
EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING OPEN SESSION – October 8, 2024

I. Call to Order - Open Session

The East Providence School Committee met in Open Session on Tuesday, October 8, 2024 at 6:00 pm in the auditorium at East Providence High School. Present: Jenni Furtado, Chair, Max Brandle, Clerk, Anthony Ferreira and Ryan Queenan. Jessica Beauchaine was absent. Superintendent Forand and Assistant Superintendent Lisa Benedetti-Ramzi were also present. Ms. Furtado called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

II. Executive Session

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried unanimously to move into main office conference room for the purpose of: East Providence School Department 2024-2025 Emergency Plan pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(3); discussion regarding security upgrades pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(3); and consider & vote on motion to adjourn and convene into public session.

III. Reconvene in Open Session (Regular Meeting)

Ms. Furtado called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence were observed. The Chair reported that no votes were taken in executive session. Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to seal the minutes.

Ms. Furtado read a statement from Vice Chair Jessica Beauchaine. "I wanted to take a moment to reach out and apologize for not being able to attend tonight's School Committee meeting. As many of you may not know, this past Friday I underwent emergency spinal surgery and am currently at home recovering. Please rest assured that despite my physical absence, I remain fully engaged and committed to the work we've been doing together. I will be following up on all matters discussed at the meeting, and if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly.

IV. Student Liaisons – Ty Messier from East Providence High School reported that the National Honors Society is holding their 10th annual Socktober event. They will be collecting socks for those in need. The NHS is also holding a breast cancer awareness week from October 21st-25th. The school will kick off spirit week this Friday when they celebrate their second annual pep rally, hosted by the 2025 Class Committee. There will be fun events for students and ending with a tug of war battle where the winning class will compete against a team made up of EPHS faculty members. Spirit week will conclude next week at the homecoming football game on Friday, October 18th where they will have a pink out themed game. They ask all students and fans to wear pink to show support for breast cancer awareness. On Saturday,

October 19th from 6-9pm they will have their homecoming dance which is disco themed. The annual mattress fundraiser will be held on October 26th to raise funds for their music department. Sports such as the football team, girls volleyball, boys soccer, girls soccer and girls tennis are all doing very well. The esports team is undefeated and ranked 2nd in the state.

V. Consent Agenda

1. **Communications** – Enrollment numbers and monthly technology data.

2. **Home School Requests** – There were eleven requests to homeschool students.

3. Approval of Minutes:

September 12, 2024 Executive & Open Session School Committee Meeting

September 9, 2024 Building Committee Meeting (MMS/Wadd/RMS)

4. Personnel Report

Appointments – Cassandra Johns, Life Skills at EPHS, effective 8/26/24; Kelly Amaral, Special Education Teacher, Pre-K at Oldham, effective 8/26/24; Melanie Hardy, Paraprofessional at Whiteknact, effective 10/7/24; Briana Grelinski, Paraprofessional at Silver Spring, effective 9/23/24; Ashley Bartone, Paraprofessional at Kent Heights, effective 9/24/24; Victoria Lopes, Speech Pathologist at Riverside Middle and Silver Spring, effective 10/1/24; Diane Laxton, Administrative Assistant in Transportation/Maintenance, effective date to be determined; and Haley Vincent, Paraprofessional at Orlo, effective 10/7/24.

Resignations – Kara Roberson, Paraprofessional at Kent Heights, effective 9/13/24; Nicole Fellows, Special Education Teacher at Kent Heights, effective 9/18/24; Ciara Nallen, Administrative Assistant at Riverside Middle School, effective 10/11/14; and John Lopes, Jr., Custodian days at Orlo Avenue, effective 9/30/24.

Retirements – Cheryl Tavares, Science Teacher at Martin Middle School; effective end of 2024-2025 school year; Rose Zarembka, Paraprofessional at Waddington, effective end of the 2024-2025 school year; Leanne Walker-Beard, Paraprofessional at Orlo Avenue, effective 10/5/24; Kim Lorenc, Administrative Assistant at Riverside Middle School, effective 1/3/2025; and Mark Williamson, Director of Human Resources, effective 1/4/2025.

Leaves of Absence – None

Non-renewals – None

Recalls – None

5. Bill List

- Voucher No. 1052 dated 9/26/2024 – \$53,735.73
- Voucher No. 1054 dated 10/3/2024 - \$1,283,861.83

6. Construction Invoices - EPHS for September 2024

- HSI Construction - \$229,000.00
- Replay - \$114,675.00
- Washington Music Center - \$5,310.60
- Whalley Computer Associates - \$144,928.50

- Whalley Computer Associates - \$1,205.88

Construction Invoices Total - \$495,119.98

Stage III Invoices - MMS/Waddington Projects for September 2024

- Ai3 Basic Services MMS - \$46,713.27
- Ai3 Supplemental Services MMS - \$108,950.17
- Ai3 Supplemental Services Wadd - \$22,660.00
- Ai3 Basic Services – Wadd - \$5,181.75
- Peregrine Group - \$81,840.00
- Shawmut MMS - \$3,038,093.79
- Shawmut Wadd - \$1,670,989.80
- Stephen Turner, Inc. MMS - \$6,804.25
- Stephen Turner, Inc. Wadd - \$150.00
- Willscot - \$2,069.33

Stage III Total - \$4,983,452.36

Motion by Mr. Brandle, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the consent agenda as submitted. Mr. Enos went through the construction invoices for the high school.

VI. PTO/PTA/EPLAC Reports – Tori Jessop Crowley and Logan Moniz, Chairperson from EPLAC, reported on information from their first meeting which was attended by twenty-four people. School Committee members Anthony Ferreira and Jessica Beauchaine, School Committee liaison attended as well. Ms. Beauchaine spoke about how to reach local School Committee members. Ms. Crowley shared highlights from their “Tell Us Something Good” portion of the meeting. They will be having a membership drive to get more parents involved. There will be a workshop this month on Dyslexia and DLD. November will be how to create a safe space in your classroom, home and community, January/February will be all about IEPs and 504s and February/March will be on trauma informed care and de-escalation.

VII. Superintendent’s Report

1. Facilities Update – Dan Carpenter

EPHS- Installation of two big fans in the chorus and band rooms has been completed by O’Neil Electric. HSI continues to install corner guards on the 3rd and 4th floors. Cape and Island Tennis and Track is reviewing the cracking issues on the running track. Awaiting the results of what they feel is an appropriate fix versus what the district feels is right. Work on the issue is ongoing. Covers for the sinks at EPHS will start to be installed soon. They are awaiting delivery from M&G plumbing supply.

Francis- Installation of the two new boilers has been completed by Nex Gen mechanical. The startup and testing has been completed.

Silver Spring- Repairs to the windows have been completed by Lockheed, they have moved the operations over to Orlo. Repairs are slated around 2-3 weeks to complete. The new dishwasher has arrived, and our plumbers and electrician will be working on getting everything hooked up properly. The outdoor classroom project is being worked on daily to be finished up in the next few weeks.

Riverside MS- Collins Construction has completed the media center, furniture has been moved in, offices are being set up and will be ready for students and teachers soon. The walk-in freezer/refrigerator project is going to be ongoing again once the concrete pad is installed. The RFP has gone out, and the bids will be before the Committee tonight for award. Project completion is now slated for the middle of November.

Martin MS- The topping off ceremony was held on September 19th. The beam with signatures now stands at the top of the steel skeleton of phase 1. Fireproofing material and the enclosure of the outside of the steel framing is priority before the winter months. Shawmut is making the push to have everything enclosed before the cold sets in. Concrete has been poured for the slab on grade and also the slab on deck metal. Metal clips are being installed along the outside of the steel framing to accept the studs to create the outside walls. Underground work continues daily, with planning for phase 2 prep work and logistics.

Some other district notes, Mr. Carpenter has begun acquiring pricing on new fencing to surround the administration building. Pricing for a new roof for Oldham Elementary School is also in the works. Also, he would like to Dan Borges, and the DPW for their help at Hennessey Elementary School with patching a large asphalt area in the teachers' parking lot, and for their help with cleaning an area of woods along the fence line at Riverside Middle School.

***Orlo courtyard irrigation breakdown**

2 plumbers (8 hrs)

\$100 in materials.

They will be looking for a credit on their final invoice from Central Nurseries for the amount.

2. Finance Update – Mr. Enos stated that they will continue to keep a close eye on the fiscal year. There are savings within the special education account. Regarding revenue, they were waiting on state aid last year for this year that didn't come through. However, there is still revenue coming in this month. He will have a better sense of closeout numbers next month. They are approving medical and grant expenditures. Any requirements or needs for students are being met. Mr. Ferreira requested a weekly update on the high school reimbursements from the City.

VIII. Policy Committee Report

1. Health & Wellness Policy – 2nd read Mr. Queenan stated there weren't many changes from last month. The words "or designee" was added next to Superintendent. "The Superintendent or designee has the authority to override the Health and Wellness Policy for the purpose of Teacher to Student Acknowledgments and Incentives at his/her discretion and for the purpose

of Celebrations/Events at their discretion. Other major changes are applications of Rhode Island General Law and references for dietary guidelines. The last revision of this policy was made in 2018.

IX. Building Committee Report

Building Project Update – Mr. Carpenter reported on project milestones for Martin Middle School, phase 1 steel erection is complete and updated plans have been submitted to RIDEM/RIPDES. Project milestones for Riverside Middle School are the completion of the media center and the installation of furniture. The punchlist of the media center is near completion. Project milestones for Waddington Elementary school are project phase I closed out and the punchlist has been completed and closed out. Warranties will carry through to phase 2.

Mr. Ferreira requested a punch list.

Mr. Carpenter stated the workers are working Saturdays at Martin. They picked up three months. The plan right now is to move the middle school into the school after Thanksgiving 2025. Completion of PreK will be in April 2027 and they will move in the Fall of 2027. The building should be complete April 2027. As soon as the middle school is moved in, demolition can start. There is an option to move in sooner which will continue to be monitored.

Great feedback was received on the science classrooms. The media center is getting books back on the shelves. Teachers were very happy.

X. Discussion Items

1. Virtual Learning Plan for 2024-2025 – There are no changes to the plan but the state requires the School Committee to review it and approve it each year.

Mr. Queenan inquired if the students aren't allowed to take chromebooks home and if there is any specific language outside of the virtual learning plan on who is making the determination, principals, schools or teachers. Dr. Forand stated that it's not a policy and this is the first year they have kept chromebooks in the classroom since COVID. It's at the discretion of the teacher. If the teacher is assigning work that needs to be done on the computer, they go home with the student. If not, chromebooks stay in the classroom. On a bad weather day or a virtual learning day, chromebooks would go home. Chromebooks for home are property of the school department and should be used for academics. Less than 10% of parents purchased insurance and many chromebooks are forgotten at home, lost, not charged or broken. Each district is different with allowing students to be taken home.

Mr. Ferreira asked if the school department could purchase insurance. Dr. Forand stated that there are 5,300 students in the district. Mr. Ferreira stated that there needs to be a clear decision on chromebooks.

2. Legal Services RFP

Ms. Furtado gave an update on this item. There have been scheduling conflicts so will get potential new dates that work for all Committee members.

XI. Public Comments – Tori Jessop Crowley stated that her daughter isn't allowed to take her chromebook home and has missing assignments. Parents need guidance and guidelines with the chromebook issue. She stated that the school department is requiring parents to have insurance on them. Dr. Forand clarified that the District strongly suggests that parents purchase insurance.

Ms. Jessop stated that she didn't hear a discussion on the emergency plan. Ms. Furtado stated that security information can't be discussed. The terms regarding emergencies were sent home in the family newsletter.

Ms. Jessop also stated that there should be equity with field trips for both middle schools. She thanked the City Council and the District for their support with dyslexia awareness month in October.

XII. Action Items

1. Executive Assistant's School Committee Stipend

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Executive Assistant's School Committee stipend as submitted. Ms. Furtado stated that they proposed a raise for the executive assistant who does work for the School Committee, Superintendent and Building Committee.

2. Health & Wellness Policy – 2nd read

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. Brandle and carried by unanimous consent to approve the second reading of the Health & Wellness Policy as submitted.

3. EPSD 2024-2025 Emergency Plan

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to approve the East Providence School Department 2024-2025 Emergency Plan as submitted.

4. 2024-2025 Virtual Learning Plan

Motion by Mr. Brandle, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to approve the District's 2024-2025 Virtual Learning Plan as submitted.

5. Award of RMS Concrete Pad RFP

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to award the Riverside Middle School concrete pad RFP to Duarte Corporation, Inc. for \$33,000.00 as submitted.

6. Contract for RMS Concrete Pad

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to approve the contract for Duarte Corporation, Inc. for the Riverside Middle School concrete pad as submitted.

7. Riverside Middle School Trip to Washington

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to approve Riverside Middle School grade 8 trip to Washington, D.C. in May 20-22, 2025 as submitted.

XIII. Announcements – October is Dyslexia Awareness Month. On October 16th at 6 pm there will be a lighting ceremony at City Hall. There will be a Family Game Day at Weaver Library on Saturday, October 12th at 11am-1pm.

Mr. Ferreira thanked the guys who did the cleanup work outside at the high school. Outstanding job.

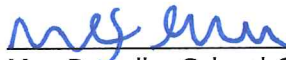
XIV. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Corsi, Executive Assistant



Max Brandle, School Committee Clerk