

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
DECEMBER 10, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held in Council Chambers on December 10, 2024.

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jean Acree, Dr. Gerald Calnen, Janet Cushman, Peter Jonaitis, Philip Kober, Tina LeBlanc, Amanda Pickett, Scott Ryder and Charlotte Riley

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Steven A. Moccio, Superintendent; Mr. Andrew B. Longey (arrived at 7:26 PM), Deputy Superintendent; Student Representatives Izzy Dinnald and Olivia Nuccio

6. **BOARD GUEST(S)**

a. **Wreaths Across America:**

Mrs. Gates and Mrs. Townsend reviewed the mission for the Wreaths Across America program - remember, honor and teach. They were disappointed to announce that due to the impending weather, the convoy would not travel by Enfield Public Schools. The public is invited to the Wreath Laying Ceremony that will be held on Saturday, December 14th at noon at St. Patrick's Cemetery on King Street in Enfield. They asked for our teachers to send them pictures of the signs they made so they can forward them to the Walmart truck drivers.

Each Board member thanked them for everything they do. This is such a great event where we all come together. They were also disappointed that the weather impacted the convoy driving through Enfield. Hopefully, next year they will be back again. This program helps to teach our students such an important lesson.

Chairwoman Riley asked them for the e-mail address for our staff to send pictures to. You can e-mail Mrs. Gates at lgates@enfieldschools.org. She thanked them for coming.

b. **School & State Finance Project Director Lisa Hammersly:**

Mr. Moccio welcomed Erika Haynes, who is here on behalf of Lisa Hammersly who was unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Ms. Haynes explained that she works for a nonprofit nonpartisan policy organization that works collaboratively with policy makers, school districts, and community leaders. They develop data driven solutions to ensure all public school students receive equitable education funding that supports their learning needs.

Ms. Haynes further explained funding sources for K-12 education in Connecticut. She reviewed Enfield spending, ECS & ECS Formula, Base Aid Ratio, additional funding for towns in need, ECS grant fluctuation & factors impacting ECS Grants, Enfield's ECS components, Enfield's Calculated Base Aid Ratio, ECS Phase-In for Enfield, History of the Alliance District Program, how Alliance Districts are Identified & Eligibility, Next Generation Accountability System, Requirements for Alliance Districts, Use of Alliance District Funds, How the Alliance District program is supported, Financial Benefit for Alliance District Designation, and how the Alliance District Program impacts Enfield.

Mrs. Pickett thanked her for this presentation. Understanding funding structures is important. She would like Town Council members to receive this information. She asked about the hold harmless and how the formula has changed for Enfield. What does this mean for districts that are being phased out and the impacts from this? Ms. Haynes stated if you are being phased out, you are losing State funds. The town municipality will not backfill those lost funds. This creates a problem because funds were being used to support student learning and needs will be reduced. Local Boards of Education are then faced with asking for additional funding from their municipalities.

Chairwoman Riley stated that is not part of the MBR (minimum budget requirement). Ms. Haynes added the MBR requires municipalities to not decrease the funds that have been provided.

Mrs. Pickett thanked her for comparing other local communities data with them. Ms. Haynes believes it is important to show awareness about other communities. This way you can see the differences.

Dr. Calnen asked why do the ECS funds go directly to the town instead of coming directly to the Board of Education? Ms. Haynes stated that is the way the payment process is structured.

Chairwoman Riley asked about the State amounts you are supposed to spend per pupil for the total budget of \$66 million. Ms. Haynes stated that is your ECS, but it will not match your district budget. In the formula, there is no mention of special education. The formula will calculate the dollars based on student needs. The State will attribute approximately 20% as support for special education. This was decided by legislation in 1995. This number to educate a student will be relatively lower because of the lack accountability for special education.

Mr. Moccio added the foundation level that they multiply, has not changed since 2013. Ms. Haynes added the funding is set by the legislature and is politically set based on available funding. When you compare us to other States, we are in the lower category.

Mr. Jonaitis thanked her for the information and knows she is just the messenger. The funding levels, unfunded mandates and politicalness makes it very difficult for some districts. He does not believe that all towns are given equal education. How does Enfield compare to other districts? Ms. Haynes does not have that information but that is something she could provide.

Mr. Moccio stated Ms. Haynes is from a private organization and is not from the State of Department of Education. She is an ally when it comes to understanding funding sources. Both he and Chairwoman Riley will be asking those questions when we go to the State Capital for their public hearings. Ms. Haynes added that those are questions they are concerned about too. We are trying to build knowledge and advocate for change.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if any of the money we receive from the State go towards salaries. Mr. Moccio stated we use the money we receive from the State to support our education programs. The Town will receive funding from the State. The Town will send us funding for us to use that

is used for our education programs and includes salaries.

Mr. Jonaitis asked if a district could choose to stay as an Alliance District. Ms. Haynes stated they have expanded the program, but none have withdrawn.

Mr. Moccio thanked Ms. Haynes for being here tonight. We have been trying to get answers from the State Department of Education and once we booked you, he started to receive answers. When he met with Melissa Jenkins from the State, he was told there is no exit from the Alliance District program. There is no exit criteria. State Legislation dictates that you cannot opt out from being an Alliance District. The original Alliance Districts have been in since 2013 and they are some of the top performers. There is no incentive for them to leave.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated it has been a long time since 2013 that adjustments have not been made. She thanked Ms. Haynes for providing us with information about the process for Alliance Grants and the funds are withheld until the plan has been approved. She would like the State Department of Education to receive this presentation. Everything you have said is the total opposite from what we have previously been told when we were first designated as an Alliance District. We now know what questions need to be asked. There was some communication from the State Department of Education that 3 districts would be graduating out and that is why 3 new towns were added (Enfield, Plainfield & Stratford). There has been a lot of confusion and misinformation we received from the State Department of Education.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked about our legislators and what should they be doing. Ms. Haynes stated they can reach out to her so they can build knowledge and help to reduce unfunded mandates in another area we can assist them in. Our legislators need to be active and advocate for us.

Mrs. LeBlanc added we have learned that our representatives need to be active especially on the Education Committee and on the legislative floor. She appreciates receiving this information and wished that we had received this sooner. There is a lot of validation in what you have presented to us tonight. Ms. Haynes stated that action matters. Raise your voices to make changes. Our elected officials are making these decisions.

Dr. Calnen asked if we could receive this information. Mr. Moccio stated he will include them in his Friday communication to the Board. He is thankful for having Ms. Haynes here tonight. Anytime he has had a question, they have responded to him in a timely manner. It is important for all of us to understand this information.

Mr. Kober thanked Ms. Haynes for being here. He has just looked at your website and looked at examples of what your group has accomplished. Ms. Haynes stated we have made changes with policies for executing funding by advocating. We established a formula to stop the block grant system. We have helped to raise funding for multilingual learners from 15% to 25%. She has been doing this since 2015. Each year changes are being made by community members by raising their voices.

Mrs. Acree asked about the Alliance funds being part of the ECS funding. Ms. Haynes stated there is a different path for your Alliance District funds to follow to your ECS funding. There is an Alliance District Grant, and any monies are held back until a plan has been approved. Once it is approved, Alliance Districts will receive the funding. It is not an additional source of revenue.

Mr. Moccio stated when Enfield became an Alliance District in 2022, we only had a 1 year look back. When other districts entered the Alliance Program, they looked back to 2012. The look back that was done for Enfield was not fair. If this was done fairly, they would have looked back to 2012 for Enfield, and we would have received \$4 million in Alliance Grant funding. That is why our ECS funding has not changed. He knows fair is not always equal. You should look

back 10 years for one group and one year for another group.

Mr. Ryder stated instead of getting \$4 million dollars, we are lucky that we get to keep \$750K because we are not being phased out.

Chairwoman Riley thanked Ms. Haynes for her informative presentation.

c. Indoor Air Quality & HVAC Update:

Mr. Dague presented information to the Board about requirements for HVAC & Indoor Air Quality. He reviewed checklists and inspections that are required HVAC at EHS, JFK and Eagle Academy, all PK-5 schools, Alcorn and the Annex. He also reviewed the ventilation checklist findings and actions that are in place including any limitations.

Mr. Dague added that this information will be placed on our website for the public to view.

Mr. Ryder thanked Mr. Dague for this information. Sometimes in the parent pick-up/drop-off lanes, buses and cars are idling. Mr. Dague added signage has been posted about vehicles idling at all schools.

Mrs. Pickett also thanked Mr. Dague for his presentation. With any future modernization for our older buildings, we will need a long term plan. We also need to keep in mind how are buildings are being used. Grants and funding opportunities are available providing we have a long term plan.

Chairwoman Riley thanked Mr. Dague for presenting this information tonight. You are extremely informative.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. Student Representative Update – as presented

b. Winter/Christmas/New Years Vacation Break – as presented

c. EPS Update –

Mr. Moccio stated he has been working on the FY25-26 Budget. Each department and administrators have presented their needs. Mrs. Cisneros is compiling the information. We are analyzing every line item. The Board will receive a lot of information. He is extremely proud of our administrative team and cabinet members. We have spent numerous amount of time analyzing each account and where we can save money.

Mr. Moccio added we are projected to be on the Monday, December 16th Town Council agenda to present them with our reimagined PK-5 schools and benefits. Included in the presentation is a comparison of what is needed to bring our current facilities up to date. Mr. Dague mentioned some areas of concern in his presentation. We will also include additional program offerings like to increase revenue streams.

Mr. Moccio provided an update on hiring for Educational Teaching Assistants to assist in some of the elementary classrooms with 28 & 29 students. We have also started the discussion around behavioral needs that have increased. We went from just over 40 BT's to 20 BT's. We recognize the need and are working to address these needs.

Mr. Moccio reported that the Town Hall has changed the process for work orders and will implement a new system with tracking capabilities.

Mr. Moccio stated the work of our Vision of a Graduate work is continuing that include our next steps. We will provide the Board with a presentation about this at an upcoming Board meeting.

8. AUDIENCES

Chairwoman Riley read a prepared statement for Audience member participation, and you will be allowed 4 minutes to address the Board.

Maureen Griffin, Abbe Road – Mrs. Griffin wished Mr. Jonaitis a happy retirement. She thanked our student representatives for the outstanding job they are doing. We have not received any adjustments since 2013. A comment was made at the last meeting that was directed to three Board members as being Rhinos. She considers this as a compliment and respects you and your voices. We may not always agree on everything. She thanked Mrs. Cushman for her focus of what is best for our students. It is budget season, and it is important to prioritize. Please remember that they are all our kids.

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Jonaitis stated this is his last meeting. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. He thanked those that voted for him. He thanked each Board member individually for their strengths and members of the Republic Town Committee. He urged any retired teachers to run for the Board of Education. The Board needs people that have taught our students. You know what is needed.

Mrs. Pickett thanked Mr. Jonaitis for his kind words. She requested via the Chair to the Superintendent about his presentation to the Town Council and will your presentation be similar to the last school modernization presentation? Mr. Moccio stated yes but it includes details about expanding our Eagle Academy.

Mrs. Pickett addressed Student Representative Dinnald and stated they can post the information for her on Facebook if she would like. She also thanked both student representatives for their comments. Will you be continuing with your survey and asking additional questions?

Student Representative Nuccio added they will be sending out additional surveys with different questions. If Board members have any questions they would like them to ask, please let them know. Mrs. Pickett would also like to receive her survey results.

Mrs. Pickett added she has been advocating for better traffic control support on Enfield Street. She has spoken to the Department of Traffic, Sargeant Myer and Superintendent Moccio about additional supports. Some of these concerns are being addressed by our Public Safety and Security Committee.

Mrs. Pickett addressed comments from our last Board meeting around Blue Rooms. These rooms are not being used for punishment. They are de-escalation rooms and are needed. There are specific protocols, documentation and laws when using these rooms. With the loss of staffing and Behavior Techs, and the need for additional Teachers and Social Workers, this is adding to our students dysregulation and escalated behavior concerns. We need a budget that supports our students and staff.

Mrs. Pickett thanked Dr. Wiley, staff members, PTO's for all the communication that we have been receiving. ParentSquare is a phenomenal tool. She wished everyone a great holiday season and a Happy New Year.

Dr. Calnen spoke passionately about vaccinations and having your children receive immunizations as a pediatrician. Our children's health is important. Vaccinations are safe and effective. He added that we should have vaccine clinics like the one at Stowe should be in all our schools.

Mrs. Acree is looking forward to attending the Stowe Early Learning Center Gingerbread Jamboree and EHS musical concert. She wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Mr. Ryder thanked our parent volunteers at the Jingle Jam Safe Grad Auction event. The turnout was great. He urged parents to sign up for ParentSquare. The EHS Pancake Breakfast will be held on Saturday from 9-11 AM and the Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony will be held at St. Patrick's Cemetery on King Street at noon. PJ Day will be held on Friday, December 13th. He also wished everyone a happy holiday and New Years.

Mr. Kober thanked Mr. Jonaitis for his years of service on the Board and to the Town of Enfield. He thanked Mr. Moccio for the update on work orders and for his Friday updates. We are receiving a lot of great communication from you and for transparency. He is also pleased with the progress made with our budget process. He also wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Mrs. LeBlanc thanked Mr. Moccio for mentioning the work our Behavior Techs do. This work cannot be done by our para's. She thanked Mr. Ryder for being our spokesperson for PJ Day. She recalled a story about a family that received services because of PJ Day. She also thanked our student representatives and for the work you are both doing. Student voice is extremely important. She wished everyone a safe and healthy holiday.

Chairwoman Riley stated the EHS career day was amazing. She met many students, and they asked so many great questions. She enjoyed attending this event. She hope our students were able to learn about career opportunities. She thanked both student representatives for their voices and leadership.

Chairwoman Riley thanked Mr. Moccio for your weekly updates and seclusion e-mail. She also thanked Mr. Moccio, Mr. Longey, cabinet and staff members for your input with this year's Budget process.

Chairwoman Riley wished our Assistant Superintendent's Secretary Judy Sullivan a happy retirement. She has worked for us for 24 years and will be missed. She wished everyone a happy holiday season.

Chairwoman Riley added that the plaque for Mr. Jonaitis is coming. She thanked him for his service on the Board of Education. You have been a public servant for our Town for many years. Thank you.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

a. POLICY REVISIONS – SECOND READINGS

Policy #3280 – Gifts, Grants, and Bequests to the District

Mrs. Cushman moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education approves the proposed new policy #3280 Gifts, Grants, and Bequests to the District as Second and Final Reading as presented.

Discussion:

Mr. Kober stated he addressed this policy at our last meeting and feels this policy is needed.

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Policy 3281.2 Fundraising Campaigns – Crowdfunding

Mrs. Cushman moved, seconded by Dr. Calnen that the Enfield Board of Education approves the proposed new policy #3281.2 Fundraising Campaigns – Crowdfunding as a Second and Final Reading as presented.

Discussion:

Mr. Kober added that this policy was discussed at our last meeting, and he supports this policy.

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

11. NEW BUSINESS

a. APRIL 22, 2025 REGULAR BOE MEETING – DATE CHANGE

Chairwoman Riley moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education changes the April 22, 2025 meeting date to April 29, 2025 and that the meeting be held in Council Chambers.

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Discussion:

Mr. Kober confirmed that we will cancel the April 22, 2025 Regular meeting and will now meet on April 29, 2025 in Council Chambers.

A vote by **roll-call 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Curriculum Committee: Mrs. Acree reported the Curriculum Committee meeting will meet next on December 19th. She reviewed the agenda items.

Finance Committee: Mr. Kober reported on the Finance and Budget Committee met prior to tonight's Board meeting. He reviewed the items they discussed. We will approve November Financial Reports later on the agenda tonight. Our next meeting will be held on January 6, 2025.

Policy Committee: Mrs. Cushman reported the Policy Committee will meet next on December 17th.

Leadership – Chairwoman Riley reported Board Leadership met on December 4th. She reviewed the items they discussed. Our next meeting will be held on January 8, 2025.

13. LIAISON REPORTS

Joint Facility – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Facilities Committee met on December 26th and again on January 23rd. Chairwoman Riley added we received an update that the application for Alcorn was accepted.

JFK Building Committee – Mr. Ryder will forward this information once it is received for the JFK Building Committee.

Joint Security Committee – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Security Committee will meet on December 13th.

Mr. Kober would like to fill Mr. Jonaitis' vacancy on this committee. Chairwoman Riley stated she will fill the open seat for this committee. Permanent members on this committee will now be Mr. Kober, Mr. Ryder and myself.

Enfield Mental Health Committee – Mrs. Acree reported the Enfield Mental Health Committee will meet on December 11th. She reviewed items on the agenda.

Enfield Cultural Arts Commission – Mrs. LeBlanc reported she does not have any update for the Enfield Cultural Arts Commission.

Joint Insurance Committee – Chairwoman Riley reported the Joint Insurance Committee will meet on December 17th.

School Reports/Updates:

Mr. Ryder reviewed happenings/upcoming events for Eli Whitney. The Whitney Holiday Festival was cancelled last week, and they will light their holiday event on Thursday. They wish every a happy and safe break.

Dr. Calnen reviewed happenings/upcoming events for Kite. PLA is looking for new recruits for their next class. The Head Start Health Committee will meet on January 7th.

Mrs. Acree reviewed happenings/upcoming events for Prudence Crandall. Their next PTO meeting will be held on December 17th virtually at 7 PM.

Mr. Kober reviewed happenings/upcoming events for Henry Barnard. He reminded parents to complete the Parent/Square information.

14. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mrs. Acree that the Regular Meeting Minutes of November 26, 2024, be approved. A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously..

15. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL

Month of November FY2025

Mr. Kober moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent's certification for:

- The month of November 2025 total expenditures amount to \$6,532,750.16 broken down between payroll totaling \$4,510,073.53 and other accounts totaling \$2,022,676.63 and
- All payments have been made in accordance with the approved budget and are properly accounted for within the books of accounts. Copies of approval for check invoices are properly documented.

A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Mr. Kober moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent's certification for:

- The month of November 2025 the total Grant and Head Start expenditures amount to \$514,107.33, broken down between payroll totaling \$371,562.62 and other accounts totaling \$169,544.41 and;

- All payments have been made in accordance with the approved budget and are properly accounted for within the books of accounts. Copies of approval for check invoices are properly documented.

A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Line Item Transfers: None

16. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION - None

17. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

18. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Kober moved, seconded by Mrs. Pickett to adjourn the Regular Meeting of December 10, 2024. Motion passed unanimously by a **show-of-hands 9-0-0**. Meeting stood adjourned at 9:34 PM.

Scott Ryder
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary