

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 12, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held in Council Chambers on October 12, 2021.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Walter Kruzel.
2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Scott Ryder
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Scott Ryder
4. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:**
5. **ROLL CALL:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jonathan LeBlanc, Jean Acree, Janet Cushman, Tina LeBlanc, Amanda Pickett, Stacy Thurston, Scott Ryder, and Walter Kruzel

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** John Unghire

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mr. Christopher J. Drezek, Superintendent & Mr. Andrew B. Longey, Assistant Superintendent

6. **BOARD GUEST(S)**

**a. Representative Arnone**

Chairman Kruzel welcomed State Representative Tom Arnone. Representative Arnone thanked the Board for the invitation. He got his start here as an elected Board of Education member and then as a Town Council member. He started with Joyce Hall, and he misses her. The floor is yours.

Mr. Ryder thanked Representative Arnone for being here tonight. We have heard a lot of feedback from parents about masks. Some parents would like masks to be worn at the elementary schools and some would like this to stop. They have asked us about our roles as Board members. We do not have a say in these decisions. Our Governor makes these decisions. Can you explain what goes into making these kinds of decisions? He did e-mail the Governor about extending the mask order for K-5 schools. Children under 12 are not eligible to get vaccinated. Can you explain the extension of Powers?

Representative Arnone stated executive orders goes back for some time. This is one of the reasons he is here tonight. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> time Governors have had to use executive orders. They have changed a bit to now include public health crises and emergencies with the executive orders if granted by the legislature. He voted to extend the executive orders. We are part time legislators and are in session from February to June. We all have full time jobs. He is extremely proud of the work they are doing. We are following protocols and Connecticut has done a great job. We want to continue this course until we are back in session in February. We have safeguards within the executive orders. If any Legislator has any questions, they can submit concerns to be addressed. He is on the Public Health Committee. We have done a great job because of our citizens receiving vaccines. It wasn't such a rosy picture several months ago.

Mr. Ryder stated he brought something to the Governor's office that they might not have been

aware of. If a teacher is exposed and needs to take time off, substitutes are needed. We have had a substitute teacher and bus driver shortage. Our students are affected by this with having different teachers. Our kids need consistency. This is another way the virus has affected our kids.

Representative Arnone stated we all know what the virus can do. As parents and elected officials, we need our kids in school to keep them safe. The masks are doing what they were meant to do. It is not a lot to ask. He hasn't received any complaints from the children. If you have ever witnessed a child's having an asthma attack, it is horrible. Even a mild case of COVID can harm them. He has children and grandchildren of his own. We need to protect our kids and kids with health concerns.

Mr. LeBlanc thanked Representative Arnone for coming. You are the Co-Chair for the Youth Mental Health and Wellness Committee. We attended a meeting last week where the numbers for suicide health risks and mental health assessments are concerning for middle and high school students. What can we do locally to partnership with the State to help combat this?

Representative Arnone stated the schools are doing a great job with our dealing with mental health and having behavioral health specialists available. Enfield is doing what is needed to be done. Schools are allowing mental health specialist assist students and families via our partnership with Enfield Youth Services. We are providing assistance 365-days a year coverage for our students. This partnership will continue with the school and town of Enfield. Enfield is doing what is right with the funding they have received. Enfield is a leader in what we are doing with this initiative. Many towns are struggling with continuing with this initiative. We will keep Federal and State money coming. We just need you to keep this initiative going.

Mr. LeBlanc is glad we are able to continue doing this. Winter is coming and people will not be outside as much. This worries him. He is glad to hear about the funding continuing.

Mr. LeBlanc asked why Connecticut is continuing the executive order. Besides Rhode Island, we are the only two states in this area continuing with the executive order. New York City is not under an executive order.

Representative Arnone stated the other general assemblies are full time 24/7. This is difficult for us in Connecticut. We cannot assemble fast enough. It takes us a while to debate anything. We had a great productive session this year. We passed over 235 bills. We did things under the Governor's executive orders. We will look at the numbers and vaccine rates in February when we start the next legislative session. He believes we will be in a better place then. We have stayed the course and have done what is needed without abusing power. Mr. Ryder asked about the process between the legislators and the governor. He e-mails the governor with concerns he receives. The governor will make adjustments and is able to change his mind from receiving these concerns. He has seen changes made by the Governor from concerns from the legislators. The Governor is keeping a balance without going too far.

Mr. LeBlanc asked about the end game. Come March, it will be 2 years we have been dealing with this. When will the masks end, especially for our schools? How many shots will be needed so we can go back to normal.

Representative Arnone stated with the Public Health Committee we talk with the Department of Health and medical doctors. These viruses can hang on for years. Our numbers for vaccinations are the highest in Connecticut. He hopes when we go back to session, we will be able get back to normal. We are still seeing deaths. Our children's hospital numbers are alarming. We are better now than where we were. Once we can start vaccinating children under 12, we will be going in the right direction.

Mr. LeBlanc thanked Representative Arnone for answering his questions. He is hopeful also. Society needs to learn that this virus is here to stay, and we need to learn to live with it. Unfortunately, it is wearing on all of us. Thank you.

Mrs. LeBlanc thanked Representative Arnone for being here. She asked if the vaccines for children under 12 years old will be mandated? This is a concern that many parents have reached out to her about. She has urged them to contact our legislators to see if this is being discussed at the State level.

Representative Arnone stated there are a lot of people that do not trust the science.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked for audience members to refrain from their sidebar comments. It is very disruptive. Each time we meet, we are very respectful to you even if we do not agree. Please be respectful and listen even if you do not agree. Thank you.

Representative Arnone stated our fabric is changing with our science and medical society. We have vaccinated many people. We have vaccinated many without many side effects. There are many misconceptions about the vaccines. He grew up knowing vaccines are needed to protect us. He trusts his doctor and his advice. Nothing is 100%. Our children have received a number of vaccines. Our life expectancy has grown. Vaccines are working for us.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated she knows this is causing some anxiety for parents. Some cities and towns have mandated masks for indoor events. Hartford, South Windsor and Vernon have done this. She appreciates your insight and we wanted to hear from our legislators. Thank you.

Mrs. Acree asked if the extension of the Governor's executive order was ever considered to be a parental choice.

Representative Arnone stated he understands your concern. When he was a Board member, we would tell parents to read through the 5000 series. We tell our students how to dress and how we handle outbreaks and pandemics. We are listening to the CDC and medical experts. The Governor's and his concerns are we have vulnerable groups in our schools that need to be protected. A mask is a small thing compared to some of the other things we have in place with school policies. We use dogs in our schools, and we have bullying, anti-hazing and dress code policies. Hopefully the mask mandate will not be long term and we can move forward so parents that don't want their children to receive vaccinations, can just have them wear masks. He thinks we will eventually get to this point where parents can make the decision. We are dealing with something that has not happened in over 100 years. We are saving lives with the mask mandate and will continue to do so for this age group. He has done what he can to help save the lives of our children.

Mrs. Cushman thanked Representative Arnone for being here tonight. She also wrote to the Governor regarding parent concerns about masks. The parents have some valid concerns with scientific backup. She agrees with their concerns based on how she is affected when she wears a mask. She asked about a less restrictive mask mandate. The children statistically speaking are the least vulnerable.

Representative Arnone stated the Governor is going to want to know how tonight went. He thanked Chairman Kruzel for making sure he knew about today. Both leadership groups want to know how tonight went. He will make sure they are aware of your concerns with the mask mandate. People protest at the State Capital every day. He always stops and talks to the groups. He understands the issue and may not agree with it, but he understands. We are looking towards the opportunity for each group to have the opportunity to receive vaccinations and then be able to make a choice to get vaccinated or continue wearing masks. Until that

time comes, it will remain mandatory. The CDC is getting closer and closer for children under 12 to have the opportunity to receive vaccinations.

Mrs. Cushman asked if children are vaccinated, they won't need to wear masks.

Representative Arnone stated we do not know this until we get back into session and debate this. The end result is to have the vaccinations rates up for the 12 and under group. No one wants to wear masks forever.

Mrs. Cushman stated the extension of the executive orders was a disappointment. We really want to see our legislators do their part.

Representative Arnone duly noted her disappointment and the audience members concerns. We are a part time legislature and cannot be there all the time to make the needed decisions during a pandemic. Hopefully we will not see this happen again for another 100 years and we will have the needed science to stop this from occurring ever again. He gives the Governor and general assembly credit for sticking with this. We are saving the lives of children and that is what he cares about.

Mrs. Cushman asked if part time legislators are aware that this could happen, and they might need to assemble quickly.

Representative Arnone stated we have worked from our homes, and we have been called into special sessions. Our legislators have been working very hard over the past 2 years. We are aware with what is happening. We will get there.

Mrs. Cushman asked if funding is attached to the State of Emergency.

Representative Arnone stated money was not attached to it. The Appropriations Committee and the Governor deserve kudos on how they treated Enfield. Enfield received \$29.8 million dollars from the State and \$4.5 million from COVID relief funding. This helped with many different issues. Enfield received 2,100 laptops. There were some restrictions on how the money could be used and there were not any strings attached. We were given band-aids to help make sure schools were fully equipped and were not left shorthanded when dealing with all these mandates. Enfield has done a great job using these funds and you should be proud of this like he is.

Mrs. Cushman stated a lot of things are needed to run a school system. She does not want that to be the motivation. We have lost our liberty and it is not worth the price of what we can get. Thank you.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated it is not a loss of liberties when our medical professionals are directing us.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked Representative Arnone about the medical professional team that are talking with the Governor's office related to COVID. Has the topic of masks for children being detrimental for their health come up? We still do not know a lot about the long term effects of COVID that will come up in the upcoming years. She personally knows people that are suffering from affects from COVID. Can you give us some insight to this from the legislator's point of view?

Representative Arnone stated that UConn Health, and Yale University have been working with us closely with daily briefings about the pandemic and the long term affects. We have been kept in the loop. This is a lot like the long term affects that came up from Lyme Disease. We have some of the great minds working with us. We are grateful to have Yale doctors. There is no shortage of information coming from our medical professionals. There were so many things

he was unaware of. People have fears and we are trying to get the word out.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated that she also listens to her doctors. She appreciates you clarifying this.

Mrs. Pickett thanked Representative Arnone for attending tonight's meeting. She appreciates you explaining what is happening at the capital and the impact it is having on Enfield. The reason the executive order was extended is because we have a part time legislature and decisions need to be made in a quick manner. The executive order allows for this to happen.

Representative Arnone stated that is correct and the virus variant was also a part of the executive order. If the variant wasn't here, things would be much different.

Mrs. Pickett stated we have received a lot of funds to our state and town. She asked if the funds we received are not dependent on the executive powers.

Representative Arnone stated the funds that were received were spelt out just the same way for any grants we receive.

Mrs. Pickett added that she understands that our feedback from towns on how the funds should be spent was taken into consideration. It was an inclusive process on how the money should be spent.

Representative Arnone stated that is correct. The superintendent's handled this.

Mrs. Pickett thanked Representative Arnone for clarifying this. Thank you for coming and standing up for our children and making these challenging decisions.

Chairman Kruzel stated this is the sixth time the Governor has extended the executive orders. He feels if there was a critical emergency you could have met via zoom. We have received funds for all these things and for our kids to wear masks. His question is who will be liable when our kids get sick from wearing masks.

Representative Arnone does not know what is worse to be liable for. Making a child deathly ill from COVID or wearing a mask. People in Europe have been wearing masks for years. He has worn a mask and has not gotten sick. Masks work. Our medical professionals wear masks. Many countries have been wearing masks and it is not a big deal.

Chairman Kruzel stated the mask manufacturers are not worried because they put a warning label on the box.

Representative Arnone stated masks are meant to be worn once only.

Chairman Kruzel stated when this started, we rushed the vaccines. He is vaccinated. We were told if you get vaccinated you would not need to wear a mask. Now if you go anywhere you need to wear a mask. He feels you gave up your powers with this mandate. We have 3 branches of government, and we are now down to one.

Representative Arnone stated we only gave up on the public health. We have passed 235 bills and committees are still meeting. We are voting on things every day. The laws have changed. We have not given up our powers.

Chairman Kruzel stated we can agree to disagree.

Mrs. Thurston thanked Representative Arnone for attending tonight. She has been on the front lines working in a nursing home during the pandemic. She thanked him for his continued

support. She was grateful to see the Governor at 4:00 PM each day giving daily updates. She felt prepared for the next day. If she needs to wear a mask, she will continue to do so. She received her vaccines as well as her family. She will continue to do everything she can to protect her family and herself. Thank you for everything you are doing.

Representative Arnone thanked Mrs. Thurston for what she is doing for our residents in nursing homes. He has had conference calls with Parkway every week. It is sad to see the number of deaths that have resulted from COVID before the vaccine came out. He has seen the worst and the pain they have experienced. The vaccine works. Thank you for comforting our elderly. The Governor changed the executive order at nursing homes so they could see their loved ones. This is one of three changes the Governor made with the executive orders. We are at a point now where things are stable in nursing homes.

Mrs. Thurston added it is horrible when you need to make that phone call to the families letting them know their loved one has died, and they were not there to comfort them in their final hours. She will continue to wear her mask.

Representative Arnone thanked Mrs. Thurston for everything she is doing.

Chairman Kruzel thanked Representative Arnone for coming. We will agree to disagree.

Representative Arnone thanked Chairman Kruzel for his service to the town of Enfield and to the Board of Education. He wished him good luck with his future endeavors.

Mr. Drezek thanked Representative Arnone for coming. We have not always agreed about the decisions that were made or the timing of these decisions from the State. We have needed help from the State. Whenever he has reached out to Representative Arnone over the past 2 years, he has picked up my phone calls. He has never forgotten that he used to sit in your chairs. He recently reached out to him about busses and received a call from the commissioner about this. He thanked him for everything he has been doing for us.

## **7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

### **a. EPS Update**

Mr. Drezek stated schools are open and the students are happy. He had the opportunity to meet with the Superintendent's Advisory Committee at EHS last week with Mrs. Clark. This committee is comprised with students that have volunteered to meet with us. We address student concerns. We have not been able to meet since the pandemic and it felt good to meet with the students again. The last big concern they had was about parking during the snowstorm. A lot of our best ideas come from this room and from talking to the students. It has been frustrating for our students, and they know getting back to a normal routine is important and it is challenging for them. Sitting with them felt really good and he is very optimistic.

### **AUDIENCES:**

Chairman Kruzel reminded audience members to refrain from personal or individual attacks. We will allow Enfield residents 3 minutes to speak.

Barbara Gillie, Buchanan Road – Mrs. Gilly spoke about the FBI monitoring people and her family's history. She has grandchildren in our school system and that is why she has started coming to Board meetings. The FBI is looking for terrorists. The FBI can't look at everyone.

Maureen Griffin, Abbe Road – Mrs. Griffin stated ignoring our concerns and differences will affect our children's mental health. She agrees and disagrees with the assignment students

received. A faith based world is not a bad view. She has agreed and disagreed with each of you. Equity, diversity and sensitivity is not divisive. Your role is to ensure all students receive a free and appropriate public education. She has children in our district. The majority of staff have gone above and beyond and deserve praise. Thank you for being who you are.

Matt Schmitt, North Main – Mr. Schmitt stated that we have been doing what we have been told to do for the past 18 months. He discussed a higher and lower order of thinking. This is not how we should be teaching our children. You should not be doing what you are told to do by your doctor or superiors. Critical thinking is needed. Leadership has hope. Parents will continue to express their displeasure about mask wearing. He hopes you will start advocating and doing what is best for our children. Unmask our children.

Evangeline Flaherty, Jackson Road – Mrs. Flaherty stated it was said tonight that the mask mandate might not be lifted. She thanked the JFK Guidance Counselors for everything they are doing for our kids. Her daughter expressed her concerns to them about wearing a mask and health concerns. CCMC has received many mental health and behavioral concerns since the pandemic started. The number of children seeking assistance has tripled. This is a sad truth. Parents are watching and want what is best for our children. We are all law abiding citizens and are not domestic terrorists. Thank you.

Amanda Marquez, Hoover Lane – Mrs. Marquez stated our government has 3 branches to keep check and balances. We the people have the power. Our representatives have voted against the voice of the people. The mask mandate has been expanded. The next mandate will be about vaccinations. This is unconstitutional. Our children are not the spreaders of this virus. Saying your hands are tied is not the answer. Why do we need a board? Our students are being written up for not wearing masks. Hearing that a child cannot breathe is not enough and they should not be disciplined. They should be allowed a mask break every hour. Students should have a choice.

Sheila Munroe, Stacy Lane – Mrs. Munroe stated we are here as parents and grandparents because we support our children because we have heard nothing can be done. The children should be our only focus. You are elected to do this. We do not teach CRT in our schools. She disagrees because it is being taught. Respect and responsibility are needed. She asked about using the funding for purchasing air purification systems and air-conditioning in all our schools. The Department of Education has released their IAQ allocations for ARP funds and have we received these funds yet. Now is the time to do this for our children's health.

Colleen O'Callaghan, Midway Street – Mrs. O'Callaghan stated she homeschools her child. She had concerns with common core. Her son was bullied when he was in school. It is disturbing to see children wearing masks outside. There is proof that masks are not good for our younger children. They can cause major health concerns for our children. We are experimenting with our children, and we do not know what the long term affects will be from wearing masks. She hopes you all do your own research.

Dana Stidsen, Ryefield Drive – Mr. Stidsen stated he watched the BOE's September 28<sup>th</sup> meeting. The superintendent stated that critical race theory is not being taught in Enfield. He does not believe this. He would like to put a stop to gender identity lessons being taught in English class. Parents should be discussing these topics with their children at home and not in school. The vaccines for children took almost 2 years to make. This is because it wasn't that important. Our kids are not in danger. Masks are ridiculous.

Conner St. George, Misty Meadow – Mr. St. George stated CRT is here and it is designed to tear us apart. He attended school in Enfield. Masks may reduce the transmission and protect us from direct spray. We are told to trust the science and listen to the experts. He reviewed past pandemic statistics. Children do not need to wear masks. Our children are being

experimented on. Our hands are tied.

Dina St. George, Misty Meadow – Mrs. St. George is against the mask mandate. She is disappointed in our government. Our government is padding their wallets from COVID. Where are the state auditors? Living in America allows us to make our own decisions and health choices. Making us wear masks is proof against our freedom and liberties. She hopes that educators will question and research everything.

Nick Hopkins, Varno Lane – Mr. Hopkins stated we are all committed to democracy. Saying we tried is a bit too much. Giving up will be the wrong thing to do. Viruses can mutate and wearing masks and getting vaccines will help. He really hopes we can all come together and be united on this issue. We need to listen to the science. He thanked everyone for being here tonight. He urged everyone to talk to their doctors about what they recommend for you. Thank you.

Giselle Moore, Ryefield Drive – Mrs. Moore stated that CRT and DEI have no part in our society. She is a woman of color and a mother. You have not protected our children. We need leadership to change the policy. Racism and domestic terrorism are bad for everyone. Middleclass parents are now being called terrorists. We are not terrorists because we are speaking up for our children and our rights.

Joe Golish, Stardust Drive – Mr. Golish thanked Representative Arnone for speaking tonight. Our political views may differ, but he helps a lot of people every day. He grew up in Enfield. Enfield is very unique. Hartford is trying to change our Enfield identity. Our schools are excellent. Parents are our most important resource. He taught Chemistry and Biology to a lot of children. As a scientist, we do our research and question everything. He has professional licenses. He expects our professionals to act professionally.

Ryan Moore, Ryefield Drive – Mr. Moore stated he is angry and disappointed like many other parents. He discussed the lesson about ideology that is being taught in our schools. This garbage does not belong in our schools. He does not want to hear that our hands are tied. The Board serves the needs of our children. He urged Board members to change the policy. We have an election coming up. It is time to put our cards on the table. He does not agree with if a medical professional tells us, it is okay. We will continue to fight for our children.

Kelly Jackson, Meade Lane – Mrs. Jackson stated CRT is not being taught. We are teaching equity. Her children have been called horrible names and nothing was done about it. Parents are supposed to teach their children. What are we doing? We are teaching our children selective history. Her children deserve to hear their history regardless of if it is good or bad. They hear about black history for one month. It is hard to listen to what is being said. Her children are of color. We are not on a slippery slope. We are teaching our kids about differences.

Liz Davis, North Maple Street – Ms. Davis stated the EHS Field Hockey team just won their game against South Windsor. A request was made to our legislators to attend and only Representative Arnone came. Thank you Representative Arnone for always doing what is best for us. She agrees about listening to your doctors. Her specialists recommend she continue to wear a mask. Everyone has your own opinions. She asked if the Board oversees the parochial students. We have a lot of parochial parents here and they are saying to unmask our kids. She does not want our kids unmasked. The Board oversees 5,000 students. She thanked Mr. Drezek for what you are doing and keeping everyone safe and alive. She also thanked Representative Arnone for voting for the extension.

Marcy Taliceo, Coolidge Drive – Mrs. Taliceo thanked Mr. Drezek and Mr. Longey for everything you are doing for our students. She thanked Representative Arnone for attending tonight's



meeting. She addressed the parents that are concerned about masks and if this is the only thing you are worried about, you are very fortunate. We have many families and children that are hungry and are wearing clothes that do not fit them properly. She has not heard many kids complaining about the masks. There is so much more to be concerned about than wearing masks. Families of color worry about their children being pulled over by the police or out in our community for no reason. It is a different world when you are seen as less than for families of color. Please put this into perspective.

Maureen Snook, Buchanan Road – Mrs. Snook stated we are being told to trust the science. We should not be mandated to do this. Why are we questioning this? Her son does not want to go to school when it is raining because they will not get mask breaks if they are holding indoor recess. She gives her children multiple masks to wear during the day. The students were not told they could have extra mask breaks. Her daughter gets headaches from wearing the masks. The classrooms are hot. She went to the open house, and we were sweating. Our children will please the adults when they are asked about masks and want to complain. When they come home, they tell us how they are really feeling. We are advocating for our children and about getting vaccines. She has a problem with this mandate.

#### **BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS:**

Chairman Kruzel stated he invited all our legislators to attend the meeting. Mr. Arnone wanted to attend tonight's meeting by himself. To accommodate Representative Arnone's request, he rescinded his invitation to Representative Hall and Senator Kissel.

Mrs. Pickett stated the decision about masks and vaccines is not up to the Board. We are here to make sure a high quality education is happening for our students in Enfield. She is not surprised to hear audience members discussing diversity, equity and inclusion. She is disheartened and sad about this. We must talk about our difference. She is proud of her commitment to equity. This is a longtime journey we must take. We need to make all students feel welcome including our students of color. All children deserve positive outcomes.

Mrs. Pickett would like to hear about how our learning has been impacted and receive some testing outcomes. It would be interesting to see attendance numbers and our academic benchmarks being met, how is discipline being handled and things that are related to education in our school.

Mrs. Pickett stated she attended Stowe's open house and the KITE meeting. These are amazing events, and she thanked our staff and teachers. They recognized both Mrs. Valley and Mrs. Hall at the KITE annual meeting as mentioned by Mr. Ryder. She also attended ERfC's Fall Festival. We have an amazing community and an opportunity to do such great work in Enfield. Including multiple perspectives will benefit our children in these conversations.

Mr. Ryder stated JFK will hold a PTO meeting on October 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 PM in the new cafeteria. They will continue holding curriculum nights on Wednesday, October 20<sup>th</sup> for students in grade 8.

Mr. Ryder stated Parkman will hold end their fundraising events tomorrow. They will hold their PTO meeting on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Ryder stated both Hazardville and Whitney will hold Halloween parties on October 21<sup>st</sup> at Collins Creamery. Whitney will hold an in person book fair on October 18<sup>th</sup>. It will be great to have some normalcy again.

Mr. Ryder spoke about our mentor program that he has been involved with for the past 6 years. If you have an hour to give and meet with a student, please contact Jenn Howell at [jhowell@enfieldschools.org](mailto:jhowell@enfieldschools.org) or call 860-253-4737.

Mr. Ryder stated 2Moms-on-a-Mission Quarter Auction will be held on Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup>. They would with Enfield Public School children to provide them with items from their Angel Tree. This event will benefit Enfield children.

Mr. Ryder stated he had a great visit at the EHS Career Center. He wished he had this when he was in school. They are doing so much for our students. Our students are learning about financial planning. What they teach our students is incredible.

Mr. Ryder stated you can place your wreath orders for Wreaths Across America now. All order should be placed by November 30<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Ryder stated the Jack-O-Lantern Festival (JOLF) will hold a K-12 virtual pumpkin contest this year. You can find out more about this on their Facebook page.

Mr. Ryder urged everyone to mark your calendars for EPS PJ Day 2021 that will be held on December 10<sup>th</sup>. We will host again on behalf of Enfield Public Schools and will combine our dollars. CCMC has helped give our kids more precious time with their families.

Mr. Ryder added all of these events can be found on the [enfieldpto.com](http://enfieldpto.com) school website pages.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated EHS will hold their Homecoming Dance on October 21<sup>st</sup>. Tickets are on sale for \$10. Permission slips are needed in order to purchase a ticket.

Mrs. LeBlanc agreed that the Career Center is amazing. They have so many community connections for our students. They can discuss many options with students. They bring back former EHS students in order for the current students to talk with them.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated October 10<sup>th</sup> was World Mental Health Day. She read a statement about mental health. There is a stigma that goes along with mental health concerns when you are not doing well. This is not a sign of weakness. If you need help, please ask for it.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated EHS Equity Leadership Team are meeting again. Parents are encouraged to attend. Preregistration is required. She has attended these meetings and they are very informative.

Mrs. Leblanc stated a lot of parents expressed their concerns tonight about vaccine mandates. She wanted to hear from Representative Arnone on this and what direction the state might be going in. She believes in our doctors. Doctors have saved our loved one's lives. She is standing by this. We have so many great careers like nurses, electricians, welders, and accountants. She would not want anyone that is not trained in these areas telling them how to do their jobs. We are a Board, and we write policies. If changes are needed, we will review them. Having unqualified people going into our classrooms and telling our teachers what to do is not an option. She will stand by what she has always said. You are talking about your strong beliefs just like I do.

Mrs. LeBlanc addressed Mrs. Monroe about her concerns and will discuss this at our next Joint Facilities meeting.

Mr. LeBlanc stated masks are an ongoing conversation. His opinion has not changed on masks. Students' behavior and lack of attention is a concern. The last year and a half, has not helped us with this and has placed a tremendous burden on them. He has seen this in

schools, and it is a serious issue keeping the kids focused. Keeping students focused is concerning. This is happening at all schools. Social media has made its presence and not in a good way. This is also concerning.

Mr. LeBlanc asked Representative Arnone about mental health. The numbers in our high school and middle school are increasing. Our district has resources in place for those that need help. If you need help or know someone that needs help or recognize someone that needs help, there are resources in place. Talk to your teachers or just reach out.

Mr. LeBlanc attended the football game where so many students were there. It was great seeing the students supporting each other. He hopes this will continue during indoor events.

Mr. LeBlanc stated KITE's We Spy Learning is underway with the North Central Chamber of Commerce. They will hold a scarecrow contest at the Enfield Public Library. The Stowe FEO will hold their next meeting on October 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM.

Mrs. Acree thanked everyone for speaking and coming out tonight regarding the different concerns that are occurring in our school system. It is great to see the Enfield community being involved in their children's education. Making sure students receive mask breaks and are aware of these breaks is important. Also making sure that kindness, tolerances and acceptance of all different races and cultures are being taught. She hopes these resolutions happen sooner rather than later as far our community is concerned.

Mrs. Cushman appreciates the parents speaking and sharing your valid concerns with us. We will continue this conversation with staff. We will also explore using TED instead of DEI. This focus comes from the FAIR Organization and exploring what our students have in common instead of their differences. She would like us to continue exploring this in our schools.

Mrs. Cushman thanked Mr. Ryder for speaking about the mentoring program. She is very interested in pursuing this.

Chairman Kruzel stated this is his second to last meeting. He thanked Representative Arnone for attending. He wanted to attend alone.

Chairman Kruzel also attended the Career Center Open House. This is a phenomenal place for our students. He was on the building committee when we were designing EHS. He thanked all the members for everything they did. The entire school is phenomenal. We fast tracked this project and saved one year by doing this. We were the first ones in the State to do this. We were ahead of schedule and under budget for this project.

Chairman Kruzel stated back in 2015 the weights at EHS needed to be repaired. He took the weights and sand blasted them and painted them all. He did this for our students and the community.

Chairman Kruzel stated he also attended ERfC's fall festival. He met Mrs. Pickett's husband there and thanked him for Amanda's committee to the Board and town.

Chairman Kruzel stated as far as the masks go, we will agree to disagree. He doesn't like them.

8. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

9. **NEW BUSINESS:**

a. **Approved Schedule of Regular Enfield Board of Education Meetings for 2022**

Mrs. LeBlanc moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education approves the regular meeting schedule for 2022.

**Discussion:**

Chairman Kruzel stated there is a conflict on February 22<sup>nd</sup>. The next chairman can address that.

Mrs. Thurston stated the name on the letter also needs to be changed.

A vote by **roll call 7-0-1** passed with Chairman Kruzel abstaining.

**b. Schedule a Special Board of Education Meeting**

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education holds a special meeting on November 16, 2021.

A vote by **roll call 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

**10. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Curriculum – Mr. LeBlanc reported they will meet on October 21<sup>st</sup>.

Finance – Chairman Kruzel reported the Finance committee will meet on October 18<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM.

Policy – Chairman Kruzel reported Policy Committee will meet on October 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM.

Leadership – Chairman Kruzel had nothing new to report.

Joint Facility – Chairman Kruzel reported the Joint Facilities Committee will meet on Thursday in the Enfield Room at 6:00 PM.

JFK Building – Chairman Kruzel reported the JFK Building Committee met. He was going to show the progress with a presentation, but he didn't receive the materials. The auditorium is now open. The Blue Wing, Music, Cafeteria, Kitchen and Auditorium are all open. The gymnasium will be next. They are working on the administration wing and the façade of the library. They are working on the hub and Red Wing, and they should be done in January 2022.

Joint Security – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Security Committee will meet on December 1<sup>st</sup> at 8:30 AM.

Joint Insurance – Mrs. LeBlanc reported the Joint Insurance Committee will meet on October 19<sup>th</sup>.

Youth Mental Health – Mr. LeBlanc reported they held their first meeting on October 6<sup>th</sup>.

**11. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc that the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 28, 2021, be approved.

A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-0** passed unanimously.

12. **APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL** - None

15. **CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION** - None

16. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** - None

17. **ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mr. LeBlanc to adjourn the Regular Meeting of October 12, 2021.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 9:42 PM.

Tina LeBlanc  
Secretary  
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary