BES on March 26th.
- Grades 3 & 4 took a field trip to Woodstock to see the Azul String Quartet perform, and they represented themselves very well.
- Grade 4 attended Lion King performance at BMS on 4/8, and were a very respectful, appreciative audience

Brooklyn Middle School:

- Good Cookie April 2024:
 - 5th - Christa Lavimoniere-Green, Lilli Bartrum-Follansbee
 - 6th - Lillian Lamson, Aiden Armstrong
 - 7th - Lexie Young, Naomi Nunez
 - 8th - Amani Ortiz, Aedan Khamphoukeo
- Congratulations to Mrs. Dehls and the Cast and Crew of Lion King, Jr. The performance was well done with great attendance.
- We were excited to have a whole school performance of Lion King, Jr. which included grade 4 students.

- We held an Internet Safety Presentation by Trooper White that provided current information to parents.
- We also had 2 assemblies with Trooper White for him to provide important information to students in grades 4-6 and 7-8 about staying safe on social media and the internet.
- We had a great start to our Kindness Campaign and are working to celebrate kindness throughout the school community.
- Ron Baribeau and company have completed the installation of another station at the middle school. He has been extremely generous with his time, talent and materials and we are very grateful.

7. Board of Education Committee Reports

None to Report

8. Board Representatives to Other Committees

Dr. Perkins-Banas reminded the Board about the Town wide yard sale sponsored by the Parks and Recreation on May 11, 2024. The final day to sign up is May 1, 2024.

9. Old Business

None

10. New Business

a. Ratification of 1303 Contract - tabled for next meeting

Mrs. Buell stated that the ratification of the 1303 contract is tabled until the next Board meeting in May due to April vacation, the 1303 union was not able to vote.

Mrs. Buell wanted to add that May 1, 2024 is the Planning and Zoning Public Meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Brooklyn Middle School Auditorium where the school is requesting a zoning change for a new electronic sign that has been donated by the Beagary Charitable Trust. The sign will provide many benefits for the town and be able to display important information. It will also be able to be dimmed at night for residents that live nearby.

Mrs. Burgess asked if Mrs. Buell would be able to share information with the public in regards to the meeting through school messenger and social media. The zoning change is for the sign to be on municipally owned properties.

11. Public Comment

None

12. Adjournment

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.
(Perkins-Banas/Burgess.)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

Rebecca S. DiBenedetto

Rebecca S. DiBenedetto

Justin Phaiah, Board of Education Secretary

Date