

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a public session August 25, 2010 in the Media Center of the Essex Fells School. The meeting was called to order by, Board President Michele Nitti at 7:30 p.m. Dr. Nitti read the following Statement of Compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act: "In compliance with Chapter 231 of the Laws of 1975, a notice for this meeting was posted at the respective offices of the Essex Fells School June 1, 2010. Agendas were mailed to the Clerk of the Borough of Essex Fells, the Progress and the Star Ledger, and posted on the district web-site."

I. Call to Order -- 7:30 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Mrs. Alison Cirenza – present
Mrs. Birgit Criqui - present
Mr. Peter Hutchinson - present
Mr. Steven LoCascio, Vice-President - present
Dr. Michele Nitti, President - present

III. Flag Salute – the President led the salute to the flag.

IV. President's Report

The President turned the meeting over to the Superintendent for the recognition of student achievement.

Mrs. Gadaleta recognized and congratulated the fifteen students who scored a perfect 300 on the math portion of this year's NJASK test, and presented each of them with a certificate of merit. The students honored were:

Grade 3-Cady Bright, Sabina Criqui, Cormac Farrell, William Hutchinson, and Noah Rombough.
Grade 4- Alessandra Di Filippo, Madeline Galligan, Elaina Kwiatkowski, Luca Santarella, Kyle Simon, and Celia White.
Grade 5- Jamie Connelly and Alexa De Vito.
Grade 6- Liam Fahey and Owen Neal.

The President acknowledged that this would be the last meeting with the Interim Business Administrator, and offered the Board's thanks to Michael Donow for his efforts on behalf of the district during the past 18 months. The President also noted that Straus Esmay had already begun the first phase of Policy Manual revision and would be present at the September workshop to present the process to the Board and the public.

The President reviewed the Board's process for the evaluation of the Superintendent and its deliberations in compliance with its contract with the Superintendent with respect to compensation. Dr. Nitti noted that while the Board was not obligated to adjust Mrs. Gadaleta's salary, she had met the goals established during this brief initial period, and the Board had considered the small adjustment in her base salary to be fair.

Because of the nature of the proposed action, the President opened the meeting to public for comment on agenda items.

V. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Members of the public expressed their concern that only 5 or 6 months had passed in the Superintendent's contract and suggested that while they were not commenting on performance, offered the opinion that the Board should consider waiting a year before making adjustments, and expressed concern the community would get the wrong message because the Superintendent raise was coming while aides had been laid off in June. In response, the President noted that the Superintendent had assumed full administrative responsibilities since her arrival, noting that the Assistant Principal's position was also eliminated as a part of the budget for 2010-11. The President read the specific contractual clauses and reiterated the basis of the Board's decision cited earlier. She added that the Board continued to act in the best interest of the children in all of its deliberations and decisions.

A former Board member urged the Board and public not to dwell on the staff adjustments as a negative, but to remember that the Board had looked at restructuring portions of the district as a part of the budget deliberations within the parameters given at the time. She added that important lessons were learned over the past few years,

and expressed hope that new processes and protocols that were established can be maintained, and thanked the Interim Business Administrator.

President's Report (Con't)

At the conclusion of the Public comments on agenda items, the following resolution was acted upon:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves an amendment to the current agreement between the Essex Fells Board of Education and Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent of Schools/Principal, adjusting the annual compensation to \$134,640.00, in accordance with Article III-J and Article IV-A4 of the existing agreement between the parties, to be effective July 1, 2010.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mr. Hutchinson
Nays: none

VI. Superintendent's Report

- Preliminary NJASK scores have been reported electronically to each district. I am pleased with all of our students' overall performance. Earlier we recognized the 15 students in grades 3-6 who received a perfect score of 300 on the 2009-2010 NJASK state test in Mathematics. Although student data reports have not arrived in district yet, parents may contact my office if they wish to know the numerical scores their students earned on the NJASK tests.
- Math instruction concerns were brought to my attention in comparison to the neighboring district of Fairfield. After a brief investigation of the program was conducted, a couple of differences were revealed. Fairfield dedicated 80 minutes daily instruction to Math in the upper grades. With our newly configured master schedule, Essex Fells will now also provide our students with 80 minutes of daily math instruction. Fairfield, with larger numbers, can provide additional sections in each subject area. The students are tracked based on achievement levels to take various leveled math classes. Essex Fells will need to investigate whether or not this is a viable option for our student body.
- West Essex Regional School District has approved revisions to their 2010-2011 School Calendar. With a majority of students residing in Fairfield and the request to conclude the school year at an earlier date, the BOE revised the February Break and Rosh Hashanah days off accordingly. Essex Fells will consider the same options when creating the 2011-2012 school calendar this winter.
- New Hires: Maternity Leave Replacement- Maria Rosamilia is certified both General Education and Special Education to fill the teacher positions for Mrs. Banek and Mrs. Almeida. Paraprofessionals, Lauren Guarracino, Nicole Flynn, and Candice Belmont, will be additions to our staff for this year. All possess teacher certifications. Administrative Assistant - Marie Criscuolo.

VII. Superintendent's Resolutions

1. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the following field trip requests:

Grade 6- September 24, 2010 NJ Rock Gym, Fairfield; NJ

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Nays: none

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as requested by the Superintendent, the payment of the following travel related expenses in accordance with the travel policy 9250 for Professional Development:

Staff Member: Michelle V. Gadaleta
 Event: NJ Superintendent's Study Council
 Location: Various
 Dates: Sept-June monthly
 Cost: \$350.00

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
 Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
 Nays: none

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the payment of the following travel related expenses in accordance with the travel policy 9250 for Professional Development:

Staff Member: Jeanine Whitman
 Event: Bullying at School and Beyond and Craft of Leadership
 Location: NJASA
 Dates: Sept. 21, 2010 and March 2, 2011
 Cost: \$120.00 each

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
 Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
 Nays: none

4. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves the recommendation of the Superintendent authorizing the submission of NCLB and IDEA Entitlement Grants in the amounts of:

NCLB Title II Part A	\$3,413.00
NCLB Title III	\$ 275.00
Total	\$3,688.00

IDEA Preschool	\$ 3,781.00
IDEA Basic	\$46,220.00
Total	\$50,001.00

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
 Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
 Nays: none

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the following practicum student teacher for the 2010-2011:

<u>Student Teacher</u>	<u>Cooperating Teacher</u>	<u>School</u>
Ian Schwindel	John Viggiano	Montclair State University

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
 Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
 Nays: none

6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Professional Services Agreements for Related Services for students in accordance with their IEP's for the 2010-2011 school year as follows:

PT:	Gina Zaccaria	\$75 per hour treatment/data \$250 re-evaluation/evaluation
	School Year 2010-11	Average 6.5 hrs/wk – treatment Average 2.5 hrs/wk – data
ABA:	Marie Hardenberg	\$40 per hour - services \$30 per hour - data
	School Year 2010-11	Average of 6.5 hrs/wk
	Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
	Ayes: 5 in favor	Nayes: none

7. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the hiring of Mrs. Marie T. Criscuolo as Administrative Assistant for the 2010-2011 school year at the Annual Salary of \$32,000, retroactively to August 16, 2010, pending a criminal history/background check.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Ayes: 5 in favor	Nayes: none

8. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the following list of substitutes for the 2010-2011 school year, at \$70/day, pending the usual criminal history and background check:

Chris Bleeke	Teacher
Theresa Caffarra	Teacher
Loretta Castrovinci	Teacher
Patricia DiBiano	Teacher
Patricia DiFilippo	Nurse (at \$109/day)
Casey Dunn	Teacher
Jocelyn Eckstein-Friedman	Teacher
Pam Garvey	Teacher
Stephania Gautieri	Teacher
Susan Giordano	Teacher
Ann Szalay	Teacher
Karen Kopec	Teacher
Nancy Palmisano	Teacher
M. Frazer O'Neill	Teacher
Evelyn Peter	Teacher
James Ponczek	Teacher
Kristiann Puorro	Teacher
Laurie Salter	Teacher
Denise Sperrazza	Teacher
Kathleen Still	Teacher
Jacquelyn Sweigart	Teacher
Patricia Wahl	Teacher

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Ayes: 5 in favor	Nayes: none

9. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the resignation of the following staff members for the 2010-2011 school year.

Jamie Reilly	Maternity Leave Replacement
Sarah Murphy	Paraprofessional
Stacy Della Volpe	Paraprofessional
Marcia George	Paraprofessional

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Ayes: 5 in favor	Nays: none

10. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the hiring of Candice Belmont as Paraprofessional for the 2010-2011 school year at an hourly rate of \$17.00/hr annualized as \$18,564.00, pending a criminal history/background check.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Ayes: 5 in favor	Nays: none

11. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the hiring of Nicole Flynn as Paraprofessional for the 2010-2011 school year at an hourly rate of \$17.00/hr annualized as \$18,564.00, pending a criminal history/background check.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Ayes: 5 in favor	Nays: none

12. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the hiring of Lauren Guarracino as Paraprofessional for the 2010-2011 school year at an hourly rate of \$17.00/hr annualized as \$18,564.00, pending a criminal history/background check.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Ayes: 5 in favor	Nays: none

13. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the hiring of Maria Rosamilia as Maternity Leave Replacement for the 2010-2011 school year pending a criminal history/background check.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Ayes: 5 in favor	Nays: none

14. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the appointment of Mrs. Jeanine Whitman to the position of Assistant to the Administrator effective September 1, 2010 - June 30, 2011 at an annual stipend amount of \$2000.00.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Ayes: 5 in favor	Nays: none

15. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the amended hiring of Nancy Downey as Paraprofessional for the 2010-2011 school year at an hourly rate of \$17.00/hr for 4.5 hrs annualized as \$13,923.00.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Nayes: none

16. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, an additional 25 hours total for the summer student custodian employees during July/August 2010 at the same rate of \$10.00 per hour.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Nayes: none

17. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the amendment of Debra Raimo's FTE from 0.5 to 0.525 hours for the 2010-2011 school year on BA+30 step 8 at an annual salary of \$30,356.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Nayes: none

VIII. Business Administrator's Report

In response to statements made earlier in the meeting by members of the public, the Interim Business Administrator noted that neither the \$50,000 transferred to capital reserve or the funding for the Policy Manual revisions were coming from the 2010-11 budget that resulted in any lay-offs. In addition, funds that resulted in excess surplus from the past year would be returned to the taxpayers in the following year, helping to stabilize the financial status of the community. He reminded the public of the Board's parameters for the 2010-11 budget recognizing the difficult economic times for all, and the state's total elimination of all aid for 2010-11. He concluded by noting that the current year's fiscal plan called for the need to assess and monitor each expenditure closely.

- Safety Grant – the application for the \$5,000 safety grant was submitted and includes the purchase of communication equipment for use during drills, expansion of outdoor lighting and the addition of caller identification for the main trunk lines for the phone system.
- We have completed a preliminary closing of the 2009-10 school year and the audit has begun. Preliminary financial statements indicate approximately \$150,000 will be available for budget off-set and tax relief for the 2011-12 fiscal year.
- The building is ready for the opening of school, with the garage repair, roof repair completed, and the boiler/plumbing work 99% completed (punch list items only). We have had difficulty getting into the state's system for the Long Range Facility Plan updates, but that is now addressed and the architect is scheduled to meet with Mr. Davison and me early in September to get the update completed and presented to the Board as early as possible.
- I have been reviewing the available Executive Session minutes and discussed the status with Counsel. I am recommending that the Board approve a resolution making all Executive Session minutes for all meetings up through April 1, 2010 available for public review. In addition, I must report to the Board that in reorganizing the office for and during our move to a new location, I have found Board minutes no earlier than July 1997. I have attempted to contact several prior Board Secretaries to try to determine if minutes prior to that date were stored elsewhere, so they can be secured.

- I have met with Mr. Davison on several occasions and we are scheduled to meet again prior to the end of the summer. He has demonstrated a quick grasp of the set-up and responsibilities, asks excellent questions and is ready to assume his new role. I am confident that the district is being left in good hands.
- The items on the agenda were reviewed. The resolution for the change in the dental plan was reviewed in depth, noting that there was no recommendation, rather it was in response to a request by the Association. The cost to the district will be approximately \$235 per year based on the current enrollment of employees with single coverage. All other additional costs would be paid by the employees via payroll deductions. The current CAP on eligible costs will not change or add to the Board's expense.
- It has been my pleasure to have spent these past 18 months with the Essex Fells family, and most respectfully thank the nine men and women who have served on the board during that time, the many excellent teachers and staff here, and most of all the parents and community that have allowed me to share some time with their children.

IX. Business Resolutions

1. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts the minutes of the following meetings:

May 12 , 2010	Special Meeting, Executive Session
June 16, 2010	Workshop Meeting, Executive Session
June 23, 2010	Regular Meeting, Executive Session

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Ayes: 5 in favor	Nayes: none

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the bills and claims for June 30, 2010 in the total amount of \$78,529.16 as certified by the Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for June 2010 as certified by the Interim Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$298,396.33 including \$277,233.17 for the gross payroll, \$6,192.18 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and \$14,970.98 for the State's share of FICA/Medicare.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Ayes: 5 in favor	Nayes: none

3. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the transfer of funds for the month of June 2010 as certified by the Interim Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio	Seconded by: Mrs.Cirenza
Ayes: 5 in favor	Nayes: none

4. **WHEREAS**, the Board of Education has received the Reports of the Board Secretary (Secretary) and the Custodian of School Monies (Treasurer) for the months of May and June 2010; and

WHEREAS, in compliance with N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.11(c)3, the Secretary has certified that as of the date of the reports, no budgetary line item account, in accordance with the minimum chart of accounts as established by the New Jersey

Department of Education, has obligations and payments which in total exceed the amount appropriated by the Board of Education;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that in compliance with N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.11(c)4, the Board of Education certifies that, after review of the Secretary's monthly financial report, and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, to the best of its knowledge, no major account or fund has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C.6A:23-2.11(c)4, and that sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the year; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that pursuant to P.L. 2004 C73, the Board certifies that after review of the Secretary's monthly financial report and certification, that there are no budgetary transfers that cumulatively exceed 10% that would require the approval of the Commissioner of Education; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the financial reports for the months be accepted and shall become a part of the official minutes of this meeting.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Nayes: none

5. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the bills and claims for July 2010 in the total amount of \$334,431.30 as certified by the Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the payroll for July 2010 as certified by the Interim Business Administrator and approved by the Superintendent and Board President in the total amount of \$39,094.64 including \$36,314.42 for the gross payroll, \$1,938.72 for the Board's share of FICA/Medicare and \$841.50 for the State's share of FICA/Medicare;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education approves the bills and claims for August 25, 2010 in the total amount of \$80,099.47 as certified by the Interim Business Administrator/Board Secretary

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Nayes: none

6. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the transfer of funds for the month of July 2010 as certified by the Interim Business Administrator and authorized by the Superintendent of Schools.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Nayes: none

7. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves a Professional Services contract with Puerari Computer of Verona, New Jersey and I.A. Data and Electrical Services LLC of Nutley, New Jersey for technology maintenance and repair services at the hourly rates of \$40.00 and \$30.00, respectively; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that these services shall be performed only upon authorization of the Superintendent or Business Administrator.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio
Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
Nayes: none

8. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves the renewal of a contract for regular trash pick-up with T. Farese and Sons, Inc. at the monthly rate of a total of 731.35 plus the mandatory tax/fee for the 2010-11 fiscal year, representing no change in rates from the prior year.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
 Ayes: 5 in favor Nays: none

9. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approve a change in the employee's dental insurance program from the current \$1,000 per covered employee/dependent to \$2,000 per covered employee/dependent; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board acknowledges this change has been requested by the Essex Fells Teachers Association, with no change in the negotiated agreement capping the premium paid by the Board of Education at \$850.00 per annum; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the full monthly premium for the new plan shall be:

Single	\$ 55.63
2 Adults	\$105.92
Parent/Child	\$105.92
Family	\$175.62

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this policy change shall become effective January 1, 2011.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
 Ayes: 5 in favor Nays: none

10. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education authorizes the Interim Business Administrator to process and release an additional payment of bills on August 31, 2010 to facilitate payment to vendors prior to the opening of school, to be approved by the Board at its next regular meeting.

Moved by: Mr. LoCascio Seconded by: Mrs. Cirenza
 Ayes: 5 in favor Nays: none

- X. **Board / Committee Reports**
 There were no further Board reports.

- XI. **Meeting Open to Public**
 A member of the public extended congratulations to the 15 students recognized earlier and thanked the Interim Business Administrator.

Members of the public expressed their concern of the effect the administrative consolidation would have on the Superintendent and urged the Board to provide the support needed for Mrs. Gadaleta to succeed. Board members responded that they were aware of the demands, were confident in the Superintendent's abilities, and that they were monitoring the situation with the Superintendent as a team.

In response to questions, the Superintendent stated duties handled by the paraprofessionals had been reassigned or are being picked up by the teachers, adding that having the aides had been a luxury that the district could no

longer afford and that the state has been pushing the district to eliminate for some time. She encouraged parents that were able to assist to join the teachers in their efforts. She further noted that the reduction in the half-time music staff would not reduce services, and that it achieved more efficient planning and scheduling. The remaining music staff member has been afforded the opportunity for refresher staff development to assist him in maintaining a strong strings program.

XII. Executive Session & Adjournment

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education shall enter Executive Session immediately following this meeting to discuss matters of personnel. The matters discussed will be disclosed to the public when the need for confidentiality no longer exists. This public meeting will not resume and no further action will be taken, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this public meeting of the Board of Education be adjourned at 8:52 p.m. The next Workshop meeting of the Board of Education will be Wednesday, September 15, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. in the Superintendent's Office, and the next Regular meeting of the Board of Education will be Wednesday, September 29, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. in the Media Center.

Moved by: Mrs. Criqui
Ayes: 5 in favor

Seconded by: Mr. LoCascio
Nays: none

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Donow, RSBA
Interim Business Administrator/
Board Secretary