

# 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  
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 virtually on April 28, 2021 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, Mr. Atchinson, and Mr. Richards. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, and Mr. Otto, Board of Finance, were also present. Mrs. Jolley was 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 7:01 p.m.

2. Public Comment

None

3. Approval of Minutes

a. March 24, 2021 BOE Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 24, 2021.  
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)  
No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

b. March 30, 2021 BOE Special Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of March 30, 2021.

(Phaiah/Perkins-Banas)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

#### 4. Correspondence and Communication

##### a. Resignations

###### i. Miss Samantha Cronin

Mrs. Buell stated that Miss Cronin is resigning from her teaching position at the Brooklyn Elementary School. Mrs. Buell wishes her well.

###### ii. Ms. Emily Moreau

Mrs. Buell stated that Ms. Moreau is resigning from her teaching position at the Brooklyn Elementary School. Mrs. Buell wishes her well.

###### iii. Mrs. Mary Ann Sjogren

Mrs. Buell stated that she received a resignation letter from Mrs. Sjogren, Special Education Teacher at the Brooklyn Elementary School. Mrs. Buell thanks her for her many years and wishes her well.

##### b. Thank You Letter - Ocean State Job Lot

Mrs. Buell stated she sent a thank you letter to Mr. Poof, Manager of Ocean State Job Lot, for the generous donation of two pallets of supplies to the Brooklyn Public Schools. The supplies have already been distributed to the Brooklyn Middle School and the Brooklyn Elementary school and have already been put to use.

#### 5. Administrative Reports

##### a. Brooklyn BOE Expenditure Report

Mrs. Buell discussed the expenditure report. She stated that there are funds that are still anticipated to be expended before the end of the year and funds that will give a surplus by the end of the year. There will still be a few transfers to be made as well. Mrs. Buell stated that she is anticipating a surplus of approximately \$165,255, numbers are still moving.

##### b. Enrollment Report

Mrs. Buell discussed the enrollment report. She stated that there are still some students in distance learning and home schooled by choice and anticipates that these students will return to in-person learning when there are less restrictions

with covid.

Mr. Otto wanted to speak about the financial report Mrs. Buell just discussed. He is hoping for a higher surplus than the \$165,255. He stated it would be great for the Town of Brooklyn given the budget request the Board of Education has made for the next school year. He is worried about the number of people in town that lost their jobs, lost their homes, lost mortgages and it looks like the Town of Brooklyn is lining up to raise taxes by a mil this year. Any surplus that can come out of this budget will be helpful.

c. Brooklyn's Best

**BES**

- The student leadership team (Sofia Carpenter, Vincent Genna, Landon Bessett, Nolan Wakely, Aiden Armstrong, Aislynn Hassett, Aiden Black, Janelle Elliott) have been doing an outstanding job preparing for the Solar Panel Ribbon Cutting Ceremony.
- The following early childhood staff submitted and received a mini grant valued up to \$500 through CT Office of Early Childhood to support high quality learning experiences and instructional needs:
  - Alyssa Barry
  - Cathy Case
  - Kimberly Wood
  - Beth Frink
  - Michelle Nye
  - Craig Osborn
  - Allison Knutson
- Our hiring committees are working hard to interview candidates that will join our team for next year.
- Lynn Paquin, Beverly Grennan, Reilly Dumond and Jamie Smith have committed to move forward with obtaining their CDA.

**BMS**

- Good Cookie March 2021
  - Grade 5:** King/Nault: Caleb Aubertine  
Carson/Desabota: Ethan MacNeil  
Payant/DS: Ioannis Exarhoulias
  - Grade 6:** Cora Hefner, Connor Bessette
  - Grade 7:** Tiernan Currant, Gabby Payne
  - Grade 8:** Jackson Sorel, Alex Forsten
  - Distance Learning:** Gabrielle Lessey, Leon Sanders
- Special congratulations to our Grade 6 students and their hard work in building and test driving their solar vehicles.

- Thank you to our Grade 8 Algebra students that worked diligently to graph and project the cost savings of our new solar panels.
- We are excited to have our 50 students in grades 6, 7, and 8 participating in our spring sports offerings.
- Thank you to our staff who have adjusted to a new instructional format since the return from Spring vacation. Teachers are now offering live instruction across all grade levels with the core academic teachers rotating classrooms to see every cohort each day. Their flexibility during this school year has been commendable.

#### 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 the Board of Education did approve a budget for the 2021-2022 school year and that budget did go to the Board of Finance. The Board of Finance received the budget, it has not been approved as of yet. The Board of Finance will make a decision once they have all the departments budgets together. Mrs. Buell stated she will continue to attend the Board of Finance meetings.

##### b. Second Reading: Policy 5141-213

Motion to approve the Policy #5141-213.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

#### 9. New Business

##### a. CDC Recommendations Update

Mrs. Buell stated there have been no changes to the CDC recommendations. Family members have been asked to quarantine after travel. If CDC guidelines change, Mrs. Buell will notify families and communicate the change. The CDC recommendations are if people travel out of state for more than 24 hours, it does require quarantining for ten (10) days or have a negative test result and quarantine for seven (7) days, which the Board agreed to follow at the last Board of Education meeting, March 24, 2021.

b. Capital Report

Mrs. Buell stated that the initial capital request was sent to the Board of Selectmen with hardware and software included. For several years, the school has been told to put hardware and software requests into the capital requests. These costs are increasing with online learning increasing due to the need for more chromebooks and smartboards for classrooms. The Board of Selectmen removed the hardware and software for the school from the capital budget and suggested that it be added to the Board of Education budget. Mrs. Buell stated the Board of Education has already approved the 2021-2022 budget, it can not be added into the budget. She has put the hardware and software purchases under the grants. There are guidelines on the ESSER II Funds and the application has been submitted. Mrs. Buell does not have the full guidelines on the American Rescue Plan Funds as of yet.

Mrs. Buell stated that four out of the six boilers that are at the elementary and middle school needs to be replaced. She stated that the boilers have been removed from the capital request as well due to the Town of Brooklyn having the possibility of additional grant funding for infrastructure. If the school were to consider bringing natural gas in, then natural gas boilers will be put in versus the oil boilers. Also, Mrs. Buell stated that there is a possibility that school construction grant funding may be available to offset air conditioning in schools.

Mr. Otto stated that after the two years of pandemic grant funds expire, the request to move the hardware and software into the school operating budget will be just as strong as it is now and will have an impact on the size of the overall budget.

Mr. Richards asked with the grant funding and the technology, what is the timeline on the approval for that or will it have to be encumbered? Mrs. Buell stated that ESSER funds has a small portion of the technology and the largest portion will be through the American Rescue Plan Funds. Mrs. Buell stated that the Technology Director has started getting quotes together.

c. FY22 Grant Update

Mrs. Buell stated that she moved the hardware and software from the capital requests to the grant funding.

d. Next Year: No distance learning required

Mrs. Buell stated that she received notification that the State of Connecticut is not requiring schools to offer distance learning for next year. She stated that our budget is based on not having distance learning. The state is allowing districts to make that decision. Mrs. Buell stated most districts will not offer distance learning. There will be some challenges when families send their children back to

school, there will not be a distance learning choice, unless the Board will want to build something around that. If there are teachers that have a medical reason for not coming into school due to the risk of covid, it could be a challenge for those employees as well. In Connecticut, there were some teachers that were accommodated to work from home that may not be able to be accommodated if distance learning is not being offered.

Mr. Richards asked if that would fall under short-term disability, if it is substantiated with medical? Mrs. Buell stated that teachers do not qualify for short-term disability. They can use sick time.

e. Virtual or in person BOE meetings

Mrs. Buell stated that starting May 19, 2021 is when Governor Lamont's next executive order extension will expire. She said the next question will be if they will continue with hybrid meetings or will they be required to offer in person meetings. Board meetings may need to be moved to a larger venue, such as the auditorium if there are many people attending.

Dr. Perkins-Banas stated that they may have to wait and see what will happen with the executive orders and how they may change, what the CDC guidelines are for crowds and how much space is needed. She is not opposed to having the public at the Board meetings. It is easier to have people participate in the Board meetings.

There was discussion in regards to being three feet versus six feet apart and on how many people may attend. If many people were to show, then the venue would need to be changed. There was discussion of the possibility of having people sign-up so they would have an idea of how many people may attend the Board meeting.

Mr. Phaiah mentioned that they can still broadcast the Board meeting and open it to the public. With people being able to watch or listen right from home, there may not be too many people showing up in person.

Mrs. Buell said that more people have been attending Board meetings because they can watch or listen from home and it might be easier for families to listen from home. Mrs. Buell was asked if the STEAM students could present to the Board at the May meeting. Mrs. Buell will confirm and will put notification out if there will be a presentation, then the meeting should be held in the auditorium. Mrs. Buell stated that she will put notice out on where the next Board meeting will be held.

f. Replacement of Woodstock Academy Liaison

Mrs. Buell stated that Mr. Atchinson will no longer be the Woodstock Academy Liaison. The Board needs to recommend someone from the Board and an application and resume needs to be submitted.

Mr. Atchinson stated that he is going to be coaching Tennis at Woodstock Academy and where he is considered as an employee, he is no longer allowed to be the Woodstock Academy Liaison.

Mrs. Lyons asked if anyone would be willing to fill it.

After discussion, Dr. Perkins-Banas stated she is willing to be the Woodstock Academy Liaison.

Mrs. Buell stated that she will send communication to Woodstock Academy and let them know that Dr. Perkins-Banas is being recommended for the Woodstock Academy Liaison by the Brooklyn Board of Education and she will also forward Dr. Perkins-Banas information to them as well.

Mrs. Lyons stated that she would like to add agenda item 9g. First Read of Board Policy 4000 to the agenda.

Motion to add agenda item 9g. First Read of Board Policy 4000 to the agenda.  
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

g. First Read of Board Policy 4000

Mrs. Buell stated that Policy 4000 is an updated Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) policy. There are usually many questions that arise and this policy will help clarify the FMLA policy.

10. Public Comment

None

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:47 p.m.  
(Phaiah/Perkins-Banas)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

***Donna L. DiBenedetto***

Donna L. DiBenedetto  
Board Clerk