

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JULY 13, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held in Council Chambers on July 13, 2021.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jonathan LeBlanc, Janet Cushman, Tina LeBlanc, Stacy Thurston, Scott Ryder, and Walter Kruzel

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Unghire, Joyce Hall, and Jean Acree

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

Chairman Kruzel reported that both Mr. Unghire and Mrs. Hall are unable to attend tonight's meeting. He also explained that our new Board member was also unable to attend tonight's meeting.

6. BOARD GUEST(S)

a. Board Member Recognition

Chairman Kruzel welcomed former Board member Bill Salazar.

Mr. Salazar thanked Chairman Kruzel for the opportunity to say goodbye to the Board. He was unable to attend the last Board meeting due to a work emergency. He recently moved out of Enfield. He read his resignation letter to the Board and public. His resignation was effective on June 30th.

Mr. Salazar stated many people care about Enfield and work hard to improve the education we deliver. There is no racism in Enfield. He has gained many friends of many different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. He urged residents of Enfield to stay focused and fight for justice for all children in Enfield. He spoke about Critical Race Theory (CRT). When you are making decisions, base them on facts and not emotions. CRT has been banned in several states. If you disagree with CRT, show up and speak up.

Mr. Salazar thanked his colleagues on the Board and in the Enfield community. He also thanked the administration for their support.

Chairman Kruzel presented Mr. Salazar with his name plate. Board members wished him good luck.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
a. EPS Update

Mr. Drezek stated our graduating seniors received their diplomas and had their graduation on June 22nd at Enfield High School outside. By the time the students made it onto the field, the rain stopped, and the sun came out. He has a photograph to prove this. We kept our remarks short.

Mrs. Thurston showed the picture of the sun.

Mr. Drezek thanked Mr. Fenton, Ms. Clark, Mr. Clark, Mrs. Gagnon for everything they did to make this event happen. He also thanked our Deans – Mr. Nelson, Mr. Murray, and Mrs. Cox-Blackwell along with Mrs. Lamagna and Mrs. Farris. This could not have been done without all your help. He thanked B&G for keeping our sound equipment dry and setting everything up. He also thanked Alex Giner from E-TV for everything he did during the graduation. He tapes all our events and is here tonight in the control room – thank you Alex.

Mr. Drezek stated we started the second week of summer school. There were a few hiccups, but everything has been addressed. He will have the summer school numbers for our next meeting. Both he and Mr. Longey stopped by summer school programs today and the students were happy to be in school. He thanked our staff for everything they are doing for our students.

Mr. Drezek stated our next series of meetings with the State Department of Education was scheduled for today, but they postponed it until next Tuesday. The CDC has made several recommendations for masks and social distancing. We follow the State Department of Education and the Department of Public Health. We will be told what we need to do, and he will communicate any information he receives with you when it is received.

8. AUDIENCES:

Barbara Gilly, Buchanan Road – Mrs. Gilly said she paid her taxes today and is interested in the education that is being taught in Enfield. Her children went to school in Enfield. She worries about CRT coming to Enfield. She said the AFT & NEA supports this. She would like to know where the Board stands on this topic. She also asked about new curriculum and does the Board know what will be taught? How can the taxpayers find out about if CRT is being taught?

Amanda Pickett, Guild Street – Mrs. Pickett has 2 black children in the Enfield public schools. It is heart breaking to hear misinformation being spoken. Racism is real. We have a system in place that has oppressed people of color. People are struggling and people of color have been oppressed. There has been change and we have come a long way. CRT is not curriculum, but a framework. We all have some bias, but we can change. It is living in Enfield Public Schools, and we can change it. We have amazing teachers that are making our children life-long learners. Our teachers are teaching our children skills. She urged Board members to reflect on your mission statement and Board goals.

Peter Jonaitis, Farmstead Circle – Mr. Jonaitis thanked Mr. Salazar and Mrs. Gilly for speaking. Both the NEA and AFT endorse CRT and they support a teacher's right to teach this. Some districts have adopted the 1690 curriculum. Pitting one race against another race has no place in our schools. He taught US History and Geography and has travelled all over the world. He has seen a lot. Many kinds of groups have been oppressed and are part of our past. He feels we live in the greatest country. We have evolved and grown and are still changing. Immigrants still want to come to this country. He urged you to review our Social Studies, English, and Science curriculum to make sure CRT is not part of it. Do not teach CRT because it is racism and we do not need that in our town.

9. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS:

Mrs. Cushman was not aware this was going to be a topic tonight. She read an e-mail about CRT being racist. This is clearly a divisive issue that we are all trying to learn more about. We will sort through this. She appreciates the parent sending this e-mail. She thanked the audience members for speaking about this issue tonight.

Mr. LeBlanc stated he is the head of the Curriculum Committee. CRT is not being taught in Enfield. We are teaching equality in Enfield. We teach our students to be respectful to each other no matter what their religion or race is. Our Chief Academic Officer Michelle Middleton can answer any questions with honesty and truthfulness. We receive our curriculum from the State Department of Education and are mandated to teach it. We teach our students to respect all individuals. The politics behind this need to stop. What you are hearing from the media does not mean it is happening in Enfield. We teach our students to be respectful and to treat each other the way you would like to be treated. That is what our goal is for every child, every day. The CRT debate is not happening in Enfield. He has faith in our administrators and teachers that they are teaching our children appropriately.

Mr. LeBlanc thanked Mr. Drezek for addressing masks. This most likely will be a mandated decision. Mr. Drezek added the decision regarding masks will be made at the State level.

Mr. LeBlanc wants the public to know we are not making this decision. The masks did what we hoped they would do. It is time to move on.

Mr. LeBlanc stated he attended the graduation ceremony, and it was pouring. He looked at his phone and the rain stopped at 7:56 PM exactly. Your meteorologist was spot on.

Mr. LeBlanc is glad we are offering summer school to our students. He spoke to some of the parents and their kids said it was a 10 out of 10. He appreciates the hard work that went into getting this done as quickly as we did it. He is glad the students are enjoying it.

Mr. LeBlanc asked if there are any plans for middle school orientation? Mr. Drezek stated the administration is still working remotely. He will look into this.

Mr. LeBlanc reported about an Enfield boy "Gabriel" that became a hero. He rode his bike to the Thompsonville Fire Station when he saw his loved one was having a medical concern.

Mr. LeBlanc reported our district 10 year-old softball team won the district 8 Championship. He wished them luck as they proceed to sectionals. Congratulations to the coaches and players and he wished them continued success.

Mr. LeBlanc thanked Mr. Salazar for his time served on the Board. He brought a unique perspective to the Board and is one of the smartest people he knows. It was a privilege to get to know you. He wished him good luck.

Mr. LeBlanc stated the Enfield Ramblers are open and they are looking for players. We are holding registrations for interested Enfield kids. Practices will start on August 2nd. If you have any difficulties with the online registrations or have any questions, please call, or e-mail me.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated she has heard a lot about CRT, and she researched this with factual information. It is not a curriculum; it is a theory, and it is not being taught in Enfield. We hold monthly curriculum meetings, and many questions are asked and addressed by our Curriculum Director. Our administration and central office administrators have dedicated their lives to teaching our students. They leave politics outside and present facts and truths. She found great information on both sides of this topic without going to news media outlets.

As a Board member, she felt she needed to be educated on this topic. We have a process for our curriculum that is being taught in Enfield and it does not include politics. She trusts our administration. This is the best administration we have had. She has been on this board for 10 years and 3 administrations.

Mrs. LeBlanc congratulated Adam Behling for being Enfield's Teacher of the Year. His mother was a sweet warm teacher and is missed by everyone. This is such a great achievement, and she knows she is very proud of her son.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated the graduation ceremony was great. She kept saying the rain was going to stop. The pictures from that night were awesome when the sun was coming through at sunset. We gave our students exactly what they wanted - they were able to walk down the hill.

Mrs. LeBlanc helped at Safe Grad and each of the students were so appreciative and thankful. Around 230 students went through the café. Graduating 2021 parents need to know how respectful their kids were.

Mrs. LeBlanc thanked Mr. Drezek for the mask update. We sit here together and are vaccinated. We will sit tight and see what will happen for the fall.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated she suggested at the Joint Facilities Committee to change the placement of the Enfield High School sign that was damaged from the falling tree branch. The historical society stated they cannot change the direction of the sign. She would like to see us use a larger sign if we can't change the direction of the sign.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked about the turf at Enfield High School and if this can be addressed before fall sports start up.

Mrs. LeBlanc wished everyone a nice healthy summer and the rain goes away soon.

Mrs. Thurston received an e-mail about ERfC holding their backpack and school supply drive. You can drop off supplies at 174 South Road from M-F from 8-5 PM. This supply drive started on July 6th and runs through August 20th. You can also go to their website at www.erfcinc.org for additional information. They will also have a school bus at the Farmers Market on August 1st and 8th where you can drop off donations. She thanked the members of ERfC for doing this for our kids every year and it is for a great cause.

Mr. Ryder stated the JFK PTO is sponsoring "That's My Brick" fundraiser again. Additional information can be found on the www.EnfieldPTO.com website.

Mr. Ryder stated free variety shows will be held at the Annex on Wednesday, July 14th at 6:30 PM. This is a town event that is free.

Mr. Ryder added the KITE/Stowe Pre-Kindergarten Camp is being held starting on August 2nd through 20th from 9-1 at STOWE. This is a free 3-week camp for pre-Kindergarten students. This is a great opportunity for students, and you can find this on STOWE's website.

Mr. Ryder added that KITE has posted their 2-page resource guide for families on their website at www.kite.org. You can find a lot of valuable information here. He thanked the members of KITE for this valuable resource.

Mr. Ryder stated we reached 11.4K people on our Facebook page during the month of June. That is why we share information here.

Mr. Ryder thanked Mr. LeBlanc for his explanation about our curriculum that is taught in Enfield. He is glad everyone is asking questions. Treat others the way you would like to be treated – with respect.

Mr. Ryder added his child is not old enough to receive the vaccination. Getting our kids back in school is important. If you can get your children vaccinated, please do so. If you need to wear a mask that is okay also.

Mr. Ryder stated our next Board meeting will be held on August 24th. We can hold a special meeting if one is needed. Have a great summer.

Chairman Kruzel plans to address the EHS sign with the Historic Committee. There are other signs on Enfield Street that are facing the road. We used to have a sign that was facing the road.

Chairman Kruzel stated he was also promised a stop light by our State Representatives. Where is our stop light! We were promised this. He urged our representatives to reach out to DOT about this.

Chairman Kruzel read his full graduation speech to the public. He congratulated our graduates and urged them to thank their parents and friends. He graduated 37 years ago on June 22nd and was also a class president. He received a pocket watch from his parents that had a pocketknife attached to it. He needed to remove the pocketknife before the graduation ceremony – even the Board Chairman needs to follow the rules. Mr. Drizzle's meteorologist came through for us.

Mrs. Thurston added the parents were so happy to be there and they really didn't mind the rain.

Chairman Kruzel added he arrived at 6:30 PM when it was really raining. One parent complained about our decision to him. Congratulations graduates!

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

11. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Approve Head Start 2021-22 COLA Funds

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education approves the Head Start 2021-22 COLA Funds as presented.

Discussion:

Mr. Drezek stated all the information is in your packet. The cost of living adjustment is done annually.

Mr. Drezek added that we are offering a summer school program at STOWE that is also filled to the brim.

A vote by **show-of-hands 6-0-0** passed unanimously.

b. Approve Head Start 2021-22 Program Improvement Plan

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education approve the Head Start 2021-22 Program Improvement Plans as presented.

Discussion:

Mr. Drezek stated this is the Head Start Improvement plan, similar to the Enfield Public Schools Improvement Plan that is required to be signed off by him. This plan went through the Enfield Head Start Policy Committee first and now it requires the Board's approval and the Chairman's signature. This is another annual item for Head Start.

A vote by **Roll-Call 6-0-0** passed unanimously.

c. Suffield Regional Agriscience Center Consulting Committee Appointment

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mrs. Thurston that the Enfield Board of Education appoints Eileen Maxwell and reappoints Sam Smyth as Enfield's Representatives to Serve on the Suffield Regional Agriscience Center Consulting Committee as recommended.

Discussion:

Mrs. LeBlanc stated we need to approve Mrs. Maxwell and re-appoint Mr. Smyth to this committee appointment.

A vote by **Roll-Call 6-0-0** passed unanimously.

Chairman Kruzel congratulated Mrs. Maxwell for being appointment to this committee. She is a friend of his family. This is a great position for her, and he knows she will do a phenomenal job.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Curriculum – No meeting was held – nothing new to report.

Finance – No meeting was held – nothing new to report.

Policy – No meeting was held – nothing new to report.

Leadership – No meeting was held – nothing new to report.

Joint Facility – Chairman Kruzel reported the Joint Facilities Committee met on July 8th. We discussed the Enfield High School sign are moving forward with the plans for the Memorial/Whitney roofs. There is a possibility that we might need a special meeting before our next scheduled meeting in August. He will keep us posted.

JFK Building – Chairman Kruzel reported the JFK Building Committee met and they demolished the portable buildings. Mr. Daigle would like to present an update to the Board at our August 24th meeting.

Mr. LeBlanc added the man operating the backhoe was quite skilled. It was the most uneventful demolition he has ever seen.

Joint Security – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Security Committee will meet on August 4th.

Joint Insurance – Chairman Kruzel reported he does not have a date for the next Joint Insurance Committee meeting.

Youth Mental Health – No meeting was held – nothing new to report.

13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc that the Regular Meeting Minutes of June 8 25, 2021 be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 6-0-0** passed unanimously.

14. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL - None

15. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION – Nothing to Report

16. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

17. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Thurston moved, seconded by Mrs. Cushman to adjourn the Regular Meeting of July 13, 2021.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 8:13 PM.

Tina LeBlanc
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary