

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 14, 2023**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held in Council Chambers on February 14, 2023.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Madam Chair LeBlanc.
2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Amanda Pickett
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Amanda Pickett
4. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:**
5. **ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jean Acree, Dr. Gerald Calnen, Janet Cushman, Joshua Hamre, Jonathan LeBlanc (arrived at 7:44 PM), Amanda Pickett, John Unghire and Tina LeBlanc

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Christopher J. Drezek, Superintendent; Mr. Andrew B. Longey, Assistant Superintendent; Student Representative Kayla Surprenant and Morgan DiFronzo

Madam Chair LeBlanc reminded audience members that we are at a Board meeting, and she does not want to stop the meeting for any interruptions made by the audience. We have a busy night ahead with budget discussions and policy revisions.

6. BOARD GUEST(S)

a. Dr Wiley – Digital Presentation

Mr. Drezek welcomed our PK-12 Director of Innovation Dr. Kerry Wiley. Dr. Wiley will share some of the things we are doing in our district with technology and its many uses. Some Board members have attended Digital Literacy Nights held at our schools. She has prepared a presentation for the Board and audience to view.

Dr. Wiley provided the Board and audience a detailed video about how we are using Apple Classroom in our schools. She showed teachers how to use Apple Classroom and they figured out how to use this as a learning tool with mathematics. Apple Classroom can be used in any grade level classroom and in any subject. The teachers iPads are connected to the student's iPads and as soon as they tell the students to use a certain application, it pops up on all the screens in the room.

Mrs. Pickett thanked Dr. Wiley for the presentation. This demonstrates how technology is supporting classroom instructional work. This is a very innovative display of what our students are doing. You also demonstrated student and teacher feedback. She knows how hard our teachers work. You mentioned them banding together and sharing what they learned with their colleagues is so true. You also demonstrated accessibility in your presentation. She loves how this is something that is easy for our teachers to use. She is concerned that we are adding more things for our staff to do. Staff can lock student screens makes it easier for them to give students instruction. It is also a great feature for teachers to make sure the students are using the correct application. Thank you.

Mr. Hamre echoed Mrs. Pickett's comments. This was a great technology presentation. Not all students learn the same. Can this be adapted towards the students needs? Dr. Wiley stated the teacher can see all the students screens and knows when someone is struggling. They allow the students to use different options to show their work. This technology is like having another set of eyes in the classroom.

Mr. Hamre stated the teacher might be looking at 14 screens and may not catch something, can they go back? Dr. Wiley stated this application does not record the students screens. It is live and what is happening currently in the classroom. This program will show the teacher what applications each student used at the end of the lesson. This will give the teacher an indication if the students are understanding the lesson or if they were off task. It is definitely a management tool.

Mr. Hamre asked if she can see anything that might be a downside to this program or a negative. Dr. Wiley stated no. This is a simple tool to be used in the moment and to share students work effectively as instructional tools. As long as our wi-fi is working this will be a tool that we can continue to use.

Mrs. Cushman thanked Dr. Wiley for her presentation. She looked up Apple Classroom and the presentation she saw was nothing like your presentation. She appreciated seeing the students and staff using this tool. Technology can be incredibly distracting. This is such a valuable tool for our teachers and students to use. She appreciates the Digital Literacy Nights presentation you held at our schools but was unable to attend. She also appreciates you helping our parents to understand internet safety and best practices better. Dr. Wiley added we will continue to do this.

Mr. Unghire asked how long have we been using Apple Classroom. Dr. Wiley stated since the beginning of this school year. Mr. Unghire can see the value using this program. He also asked if there are any limitations or shortcomings. Dr. Wiley stated the students have realized the teachers can see their work. The students know the teacher can help them and they can also see the benefits. The teacher is everywhere and can see all of their work which isn't really a negative but more of a positive.

Dr. Calnen asked if white boards can still be used in the event the system crashes, or the internet connection is lost. Dr. Wiley stated yes. We also use whiteboards and not just iPads for student instruction. This is a great management tool for our teachers to use when they are using iPads. Technology can crash at any time. That could be considered a short coming for this.

Mr. Ryder stated you have worked with approximately 50 educators. Do we have the bandwidth to support this program building and districtwide at the same time? Dr. Wiley is confident that we have enough bandwidth, but she will check on this. This program is using Bluetooth, so the proximity of the devices is what matters.

Mr. Ryder added since this is Bluetooth, you do not need the same internet signal except for when you are in the classroom. This cannot be used for someone outside of the classroom. Dr. Wiley stated that is correct. This can only be used in the classroom during that moment. Our IT Department is hard at work every day making sure our internet is up and running smoothly.

Mr. Ryder stated our two newest buildings (EHS and JFK) have currently been updated with the latest technology and infrastructure.

Mr. Drezek added when we started using iPads in the district, we updated our bandwidth in every building. There will always be some hiccups. Our IT department is consistently putting out fires to make sure our bandwidth is not interrupted.

Dr. Wiley added she is 99.9% positive this will work wonderfully even if all schools and classrooms were using this program at the same time.

Madam Chair liked hearing feedback from some of the students. There is an element of student empowerment especially when they can share their lessons with other students. The teachers can also see who might be struggling. This is important because some students might not want to raise their hands for help. She can definitely see the benefits of using this for math. Math is all about strategies and the students learning those strategies and math facts. This is such a helpful tool for our students to use. The teachers that are using this tool can keep an eye on what all the students are doing. They made using this tool look very easy. She appreciates all of the hard work that went into learning this. Her kids also had Mrs. Kilty and Mr. Cassio who were wonderful teachers. She appreciates your presentation.

Mr. Unghire asked about any security issues, and can anyone hack into this? Dr. Wiley stated we have lots of security in place. The teacher is the only one that can connect with the students. This all works with PowerSchool and Apple School Manager. The teacher is the only one that can connect with the students during that moment.

Mr. Hamre asked if this is being used at the high school? Dr. Wiley stated she has worked with all departments at the high school and with our technology integration specialist Julie Kunzelman who has been working with all departments at the high school.

Mrs. Acree stated she wished this was around when she was teaching.

Dr. Wiley thanked our teachers, they are like superheroes and are everywhere.

Mr. Drezek added Mr. LeBlanc has addressed previously the amount of screentime our students are using with iPads. As you can see from this presentation that we didn't just give them iPads and say we'll see you in an hour. This tool increases student engagement and instruction. This demonstration was important for people to see this at home and how we are using iPads in our classrooms. He thanked Dr. Wiley for her presentation. The sky is the limit for what Dr. Wiley can do and show us going forward. She is our own superhero.

Madam Chair also thanked Dr. Wiley for her presentation.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Morgan DiFronzo stated last week all Juniors participated in a safe driving assembly. Two EHS students are representing Connecticut in Washington DC for Special Olympics with Mr. Ramos. They will meet with members from senate and elected officials. We will hold student symposiums during February about Black History month. Juniors will be participating in AP testing and SAT testing. Our 2 EHS artists of the month are Daniel Cardona and Mabel Gray-Khen.

Student Representative Kayla Surprenant reported the National Honor Society will host a fund raiser event at Standout Nutrition in Enfield on Saturday. We will have raffle baskets and prizes that will benefit the Enfield warming center. The Enfield Instrumental Music Association is holding a Wolf Pack fundraiser event on Saturday. Buzz Robotics is holding a Family painting night fundraiser on February 25th. The Buzz season starts on March 3rd thru April 8th. The EHS Boys Basketball team will hold their Senior night on Friday. The Girls Basketball team held their Senior night on February 9th. Mason Pilkington is a LL State Champion for the 55 meter dash in Track & field. He will compete in the State Championship on Saturday February 18th. Students interested in playing in any spring sports can sign up on final forms. The EHS Hockey team will hold a game on February 15th at Enfield Twin Rinks.

b. Staff PL Days & President's Day – NS – as presented

c. EPS Update

Mr. Drezek stated he forwarded to Board members an e-mail he received from Representative Arnone about legislation changes. School lunches will be free for all students for the remainder of this school year by the State of Connecticut. This takes effect in March. We will still offer free lunches for students during February. The state will also remove the cap on Excess Cost Funding.

Mr. Drezek stated that both he and Mr. Longey held our first parent advisory group meeting. We invited the first 30 parents to attend out of 150. We had great enjoyable conversations. They were listening to each other and were very respectful to each other even if they had a difference of opinions. He was very impressed by the parents and how vested they are in their children's education. He will be setting up the next group to meet with him. He is very pleased with the feedback he received this morning.

8. AUDIENCES

Madam Chair read a prepared statement about expectations for audience participation. She reminded audience members about Policy #9325.2 Order of Business and Meeting Conduct and explained about audience participation. We will utilize a 4-minute time limit for audience participation tonight. Thank you.

Rob Anderson, Bass Drive – Mr. Anderson spoke about our existing bullying policy and how it is not working at JFK. Parents complaints are not being taken seriously. The policy is ineffective, confusing and does not address the bully. Many school shooters have been bullied or had suicide ideations. We need to send a message to the bullies that it is not allowed. We need to have a better way for the kids that are being bullied to standup for themselves and report concerns without the fear of retaliation. Consequences for the bully are needed.

Lynn Kostek, Teach Street – Mrs. Kostek stated her children attended EPS. She started coming to Board meetings two years ago. She feels politics have taken over on the Board. She is glad to see us focusing on the needs of our children and not adult behavior. The Board should be focusing on the children. We need to set a better example for our students and for our student representatives that are seeing this bad behavior. We are the adults. What are we teaching our youth. You need to respect each other. Please do not ridicule each other. Our kids act better than the adults.

Mr. LeBlanc arrived at 7:44 PM.

Bill Delaney, JFK Middle School Social Studies Teacher and ETA Vice President – Mr. Delaney stated he is here to represent our EPS teachers, administrators and students. We are very grateful for Madam Chair for your leadership and the work you are doing. Our superintendent has maintained excellence and professionalism and is here for the right reason. He is here to advocate for our students and teachers. Please do not get distracted by the political charged negativity. The work we are doing is very important. A certain individual is discrediting our teachers and administrators about the work we are doing. This person does not want to hear what is going on in our schools now. Please do not let this misinformation distract you. He urged Board members to support the budget and ignore the negativity.

Peter Jonaitis, Farmstead Circle – Mr. Jonaitis stated he cares about our kids and what the Board does year after year. The Board will vote on a policy tonight, meetings are held in the public and the public has a right to speak. The chair sets the amount of time the audience can speak and is limiting participation. Please just set a fixed amount of time that is consistent for each meeting. The entire Board should decide this. Mr. Drezek spoke about our high needs students in the letter he sent to the state. Our needs should be higher for all students. We have good teachers in the classrooms. He would like to see us revamping our curriculum and

bringing back modified classrooms. Our students needs study halls. Every kid does not need to go to study halls, but some kids need this.

Liz Davis, North Maple Street – Mrs. Davis stated being a parent of a child that goes to EPS, your kids are the most important thing. Our teachers consider our kids as they were their own kids and will do everything for them. Our teachers understand and have a connection. We have an amazing superintendent. He has also said these are his kids. When people wanted to unmask our kids, he put his career on the line for our kids and took a stand. She appreciates you treating our kids like they were your own. Look at our past meetings and see what has gone on. You need to educate yourselves on diversity and inclusion so we can co-exist together. We need to understand our differences and get along. Do not stop love and empathy.

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Acree stated she visited Prudence Crandall and toured the school. She was very impressed with the staff and students. Crandall has great leadership along with caring, supportive teachers. The students were very engaged with their lessons and working hard toward their goals and objectives. They have wonderful programs and interventions that promote a successful learning environment. Kudos to the Crandall administration, staff and students. She attended the Crandall Winter Concert and loved hearing the students lovely voices and instruments. She congratulated Melissa Clark, Eric Spaulding and Elizabeth Tomsik for their hard work preparing for this concert.

Mrs. Acree added that 125 students attended the Literacy and Numeracy night that was held at Prudence Crandall. Both parents and students were able to take part in math and reading activities and drink hot cocoa that night. They are seeing a steady increase in targeted growth in math and reading. Teachers are addressing areas of student weakness. They are looking for volunteers to help with the end of year activities for grade 5 students. For more information please contact Principal Duperre or PTO President Jen Wheeler. They will also hold a virtual PTO meeting on Thursday, February 16th at 6:30 PM. She thanked Principal Duperre for this update.

Madam Chair was glad that Mrs. Acree was able to tour the school.

Dr. Calnen gave the Board an update on Kite. They are working on their community plan. They will hold several focus groups. Classroom observations were held. They also discussed a platform for early educators to share ideas. They held a dinner on February 2nd. The mental health committee met on February 9th and discussed challenges and how to address them. They will meet again in April. The Pre-K students will meet with the residents at Mark Twain. The Stowe Head Start Focus Group will meet on Tuesday, February 28th.

Dr. Calnen stated the Heritage Fair committee is looking for presenters and food vendors. This event will be held at JFK on Saturday, February 25th from 11:30 AM – 4 PM. Additional information can be found on our website or enfieldkite.org.

Dr. Calnen stated Kite will apply for a grant from Enfield Social Service. The Sparkler program initiative continues to make good progress with 31 families that participated in January. The FRC and Food Shelf worked together and helped parents use this program for screenings.

Dr. Calnen stated PLA held their retreat on Saturday, February 4th and their first class was held on Thursday, February 9th. PEP is still looking for a Spanish translator. Please contact KITE or Enfield Public Schools if you are interested.

Dr. Calnen stated the First Readers will hold their Trivia Night fundraiser event on Saturday, February 25th. You can purchase tickets at firstreaders.org. Their first ceremony will be held on Monday, March 6th at 5:00 PM at JFK. Rocking Chair Readers started reading to Stowe students. The purpose of this initiative is to bring generations together.

Dr. Calnen stated the Head Start Policy Committee met on February 3rd. They reviewed selection criteria and have a waiting list that applicants are prioritized by need. Head start cannot deny eligibility based on health conditions or disability. He reviewed what students are working on. They will hold two upcoming family engagement meetings. The first meeting is called Apps & Chaps will be held on March 14th. They also held a Family Science night in conjunction with the Connecticut Science Center where over 200 people attended.

Mrs. Cushman is excited to attend First Readers Trivia Night and the Heritage Fair. This is the First Readers only fundraiser event. We are hoping that many community members will attend this event.

Mrs. Cushman addressed audience member Rob Anderson's concern about the Bullying Policy. She will review this and will bring it up at our next Policy Committee meeting.

Mr. Hamre stated JFK is holding a kindness fundraiser. This is the last week for this fundraiser. Check your monthly newsletter for additional information. He hoped that JFK families were able to attend the Program of Studies Night that was held for incoming grade 9 students at EHS to see what programs are being offered. This can be overwhelming task.

Mr. Hamre also congratulated the EHS students for medaling at the wrestling competition that was held. Congratulation Ethan Bounanducci, Kaden McBride, Jacob Beiler and Keonta Crawford.

Mr. Hamre stated he has been a Board member for over a year now. His intentions are to bring his best to the Board, the district and students and he hopes he is doing that. He has missed some events he planned to attend and apologized for that. He added that your mental health matters. If you are struggling, please reach out and get some help.

Mr. Hamre thanked Mr. Delaney for his comments. We as Board members have an obligation to understand our policies and procedures. It is very discouraging to hear misleading information being spread around. If you have any questions, please contact any of us on the Board.

Mr. LeBlanc stated he attended the Kite Focus Group meeting last night. It was a great meeting. He thanked Brianna Beckstrand for the important topics they discussed and for the great speakers. One of the topics was how can we reach out to Enfield families that will be entering our school system soon. We do a great job connecting to families once they are in our school system. He didn't understand the connection with pediatricians, but he now knows how important their connection is to families with young children. All young children have a doctor, and they trust their pediatrician. Having them connect with outreach programs is important. This was a such a great conversation to help us start coming up with solutions.

Mrs. Pickett stated application for the 2023-24 school year at Stowe are now open for registration at Integrated Pre-School program, Stowe Early Learning Center and Head Start. We have some amazing preschool programs in Enfield.

Mrs. Pickett thanked the Enfield Street PTO for all the planning they did for the Someone Special Dance that was held on Friday, February 10th. Over 300 families participated. Her kids had such a great time attending this event. They had a DJ, treats, food and picture booths. She was able to meet her children's friends. The next PTO meeting will be held on March 8th. This is kindness week at ESS. They will have a fundraiser event at Jersey Mike's.

Mrs. Pickett added the Opera House Players, and the Enfield Congregational Church is holding a Black History concert. There are many resources available about Black History month. We have links available on our website. There are also resources available on Netflix and at our national museums of history.

Mr. Unghire stated the students from Hazardville Memorial sent out over 300 Valentine Cards to our soldiers and veteran's at the Veteran's home in Rocky Hill. He thanked Mrs. Wilcox for bringing this service project to the students. During Paws Time last Thursday, the students listened to a story being read to them "The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Class" written by Justin Roberts. All the students participated in a challenge to give out 5 heart stickers. There were hearts all over at Hazardville Memorial. He thanked Principal Hunter for sharing this information with him.

Mr. Unghire also addressed audience member Rob Anderson's concern with our bullying policy. He is challenging the members of the Policy Committee to look at this policy and address any gap areas. No one supports bullying.

Mr. Ryder stated Eli Whitney grade 3 students developed a partnership with Buddy the Bison project with our national parks. They attended an in-school field trip to the Nowashe Village on January 26th. February is Fluency month at Eli Whitney. Students have been busy working on their math and reading skills. February 1st was also read aloud day. They had many volunteers reading to the students. The Enfield Food Shelf Boat is currently at Eli Whitney. Students are collecting non-perishable goods throughout this month. Grade 5 students will visit JFK to hear their music assembly. They will also tour the new music department. They will have an author Richard Anderson visit on Thursday, February 16th. He will read "Home Run for Bunny" that ties into Black History month. Students can also purchase a copy of the book. Students are currently participating in a kindness challenge for a chance to win a build a Whitney Wolf mascot kit on Thursday, February 23rd. One wolf kit per grade level will be awarded. The PTO meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 15th at 5:30 PM in the library. He thanked the Enfield Police and Fire Departments for being their weekly lunch time mentors. We will also be partnering with other libraries with links with our sponsor from Lego who will sponsor mentor readings at Eli Whitney. Please check the Eli Whitney newsletter and enfieldpto.com for additional events and happenings and end of year activities.

Mr. Ryder was unable to attend the last Board meeting, but he watched it remotely.

Madam Chair also congratulated Mason Pilkington for winning the Class LL 55 meter state champion. He also tied the Class L record and earned an All State Record. He will be competing in the New England Championship and then the Nationals. She also congratulated Mr. Ramos for his trip to Washington DC. She would love to get an update when he gets back. He is a huge champion for Unified Sports. He has presented to the Board in the past. He truly loves what he does for our students. We also now have United Sound. We are going in a good direction for Enfield Public Schools.

Madam Chair stated EHS Safe Grad will hold an 80's themed dance on March 18th at the American Legion. They will have prizes and raffles. Tickets are \$25. They will also hold another bottle, can and clothing drive in the spring. Safe Grad is also collecting monetary donations.

Madam Chair stated the Opera House Players will be collecting prom dress, tuxes and suits, and shoes from February 3rd through March 3rd. They will also accept monetary donations. Donations can be dropped off at the Opera House Players. This will help out many families and students.

Madam Chair spoke about driving issues at Enfield High and parents driving over the median and speeding. This is unacceptable. She is not sure about what we can do to prevent this from happening. It seems to be getting worse. She does not want anyone getting hurt. We know that everyone is in a rush, please take your time and slow down. Safety comes first.

Mr. Drezek added we see this problem at Central Office everyday when the buses are stopped across the street from us to let kids off, cars are driving by the flashing lights. Madam Chair

added we have a lot of drivers in this town, and this should not be happening.

Madam Chair stated we held an CREC Equity meeting with Altressa Cox Blackwell. The CREC speakers did a wonderful job. Mrs. Cox Blackwell is looking for family engagement from PK-12. Enfield High just held their first meeting. Collaboration is very important. These parent groups are intentional. She would like to hear more from Mrs. Cox Blackwell about our diversity, equity and inclusion work. This work has a 3-5 year commitment. We need a strategic equity plan. Diligent work is currently being done. She appreciates Mrs. Cox Blackwells efforts.

Madam Chair also addressed the bullying issue. We have place a link on our website for parents to access the bullying form.

Madam Chair stated Mr. Delaney spoke about education. Enfield is an Alliance District that is based on our socio economic status as a town. Our teachers are continuing to do as much as they can. As an Alliance District, they expect more and more from us and our teachers. We have maintained during the pandemic, mental health concerns and living through a pandemic. We need to reevaluate. Our teachers and administrators think of our students as their own kids. We need to recognize this. We are asking our teachers to do more and more. There is a lot of pressure placed on our teachers. The State is expecting more and more. She appreciated Mr. Delaney's words. She is sadden by what she is seeing and how the teaching profession is being viewed. She is doing this because of our wonderful teachers and students. She views our education as an investment. Our students and teachers need supports.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. Discussion and Action Regarding the FY2023-24 Budget

Mrs. Pickett moved, seconded by Mr. Hamre that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the FY2023-24 budget.

Discussion:

Mrs. Pickett stated she wants more. We need to do more than just maintain. She will support this budget. She would like to see us have summer programming for our students. She would like to discuss partnership opportunities. She would also like to see our staff compensated. They are doing so much more. She understands the contractual obligations. Our staff need to be supported.

Mrs. Pickett asked via Madam Chair to the Superintendent about capital improvements like school security efforts, buildings and grounds, parking lots and if this is in our budget or on the town side of the budget. Mr. Drezek stated that is on the town side of the budget. Our town supports us with an operating budget and our capital improvement plans. They are not our employees. There is a balance, and they are in a partnership with us. This starts with the Town manager and himself.

Mrs. Pickett thanked Mr. Drezek. This is important for residents to understand our budget and the towns budget. The budget you presented is more a sustained budget with contractual increases. She knows the federal funds are disappearing. Are our federal funds sustained within this budget? Mr. Drezek stated yes, they are. Other communities are asking for much larger budget increases. We are working with our partnership with the town. Having a great business manager like Lorena Cisneros and our grant specialist Laurie LaRusso, they know where we can offset some of the costs with these one-time infusions and stretching them out until 2025. We are doing everything we can until we reach the cliff in 2025. We didn't spend all the money once we received it.

Mr. Hamre stated he supports this budget because it maintains our programs that are getting

our students back on track. Having a little extra would be nice. If we receive our ask, he is okay. This budget request is less than other districts. This is a responsible budget request while maintaining a disciplined approach. Regarding the questions with the format not matching the format from last year, he did not notice anything different. We were given plenty of notice that the budget would look different. This format is a streamlined process. The budget maintains continuance of our programs and education for our students.

Mr. Unghire stated after our last Board meeting, we received an email from Mr. Longey with the budget. He asked for a hard copy of the budget. He expected the same level of detail as the Board has received in previous years. Previous budgets presented were 70 pages of budget detailed information for each category. We were given 5 colored coded pages this year of a budget summary. He was looking for the detail provided previously. This was his expectation. This budget is our taxpayers money that supports our education budget. We need to conduct our due diligence and we have a fiscal responsibility to review the budget. The superintendent presented a 3.96% increase which is reasonable, but he cannot support this request by the way this data was presented. We need to see more detail to see areas of cost savings. He will not support this budget request.

Madam Chair stated this budget is a “maintain” budget. We only have two areas to cut from and that is teachers and programs. We are at bare bones. That would be the only place where cuts can be made.

Mr. Hamre apologized for interrupting Mr. Unghire. As mentioned by Madam Chair, this is the same budget and keeps the same programs. We were previously told by the Superintendent the budget was going to be different and it would be formatted differently without as much detail. He has previously been in the audience hearing past budget presentations. This is the second budget he has been part of. This budget deserves our support. He respects your decision to not support it. What is worthwhile discussing further, cutting staff or programs?

Mr. Unghire stated yes we were told the budget would look different with a different format but he did not know we were going to get less. He did not know how it was going to look. He expected more detail. He would have raised questions about the detail. We have a responsibility to look at the budget. There could be areas we could look at.

Mr. Hamre stated you have not answered my question.

Mr. Ryder stated we were given a 5 page summary and then we received 35 additional pages. You mentioned that past Boards have received 70 pages of details. We have received everything. We discussed this in Board Leadership. The grant information is part of the Finance meetings. This budget supports not cutting any staff or programs. There will be no staffing changes. What else can we help you understand better?

Mrs. Cushman stated our caucus discussed the budget. We all heard about the new budget format, but the detail was not explained. We only received additional detail because we asked for it. This still is only offering a budget summary and no budget detail. We are not trying to be accountants. This is a very large budget, and we have an obligation to our community to be fiscally responsible and to see how the money is being spent. Past precedence has a high value of expectations. Our concern is if the budget is passed with little detail, it will set another precedence of what could be expected in the future.

Mrs. Pickett thanked Mr. Drezek and she asked for a different format. This supports our student needs and programs. We support the administration and they have been willing to answer our questions. Madam Chair asked for any Board member questions to be sent to her. She has received answers to her questions. We have a detailed budget with common spending categories. What level of detail are you looking for? She appreciates this format.

Mr. LeBlanc stated there are two different set of opinions regarding the Board’s responsibility

when it comes to overseeing the budget. This is his third time dealing with the budget. The superintendent has proposed a number and if we want to cut or increase number, the superintendent would comeback with another number. He is voting based on the percentage. He is comfortable with this budget request.

Mr. Ryder just wanted to clarify the budget request is for \$76.1 not \$75 million. He added we need to report our budget this way since we are now an Alliance District and also need to submit our grants in this format.

Mrs. Acree thanked Mr. Drezek for the budget. Seeing more detail would have been helpful before the Board meeting just to see how the funds are appropriated. Is it possible in the future to have a meeting with the superintendent and the Board before to give us more information where you can present this in detail. This would help her understand the budget process better.

Madam Chair stated at anytime you have questions, reach out to her and we can set up a meeting. When Mr. Kruzel was chair, we held a meeting like you are asking about for new Board members with budget questions. At anytime you have a question, please reach out to her.

Mrs. Acree added if this had happened we would have had the clarification we needed about the budget. Madam Chair appreciates her sharing this with her. In the future, if you feel you need more information about anything, please reach out to her.

Madam Chair stated if the Board would like to make cuts to the budget, we will not tell the Superintendent what to cut. We would give the superintendent a new percentage. The superintendent will meet with his principals and look at programs and classes and merging classes. She asked Mr. Drezek what 1% would look like. Mr. Drezek stated it is around \$730K.

Madam Chair stated we would then look at cutting teachers. That is a lot of teachers. It can be our prevue to cut the percentage, but is not in our prevue to go line by line to say where the cuts should be made. If the Town Council only supports a percentage increase, this would go back to Mr. Drezek to make the necessary cuts with his administration.

Madam Chair added having a “maintained” budget, the teachers are feeling we are maintaining. It is scary to think everything you have gone through up to this point and now your job is on the line. When we received funding from the State and Federal Government for Covid, Mr. Drezek told us the money will not last forever and any changes he makes will need to be sustainable changes. This is important. When you look at what other districts are doing, they are painting a different story.

Madam Chair reviewed the timeline for receiving the budget and budget requests. We had a week in between our meetings to ask for any questions or details to be addressed by the Superintendent. Our budget is due to the Town Manager on March 1st. We need to vote on this budget tonight. She moved to call for the question.

A vote by **roll call – 6-3-0** passed with Mr. Unghire, Mrs. Cushman and Mrs. Acree in dissent.

11. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Discussion and Action Regarding the FY2023-24 School Calendar

Mr. Hamre moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education approves the FY2023-24 School Calendar as amended.

Discussion:

Mr. Hamre stated a change is needed in the month of February, there are two February 27th dates. One needs to be changed for Wednesday, February 28th.

Mrs. Pickett is happy to see Juneteenth added on the calendar. She would like to request for next year to form a family advisory group and include our Equity Director to make recommendations about our school calendar. She would like to see spring conferences added to the calendar. We could also discuss half days and the month of November is a nightmare for many working families. She would like to see our district engage in efforts to ensure our calendar is inclusive, respects family, staff and students and meets our legislative requirements. She will support this calendar tonight. She is asking for more to recognize our many cultural and religious holidays as a tool to build awareness and potentially change practices in our schools. She would like to have feedback before we vote on the 2024-25 calendar.

A vote by **roll call – 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

b. H.B. 5003 an Act Concerning Education Funding in Connecticut

Mr. Drezek shared a copy of his testimony he sent to the Education Committee last week for proper funding and ECS funding. If the Board would like to submit a letter of their support, they can. The Mayor, Town Manager and Madam Chair also sent letters of their support for this legislation. We can draft a letter for you if you would like or if you would like to just endorse what he has submitted.

c. Policy Revisions – First Reading

Mrs. Pickett moved, seconded by Mr. Hamre that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #5113.2 Truancy as a first reading.

A vote by **roll call – 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Mrs. Pickett moved, seconded by Mr. Hamre that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #5141.4 Reporting of Child Abuse, Neglect and Sexual Assault as a first reading.

A vote by **roll call – 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Mr. Hamre moved, seconded by Mrs. Pickett that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #5145.511 Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program as a first reading.

Discussion:

Mrs. Cushman would like to amend this motion to remove from the definitions the first two sentences in the first paragraph. She feels leaving the last sentence provides a clear and concise definition. She believes the first two sentences are lengthy and confusing as written.

Mrs. Cushman moved, seconded by Mr. Unghire that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #5145.511 Sexual Abuse Prevention and Education Program as amended for a first reading.

Discussion:

Mrs. Pickett understands the length of this definition. The definition includes two pieces that are important. One is around systemic oppression of sexual violence and what happens in our social media culture. That is what you are proposing to eliminate. The second part of the definition is the acts of sexual violence. She is concerned if we remove the systemic piece of the definition, we would be losing an important piece of the definition. We want to make sure we are preventing and addressing.

Mr. Hamre agrees with what Mrs. Pickett has said and is what we have previously discussed at our policy meetings.

Mr. Ryder also supports keeping the definition as is. The robust language is important. It needs more than one sentence as a definition. The policy committee has approved this policy as it was previously presented. He is not in support of the amendment.

Dr. Calnen asked for clarification about when we vote on this, it will be for as amended motion. Madam Chair stated that is correct, if the amendment fails, we will then vote on the main motion that was made.

Mr. Unghire stated this will impact or students and society. It is very ambiguous as written. It is confusing as written. The shortened version would be most helpful to our students and administrators.

Mrs. Pickett stated this policy is not about student violence and how we respond to student violence. This is about our educational prevention and response. As a parent, and regarding digital citizenship curriculum and media literacy, the importance of understanding oppression and sexual violence is part of students understanding this and how it impacts them. As a woman, young girls body image concerns impact how we look. Social media pressures girls to look a certain way. This definition addresses and our programs teach students about this. This policy is important.

Mr. Hamre stated narrowing down the definition of a sexual assault is wrong. Why would we want to do that. We should not cut out what someone has experienced as an assault. It does not make sense to minimize what could be called as an assault. The definition is not a simple answer. We should not eliminate what someone on the receiving end of an assault has experienced. He appreciates this conversation, but he will not support this amendment.

Mr. LeBlanc has seen a lot of debate going on. If we amended this as recommended, behavior is not defined. In the amended version, acts and behaviors itself could be a wide range of circumstances that could be compared to what you are referring to.

Mr. Hamre does not disagree with your observations. But narrowing down the definition and minimizing or limiting it does not work. There are many cases in history where a victim of a crime was unable to receive justice because of the lack of a definition or laws. This policy is about moving forward.

Mrs. Cushman stated she is looking at the definition of the policy for clarity. There will

still be robust discussions with our education programs. She is looking to make this as simple and concise in the policy definition.

Mr. Unghire added we support the rest of the policy. The definition needs to be clear, concise and not subjective. He feels this change will benefit our school system.

Madam Chair stated we will vote on the amended policy.

A vote by **roll call – 4-5-0** failed with Mrs. Pickett, Mr. Ryder, Dr. Calnen, Mr. Hamre and Madam Chair in dissent.

Madam Chair called for a vote on the main motion.

A vote by **roll call – 5-4-0** passed with Mr. Unghire, Mrs. Acree, Mrs. Cushman and Mr. LeBlanc in dissent.

Mrs. Pickett moved, seconded by Mr. Hamre that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #9325.2 Order of Business and Meeting Conduct as a first reading.

A vote by **roll call – 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Madam Chair stated the conversation we had about the policy revisions ahead of time helped about learning the process, amendments and being heard. She appreciates everyone working through this process and being heard.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Curriculum – Madam Chair reported the Curriculum Committee met on Monday, January 30th. She was unable to attend. We officially approved United Sound as a new course. They also approved program of studies description changes to music courses and changed the number of days allowed for changing courses from 20 days to 14 days. So if you are planning to drop or change a course, you have fewer days to do this now. We will meet next on February 23rd. At that meeting we will review TAG, an additional “M” course and the Invention Convention is on March 4th.

Madam Chair added it was a perfect meeting having both Mrs. Acree and Mr. Hamre at the meeting because of their love of music. She also thanked Mr. Reppucci for making this recommendation for the program of studies more robust. He mentioned we have some kids that come here and never participated in band and we never turn them away. She loves this.

Finance – Dr. Calnen reported the Finance Committee met on February 6th. We reviewed the budget, end of year financials, nutrition financials and Tag Investments

Policy – Mr. Ryder reported the Policy Committee will met on February 21st.

Leadership – Madam Chair reported Board Leadership met on February 13th and we discussed the budget.

Joint Facility – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Facilities Committee will met on February 23rd.

JFK Building Committee – Madam Chair did not have anything new to report.

Joint Security – Mr. Ryder reported the next Joint Security Committee meeting date has not been set yet.

Enfield Mental Health Wellness & Workgroup – Dr. Calnen did not have anything new to report regarding the Enfield Mental Health Wellness & Workgroup.

Enfield Cultural Arts Commission – Mr. Hamre reported ECAC met last week and they developed a plan. The EHS Lamplighters are working on their play “The Sound of Music”. The Valley Repertoire is working on their the production of “Holidazed”. The Opera House Players are collecting prom gowns and tuxes as previously mentioned. The Opera House Players will hold a Black History Month Concert on Thursday Night. He is looking forward to hearing this. He congratulated the Opera House Players for the production of “Bridges of Madison County” they put on last weekend. They are also working on the production of “School of Hard Rock” and the “Hunchback of Notre Dame” for later this year. He thanked Councilman Santanella for attending the last ECAC meeting. He appreciates the ECAC modest budget request has been approved. It is important that liaisons show up to these joint committees.

Madam Chair asked if we should extend the meeting past 10:30 now or wait. Mr. Drezek believes we will be okay to wait.

13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Calnen moved, seconded by Mrs. Pickett that the Regular Meeting Minutes of January 24, 2023, be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-1** passed with Mr. Ryder abstaining.

14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL

Dr. Calnen moved, seconded by Mrs. Pickett that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent’s certification for:

- The month of January 2023 the total expenditures amount to \$6,907,526.69, broken down between payroll totaling \$4,569,043.51 and other accounts totaling \$2,338,483.18 and;
- All payments have been made in accordance with the approved budget and are properly accounted for within the books of accounts. Copies of approval for check invoices are properly document.

A vote by **show of hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Dr. Calnen moved, seconded by Mr. Pickett that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent’s certification for:

- The month of January 2023 total Grant and Head Start expenditures amount to \$685,601.37 broken down between payroll totaling \$539,401.76 and other accounts totaling \$146,199.61; and
- All payments have been made in accordance with the approved budget and are properly accounted for within the books of accounts. Copies of approval for check invoices are properly document.

A vote by **show of hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Line Item Transfers if any - None

15. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION - None

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Unghire moved, seconded by Mr. Hamre Pickett that the Enfield Board of Education enter

into Executive Session for matter(s) related to Attorney Client Privilege.

A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Both Mr. Drezek and Mr. Longey joined the Board in Executive Session at 9:47 PM.

No Board action occurred while in Executive Session.

Open Session:

The Board returned to open session at 10:22 PM.

17. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Pickett moved, seconded by Mr. Unghire to adjourn the Regular Meeting of February 14, 2023.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 10:23 PM.

Jonathan LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary