

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 11 , 2020**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held at Town Hall in Council Chambers, located at 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT on February 11, 2020.

1. **CALL TO ORDER** : The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Walter Kruzel.
2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE** : Stacy Thurston
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** : Stacy Thurston
4. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT** : Walter Kruzel announced the fire evacuation announcement.
5. **ROLL CALL** :

MEMBERS PRESENT : Jonathan LeBlanc, Chris Rutledge, Wendy Costa, Tina LeBlanc (Participated remotely), Joyce Hall, Stacy Thurston, Scott Ryder and Walter Kruzel

MEMBERS ABSENT : Bill Salazar

ALSO PRESENT : Mr. Christopher J. Drezek, Superintendent; Mr. Andrew B. Longey; and Student Representative Madison Daigneau

Chairman Kruzel addressed audience members that would like to speak. You will need to sign-up using the sheet that is provided. He added Mrs. LeBlanc will participate remotely per BOE Policy #9325.43 Participation at Board Meetings by Remote Methods.

6. **BOARD GUEST(S)**

a. **Geography Bee Winner**

Mr. Drezek welcomed Lucas Aiello to the Board meeting. He is our John F. Kennedy grade 7 Geography Bee winner.

Mr. Ryder asked him about the experience at the geography bee. Mr. Aiello stated we had a 3-way tie for 3rd place. He placed first and the third place received a 50 out of 70. We needed to decide who would be our 3rd place winner, the alternate and the who would be eliminated. He came into the competition 2 days late and needed to redo a lot of the questions and still won.

Mr. Ryder asked how was the tie broken? Mr. Aiello stated they needed to complete a separate assignment with more questions. This allowed us to pick our 3rd place winner. Then we had a lightning round to pick our alternate.

Mrs. Hall asked him how did you prepare for the Geography Bee? How did you know what questions would be asked? Mr. Aiello stated you really don't prepare. The questions are random.

Mrs. Hall asked him if he studies Geography? Do you look at an atlas or look at pictures? How do you do it? Mr. Aiello stated he read textbooks and whatever Mr. Delaney assigned them to do.

Mr. LeBlanc stated congratulated him on winning the Geography Bee. Mr. Delaney is a great

teacher and you are learning from the best. Keep up the good work. Mr. Aiello stated Mr. Delaney is a great teacher. He couldn't attend tonight's meeting and waived to him in case he is watching us from home.

Mrs. Thurston asked him about the state level competition. Mr. Aiello stated he needed to take a test to see if he could proceed to the state level. The results will be in at the end of March. He hopes he makes it to the state competition.

Mrs. Thurston asked him to let us know if he makes it to the next level.

Student Representative Madison Daigneau remembers the Geography Bee and didn't get very far. She congratulated Mr. Aiello for making it this far.

Mr. Aiello added that he also won the grade 6 Geography Bee last year but lost to the grade 7 winner by 1 point. He still holds a grudge against Poland.

Chairman Kruzel congratulated him for a job well done. Board members gave him a round of applause. Chairman Kruzel invited Mr. Aiello and his parents to come to the front of the dais for a picture.

Chairman Kruzel added we are hoping you go far in the State Competition.

7. SUPERINTENDENT 'S REPORT

- a. Student Representatives Report - as presented
- b. Staff PD Days & President's Day - as presented
- c. January Events - as presented

Mr. Drezek stated the Eagle Academy elementary students made bracelets to celebrate the 100th day of school. The students sold 100 bracelets to raise money for Cure4Kids and #Teentrees. They sold the bracelets to staff members at the school and the staff members continued to sell them for the students outside of school. Both Mr. Longey and I received one. He had every intention to wear it tonight, but he left it at home. He will bring it to the next meeting.

Mr. Drezek stated he received some information from CAGE and would like to bring it to the Board and public's attention. At our last Board meeting, several parents and students spoke about incidents that had occurred. During public comments, the Board cannot address parent concerns. All our students are protected by privacy laws. This does not mean that your concerns were not heard or investigated. He took what he heard to heart. One of the speakers wanted us to start a dialogue. He was 100% correct. Since the last Board meeting, he has had numerous talks with parents, staff and colleagues on the topic of equity and diversity in our schools. A broader dialogue is needed. Inequities surround us across the state and country. There are no quick fixes. We owe it to our students to have an open and honest dialogue about creating a better experience for all our children and families. The information he received from CAGE is a good starting point.

Mr. Drezek stated CAGE started an Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity. With grant funding, the committee was able to develop an Equity Toolkit to help member districts to facilitate conversations about equity, diversity and inclusion issues. CAGE created this toolkit as a step-by-step guide for planning a community conversation about equity. Currently, we have many initiatives going on in our schools. We do not have a Board initiated program to have meaningful conversations with parents, students and concerned citizens. He shared this information with the Board last night and is going to recommend exploring this program further. This process is a commitment. He asks for everyone's patience while the work gets underway. Doing this right is more important than doing this quickly.

Mr. Drezek reviewed the highlights of this program with the Board and public. This commitment will require the Board's endorsement. He is looking for a consensus from the Board to contact CAGE's Executive Director to begin this process. He would also like to extend this to the Town Council since these conversations will affect the entire community. This committee will work similar to other Town committees where the public will apply to be on this committee. The committee will hold a community conversation, not the Board. A moderator will be needed. Board members roles are clearly defined. If the Board is willing, a simple consensus is needed to start the process. Once he receives approval from CAGE, he will post this information on our website and on enfieldpto.com. It is crucial for the public to understand the importance of this work, and to be active and willing participants.

Mr. Drezek strongly endorses this program. The decision to move forward is up to the Board. He also has a personal relationship with several of the members of CABE's Ad Hoc Committee. If the Board chooses to move forward, he will call on them for their guidance.

Mr. Drezek added at our last Board meeting, you all mentioned that equity and diversity is a society problem and we can't fix the world's problems all at once. We can control what we do in Enfield. We owe it to our students to have meaningful and sometimes difficult conversations to ensure that all our kids have the best experiences as possible.

Mr. Drezek asked Chairman Kruzel to see if there is a consensus of the Board to move forward with this initiative.

Chairman Kruzel stated each Board member received this information on the Toolkit. He feels this is beneficial for the Town and our school system. We are looking for a consensus to start this process. A formal vote will be taken later.

Board members unanimously agreed to start this process.

Chairman Kruzel stated this is a step in the right direction. This will be a long process.

Chairman Kruzel reminded audience members that wish to speak to refrain from using personalities. If anyone violates this policy, you will be interrupted.

Chairman Kruzel stated during our last meeting, a parent addressed concerns about an experience their child had which is their right. They also spoke about a rumor they heard about an administrator that was not true. This false rumor caused significant disruption to the education process. Spreading false rumors on social media and here, can cause lasting damage to our kids and staff. This will not be tolerated. On behalf of the Board, he thanked all our staff for doing the best they can for our children. He apologized for needing to do this.

We make a difference in Enfield - every child, every day. Please refrain from personalities and using staff member names. Thank you.

8. AUDIENCES - None

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mrs. Hall stated ERfC is celebrating Black History month on February 26th from 6-7:45 PM at Asnuntuck Community College in the conference room. Bus transportation is available from the Thompsonville area. You can contact ERfC for additional information.

Mr. LeBlanc stated we are taking a positive step in the right direction. He is not afraid to have tough conversations. Diversity issues do not stop at the walls when you come to Enfield or when you leave Enfield. The only way to find common goals is to start a dialog. He is encouraged by the ongoing communication with faculty, staff and the administration. Dialogue is important. Schools are where everyone should be welcome and feel safe. He has said this

before, treat others the way you would like to be treated. We have tremendous teachers in our schools. He has full confidence with our Board, administration and staff to promote the values of equity and diversity. Our students should be able to go to our staff with their concerns and feel safe. He knows we do not live in a perfect world and hopes to see us live where you receive the respect you deserve regardless of race, religion, social class, etc.

Mr. LeBlanc stated coaching our youth has shown him that our kid athletes treat everyone like a brother or sister. For them, barriers do not exist. He hopes that Nelson Mandela's philosophy can be spread to all Americans. This conversation will take all of us. He supports the superintendent's proposal. This is a positive step in the right direction. He thanked Mr. Drezek for this proposal. As a Board, this issue will continue to be of extreme importance to us.

Mr. LeBlanc congratulated EHS student wrestler Noah Bonini who put sportsmanship above all in order to

give an opponent with down syndrome a win on senior night. This athlete will never forget this. He congratulated our wrestling team for a great job. This shows what our community is about.

Mr. LeBlanc stated Henry Barnard PTO is looking for volunteers for the Book Bingo they are holding in March.

Mrs. Costa stated Edgar H. Parkman and Enfield Street schools will hold their ERfC Ice Cream Social on February 12th. Parkman will hold a wear Red Day for CHD (Congenital Heart Disease) on February 25th. They are accepting \$1 donations that will be given to the Yale Children's Hospital or CCMC Pediatric Cardiac Unit. They will also hold their Special Persons Dance on February 28th. They are looking for volunteers for this event.

Mrs. Costa also thanked Mr. Drezek for the CAGE Toolkit. She has reviewed the information. She acknowledges the speakers from the last Board meeting. She knows it can be tough to speak to us and not receive any feedback. We work as a Board of 9. We are listening to your concerns. She has been gathering data and facts. The minority population is significantly higher in our schools than our teacher population. The number of minorities enrolled in teacher prep courses in colleges is significantly lower. Many of these graduates go on to teach in schools with high minority enrollments. We need to find a way to turn this around. She has reviewed our policies that clearly forbid this kind of behavior. There are procedures to be followed if a student has been harassed. She is also looking into what our high school equity team is doing.

Mrs. Costa added we have a lot of things already underway. We need to have a common understanding of where we are coming from. An agreement with fundamental concepts is important. The Board, Superintendent, faculty and parents cannot solve all of this on our own. It is going to take all of us working together. This initiative is a good way address this. This is not just an Enfield problem. The discussion of discrimination, drug use and fighting should begin in the home. Foundations need to be established before a child starts school. Based on social media, not all adults set good examples of appropriate behavior. Collectively, we need to find a way to strengthen the family unit and work together to come up with a solution.

Mr. Ryder stated the Hazardville Memorial held their special person dance last Saturday. The PTO will meet on February 12th at 6:00 PM in the library. They will hold a spirit day assembly on February 24th. They are asking all students to wear red or pink.

Mr. Ryder added Prudence Crandall and Eli Whitney Girls on the Run will hold signups. You can go to EnfieldPTO.com/EliWhitney or EnfieldPTO.com/PrudenceCrandall. The program will begin at the end of the month.

Mr. Ryder stated the grade 5 Eli Whitney students will visit JFK on February 19th and 20th.

The other secondary schools will also be visiting JFK. He is not sure of their dates. The Eli Whitney Snowflake Social will be held on February 21st at 6:00 PM. The deadline for turning in box tops is March 1st.

Mr. Ryder stated the Transition to Kindergarten event will be held at JFK on February 13th. If you know any children that will be entering Kindergarten in the fall, please share this information with them. Tell your neighbors and friends about this. All three K-2 Principals will attend this as well as the PTO's.

Mr. Ryder thanked Jason Alan and Guy Bourassa for fixing the IP address issue they were having on our website. You could not access the enfieldpto.com website when you were in the schools.

Mr. Rutledge stated the JFK PTO meets the first Tuesday of the month. Their next meeting will be on March 3rd at 6:30 PM in the library. JFK will hold a faculty/student basketball game on March 6th. PTO President Bethany Ouellette is still looking for volunteers for this event. They are also holding a brick fundraiser. You can purchase a brick that will pave the walkway to the flagpole.

Mr. Rutledge stated some of his comments will be delayed until Item 11b.

Mr. Rutledge thanked Mr. Drezek for bringing us the information from C.A.B.E. This will be a good area for us to explore. He also thanked Mr. Drezek for explaining why we cannot address audience members concerns. He understands how this can be frustrating for audience members. You are looking for answers and want us to respond to your concern. There are privacy laws in place to protect our students. Our hands are somewhat tied. That is why you will see us asking via the chairman to the superintendent a question. In response to our last meeting, communication can be misinterpreted. It is important to find the meaning behind the language. At one time or another, we have all put our foot in our mouth. We can only hope that people understand and try to delve into the meaning of what is being said.

Mr. Rutledge added he is a member of the Connecticut Debate Association Board of Directors. As he goes around the state judging and setting up debate tournaments, the students are discussing topics and are trying to understand the meaning behind the points. If we do this as a society, regarding discrimination this would be a good starting point.

Mr. Rutledge stated highlighting our student's accomplishments is refreshing to see like Mr. Aiello tonight. He congratulated him for winning the Geography Bee. We acknowledge our student athletes and our music students. He would like us to continue recognizing our students for their scholastic accomplishments. We are giving our students a well-rounded experience. These are the things students continuing their education at 2-year or 4-year schools can include on their college applications.

Mr. Rutledge asked through the Chairman to the Superintendent, he would like to see us continue doing this, highlighting scholastic accomplishments like the EHS Valedictorian & Salutatorian and students that have been accepted to Ivy League Colleges and Universities.

Chairman Kruzel stated we make a difference in Enfield - every child, every day. This is our logo that our staff came up with. We have faith in our staff. They work tirelessly every day and they are making a difference.

Chairman Kruzel added Buzz Robotics is busy working on their robot. They will hold a Pasta Supper on March 4th from 5-8 PM at St. Bernard's Church Hall on 426 Hazard Avenue. You can purchase tickets at the door for \$10. He would like us to put a link for this on EnfieldPTO.com. All proceeds go to the students. He encouraged everyone to support them.

Chairman Kruzel attended the Four Chaplains Mass on February 9th at St. Patrick's Church. This is the 70th year they have been doing this. We have the longest running community that recognizes the Chaplains for giving up their life jackets so four other people could be saved. This is done every February. This is a great event that is put on by the John Maciolek American Legion Post 154.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Action if any, regarding the FY2020/21 Budget

Mrs. Hall moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the FY2020/21 Superintendent's Budget as presented.

Discussion:

Chairman Kruzel stated this budget is a starting point. By charter we need to approve this and forward the budget to the Town Council.

Mr. Rutledge asked if this item had been tabled. Chairman Kruzel stated it hadn't been tabled. It has been listed as unfinished business.

Mr. Rutledge stated we are looking at a 2.6% increase. We discussed at the finance meeting potentially carrying over 1%. If we do this from year to year, would that mean we are asking the Town Council for a 1.6% increase?

Mr. Drezek stated the budget he presented was for a 2.6% increase which is inclusive of the 2%

carryover. If adjustments are needed, they will be brought to the Board to approve.

Mr. Rutledge thinks the budget is very good and was presently excellently. A lot of people in our community do not want to see any tax increases. The budget fulfills the needs of our school. As a financial steward, he is concerned that we may be asking for more than we than we will be able to get.

Chairman Kruzel stated he brings this up every year. The budget process is done backwards. We need to give our budget request first. The Town Council then needs to go through their budget needs and waits until May to receive funding amounts from the State. This is done backwards. The state should tell us in January what we will be receiving. We need to approve this and submit our budget to the Town Council.

A vote by roll call - 7-0-1 passed with Mr. Rutledge abstaining.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. Approve 2020/21 School Calendar

Mr. Rutledge moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston to approve the 2020/21 School Calendar.

Discussion :

Mr. Ryder would like to propose a change by making December 23rd an early release day with lunch. This will help families that travel during the Christmas break.

Mr. Drezek stated this change would not impact the number of student days.

Mr. LeBlanc moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder to amend the previous motion to include December 23rd as a half day with lunch.

Discussion :

Mr. Rutledge considers this a friendly motion.

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

Chairman Kruzel stated we are now voting on the original motion as amended.

A vote by roll call - 8-0-0 passed unanimously.

b. Acceptance of the Enfield High School Expansion Project as Complete and Authorization to Submit ED049F for Final Payment

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the Enfield High School Expansion Project Number 049-0138 RNV/E as Complete and Authorize to Submit ED049F "Final Grant Application for a School Building Project" to the State of Connecticut on behalf of the Board of Education for Final Payment

Discussion :

Mrs. Hall asked if the lights at Enfield High School have been resolved with the neighbors next to the school.

Chairman Kruzel stated that has been resolved with planning and zoning.

Chairman Kruzel added this project was completed ahead of schedule and under budget. He thanked the members of the EHS Building Committee for all their work. We now have a beautiful high school.

A vote by roll call - 8-0-0 passed unanimously.

c. **Action if any, r egarding the Education Specifications for Phase III of the Henry Barnard Roof Replacement Project**

Chairman Kruzel asked Mr. LeFleur from CSG (Construction Solutions Group) to join them and address any questions from the Board.

Mr. LeFleur stated CSG has been contracted to assist with the final phase of the Henry Barnard roof. Board members have received copies of the Educational Specifications. We are looking for Board approval for phase III.

Mrs. Hall moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education approves the Education Specifications for Phase III of the Henry Barnard Roof Replacement Project.

A vote by **roll call - 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

Chairman Kruzel thanked CSG and our owner's representative for their assistance with all our building projects. He thanked Mr. LeFleur for attending tonight's meeting.

d. **New Policy # 5000 Students - Concepts and Roles in Student Policies - First Reading**

Mr. Rutledge addressed the proposed new policy #5000 Students - Concepts and Roles in Student Policies. The Policy Committee felt bringing this policy forward now based on current happenings would be appropriate. He read the proposed new policy that is being presented as a first reading.

Mr. Rutledge added we do not tolerate discrimination in our schools. If students feel they have been discriminated against, we urge them to contact the administration or principal. If they are unsatisfied with that, they can bring it to the Superintendent's attention. This is an important policy.

Mr. Rutledge moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa that the Enfield Board of Education approves the proposed new policy #5000 Students - Concepts and Roles in Student Policies as a First Reading.

Discussion :

Mrs. Hall asked if this is a brand-new policy. Mr. Longey stated this is one of the new policies that has come from CAFE. They took bits and pieces from existing policies to make this one. This is the start of the 5000 series.

A vote by **roll call - 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Curriculum Committee

Mrs. Hall reported the Curriculum Committee will meet on February 20th .

b. Finance, Budget Committee

Mrs. Costa reported the Finance Committee met on February 10th . We are going to delve into individual grants. Our meetings are open to the public.

c. Policy Committee

Mr. Rutledge reported the Policy Committee met on February 5th . We discussed Policy #9132 and enhanced it. Mr. Longey has confirmed with CAFE that they approve these additional changes. We will hold our next Policy Committee meeting on February 26th . Once committee members have approved the changes, we will bring it back to the Board for a first reading at the March 10th meeting.

d. Leadership Committee - None

e. Joint Facilities Committee

Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Facilities Committee is meeting on February 13th at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Kruzel stated now that we have approved phase III for Henry Barnard, we can start on Eli Whitney and Hazardville Memorial.

Mr. Ryder agreed that one of those will be the next project for phase I.

f. JFK Building Committee

Chairman Kruzel reported the JFK Building Committee met on February 6th. We will meet again on February 13th to finalize estimates and drawings. The JFK Building Committee will attend the March 10th Board meeting and will be looking for us to approve the final plans.

g. Joint Security Committee

Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Security Committee will meet on March 4th.

h. Any Other Committees

Mrs. Costa reported the Joint Insurance Committee met and reviewed our claims experiences and what to expect. We sent a consultant back to the drawing board. We will have another meeting on March 3rd.

13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mr. Rutledge that the Special Meeting Minutes of February 3, 2020 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS PAYROLL

Mrs. Costa moved seconded by Mrs. Hall that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent's certification for:

- The month of January 2020, total expenditures amount to \$8,080,840.45, broken down between payroll totaling \$6,251,853.62 and other accounts totaling \$1,828,986.83. 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.

Mrs. Costa moved seconded by Mrs. Hall that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent's certification for:

- The month of January 2020, total grant expenditures amount to \$534,824.70, broken down between payroll totaling \$451,006.31 and other accounts totaling \$83,818.39. 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 - None

15. CORRESPONDENCE AND COMMUNICATION - None

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

17. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mr. Rutledge to adjourn the Regular Meeting of February 11, 2020.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 8:02 PM.

Tina LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary