

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 13, 2020**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held on October 13, 2020 at Enfield Town Hall located at 820 Enfield Street in Council Chambers.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY: Jonathan LeBlanc, Bill Salazar, Tina LeBlanc, Joyce Hall, Stacy Thurston, Scott Ryder, John Unghire, and Walter Kruzel

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Christopher Drezek, Superintendent of Schools; and Mr. Andrew B. Longey, Assistant Superintendent

Chairman Kruzel reported that Mrs. Costa has resigned from the Board effective today. She moved out of Enfield last Friday. He read a letter from her to the Board. We will follow the normal process for filling her position.

Chairman Kruzel also reported based on feedback, masks will be worn by all Board members except for when we are speaking.

6. **BOARD GUEST(S):** None
7. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**
 - a. **EPS School Update**

Mr. Drezek stated we have a very large audience that view our meetings from home. We will use this opportunity to get as much information out as we can for those watching from home. He explained how decisions are made about school closures due to COVID. The State issued guidelines for us to use during the summer. The State has given us Leading and Secondary Indicators. This is the information we will use when making decisions about hybrid classes, in-person classes or distance learning. You are hearing about the daily transmission rates on the media. This is public information that can be found on the State's website. The State updates these indicators weekly. If the indicator is under 10, it is okay for us to hold classes. If the indicator is in the 10-25 range, we will hold hybrid classes and if the indicator is above 25, we will be all remote. He started his own database to track information. The State also looks at county data. He looks at State data, county data and Enfield data. Districts are intertwined so it is important to look at county data. Each district can make their own decisions. He started doing this in August. The information that is posted on the State website is around a week and a half old.

Mr. Drezek reviewed what the indicators are for Enfield, State and County. The averages are increasing. When he made the decision about continuing with our Hybrid plan in November, he was using older information. We are currently trending upwards. We have an inhouse

database that we track information for any positive cases and any potential cases. All this information is included when making decisions along with talking with colleagues in our county and information received from the Governor.

Mr. Drezek added we are currently at 7.8. His biggest fear is doing what is worst for our kids. This is real. We have the experience of living through this and know more now. We may need to close at some point. Our data is trending upwards and we have a lot of potential cases. We are asking staff members and students to stay home. There are some cases we do not know about. If our numbers go over 10, we will need to remain in a hybrid plan. We will use this information to help us make decisions. We are expecting to hit the 10 mark on Monday that would warrant us to remain in our current Hybrid Plan.

Mr. Drezek stated he knows this question will be asked - what number do we need to be at in order to go back full time? When we reverse the trend, we can come back full time. He wanted to be as transparent as he could about this information with the Board and the public about how we are making decisions.

Mrs. Hall asked about the number of students at Magnet Schools this year? Mr. Drezek stated around 300.

Mrs. Hall asked if many parents have indicated they would like to stop Remote Learning and start Hybrid Learning? Mr. Drezek stated only a few parents have made the change. We have seen that most parents are opting to keep their kids remote. Once the first positive case was made, this confirmed many parent's decisions. More parents are opting to keep kids home.

Mr. Unghire stated the Hartford County data is 7.8. This information is from the State. Enfield's number is 3.9. He asked if this number is from the State or is it from your information? Mr. Drezek stated all the information has come directly from the State.

Mr. Unghire asked if we are including the numbers from the prison and would that affect our numbers? Mr. Drezek is not sure if the prison population numbers are included with ours. He believes they are included with our community numbers. He does not know how to exclude their numbers from ours.

Mr. Drezek stated State numbers, county numbers and our numbers show we are doing better. We are looking at this by county. We are already in a Hybrid Model. We have been following all State guidelines.

Mr. Salazar thanked Mr. Drezek for this information. It is a necessity that you are now analyzing all this data. If we exceed 10, it is up to us to make a decision about what plan we will be using? Mr. Drezek stated there was no executive order about this. We are following the guidelines and they are not mandated.

Mr. Salazar asked if the numbers trend down, would they need to stay down for a period of time before a change is made? Mr. Drezek stated if the data points turn down, we would need to watch them for a while and be cautious. We are also dealing with when the vaccines will be available. They will not be the end all for curing this. He would like us at the 2 percent number. We are learning how to live with this. This model is the lessor of the two and is working. This is our new normal for a while. When we make a change, we would start to ease back in a responsible way. Everyone is waiting to see how the number are during the Fall and during flu season. It is a balancing act.

Mr. LeBlanc asked how many confirmed cases have there been? Mr. Drezek stated 12.

Mr. LeBlanc understands the data and levels that are trending upward. He respects your decisions based on the data. Based on these numbers there is a ray of hope for our Enfield

School System of a .24 positivity rate of our 5,000 students. This is something positive for our community.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated we have students that could be asymptomatic that we are not aware of and we would only know about it if they were being tested. We need to take into consideration the number of people contacted with contract tracing. Other towns have needed to close for two weeks because of staffing issues. We are seeing our numbers rising from contract tracing. She was expecting to see more cases and is glad it is not worst.

Mr. Drezek stated when we trend down, we can get more ambitious. We do not want to get into the red area. We were expecting cases. There are people that are asymptomatic. We need to go back 48 hours and identify who the close contacts are once we are notified of a confirmed case. It is now cold and flu season. Our staff are doing what we told them to do – stay home if you are not feeling well. We are looking at 8-10 circumstances each day. We have learned the leg work takes the most time. We need to get all our ducks in a row to be prepared. That is why you are seeing the weeklong and 14-day school closures occurring.

Mrs. LeBlanc agreed that none of this is ideal. Changes can be made. It is tough on the families and some of the individual grades. Each family has their own situation they are dealing with. We are giving our families a choice. She appreciates that we can give our families this opportunity. Thank you.

Mr. Salazar stated our school closure last year was unfortunate and we lost contact with some of the students temporarily. He asked how the schools are doing now, and are students participating? Mr. Drezek stated our staff is keeping track of all our students. Each student has an iPad now. He commends our teachers for reaching out to our families during the spring. Our staff have done a remarkable job making sure our kids are connected. We can now take attendance remotely. Having our teachers in our buildings helps. Our teachers take this personally. We are tracking this information and can share it.

Chairman Kruzel stated he has seen what our staff has been doing with contract tracing and getting our ducks in a row and the amount of leg work that is needed. Our administrators and staff have gone above and beyond what was expected. He thanked all our staff members for what they are doing for our students.

8. AUDIENCES:

William Delaney, JFK Middle School – Mr. is a Social Studies Teacher at JFK. He has been teaching in Enfield for 20 years. He thanked Mr. Drezek and Mr. Longey for look out for us all and the excellent job you are doing. He thanked the Board for your public service. Our teachers are terrified that we will catch this and the thought of going back fulltime is terrifying. We need to pay attention to the data. With the renovation that is going on at JFK, he does not see us going back fully at JFK. The workload for all teachers has increased. He is also the vice president of the ETA. Teachers are heroes and we want to serve the public and that is why we do this – we make a difference in Enfield, every child, every day. We have families also and urged them to keep this in mind. We are working unreasonable hours and are doing this to keep the ship afloat. He thanked the students and parents for everything they are doing. They are all troopers. The way we are teaching is a complete shift of the delivery of instruction. You will see students that are learning and productive. We will get thru this and need to work as a team. Thank you.

Chairman Kruzel thanked Mr. Delaney and all the teachers for what you are doing. God bless you all.

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:

Mrs. LeBlanc stated she attended the Farm to Table dinner with Joyce and Scott. Mr. Salazar was also there. We all had a wonderful time. Everyone has been teasing her about getting the word out about ERfC. This is a wonderful program, and she is happy to share information about them.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated she was happy to attend a football skills competition. Football looks different this year. She enjoyed watching the lineman challenge.

Mrs. LeBlanc add that two of her children had Mr. Delaney as a Social Studies teacher. You left a lasting impression on her kids and students in general. Thank you.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated the communication we are receiving from Enfield High is even better now. We are all on the same platform and the expectations are very clear for the students at the high school. Our teachers are working so much. She gets alerts when they post grades and if there are any grade changes. She thanked our teachers for doing a great job. She feels for our teachers. This is why she became a Board member - they prompted her to get involved. Our teachers have done so much for her kids and she cannot thank them enough. It takes a village to educate our kids. She is thankful for what you are all doing for our kids and is proud to have you in her village. She is thankful every day.

Mrs. Hall attended the Head Start Policy Committee meeting last week. They elected parents to the officer positions. They have filled 91 of the 102 slots and one remote class. The attendance for the in-person class was 94% and 74% for remote learning class.

Mrs. Hall attended the KITE annual meeting where our Superintendent Mr. Drezek was recognized for his good and extensive work for the Enfield school age children and was presented the Children's Champion Award for 2019-20.

Mrs. Hall stated CREC will hold a meeting virtually next week. They are considering holding all their meetings virtually now because attendance is better virtually than in person.

Mrs. Hall stated that the board has been criticized for spending too much time talking about sports. Relating a recent national sport tournament and academic concerns she showed a book "I Promise" by Lebron James who is very supportive of education. "Sports, Books and Students are all important."

Mr. Ryder congratulated Mr. Drezek on receiving an award from KITE. We are all very proud of you and this recognition is very well deserved. He thanked KITE for doing this.

Mr. Ryder stated the green Eagle masks are being ordered by each of the school's PTO's. We will submit an order at the end of the month.

Mr. Ryder added Hazardville Memorial will hold their virtual PTO meeting on Wednesday. The Memorial Jogtober event raised almost \$4K. He thanked them all for doing this – Go Huskies!

Mr. Ryder stated the Eli Whitney PTO will meet later this month. You can go to our website at enfieldPTO.com and you can see the dates for student pictures for all the schools. Our distance learning students can also have pictures taken. He has been posting all the messages received from the principals on the schools PTO website in case you miss a message or want to see what messages have been sent out.

Mr. Ryder stated the JFK PTO is holding the "that's my brick" fundraiser at thatsmybrick.com. The Board has purchased a brick. You can buy a brick and it will be placed around the flagpole at JFK and along the pathway to the school if there are enough bricks. There is no limit on the number of bricks you would like to purchase. JFK is also holding a fundraiser where you can wear pink on October 20th or 23rd to raise awareness for breast cancer research and awareness for \$1.

Mr. Ryder added additional COVID testing will be held at the Enfield Food Shelf on October 14th from 9-1 PM, and on October 16th from 9-1 PM, and at Loaves & Fishes on October 28th from 3-6 PM. They will also have testing at 5 North Main Street at CHC on Wednesdays in November from 9-1 PM.

Mr. Ryder also thanked Mr. Drezek, Mr. Longey, Central Office, Teachers, parents, and students for everything you are doing.

Mr. LeBlanc stated he understands the guidelines from the State. When contract tracing has been done and you need to quarantine due to being directly affected and if there are other members in the family, they do not need to quarantine. He understands why this person is being quarantined but questioned why all members in the same household do not need to quarantine.

Mr. LeBlanc stated he attended a PTO meeting, and it was brought to his attention that many of our teachers are working many extra hours as mentioned by Mr. Delaney. He thanked Mr. Delaney and all our teachers for what you are doing for our kids. Thank you from the bottom of his heart. Without you, this would all fall apart.

Mr. LeBlanc stated there is an app for Box Tops that you can download onto your phone for you to scan your receipts. Box tops help to support your child's school. This is something he did when he was in school.

Mr. LeBlanc stated our Fall sports are underway. He wished them all the best of luck. They have held many of the senior nights for soccer and field hockey. JFK and EHS will hold virtual clubs. He encourages students to join and participate.

Mr. LeBlanc thanked Mrs. Costa for her service as a Board member. You were a great addition to the Board. We will miss you and he wished her the best of luck.

Mr. Salazar thanked Mr. Delaney and all the members of the ETA for everything you are doing. He does not have children in school, but he hears from his neighbors and appreciates everything our teachers are doing.

Mr. Unghire recently met with Mr. Longey and understands your role better and the challenges and issues you are faced with. We discussed the need for substitutes. There is a critical shortage of substitutes. What can we do to assist increasing the substitute pool? The State changed the eligibility requirements for substitutes needing a bachelor's degree now. From this change, we lost some very qualified substitutes. Would it be possible to get a waiver from the State to help during this crisis we are dealing with? He had mentioned this when he met with Mr. Longey and wanted to know if any progress has been made? Mr. Longey stated we have not looked into this yet.

Mr. Unghire stated if there is anything we can do, please let us know.

Chairman Kruzel added we could reach out to Senator Kissel, Representatives Arnone and Hall and see if they could assist in this area.

Mr. Unghire thanked Mr. Longey for his time and looks forward to working with him.

Chairman Kruzel showed Board members the mask from the STOWE Early Learning Center with the Eaglet on it. He would have worn it, but it is too small for him. Please send him your masks and he will show them off.

Chairman Kruzel thanked Mrs. Costa for her hard work on the Joint Facilities Committee, Finance Committee, and Reopening Committee. She was his right hand, and he will miss her.

He thanked her and wished her luck.

Chairman Kruzel congratulated Mr. Drezek for the award he received from KITE. He was watching the meeting until his power went out.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

11. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Approve 5000 Series Policies – First Reading

Mr. Salazar we will keep this item on the table. The Policy Committee has not met yet.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Curriculum Committee – Mr. LeBlanc reported the Curriculum Committee will meet on October 15th at 5:30 PM at Alcorn.

Finance Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported the next Finance meeting will be held on October 19th.

Policy Committee – Mr. Salazar reported the Policy Committee will meet on October 26th.

Leadership Committee – None

Joint Facility Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported the Joint Facility Committee met last week. We will present to the Town Council on Monday, October 19th. We have finished the roof at Barnard, and they are working on the chimney.

JFK Renovation Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported we will meet on October 15th.

Joint Security Committee – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Security Committee is scheduled meet in December.

Joint Insurance Committee – Chairman Kruzel reported they will meet in December.

13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Hall moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 29, 2020 be approved.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated a change is needed on the last page changing this from a special meeting to a regular meeting. A vote by **show-of-hands 8-0-0** passed unanimously with the recommended change.

14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL: None

15. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION:

Mrs. LeBlanc read a thank you note from Mrs. Costa. She thanked Mrs. Costa for her time on the Board. She wished she had more time to work with her. She had some great ideas and was very detailed orientated. She wished her good luck in her new ventures.

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

17. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mr. Salazar to adjourn the Regular Meeting of October 13, 2020.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Tina LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary