

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 April 22, 2020 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Atchinson, Mr. Phaiah, Mrs. Jolley, Mrs. Hackbarth. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, was also present.

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

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

2. Public Comment

Questions and comments are by phone: (860)774-9732 x1.

Mrs. Lyons stated that we would ask that you state your name and address for the record and direct your comments to the Board of Education. The Board of Education is not permitted to engage in a discussion or answer questions during public comment, but welcome you to share your thoughts or questions. Five minutes may be allotted to each speaker and a maximum of 20 minutes.

No comments by email or phone

3. Approval of minutes

a. February 26, 2020 BOE Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2020
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)
No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve.

b. March 26, 2020 BOE Special Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of March 26, 2020
(Phaiah/Perkins-Banas)
No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve.

4. Correspondence and Communication

a. Resignation/Retirement

Mrs. Buell read a letter of retirement from Marla Rufo-Pellegrino. After 31 years of employment at the Brooklyn Elementary School, it is hard to say goodbye, but it is the right decision in her personal life. Mrs. Buell is sad to see her leave, but wishes her the best with her retirement.

b. Retirement

Mrs. Buell read a letter of retirement from Diane Wimmer. Diane will miss her kids and her colleagues and stated Brooklyn is a special place. Mrs. Buell stated at the end of Diane's letter she quoted Winnie the Pooh, "How fortunate am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard." Mrs. Buell is sad to see her leave, but wishes her the best with her retirement.

5. Brooklyn's Best

BES

1. Excellent Participation in our Virtual Spirit Week.
2. Mrs. Payant has planned a Virtual Math Week (April 20-April 24).
3. Positive feedback from parents around how we have shifted to e-learning.
4. We've had numerous students participate in virtual art and music classes.
5. Staff is coming together to support one another in ways that we would not have imagined. We are all learning from one another.
6. PD is being provided to our paraprofessionals through webinars and Zoom meetings.

BMS

1. CT Writing contest winners (out of 209 5th grade entries across the state 10 of our students won awards!)
 - Ronan Curran received the platinum award for "Alone with a Zombie Skeleton."
 - Ariana Hamm received an honorable mention for "My Dad."
 - Madelyn Hanes received an honorable mention for "Warriors."
 - Rocco Pascale received a platinum award for "Middle School."
 - Christian Bard received a silver award for "My Niece was Born."
 - Claire Ellsworth received a silver award for "Pollution."
 - Cora Hefner received a gold award for "How a Book Inspired Me."
 - Tomas Gutierrez received a silver award for "Chains."

- Angelina Pacheco received a silver award for "May Not Be the One."
 - Lyra Ritner received a platinum award for "Love."
2. Grade 6 Brady Gedutis won third place in the CT Elks Association American Essay contest amongst thousands of contestants across CT.
 3. Staff created a Hello video that was shared with BMS students and families in conjunction with our Virtual Spirit Week. We received lots of positive feedback from parents and students for the continued sense of connectedness it fostered.

Mrs. Buell would like to commend staff and volunteers that are helping with meals. She stated that approximately 230 students are being served two meals per day, seven days per week. She also wanted to send kudos to EASTCONN, who provides the oversight for our meal program. We've also received many mask donations from several people. Mrs. Buell thanked staff, families and the community as a whole.

6. Administrative Reports

a. Finance Reports

Mrs. Buell reviewed the finance report. There will be some savings due to some of the line items that were budgeted for that will not be happening.

b. E-Learning Updates

i. Report Cards

Mrs. Buell stated that the last day that school was in session, BMS students received third quarter progress reports. There has been two weeks of distance learning and then shifted to e-learning. After discussing with administrators, they feel it's not an effective time to provide a third quarter report card. They decided that the third quarter grades will rollover to the fourth quarter.

ii. Grading

Mrs. Buell stated that they did look at the guidance of the state department on grading on the pass/fail system: pass with distinction, if a student has gone above and beyond what is expected and has excelled in that environment; pass with incomplete, if a student may not be able to access the learning due to not having access. She doesn't anticipate failing a student.

iii. E-Learning Handbook

Mrs. Buell believes that Brooklyn was ahead of the curve in providing our students with what they needed. She stated that she asked teachers to start

to pull back a little bit. The students have been working very hard and too many hours. She stated that they are looking at the e-learning handbook to look at having some around scheduling, some around the number of assignments. The platform is different from teacher to teacher, by grade levels, and what is expected on which days. They are looking at the model handbook on e-learning that came out of Stonington and Hebron then adapted it. Administrators are working on the e-learning handbook so we are a little bit more prepared. They are looking at the specific guidelines on what the learning will look like by different grade and developmental levels to have some uniformity for students and families.

Mrs. Perkins-Banas asked if Mrs. Buell had the e-learning handbook for them or anyone else to look at? Mrs. Buell stated that it's from another school district. Mrs. Buell stated it's on the Hebron Public School's website or the Stonington Public School's website. She stated that it's being worked on now with administrators and will forward it to the Board to look at when it's completed.

- iv. Student work schedule more clearly defined to include office hours and PD/Curriculum work time for staff

Mrs. Buell thought that when this first happened, when teachers aren't engaged in teaching there might be time to work on curriculum, which has been limited. That hasn't been able to happen. Students working on their own for five hours, is too much time. Assignments that are being assigned may be easier for some students than others and teachers having office hours may help the students that are struggling. It's a learning experience for everyone.

- c. Enrollment for PK/K starts next week

Mrs. Buell stated Mrs. McCallum and Mrs. Hardacker have been working on transitioning from paper enrollment to all online enrollment to decrease the face time of enrolling students. They created Google Forms and they are being posted to the website today and will advertise and promote by Monday for preschool and kindergarten registration.

- d. Brooklyn Public Schools May Day Parade: May 1st

Mrs. Buell stated that the staff asked if they could do a parade. With the state roads in Brooklyn, it becomes challenging with the traffic in those locations. The creative staff have asked about a reverse parade for May 1, 2020 to celebrate students and families. Staff will go to the school and line up on the parade route in their vehicles keeping their social distance. Families will be invited to come through, they are going to be the parade. They will go through the line and staff

will be cheering for them. Teachers will be lined up starting at the BMS gym and going behind both schools. Middle school parents will start first at BMS at 1:00 and elementary students starting at 1:15 and then going home. At 1:45, staff will get in the line and parade over to East Brooklyn going down side roads. Mrs. Buell will be posting the route. Mr. Ives is willing to help coordinate with police/fire escorts.

Mr. Atchinson stated it's a cool idea. Other schools have done it and it's gone well.

e. Parent Survey Results

Mrs. Buell reviewed the parent survey results. She stated that overall the feedback was positive, over 200 parents replied. Some students have excelled in this environment. Parents are appreciative of what teachers are doing. There were a few comments that parents would like to see improvement.

7. Board of Education Committee Reports

a. 2020-21 Budget Update

The budget meeting was held just prior to the BOE Meeting tonight. The budget Will be presented to the Board of Finance on May 6, 2020.

b. Negotiations: Currently engaged in negotiating for 1303 and bus contract per Executive Order 7R

Mrs Buell stated that this is the year for the for 1303 three year contract negotiations for non-certified staff, which includes paraprofessionals, custodians, cafeteria, and secretary employees. Given the situation, the sub-committee of the Board wanted to see if 1303 would agree to a one year extension to their contract. A proposal was made, it's not completed as of yet.

Mrs. Buell stated that the bus contract is currently being negotiated with the bus company around their contract. The Executive Order 7R states you should enter into negotiations again with the bus company to negotiate what the payment should be during a shutdown. We are in negotiations and there might be some savings.

8. Board Representatives to Other Committees

None to report

9. Old Business

- a. PV Projects Update
 - Permit Plans for both schools are complete. The documents include:
 - o Electrical Plans and Specifications
 - o Structural Assessment and Sign Off
 - o Racking Plans and Calculations (Solar panel mounting)
 - CSW has performed a review and provided comment to the awarded contractor.
 - Roofing Warranty – Garland Company the roofing warranty holder has been made aware of the projects and issued an overburden waiver for signature.
 - These permit plans and the DAS Code Conformity Certification are at the school, and we are coordinating with four town officials for the required sign-offs.
 - CSW is in communication with DAS and tracking the close-out of the required forms needed to schedule the DAS plan review.
 - Site mobilization can commence once we perform this DAS plan review, and are granted permission to begin construction.
 - Anticipate about 2-3 weeks until the DAS plan review. The meeting will occur virtually.

Mr. Atchinson wanted to ask a question about pass/fail that he was seeing on Facebook. How is this going to affect National Junior Honor Society or Honors Night? Mrs Buell stated that they have been discussing it internally. There are two quarters worth of grades and they'll look at the passing with distinction. Conversations have been happening. Mrs. Buell stated that they aren't sure how it will be addressed at this time.

10. New Business

- a. Approval of Healthy Food Certification for 2020-21

A motion to approve the healthy food option: Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Board of Education or governing authority certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.
(Phaiah/Hackbarth)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

A motion to approve the food exemptions: The Board of Education or governing authority will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The “regular school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the food sales.

(Perkins-Banas/Atchinson)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

A motion to approve the beverage exemptions: The Board of Education or Governing authority will allow the sale to students of beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the beverages are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An “event” is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting or extracurricular activity. The “school day” is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. “Location” means where the event is being held, and must be the same place as the beverage sales.

(Perkins-Banas/Jolley)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

b. Policy 0210 Second Read

Motion to approve policy 0210 with one modification to replace Nutmeg School with Brooklyn Public Schools

(Perkins-Banas/Atchinson)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

c. Next Steps with Budget Process

- i. The Board of Education Budget will be presented to the Board of Finance on May 6, 2020.
- ii. There will be a Town Hearing on June 2, 2020.

d. SERAC Student Questionnaire 7.1 vs. 8.1 or No Survey

Mrs. Buell recommends no action since we are not available to administer and respond to questions.

11. Public Comment

Questions and comments are by phone: (860)774-9732 x1.

Amy Landis, Fairway Drive, Brooklyn. She wanted to comment on the grading and recognition, wondering if students can get grades for the third quarter. She thinks that we were about three-quarters of the way through the third quarter with 2 weeks of distance learning and one week of e-learning. A lot of students have been working really hard to get the grades and even doing extra credit. Her other comment is on recognition. It is a big deal for students. Her daughters' high school is doing a web-base platform to do an honors night. Maybe it's something that Brooklyn can still do and decide if it's an option.

No further phone or email comments

12. Executive Session

- a. Security Survey
- b. Negotiations

Motion to enter into executive session to discuss the security survey and negotiations and invite Superintendent Buell to attend.
(Perkins-Banas/Jolley)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

The Board of Education will take no action except to adjourn the meeting following executive session.

Motion to come out of executive session at 8:48 p.m.
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

13. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 8:48 p.m.
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)
No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,
Donna L. DiBenedetto
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Board Clerk