

**BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 12, 2023**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held in Council Chambers on September 12, 2023.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Madam Chair LeBlanc.
2. **MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Amanda Pickett
3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Amanda Pickett
4. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:**
5. **ROLL CALL:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Jean Acree, Dr. Gerald Calnen, Janet Cushman (participated remotely), Joshua Hamre, Scott Ryder, John Unghire, and Tina LeBlanc

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Jonathan LeBlanc

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

6. **BOARD GUEST(S)**

**a. EHS Best Buddies**

Mr. Drezek welcomed JFK Special Education Teacher Amy Santanella and EHS students Delaney and Autumn.

Mrs. Santanella thanked the Board for this invitation. She explained that Best Buddies is about friendship. She further explained how she became involved with this program that has had a huge impact on our students. She had a student that wanted to visit her friend at JFK. This student, Delaney Hutchings is now a senior now. She never wanted to see anyone sitting alone during lunch. She met Autumn LeDuke in fourth grade, and they have been friends ever since. JFK has a huge club comprised of students and staff members that support our goals. Delaney is the president of the club at EHS and has continued to spread our message of kindness, caring and friendship.

Mrs. Santanella added she nominated Delaney and Autumn as Connecticut's Best Buddies Champions of the Year. They spread kindness and inclusion. Both Delaney and Autumn are both seniors that are ready to take on the world. She thanked them for their hard work, and she is their biggest fan. Enfield is routing for them as well as the JFK/EHS families, friends, staff members, Board and Town Council members. You are our champions.

Ms. Hutchings thanked everyone for their support. Best Buddies has made a huge impact on her life. She met Autumn in grade four and their friendship has continued to grow throughout the years. Mrs. Santanella has taught us so much and our bond has continued to grow. She also wants to be a Special Education teacher like Mrs. Santanella. Mrs. Santanella started a chapter at JFK. We have made so many friendships because of Best Buddies. We formed another chapter at EHS and Mr. Ramos is our advisor. Being nominated for this award means a lot to us. This competition raises awareness about the important work of Best Buddies. We will hold our next fundraiser event at the Raffia Road Service Station for a car wash on Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup> and on September 23<sup>rd</sup> at Standout Nutrition from 8-3 PM. Thank

you for all your support.

Ms. Leduke spoke about how important Best Buddies is to her. She likes doing fun things. We have been raising money for Best Buddies. We collected bottles at our can and bottle drive. Thank you for your help.

Mr. Ryder stated this is amazing. What are you fundraising for? We would love to help you promote this. What are your next steps from being nominated as Champions? Will this go to a state committee next? What is the process?

Ms. Hutchings stated any money we raise goes to our team. They will announce the winner at the gala. It is basically whoever raises the most money. The money will be used for leadership training. The money will also help with other chapter fees.

Mrs. Santanella added Best Buddies is a non-profit organization. The money we raise goes back into the organization to make more chapters in schools. They are now trying to start this program at elementary schools. There is also a Best Buddies walk that will be held. They have inclusive living chapters also. Chapters have been started for adults to live at. There are integrated employment opportunities at Black and Decker who is a huge supporter of Best Buddies. They will hire individuals with any abilities, so everyone is included. Delaney and Autumn have blown this out of the water. Mayor Cressotti was at our fundraiser event at Red Robin. We had an amazing turnout. Our community cares deeply.

Mr. Ryder asked them to send him their link so he can help to spread the word. Mrs. Santanella will forward that to him. Any amount will make a difference. Thank you.

Mrs. Pickett added we are all rooting for you. You are already winners in our hearts. What you are doing is awesome. There are so many opportunities to grow this program and make partnerships. She thanked both Delaney and Autumn. You have taught her a new language about special abilities and how you are all unique and special. How much money are you trying to raise?

Ms. Hutchings stated our goal is \$5,000. We have raised around \$2,000. Mrs. Pickett added lets get our cars washed, donate our bottles and cans and get something at Standard Nutrition. She also thanked Mrs. Santanella, Mr. Ramos and staff for all their support and dedication.

Mr. Hamre would also like to promote your fundraising events. He asked about how many pairs are at JFK and EHS?

Ms. Hutchings stated we have a matching party. Each student with an ability will be matched with a regular education student. JFK has a lot of students that are paired into groups. Sometimes there are 4 in a friend group.

Mrs. Santanella added it is different at the high school. The chapter at the high school is student driven. She attends every meeting at the middle school. Delaney is the president of the chapter and Mr. Ramos is the advisor to guide them at EHS. JFK has a large number of students. At EHS, the students do things together and are very flexible. The best thing about Best Buddies is this is never forced on anyone. We do more group activities at JFK. At EHS, the students do things independently. The friendships that have formed are melded on their own. It is very flexible. When it melds and works you have what Delaney and Autumn have and it is wonderful. Having this program at the elementary schools would be more involved and would need more staff members. She thanked Mr. Ramos for being involved at the high school level. When Delaney graduates, we need someone as amazing as she is to fill her shoes at EHS. We have been talking about training sophomores and juniors and getting them involved in more leadership roles. It is different at each level, and we have a lot of matches.

Mr. Hamre added this is another example of what we are doing right in our schools. This is

very humbling. He thanked them all for coming here tonight.

Mrs. Acree thanked Mrs. Santanella for starting such a great club. She congratulated Delaney and Autumn for being nominated as Champions. It is wonderful to hear that Delaney has such a kind, compassionate heart. That was the catalyst for your teacher starting this club. Delaney and Autumn are sharing such a beautiful friendship. We need more young people to get along like this. From this friendship, you have been able to accomplish so much together. Thank you.

Mr. Unghire thanked Delaney and Autumn for coming and speaking about the Best Buddies program tonight. He thanked Mrs. Santanella for starting this organization. You spoke about friendship, kindness, compassion and caring. These are the highest of human qualities. These qualities are rooted from love. That is what is in your heart and that is what inspired you to do this. He has a lot of cans in his garage and is willing to help with your donations. Just let me know when and where. He will also look for other ways to support your program financially. Thank you.

Dr. Calnen stated what an incredible journey we have made over the past decades. We are very proud of the legislation that has passed. You have formed an intergenerational friendship. Your mutual respect is profound. This is an incredible idea and such a simple solution that is profound. He congratulated them all.

Mrs. Cushman thanked them for talking about Best Buddies and learning about this program continuing to adults with housing and employment opportunities. This is exciting that this program will be coming to elementary schools. Mrs. Santanella stated she would like to start this at the elementary level. There are opportunities where this could take off. We also have reading buddies and library helpers at the elementary level.

Mrs. Cushman asked if you have started mentoring the younger students with high school students. Ms. Hutchings stated we have some students in grade 10 that want to be involved including Delaney's brother. Last year, our club was small without an advisor. Now we have Mr. Ramos. This is a great opportunity for anyone that wants to get involved. You can have many chapter presidents.

Mrs. Cushman added you are really making a difference. Thank you for your commitment.

Madam Chair stated you have touched us deeply. This program is so impactful and touching. You are our future. One of the best things about Best Buddies is this is being led by other students. She is impressed with how this nonprofit organization offers leadership training. We all wish you a lot of luck. Please send us your link and let us know if we can do anything. Going forward, we would love to get updates from Mrs. Santanella about the Best Buddies program.

Madam Chair encouraged Ms. Hutchings to come back to Enfield Public Schools when you are ready to start teaching. It would be amazing to have you back here. It is students like you and Autumn that make the world a better place. You are the ones that are teaching us. Thank you.

Ms. Hutchings thanked the Board for this opportunity. Ms. Leduke also thanked them.

The Board gave them all a standing ovation.

Mr. Drezek commented that you will graduate this year as the class of 2024, you will also be the graduating college class of 2028. You will be a freshman again when you come back here as a teacher in 2028. Congratulations.

**b. Armando Ramos – 2023-24 TOY**

Mr. Drezek welcomed our teacher of the year Armando Ramos. He has attended several Board meetings last year informing the Board about our Unified Sports program. He is also Connecticut's Unified Coach of the Year.

Mr. Ramos added that was a tough act to follow. Last year was so successful because of unified sports. Last year, we did an activity with a student teacher who was visually impaired. He demonstrated this activity by using Mr. Drezek.

Mr. Ramos provided the Board with a power point presentation with inclusion events from 2022-23 that included Special Olympics on Capital Hill Day; hosting a CIAC Cornhole Tournament; being named 2023 Connecticut Unified Coach of the Year; attending the CAS Elementary Leadership Conference; attending Student Seminars; Best Buddies; Community Inclusion Events; First Responders Volleyball Tournament; hosting the Enfield Allied Stars, JFK Unified and EHS Unified Team on Special Olympic Track and Field Night; Autism Awareness Month and Inclusion Campaigns; Inclusion Rocks with Enfield street School; and spreading the word to end the word and Inclusion Campaign Pledge Day. We had a really great year.

Mr. Ramos shared his Teacher of the Year message. This job is about relationships and the relationships he has built with his students. Cultivating these relationships takes time but it is worth it. Our mission statement is to make Enfield High School a kinder, more accepting place where all students feel included and are successful. This has become our philosophy. He still remembers his favorite teacher when he was in high school and how they made him feel connected. Creating classroom environments where kids feel connected to you, their classmates and their school is the most rewarding part of this job.

Mr. Ramos stated last February, Special Olympics Connecticut asked him to join them at the Special Olympics Capitol Hill Day in Washington, DC. We brought a team to advocate for Special Olympics and Unified Sports. We shared stories about how Special Olympics has positively impacted our lives and why Congress should support Special Olympics. He also shared stories as a coach on the impacts he has seen. He shared a portion of that speech and some of his students comments they wrote for the annual State Essay Contest.

Mr. Ramos also thanked the PE Department. This honor is a team effort, and he could not have done this without them. He also thanked his students who make him look good every day and make his job awesome. These relationships are priceless to him. He never envisioned being here giving this speech and is deeply honored. His former Springfield College classmate and Rugby teammate Andy Longey said it best, not bad for a couple of knuckle heads from Springfield College. Thank you.

Mr. Ramos also received a standing ovation.

Madam Chair stated we have a special guest who would like to say a few words on behalf of the parents and what they have experienced with you and Unified Sports.

Sara Leventhal is a parent of an Enfield High student in Mr. Ramos class. As Enfield's Teacher of the Year, he becomes part of the process for Connecticut's Teacher of the Year. She shared a deeply moving letter she wrote in support of his candidacy.

Madam Chair thanked Ms. Leventhal for sharing her letter with the Board and public. It was very important to hear from a parent's perspective.

Mr. Hamre added this is one heck of a way to start our meeting. This is very humbling to have your colleagues recognize you and hear about the support from your families that you have impacted. For us sitting up here witnessing this is amazing.

Mrs. Pickett also thanked him but is not surprised because we have heard about all of the amazing things you have been doing and you deserve to be recognized. You spoke about belonging. She loves the words of togetherness. That has been the theme and she hopes to see this continue to grow. You have partnered with our Police Department and Allied. She remembers the rocks at Enfield Street. Thank you and congratulations. You are already a winner for us.

Mrs. Acree also congratulated Mr. Ramos for being Enfield's Teacher of the Year. She is a retired teacher and feels teaching is an honorable profession. By winning this award it shows that you are an excellent teacher. Hearing about all of your hard work tonight was amazing. You exhibit hard work, dedication, professionalism and respect from your colleagues. This is very rewarding and can be overwhelming.

Mr. Ramos added it is definitely overwhelming and he agrees with you. Mrs. Acree thanked him for being such a great teacher.

Mr. Unghire also thanked him for what you are doing for Enfield Public Schools and our Enfield community. Congratulations for being our Teacher of the Year and keep up the great work. How long have you been working here? Mr. Ramos stated he started teaching in 2000.

Madam Chair thanked Mr. Ramos. You make Enfield Public Schools better. She can tell that all of this attention makes you a little uncomfortable. You are doing this with your heart, and you are making Enfield a better place to live and to be a student. We are all proud of you.

Members of the Board of Education presented Mr. Ramos with a gift. Mr. Ramos thanked the Board. He is so overwhelmed. He also thanked Sara Leventhal. Your letter is very touching and sweet. This means a lot to him. He also thanked Marilyn and Brian Cressotti for recruiting him when he was at Enrico Fermi. This was the best decision he ever made. Thank you.

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

### **a. EPS Update**

Mr. Drezek stated the Board will vote on Student Representatives later on the agenda. We will in-service the student representatives tomorrow so they can start attending Board meetings.

Mr. Drezek reported that our schools are off to a great start. The weather has been a bit warmer than we anticipated. We held some unplanned half days. He thanked our parents for working with us during the early release days that we held due to the temperatures at some of our elementary schools. We know it is not easy making pickup changes and juggling your schedules. Thank you for your understanding.

Mr. Drezek spoke about policy #6162.51 Surveys of Students – Student Privacy that is included in student handbooks that has caused some concerns. There is some misinformation out there. This policy is required by Federal Law. The policy was updated Federally in 2020 and we created this policy in 2021 based on legal advice. The policy gives parents the right to opt out of several different surveys. The policy is centered around student surveys but there is a section that mentions invasive medical exams. We do not conduct medical examinations here in Enfield. This portion of the policy is what is causing some concerns. Our nurses will conduct vision, hearing and scoliosis exams. Your child's physician will provide medical exams that are required to attend school. Some school based health centers can perform physicals. Our nurses do not provide or conduct physicals. If there is an emergency on the playground or inside of the school, our nurses will assess the child and if needed, they will call for an ambulance and the parent/guardian will be notified. That is their protocol. The policy does not say emergency it says non-emergency. The reason it is in the policy is because it is Federal law. Other districts may have their nurses conduct physical exams, we do not. Districts with school based health centers may do this with nurses that are PA's or NP's. The Board may

decide to review this policy.

## **AUDIENCES**

Madam Chair stated she will allow 4 minutes for audience member participation.

Maureen Griffin, Abbe Road – Mrs. Griffin reflected about comments from the last Board meeting. Mr. LeBlanc will not be running, and it will be a loss for our community, schools and district. He truly understands what it means to be a Board member. She urged parents to raise their children with strong values. Diversity and opinions are needed. Our public schools must accept all students. She would like to see another presentation about support services offered to our students and families. She thanked Mr. Drezek for explaining the policy.

## **8. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mrs. Acree thanked Mrs. Griffin for her comments. She also welcomed back students, teachers and staff members. She looks forward to reporting on events and happenings at Prudence Crandall and working with the members of the Board and accomplishing great things this year. Thank you.

Dr. Calnen provided the Board with an update on events happening at Kite, ECDC, Grants, homeless population, Sparkler program, Circle of Security Training, FRC and Family Day that will be held on Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup> from 11:30-3:00 PM. The next Kite meeting will be held on October 4<sup>th</sup> at JFK.

Mrs. Cushman thanked Mr. Drezek for the information about Policy #6162.51. She wonders if we could separate the two sections making this into 2 policies. Mr. Longey stated we can discuss this at the next Policy meeting under Items from the table. Then he can reach out to our attorney's for further direction. We cannot change the nature of the policy, but we might be able to soften up the language.

Dr. Calnen stated we can also look at the term "invasive". From a medical standpoint, that term does not make any sense. He would advise removing or revising it.

Mr. Longey asked Board members to send your suggestions to Mr. Ryder for our next Policy meeting to discuss further. He agrees that the language needs to be addressed.

Mr. Drezek stated that term came directly from the document we received from the US Department of Education.

Mr. Hamre thanked Enfield Fire District #1 for their annual 9/11 memorial ceremony. He also thanked Lori Gates and Town Hall for the flag display outside. He spoke about a resident that needs a kidney and the lawn signs "Natalie needs a Hero". There will be a musical petty zoo of instruments at Family Day for attendees to try out. He also spoke about the parking/parent drop off at Henry Barnard that is very concerning.

Mr. Hamre stated Policy #6162.51 concerns will be addressed and handled correctly at the next Policy Committee meeting. He agrees that some changes are needed.

Mr. Hamre received an email from an EHS senior about bringing back a talent show. He wished Dr. C a happy birthday. September is library card sign up/renewal month. If you are interested in renewing your library card or signing up for one, you can be entered into a drawing for a prize at "Wood n Tap". He spoke about a book he is reading – "We are going to be Lucky – A World War II Love Story of Letters".

Mr. Unghire stated Hazardville Memorial has some changes this year. Mrs. Hunter has moved on and he wishes her good luck in her new endeavors. The new Memorial principal is Kristen

Fitzsimons. He congratulated Ms. Fitzsimons and added that she is doing a wonderful job. We are all happy to see you in this new position.

Mrs. Pickett stated also at Hazardville Memorial is new Assistant Principal Kim Tait. Hazardville Memorial has truly gained a gem. She wished them good luck at your new school. Ms. Tate will be missed at Enfield Street.

Mrs. Pickett missed the last Board meeting. She spoke about our staff, new staff and the reflection of teaching. Our schools are inclusive. Going back to school is hard. She thanked all our teachers for everything they do to make our students feel welcome. Some of our staff have been working here for over 20 years even though they could accept another higher paying job in another district. Our students have graduated and have come back to teach in our district. Thank you. She is looking forward to hearing about our strategic goals. She would also like to see improvement in our buildings and facilities. We need to take pride in how our schools and grounds look. She now has children at two different schools, and it is challenging getting kids to each school. We need to ease the burdens on families and cannot wait for changes to come.

Mrs. Pickett understands the concerns Mr. Hamre discussed about Henry Barnard. There are also challenges at Enfield Street. There are no school zone signs or speed signs posted on Enfield Street by the school to make drivers aware.

Mr. Drezek stated the parking lot concerns at Henry Barnard were multiplied today due to voting taking place. We work closely with the Enfield Police Department, and they take this very seriously and monitor the traffic flow at our schools. We witness this every day at Alcorn where the bus flashing lights and signs are ignored by passing vehicles. This is a concern for our entire community.

Mrs. Pickett added signs are needed. She wasn't sure because of the historical history that would prevent signs from being put up. She agrees about the changes needed to the policy you discussed needed more context and additional communication is needed. She thanked Mrs. Griffin for her comments at the last meeting about hearing different student voices. She provided an update about happenings and events at Enfield Street school and Edgar H. Parkman. Thank you school staff for everything you do for our families.

Mr. Ryder stated there are a lot of events and school happenings. Early release last week changed the schedule for open house nights. He reminded principals to send him events and he will place them on the enfieldpto.com website. He thanked our amazing PTO volunteers for everything they are doing.

Mr. Ryder thanked Mr. Ramos for recognizing Marilynn Cressotti. Jim Malley will provide a presentation about our schools at the central library on September 14<sup>th</sup> from 6-7:30 PM. This is a good opportunity to hear more about the history of our schools. Thank you Mr. Malley for doing this.

Mr. Ryder reminded everyone about PJ Day that will be celebrated on December 8<sup>th</sup>. This will be our 6<sup>th</sup> year participating as a school district for Connecticut Children's Hospital. Last year we raised \$10K. Our district goal for this year is \$7.5K. He is sure we will surpass this amount. We have always finished in the top 5. He is in the process of contacting other Enfield businesses to participate. We will send out the donation link. He thanked everyone that participated last year.

Madam Chair stated we received a notice from Enfield Loaves & Fishes about how you can help them. This is really a community event. For more information you can go to [www.enfieldloavesandfishes.org](http://www.enfieldloavesandfishes.org). They do an amazing job of our community. She urged everyone to get involved in our community.

Madam Chair stated she misses the crazy back to school days. She hope everyone had a great back to school. September is national suicide prevention month. Having Armondo and Best Buddies here tonight is important. We also have Rachael's Challenge with their many acts of kindness. You do not know how much your kind words or a simple smile can have such a powerful impact on someone. Check on your friends and family members. Many are dealing with mental illness and can struggle from time to time.

**9. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:** None

**10. NEW BUSINESS:**

**a. Approve 2023-24 Student Representative & Alternates**

Mr. Unghire moved, seconded by Mrs. Pickett, that the Enfield Board of Education approves the 2023-24 Student Representatives & Alternates as presented.

**Discussion:**

Mr. Ryder suggest we rotate the representatives so we can hear from them all and they can participate throughout the school year.

Mr. Hamre agrees with Mr. Ryder. This would be worthwhile exploring this further. It would be great to have the diversity from the student representatives.

Mrs. Pickett added that Policy #9160 Student Representatives should include inclusive language as part of the selection process and their roles as representatives and alternates.

Mr. Hamre thanked the students that are interested and want to do this.

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

**b. Discussion & Action regarding Enfield Mental Health & Wellness Mission Statement**

Madam Chair stated both Dr. Calnen and Mrs. Acree have been doing a lot of work on the Enfield Mental Health and Wellness Committee for Enfield Public Schools. Last week they met with Board Leadership about this. They have developed a mission statement and they are here to give the Board an update and their next steps.

Dr. Calnen stated he mentioned at the last Board meeting about funding and the need to have a mission statement as recommended by Senator Kissel for tapping into resources. This is more of a statement of intent vs. a mission statement because it is too wordy the way it is now. This statement was shared with both caucuses. He read the statement of intent.

Dr. Calnen added he spoke to Mr. Neville, and it was Mr. Neville's impression when they were building EHS they were going to have space for a school based health center. This is something he would like the school modernization committee to keep in mind with their plans.

Dr. Calnen stated this is our proposal to bring the concept of a Mental Health Committee to the Policy Committee. This should proceed regardless of what we do here tonight. They are two separate issues. Thank you.

Mr. Hamre moved, seconded by Mrs. Acree that the Enfield Board of Education approves the Enfield Mental Health & Wellness Committee Mission Statement.

**Discussion:**



Mr. Unghire stated he is not in support of this mission statement as written. The mission statement should be more succinct and explain what the mission is. This should be first fine-tuned before we vote on it. He applauds both Mrs. Acree and Dr. Calnen for recognizing mental health concerns in our schools. We need to establish a Mental Health Committee first and then look at the frame works for that committee. The document needs additional work. You are discussing expanding and enhancing our systems. We need to document our resources and effectiveness of these resources first before we enhance them. What is working or not working and can they be fixed. If they can't be fixed, then we should look at enhancing and expanding our resources. This work is extremely important. More work is needed on developing the mission statement and the function of the committee.

Mrs. Acree stated that is why this is going to go to the Policy Committee first. We decided to do this at the Board Leadership meeting to send this to the Policy Committee so they can define the responsibilities and roles pertaining to this committee. Once the Policy Committee has done this, we can move forward, and we will be able to come up with a better mission statement.

Mr. Unghire asked if this is something we are going to vote on tonight.

Madam Chair added this is a mission statement and we are discussing this now. She understands that this is a mission statement. The next step will be to form a committee. This is going to be looked at by the Policy Committee. This will be a different kind of subcommittee than we typically have.

Mrs. Pickett stated she has spoken with Dr. Calnen and Mrs. Acree. She thanked them for the work they have done. We need to look at what we are currently doing, look at the needs of our students, and better support our students. The data is clear that we need to do something. She does not feel the statement that was read needs to be formally adopted. Going through the Policy Committee first to address the purpose of the committee makes sense. There might be some concerns coming down the pike because of what is being addressed.

Madam Chair added this is a mission statement and the next step will be to form a committee. This needs to be centered around wellness. She supports the work of this potential committee but not the statement as written.

Mr. Ryder added even when Dr. Calnen was reading this, there were changes that were needed to the statement. He was editing this as he was reading it. If the motion is to accept the mission statement, he does not want to go on record voting against this because it is needed. If we could amend the motion to proceed to table this so both Dr. Calnen and Mrs. Acree can continue with your fact finding to see what we can do as a group. We need to take ownership as the Board of Education. There are other committees like this in our town and you have run into some roadblocks. We need to take ownership and give you permission to move forward but maybe not with the words as presented.

Mrs. Pickett would like to second that amendment.

Madam Chair stated Mr. Hammer had something to add first.

Mr. Hamre stated Mental Health Services are needed in our schools. Trying to work with another group did not work for the betterment of our students. The Board, along with Dr. Calnen and Mrs. Acree are working to address mental health concerns on our own accord. The statement is wordy and needs fine tuning. We need to get this moving forward. There is a staff shortage of mental health professionals and clinicians. He supports moving this forward.

Dr. Calnen stated he wanted to place this item on the agenda. That was before I met with Board Leadership. We have two related issues. He agrees with Mr. Unghire. We need to get the committee up and running and then we can address the mission statement. At least we

have a starting point for the mission statement and can amend it as needed. He also agrees that we do not fully understand what services currently exist. That should be a priority. He agrees with the suggestion to table this.

Madam Chair added we have put the cart before the horse because we didn't really have the horse yet, but now we do. When we discussed this at leadership, we discussed your next steps. We now have a starting point and direction to proceed. She is glad this was on the agenda so we could all discuss this. The Board supports this, and this is a starting point.

Mrs. Cushman thanked Dr. Calnen for mentioning that you were not sure about what services are being offered at our schools. In the school newsletters, there is a colorful page with the heading Community Health Center, Inc. The QR Code will link you to locations at our schools and the services the school may include under behavioral health where it says crisis intervention, individual counseling, group counseling, family counseling, and referrals. She wonders if this is really available at our schools. She sent a copy of this page to Dr. Calnen.

Madam Chair stated that was part of the reason we had Mrs. Acree and Dr. Calnen attend our Board Leadership meeting to discuss resources and next steps.

Mr. Drezek stated CHC is in all of our buildings as a resource with some space for them to use with some boundaries. The student needs to be a CHC client. We can have an additional conversation about what we provide our students and what they can provide. We had a 22% increase with SPED referrals or 170 kids with an increase in 504's. We partner with CHC. This is something he recently discussed with an elected official that represents Enfield at the federal level that other districts received mental health money. We hired 10 social workers with our the ESSR funds we received. Our job now is trying to maintain these additional social workers. Other districts are receiving a grant for this now. We were excluded for the sole reason that we have a better infrastructure in place than other districts. Board members make many important decisions including what we will fund and what is a priority. Last year, we provided a presentation about our SEL (Social Emotional Learning). This is all relative work that the Board needs to be aware of.

Madam chair thanked Board members for their questions and discussing this. Madam Chair asked for a motion to table this item.

Mrs. Pickett moved, seconded by Mr. Unghire that the Enfield Board of Education table this item.

A vote by **roll call 8-0-0** passed unanimously to table this item.

Madam Chair thanked both Mrs. Acree and Dr. Calnen for all the work they have done on this. She knows it has not been easy and hopes it gets a little easier as we move forward.

## **11. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Curriculum – Mrs. Pickett reported the Curriculum Committee will meet on September 21<sup>st</sup>. We will look at the book approval process.

Finance – Dr. Calnen reported the Finance Committee will meet on September 18<sup>th</sup>.

Policy – Mr. Ryder reported the Policy Committee will meet on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

Leadership – Madam Chair reported Board Leadership met last Thursday and we discussed the Enfield Mental Health and Wellness Group.

PK-5 School Modernization Committee – Mr. Ryder reported the SMC met on September 7<sup>th</sup> and we reviewed a presentation. Committee members present support the plan and we will present

this at a Board meeting in the near future.

Joint Facility – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Facilities Committee will meet on September 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM.

JFK Building Committee – Mr. Ryder did not have a date for this committee’s next meeting.

Joint Security Committee – Mr. Ryder is not sure when the Joint Security Committee will meet next.

Enfield Mental Health Wellness & Workgroup – Dr. Calnen previously reported on this.

Mrs. Pickett asked if we would continue to be liaisons to that workgroup. Madam Chair stated a few years back, there were a few suicides in Enfield at the time. Mayor Kaupin and Mr. Neville got together and wanted to help the youth in Enfield. They formed a Mental Health Committee. There was a resolution, and it was well defined committee with a pediatrician, EPD representation and worked well with social services at the time. For whatever reason, it is not going in this direction anymore. The Enfield Public School piece has been lost in the shuffle. Both Mrs. Acree and Dr. Calnen will continue to work with the workgroup. We will form our own committee and they will work with the Policy Committee. She is excited to hear about this as it progresses, and they can talk to Leadership about anything you might need. This will become an actual Board committee.

Enfield Cultural Arts Commission – Mr. Hamre commended the ECAC Concert series and looks forward to future events. Open mic night will be held at the Enfield Public Library on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month. The ECAC community calendar can be viewed on Facebook and on the Town website. We will sponsor a community paint day to paint a mural at the Enfield Produce & Deli on Enfield Street. They are looking for volunteers. PFLAG will meet the first Monday of the month at ACC and will meet virtually on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday. He gave an update on Enfield Pride and upcoming Opera House Player events.

**13. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mr. Hamre that the Special Meeting Minutes of August 22, 2023, be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 7-0-1** passed with Mrs. Pickett abstaining.

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

**15. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION - None**

**16. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None**

**17. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Hamre moved, seconded by Mrs. Pickett to adjourn the Regular Meeting of September 12, 2023.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 9:28 PM.

Jonathan LeBlanc  
Secretary  
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary