

## The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn  
119 Gorman Road  
Brooklyn, CT 06234

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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 a special meeting in the Brooklyn Middle School Auditorium and virtually on September 28, 2022 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, Mrs. Burgess, Mr. Ives, and Mr. Sostre. 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 all six Board members were present: Melissa Perkins-Banas, Justin Phaiah, Kayla Burgess, Rick Ives, Isaias Sostre, and herself, Mae Lyons. Quorum established. Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Public Comment

No Public Comment

3. Approval of Minutes

a. August 24, 2022 BOE Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for August 24, 2022.  
(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

No discussion

**Vote Count:** 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

4. Correspondence and Communication

a. EASTCONN presentation by Executive Director Eric Protolis

Mrs. Buell introduced Eric Protolis, Executive Director with EASTCONN. She stated that Brooklyn Schools has a lot of collaboration with EASTCONN and he will be sharing information about himself.

Mr. Propolis thanked the Board for having him to share information about himself as well as EASTCONN. He stated that he has been in the field of education for approximately 22 years. He started out at a middle school and high school for Region 8 as a school Psychologist. He then was a Director of Special Education. Mr. Propolis stated that he was looking for placement for students at a meeting with EASTCONN and an opportunity came for him to apply as a Program Director. He then was an Assistant Director of People Services for EASTCONN and then became the Director of People Services. From there he became the Director of Special Services with ACES. Mr. Propolis wanted to return to North East Connecticut and to EASTCONN, which brought him to his current position of Executive Director at EASTCONN.

Mr. Propolis stated that his entry to EASTCONN has revealed some challenges. He stated that EASTCONN has inherited financial struggles in the past couple years. Operations of the agency were stressed during the pandemic and to maintain the programs and services EASTCONN provided, resulting in financial challenges. Mr. Propolis stated that EASTCONN remains committed to the programs and services they have been providing, especially with the contracts they have in place. He stated that they are seeking support in different ways by talking to districts and letting them know what has been happening with EASTCONN. They are working with the State, and with other representatives so that they are aware that EASTCONN is having some struggles and they are looking for solutions. He stated the mission of the agency is to be a responsible agent and provide efficient resolution and solutions for the districts that EASTCONN serves. Mr. Propolis stated that EASTCONN is looking for opportunities to help them get through this difficult time. What is helpful and they have been communicating with districts is that prompt payments are helpful. He stated that some services may not be available that may have been before. EASTCONN provides services in special education, transportation, food services, professional learning, and early childhood and believe these services are value added to the region and would be committed to providing these services.

Mrs. Buell stated that she wanted to share with the Board and publicly that when she heard that EASTCONN was having a challenge, she asked if there were risks to any of the services going to discontinue and she was told no. She stated that she asked if there was anything that Brooklyn Schools might be able to do to help. They had discussed invoicing in advance for transportation. Mrs. Buell stated that Brooklyn Schools values the collaboration they have with EASTCONN and it would be in the districts best interest to support EASTCONN, to help them be successful and get through this challenging time.

b. Administrator Presentation of District Advancement Plan

Mrs. Buell stated that the District Advancement Plan is that Brooklyn provides a solid Tier I instruction, which means all students have high quality instruction. She stated that improvement of SRBI and Tier II and Tier III interventions will lead to improved progress monitoring and adjustment to focus on student outcomes. She stated that both the elementary and middle school will discuss their plan of action for the year. The goal is to improve instruction and closing the achievement gaps for students.

Mrs. Graef discussed the Reading plan for the elementary school. They will be continuing with the work they have done for the past few years with the reading and writing workshops. She stated that they will be adding some new things and there have been some changes that impact the elementary school. The universal screening with Star for kindergarten through grade 3 is no longer an assessment recommended by the State. They will be using the DRA for screening. They have restructured the data team meetings to embed calibration of student work to identify strengths and weaknesses of students and areas to strategically address the needs of learners through the SRBI process. They will also be looking at the foundational reading skills that are needed for students.

Mrs. Tamsin discussed Reading for the middle school. She stated that one of the challenges at the middle school is collecting data for students. They are looking to make improvements in the data collection and meeting process along with documentation in order to inform instruction in the FLEX intervention model. The Lexile level that they can retrieve from the Star assessment that they give three times per year. They will be looking at the 2021-22 SBAC results and incorporating interim Assessment Blocks (7 per grade level). They will continue to use Freckle for reading intervention during FLEX times and will also incorporate IXL, which they have used in the past as well.

Mrs. Toth discussed the Special Education support. She stated that they have been very busy this year with the State launching a new data system called CT-SEDS. It is a new IEP format that is different from what they are used to. She stated that all the special education teachers have done a great job with the new system. They will be focusing on writing quality IEPs through professional development, coaching and collaboration. They will measure usage and effectiveness of specialized programs with Orton Gillingham, Co-Writer, Snap and Read, REad Naturally Live, and TeachTown. She stated that they will be collaborating with both the elementary and middle school and improve the special education referral process through general education and special education within the SRBI/MTSS process.

Mr. Weaver discussed mathematics for the elementary school. He stated that they are looking at piloting two new math programs. IM (Illustrative Math) and i-Ready Math. They will be creating a list of mathematical vocabulary and

terminology that includes preferred words and alternatives for each grade level. They will continue with math fact fluency and calculation assessments administered at all grade-level to identify strengths and weaknesses of students and address the needs of learners through the SRBI process.

Mr. Bender discussed mathematics at the middle school. They are starting the IM (Illustrative Math) this year. They will make improvements in the data collection process and documentation in order to inform instruction in the FLEX intervention model. They will be using checkpoint formative assessments, end of unit summative assessments, Star Math, 2021-22 SBAC results, Freckle, IXL, and Moby Max.

Mrs. Graef discussed Science at the elementary school. There have been changes with the STEAM program. Mr. Maloney will be developing the STEAM pacing guides which includes a progression of the NGSS standards.

Mrs. Tamsin discussed Science in the middle school. She stated they will be making improvements in the data collection process and documentation in order to inform instruction. There will be an implementation of four interim assessment blocks, development of unit assessments, GIZMO, and Science Tech Book.

Mr. Weaver discussed Social Emotional Learning at the elementary school. He stated that social emotional learning remains a priority. They do use the SRBI process to identify students and appropriate supports to meet the individual needs. The Social Worker will help with grade level lessons. They will continue to track and celebrate student and staff attendance. They will be implementing a Tier 1 positive behavior support system that includes recognition of positive, pro-social behaviors and schoolwide social emotional instruction.

Mr. Bender discussed Social Emotional Learning at the middle school. He stated that staff will use PowerSchool to track student discipline data. They will use the DESSA-mini universal screen three times per year. They will be having a weekly agenda raffle and chromebook spot checks. They will continue the Good Cookie Award recognizing student behavior monthly; Lions Club Award recognizing student effort for Q1, Q2, Q3; Academic Achievement Awards. They will track and celebrate student and staff attendance and “Start with Hello” week to support SEL needs.

Mrs. Graef discussed Communication and Parental Involvement at the elementary school. She stated that the goal is to have parents back in the building. She stated they will develop a positive perception of the school through direct publication to showcase successes using Podcast, opening up the PowerSchool Portal, and encouraging parent volunteers for interventions/school-wide activities. They want more parent involvement and getting people back in the building.

Mrs. Tamsin discussed Communication and Parental Involvement at the middle

school. She stated that people were missing the opportunities of being involved. The middle school had a ribbon cutting ceremony earlier today to celebrate the first phase of the Fitness Course. Parent involvement looks different at the middle school. They can get parents involved through Podcasts, PowerSchool Portal for progress reports, Principal's advisory group, grade level family newsletters, school messenger family updates, two parent conference events, yearly drama production, band/chorus concerts, family engagement nights and starting to utilize the Teen Center again.

Mrs. Buell stated that the administrators discussed curriculum, assessments, and incentives. These are challenges and hard work ahead. She stated that they are all proud of our students. We want them to be as successful as they can.

Mrs. Buell thanked administrators for a great start to the year and for all their hard work in putting this presentation together.

c. NFA Brooklyn Town Profile SY22

Mrs. Buell shared NFA's presentation and it is also on the Town's website. She stated that there are currently eleven students enrolled at NFA, which is not a designated high school. Brooklyn students have better attendance than other towns that attend NFA. She stated that eight of our students earned high honors and three earned honors. All eleven students are on track to graduate. Brooklyn students are participating in fifteen co-curricular activities. There were fourteen scholarships and awards that were given to Brooklyn students. Brooklyn students outperformed in both the PSAT and the SAT.

Mrs. Lyons asked if NFA makes a presentation to our 8th grade students. Mrs. Buell stated that they do not. She stated that Brooklyn holds a High School Choice Fair where any high school can attend. She stated that our designated high schools, Killingly High School and Woodstock Academy, the Magnet Schools, Ellis Tech, and Parish Hill attended. A few private schools, Pomfret and Marianapolis, also attended.

d. Thank You Letter - Brooklyn PTO

Mrs. Buell stated that she sent a thank you letter to the Brooklyn PTO for their continued support of the Brooklyn Schools. She stated that the Welcome Back to School BBQ was amazing and she recognized the time and effort that is put forth for the event. Mrs. Buell stated that Robert Chenail, PE Teacher at the elementary school, is the President of the PTO.

e. Thank You Letter - Mortlake Fire Department

Mrs. Buell stated that she sent a thank you letter to Mortlake Fire Department for cooking for Brooklyn students, families, and staff at the PTO Welcome Back BBQ. She stated that everything was delicious.

f. Thank You Letter - Brooklyn Cub Scouts Pack 44

Mrs. Buell stated that she sent a thank you letter to Brooklyn Cub Scouts Pack 44 for their continued support of the Brooklyn Public Schools and for the many hours that the scouts helped to serve food at the PTO Welcome Back BBQ.

5. Administrative Reports

a. Brooklyn Enrollment Report

Mrs. Buell discussed the enrollment projection report. Brooklyn Elementary school enrollment is at 534 students; Brooklyn Middle school enrollment is 358 students; High school enrollment is 396 students and 17 students out of district. Total Brooklyn enrollment is 1,305 students.

b. FY23 Financial Reports

Mrs. Buell discussed the financial reports. Staffing is slightly over budget. This is due to when a teacher resigns their position and filling the position is sometimes at a higher rate.

c. Budget Transfer Request

Mrs. Buell discussed the amended budget transfer request line items totaling \$42,873.00 with the Board and asked that they approve the amended budget transfer.

Motion to approve the AMENDED transfer of funds as outlined on the Budget Transfer Request in the amount of \$42,873.00.

(Perkins-Banas/Ives)

No discussion

**Vote Count:** 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

d. Data Dashboard

Mrs. Buell discussed the attendance for staff and wants to look at it on a monthly basis. She is looking at an incentive/acknowledgement for perfect attendance to have staff in the buildings. Full day attendance is slightly better this year than in 2021 in both schools. Partial attendance is also better this year than in the last school year in both schools.

e. Brooklyn's Best

**BES**

- We had wonderful participation at the Back to School BBQ and Open House. Thank you to our PTO for hosting such an amazing night!
- Implementation of new PBIS system (PD for all staff, expectation stations, voice levels, give me 5, staff handing out tickets for BEAR behavior, first shopping day & monthly drawing at the end of month).
- Kinder Camp was well attended by our incoming Kindergarten students and families. This year we had 13 community organizations attend to share information about how their organizations can assist families and students. The organizations that attended were the Brooklyn Public Library, Brooklyn Little League/KBMF, Brooklyn PTO, Brooklyn Soccer, Carelot, Brooklyn Cub Scouts, ELL Program Eastconn, Green Valley Girl Scout Service Unit, Jewett City Bank, Northeast District Department of Health, Northeast Early Childhood Council, United Services, and Village Green.
- Mrs. Gatlin created a wonderful display for Dot Day. The children and staff loved seeing the student art work throughout the hallways.

**BMS**

- We had a successful Principal Advisory meeting with 6 parents and 5 staff members in attendance.
- Thank you to Mrs. Kerr for planning and organizing a High School Choice Fair, which was well attended by families and schools.
- Great start to our fall athletic season.
- We are looking forward to the Ribbon Cutting event on Wednesday, September 28th.
- It has been a smooth start to the new school year and our new staff has done a nice job getting to know students, staff and families. We celebrated "Start With Hello Week" with activities during lunches for students to interact and recognize peers and staff for positive support.

6. Board of Education Committee Reports

Mrs. Burgess stated the Policy committee met yesterday, Tuesday, September 27, 2022. She will be discussing the policies under Old Business.

7. Board Representatives to Other Committees

Mrs. Burgess stated that the Early Childhood council met last Monday, September 19, 2022 and the focus was on mental health. Taking care of yourself first before helping others.

Mrs. Burgess stated that the School Readiness council met afterwards, she was not sure if she was supposed to take part and thinks she was. She will attend the next meeting.

## 8. Old Business

### a. Policies: 2nd Reading

Mrs. Burgess stated that the Policy Committee met yesterday, Tuesday, September 27, 2022, and stated that there are several policies they have recommendations to pass or to not take action, as well as some that will be tabled until next month for the committee to review further.

The following Policy Committee's recommendations are below for the each policy and motions will be held after Mrs. Burgess goes through the committee's recommendations:

- P6111(a): School Calendar - The committee's recommendation is to approve and to update with the newest State law.
- P9321.2(a): Bylaws of the Board - Needs further review by the committee and to table until the next meeting.
- P5145.511(a): Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program - Needs further review by the committee and to table until the next meeting.
- P5141.4(a): Reporting of Child Abuse Neglect and Sexual Assault - Needs further review by the committee and to table until the next meeting.
- P5141.213(a): Opioid Overdose Prevention - The committee's recommendation is to update to the newest state law and clean up some of the language.
- P6140(a): Curriculum - The committee's recommendation is to approve and update to the newest state law, minor updates.
- P6172.6(a): Distance Education - The committee's recommendation is to not to take action at this time.

Mr. Ives stated that he was not sure what this policy was, is there any background? Mrs. Buell stated it had to do with dual teaching, which is teaching on computer and teaching in the classroom at the same time. Brooklyn does not do dual instruction.

- P7230.2(a): Indoor Air Quality- The committee's recommendation is not to take action at this time.



- P4113.12: Minimum Duty-Free Lunch Periods for Teachers - This has been already discussed at a previous meeting. The committee's recommendation is to approve this policy due to it being a State law.
- P5144.4(a): Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students - Needs further review by the committee and to table until the next meeting.
- P5113.2(a): Truancy - Needs further review by the committee and to table until the next meeting.

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to approve the following four policies as edited on the documents:

P6111: School Calendar

P5141.213: Opioid Overdose Prevention

P6140: Curriculum

P4113.12: Minimum Duty-Free Lunch Periods for Teachers

(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

**Vote:** Mrs. Lyons: Yes

Dr. Perkins-Banas: Yes

Mr. Phaiah: Yes

Mrs. Burgess: Yes

Mr. Ives: Yes

Mr. Sostre: Abstention on P6140: Curriculum

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to table the following policies to next month's meeting, October 26, 2022:

P5113.2: Truancy

P5141.4: Reporting of Child Abuse Prevention and Education Program

P5145.511: Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program

P9321.2: Bylaws of the Board

P5144.4: Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students

(Perkins-Banas/Sostre)

No discussion

**Vote Count:** 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to not take action on the following policies:

P6172.6: Distance Education

P7230.2: Indoor Air Quality

(Perkins-Banas/Sostre)

No Discussion

**Vote Count:** 6,0

Unanimous vote to approve

b. Climate Survey Questions/Answers

Mrs. Buell stated that she shared the Climate Survey data with the Board at last month's meeting. The results were posted online and the Board was given a copy to review. Mrs. Buell asked the Board if they had any questions or feedback that they may be able to address.

Mrs. Lyons stated that it looked like administrators incorporated some of the feedback into the Advancement Plan. She stated that it was nice to see the administrators doing that and it is helpful.

9. New Business

a. Policies: 1st Reading

The following policies are a first reading for the Board:

- P1250: School Visitors
- P1330: Use of School Facilities

Mrs. Burgess stated that the policy committee will be discussing these policies for the next Board meeting. She stated that visitors being on the grounds when they shouldn't be, such as a fire drill or walking their dog on school grounds during school hours when students are at recess, should not be allowed. It can be concerning to have unknown adults walking on school grounds during school hours. The committee will be looking into these policies for the next meeting.

Mrs. Buell stated with all the school events that have happened, she stated it is a little contradictory to what the administrators had discussed earlier in regards to having parents in the building. Mrs. Buell stated that they want parents there for a reason, not for unknown adults walking through the parking lot. The building could be put in lock down. Mrs. Buell stated that walking a dog or just going for a walk should not be during school hours on school property. She stated that this policy needs to be looked at by the committee and changes need to be made.

b. 8th Grade End of school Year Trip

Mrs. Buell discussed the 8th grade trip and being able to attend the DC trip. The administration put out a survey to families and there were three options:

**Option 1** - Nature's Classroom 3 Days, 2 Nights

Price: \$400.00

**Option 2** - Nature's Classroom 4 Days, 3 Nights with Whale Watch  
Excursion

Price: \$530.00

**Received the most response from families**

**Option 3: Washington D.C. & Morning in Philadelphia 3 Days, 2 Nights**  
Price: 650.00

Mrs. Buell stated that Option 2 to Nature's Classroom with the Whale Watch Excursion had the highest turnout on the survey. There will be fundraising to help offset the cost of the trip for every student.

c. Discussion about HVAC School Construction Grant

Mrs. Buell stated that she wanted to give the Board an update on the HVAC School Construction Grant. There is a handout posted on the Town's website. The State has released funding to apply for a grant through the Office of School Construction. She stated that it would work similarly to the Solar Project. If the Brooklyn Schools were to approve the grant, the State would reimburse the Town of Brooklyn 72.86% and the local portion is 27.14%. She stated that she has discussed this with the Board, the Board of Selectmen, The Board of Finance and the Esser committee about the possibility if they were to take on this project. The Town ARP/ESSER committee were supportive of moving forward and the offset of the project. Mrs. Buell stated that the State will not commit. She stated that she would need to go back to the Town and the Board of Selectmen make some resolutions permitting the school move forward with the project and put a building committee in place. The Board of Selectmen has a meeting scheduled for tomorrow, Thursday, September 29, 2022. Mrs. Buell stated that this project could cost approximately \$2,000,000 and would replace the HVAC system in both buildings and add air handlers and air conditioning in places that currently do not have it. If some parts are in good condition, they will remove parts of the air conditioning that are no longer compliant and update/upgrade the system. This project is about air exchange, air quality, and safety to improve the work environment and increase efficiency. It is not just about adding air conditioning in the classrooms.

Mrs. Buell stated that ARP/ESSER funds can not be used for the local portion and the taxpayers would have to vote on the project and go out for a bond. The Town would have to commit to the full cost of the \$2,000,000 project with the reimbursement funds going back to the Town to offset the bond. Town financial responsibility would be \$542,800 for the project and the reimbursement from DAS would be \$1,457,200.

Mrs. Buell would like the Board to make a motion on moving forward with the RFQ and the project.

Mr. Ives made a motion to move forward with the RFQ and the HVAC project.  
(Ives/Phaiah)

No discussion

**Vote Count:** 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

d. Update on the School Business Manager Vacancy

Mrs. Buell stated that our current Business Manager, Rushie Bean, resigned her position. She stated that Rushie has a great opportunity and has done a great job for the school. There are currently three applicants for the school Business Manager vacancy.

Mrs. Buell stated that she also received a resignation from the new Financial Assistant with the school and will be posting this position right away. She also has a great opportunity that will impact her for many years and her children's education down the road.

e. Legislative Updates

Mrs. Buell stated that there are numerous legislative impacts to the district. These include impacting policies, unexpected expenditures as well as increased areas of required instructional development.

f. SBAC Scores

Mrs. Buell discussed the SBAC scores and data with the Board and they are posted on the Town's website as well. Data from 2017 through 2022. Mrs. Buell stated that 2020 there was no testing; 2021 was a challenging year; 2022 was somewhat back to a normal year.

10. Public Comment

Austin Tanner, First Selectman, stated that he is hopeful with the school construction grant. The State has not said the bottom line and stated that we need to jump on it and maybe all the schools will not get their applications in. He believes the state will continue it another year and we will have everything done. Mr. Tanner also stated that there is a new Parks and Recreation Director, Renee Sangermano. She was a Parks and Recreation director in New Hampshire and is very enthusiastic and excited for her new position. She will be starting next week, October 5, 2022. He will be introducing her to staff. Mr. Tanner stated that he also wanted to mention the opioid policy on the agenda this evening, the Town gets funding from the State opioid settlement. He stated that there are only certain things the Town can spend it on. He would like to discuss further with the school and see if he can provide funds for the opioid.

11. Executive Session

- a. Superintendent Goals
- b. Brooklyn Public School Safety Plans

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to enter into executive session at 9:20 p.m. to discuss the superintendent's goals as well as to discuss Brooklyn Public School Safety Plans. We would invite the superintendent.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion

**Vote Count:** 6, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Mr. Ives left the meeting at 9:52 p.m.

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to come out of executive session at 9:52 p.m.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion

**Vote Count:** 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

## 12. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:53 p.m.

(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

No Discussion

**Vote Count:** 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

***Donna L. DiBenedetto***

Donna L. DiBenedetto

Board Clerk

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Justin Phaiah, Board of Education Secretary

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Date