

# The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn  
119 Gorman Road  
Brooklyn, CT 06234

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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 special meeting in the Brooklyn Middle School Auditorium and virtually on February 28, 2024 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](mailto: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. January 24, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes for January 24, 2024.

(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

No Discussion

**Vote Count:** 6, 0  
Unanimous vote to approve

5. Correspondence and Communication

a. Woodstock Academy: January Head of School Award

Mrs. Buell stated she received a letter from Woodstock Academy's Head of School, Christopher Sandford, stating that Brady Ericson was chosen to receive the Head of School Award for January. Mrs. Buell and the Board congratulated Brady.

b. Thank you - Dan Landry Electric

Mrs. Buell stated that she sent a letter to Dan Landry Electric for his contribution of time, skills and materials (valued at approximately \$500.00) towards the installation of the motors for the backboards at the Brooklyn Elementary School gymnasium. She stated that Mr. Landry's contribution demonstrates a deep commitment to the Brooklyn community.

c. Fall and Winter Athletics Recognition: Thank you Athletic Director Gutierrez, coaches and athletes

Mrs. Buell thanked everyone for being present and introduced Mrs. Tamsin.

Mrs. Tamsin thanked everyone for coming and stated that they are celebrating the fall and winter athletes. She thanked parents and guardians for supporting the players and getting them to early morning practices. Mrs. Tamsin introduced Mr. Gutierrez, Athletic Director.

Mr. Gutierrez stated that the fall cross country team was undefeated and wanted to recognize Emmy Langevin who came in fourth overall and went to State championships with her sister. The boys struggled, but every runner was cheered on. The girls soccer team was undefeated for the last two years. The boys soccer team was undefeated as well.

The winter season, the girls basketball team was undefeated. Mr. Gutierrez stated it was an awesome season. The boys basketball team worked really hard and practiced every morning at 7:00am, despite ending the season 2 to 8. The cheer team did an outstanding job supporting both teams.

Mr. Gutierrez invited each team member by grade that was present at the Board meeting to be individually recognized for their accomplishments this season. They each received a small gift.

Mrs. Buell thanked Mr. Gutierrez and the coaches by giving them a round of applause for all their hard work.

d. Arts BES and BMS Appreciation: Mrs. Gatlin, Mrs. Paille and artists

Mrs. Graef introduced the Brooklyn Elementary School's Art Teacher, Mrs. Gatlin who was Brooklyn's Teacher of the Year last year. Mrs. Gatlin and a few students that take part in the after school Art Club walked up to the stage holding a welcome sign that they made. Mrs. Graef thanked the parents of students that participated in the after school Art program.

Mrs. Buell thanked the students for the welcome sign and asked if they made it for anyone special. The students stated it was for the new Superintendent.

Mrs. Tamsin stated that there were many pieces of art work displayed in the lobby area. She stated that if any students were present that had their art work displayed, to stand up to be recognized. Mrs. Tamsin introduced Mrs. Paille, the Brooklyn Middle School Art Teacher. Mrs. Tamsin stated that Mrs. Paille is responsible for having students create all the murals in the hallways.

Mrs. Buell thanked all the students, administrator teams and art teachers. She stated that the arts and athletics in Brooklyn, and all of Brooklyn is amazing.

e. Appointment of Brooklyn's Next Superintendent of Schools

Mrs. Lyons asked for a motion to appoint Brooklyn's Next Superintendent of Schools.

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to appoint Michele Raynor as the Superintendent of Brooklyn Public Schools effective July 1, 2024 (Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

No Discussion

**Vote Count:** 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Mrs. Lyons read the In Person Announcement. She stated that Mrs. Raynor has been a Connecticut Educator for over thirty years. She began as a Science Teacher and Department Chair. She then was an Assistant Principal in Branford before becoming the Principal at Griswold Middle School. In 2017, Mrs. Raynor was appointed as the Director of Curriculum in Region 16. Mrs. Lyons stated that Mrs. Raynor earned her Bachelor's Degree of Science at Southern Connecticut State University, a Master's of Science Degree from Wesleyan University, and a Sixth Year from Southern Connecticut State University and her Superintendent certification from the University of Connecticut. Mrs. Raynor was selected from a pool of over 30 candidates. Brooklyn Schools used NESDEC in order to find the best qualified candidates. After review of profiles and several interviews, the

Brooklyn Board of Education selected Michele Raynor as the next Superintendent. Mrs. Raynor's references confirmed that she is highly regarded for her knowledge, leadership, listening skills, communication skills, problem solving, loyalty and integrity. Her references also described Mrs. Raynor as organized, collaborative, straightforward and hardworking. The Brooklyn Board of Education welcomes Michele Raynor to Brooklyn Public Schools and looks forward to her starting July 1, 2024.

Mrs. Michele Raynor stated that it is an honor to be selected as the new Superintendent for Brooklyn Public Schools and is excited to begin working with everyone.

Mrs. Lyons stated that they will be taking a ten minute break to welcome Michele Raynor.

## 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.

### b. Transfer Request

Mrs. DiBenedetto discussed the budget transfer request for the amount of \$130,000.00 from six account lines to other account lines to offset negative balances.

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to approve the transfer of funds as outlined on the Budget Transfer Request in the amount of \$130,000.00 to adjust for negative balances.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

### c. Enrollment Reports

Mrs. Buell discussed the enrollment report. The Brooklyn Elementary School decreased by 2. The Brooklyn Middle School decreased by 4 and high school students had no change. Total student enrollment 1,251.

### d. Brooklyn's Best

#### Brooklyn Elementary School:

- The Donors Choose items have been pouring in! The staff and students are

- thoroughly enjoying their new SEL materials.
- Multiple staff members have visited other schools to observe potential reading programs for our building. They are excited and eager to bring their findings back to our literacy committee.
- Our students have been racking up their PBIS tickets to be guest announcers for morning announcements. It has been wonderful to see so many BEARs!
- Sally Rodgers came to visit kindergarten. The students have enjoyed the Science of Sound activities and learned about sound waves and how they travel.

Brooklyn Middle School:

- Good Cookie October 2024:
  - 5th - Maahir Solanki, Maeve Sladewski
  - 6th - Salvatore Deojay, Sahanna Bonafe
  - 7th - Lillian Dumond, Asher Jarvis
  - 8th - Ella Petersen, Peyton Loeber
- Q2 Lions Club
  - 5th - Aaisley Torres
  - Olivia Hunton
  - Max Schaeffer
  - Joseph Spring
- Congratulations to our Girls Basketball team for their perfect season and First place finish for the QVJC championship! Our Boys basketball team made nice progress in their skills and teamwork throughout the season. Cheerleaders improved their skills and team cohesiveness throughout the season!
- Congratulations to our 21 staff members who were awarded project grants from the CSDE. Their interest and willingness to develop ideas for new materials and opportunities in classrooms is commendable.
- Thank you to the teachers who have committed to offering Q3 after-school activities. There are 10 club offerings with 80 participants.
- The drama club continues to make great progress towards their performance of Lion King, Jr. The scheduled dates for that performance are April 5 and 6 from 6-8 pm. We look forward to enjoying the final product.
- Our NJHS is working to schedule a Red Cross blood drive in March. More details will be shared as they become available.

7. Board of Education Committee Reports

None to Report

8. Board Representatives to Other Committees

Dr. Perkins-Banas stated that Woodstock Academy will have 3% tuition increase for the 2024-2025 school year.

9. Old Business

- a. Approve Increasing Educator Diversity Plan

Mrs. Buell stated that the overview of the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan was presented and the State has required that every district develop a plan. She stated that the idea is to increase educator diversity. Mrs. Buell stated that Brooklyn has developed a plan and asks the Board to approve the plan and give the Superintendent the authority to make revisions as necessary.

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to approve the Increasing Educator Diversity Plan as proposed and gives the Superintendent the authority to make revisions to the plan as necessary.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No Discussion

**Vote:** 5 in favor; 1 opposed

Mrs. Lyons: Yes

Dr. Perkins-Banas: Yes

Mr. Phaiah: Yes Mrs. Burgess: Yes

Mrs. Wasstrom-Evans: Yes

Mrs. Metzger: Opposed

Motion passes

#### 10. New Business

No new business to report.

#### 11. Public Comment

Lance Metzger, resident of Brooklyn, asked why Brooklyn is choosing a new reading program. Mrs. Buell stated that the Legislature passed a new law that all districts had to adopt an approved reading program. Brooklyn does not have one of the approved programs. She stated that she wrote a waiver and the State denied the waiver request. The State stated that it needs to have higher performing readers in Connecticut. The Town of Brooklyn is complying with this legislation by adopting a new program that is approved by the State. Mrs. Buell stated that Brooklyn has already made improvements to the current program and have adapted three quarters of the approved program. She stated that they are in the final stages of implementing the program and are happy with the progress that has been made. Mr. Metzger asked about the cost associated with the new program. Mrs. Buell stated that the new program will be funded by grants.

Cindy Dehner, a resident of Brooklyn, asked the Board if they would be able to see the Educator Diversity Plan. Mrs. Buell stated that the plan was posted on the Town's website under the meeting agenda. Mrs. Buell also offered the resident a paper copy of the plan.

#### 12. Adjournment

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to adjourn at 7:20 p.m.

(Mrs. Burgess)  
No Discussion  
**Vote Count:** 6, 0  
Unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,  
***Rebecca S. DiBenedetto***

Rebecca S. DiBenedetto

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Justin Phaiah, Board of Education Secretary

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Date