

The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn
119 Gorman Road
Brooklyn, CT 06234

Mae Lyons, Board Chair
Justin Phaiah, Secretary
Isaias Sostre

Melissa Perkins-Banas, Vice-Chair
Kayla Burgess
Rick Ives

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 Central Office Community Room Auditorium and virtually on June 22, 2022 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah (arrived at 7:03 p.m.), Mrs. Burgess and Mr. Ives. Mr. Sostre was absent. 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. Lyons stated that four Board members were present: Melissa Perkins-Banas, Justin Phaiah, Kayla Burgess, and herself, Mae Lyons.

Quorum established. Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

2. Public Comment

a. No Public Comment

Motion to move Agenda item 9a up to item 2b.

(Perkins-Banas/Ives)

No discussion

Vote Count: 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

b. Appointment of Adam Bender, BMS Assistant Principal

Mrs. Buell introduced Adam Bender, BMS Assistant Principal, to the Board of Education. She had already publicly made the announcement and introduced Mr. Bender to staff. Mrs. Buell stated that there were approximately thirty-five (35)

applicants. The first round of interviews, the interviewing committee consisted of teachers, administrators and parents. The second round of interviews consisted of teachers, administrators, and Board of Education members. Mr. Bender accepted the position on June 16, 2022 and will start on July 1, 2022. Mrs. Buell stated he comes to Brooklyn from Hartford Public schools where he was a fifth and sixth grade teacher. He was then working in Putnam as a SRBI Coordinator and then Interim Assistant Principal. Mrs. Buell stated that the comments and references that have been made through the hiring process is that Mr. Bender is a hard worker, always there and calm, parents like him, staff felt supported by him, and he spoke about reflection during his interviews, and he also does well under pressure.

Mr. Bender introduced himself to the Board of Education. He stated that he has been the Interim Assistant Principal for the past seven months in Putnam. He enjoyed the role and something he wanted to pursue doing. He stated that he enjoyed meeting the staff at Brooklyn and feels that this is a great community and one he wants to be a part of.

Dr. Perkins-Banas asked Mr. Bender what he likes to do for fun. He stated he is a terrible golfer. He likes to play poker and to bake. One of his children stated he likes to play with his dog as well.

The Board of Education congratulated him on his new position as Assistant Principal at Brooklyn Middle School.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. May 25, 2022 BOE Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for May 25, 2022.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion

Vote Count: 4, 0

Mr. Ives abstained due to not being present at the Board meeting on May 25, 2022.

4. Correspondence and Communication

a. Thank You - Brooklyn Education Association

Mrs. Buell stated she sent a thank you letter to the Brooklyn Education Association for their generous donation of \$500.00 to be used for equipment for the Community Fitness Course.

b. May 31, 2022 Woodstock Academy Letter

Mrs. Buell stated that she received an end of the year letter from Woodstock Academy stating some of their successes for this year. There were 274 students that graduated. The letter discussed commencement, restoration work that they are doing on the Historic Academy Building, which will house a small museum display highlighting the inner workings of the original clock tower. They reopened the Loos Center of the Arts and have done a lot of work in diversity, equity, and inclusion, which has resulted in positive changes campus wide.

5. Administrative Reports

a. Brooklyn Enrollment

Mrs. Buell discussed the May enrollment report. The elementary school went up by five students. The middle school went down by three students. The high school enrollment went up by two students. The total net enrollment changed by an increase of four students.

b. FY22 Financial Reports

Mrs. Buell shared the expenditure report. She stated that we are currently in the black and anticipates remaining in the black with \$38,458.50 or 0.20% left to the budget. She stated there was a lot of hard work of freezing budgets and making difficult decisions. She is anticipating bringing the budget down to zero due to there being outstanding invoices, and \$29,000.00 worth of liability for retiree payouts, which all of it does not need to be paid out this fiscal year. She stated invoices will continue to come in through July.

Mr. Phaiah asked if the payouts for the retirees for this year affect next year's budget if you make payments after July 1, 2022. Mrs. Buell stated that if she knows early enough, she plans for a replacement at a MA or Masters level step. There are some exceptions where there are some positions that are difficult to fill. There have been quite a few resignations and a couple of retirements. She stated that the liability to payout the retirees is approximately \$29,000.00 and there is approximately \$38,000.00 left to the budget. There are a few more expenses with most of the expenses anticipated being already encumbered. Mrs. Buell stated that the bulk of the \$29,000.00 she is planning on paying out this fiscal year, but could go out as far as July of 2023. She stated that the budget passed last night at the Town meeting and she is going to be working the numbers.

Mrs. Buell also stated that there are additional fees for cyber insurance, which is a new policy in case someone hacks into the system and had happened to a neighboring town. She stated that there is also an additional \$12,000.00 that is not in the budget.

Mr. Ives asked if the cyber insurance is part of the Town or the Board's own policy. Mrs. Buell stated that the Town and School are now separate policies due

to the insurance carrier requesting the policies be separate. Mr. Ives stated that it is more expensive with separate policies.

c. May Data Dashboard

Mrs. Buell discussed the Data Dashboard for May with the Board. She stated student attendance increased and the staff attendance decreased slightly. They are transitioning over to PowerSchool and working on getting data cleaned up to enter. She stated that reporting of the total number of truancies for the district has not been done accurately. Any time a student is absent four days in a month or a total of ten days is considered truant.

Brooklyn Elementary School Data for the month of May:

- Assessment completed on time: 100%
- At or above expectations: NA
- % of students in intervention Tier II: 61; 11.30%
- % of students in intervention Tier III: 70; 12.96%
- Observations reviewed: 9
- Instructional pacing on track: 100.00%
- Learning objectives: 100.00%

Brooklyn Middle School Data for the month of May:

- Assessment completed on time: 100.00%
- At or above expectations: Math - 33%; ELA - 67%
- % of students in intervention Tier II: 125; 36%
- Student intervention Tier III: 49; 14.12%
- Observations reviewed: 8
- Instructional pacing on track: 75.00%
- Learning objectives: 75.00%

District Attendance for the month of May:

- BES student attendance: 547; 92.28%
- BES staff attendance: 88; full day - 93.40%; partial day - 95.24%
- BMS student attendance: 345 - 94.52%
- BMS staff attendance: 64; full day - 93.97%; partial day - 96.73%

d. Brooklyn's Best

BES

- PreK staff held an evening ice cream social for families that was very well attended!
- This month kindergarten students went to Mystic Aquarium, Grade 1 visited the Ecotarium and 4th grade students explored Sturbridge Village.
- Our PTO hosted an outstanding Fun Day event for the school. All the students had an amazing day!

- Kindergarten students attended a Snap Word Celebration. Parent volunteers lead students through various interactive games to practice snap words.
- We held a school wide parade for our 5 staff members that are retiring at the end of the school year. It was a bittersweet moment as we are so sad to see them go but so proud of the impact they have had on BES and our community!

BMS

- Grade 8 Field Trip to Nature's Classroom in Yarmouth Port, MA was a success.
- Grade 7 went to Suto through a generous donation by Suto and the students enjoyed the experience thoroughly.
- Grade 6 went to Mystic Aquarium with a significant number of chaperones.
- Grade 5 went to Mystic Seaport with a significant number of chaperones.
- First 3 stations have been received for the Community Fitness Course and are waiting for volunteers to install.
- NJHS Induction Ceremony was a celebration of students' hard work, leadership, and support of their school community.
- Students were celebrated at an in-school assembly for sustained honors and high honors. This event was live-streamed and we hope that next year we will be able to host a full auditorium of guests.
- A special thank you to Michelle Parmeter of Mortlake Fire Department and Aimee Andereson of the Allen Hill Tree Farm for donating chairs for our Brooklyn Middle school graduation ceremony.
- Thank you to Mr. Anderson and Mr. Currant for being an overnight chaperone at Nature's Classroom in Yarmouth Port, MA.
- Thank you to the Icebox for donating served ice cream sundaes at our 8th grade dance. They provided an entire sundae bar with servers! The kids loved it!
- Thank you to Heirloom who also donated additional desserts for the students to pick at while they danced the night away.
- Thank you to all of the generous parents for donating decorations, setting up chairs and volunteering to set-up the 8th grade dance. We appreciate all your help and time.
- Good Cookie May 2022:
 - Grade 5:** King/DS: Anthony Santos
Carson/Nault: Reese Robillard
 - Grade 6:** Olivia Devolve, McKenzie Gianquitti
 - Grade 7:** Ronan Curran, Aris Roane
 - Grade 8:** Madison LaVallee, Tyler Smith

- Q3 Lions Club Recipients:
Grade 5: Lillian Dumond
Grade 6: Anyah Oatley
Grade 7: Logan Hamel
Grade 8: Brady Brezniak

Central Office

Thank you to all of the teachers and staff that go above and beyond helping students and our school. Have a fun and relaxing summer break and we look forward to seeing you in the fall.

6. Board of Education Committee Reports

None to Report

7. Board Representatives to Other Committees

None to Report

8. Old Business

None

9. New Business

a. Appointment of Adam Bender, BMS Assistant Principal

Discussed earlier

b. Policies - 1st Reading

i. Policy 6112 - School Day

Mrs. Buell stated that Policy 6112 is in regards to kindergarten being a half day from 1996 that needs to be revised. She would like the Board to review and will be discussed at the next Board meeting.

Mrs. Buell wanted to give an update on new hires:

- Adam Bender, Assistant Principal at BMS
- Christine Blake, Financial Assistant
- Janet Johnson, BES Special Education Teacher
- Alexa Franchetti, BMS PE Teacher
- Heather Garosshen, BES Teacher
- Emily Rainville, BES Teacher
- Rachel Cardaci, Speech Pathologist

- Jillian Galipeau, Speech Pathologist
- Jill Hardacker, BES Secretary
- Sara Howley, Para Clerk

There are more interviews scheduled for an Art Teacher at BMS and a few positions at BES.

Mrs. Buell provided an update on the Town Finance Director. They have been conducting interviews and have not found a candidate as of yet. They thought they had one, but there are still some in the mix. Mrs. Buell stated that Rushie Bean has been working sixty (60) to seventy (70) hours per week. She stated that we need to provide some relief for Mrs. Bean. Mrs. Buell is concerned with the number of hours she has been working and becoming burnt out. The Board of Education and the Town have committed to this model and they have not filled the Town Finance Director position as of yet. The Board and the Town need to understand that Mrs. Bean cannot keep working seventy (70) hours per week. There is no solution as of yet. She stated that the school needs to work with the Town to get the position filled with the right person. Mrs. Buell stated that Mrs. Bean is doing a great job, she is very driven and wants to do the right thing by not letting anyone down. Mrs. Buell is advocating that Mrs. Bean does not work seventy (70) hours. She is wondering if they separate the positions and Mrs. Bean works forty (40) hours per week for the Board of Education and is willing to work extra hours, the Town pays her at a per diem rate. Mrs. Buell stated that it is not a money issue, it is a burning out issue.

Mr. Phaiah asked as of July 1, 2022, Mrs. Bean is working for the Board of Education and not the Town anymore? Mrs. Buell stated that is correct.

Mrs. Burgess asked what the advertising has been for this position. Mrs. Buell stated that it is still posted in a few different places.

Mr. Phaiah stated that the other concern he has is Mrs. Bean training the new people as well, which is a task in and of itself. Mrs. Buell stated that Donna DiBenedetto, who is the shared Financial Assistant, and Shelley Cates, who is the Town Financial Assistant, will both be doing some of the training of the new Financial Assistant that will be starting the second week of July. They had hoped to get someone in the Town Finance Director position with experience, but it fell through. It looks like there may be a lot of training for the Town Finance Director position.

Mr. Ives asked what the salary is for the Town Finance Director? Mrs. Buell stated that they advertised \$85,000.00 to \$90,000.00 with room to negotiate. Mrs. Buell is suggesting limiting Mrs. Bean's hours to 40 hours per week. She also stated that HR and the Finance Office have been working well together and are in good shape due to all the hard work and collaboration between the two,

which benefits the Town and the School. Mrs. Buell stated that Mrs. Bean has already been contacted by the Auditors and they plan on coming in July.

Mr. Ives stated that it is really important that the Town has somebody on board by the end of July for the schedules with the Auditor that have to be done in August and if Mrs. Bean has to do that, it will be full-time. He also believes that it is not enough money.

Mrs. Buell stated that she wanted to bring it to their attention. She wants to relieve some of the pressure that Mrs. Bean is under. The fiscal year needs to be ended and ready for the new school year. The balloon checks went out this week, which is a big payroll to get done. Mrs. DiBenedetto has not been there a full year and has been doing all the school payroll and accounts payable, which was not her full function before and it also pulls her away from the Town side. The Board has been paying her salary and most of the year she did more work for the Town than she did for the school. Mrs. Buell also stated that Mrs. Bean has the budgets ready to roll up into Ivisions.

Mrs. Lyons asked if there are any issues with holding the July meeting? Mrs. Buell stated that there will not be much in July except for a few policies to review and go over. In August and September they will have the Student Achievement Data and the School Climate Survey. Mrs. Buell stated that she will be spending some time going over school safety plans during the summer. She stated that Mrs. Graef, the Resident Trooper and herself attended the safety seminar at Woodstock Academy on Monday and Tuesday of this week. She stated that there is some work to do in upgrading the schools' plans and getting ready for additional funding.

A few Board members stated that they would not be available for the July meeting.

Mrs. Buell stated the August meeting is August 24, 2022 when they will discuss the Continuity of Service Plan with COVID. She stated that she was on a conference call with the Department of Public Health and the State Department of Education and the message is that covid will still be around. It will probably dip down around the summer and come back up November through January. It was discussed to still have mitigation strategies in place.

The Board agreed to cancel the July meeting and they could call a Special Meeting if something comes up that needs to be addressed.

10. Public Comment

Mr. Ken Dykstra asked for an update on the boiler replacement. Mrs Buell stated that there were three bids and Grodsky & Company, Inc. is the company that the school has been working with on other projects. They know the school's system and are a vendor

that can integrate the control system the school has. There are only certain vendors that can do that. Once the Town approved the funding for the boiler replacement, she was in contact with them so they could work on getting supplies and reaching out to their vendors. They have not been on sight yet, but will be doing so soon and getting the work completed before the cool weather comes.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m.

(Phaiah/Perkins-Banas)

No Discussion

Vote Count: 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna L. DiBenedetto

Donna L. DiBenedetto
Board Clerk

Justin Phaiah, Board of Education Secretary

Date