

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
MAY 12, 2020**

A special meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was virtually on May 12, 2020.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Walter Kruzel.
2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Walter Kruzel
3. **ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY: Jonathan LeBlanc, Bill Salazar, Chris Rutledge, Wendy Costa, Tina LeBlanc, Joyce Hall, Stacy Thurston, Scott Ryder and Walter Kruzel

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Christopher Drezek, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Andrew B. Longey, Assistant Superintendent

4. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**
 - a. **School Closure/Distance Learning Update**

Mr. Drezek stated the Governor has cancelled all classes for the remainder of the school year. We will continue with our distant and virtual learning plans. Each school has been sending out messages directly to their families.

Mr. Drezek added Principal Clark has sent out a message regarding graduation caps and gowns. We will be waiving class dues this year. We are under an executive order regarding social distancing and no large group gatherings that we must abide by. Leadership has discussed plans for a virtual graduation. Nothing compares to an actual live graduation. We are going to send our students off the best way we can. We have been discussing a drive through graduation. We know this is far from perfect and he understands the pain the students and families are feeling. We fear postponing the graduation might prohibit our kids from receiving any kind of recognition. We have contacted a Hollywood production company for our virtual graduation. He does not want us to miss our window of opportunity. Ms. Clark will send out additional information about the virtual graduation. We will live stream the graduation for families. We are starting to discuss what will happen in the fall. Health officials are still saying there might be a spike with COVID related illnesses in the fall. Past graduations held on the athletic fields allowed thousands of people to attend. Large gatherings are now prohibited. Community events for the summer have also been cancelled. This is out of our control. We will hold the EHS graduation on June 17th with a live stream event.

Mr. Drezek stated elementary school plans have been shared by each Elementary Principal with their families. Once the student packets are collected, they will sit for a while as a precaution of safety. We will be issuing modified progress reports and there will be no student retentions after March 1st unless previously indicated.

Mr. Drezek stated there are a lot of ideas floating around about school in the fall. We all want our kids back in school. He is not sure what the requirements will be for class sizes or instruction. Some of the ideas are no class sizes greater than 10. If this was the case, we would need to add 23 classrooms and 7 teachers per school based on Henry Barnard current numbers. If money wasn't an issue, we would be looking at adding 300 additional staff members. We could phase our kids back with half the students coming in one week (A Block)

and with the other students learning virtually and rotating this plan (B Block). Teachers would still need to be teaching both groups. There are many questions with this plan. We also have questions about socially distancing students in school and riding the bus. There are many logistical challenges we will need to address. Student temperatures will need to be taken before they enter the buildings. What about staff PPE's? We have many topics that will need to be addressed.

Mr. Drezek stated virtual learning will continue some level. We have 4 months to plan. Will we come back or will virtual learning continue? We will need to plan on being a 1:1 device school system. There are no guarantees that we will not be out again next year at any given point. He has tasked our staff to outfit all students with a device. Mr. Bourassa is working with our representative from Apple about this. Microsoft TEAM allows us to interact better remotely with our students in a learning environment. Mr. Bourassa, Dr. Wiley and Mr. Dague will show me the different options with TEAM before our next Board meeting. We will then show you this presentation to the public hopefully at our next Board meeting or the June Board meeting. This way people will know what we are doing and what our expectations are for our students.

Mr. Drezek has been talking with Representative Hall and Representative Arnone and plans to reach out to Senator Kissel. Both Representative Hall and Arnone have been extremely helpful and they are here to assist us and meet with us remotely. They have answered all his questions and if they didn't know an answer, they found it out. There are so many things up in the air now.

Mr. Drezek is going to defer his last update to Mr. Ryder.

Mr. Ryder thanked Chairman Kruzel and Mr. Drezek. The item for the Board to approve the last day of school is not on our agenda tonight. Board Leadership met and we discussed the last day of school. We will add this to the May 26th BOE agenda approving June 12th as the last day of school for students. This is a question many parents have been asking. Parents and staff will have an end date and can plan for summer vacations.

Chairman Kruzel opened-up the floor for questions for Mr. Drezek.

Mr. Rutledge asked about what will happen when we open next year? People might have been exposed and are asymptomatic. If we have a bad flu season, will we shut down again. When will we say enough is enough and move forward.

Mr. Drezek stated the Governor will decide when we can reopen. The Governor has a taskforce in place. Any decisions will be made through the same channels. Regarding risks and infections, our public health officials are in consultation with the state. They will say when we can go back safely and when we will need to go out. We are not permitted to go back. When we do go back, it will look differently. We need to prepare for the unknown. We will need to discuss attendance for students for next year. We will take our directions from our state leaders.

Mr. Ryder asked if we can send out a Distant Learning Survey to staff and parents about how it is going, and how can we enhance student learning or what we can do differently. Getting feedback could help us.

Mr. Drezek stated this is something we are planning to do. Our staff are currently being trained as we are doing this. We started with paper packets. No one knew this was going to happen. We thought we were going to be out for 2 weeks, not the rest of the year. Our staff (Mr. Bourassa, Dr. Wiley and Mr. Dague) are remotely showing our teachers how to do this via webinars. Some staff are more computer literate than other staff members. We are trying to roll this out consistently. The process has been slow but we are making strides. Everyone is

struggling, not just us in Enfield. Once we have our foundation in place, it will make it easier to adjust virtual learning.

Mrs. Hall stated the A & B block sessions mentioned by Mr. Drezek could also be split sessions with a session in the morning and afternoon, or sessions can be held every other week. This could create problems for parents that will go back to work before schools are back in session. Are these type of things being considered?

Mr. Drezek stated this is a big concern. Parents will go back to work and student learning will impact employers. Will we phase instruction back in and how will this impact them? Daycare is another area of concern. Phasing for high school students would be easier than for elementary students. Everyone wants the students to go back to school, but the Superintendent's might say it is all or nothing. We have a committee for superintendent's where our input is sought to make sure our voices and concerns are being heard at the State level.

Mrs. Hall stated in other countries where schools are being opened now, more parents are opting to keeping their children home due to fear. This will be a continued problem. Attendance is a concern. Are we taking attendance and how are we doing this? Student packets will give you some indication of what they are doing. She thought when high school students signed on to their computer, the teacher would know if they were participating or not. What have we done with attendance?

Mr. Drezek stated we do not have a formalized plan for attendance. Every teacher knows when each student has signed online particularly at the secondary level and has worked on an assignment. In TEAMS, there is an attendance tool where attendance can be taken daily. Our teachers are reaching out to the students and are tracking them. If a teacher has not heard from a student, they will call home. We are going above and beyond to make connections with the students. We need to formalize our student attendance better.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated we need to hope for the best and plan for the worst. The worst would be if we do not go back in the fall. She worries about Kindergarten students for their first day of school. This is special for our little ones. It would be challenging for them to understand distance virtual learning. If we go back in the fall and we are required some type of distance, we will need the JFK Building committee to look at space needs. We have some swing spaces but we do not know what the State will tell us. We can make decisions based on what the Governor tells us and there is not much we can do. Our hands are tied. She wished we all had better answers. Phase II will only be successful if Phase I is successful. If it isn't, we will keep repeating this pattern. She hopes the State will decide sooner rather than later and the teachers can spend the summer getting ready instead of waiting to August.

Chairman Kruzel added commonsense shall prevail.

5. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Approve 2020 Lester J. Bodley Memorial Scholarship Recipients

Mr. Rutledge moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa that the Enfield Board of Education awards the 2020 Lester J. Bodley Memorial Scholarships to Student A and Student B as presented.

Discussion:

Chairman Kruzel added as part of the requirements for this scholarship, the students must be referred to as Student A & B. Enfield High School will hold their Awards and Scholarship program on June 10th.

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

b. Approve 2020 Safe Grad Contributions

Mrs. Hall moved, seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc that the Enfield Board of Education donates \$1,000 to the Enfield High School Safe Grad Committee on behalf of the Graduating Class of 2020.

