

The Board of Education

Town of Brooklyn
119 Gorman Road
Brooklyn, CT 06234

Mae Lyons, Board Chair
Keith Atchinson, Secretary
Tana Jolley

Melissa Perkins-Banas, Vice-Chair
Justin Phaiah
Carolyn Hackbarth

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 November 24, 2020 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Atchinson, Mr. Phaiah, Mrs. Jolley and Mrs. Hackbarth. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, and Mr. Otto, Board of Finance, were also present.

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 prior to the meeting.

1. Attendance, Establishment of a Quorum, Call to Order

Quorum established. Mrs. Perkins-Banas called the meeting to order at 7:09 pm.

Mrs. Perkins-Banas stated that there is an adjustment to the agenda: items 4a and 4b to be moved to 1a and 1b.

a. CT Collaborative Health Insurance Program Presentation by MDG Benefit Solutions

Lynn Gurnham reviewed the Brooklyn rates since 2011. She also reviewed the Underwriting Summary of July 1, 2020 Renewal, claims data and manual rates. She stated that for all groups in CT-CHIP, there were only five claimants over \$150,000 when Cigna quoted for July 1, 2019. Also when Cigna looked at the large claims for the 2020 renewal, there were 11 claims over \$150,000. The large claims more than doubled what was priced for initially, which is the primary reason for the high increase. Ms. Gurnha also reviewed the large claims with the Board.

b. The Brooklyn Schools Insurance Benefits Overview by MDG Benefit Solutions

Joseph Spurgeon and Larisa Carr reviewed the CT-CHIP Connecticut Collaborative Health Insurance Program. Mr. Spurgeon explained the CT-CHIP objective is to maximize the health insurance buying power of smaller districts and municipalities through partnerships, resulting in reduced administrative costs for employee health benefits. There are currently 9 CT-CHIP members, which include Boards of Education in Bolton, Brooklyn, Canterbury, Columbia and Thompson and municipalities of Bolton, Brooklyn, Columbia and Thompson. Mr. Spurgeon stated that CT-CHIP conducted a RFP for health insurance providers and received responses from Anthem, CTCare and Cigna. The members of CT-CHIP selected Cigna as the health insurance provider for the collaborative. Brooklyn's participation with approximately 110 Town and Board of Education employees is part of a much larger pool of approximately 560 employees. Larger pools provide advantages over smaller pools. He also discussed the 2020 versus 2019 renewal drivers and Brooklyn's large claimants 2019-2020.

Mrs. Buell thanked the presenters for their time and effort they put in to be present for the meeting.

Mrs. Perkins-Banas stated that there are additions to agenda items: under Correspondence and Communication - 4h. Maternity Leave of Absence Request and under New Business - 9f. Proposed 2021-2022 Budget Workshop Dates.

2. Public Comment

No public comment

3. Approval of Minutes

a. October 28, 2020 BOE Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 28, 2020
(Phaiah/Hackbarth)

No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve

4. Correspondence and Communication

a. Marla Pellegrino - Thank you note

Mrs. Buell stated that she received a thank you note from Marla Rufo-Pellegrino who retired last year. Mrs. Rufo-Pellegrino was in tears when she opened her retirement gift from the Board of Education and Mrs. Buell. She will miss her Brooklyn family, but is enjoying her time with her husband.

b. Kathi Peterson of Daily Bread Food Pantry Donation - Thank you note

Mrs. Buell stated she sent a thank you letter to Kathi Peterson of Daily Bread Food Pantry for the generous book donation. She donated a variety of books, ranging from age 3 to young adult, that will be a great addition to both the Brooklyn Elementary School and the Brooklyn Middle School.

c. Mary Blain - Thank you note

Mrs. Buell stated she received a thank you note from Mary Blain, 8th grade Language Arts teacher that recently retired, for the lovely retirement gift from the Board of Education and Mrs. Buell. Mrs. Blain stated that she will treasure her memories of teaching at Brooklyn, a special place filled with caring, dedicated and supportive people.

d. October Communications

Mrs. Buell stated that there were three emails she received just prior to the Board meeting last month and she wasn't able to get the emails included in the Board of Education packet last month from K. Coddington dated October 16, 2020; from A. Landis dated October 27, 2020; and from K. Elliott dated October 28, 2020. Mrs. Buell stated that each one of the people that wrote the letters did speak publicly at the October meeting.

e. Letter to SDE regarding the receipt of 20 Chromebook devices

Mrs. Buell stated she sent a thank you letter to the Chief Performance Officer with the Connecticut State Department of Education for the 20 chromebooks they donated to Brooklyn Public Schools. The chromebooks have been distributed to students.

f. Maternity leave of absence request

Mrs. Buell stated she received a letter from Allison Knutson requesting a maternity leave of absence expecting her child in February. She is requesting to use FMLA leave of absence starting in February and use the leave of absence through the end of the school year. Mrs. Buell stated that in accordance to the contract and FMLA laws, she suggests that the Board approve the FMLA leave and unpaid leave of absence approximately from May 17, 2020 to June 10, 2020.

Motion to approve an unpaid leave of absence for Mrs. Knutson following her FMLA leave, approximately from May 17, 2020 to June 10, 2020. The district will allow Mrs. Knutson to use sick time in accordance with the Family Medical Leave Act during the period of time that she is sick/recovering for the birth of her child.

(Phaiah/Hackbarth)

No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve

5. Administrative Reports

a. Brooklyn BOE Expenditure Report

Mrs. Buell discussed the expenditure report. The year to date expenditure report shows that we are projected to spend on track to what has been budgeted. She stated there are some salary lines that are showing a slight deficit, which will be offset by the coronavirus relief fund. She stated that there is a tuition special education deficit, which will be offset when we receive our excess cost reimbursement for special education grants.

b. Enrollment Report

Mrs. Buell discussed the enrollment report. She stated that some students have returned from distance learning and some have gone out on distance learning due to the full in-person model. Currently at the Brooklyn Elementary School, there are 394 students that are full in-person, 89 students are opt-out distance learning and 35 students are being homeschooled. At the Brooklyn Middle School, there are 258 students that are full in-person, 72 students are opt-out distance learning and 13 students are homeschooled. The High school enrollment has been consistent. There are 21 students that are out of the district. Mrs. Buell wanted to state that in September we started with 213 students in the opt-out full remote distance learning model and as families saw school opened up safely and went away from the hybrid model, we ended up in October with 156 in the opt-out full remote distance learning model. She stated as things change and we had a few cases of covid-19, families started to move to distance learning and we have 161 students that are distance learning in November. Mrs. Buell stated we continue to adjust for the changes in enrollment.

c. Brooklyn's Best

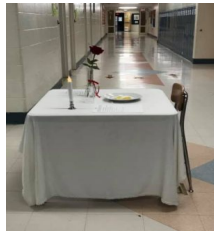
BES

1. Successful conferences, Thank you to the PTO who provided dinner to our teachers at BES and BMS.
2. Hired Bethany Corbin as an IIC Teacher.
3. Pre-K Paraprofessionals have completed their literacy and diversity required training.
4. Classrooms celebrated Veterans Day in multiple ways. We zoomed with veterans, read books, sang songs and shared pictures of family members



BMS

1. Virtual Veteran's Day recognition was held across all grade levels on November 11, 2020.
2. Collected just over \$1,000 for the Danielson Veteran's Coffee House.
3. The Student Council and NJHS are doing a food drive.
4. Positive conversations in goal setting meetings with all teachers.
5. We are excited that so many parents have signed up for our Zoom Parent Conferences.
6. Good Cooke Awards:
Grade 5: Ryael Riche, Lucas Hecker, Brody Lavalee, Aiden Powell
Grade 6: Aris Roane, Alexis Sansone, Ronan Curran
Grade 7: Zachary Phillips, Kendall Rosen
Grade 8: Samuel Clark, Sophia Sarkis, Corey Stephens



6. Board of Education Committee Reports

Nothing to Report

7. Board Representatives to other Committees

Nothing to report

8. Old Business

a. PV Update

Mrs. Buell stated that at the Brooklyn Elementary School, the building inspector has completed the initial inspection and we are waiting on the Eversource submittal to get approval to operate. At the Brooklyn Middle School, racking is partially done, panel installation has started, electrical tie in to be completed then permission to operate will be sought.

b. Hiring a IT Support Personnel

Mrs. Buell stated that the position for an IT Support Personnel has not been posted as of yet. She stated we are negotiating with the current stipend IT staff and determining what the positions should be. They feel we need more of an IT Director and continue maintaining with the current stipend IT staff as well. Mrs. Buell agrees with them. We currently do not have the funding for this as of yet and still working on it.

c. 2021-2022 Calendar

Mrs. Buell shared the second draft of the 2021-2022 calendar. Mrs. Buell discussed changes on the second draft from the first draft..

The Board would like Mrs. Buell to seek additional feedback after sharing the second draft with staff and families for final approval next month.

d. TiO2 Coatings: Consideration of the application of this product

Mrs. Buell has not received a price on the TiO2 coatings as of yet. She stated there is some testing going on and has received some test results. Mrs. Buell stated she did send the test results out for review and hasn't gotten a response as of yet. She would like to get a green light on the product and cost. She feels it is a safe product and will benefit and assist the schools. She stated it does kill the coronavirus, keeps things clean, and kills odor causing germs.

Mrs. Lyons asked about the absenteeism due to the coronavirus. Mrs. Buell stated she has asked the school nurses and she stated it is hard to measure due to students quarantining for possible exposure or being sent home for a sniffle or cough.

Mrs. Perkins-Banas asked, is there any literature on the toxicity of safety of this product? Mrs. Buell stated she included information at the last meeting in October. She does have additional test results that weren't included in this month's Board packet, but will pass the information along.

Mrs. Hackbarth is wondering about the long term effect of chemicals that might be in the product.

9. New Business

a. Designated High Schools: Policy 3340

Mrs. Buell stated she included this policy due to a typo in Policy #3340 (fourth line: change seeing to setting)

Motion 1: Motion to correct a typo on policy 3340. Fourth line: change seeing to setting

Motion 2: The Brooklyn Board of Education would like to continue to designate Killingly High School and Woodstock Academy as designated high schools. Any parent wishing to send their child to a non-designated public high school must submit a written request to the Superintendent. We authorize the Superintendent to approve placement in another accredited public high school if it meets the needs of the student and does not exceed the cost of a designated high school

contingent upon parents agreeing to provide transportation at no cost to the district.

(Hackbarth/Lyons)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

b. Policy Updates

- i. Policy # 3541.5
- ii. Policy #3542.22
- iii. Policy #4211
- iv. Policy # 4111.1/4211.1

1. First Read November 24,2020

Mrs. Buell asked the Board to review the policies required by CABE above and will discuss them at the December 16, 2020 meeting.

2. Second Read 12/16/2020

c. Updated Distance Learning Plan

Mrs. Buell stated a communication was sent November 23, 2020 indicating that on November 30, 2020, instruction would pivot to distance learning for a minimum of one week. Mrs. Buell stated that this decision was not made lightly. The number of new cases in the Brooklyn community and schools will be monitored. Mrs Buell stated students will return to in person learning if the cases level out. Given Addendum 4, based on the current metrics, Brooklyn will monitor and consider a less dense option of learning to ensure health and safety of students and employees. She stated that data will be reviewed weekly to make this determination in collaboration with the Department of Health. Mrs. Buell stated that she has had conversations with Mr. Ives and Mr. Lohbusch with Brooklyn Parks and Recreation that if we need to continue with the distance learning model about the possibility to offer a low/no cost childcare option. She also stated that as schools are moving to a distance learning model, it is impacting the staff. If staff live in another district and their children go to school in a district that just shutdown, it makes it hard for staff to come to school when their children are at home. She's had conversations with administrators for consideration to offer low cost childcare options for employees to benefit students of Brooklyn by allowing their children to be in a low cost childcare at the school to be present to teach.

Mrs. Lyons stated there were other districts that were providing the low cost childcare for staff and the cost to the district is lower because you have the staff there and not having to pay substitute teachers.

Mrs. Perkins-Banas stated it would be a clever solution.

Motion to provide space for low cost childcare for Brooklyn staff to have a place for their children so that staff can continue teaching in our schools while their children's schools are distance learning.

(Lyons/Hackbarth)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

d. Proposed BOE Meeting Schedules 2021

January 27, 2021

February 24, 2021

March 24, 2021

April 28, 2021

May 26, 2021

June 23, 2021

July 28, 2021

August 25, 2021

September 22, 2021

October 27, 2021

November 23, 2021 **4th Tuesday

December 15, 2021 **3rd Wednesday

Motion to approve the Board of Education meeting dates for 2021 as proposed.

(Phaiah/Hackbarth)

No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve

e. AQIS Fall 2020 Application

Mrs. Buell stated that the Brooklyn Elementary School would like to apply for a grant to participate in the NAEYC Accreditation Support Facilitator and is seeking the Board support.

Motion to approve the Application for Accreditation for Quality Improvement Support for the NAEYC Accreditation.

(Phaiah/Hackbarth)

No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve

f. Proposed Budget Workshop Dates

Proposed Budget workshops for the 2021-22 school year are scheduled for

January 13, 2021 6:00-8:00 PM

Initial presentation: Overview of BES, BMS and Special Education budget

Budget will consist of model to include Distance Learning staff

Second model to consist of in-person only model

January 27, 2021 6:00-7:00 PM

Discussion of Maintenance Budget, CO, Capital Budget

February 24, 2021 6:00-7:00 PM

Review of questions

March 24, 2021 6:00-7:00 PM

Q&A as needed

Prepare budget for Board of Finance

April 28, 2021 6:00-7:00 PM

If needed

Budget Workshop Agenda

1. Attendance, Establishment of a Quorum, Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Budget Discussion
4. Public Comment
5. Adjournment

10. Public Comment

None

Mrs. Buell wanted to say thank you to the Board. November is Board appreciation month and she stated she appreciates each of them and knows that the community appreciates them as well. Mrs. Buell hopes that the Board and the community has a restful Thanksgiving and plenty to be thankful for.

Mr. Atchinson thanked Mrs. Buell for everything she has been doing over the past couple of weeks with everything going on. He knows it has not been easy.

11. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:55 p.m.

(justin/carolyn)

No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

Donna L. DiBenedetto

Donna L. DiBenedetto
Board Clerk