

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 a meeting in the Central Office Community Room and virtually on March 22, 2023 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, Mrs. Burgess, and Mr. Ives. Mr. Sostre was absent. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, and Mr. Carey, Business Manager, were also present.

Also in attendance were Heather Tamsin, BMS Principal, Adam Bender, BMS Assistant Principal, Paula Graef, BES Principal, and Mark Weaver, BES Assistant Principal, Mr. Gutierrez, Athletic Director, Mrs. Dehls, Drama Director/Music Teacher, and Mr. Rewers, Coach/Physical Education Teacher.

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, Rick Ives, and herself, Mae Lyons. Isaias Sostre is absent.

Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comment

None

4. Approval of Minutes

- a. February 22, 2023 BOE Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for February 22, 2023.
(Perkins-Banas/Burgess)

No discussion

Vote Count: 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

5. Correspondence and Communication

a. BMS Winter Sports Presentation

Mrs. Buell thanked everyone for being present. She stated that it is always nice to see the students. Mrs. Buell told the students that the Board members were present because they care about Brooklyn students and work hard for Brooklyn Public Schools to be a great place. She told them that part of the monthly Board meetings is Brooklyn's Best and everyone has stated that it is the best part of the meeting. Mrs. Buell stated that she and the Board enjoy the in-person student presentations.

Mrs. Tamsin stated that the Boys and Girls Basketball players were present and introduced Mr. Gutierrez, Athletic Director.

Mr. Gutierrez thanked the coaches, Mrs. Lessard, Girls Basketball Coach, and Mr. Rewers, Boys Basketball Coach, for all their time and effort. He stated that Mrs. Lessard could not be present for the Board meeting. The Girls Basketball team had a great season, 5-5, and they were in the playoffs, played hard and unfortunately did not win the playoffs.

Mr. Rewers stated that he enjoyed coaching both Boys Junior Varsity and Varsity Basketball teams. He has been teaching high school the past few years and is now at the middle school. He stated that the Junior Varsity team was 3-5-1. The Varsity team ended the season 6-4. They won the last four games that sent them to the playoffs and came up short against Griswold in the semi-finals. Mr. Rewers stated that both teams had a rough start and after Christmas break both teams started to play and work together as a team and played hard. He wanted to thank the parents for getting the players at the school for 7 a.m. practices and for the boys getting up early for the early practices.

The BOE handed out stickers that were made by the middle school staff to the players that were present for the Board meeting. The Girls Basketball players that were present and recognized were:

Finley Hamilton

Olivia White

Janelle Elliott

Safia McDonough

The Boys Basketball players that were present and recognized were:

Brayden Briere Jones
Brady Giradin
Eli Poh
Mason Wiesner
Nick Sorel
Brody Dexter
Zach Lackner
Griffen Tisler
Grason Fueller

Mrs. Buell thanked Mr. Gutierrez for his very strong presence, being an advocate for the athletes at the games and all their hard work. She also thanked the administrators for being present at the Board meeting.

b. BMS Drama Club

Mrs. Dehls, Drama Director/Music Teacher at Brooklyn Middle School, and the Drama Club cast and crew dressed in their costumes for the production of the Little Mermaid Jr. She stated that they have been working very hard for months. Production is this Friday and Saturday at 7 p.m. Mrs. Dehls introduced the cast and crew to the Board.

Mrs. Buell thanked all of them for all their hard work and told them all to have fun with the production.

Mrs. Buell asked the winter athletes how many were playing in spring sports. There were several hands raised. Mr. Gutierrez stated that there are over 100 athletes signed up for spring sports.

c. Math Pilot Presentation

Mrs. Graef stated that the Brooklyn Elementary School has been piloting math programs for next year. Members of the committee are teachers from each grade level as well as the math interventionist.

Programs that were piloted were i-Ready Classroom Mathematics and Illustrative Mathematics. The program search process consisted of:

- Analysis of surrounding districts data
- reaching out to surrounding districts to see what programs they currently use
- Reviewed edreports.org on alignment to standards and strength of programs
- Identified highly rated programs and contacted representatives to acquire materials to preview as a committee
- Selected top two programs to pilot
- Identified criteria specific to district needs

- Professional development with programs

Mr. Weaver stated that teachers would fill out a survey after each lesson with their feedback of experiences and student progress. After piloting the two math programs, the Math committee got together with Kelly Francis from Eastconn to discuss the pros and cons of each program.

iReady Classroom Mathematics

Pros:

- Comprehension checks (paper or computer)
- Student-friendly math workbooks
- Rigorous lesson progression
- Turn & Talk math discussions
- Reasonable prep time
- Parent communication letters (for each unit)
- 95% correlation to SBAC performance
- Mix of whole/small group work & independent work in each lesson
- Layer of intervention built into the program

Cons:

- Level of rigor - lesson progression is challenging
- Diagnostic is quite lengthy
- Younger grades may need to share devices at times

Illustrative Mathematics

Pros:

- Children loved the games
- Small chunks of learning

Cons:

- A lot of preparation for centers
- Lacked explicit instruction
- Repetitive center work
- Not enough practice
- Centers didn't match lesson
- Too fast-paced

Mr. Weaver discussed the Math pilot teacher feedback. The teachers leaned towards iReady Classroom Mathematics liking the clear objectives, multiple opportunities for critical thinking, working together. He stated that teachers stated that there were challenges with Illustrative Mathematics.

Mrs. Graef discussed the Math pilot program recommendation and stated that the pilot committee had completed one unit from the two programs and they are recommending iReady Classroom Mathematics as it is a rigorous, comprehensive K-4 program, meeting expectations for alignment with the CCS, and incorporating diagnostics and interventions to meet the needs of all students.

Ms. Burgess asked if there was a group of teachers that piloted one program and the other teachers piloted the second program or did teachers pilot both. Mrs. Graef stated that teachers partnered in a grade level with one teacher piloting iReady and the other piloting Illustrative Mathematics. Teachers were going to each other's classrooms and discussing what their experiences were with each of the programs.

Mr. Weaver stated that the overall consensus was overwhelming for iReady. Mrs. Graef stated the teachers initially liked Illustrative Math and then started to shift towards iReady.

Mrs. Buell stated that administrators and the consultant wanted to make sure the program meets the overall direction of the district and building and was answered sufficiently and supports their decision.

Mrs. Burgess made a motion to adopt the iReady Mathematics curriculum for Kindergarten through Grade 4 next year.
(Burgess/Perkins-Banas)

No discussion

Vote Count: 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Mrs. Buell stated that materials can be ordered and ARP ESSER funds will be used to purchase five years worth of materials for the new math curriculum in both the middle and elementary schools.

d. Greenhouse Project - Paula Graef

Mrs. Graef discussed the process of how the Greenhouse Project was started. They had a discussion a few years back and they visited The Learning Clinic to see their greenhouse. A grant proposal was submitted in November of 2022 and Brooklyn Schools was awarded the grant in December of 2022. They have requested the permits with the Town of Brooklyn and are securing contractors and volunteers. The final report is due July 20, 2024 and the timeline is through August 31, 2024.

Mr. Weaver discussed the greenhouse specifications:

- 18ft x 36ft x 10.6ft
- Complete frame with 6mm polycarbonate twin-wall covering (10 year warranty)
- (1) 3' x 6'- 8" Plyco insulated door
- (2) J & D Exhaust Fans
- (2) J & D Motorized Inlet Shutters
- (1) Heating Thermostat
- (1) 2 Stage Cooling Stat

- (1) Modine HD75 High Efficiency Gas Unit Heater (Natural Gas or Propane)
- (2) Horizontal Air Flow Fans
- Complete assembly instructions, and an electrical wiring diagram showing details of all equipment connections

Mr. Weaver stated that the location of the greenhouse will be behind the gym, which is adjacent to the STEAM classroom. There is access to electrical and water and will require a concrete pad underneath the greenhouse for the foundation.

Mrs. Graef stated that the greenhouse is a complete kit that will need to be assembled. Mrs. Buell has already put out a request for the permits. The other items that are needed: land will need to be graded, a trench for water and power, a foundation for wheelchair accessibility, high school students would be able to assemble the greenhouse, benches and tables, consumable materials, development of the curriculum

Mrs. Lyons stated that she was reading an article about schools having students taking the waste from lunch and composting it.

Mrs. Buell thanked both Mrs. Graef and Mr. Weaver for being there and for their time and effort of putting this project together.

e. Thank you letter - Beagary Charitable Trust

Mrs. Buell stated that she sent a thank you letter to Ms. Morgan with the Beagary Charitable Trust for their very generous gift of \$5,000, which was part of the two year grant for the Music Department.

f. Retirement Letter - Kathi Dumaine-Savage

Mrs. Buell stated that she received a retirement letter from Kathy Dumaine-Savage, 5th Grade Teacher, effective June 16, 2023. Mrs. Buell stated that she accepted her letter of retirement and thanked her for over 36 years of service and dedication to the students and families of Brooklyn. Mrs. Buell and the Board wish her well.

6. Administrative Reports

a. Brooklyn Enrollment Report - March

Mrs. Buell discussed the enrollment report. Brooklyn Elementary School went up by 6. Brooklyn Middle School went up by 2. The high school enrollment went up by 2. She stated that overall there was an increase of 10 students for enrollment. The enrollment has gone from 1292 to 1302 for total enrollment.

b. FY23 Financial Reports

Mr. Carey discussed the financial report highlights with the Board. He stated that the salaries line is showing \$28,000 under budget and may change slightly having more substitutes and paraprofessionals being hired. The benefit lines are getting closer to what they should be, he has been analyzing this account and expects to be approximately \$138,000 under budget. The contribution line item is approximately \$30,000 under due to less staff being enrolled in health than projected. He stated that repairs from the lightning strike are ongoing and have received funds from CIRMA. The professional educational services line is showing \$106,000, which \$70,000 is for speech services at Woodstock Academy. Woodstock Academy now has speech services as part of their program and is included with tuition. The high school tuition is showing under budget due to more students choosing Woodstock Academy than projected for this year and this year's student enrollment will be next year's tuition; tuition will be higher next year. Also, more students chose the Vo-AG program and we are over budgeted for that line. The electricity line is approximately \$12,000 under budget due to the savings with the solar panels.

Ms. Burgess asked if there are expenses that will offset the funds that are under budgeted. Mr. Carey stated that there are still technology purchases that are ongoing. The smaller expenditures will play out to the end.

Mrs. Buell stated that at this time of the year we are usually in the black than the red. There are repairs being done as well as projects being completed. The boiler project is complete and still needs to have a maintenance contract put in place. She stated there is an outstanding item where the preschool wing is not tied into the new energy management system and the software is no longer available on the preschool system. Mrs. Buell stated that if funds are available, she would like to get the preschool system updated. Other projects being worked on are resurfacing the gym floor at the elementary school and looking at the floor at the middle school, the stage floor in both schools need to be resurfaced, replacing the stage curtain at the elementary school, painting the gym walls at the middle school, fixing blind spots on the cameras at the schools. These are items that have not been maintained. Also, Mrs. Buells stated that if the school will be using the Community Center, cameras and badge access will need to be added so the building is secure. There is also a school safety grant that she is going to apply for and there needs to be a local offset and some of these expenditures will count towards the grant.

Mr. Ives asked if she had been looking at hiring a Facility Director. Mrs. Buell stated that she will be starting the process.

Mrs. Buell stated security measures are still being put in place and that the HVAC project is still in progress.

c. Brooklyn's Best

BES

- We have begun positive office referrals. Staff send children displaying BEAR qualities. This has been a huge success and children are loving the positive feedback!
- The Ice Box persuasive writing challenge has been completed! Thank you to the Ice Box for providing such a wonderful opportunity for our students to have an actual audience for their writing.
- SBAC Vocabulary words presented through Morning Announcements - words of the day are posted around the school for students to find. Teachers follow-up and review words throughout their lessons. Words are posted on a UA Hallway bulletin board.
- PreK held an ABC Hunt night for parents. It was well attended and children did a great job locating ABC letters in all three classrooms!
- UA staff are visiting 3rd and 4th grade classrooms to learn about the academic vocabulary to then incorporate the vocabulary into their instruction.

BMS

- Good Cookie February 2023:
Grade 5: King/DS/Desabota: Colin Bates
Carson/Nault: Mason Putnam
Grade 6: Lexie Young, Declan Harman
Grade 7: Kassidy Rosinski, McKenzie Gianquitti
Grade 8: Finley Hamilton, Tomas Gutierrez
- Related Arts Night was a huge success with over 200 people in attendance! Mrs. Dumaine-Savage has her 5th grade ELA groups join the event presenting their Wax Museum activity and research.
- Thank you to the Danielson Lions Club for supporting our Pasta Dinner Fundraiser on March 23.
- We are excited about the performance of Little Mermaid Jr. on March 24 and March 25. The cast has worked for many months preparing for this!
- We have had 30+ students signed up for each Spring sport. Tryouts begin the week of March 20th.

7. Board of Education Committee Reports

None to report

8. Board Representatives to Other Committees

None to report

9. Old Business

a. Budget FY24

Mrs. Buell stated that the Brooklyn Board of Education approved the budget for the 2023-2024 school year. The Brooklyn Board of Education budget for the 2023-2024 school year is \$21,635,600 or 5.33% increase over the 2022-2023 school year. She handed out a finalized budget packet to the Board.

Mrs. Buell stated that the budget documents are posted on the Brooklyn Schools website at www.brooklynschools.org and Town's website at www.brooklynct.org.

b. SPF Youth Survey

Mrs. Buell stated that the SPF Youth survey is a SERAC survey that middle school students would be taking. The survey helps gauge what interventions or supports are needed in Brooklyn. She stated that it is a choice for students to take the survey. It would be for 7th and 8th grade students and it is part of what initiated the multi-health support at area districts. This survey has not been given in approximately five years. The Board discussed the survey.

The Board stated that parents need to be aware that the survey will be given to the students. The survey is helpful in getting grant funds and if parents have concerns to contact the school. There is potential value in taking the survey.

10. New Business

a. Capital Projects

Mrs Buell discussed the Capital projects for the 2023-2024 school year with the cost being approximately \$20,000. She would like concrete sidewalks behind the 3rd and 4th grade wing for students to utilize for parent drop-off/pick-up, blacktop repairs outside the elementary gym area, a flatbed utility trailer that can be hooked up to the pick-up truck.

Mr. Ives asked about needing a new tractor that was discussed previously. Mrs. Buell stated that buying a new tractor is costly and if you maintain a John Deere tractor, it will last a long time and be more cost effective. They will look at replacing tires and parts to the John Deere tractor the school currently has.

Mrs. Buell stated that the Planning and Zoning Board approved the condominiums that will be going in at the end of Louise Berry Drive and possibly more going in by the golf course. She stated that in a couple of years, Brooklyn Public Schools will be running out of room for students and other discussions will be happening. She stated that parking is already a challenge for staff due to leaving spaces open for parents to get through for student drop-off and pick-up.

11. Public Comment

None

12. Executive Session

a. Attorney Privileged Communication

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to enter into executive session at 8:36 p.m. to discuss the Attorney privileged communication and invite Mrs. Buell, Superintendent. There will be no further action taken once the executive action ends.

(Perkins-Banas/Ives)

No discussion

Vote Count: 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

Dr. Perkins-Banas made a motion to come out of executive session at 9:02 p.m.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion

Vote Count: 5, 0

Unanimous vote to approve

13. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:03 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

Justin Phaiah, Board of Education Secretary

Date