

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 28, 2023**

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

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jean Acree, Dr. Gerald Calnen, Janet Cushman, Joshua Hamre and Tina LeBlanc

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jonathan LeBlanc, John Unghire and Amanda Pickett

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

6. BOARD GUEST(S)

a. GEMS

Mr. Drezek welcomed our PK-12 STEAM Coordinator Elana Beebe. Ms. Beebe introduced JFK teachers and GEMS Club Advisors Janice Cerrato and Quyen Danis. She added 2 years ago we started developing curriculum for a club for our Tech Ed classes for an under-represented population of students at Enfield High School.

Ms. Cerrato stated as advisors, we are offering 8 sessions to entice students into engineering through our academic pathways at Enfield High School and career offerings. We have many hands-on activities. She gave a shout out to our current grade 8 students (Wilbur, Julia, Rosie, Addison, Emma & Charlotte). We are currently working on robotics. We have worked on pre-construction design and architecture. We will also go into automotive and CNC machining. Tonight, we have our former GEMS students to present to the Board about the work they did last year at JFK.

Ms. Beebe stated last year we had 7 students enrolled in GEMS. One of the students was from JFK and her parents would bring her to EHS to participate with one Sophomore and the rest were Freshman. Four of the students are here today to talk about the program. They are also involved with Buzz.

Kathia Diaz, Gr. 10 spoke about architecture and how they designed a floor plan for a house. This was a very creative experience and it helped them to plan a prototype. This helps us to connect with real life experiences especially for students interested in architecture.

Sophie Carrier, Gr. 10 spoke about manufacturing and how we created unique signs that each student customized using a program called V-card. This helped us to learn about CNC Engineering and Manufacturing using a 2-D image and making 3-D carvings. Using this technology has given us professional experience if we were to go into manufacturing. This also

helped us with Robotics where one of the students made a smiley face logo to place at the Annex where we meet for Buzz. We also make a lot of parts with robotics.

Madam LeBlanc asked for them to show us the signs you made.

Selma Fridgat, Gr. 10 spoke about making a robot and how they learned about wiring and what they are doing with buzz and electrical engineering. We built, wired and coded the project. This was a lot of fun. She showed the Board how you can use your iPad or cell phone to make it move. You can also give it commands. This can also help you with automotive.

Rym Fridgat, Gr. 10 spoke about transportation and automotive unit. She spoke about what they learned and how to change a flat tire, change oil, how an automotive runs and what to do if it breaks down or if you get pulled over. She believes more women will be involved in the automotive field in the future.

Mr. Hamre is amazed at the opportunities and experiences that are available for our students. The architecture, engineering, automotive and robotics units are great opportunities to participate in. He is happy that you are continuing to pursue this. Thank you for your presentations.

Dr. Calnen was glad to see them all here tonight. Seeing your presentations tonight is not something that would have been heard of when he was in school. Girls did not go into engineering, manufacturing or the automotive fields. This is a wonderful program, and you are making major breakthroughs - congratulations. This program brings everything you learn from arts, science, manufacturing and marketing together. Thank you.

Mr. Ryder stated he is a huge fan of everything you are doing. He also wanted to thank the staff and Mr. Dague. This is another example of what we are doing right in Enfield public schools. He thanked Ms. Beebe, Ms. Cerrato and Ms. Danis for being there for our students.

Mrs. Acree thanked them for sharing this presentation tonight. Great job and Girl Power! She also thanked them for being great leaders for our students.

Mrs. Cushman also thanked them for sharing. How are you spreading the word about this? Ms. Beebe stated we are focusing on grade 8 students, so they are able to do some projects and spark their interest in this club.

Madam Chair added when we see our staff and students doing everything right, we want to see this program grow. She knows that is what will happen with this program. She first learned about GEMS at the Invention Convention. It was important for you all to attend our Board meeting. As a mom, when you came in tonight, you gravitated towards each other because you wanted them to be prepared. You have developed your presentations skills that young adults that are graduating from college haven't attained. Going in the workforce, you will use problem solving, collaboration, thinking outside of the box and getting out of your comfort zone. Just because it is a man's world, it doesn't mean a female can't do it. A female can be in a leadership role, be strong and confident. She is very proud of Ms. Beebe, Ms. Cerrato and Ms. Danis for your female leadership. She is proud of all of you – keep up the hard work. She wished you could see what we are seeing. You will all do a great job in your lives. Follow your dreams and do not take no as an answer.

Mr. Drezek added this is Ms. Beebe's first year as our PK-12 Steam Coordinator and she has been doing a remarkable job. We are very grateful to have her. He added that Sophia and Kathia are wonderful STEM students, but they won their division at history day and have advanced on to the state competition that will be held in May. Mr. Zawodniak sent him a picture of them today about this. Congratulations on winning your division and good luck in the State History competition. Thank you all for your presentation tonight.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. Student Representative Update

Student Representative Morgan DiFronzo stated EHS will hold a UConn Spirit day on Friday. The Junior Prom will be held on Thursday, April 6th at Crestview Country Club. You can no longer purchase any tickets, the cutoff date was March 27th. If any students are planning to leave early to get ready for the prom, the earliest you can leave is 11 AM. All dismissal notes must be handed in by April 4th to Ms. Smith. She congratulated all juniors that took their SAT's on Friday. Senior scholarships are now available in the guidance office. The digital media class is conducting an educational campaign about distracted driving. Grades will close on March 30th for the end of the 3rd quarter. The artist of the month is Abby Poreda. Ashley Levine placed 2nd in the State Deca competition. She also congratulated Brianna Carlin and Madison Bohan for being our Valedictorian and Salutatorian for the EHS Class of 2023.

Student Representative Kayla Surprenant provided the Board with a lot of sports updates. The Outdoor Track Team will have a meet on April 4th in Manchester. The Boys Lacrosse Team has their first game on April 3rd at Bristol High School. The Girls Lacrosse Team has a scrimmage at home against Chicopee and their next scrimmage is Thursday at Rockville High. Their first game will be held on April 4th at home against Bristol Central. The Boys Volleyball Team held a scrimmage today against Westfield in Westfield. Their first game is on April 8th against Simsbury at home. The Girls Tennis Team will have their first game on April 5th at Bristol Eastern. Boys Tennis will have their first game on April 5th at Platt.

b. Thank You

Mr. Drezek stated the Board is almost at the completion point for your term as Board members. You all know this is unfortunately a thankless job. March is Board Appreciation month. In front of you are gifts and tokens of thanks and recognition of your devotion and dedication to the students, families and staff. Mr. Longey will forward you a video presentation from JFK. You represent all the kids in Enfield, and they all wanted to thank you for your selfless dedication. You are all volunteers, and we can get into some contentious conversations in these chambers. You signed up to help our kids. He thanked Mr. Lord and Enfield Street for the banner that is here tonight. Thank you for what you have done.

c. Spring Vacation – as presented

d. EPS Update

Mr. Drezek stated Mr. Ramos who attended our last meeting was selected as the State Unified Coach of the Year. Congratulations Mr. Ramos. We couldn't be prouder to have you teaching here in Enfield and to represent our state.

Mr. Drezek stated beginning this week the School Modernization Committee will start meeting. His Superintendent's Advisory Committee will resume meeting in the future.

AUDIENCES - None

8. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Acree stated she attended Crandall's Pride Assembly today. Three students received Kindness Awards for the month of March. Also, students were recognized for their classroom accomplishments. They also showcased two students that participated in the Invention Convention and who will continue at the Regional Invention Convention. They gave her a special Crandall T-Shirt. The students read letters they prepared for the Board expressing their gratitude. She read a couple of them to the Board. She gave an update from Prudence Crandall Principal Andrew Duperre about the grade 3 students visit from the Connecticut Water Company. Smarter Balanced Assessment testing will start on April 19th. The intermediate schools will be hosting their One Book, Three Schools initiative starting on April

20th with an unveiling party. On April 27th there will be a districtwide virtual presentation about vaping and the health effects from vaping and ways to talk to your children about this. Mr. Duperre also wishes everyone a happy April vacation.

Mrs. Acree attended the Enfield Chorus Festival at EHS last Saturday. The choral ensembles were beautiful. She thanked Mr. Reppucci and his fine music educators (Malissa Clark, Kimberly Jacques, Elizabeth Gagnon, Amanda Tilghman, Elizabeth Tomczek and the wonderful singers and musicians). Congratulations to everyone for a great job!

Dr. Calnen reported the Head Start Policy Committee met on March 27th and they approved funds for Head Start. They have also submitted their self-assessment plans and Quality Improvement funding and Governing Board Approval Statements for Board approval tonight. This information has been included in the Board packet.

Dr. Calnen added Kite will hold a community conversation on March 29th. He added that both education and health co-exist and it has been examined by the State of Connecticut via a study. Enfield is one of 11 towns being considered for the expansion of school based health services to help our community by the State of Connecticut. He would like to meet with CHC about this recommended expansion of school based services.

Mrs. Cushman thanked all the students and teachers that took the time to provide us with all the notes, cards and gifts. We were all stunned when we walked in here tonight.

Mrs. Cushman added it was fun to see Fox61 Meteorologist Ryan Breton at Hazardville Memorial this week. The kindergarten students learned a lot from him. Mrs. Nuzzolo kindergarteners are weather watchers and they have learned about all of the weather forecasting tools and equipment they use.

Mr. Hamre stated the JFK PTO will hold a mattress fundraiser event on April 30th. Any purchases will benefit the PTO. The JFK PTO will meet tomorrow remotely at 6:00 PM. You can also refer to the JFK newsletter for additional information.

Mr. Hamre congratulated Mr. Ramos for being named the Unified Coach of the Year. We are very proud of your accomplishments.

Mr. Hamre thanked PLA for allowing him to speak to the current students about the process and benefits of PLA.

Mr. Hamre also enjoyed the Enfield Chorus Festival. It was great. The auditorium is amazing. He thanked Mr. Reppucci for everything he has done and for his outstanding staff.

Mr. Hamre added today is an emotional day about what has happened in Tennessee and then coming here tonight and seeing all of these gifts. Thank you for recognizing us. This is greatly appreciated and is a reminder of why we are here. He added if you are struggling, please reach out for help.

Mr. Ryder thanked our GEMS students and teachers. He recommends that more students should look into these programs and give it a shot. There is a lot of room to grow.

Mr. Ryder stated the Town's Clean Sweep is coming up on April 22nd which is also Earth Day. A lot of things are being planned and are listed on the town's website and on Enfieldpto.com.

Mr. Ryder added Eli Whitney will hold a math night on April 6th. The fun will start at 4:30 and will end at 6:00 PM. Parents and students are welcome to attend and to participate in the many activities they have planned.

Mr. Ryder stated both Hazardville Memorial and Eli Whitney will hold their change for superheroes. They will collect change for the CT Children's Hospital. Students can wear their PJ's to school on April 6th.

Mr. Ryder stated students will take SBAC tests on April 19th. The Eli Whitney Principal for the Day Essay's are also due on April 19th. He has posted the second Yard Goats game on the Enfieldpto.com website for anyone that is interested to attend. Whitney will also start their fundraising for butter braids soon and they will hold a spring Bingo night on April 27th. Each year we invite the incoming grade 3 students (current grade 2 students) to tour Eli Whitney and the classrooms. It helps to get them acclimated to the school they will be attending in the fall.

Mr. Ryder congratulated both Rym Fridat and Kayla Surprenant for being NCCC kindness recipients. He added that it is nice hearing kids outside playing again on the playscape and basketball court. He is grateful for the time change and the warmer weather upon us.

Madam Chair reported Safe Grad will hold a spring can and bottle drive on April 22nd at JFK. They will hold a car wash on May 6th at the Raffia Road Service Station.

Madam Chair thanked Mr. Drezek for the update on Mr. Ramos. She is extremely proud of the work he has been doing with Unified Sports. She also appreciates having the Unified Sports events put on her calendar.

Madam Chair was also invited to PLA. She enjoys talking about government, elections and all the fun things they do.

Madam Chair thanked our GEMS students and advisors for attending tonight's meeting. This is such an empowering program.

9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

10. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Approval of FY2023-24 Head Start Grants

Mr. Hamre moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education endorses the FY2022-23 Head Start Grants, Approval Statements and Self-Assessment Plans as presented.

Discussion:

Madam Chair asked for some clarification regarding the money. It is not Covid funds it is Federal funds. Dr. Calnen stated that is correct.

Madam Chair asked about the position for the quality literacy and would be sustainable. Dr. Calnen stated that is also correct.

A vote by **roll call – 6-0-0** passed unanimously.

b. Discussion & Action if any regarding the April 11, 2023 Regular BOE Meeting

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mr. Hamre that the Enfield Board of Education cancels the April 11, 2023 Regular Board of Education meeting.

A vote by **roll call – 6-0-0** passed unanimously.

c. Policy Revisions – First Reading

Mr. Hamre moved, seconded by Mrs. Cushman that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #4112.5 Security Check/Fingerprinting for a first reading.

Discussion:

Dr. Calnen asked for clarification regarding Head Start employees at Stowe. Mr. Ryder stated this policy change will put us in alignment with Manchester. They are the ones we are in partnership with for Head Start. This will not delay us with any new hires while we wait for background checks. In the meantime any teacher or employee that has not been cleared would never be alone with any student. This policy revision will not delay us when hiring any new qualified candidate and it puts us in-line with what Manchester is doing.

Mr. Longey added any background checks that are done are in reference to our Board policy. Head Start is a Federal program and any background checks that are done, are now done by following Federal policies. These changes will put us in line Federally.

A vote by **roll call – 6-0-0** passed unanimously.

Mr. Hamre moved, seconded by Mrs. Cushman that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #5123 Promotion/Retentions as a First Reading.

Discussion:

Mr. Ryder would like to recommend a change to the first paragraph on the second to last sentence. The last two lines need to be clarified. The change will be ***input from parents and/or guardians concerned with the progress of the student will also be considered.***

Mr. Ryder proposed the following amendment: that the Enfield Board of Education approves Policy #5123 Promotion/Retentions with the proposed changes.

Mr. Hamre moved, seconded by Mrs. Cushman the proposed amendment regarding Policy #5123 Promotion/Retentions as a First Reading.

Mr. Ryder thanked Mrs. Cushman for the clarification of this policy.

Madam Chair added we really do have rock stars on our Policy Committee. They do not miss anything. She appreciates all your hard work.

A vote by **roll call – 6-0-0** passed unanimously.

11. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Curriculum – Madam Chair reported the Curriculum Committee met on March 21st. They discussed a new online Program of Studies. This online version will make the process easier for students. Mrs. Pickett would like Mr. Dague to attend an upcoming Board meeting to demonstrate the online POS format when it is live. Our next meeting will be held on April 20th. We will discuss the selection process of books.

Finance – Dr. Calnen reported the Finance Committee meeting will be held on April 3rd.

Policy – Mr. Ryder reported the Policy Committee met on March 21st and our next meeting will be held on April 18th.

Leadership – Madam Chair reported Board Leadership did not meet.

Joint Facility – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Facilities Committee met on March 23rd and our next meeting is on April 13th.

JFK Building Committee – Mr. Ryder stated the JFK Building Committee met on March 23rd and our next meeting will be held on April 6th.

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 the site preparation for the Gazebo has started. He hopes it will be in place for the summer for performances. The ECAC, in cooperation with the Town Manager are soliciting ideas for musical and performance acts. We are still waiting for dates for the open mic nights that will be held at the Enfield Public Library community meeting room. Yesterday was World Theatre Day. He thanked those that are involved in theatre. He encourages you to see any theatrical show. The Opera House Players performance of the Hunch Back of Notre Dame can be seen at the Annex. Enfield High School is currently rehearsing for the Sound of Music. He is happy building sets with Mr. Reese, and it is nice seeing the other parent volunteers. Valley Rep is performing their production of Holidazed at Asnuntuck Community College. You can purchase tickets for these performances. He encouraged everyone to get involved in the arts.

Joint Security Committee – Mr. Ryder will get the date for their next meeting.

Madam Chair would like to add the Pre-K-5 School Modernization Committee to our lists for committee reports. The members have been selected for this committee and we will start meeting on Wednesday. We had 34 people apply for this committee. We will tour each of the schools to see the concerns at each building.

Mr. Ryder reviewed the schedule starting tomorrow at Hazardville Memorial and Eli Whitney on March 29th; Henry Barnard and Prudence Crandall on March 30th; Enfield Street, Edgar H. Parkman and Eagle Academy on April 3rd; and Stowe Early Learning Center and a tour of John F. Kennedy on April 4th. Touring JFK will give committee members an opportunity to see what this building now looks like. We will then discuss what we saw at each of the schools and come up with a plan for our presentation to the Board and Town Council.

Mr. Hamre stated he just received word that ECAC Open Mic night will be held on the first Wednesday of each month at the Enfield Public Library in the community meeting room starting on April 5th at 6-8 PM.

Madam Chair added that Mr. Ryder and Mrs. Cushman will be our Board liaisons and Mr. Nelson and Deputy Mayor Cekala will be the Town Council liaisons on the PK-5 School Modernization Committee. We also have additional administration from the Town and school administration, including Mr. Dague. This committee is being led by staff and community members. The committee has been made up of staff from every school. It is important that every school is seen, heard and feels valued. We are also focusing on academics. We have seen what our kids have gone through post-Covid. We have received great presentations from Ms. Middleton. We know there are issues with the transitions years. Putting this committee together is a great way to tackle this with our staff and community leading this charge. We will hit the ground running on Wednesday. She is excited to tour the schools and hear from our staff members.

13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mrs. Cushman that the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 14, 2023, be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 6-0-0** passed unanimously.

14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL - None

15. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION

Madam Chair stated coming in here tonight put a smile on our faces. Seeing the graciousness of our students, staff and PTO's is well appreciated. Sometimes this can be considered as a thankless job. Seeing the students faces is why we do this. She loves receiving notes and gifts from the students. She has also saved everything she has received from our students and staff over the past years. Thank you.

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

17. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Hamre moved, seconded by Mrs. Cushman to adjourn the Regular Meeting of March 14, 2023.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Jonathan LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary