

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES
JUNE 9, 2020**

A special meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was virtually on June 9, 2020.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 5:31 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. Andrew B. Longey, Assistant Superintendent

4. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - a. **Matter(s) Related to Personnel**

Mr. Rutledge moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa that the Enfield Board of Education enter Executive Session for Matter(s) Related to Personnel.

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

The Board entered Executive Session at 5:32 PM.

Mr. Longey joined the Board in Executive Session. No Board action occurred while in Executive Session.

Return to Open Session:

The Board returned to open session at 5:41 PM.

5. **ASSISSTANT SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**
 - a. **EPS School/Distance Learning Update**

Mr. Longey extended best wishes to the Drezek family. He thanked Chairman Kruzel for the moment of silence for his family. They have all been on his mind.

Mr. Longey congratulated our 2020-21 Teacher of the Year, Enfield High School Math Teacher Michelle Burlingame. She is definitely worthy of this recognition. She was at Enfield High during his time as Principal. We are excited to share this distinct honor with the Board and public. We will have Mrs. Burlingame attend a future Board meeting.

Mr. Longey read part of the press release about Mrs. Burlingame.

Mr. Longey gave the Board an update regarding Enfield High School Equity Team members. They have been busy keeping focused on the Enfield community and our students. He would like to publicly thank them. The Equity Team members are: Julie Alier, Greg Chandler, Tony Allegro, Colleen Ceniglio, Stephanie Goddard, Cynthia Spencer, Josh Ogrodowski, April Frizzell, Altressa Cox-Blackwell, Angela Early-Alves, Norma Romano, Bridgette Moriarty, Nicole Fontaine, Erin Clark, Connell Clark, Bethany Sullivan, Jennifer Jablonski, Dan Paridis and Julia Barnett.

Mr. Longey added this is a dedicated group that is doing outstanding work. He thanked them for all the work they have been doing and will continue to do.

Mr. Longey added the Equity Team held 3 community conversations. Mrs. LeBlanc attended the morning session and can share her experience with the Board. They also held another session mid-day and an evening session where 50 staff members attended. This shows the dedication of our staff wanting to learn and grow as educators. Several parents also attending each of the sessions. The team will also host another conversation on June 10th for students. This is important work and he thanked them publicly.

Mr. Longey stated once we can, we will bring in the CAFE program so our district can have a real focus on the work of equity.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated her kids had Mrs. Burlingame for math. She is a wonderful teacher and coach. She congratulated her on this accomplishment and wished her luck as she progresses in the State Teacher of the Year competition.

Mrs. Hall asked about the graduation plans? Mr. Longey stated everything is set and on time for our drive through graduations being held on Monday and Tuesday next week starting at noon. Ms. Clark will send out additional information to the students. If parents have questions, they should reach out to a Dean or Principal Clark. We are on track and ready to go.

Mrs. Thurston asked about the link to watch the graduation. Mr. Longey stated the link will be provided later.

Chairman Kruzel added there is a spot for Board members to watch the graduation at EHS. You do not need to stay for the entire time, you can come and go if needed.

Mr. Ryder congratulated Mrs. Burlingame. He hopes that we will get to see Mrs. Burlingame as much as we saw Mrs. Estes over the past year.

Mr. Salazar expressed his condolences to the Drezek family. He also congratulated our new TOY Michelle Burlingame.

Mrs. Costa also congratulated Mrs. Burlingame and wished her the best in the upcoming State Teacher of the Year competition.

Chairman Kruzel also congratulated our Mrs. Burlingame.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Policy Revision #9132 Bylaws of the Board – Standing Committees – First Reading

Mr. Rutledge moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa that the Enfield Board of Education approves proposed policy revisions to Board Policy #9132 Bylaws of the Board – Standing Committees as a first reading.

Discussion:

Mr. Rutledge stated this policy revision was previously brought to the Board and was voted down. Additional changes were needed. This policy is important. It helps the Board conduct business in our subcommittees if members are absent. These changes provide an option for alternates to be assigned to subcommittees.

Mrs. Hall stated in 2017, our 9000 series policies were all reviewed. She feels the proposed changes are an overkill. We ran into problems during a Curriculum meeting when a quorum was not present. She does not have a problem with either the quorum definition or assigning alternates is added to the policy. Prior policy committee descriptions are clear and concise. She does not believe the additional language regarding political parties is needed. Our Town Charter allows for minority representation on the Board of Education. It is not needed in a Board policy regarding standing committees. If Board members feel this additional verbiage is needed, it should be included in an additional policy within the 9000 series.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked if CAGE recommended this policy revision. Chairman Kruzel stated CAGE reviewed this change. Mr. Longey stated no, the policy revision was shared with CAGE and they felt it was a bit wordy, but it is a legal policy.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked if this is a new policy. Mr. Longey added this is a revision to an existing policy.

Mr. Salazar asked about the Curriculum meeting Mrs. Hall is referencing. Mrs. Hall stated it was a meeting that you were unable to attend. Mrs. Costa was present. We tried calling several committee members. We decided to hold the Curriculum meeting without a quorum. It was a very informative meeting.

Mrs. Costa added she recalls this Curriculum meeting. The point of this policy revision is to avoid the lack of a quorum in the future. She does not disagree that the revision is wordy. When you have the potential for 3 political parties, establishing alternates to avoid the lack of a quorum is needed.

Mrs. Hall is expressing her concerns about what was added to the policy that could be useful. We only need to add one or the other – the potential for alternate members or a quorum definition. Defining a quorum is acceptable and would have eliminated the problem that occurred at a past Curriculum meeting. The proposed policy includes both and she feels only one is needed not both.

Mrs. Costa stated Mrs. Hall was the only Curriculum committee member that was present. Both Mr. LeBlanc and Mr. Salazar were absent. Mr. LeBlanc phoned in to give me authority to represent him at that meeting. He did not participate remotely at this meeting.

Mrs. Hall added if we had one or the other (alternate or quorum definition) it would have addressed that concern.

Mr. LeBlanc added that he called in to give Mrs. Costa the authority to sit in for him.

Mrs. Costa stated we conducted business, but it was not an official meeting because we did not have a quorum of Curriculum Committee members present.

Mr. LeBlanc added this proposed policy revision will allow us to conduct meetings with alternates so this would not happen again. Mrs. Costa stated that is correct.

Mr. Rutledge remembers this meeting and only one Curriculum Committee member was present. If this policy revision had been in place, the meeting would have official. The need to define quorum, goes to the point. There were 3 parties that ran for the Board of Education this past election. This policy clarifies this and is the only reason political parties are mentioned within the policy revisions. It is wordy in order to make things clear and less of a chance for misinterpretation. He supports the recommended changes.

Mrs. LeBlanc added the chances for the Board to have a third political party are very real. Based on the current policy, she believes there could be representation from each political party. That is her understanding of the current policy.

Chairman Kruzel stated the policy revision defines the Chairperson's role and as an ex officio member on each subcommittee and can establish quorum if needed. Mr. Rutledge stated that is correct and the Chairperson can be recognized by the subcommittee chair to establish quorum if needed.

Chairman Kruzel stated this happened because only one Curriculum Subcommittee member was present. We had a resignation and he was asked to fill in at a couple of Curriculum meetings to move things along prior to this Board being elected. Mr. Rutledge added these changes put this in writing.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated the current policy lists the Chairman as an ex officio member to any subcommittee. Mr. Rutledge added the proposed policy revision clarifies that and the ex officio member can vote at any meeting, if needed to establish quorum. The proposed changes eliminate any vagueness in the policy.

Mr. Ryder added if they are a member of a subcommittee, they can vote.

Chairman Kruzel asked for a roll call vote.

A vote by **roll call 5-4-0** passed with Mrs. LeBlanc, Mrs. Hall, Mrs. Thurston and Mr. Ryder in dissent.

b. Action, if any Regarding Superintendent Evaluation & Contract

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa that the Enfield Board of Education to extend the Superintendent's Contract to June 30, 2023.

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

7. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Mrs. LeBlanc expressed her condolences to Mr. Drezek's family. COVID-19 is real and has affected many families. She thanked the teachers, students and families. You only have 3 more days of school left.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated many families have reached out to her regarding the Equity Team statement. They explained why the statement was not well received by all stake holders. They asked how many people of color are on the equity team, how are they representing the students and how do they know how we are feeling?

Mrs. LeBlanc attended the EHS Equity Team Community Conversation. This helped to restore her faith in humanity. As a nation and community, we are all suffering. She expressed the concerns she received with the Equity Team and how they are feeling about the equity statement and the lack of diversity on the equity team. The Equity team understood their concerns and stated we do not have diversity with our teaching staff. They added that EPS is part of the CREC minority teacher recruitment and are working to have a more diversified teaching and administrative staff. They have discovered that people of color are often discouraged by the curriculum that is being offered at colleges. They also discussed having difficult conversations that are needed. EHS students encourage these kinds of difficult conversations.

Mrs. LeBlanc added we are living in a society where people are hurting and are afraid to make them hurt more. How do we educate ourselves on both sides while gaining common grounds? As a society, we are starting to make changes and teach each other validating each other's concerns.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated prior to the pandemic, the district reached out to CABE to help facilitate discussions with educators, parents, students and community members. The Equity Team also discussed needed curriculum changes. One member added we really need to understand systemic racism.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated our personal experiences mold who we are. The death of her mother when she was 23 affected her. She has learned that her silence is not always correct. Even if she doesn't understand, she can stand with you.

Mrs. LeBlanc would like to see an expansion of the EHS Equity Team to be districtwide and a town-wide initiative. The EHS Equity Team is amazing and they have amazing educators and administrators that are working with our students by continuing to grow and learn themselves. She would love to see an Equity Team collective from each K-12 school.

Mrs. LeBlanc added that we are currently working on hiring diverse staff. We also have a diverse student population and she would like to have our students become involved with peer student mentoring. Allowing our high school students of color to mentor students in the lower grades would be an outstanding experience for all involved. This involvement can result in positive outcomes with student's behaviors and life-long connections being formed with someone that understands what they are dealing with. Our kids are our future and they are so much better than we are. It is okay to say come talk to me and teach me. If we can be brave and open the door, we are opening the door for a teachable moment.

Mrs. LeBlanc added we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about.

Mrs. Hall thanked Mrs. LeBlanc for that powerful message she put into words. This is a good direction for us to go in. It has been a very difficult week for us all.

Mrs. Thurston stated we are all thinking of Mr. Drezek and his family. You are in our thoughts and prayers. She wished all the students a happy and safe summer. We look forward to seeing you in person hopefully in the fall.

Mr. Ryder thanked Mrs. LeBlanc for her comments. If we can take action on some of your suggestions, we will become a better Board and school district.

Mr. Ryder added that our grab and go lunches will continue through June 10th. There will be a one-week gap where we will not be providing meals. If you need meals, you will be given extra frozen meals prior to the week that we will be closed. He thanked our nutrition services staff for everything they have been doing for our families. ERfC will provide meals at Eli Whitney starting on June 22nd as well as at the Enfield Food Shelf. This information will be given out as you pick up meals and will also be posted on the EnfieldPTO.com and school websites. We will also give out information about Loaves and Fishes and food distribution from the Enfield Food Shelf.

Mr. Ryder stated this information is for students in Stowe, primary and intermediate schools through grade 5. Students can pick up any belongings and items that need to be returned like library books, etc. Hold on to any electronic devices you were given for the time being. This information can be found on the activity's calendars on the EnfieldPTO.com school pages with the date and times for your child's school. Teachers want to say goodbye to their students.

Mr. Ryder also wished his condolences to Mr. Drezek and family. We will see you soon.

Mr. LeBlanc added we are all thinking of you Mr. Drezek, hang in there.

Mr. LeBlanc wished the students and staff a happy summer vacation. Enjoy your time off. He also hopes to get you back in the fall. He knows all our graduates will become amazing people and will be able to accomplish anything that is put before you.

Mr. LeBlanc congratulated Makena Schwab & Olivia Sears for their outstanding visual art accomplishments. These two individuals have gone above and beyond and deserve this amazing recognition.

Mr. LeBlanc is hopeful that the CIAC will bring sports back in the fall. They released some guidelines for the fall. Each district will setup a committee to evaluate and discuss how sports will be run. He would like to see us look into this to get our kids back out on the field safely.

Mr. LeBlanc stated he has received questions regarding parent input on the School Reopen Committee. He will discuss this at our next meeting.

Mr. LeBlanc stated equity has been a big topic in our country, and rightly so. He is proud how we have been handling this in our school system and our active conversations with CABA regarding equity. We have an equity team at the high school with parents, administrators and students. We were planning to hold equity meetings with community members before the pandemic. We have SRO's in our buildings that interact with students daily. We need to have conversations. They need to be true and honest. He knows we can accomplish great things. We will get there. When our country is tested, we always find a way to come together. We are all American's and are in this together. It is up to all of us to figure this out. It will take dialogue, communication and for everyone to have a voice in this.

Mr. Salazar congratulated all the graduating seniors. He also congratulated all the other students being promoted to the next grade level. We are planning and working on making this the best graduation we can for our seniors.

Mr. Salazar stated he wasn't going to say anything but since we are talking about racism and diversity, he has experience with this topic. He is the only person of color on the Board and has experience overcoming diversity. He came to this country from Mexico. When he came here, he was 15 and learned how to speak English. He has dealt with adversity in his life and has overcome most of it. He is open and cordially invites anyone to talk with him. He is welcoming you to attend any kind of zoom session with him on any topic.

Mr. Rutledge echoes the comments from Mr. Salazar and Mr. LeBlanc. He stated the key is communication. He has been reflecting on what has transpired over the past 20 years in this country. We use social media for posting bits of information. We need to be deeper. He supports the peaceful protests. He does not support riots. We need to pay attention to the words that are being spoken and the meaning behind the words. Labels do not help anyone. We need to talk about this. He supports the Equity Team and what they are doing. We need more open conversations without fear about the comments that are made. If you don't understand what is said, you need to ask the question what do you mean? These are the conversations that are needed. We will not get to the heart of the matter until we can do this open and publicly.

Mrs. Costa also offers her condolences to Mr. Drezek and his family.

Mrs. Costa is happy to see this is the last week for distance learning for our students and parents. She thanked the parents, students and faculty for everything you have done over the past 3 months. She knows it has not been easy. She is sure the parents and the students are ready for the summer break.

Mrs. Costa wished our senior graduates well. She hopes you all enjoy the graduation activities planned for next week and your graduation.

Mrs. Costa was also excited to see the CIAC guidelines. Summer school guidelines were extremely stringent, so we opted to hold summer school virtually. She is hopeful we can comply with the CIAC guidelines and get our kids back into sports, they need it.

Mrs. Costa stated she hopes the State of Connecticut continues to see improved COVID-19 numbers so we can get our students back into school in September even if it is on a limited basis. She is hopeful the Board can get back on things we suspended back in March like our diversity initiative.

Chairman Kruzel thanked his fellow Board members for addressing all the topics again. That is one of the reasons this Board is so great. He extended his deepest sympathy to the Drezek family.

Chairman Kruzel also extended sympathy to the Torrington School District for losing 2 students in a tragic automobile accident today.

Chairman Kruzel stated he wished we could do things differently with our graduation, but our hands are tied. He made a short video for the graduates. He wished they could all walk across the stage. He wished them all good luck. We know our drive through graduation will work. Congratulations to our seniors. He wished all the teachers and students a great summer. Thank you everyone.

8. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Curriculum Committee – Mr. Salazar reported the Curriculum Committee met virtually on June 4th. We are developing a 3-point plan with the administration to meet the guidelines set by the State for reopening. Committee members also provided feedback about the plan. Our next meeting will be held on June 18th at 5:30 PM virtually.

Finance, Budget Committee – Mrs. Costa reported the Finance, Budget Committee will meet virtually on June 15th.

Policy Committee – Mr. Rutledge reported the Policy Committee will meet virtually on June 16th.

Leadership Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported that Board Leadership met on May 29th.

Joint Facilities Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported the Joint Facilities committee will meet on June 11th. We met on May 28th.

Mrs. Costa added BL Company discussed which town buildings are best to keep and which buildings are best to divest. How we can better utilize our buildings and bring DPW together in one location.

Chairman Kruzel added these meetings are also posted on YouTube if you are interested in viewing them.

JFK Building Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported we met on June 4th. They have torn apart the locker rooms. They will start on the Blue Wing next and the swing spaces. We will meet again on June 11th to approve some change orders.

Joint Security Committee – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Security Committee postponed the June 3rd meeting. We will schedule another date to meet shortly.

School Reopen Committee – Mrs. Costa reported the School Reopen Committee met on June 3rd. We need to be prepared for a hybrid learning. We are waiting for the guidelines for

reopening from the State. We are looking at updating student tablets for distance learning and professional development for staff on TEAMS. Our next meeting will be held on June 17th. Public works will attend our next meeting as guests.

Joint Insurance Committee – None.

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mr. Rutledge that the Special Meeting Minutes of May 26, 2020 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

10. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL: None

11. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION:

- a. We received an invitation to attend a live viewing of the Virtual 2020 Enfield High School Scholarships and Awards Ceremony on June 10th at 6:30 PM.

Chairman Kruzel thanked Mr. Longey for filling in for Mr. Drezek. He extends the Board's condolences to the Drezek Family.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. Costa to adjourn the Special Virtual Meeting of June 9, 2020.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Tina LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary