

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 27, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held in Council Chambers on April 27, 2021.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bill Salazar, Janet Cushman, Tina LeBlanc, John Unghire, Joyce Hall (participated virtually), Stacy Thurston, Scott Ryder and Walter Kruzel

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jonathan LeBlanc

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Christopher J. Drezek, Superintendent & Mr. Andrew B. Longey, Assistant Superintendent

Chairman Kruzel stated that Mr. LeBlanc is unable to attend the meeting tonight.

6. BOARD GUEST(S)

a. Luke Barnes

Mr. Drezek welcomed EHS student Luke Barnes as our first student guest since being back in-person. Mr. Reppucci and Mr. Osview are also here tonight.

Mr. Barnes thanked the members of the Board and Mr. Drezek for inviting him to the Board meeting. Mr. Barnes shared his experience about the process for the NAFME All-Eastern Honors Ensembles.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated this is not how you expected your senior year to be like. This must have been very difficult performing virtually. Thank you for your tenacity and for working so hard. You have made us all very proud of your accomplishments. She wished him good luck in your future endeavors.

Mr. Ryder also congratulated him. He asked him if he has decided what school he will attend next year? Mr. Barnes stated he hasn't decided yet. It is between UConn and a school in NY. He will major in Actuarial Science.

Mr. Unghire also congratulated him. We are all very proud of your achievements.

Mr. Reppucci stated it has been a pleasure working with Mr. Barnes and each of his older siblings as the band director over the past few years. He added that Luke was first seat and first chair in the clarinet section during this prestigious ensemble. He also recognized Aaron Osview the director of the EHS Orchestra for being here to support Luke. Congratulations!

Mr. Barnes thanked the Board for their support.

Tony Swanger - Ganny Terrace. Mr. Swanger stated he is the Enfield Instrumental Musical Association Vice President. He has been nominated to serve as the president for next year. He also wanted to congratulate Luke Barnes. His daughter is a freshman who also plays the clarinet. Mr. Barnes has been a great example for our students. His daughter loves music. He sent a letter to each Board member about how important music is and encourages the Board to continue supporting music in our schools. Thank you.

Mr. Swanger added we will be holding a fundraiser event on May 2nd at Grassmere Country Club. You can make donations on-line at www.eimaeagles.com.

b. Board Member Recognition

Chairman Kruzel stated we were going to recognize Mr. Rutledge tonight, but he is unable to attend. We will do this at another Board meeting.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. EPS Update

Mr. Drezek stated we are back in-person four days a week. Both he and Mr. Longey went and visited the schools. It felt great going into the classrooms and seeing the students and teachers. The level of enthusiasm he received from the students was not out shadowed by how excited our teachers are having their students back. It felt right doing this.

Mr. Drezek thanked our administrators and principals for everything they have done and have been doing helping to get our kids back.

Mr. Drezek thanked Mark Gahr and his B&G staff for literally moving mountains for us. We couldn't have done any of this without you and your team. Thank you.

Mr. Drezek thanked the nine Board members. You are all volunteers and you chose to serve the community. You are offering our students the best educational opportunities and experiences we can give them. He appreciates your opinions and for your continued support on the decisions he made over the past few months. We missed Board appreciation month and we will make it up to you.

Mr. Drezek presented a slide showing the percentage of students in-person and remote at each grade level. This is something Board members have asked about. The numbers increase as you move to the younger grades. We anticipate the students that are still remote will see how in-person learning is going and will return.

Mr. Drezek stated all staff that wanted to receive vaccines have been vaccinated. This has helped us during quarantining. You have seen the letters that have been going out about schools quarantining. We had two cases and if this was January, we would have needed to close our schools because of the number of cases needing to quarantine. Because of how many staff chose to be vaccinated, we now have a level of comfort and we do not need our staff to quarantine if they are considered a close contact.

Mr. Drezek appreciates Chairman Kruzel for talking about getting vaccinations. The message worked and we have a lot of staff that have been vaccinated. We are now offering a clinic for students age 16-18 at the Enfield Annex. Trinity Health will hold this clinic on May 12th for Enfield students only. They have 550 doses available. We have had 300 responses for vaccinations. This is a personal choice and he knows that not all students will receive this. The second dose will be administered on June 2nd. All students would be fully vaccinated by

June 16th. We would like to give every student the option for this and do not want to see any students not being able to attend the graduation ceremony if they are considered a close contact.

Mr. Drezek stated the administration will be sharing details about a Junior and Senior prom with students this week. Nurse Jess has been involved with making the plans and the necessary precautions that will need to be adhered to. Our kids will have a prom if they are interested. This is something his daughter will not have at her high school.

Mr. Drezek stated the Governor will be lifting mandates in May. Some of these changes will not apply to schools. He has weekly meetings with the DPH and State Department of Education. He has forwarded the guidelines to the Board and they have been posted on the website. The State has asked for school events to be moved to later in the school year to increase the likelihood for these events to happen.

Mr. Drezek added the same rules will apply to graduations. It is still his plan for seniors to walk down the hill. We are making our plans and adjustments as we go and ask for your continued patience. He will share this information with you as soon as he receives it. We are planning to hold graduation outside and make this the best celebration we can for our seniors.

Mr. Drezek stated the CAFE Leadership Equity Work will start next week. More information will follow.

Mr. Drezek addressed the absentee policy. If we send your child home due to quarantining purposes, we expect your child to log in. The teachers are planning for you to attend remotely. If you are home sick, you should not log in – you are sick. The teachers are not planning for them to attend remotely. If your child logs in, it is having adverse actions on the classroom teachers.

Mr. Drezek stated he is lifting the moratorium for Board Members going to schools for visits. He asked for Board members to call the school first and make an appointment if you plan to visit.

Chairman Kruzal added please let Mrs. Zalucki know if you are visiting any schools. Mr. Drezek added please make an appointment.

8. AUDIENCES:

Kelly Jackson – Mead Lane – Ms. Jackson addressed comments previously made by a Board member. She has also e-mailed and has not received any response. She expressed her personal opinions.

9. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS:

Mrs. LeBlanc thanked Mr. Drezek for your explanation about absenteeism. The news about proms is great. Enfield Public Schools has not let us down yet. She is so appreciative of your hard work. Thank you for everyone that has worked on this.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated some students are getting vaccinated on their own prior to the clinic. Should they notify the school nurse if they have been vaccinated? Mr. Drezek stated if they would like to share the information with the nurse they can. They do not need to tell us, and it is not required. This information will help when it comes to contact tracing. The nurses can take this information.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated spring is here and our positivity rate is down. We can start to celebrate, and things are looking up.

Mrs. Hall congratulated the students at JFK and EHS that made the honor roll. She is very impressed with them. Many of these students have been on the honor roll consistently. Congratulation for all your hard work. She also congratulated our CIAC student scholar athletes – Grace Farris and Andrew Herron.

Mrs. Hall added that the legislature and the Governor have been thinking of our schools. She is not sure how this will end up since the legislative session has not ended yet. Governor Lamont is supporting summer school for pre-k students. The legislature has been focusing on reading and dyslexia. She has been concerned about students with dyslexia for years. We did have a bill previously about this, but there was no requirement that anything needed to be done about it except for identifying students with dyslexia. Bill #6517 now requires us to teach our teachers about how to teach students that are dyslexic besides identifying students with dyslexia. She is very impressed by what the legislature has been focusing on this year and she hopes they follow through on some of it.

Mr. Ryder also thanked Mr. Drezek for opening up the doors for Board members to visit the schools. Will mentors be able to visit with their mentees?

Mr. Drezek stated if the mentors are willing to start meeting with the students again, and the principals can designate time for them to meet, then yes. Our kids need all the support they can get.

Mr. Ryder thanked KITE for the sign on the corner of Enfield Street thanking our EPS staff. He thanked them for the transition to Kindergarten packets that were given out at Stowe. We had a chance to speak with incoming parents via zoom on our Transition to Kindergarten event. This was is another way to reach out to parents. Ideally, we would like everyone to meet in person, but this worked out very well. We had over 70 parents that participated in the zoom call. Thank you everyone that was involved in this.

Mr. Ryder reminded everyone that Teacher Appreciation week is next week. Please reach out to your school PTO's. He gave some suggestions for gift ideas thanking your child's teacher – draw a picture, write a poem, create a video, gift cards. It is always held the first week in May.

Mr. Ryder also thanked Mr. Drezek for the information on the attendance policy. The Enfield PTO.com calendar has been updated with all in-person school dates. He also thanked our administration and teachers for everything they have done for our students. SBAC testing is happening and he wished students good luck.

Mr. Ryder stated Memorial and Eli Whitney will hold a virtual Bingo event next week on Teams.

Mr. Ryder reminded parents about the summer school survey that just went out. Please complete the K-8 survey by Friday, April 30th. It will start in July and will end in August. Transportation is available if needed.

Mr. Ryder added that he will put the May 12th vaccination date on the PTO.com calendar for students ages 16-28 that will be held at the Enfield Annex.

Mr. Ryder wished everyone a happy Mother's Day. Thank you.

Chairman Kruzal stated he attended the JFK fundraiser event at Moe's. He asked if these events are on the Enfieldpto.com website. Mr. Ryder stated they are on the website. He will post all fundraiser events.

Chairman Kruzel encouraged audience members to participate in our school fundraiser events. Mr. Ryder also participated at the JFK Moe's fundraiser event.

Mr. Salazar stated there will be a vaccination clinic for students ages 16-18 on May 12th. Do they need to make an appointment, or should they just show up?

Mr. Drezek stated we will send out a survey and we will schedule the appointments for the students. We are making this as easy as possible. Both students and parents will receive an e-mail about this. Trinity Health has secured 550 spots for Enfield students.

Mr. Salazar thanked Mr. Drezek for the information about the students that have come back to in-person learning. This is encouraging for next year. He has been reading about other school districts where the students are either being home-schooled or receiving private education. Have we seen an increase in this area or do you have any percentages you can share with us?

Mr. Drezek stated these students are not included in our numbers. The information we have received from the State is the remote option will not be mandated for districts next year. We have not seen an increase of students going to private, parochial or magnet schools. We have seen more students returning to our schools.

Mr. Salazar thanked Mr. Drezek for this great information.

Mr. Unghire stated he also went to Moe's fundraiser event. It was good to see the JFK students and staff. So many people supported them. It was a great night out.

Mr. Unghire thanked both Mrs. Zalucki and Mrs. Cisneros for their assistance this week with policies and financial information. We are fortunate to have great staff in our system.

Chairman Kruzel asked if remote learners can come back to in-person learning? Mr. Drezek stated the cutoff for returning is May 3rd for either in-person or remote learning. We wanted to leave this option available after we returned to 4 day a week learning because word of mouth helps to get the word out. We ask the parents to contact their child's principal if they would like to bring their child back. Any additional cases after this date will be referred to Mr. Longey. They will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Chairman Kruzel read a statement from the Governor about how important paraprofessionals are. He thanked our paraprofessional staff and stated they are very important to our students and staff in our schools. He also wanted to thank all our staff for getting our students back 4 days a week starting on April 19th. He supports you and is proud of all our staff.

Chairman Kruzel added that he will start to visit our schools and looks forward to seeing our students, teachers and staff in the next couple of weeks.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

11. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Approve 6000 Series – First Reading

Mr. Salazar moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education approves the 6000 Series presented as a First Reading.

Discussion:

Mr. Salazar stated the members of the Policy Committee have finalized the policies being presented tonight for a first reading. We feel these policies meet the needs of the district.

Chairman Kruzel thanked the members of the Policy Committee for updating our policies.

A vote by **Roll-Call 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Curriculum – Chairman Kruzel reported the Curriculum Committee did not meet. Their next meeting will be on May 22nd

Finance – Mr. Unghire reported the Finance Committee met on April 19th and we will review financial reports later tonight. Our next meeting will be on May 10th.

Policy – Mr. Salazar reported the Policy Committee has finished reviewing our policies. At this time, we have completed our task of reviewing required policies from CAFE. Our next meeting will be on May 18th.

Leadership – Chairman Kruzel stated we will meet on Thursday, May 6th at 5:00 PM with CAFE.

Joint Facility – Chairman Kruzel reported the Joint Facility Committee met last week. We are moving forward with our plans for the Memorial/Whitney roofs. The plans are being finalized with the Town and they will be put out to bid soon.

JFK Building – Chairman Kruzel reported the Building Committee will meet May 6th. We are moving along with this project and we are still on schedule.

Joint Security – Chairman Kruzel reported the Joint Security Committee meeting will meet in June.

Joint Insurance – Chairman Kruzel reported the Joint Insurance Committee met on April 20th. We are on track and all our hard work is paying off.

Youth Mental Health – Chairman Kruzel did not have anything new to report on this committee.

13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. LeBlanc moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 23, 2021 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

Mrs. LeBlanc moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Special Meeting Minutes of April 1, 2021 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL

Mr. Unghire moved seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent's certification for:

- The month of March 2021, total expenditures amount to \$6,267,611.15 broken down between payroll totaling \$4,219,562.35, and other accounts totaling \$2,048,048.80. 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 documented.

A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

Mr. Unghire moved seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent's certification for:

- The month of March 2021, total grant Head Start expenditures amount to \$324,794.41, broken down between payroll totaling \$260,164.42 and other accounts totaling \$64,629.99. 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 documented.

A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

Line-Item Transfers: Nothing to Report

Chairman Kruzel thanked the members of the Town Council for passing the FY2021-22 budget and they will pass along any additional funds they receive to us.

15. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION – Nothing to Report

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

17. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder to adjourn the Regular Meeting of April 27, 2021.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 8:12 PM.

Tina LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary