

The Board of Education of the Borough of Essex Fells, in the County of Essex, New Jersey, convened in a workshop meeting on February 4, 2015, in the Superintendent's Office of the Essex Fells School. The meeting was called to order by Board President Dr. Steven LoCascio at 7:33 P.M. Dr. LoCascio 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 on January 7, 2015. Agendas were mailed to the Clerk of the Borough of Essex Fells, the Progress, the Star Ledger, and posted on the district web-site."

I. Call to Order – 7:33 P.M.

II. Roll Call

Mrs. Carol D' Alessandro, Vice-President – present (arrived at 7:38 P.M.)
Mrs. Shani Drogin – present
Mrs. Kris Huegel – present
Dr. Steven LoCascio, President – present
Dr. Michele Nitti – present

Also present: Mrs. Michelle V. Gadaleta, Superintendent/Principal; and Mr. Steven J. Lella, Business Administrator/Board Secretary

III. Flag Salute

The President led the flag salute.

IV. Public Comment

- No comment.

V. Buildings & Grounds

- Mr. Lella informed the Board that he had received the application for the 2015-16 Safety Grant. The amount of the award will be \$2,500. The application is due April 3rd.

VI. Curriculum & Instruction

- Mrs. Gadaleta gave a further update of the new programs proposed for the 2015-16 School Year. There will be an increase in the Art Therapy and Media Center positions, and Mrs. Gadaleta will continue to ask for staff feedback regarding the STEAM/Art Program. Mrs. Gadaleta also briefly explained the Reading Anthology and Empowering Writers books programs, as well as a grant to Rutgers for the National Writing Project, which would allow for Essex Fells to host the consortium for an upcoming professional development.
- Mrs. Gadaleta presented the results of the district's School Performance Report. Once again, the district is being recognized as an Award School. Mrs. Gadaleta pointed out the chronic absenteeism on page 12, noting that the number had significantly improved. Mrs. Gadaleta referenced the peer groups in the report, and the Board discussed the results. Mrs. Gadaleta also provided an update on the process for the PARCC testing along with what the district has done in preparation.
- Mrs. Gadaleta explained the median Student Growth Percentile (mSGP), which grades teachers from last year's student growth reports as well as NJASK reports from the prior year. Mrs. Gadaleta stated the teachers that were graded scored very well. Mrs. Gadaleta also stated she had reached out to the staff asking what else could be done to help, and the staff would like continued professional development opportunities.

VII. Finance

- Mr. Lella provided a comparison of the current After-School Program compared to the proposed in house program. The Board discussed the possibility of an in house program.
- Mr. Lella provided the Board with an update on the status of the 2015-16 Budget. The Board reviewed and discussed line by line revenue and appropriation detail.
- Mr. Lella presented the Board with information regarding possible grant funding from the Caldwell Rotary Club for the upcoming school year. He will continue to follow up.

VIII. Policy

- The Board discussed the Substance Abuse Policy.

IX. Personnel (Public Items only)

- Mrs. Gadaleta reiterated 2015-16 staffing was discussed during the budget review.

X. Old Business/Board Discussion

- Mrs. Gadaleta provided the Board with a draft of the 2015-16 school calendar as aligned with West Essex.

XI. New Business / Board Discussion

- Mr. Lella informed the Board of an OPRA request he had received from WNBC-4 New York, Investigative Unit, regarding security drill record forms. Mrs. Gadaleta and Mr. Lella stated they would follow up with the Board Attorney regarding what information can be sent.

XII. Public Comment

- No comment.

XIII. Resolution to Enter Executive Session

The Board convened in Executive Session at 9:57 P.M. to discuss the Business Administrator's contract. The items discussed in Executive Session will be disclosed to the public when the need to maintain confidentiality no longer exists.

Moved by: Mrs. D'Alessandro
Ayes: 5

Seconded by: Dr. Nitti
Nays: 0

The Board exited the Executive Session at 10:08 P.M. and returned to the Workshop Meeting.

Moved by: Mrs. D'Alessandro
Ayes: 5

Seconded by: Dr. Nitti
Nays: 0

XIV. Adjournment

At 10:08 P.M. the Board of Education made a motion to adjourn.

Moved by: Mrs. D'Alessandro
Ayes: 5

Seconded by: Dr. Nitti
Nays: 0

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Steven J. Lella
Business Administrator/
Board Secretary