

# 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 Phaia  
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 its regular monthly meeting on November 26, 2019 in the Central Office Community Room. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Atchinson, Mr. Phaiah, and Mrs. Jolley,. Mrs. Hackbarth was absent. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, Mr. Otto, Board of Finance, Mrs. Vachon, Finance Director, were also present. Members of the public were in the audience.

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

Quorum established. Mrs. Buell called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Public Comment

None

4. Election of Officers

a. Board Chair

Dr. Perkins-Banas nominated Mae Lyons for Chairperson stating she's a veteran Board member with 22 years experience and experience as Chair that it makes sense given there are 3 new Board members.

Mae Lyons accepted the nomination.

A paper vote was taken, five votes were cast for Mae Lyons.

Each vote unanimously stated Mae Lyons as Board Chair.

b. Board Vice-Chair

Mr. Atchinson nominated Melissa Perkins-Banas for Board Vice-Chair.  
Melissa Perkins-Banas accepted the nomination.  
A paper vote was taken, five votes were cast for Melissa Perkins-Banas.  
Each vote unanimously stated Melissa Perkins-Banas as Board Vice-Chair.

c. Board Secretary

Dr. Perkins-Banas nominated Keith Atchinson for Board Secretary.  
Keith Atchinson accepted the nomination.  
A paper vote was taken, five votes were cast for Keith Atchinson for Board Secretary.  
Each vote unanimously stated Keith Atchinson as Board Secretary.

5. Approval of minutes

a. October 23, 2019 BOE Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of October 23, 2019  
(Perkins-Banas/Lyons)  
New members, Mrs. Jolley and Mr. Phaiah, abstained from vote

6. Correspondence and Communication

a. Regional Schools: Information shared regarding regional questions, facilitated by Representative Doug Dubitsky. Next meeting January 16, 2020, 5:30PM you are welcome to attend at EASTCONN.

Mrs. Buell shared and explained some of the information from Representative Dubitsky from an EASTCONN meeting on November 21, 2019 in regards to regionalizing school districts versus collaboration with other districts.  
Representative Dubitsky is trying to support smaller school districts by getting answers to questions that schools may have and to prevent regionalizing.

7. Brooklyn's Best

**BES**

1. Ice Box staff meeting was appreciated by all
2. Sensory path was installed and has been a huge hit
3. Excellent professional development sessions focused around ELA workshop
4. Successful parent-teacher conferences
5. We are seeing a lot of learning through formal and informal observations

**BMS**

1. Parent Conferences were well attended

2. Honors Assembly recognizing academics, acts of kindness, perseverance and our newest award "The Good Cookie"
3. Lions Club Recipients:
4. Gabrielle Lessey Grade 5
5. Breslin Brown Grade 6
6. Julie Young Grade 7
7. Calleigh O'Brien Grade 8
8. 8th Grade students enjoyed A Christmas Carol at Trinity Theater
9. PTO sponsored an indoor planetarium for grade 5 student

### **High School**

1. Marisa Kazantzis, one of our freshmen at KHS, was recently awarded the KHS Good Cookie Award. The Freshman team gives the good cookie to recognize any student they see as being a good role model and going above and beyond.
2. Congratulations to Linda St. Laurent and Caroline Frost for being chosen to receive the November Head of School's Award at Woodstock Academy for commitment, trustworthiness, leadership, dedication and respect of peers and staff.

### **8. Administrative Reports**

- a. Current budget balance: FY 20

Mrs. Vachon discussed the budget balance to date. Actual expenditures are at \$18.6 million, 36.4% spent to date. She also discussed the line item transfers.

Mrs. Buell requested that the BOE approve the line item transfers to make the budget adjustments to expenditures.

Mrs. Buell requested that the board accept a motion to approve the line item transfers on the budget expenditures and adjustments as outlined by Mrs. Vachon. Mrs. Lyons made a motion to approve the line item transfers.  
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

Mrs. Jolley abstained from the vote due to not having enough information.  
Vote to approve

Mr. Otto asked Mrs. Buell to share some information on the private special education tuition line item. Mrs. Buell explained how the tuition with private special education is handled. She will provide additional information for the next meeting.

- b. Enrollment Report

The numbers are stable at this time, no big changes.

- c. Bus Contract RFP Process and Timeline

Currently Mrs. Buell is working with Pomfret and Eastford to explore a joint RFP. Companies may bid on all three districts together and individually. Pomfret may not participate in the bid and it might be just Brooklyn and Eastford.

Timeline:

- 10/21 Initial Meeting
- 10/23 Work on RFP
- 11/20 RFP Mostly Complete
- 12/03 Post RFP
- 12/12 Mandatory Bidders Conference
- 12/18 Written Questions Due
- 12/20 Q/A Posted
- 01/21 Bid Opening

#### 9. Board of Education Committee Reports

Nothing to report

Board members will be assigned at a later date to committees

#### 10. Board Representatives to Other Committees

Dr. Perkins-Banas stated that the Brooklyn Parks and Recreation needs to establish a sub-committee to deal with the track at Prince Hill due to incidents of vandalism. The bathrooms at Prince Hill had to be closed as well due to vandalism.

Mr. Atchinson stated that Mrs. Trivella wanted him to remind everyone about the CABA Legislative breakfast that is December 12, 2019 being held at Brooklyn Schools at 7:30 a.m.

Mrs. Lyons wanted to let the new Board members know that there are sub-committees and some of those responsibilities will be divvied up in the next few months. They can email the Chair, Mrs. Lyons, of which committee they express interest in.

#### 11. Old Business

##### a. Draft 2020-2021 School Calendar

##### i. **August 24-28: problem is Brooklyn Fair begins on 8/27**

Recommendation 1: Staff 8/24, students 8/25-8/27, Staff 8/28

Recommendation 2: Begin school after Labor Day: 9/8

Recommendation 3: Begin 8/31 with two staff days and 3 student days

Implication: KHS/WA start school the last week of August. Every time that we are not on the same schedule, it costs BPS \$320 X 15 buses = \$4,800/day

There was discussion on the start date in August. The Board seems to be in

favor of recommendation 1.

**ii. Professional Day scheduled for 2/16 move to 1/15**

The day after President's Day used to be a day off. Long ago it was a week off. Staff would like to have that day off.

Recommendation: This could be moved, it would prolong the school year. There was discussion and the Board wants to keep Professional day on 2/16 and not change it to 1/15.

**iii. Consider Veteran's Day:**

There were 3 parents who thought that it was disrespectful to have school on this day. There were many others who were incredibly impressed and appreciated that they were able to attend the event. Some active military or recent veterans may not be able to attend if it was held on a different day due to work.

Recommendation: I believe that the students likely spend this day actually commemorating veterans rather than being home or in childcare where they may not spend time thinking about veterans. Parents are always able to remove their students from school if they have ceremonies to attend. There was discussion and the Board agreed.

**iv. April Vacation 4/12-4/16:**

April vacation will need to be moved to 4/19-4/23 due to SAT testing at high schools. All schools will be changing this.

**v. Request for Early Dismissal Days:**

I am requesting that Brooklyn adopt 4 early dismissal days so that teachers can engage in professional development days. In order to advance student achievement, it is necessary to engage in ongoing and embedded professional development throughout the year in addition to the full day PD schedule.

Recommendation: Add 4 Early Dismissal Days: 9/30/20, 12/2/20, 2/3/21, 5/19/21. There was discussion and the possibility of moving the February date.

**vi. Evening parent conferences at BES and BMS both on the same evening:**

This was requested by the staff. This presents some positives and negatives for staff and families.

There was discussion in regards to Mrs. Buell's recommendations stated above. Mrs. Buell will make changes, share it with staff and parents, and bring it to the next meeting. Mrs. Buell wanted to have a discussion about Brooklyn Public Schools not having school today due to the adjourn election. An adjourn election needs to have the same conditions under the last election date and school wasn't in session for students on November 5, 2019. Mrs. Buell wanted to discuss this because of the Connecticut State

Primary Election coming on April 28, 2019. April may be a busier voter turnout day. She would like to try and figure out traffic for voters and buses if we were to have school or to find other voter locations. Mr. Atchinson stated that the first priority is safety. Today was a staff development day for all staff on a new security app and sexual harassment. There was further discussion on reducing the current student days from 182 to 181. After discussion, Mrs. Buell is recommending that they close school on April 28, 2019 and a professional development day will be added in June for teachers.

## 12. New Business

### a. Board of Education Meeting Dates 2020

1/29 (5th Wednesday)  
2/26 (4th Wednesday)  
3/25 (4th Wednesday)  
4/22 (4th Wednesday)  
5/27 (4th Wednesday)  
6/24 (4th Wednesday)  
7/22 (4th Wednesday)  
8/26 (4th Wednesday)  
9/23 (4th Wednesday)  
10/28 (4th Wednesday)  
11/24 (4th Tuesday) before Thanksgiving  
12/16 (3rd Wednesday)

Motion to approve the Board of Education meeting dates as proposed/revised.  
(Perkins-Banas/Jolley)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

### b. Budget Workshop Dates: Proposed Dates for Budget Workshops

Jan. 8: 5:00-7:00PM  
Jan. 29 6:00-7:00PM prior to BOE meeting  
Feb. 26 6:00-7:00PM prior to BOE meeting  
Mar. 11 6:00-7:00PM prior to BOE meeting  
Mar. 25 6:00-7:00PM prior to BOE meeting

Motion to approve the Budget Workshop Dates as proposed  
(Phaiah/Perkins-Banas)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

### c. First Read of Board Policies

Policy 6159, 5144.4, 5131.911  
Policy 0200, 5112

Mrs. Buell stated the Board will be reviewing five policies and provide feedback and recommendations on any changes at a later date. CABA is updating our policies online.

Mr. Atchinson had a question for community members that were asking about our gym policy. Mrs. Buell stated there is a use of facility policy. There is a form on the school's website.

d. Committee and Representative assignments

Identify committee members for committees and representatives: Board members will email Board Chair, Mrs. Lyons, with interest of which committees and representatives that they express interest in.

13. Public Comment

Amy Landis wanted to talk about conferences for Middle School students due to there not being enough time slots for the number of parents to be meeting with all teachers that their children have and administration is aware of the issue. She gave an example for the sixth grade team, this year was split into two groups. She made an appointment with both groups so she could speak with all of her child's teachers. She was asked to please cancel one appointment. She couldn't meet with all of her child's teachers and she had additional questions and they had to pull a teacher out of another conference. She feels there has to be a better way to have parent/teacher conferences. This isn't the first year, it's been happening for years. It wasn't an issue with her older twins because she could schedule two appointments and meet with all their teachers. She knows there were other sixth grade parents that were asked to cancel an appointment and they weren't able to meet with all the teachers. She is aware that she can call or email at any time, but there's a reason why we have parent/teacher conferences to have face to face meetings. She said it needs to be addressed, especially if they're looking to change the conference time around.

14. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:05 p.m.  
(Perkins-Banas/Jolley)  
No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

***Donna L. DiBenedetto***

Donna L. DiBenedetto  
Board Clerk