

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a Special Meeting held remotely on August 4, 2020. The meeting was called to order by the Board President, Mrs. Kris Huegel, at 12:07 P.M. Mrs. Huegel 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 as of July 31, 2020. Agendas were mailed to the Clerk of the Borough of Essex Fells, the Progress and the Star Ledger, and posted on the district's web-site".

**I. Call to Order – 12:07 P.M.**

- The meeting was called to order by the Board President.

**II. Roll Call**

Mrs. Kris Huegel, President- Present  
 Mrs. Bethany Buccino, Vice President- Present  
 Dr. Steven LoCascio- Present  
 Mr. Raj Mehta-Present  
 Mr. Theodore Skopak-Present

Also present: Mrs. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary; 93 members of the public.

**III. Flag Salute**

- The Board President led the salute to the flag.

**IV. Public Comment on Agenda Items Only**

- None

**V. President's Report**

Good Afternoon Everyone-Thank you all for joining us today. Our reopening committee, administrative staff, custodians, Board and teachers have been working tirelessly to come up with the most comprehensive and safest plan that we can. We have a very unique situation for our district that other districts do not have and have to build our plan specifically for our school, staff and students. Our responsibility is to provide the best education possible to the children, while making them and the staff as safe as possible during the current health crisis. We are sorry if we cannot please 100% of you, but we are doing the best that we can. Everyone has unique fears and concerns relating to their children and your families' health and how you work that out in your own house is ultimately your own decision. I don't think judging, criticizing or having negative feelings for people who express their concerns is helpful as those concerns are legitimate and real. We are pleased that there is a state option for remote learning for those who feel more comfortable having your children learn from the safety of their own homes. But please know that everything we have done and will do going forward is to make the best decisions given the state's rules and regulations that we can to keep all of your children as safe as possible while providing the best education possible.

**VI. Superintendent's Report**

**VII. Superintendent's Resolutions**

**RESOLVED** that the Board of Education approves Superintendent Resolutions #01-02.

1. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the first reading of the following bylaws/policies/regulations:

1648 Restart and Recovery Plan

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

2. **RESOLVED** that the Board of Education accepts and approves, as recommended by the Superintendent, the Education Services Agreement between Educere and the Essex Fells Board of Education from September 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

Moved by: Dr. LoCascio

Seconded by: Mrs. Buccino

Ayes: 5

Nays: 0

#### **VIII. Business Administrator's Report**

- Mr. Lella reported the November 2020 BOE Election candidates. Mr. Mehta will be running unopposed for the 3-year term vacated by Mrs. Buccino. Mrs. Christina Casey and Mrs. Amanda Haber will be running for the 1-year term still remaining under Mrs. Tedesco.

#### **IX. Meeting Open for Public Comment**

- Mrs. Hoffman asked about procedure for a positive test. A positive test will result in the grade going remote. Mrs. Gadaleta also reminded all children must be fever free for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Mrs. Vega asked about the difference between remote learning and Educere. Educere is opting out of in person learning.
- Mrs. Bezmen asked about the fever limitation temperature. Mrs. Gadaleta explained the temperature threshold of 99.5 that EFS is using. Mrs. Bezman cautioned sending healthy children home and asked about the tracing form and if families are taking temperatures at home. Mrs. Gadaleta noted home temperatures are encouraged. Mrs. Bezmen asked about child exemptions from wearing a mask. Mrs. Gadaleta noted a doctor's note due to a medical condition. Mrs. Gadaleta also explained how a child is to return if they are sent home.
- Mrs. DiGiovanni had a question regarding protocols.
- Mrs. Hidalgo asked for clarification for the temperature of 99.5. Mrs. Gadaleta noted we lowered our temperature from 100.4 to 99.5 per discussions with health officials.
- Mrs. Hornburger asked about the possibility of alternate days. Due to the EFS size we can service all students in the classrooms maintaining 6 feet of distance, while other districts can't.
- Mrs. Lattarulo voiced a concern about bringing everyone back at once.
- "Farrah's phone" asked about mask breaks. With the new guidance received yesterday we will still be limited.
- Ms. Lauren Smith asked about 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom setup.
- Mr. Autret was curious about how mask wearing would be enforced. He also voiced a concern with the Educere program.

Due to the storm, Mrs. Gadaleta lost connection to the meeting. A large amount of EF residents also lost power and lost connection to the meeting. As Mrs. Gadaleta and others attempted to dial back in, Mrs. Mehta asked if Dr. Nitti could provide her opinion.

- Dr. Nitti noted that we at EFS are fortunate with our population size and are doing what the CDC requires. Utilizing outdoor tents is a good option. We need to understand that the situation can change daily but following the guidelines provided is the best we can do and we are doing very well.

At 1pm Mr. Lella, as the meeting host, lost power and the meeting came to an end. Per NJSBA, had we recessed the meeting it would be ok to return later in the day with participants returning, however since no action/motion was taken the meeting was considered as ended with the power outage. All actionable business is considered complete and new meeting would need to be called, providing 48 hours' notice. The Board will advertise another Public Notice giving 48 hour notice for a new meeting on August 7, 2020 to continue the August 4, 2020 meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella  
Business Administrator/  
Board Secretary

