
EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING OPEN SESSION – January 14, 2025

I. Call to Order - Open Session

The East Providence School Committee met in open session on Tuesday, January 14, 2025 at 6:00 pm in the auditorium at East Providence High School. Present: David Luiz, Chair, Antonio deSimas, Vice Chair, Anthony Ferreira, Clerk, Jessica Beauchaine and Ryan Queenan. Superintendent Forand and Assistant Superintendent Lisa Benedetti-Ramzi were also present. Mr. Luiz called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence were observed. Mr. Luiz acknowledged Bernard Jr. White who was a graduate of East Providence High School, coached many years in the City and served as an athletics supervisor on East Providence athletics. He was kind and supportive of everyone he interacted with and he will be missed.

II. Student Liaisons – Ty Messier from East Providence High School reported that yesterday all the seniors presented their senior projects. Everyone showed off their hard work and the results were very impressive. Congrats to all the seniors for a job well done! On Thursday the high school will have an open house for the class of 2029. This will be a great opportunity to welcome future Townies, showcase the school and prepare them for the upcoming months. Families will tour the campus, meet some teachers and learn about sports, clubs and more. Midterm exams will be January 21st to the 24th. Winter sports have begun which includes, boys basketball, girls basketball, wrestling, swimming, gymnastics, indoor track, girls hockey and boys hockey. A shoutout to Keira Mullen, the 2024 Rhode Island Gatorade Player of the Year. This is an incredible achievement, as East Providence has not received this award for girls volleyball since 2005.

III. Consent Agenda

1. **Communications** – Enrollment numbers, monthly technology data and letters from NEASC and the City of East Providence were received.

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

3. Approval of Minutes:

December 4, 2024 Special Executive & Open Session School Committee Meeting

December 10, 2024 Open Session School Committee Meeting

January 2, 2025 Special Open Session School Committee Meeting

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

4. Personnel Report

Appointments – Kourtney Gray, Assistant Principal at Orlo Avenue, effective 1/27/2025; John Iemma, Co-Director of Instructional Technology, effective 1/1/2025; and Patrick McDonald, Co-Director of Instructional Technology, effective 1/1/2025.

Resignations – Michael Sousa, Night Custodian at Silver Spring, effective 12/9/2024; Christopher Russo, Dean at Orlo Avenue, effective 1/1/2025; Heather Rocha, School Nurse at Oldham, effective 1/10/2025; Emily Dias, Staff Accountant, effective 12/19/2024; Danielle Bruder, Speech Pathologist at Whiteknact, effective 1/31/2025; and Jodi Lamagna, Science Teacher at EPHS, effective 12/12/2024.

Retirements – James Watson, Day Custodian at Waddington, effective 2/21/2025; Jose Costa, Day Custodian at Whiteknact, effective 12/11/1024; and Celeste Verria, Physical Education Teacher at Riverside Middle School, effective end of 2024-2025 school year.

Leaves of Absence – Grade 3 Teacher at Hennessey, effective 8/26/2024.

Non-renewals – None

Recalls – None

Rescindments – Catarina Perry, Director of Human Resources.

5. **Bill List**

- Voucher No. 1007 dated 12/12/24 - \$900.00
- Voucher No. 1009 dated 12/26/24 - \$157,727.73
- Voucher No. 1010 dated 12/27/24 – \$15,179.47
- Voucher No. 1011 dated 1/9/25 - \$1,887,896.65
- Voucher No. 1061 dated 10/31/24 - \$364,088.51

6. **Stage III Invoices - MMS/Waddington Projects for December 2024**

- Ai3 Basic Services MMS - \$46,713.27
- Ai3 Supplemental Services MMS - \$24,736.25
- Ai3 Basic Services – Wadd - \$5,181.75
- East Providence School District - \$900.00
- Peregrine Group - \$72,380.00
- Shawmut MMS - \$4,766,006.04
- Stephen Turner, Inc. MMS - \$9,035.78
- Thielsch Engineering (November) – \$4,360.95
- Willscot – \$2,069.33

Stage III Total - \$4,931,383.37

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to approve the consent agenda as submitted.

IV. PTO/PTA/EPLAC Reports – Ms. Beauchaine stated that the EPLAC Board members were not available this evening. Next Tuesday there will be a RIPIN 504 workshop at Kent Heights School at 6:00 pm. Anyone who has questions about IEPs and 504s are welcome to attend. In February there will be a workshop on Trauma Informed Care and De-escalation. Ms. Beauchaine stated EPLAC is looking to do video streaming for people who are not able to attend. Nominations are open for the 17th Annual Special Needs Recognition Program which

will be held in May. Nominations can be emailed to principals and are due by February 13th. Ms. Beauchaine stated, as President of the PTA at Riverside Middle School, on February 1st

at 12:30 pm the fundraiser at Contenders will be completely dedicated for the 8th grade field trip to defer the cost for students going to Washington, D.C. They are welcoming support from teachers and administration for this trip.

V. Superintendent's Report

1. School Accountability Results Presentation – Lindsey Reilly gave an update presentation on school accountability. She stated that RIDE released this data, from the spring of 2024, on December 17th. School report cards are released online and the District provides a hard copy. Ms. Reilly went over the measures the District uses to evaluate school performance; elementary and secondary schools' star ratings; student subgroups identified for targeted support and improvement; commendable achievement schools; and elementary and secondary ELA, math and science proficiency percentages from previous years to 2024.

Dr. Forand gave a high level overview on aligning the current work to the Vision of a Graduate (VOG) and the goals for the District. She spoke about the initiatives going on with academic excellence, such as Right to Read, High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), Math AddVantage, Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Special Education Advisory and SRSD Writing Framework. Social Emotional Learning includes Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), Educational Collaborative Partnership and Conscious Discipline. Educator Continuous Improvement such as Aligned Common Planning Time (CPT) and Leading for Learning Admin Series. Safe Schools related to EPEA/Admin Safety Team; Development of Protocols/Systems/Processes using the EPSD Code of Conduct as a foundation; ALICE Training, forty members of staff are certified trainers; and District Threat Assessment Team (EPSD, EPPD, EPFD) Building walkthroughs/Upgrades. Family & Community Engagement includes Project Aware which provides resources and a food pantry for families, EPSD, EPPD, EPFD Partnerships, Boys & Girls Club/YMCA, East Bay Community Action/Health Equity Zone (HEZ), East Providence Prevention Coalition and Hope & Faith.

2. Teacher Sub Pay – Dr. Forand tabled this item until the next meeting.

3. Facilities Update – Danny Carpenter

Riverside MS

- The pole lighting along the driveways has been rewired and restored. The old wiring underground had deteriorated which caused a breakage in the circuit that fed the lighting leading from the building.
- Drawing specs are being procured from Studio JAED for the teachers parking lot and sidewalk that runs from Forbes Street, down to the entry of Riverside MS. Initial pricing has come back for budgetary numbers, and a formal RFP will be drafted to be sent out

to bid. Time frame will be in the springtime when it is feasible, and the asphalt plants are in operation.

- On December 21st, the outside freezer contractor returned to put the finish trim pieces and straighten out the loose roof membrane issue. HVAC startup was completed on Friday January 3rd. Finishes to the interior area of the previous freezer area are being worked on by our in-house maintenance crew as to flooring, ceilings and paintwork restoration to finish up the old space that will now be a storage room.

Whiteknact and Silver Spring

- New PA system wiring has been run over the holiday break week to get a good jump on getting the new systems installed as soon as possible. Myron Francis and Orlo are also slated for replacement. Timelines are coordinating with school vacations until summer break.

At Silver Spring the new dishwasher wiring was initially started by O'Neil Electric with a required new electrical feed to be brought to the kitchen area due to re-purpose of the old feed over previous years over 15 plus years ago.

EPHS

- The lighting on the front of the building and the clock tower is being repaired due to problematic electrical drivers that control the lights. Parts have been ordered and slated for replacement, with the clocktower being first, then the upper wording lighting on the building due to the height restriction of an 80 plus foot lift. The East Providence High School wording has been temporarily turned off to combat the flickering on and off. The in-house electrician, along with O'Neil Electric are handling the work needed to get everything back up and running correctly.

Mr. Ferreira asked if the lights on the front of the building are under warranty. Mr. Carpenter stated that he met with the company today and the sign company is responsible. Mr. Ferreira stated that if the clocktower is under warranty, we should hold off on that until we can get the company back.

4. Finance Update – Mr. Enos stated that there are a couple of items to note for FY25, 53000 series for speech therapists. The District is hiring their own speech therapists so there is a significant savings. The same for psychologists. Also, HVAC and plumbing issues are serviced from in house staff. RIDE requires the District to show that we are spending money on maintaining. Software that was covered by grant funding is now in the operational pieces for the District such as Go Guardian and licensing. FY24 has not yet been closed out. There are still some revenues that haven't been finalized. Final numbers should be ready for the meeting next month. The FY audit will also be presented at the next meeting.

VI. Building Committee Report

1. Building Project Update – Dan Carpenter reported that the project at Martin is making great progress with completion of roofing, framing, rough electrical, plumbing and HVAC work. Masonry is starting along lower section of building. Windows and glass are being installed daily. The stock piles of excess soil are being hauled off to the Live Nation site.

Site prep work continues with measurements and electrical work at Waddington. Drainage plans for the rear of the building have been initially approved and are slated for DEM approval. The work to bring the library offices up to code compliance is also being procured. Ongoing coordination in preparation for phase 2 is being done. The ADA stairlift is on order to be installed this summer.

The punch list has been completed at Riverside. The remaining item of additional fire sprinklers required are to be installed during February vacation. Six and eleven month warranty walkthroughs will be scheduled.

Mr. Ferreira stated that he would like to see our professional staff go through the middle school. He is unhappy about the condition the high school is in and doesn't want to see the same thing happen at Martin.

VII. Public Comments – No public comments.

VIII. Discussion/Action Items

1. Award of Concrete Pad – EPHS RFP

Mr. Enos stated that on December 12 an RFP was published. Submissions were received on January 8, 2025. Six bid responses were received with one response considered not valid. Of the five responses scored, they recommend making the award to Duarte Corporation for \$138,647.37 for this project.

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by unanimous consent to approve the award to Duarte Corporation for \$138,647.37 for the concrete pad project at East Providence High School as submitted.

2. Contract for Concrete Pad – EPHS RFP

Mr. Carpenter stated that the concrete pad is being put in place for a storage building. There will also be a concrete pathway around the building which includes landscape to the property.

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to approve the contract for Duarte Corporation for the concrete pad project at East Providence High School as submitted.

3. MMS/Pre-K FF&E RFP

Mr. Enos stated that this FF&E RFP will go out tomorrow after School Committee approval and responses are due on March 4th.

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Martin Middle School/Pre-K Request for Proposal for Furniture, Furnishings and Equipment as submitted.

4. Establish Oversight and Transparency in Legal Counsel Communications

Mr. deSimas stated that he would like the School Committee to adopt a policy effective immediately. He wants to be copied on all messages, excluding students and personnel with legal counsel to establish transparency. Mr. Queenan asked for clarification and asked if Mr. deSimas is interested in being notified of the back and forth on emails. Ms. Beauchaine requested legal counsel's opinion on this. Her concern is with no one replying all which has happened in the past.

Mr. Luiz has a concern with the amount of times the Superintendent has to interact with legal and sends emails to them. Legal counsel has been very good with communicating with the Committee.

Dr. Forand stated that she communicates with legal counsel on several matters, ongoing cases, MOUs, occasional questions with procedure or an agenda item. Currently it has been more with the transition and ongoing issues with students and special education matters. The big issues are given to the School Committee. The Superintendent may go back and forth with details and then the Committee will get a briefing.

Mr. deSimas stated that he doesn't want anything redacted. Dr. Forand stated she doesn't redact anything. A lot goes into the prep work and they have residency and truancy cases that are ongoing.

Mr. Luiz stated he is completely satisfied with the legal team and absolutely comfortable with their interactions.

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. deSimas to establish oversight and transparency in legal counsel communications as submitted. Mr. Queenan, Ms. Beauchaine and Mr. Luiz voted nay. Motion failed.

5. Finding Out Any Vacancies in the District

Mr. Ferreira would like a weekly update on vacancies with a salary dollar amount sent to the Committee in the Friday update from the Superintendent.

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by a vote of 4-1 to find out about any vacancies in the District as submitted. Mr. Queenan voted nay.

6. Appointment of School Committee Members to the Wellness, Policy, Building and Facilities Subcommittees

Wellness Committee – Ryan Queenan

Policy Committee – David Luiz and Antonio deSimas

Building Committee – Jessica Beauchaine and Anthony Ferreira

Facilities Committee – Anthony Ferreira and Antonio deSimas

IX. Announcements – Mr. Luiz stated that according to legal, a vote is not needed on the appointments.

Mr. Queenan reiterated some statements of gratitude towards the facilities and maintenance staff. After looking at the budget, the District has impactful cost savings on fixtures, equipment and general maintenance. According to Mr. Enos, it's due in part of the work that is being done in house vs. from having to go outside.

Mr. Ferreira announced that the School Committee is moving towards having two meetings per month. He thanked the people who attend the meetings.

X. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Corsi, Executive Assistant



Anthony Ferreira, School Committee Clerk