

# 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 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 June 24, 2020 via Zoom. In attendance were Mrs. Lyons, Dr. Perkins-Banas, Mr. Phaiah, Mrs. Jolley, and Mrs. Hackbarth. Mrs. Buell, Superintendent, and Ms. Levin, Business Manager, were also present.

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

Quorum established. Mrs. Lyons called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

2. Public Comment

Questions and comments can be made on Facebook Live or call 860-774-9732 X1.

No comments or questions on Facebook Live or phoned in.

3. Approval of minutes

a. May 27, 2020 BOE Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of May 27, 2020  
(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)  
No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve.

4. Correspondence and Communication

a. Resignation Letters

Mrs. Buell stated she received a letter of resignation from Amanda Brown, Director of Special Education. She has enjoyed her experience with Brooklyn Public Schools and is going to miss being here. She has accepted a position closer

to her home. Mrs. Buell stated that we will miss her very much and she wishes her well.

Mrs. Buell stated that she received a letter of resignation from Suzette Reading, Library Media Specialist at the Brooklyn Middle School. The Library Media positions have been changed for this coming school year. Mrs. Reading was able to obtain another Library Media Specialist position in another district. Mrs. Buell stated that we wish her well and knows that's where her heart and passion is.

b. Woodstock Academy Student Awards

Mrs. Buell stated that she received two letters from Woodstock Academy's Head of School, Mr. Sanford:

Congratulations to Adam Shinkiewicz for being chosen to receive the Head of School's Award.

Congratulations to Alyssa Arends for being chosen to receive the Outstanding Academic Achievement Scholarship.

Mrs. Buell congratulates both Adam Shinkiewicz and Alyssa Arends. It's always nice to hear about Brooklyn's high school students.

5. Brooklyn's Best

**BES**

1. Mrs. Gatlin did an excellent job with the Virtual Art Show. Children in all grades sent in projects to be included.
2. The support team held a Health and Wellness week and our students had multiple creative ways to remain calm and eat healthy.
3. Ms. Dakota Nicholson completed TEAM.
4. New staff members for the 2020-2021 school year have been attending team meetings.

**BMS**

1. 8th Grade students finished the school year with many fun activities such as bingo, class movie, awards night and graduation.
2. Thank you to the teachers who paraded through Brooklyn for 6 hours to deliver yard signs to our graduating students.

**District**

1. Thank you to the many staff who went above and beyond to address the academic, social emotional and physical needs of our students.
2. Thank you to the PTO for securing a donation of t-shirts to give to each student at BES for field day.

3. Thank you to the Patel family from Quiet Corner Inn; Ferland Family from Norcom Mortgage; Brais Family; Schley Family; Parmeter Family and Jaime Carver for donating t-shirts to each of our 8th grade students. They were very appreciated.
4. Thank you to the staff who volunteered to distribute meals and work in the kitchen during this shutdown. Special thank you to Ana Klawitter and Jan Franklin who volunteered to help in the kitchen with preparation of meals. We are so grateful to have so many amazing staff members. Volunteers: Lisa Donovan, Lynn Paquin, Lisa Lernould, Deneen Azzolino, Theresa Demers, Sherry MacFarland, Jan Franklin, Melissa Hopkins, Ileana Delegan, Ana Klawitter, April Kyllonen, Tammy Courtemache, Arturo Gutierrez, Diane Wimmer, Wendy Page, Vicki Porier, Heather Mumford, Gena Laplante, Jane Hatzberger, Margaret Swagger, Beverly Grennan, Mary Brennan, Beth Frink and Jeannie Gorky.

## 6. Administrative Reports

### a. Budget Updates

#### i. Standard Budget Report

Mrs. Buell stated that Ms. Levin has experience in another district and asked Mrs. Buell what she thought of a different report. Mrs. Buell shared the standard budget report with the Board that is very detailed, sometimes difficult to read, and difficult to see which things are encumbered and which are expenditures. The new report is more about expenses, not necessarily a budget report.

Ms. Levin explained that the standard budget report that the Board of Education is used to seeing is difficult to read, specifically it's hard to tell Salaries because they aren't encumbered on the report to know what you have left in every salary line, how much you have in benefit lines. Some items are just harder to encumber in the system. She explained when you print a report from the system it doesn't show those encumbrances. She stated this happened in her last district and they created a projection budget report, which makes it easier to show where we're projected to be at the end of the year due to being able to manually encumber some of the expenses that we know are going to happen. The report she is proposing, gives the same information, a little bit more condensed, you won't see every individual account. For example: Principal at elementary school or Principal at the middle school, you would see Administrators. It would be more grouped together for all major accounts. She stated that the Board would be more focused on the total objects which are salaries, benefits, professional services, contracted services and that it's their responsibility to make sure that those are balanced at the end of the year through

transfers. With the standard budget report, you can't see the object code total expenses.

ii. Projected Budget Report

Mrs. Buell discussed some of the items on the new Projected Budget Report:

-\$200,000 has been set aside to return to the Town of Brooklyn.

-Funds will be expended to ensure that we can meet the educational needs during the phased reopening of school for the 2020-2021 school year.

-Funds returned to the Town from 2019-2020 included costs of fuel that were refunded to the BOE after June 30, 2020 and tuition revenue that was billed to other districts for students who are being educated in the Brooklyn Public Schools. We anticipate these funds to be paid out before June 30, 2020 and they will assist with the purchase of technology to enhance teaching and learning.

Mrs. Buell asked the Board if the new template is easier to read and understand and do they want to continue to use the new template?

Mrs. Jolley asked if they use the new template, would they be able to see the more detailed ones if they want to dig in to see what is what with a certain line? Mrs. Buell stated she can still produce both documents.

Mrs. Perkins-Banas asked if Mrs. Buell asked Mr. Otto, where he's the representative with the Board of Finance, what is his opinion on it? Does he want it done this way or not? Mrs. Buell stated she hasn't spoken to him yet due to Ms. Levin had just gotten this together last week. Mrs. Buell stated she wanted to present the new template to the Board. She said they can do it again at the next meeting. Mrs. Perkins-Banas said the new template is easier to read.

Mrs. Lyons stated that what really matters is that they can see the bottom line. Mrs. Buell discussed some other line items and discussed them further.

Motion to approve the transfer of funds to balance objects to ensure there are no negative balances as of June 30, 2020.

(Perkins-Banas/Hackbarth)

No discussion; unanimous vote to approve

-Smartboard Purchases

Mrs. Buell stated when we return to school if we're in a situation where we have smaller class sizes, one teacher might be teaching in classroom A and some of their students are in classroom B, she would like to be able to livestream instruction from classroom A to classroom B. Mrs. Buell went through the schools and took a count of what the rooms are and based on last week's recommendation of 10 students per class, we are going to need quite a few additional projectors and monitors or Smartboards. Mrs. Buell stated earlier that savings from fuel and tuition revenue will help cover the cost of purchasing technology to enhance teaching and learning.

7. Board of Education Committee Reports

None to report

8. Board Representatives to Other Committees

None to report

9. Old Business

a. PV Project Update

Mrs. Buell stated that she did a walk through with the Project Manager and the Site Manager and there is some tree removal that needs to be done and will include additional trees. These will include trees that will shade the solar panels, trees that are dying due to algae and lightning strikes as well as trees that are too close to the building causing debris on the roof or improper air circulation around the building.

b. BOE Policy 9000 Series

Mrs. Buell recommends that they discuss each of these policies in July during a workshop prior to the July 22, 2020 BOE meeting. Possible workshop from 5:00-6:45pm on July 22, 2020.

Mrs. Lyons stated that it would depend on how many people might be away.

Mrs. Perkins-Banas agrees that July is sometimes a light month that they could have the meeting before the regular Board meeting. There was discussion whether Board members would be available to meet. Mrs. Buell stated that a decision doesn't need to be made, they'll see what's happening as it gets closer.

Mrs. Lyons wanted to state that she had the privilege last week of joining Mrs. Buell giving gifts to the teachers who are retiring. She stated that there are

teachers that have been at the Brooklyn Public Schools for a very long time, they're part of the Brooklyn family. She said it was bittersweet and is happy for them. Mrs. Lyons thanked Mrs. Buell for setting it up.

## 10. New Business

### a. New Hires

Mrs. Buell stated that the Brooklyn Public Schools has many new hires:

Nicholas Carson - BMS Grade 5 Science  
Jocelyn Webster - BES Special Education  
Daniel Baccaro - BMS School Counselor  
Emily Moreau - BES Grade 3  
Alyssa Barry - BES Kindergarten  
Michelle Nye - BES Preschool  
Carolyn Lowe - Grade 6 ELA  
Barbara Saladin - District OT  
Shannon Russo - Grade 7 Science

### b. Discussion of Meal Price Increase

Mrs. Buell stated that EASTCONN is required by the state to do an analysis of our lunch costs and our expenses each year. Based on that assessment, they make recommendations of changing lunch prices or keeping them the same. It is recommended that Brooklyn Schools increase meal prices by \$0.05 in each building.

Prices would go from: \$3.00 to \$3.05 BMS;  
\$2.95 to \$3.00 BES

Mrs. Lyons asked if the cost of breakfast would stay the same? Mrs. Buell stated she believes it would, she didn't receive a recommendation to change breakfast prices.

Motion to approve the increase in meal prices for the 2020-2021 school year by \$0.05 at each school.

(Perkins-Banas/Hackbarth)

No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve.

### c. District Reopening Team

Mrs. Buell stated that they plan on creating a District Reopening Team. There have been many people that have volunteered to be on the team. Mrs. Buell stated that they have not convened the team yet because she was thinking they would get

guidance and they have not gotten the guidance yet. She has a conference call tomorrow with the Commissioner of Education and the Governor will be making an announcement about what schools will look like in the fall. She anticipates convening the District Reopening Team soon to review some of the guidelines and recommendations. Some work has been done around the little pieces, but until there's something more concrete to plan on she didn't want to bring people together and have to change things.

Mrs. Buell stated that there's still discussion of smaller class sizes, and reduced seating on buses. She believes the guidance is moving towards slightly larger class sizes, possibly more students on buses. Also, discussion about not requiring taking temperatures of everybody as they walk through the door of the bus or building. She thinks masks are still a requirement, social distancing is still part of the requirement, as well as disinfecting and cleaning. She will know more tomorrow, Thursday, June 25, 2020.

Mrs. Jolley asked if a liaison from the Board of Education would be on the team? Mrs. Buell stated that Mrs. Lyons is willing to be on the team. Mrs. Jolley stated that she would like to be on it, she can bring a little bit of perspective from both sides.

Mrs. Buell asked if anyone from the Board would like to join the team? She's trying to have representation. A community member reached out to her today asking if anyone from the community, that is not a parent, on the committee. Mrs. Buell stated that there isn't. Some of the team members are school employees, secretaries, teachers, paraprofessionals, Board members, and parents.

Mrs. Jolley asked if the meetings would only be during the day? Mrs. Buell stated that no decisions have been made, there will be a poll on what works best for everyone.

Mrs. Lyons asked if Mrs. Buell is on a committee for the state? Mrs. Buell stated she isn't sitting on the Regional Team that reports to the state. She is on the Regional Superintendents that sit together, which is the EASTCONN Region. She then works closer with sending high schools and neighboring districts. They are able to have a variety of opportunities to communicate with Commissioner Cardona and the Governor to ask questions. She also has email communication where she can send in questions as well. Mrs. Lyons was asking because she's hearing from parents that the wearing of masks is not going to happen. Mrs. Buell believes that the state has heard it as well. She stated that it goes through attorneys and the Department of Health that looks at the plans and there could be a liability issue.

Mrs. Buell stated that she sees a couple comments/questions on Facebook Live. Someone stated they have volunteered to be on the committee. Mrs. Buell stated

that she had so many volunteers that she had given the list to someone that knows no one in town and had that person choose 3 numbers from that list. Mrs. Buell has a draft email to send out, but she is waiting to get more information before sending it out.

d. District Calendar Modification

Mrs. Buell stated that the calendar for next year has school starting on August 24, 2020 for staff and students beginning on August 25, 2020 due to Friday being the Brooklyn Fair. Mrs. Buell would like to request that the calendar be changed to have staff in for professional development on August 24, 2020 and August 25, 2020 with students returning on Wednesday August 26, 2020 for 3 days that week. The change would require changing two days on the calendar, August 25 and August 28, 2020.

Mrs. Lyons asked if the state is going to dictate when we start school. She knows that Rhode Island is making all schools start on the same day. Mrs. Perkins-Banas stated that in Rhode Island, the school calendar is dictated by the Governor. All Rhode Island schools are starting at the same time this year due to covid. Mrs. Buell hasn't heard that is happening in Connecticut.

Motion to change the approved 2020-2021 Brooklyn Public Schools Calendar and make August 25, 2020 a professional development day and make August 28, 2020 a school day.

(Perkins-Banas/Phaiah)

No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve.

11. Public Comment

Questions and comments can be made on Facebook Live or call 860-774-9732 X1.

No new comments on Facebook Live, no phone calls, and no emails.

12. Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation

Motion to enter into the Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation and invite Superintendent Buell to attend.

(Jolley/Perkins-Banas)

No Discussion, unanimous vote to approve.

The Executive Session ended at 9:08 p.m.

13. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:09 p.m.

(Jolley/Hackbarth)

No discussion, unanimous vote to approve

Respectfully Submitted,

*Donna L. DiBenedetto*

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Board Clerk