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

c. Approve 2020-21 Head Start COLA & Quality Improvement Grants

Mrs. Hall moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education approves the Head Start FY2020-21 Federal COLA Grant and Community Quality Improvement Grants as presented.

Discussion:

Mrs. Hall added that she is always so impressed with what they are doing with their program with such a relatively small amount of money. She congratulates them for making the money go as far as it does.

Mr. Drezek agrees with Mrs. Hall about the Head Start program.

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

d. Approve Adult Education Program Improvement Transition Grant for 2020-21

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. Hall that the Enfield Board of Education approves the Adult Education Program Improvement Transition Grant for 2020-21 as presented.

Discussion:

Mrs. Hall added the amount of this grant award is also relatively small for such a long and excessive grant application. She endorses this grant application and would like us to continue this program.

Mr. Drezek agrees with Mrs. Hall with the amount of work required for the grant application. He also endorses this program.

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

6. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Mrs. Costa is very appreciative of our staff, administration, students and parents. It is exciting to see the construction trailers at JFK. With distance learning continuing for the remainder of the school year, we should be able to get a head start with the construction at JFK. We have an aggressive construction plan and hopefully they can move forward quickly.

Mrs. Costa spoke about recording the JFK construction project to the community. There are key developments like when will the first meal be served in the cafeteria. She knows the committee will give the Board regular updates. She volunteers to relay key updates that parents and students will be excited about.

Mrs. Costa stated she discussed with Board Leadership about making sure our schools are ready to be open in the fall. She does not believe the State will be delivering timely guidelines and would like us to be proactive about this. There is not enough information about PPE's,

hand sanitizers, bussing, lunches, etc. These are unique times and she feels a broad team approach is warranted for a committee to be formed to consider everything that might be needed. She is aware that a decision not to open can be made at any time by the Governor. She does not feel we should wait for that decision to be made. It is our mission and our responsibility to give our students a quality public education.

Mrs. Costa expressed her desire to meet weekly until the end of the school year due to the barrage of information that will be forthcoming. She would also like to re-instate our summer meetings. We can use these meetings to showcase our students as well as share up-to-date information. We can receive updates from the new committee, if it is formed. This would be another vehicle of communication for our parents besides robo-calls about what is happening. She does not feel we should sit back and wait for someone else to us what we should be doing. We owe it to our children and parents.

Mr. Rutledge stated that out of these trying times, people are learning how to use and navigate technology by bringing people together remotely. Look at how we are conducting our meetings. He feels that in times like these, government is needed more than ever. It needs to be public and it needs to be accessible. He discussed adding public communication to any future agenda. This technology can be used to include the community to be part of our virtual meetings. We can discuss this with Board Leadership and look at our policies especially if we are going to hold weekly meetings.

Chairman Kruzel added that this was discussed and we are having our Legal team looking into this. We are working on this.

Mr. Salazar agrees with what his colleagues have said. There will be a lot of benefits with having weekly meetings going forward. He hopes the public will take advantage of this in the future. He agrees with Mrs. Costa about forming a subcommittee. It is necessary and a welcome idea. He also agrees with adding public comments to any future agenda.

Mr. Salazar stated as we make plans for whatever our schools will look like, we need to realize that not only are the schools being affected as we wait for the Governor decisions, but businesses have been affected. We will not be able to bring back all our employees or work force. We are limited to social distancing of no more than 5 people. Our parents will be affected by this, as well as the students.

Mr. Salazar added that parents and community members can reach us by e-mail. Your opinions and comments matter to us. We are here for you and to listen to you.

Mr. Salazar stated Kite has started a campaign – One Community. This campaign donates to Enfield Loaves & Fishes. This is a way for you to help members in our community and our students that need assistance. You can go to the www.EnfieldKite.org website and make a donation that will be matched by Eppendorf.

Chairman Kruzel added that our e-mail addresses can be found at www.enfieldpublicschools.org under the BOE Heading and to make a donation to Kite's One Community campaign can be found at www.enfieldkite.org. You can donate any amount of money. Thank you, Mr. Salazar, for bringing this up.

Mr. LeBlanc read a prepared statement. He stated as we move forward in the future with our virtual distance learning, learning in a classroom cannot be replaced. Schools provide so much more to our students. Our children need their teachers, coaches and mentors back in their lives. Schools provide them with extra-curricular activities and socialization. We need to figure out what we can do in our classrooms for our student's mental health. This virus has touched a lot of people mentally. He is concerned with the proposals the State is putting out. Our kids need a well-rounded education. We need to come up with real decisions for our school system.

Education is an important thing we have in our democracy. We value education in Enfield and the diploma our students earn. We cannot fear living life. We need to come up with real solutions with our state and community leaders. He will not sit quietly while our education systems fall apart. We have all the right tools in front of us and Enfield can be a leader with this. We have proved we can do this smartly by flattening the curve. Now is the time to do this with the interest of safety and learning. We owe that to our kids, parents and community. Our best days are ahead of us.

Mr. Ryder stated we will add to the next agenda closing school for distance learning for all students on June 12, 2020.

Mr. Ryder reminded all K-5 parents to turn in their children's distance learning packets until May 18th at noon.

Mr. Ryder thanked the Enfield High School Physical Education Department and Athletic Coaches. You can sign-up at #enfieldmoves to participate in a virtual 1K or 5K run/walk. This event is free and your entire family can participate.

Mr. Ryder thanked the Enfield Teachers Association for donating over \$8,000. They donated \$2K to the Enfield Food Shelf, \$2K to the Enfield Loaves & Fishes, \$2K to the Enfield Class of 2020 Graduation and \$2K to other community charities and needs.

Mr. Ryder stated regarding increasing our meetings, he is currently communicating via EnfieldPTO.com, Facebook and talking to citizens daily. He knows Mrs. LeBlanc is doing the same. He said we can add our e-mail address to our virtual on-line squares for people to view and contact us.

Mr. Ryder added that working from home is easier some days than other days as a working parent. His wife is working fulltime from home. A lot of the student learning falls on him. There are many specials for the students to do like music, art and PE. None of this is easy. He thanks the parents, teachers and Central Office staff. That is why I asked Mr. Drezek about polling the parents. We ask questions so parents can hear the answers.

Chairman Kruzel stated they did add our e-mail addresses to our virtual squares. They are very tiny. All our e-mails are listed on our Board website.

Mrs. Thurston thanked Mr. Drezek, Mr. Longey and all the teachers for all the work you have been doing and keeping us all updated. This has not been easy and she would not want to be in any of your shoes. She is glad that everyone is safe. She knows the robo-call messages and Facebook posts and retweets are helping. Our messages are getting out to parents and students. She would like to keep our summer meetings and does not think we need meet weekly yet.

Mrs. Hall stated she read a message about summer work for children that have suffered the most. They can meet in small groups with teachers like our students at the Eagle Academy. They could benefit from meeting with their teachers in person instead of remotely. Based on what we have discussed tonight, this might be difficult to do.

Mrs. Hall stated the Connecticut Lt. Governor proposed the COVID-19 Computing Challenge for students in grades 3-12. They can submit a plan that can be implemented with computer technology that can aid our community. Student's ideas can be expressed online about defeating the spread of the disease, aiding our communities or encourage and inform. Student's can use this period of social distancing to better their communities. She will send Board members the e-mail with this information. This information can be shared with students and teachers.

Mrs. Hall thanked everyone for making our school year better for all our students. Keep working everyone.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated that she has also been receiving phone calls and e-mails from parents like Mr. Ryder. There is no handbook for us to follow. Parents should not be hard on themselves. Parents are juggling many hats. Students are also being hard on themselves. We are all learning distance learning. Our teachers are managing distance learning and distance teaching. Everyone is really doing a great job. If we can open our schools up in the fall, we need to recognize the emotional toll this has caused. The virus has taken an emotional on the parents and the kids as mentioned by Mr. LeBlanc. We need to be prepared for the kid's emotional needs. There are many services available in our town to help you. She appreciates everyone that has reached out to her. She is here to listen and help when she can. She thanked the parents for everything they are doing.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated she is heartbroken about graduations but our hands are tied. We want to give the kids more but we can't. A traditional graduation is not possible. She thanked central office for everything they have been doing and for keeping us informed about what is going on at the State level. It is nice seeing all Board members and that you are all healthy.

Chairman Kruzel thanked the parents and staff for educating Enfield's children. We couldn't do this without the parents and staff. Thank you.

Chairman Kruzel added that May 20th is the first phase for businesses reopening. He doesn't understand that large businesses are open now except for small mom and pop stores. He knows we need to do this safely. We all need to use commonsense to get our economy back up and running. He thanked Board members for discussing all the important topics. We will continue to meet and update you with the facts in a timely manner. We will discuss the last day for distance learning at our next meeting.

7. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Curriculum Committee – Mr. Salazar reported the Curriculum Committee will meet virtually on May 21st at 5:30 PM.

Finance, Budget Committee – Mrs. Costa reported the Finance, Budget Committee met virtually last night. We will be approving financial reports later on the agenda.

Chairman Kruzel added thanks to our Nutrition staff and what they are doing for our kids. They are truly a godsend – thank you for your hard work.

Policy Committee – Mr. Rutledge reported the Policy Committee will meet virtually on May 19th at 5:30 PM.

Leadership Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported Board Leadership met virtually on May 8th.

Joint Facilities Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported the Joint Facilities committee discussed solar plans. We will meet virtually on May 14th. We are also working on the 3rd phase for Barnard's Roof and the other schools.

JFK Building Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported the trailers have arrived at JFK and they will start construction sooner now that students will not be returning this school year.

Joint Security Committee – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Security Committee met virtually on May 6th. Our next virtual meeting will be on June 3rd.

Chairman Kruzel added there was an issue with our security plans for the Barnard roof. He hopes this is all resolved.

Joint Insurance Committee – Chairman Kruzal is not aware of any upcoming Joint Insurance Committee meetings.

8. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mrs. Hall moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Special Meeting Minutes of March 10, 2020 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-1** passed with Mr. Rutledge abstaining.

Mrs. Hall moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 10, 2020 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-1** passed with Mr. Rutledge abstaining.

Mr. Rutledge moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Special Meeting Minutes of April 28, 2020 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

9. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL:

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

- The month of February 2020, total expenditures amount to \$5,853,765.93, broken down between payroll totaling \$4,205,056.83 and other accounts totaling \$1,648,709.10. 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 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

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

- The month of February 2020, total grant Head Start expenditures amount to \$349,125.81, broken down between payroll totaling \$312,165.51 and other accounts totaling \$36,960.30. 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 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

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

- The month of March 2020, total expenditures amount to \$5,552,771.03, broken down between payroll totaling \$4,263,554.80 and other accounts totaling \$1,289,216.23. 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 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

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

- The month of March 2020, total grant Head Start expenditures amount to \$566,943.00, broken down between payroll totaling \$314,110.03 and other accounts totaling

\$252,832.97. 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 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

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

- The month of April 2020, total expenditures amount to \$6,425,088.72, broken down between payroll totaling \$4,085,832.77 and other accounts totaling \$2,339,255.95. 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 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

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

- The month of April 2020, total grant Head Start expenditures amount to \$326,327.14, broken down between payroll totaling \$294,588.39 and other accounts totaling \$31,738.75. 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 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Line Item Transfers – None

10. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION: - None

Chairman Kruzal added a special thanks to Mr. Bourassa and E-TV for putting our meetings together. This is not the way to do business. He would prefer to meet in person in council chambers.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa to adjourn the Special Virtual Meeting of May 12, 2020.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 7:09 PM.

Tina LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary