
EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING OPEN SESSION – February 11, 2025

I. Call to Order - Open Session

The East Providence School Committee met in open session on Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 6:00 pm in council chambers at East Providence City Hall. Members 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 6:01 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence were observed.

II. Student Liaisons – Ty Messier from East Providence High School reported that the Health Occupations class will be hosting another blood drive on February 28th. The National Honor Society is hosting a Paint Night on March 6th which is an amazing opportunity to get creative with your family. The Class of 2025 Committee is holding its Valentine's Day fundraiser this week in the student commons selling carnations for \$2 each. These will be hand-delivered on Valentine's Day to whomever you choose. The boys and girls basketball teams and the wrestling team are having an amazing season. The swimming team is still undefeated. Gymnastics, both boys and girls indoor track and field teams are having a great season. On the ice, girls and boys hockey co-op are doing well. Spring sports are coming up fast. Sign up meetings will be happening over the next few weeks.

III. Consent Agenda

1. **Communications** – Enrollment numbers and monthly technology data were included in the packets.

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

3. Approval of Minutes:

January 9, 2025 Special Executive & Open Session School Committee Meeting

January 13, 2025 Special Open School Committee Meeting/MMS Site Tour

January 14, 2025 Open Session School Committee Meeting

January 22, 2025 Special Executive & Open Session School Committee Meeting

January 13, 2025 Building Committee Meeting (MMS/Wadd/RMS)

4. Personnel Report

Appointments – Sandy Farias-Borges, Interim HR Director, effective 1/17/2025; Mark Thurber, Science Teacher at EPHS, effective 1/23/2025; Megan Hill, MLL Teacher at Martin Middle School, effective 2/10/2025; and Amanda Medeiros, Lunch/Recess Attendance at Orlo, effective 2/13/2025.

Resignations – Diane Laxton, Administrative Assistant in Transportation/Maintenance, effective 1/31/2025; and Mark Thurber, Science Teacher at EPHS, effective 2/4/2025.

Retirements – Lisa Medeiros, Administrative Assistant at CTC, effective 1/22/2025; and Gilbert Soares, Day Custodian at Oldham, effective 3/3/2025.

Leaves of Absence – Grade 2 Teacher at Waddington, effective 2/25/2025.

Non-renewals – Two non-renewals, effective the end of the 2024-2025 school year.

5. Bill List

- Voucher No. 1062 dated 10/31/24 - \$710.99
- Voucher No. 1012 dated 1/15/25 - \$6,090.00
- Voucher No. 1013 dated 1/17/25 – \$100.00
- Voucher No. 1014 dated 1/28/25 - \$146,683.45
- Voucher No. 1016 dated 2/6/25 - \$1,877,699.41

6. Stage III Invoices - MMS/Waddington Projects for January 2025

Ai3 Basic Services MMS - \$46,714.27

- Ai3 Supplemental Services MMS - \$12,258.95
- Ai3 Basic Services – Wadd - \$18,792.28
- Peregrine Group - \$62,920.00
- Shawmut MMS - \$3,845,851.33
- Stephen Turner, Inc. MMS - \$3,582.00
- Stephen Turner, Inc. Wadd - \$85.00
- Thielsch Engineering – \$1,277.39
- Willscot – February - \$2,038.75

Stage III Total - \$3,993,518.97

Mr. Ferreira stated there was a typo in the budget amount in the January 9, 2025 meeting minutes which will be corrected showing the budget amount of \$100M, not \$10M.

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

IV. PTO/PTA/EPLAC Reports – No reports.

V. Superintendent's Report

1. ALP Update – Lisa Benedetti-Ramzi gave a power point presentation update on how the ALP program is doing. The EPHS's Alternative Learning Program mission statement is to provide a comprehensive educational environment unique in its delivery of services in a nontraditional setting with individualized goals. The ALP will allow students to achieve academically while fostering caring and respectful relationships with peers and adults. Ms. Benedetti-Ramzi highlighted the program objectives, student attendance, academic progress and report and use of the level system. ALP's faculty, administration and staff have been meeting with families to discuss student achievement and attendance. These meetings have proven to be quite worthwhile. Students in the program have stated that the teachers are a big help, that they are being able to make up credits, that there is support and kindness, break time activities and they are getting a lot more work done. 92.3% of students expressed they are doing better.

Mr. Ferreira thanked Ms. Benedetti-Ramzi for this report and would like to receive an update in two weeks to continue to see the tracking. He would like information on the goal that students

are supposed to be meeting and what the goals are at for behavioral issues. Ms. Benedetti-Ramzi stated she will bring a student's individualized goal sheet, without their name.

Mr. deSimas asked if there were any specific success stories to highlight. Mr. Benedetti-Ramzi stated that there is a student who was behaviorally ineligible to play a sport and is now playing a sport. Another student cried that they passed a class. Some students were not in an age appropriate grade. A young man didn't know where to go for the future and she helped him get online and reach out for an internship.

Mr. deSimas asked if the program is adequately staffed. Ms. Benedetti-Ramzi stated that right now they are adequately staffed and students are able to access services from the high school. They are at the point where they're feeling confident and meeting once a week.

Mr. Queenan stated that there is great work within this program and on the data that was shared. For the next update, he would like Ms. Benedetti-Ramzi to share the completion track and compare the data to district level data with attendance.

2. Youth Risk Behavior Survey – Dr. Forand stated that every year this survey from the RI Department of Health and the RI Department of Education is distributed to secondary schools and administered to students in the spring. Students are able to opt out with no repercussions. The survey will be sent to parents/guardians via parent square and family newsletters. Schools receive \$500 for administering the survey to use at their discretion. The survey helps the District to see trends and offer support. It is anonymous, neither schools nor students are identified. The web survey is administered during one period in randomly selected classes; it is not administered to the entire school.

3. Substitute Salary Increase – Dr. Forand stated that sub rates need to be adjusted. She proposed the following sub rates for a teacher: Day 1-30 \$125, Day 31+ \$150, Day 61+ \$175; retired EP teacher: Day 1-30 \$175, Day 31+ \$200, Day 61+ \$225; long term teacher: Day 1-30 \$150, Day 31+ \$175, Day 61+ \$200. Sub Principal/Administrator \$400 per day; Sub Paraprofessional \$16 per hour; Sub Administrative Assistant \$16 per hour; Sub Custodians \$16 per hour; and Nurse Subs \$323.09 per day.

Ms. Beauchaine stated that the District needs to look at putting building based subs back in each building. There are schools that don't have subs because they don't want to go there. Dr. Forand stated that the last few weeks have been difficult, however, we have more subs than we've had in a long time.

Mr. Queenan stated this is about a strategy to attract substitutes and inquired about the financial impact of bumping up pays. Dr. Forand stated that East Providence is not compliant with minimum wage. The District owes \$3000 in back pay for the substitutes that were making \$100 per day since January.

Ms. Beauchaine reiterated that she would like to circle back with getting building based subs for next year. Mr. Ferreira requested documentation in the packet on the back pay owed to subs.

4. Creation of MLL Family Service Coordinator Position – Yanaiza Gallant, Director of Multilingual Learners, stated that the District is seeking a full time MLL Family Service Coordinator to assist MLL and newcomer families in building school knowledge and have access to community resources. This candidate will be well integrated in the community and an advocate for MLL families. Duties will include family contact, parent training, student check-ins, program development and community service outreach. This is a grant funded position. The District has had a 25% increase in MLL families. We would be in compliance to the Board of Education regulations governing MLLs Section 4-G which calls for a school and community liaison to facilitate communication with families and schools.

5. Facilities Update – Danny Carpenter

EPHS

- The concrete pad work is being done to accept the new 36'x 48' steel storage building. Site work continues and has a contractual end date of March 3, 2025. The building has been ordered, and awaiting delivery. Installation will be going out to bid, along with electrical RFPs.
- The lighting for the "East Providence High School" lettering has been replaced and is back in operation. Warranty on the lights is now expired.
- The wiring issues with the clock tower have been addressed with the appropriate contractors, OPM and electrical inspector. Action has been taken to have everything brought to code and will be fully repaired to meet electrical standards.
- I have also addressed my concerns about the issues with the running track to the contractors, OPM and installer. Further determinations are still being made as to the appropriate repair needed. Will continue to press the issue until it is resolved. Will be looking into having the track repaired with a permanent solution to stop the cracks.
- Preparations for the baseball field seating were started by the City DPW. Excavation for the concrete work needed to support the seats has been dug initially, and they will be looking to do the concrete work in the spring.
- The rear parking lot where there is asphalt cracking has been repaired with crack sealant on Saturday January 18, 2025

Martin Middle School

- Construction continues with sheetrock, interior framing, rough electrical, plumbing and HVAC. Windows and masonry continue to be installed daily.

Waddington

- Preparations are being made for the next phase of the construction project to start taking place. Over February break, masonry on the outside of the building will be started

with filling in the old univent intake grate holes, along with test installation of some windows. More work will continue during April vacation also to get a jump start on everything needed for the summer time period.

Riverside Middle School

- The interior space where the old freezer was has been converted into a storage/office area. Shelving units have been ordered and set for delivery on February 7th. The unit is up and running and ready for full operation. Remaining refrigerators will be distributed to other schools in need of replacement. Exterior site finishes with grass and asphalt will be completed in the spring when the weather allows.

There was some discussion with the issue of the cracks in the high school sidewalk and the running track. The sidewalk cracks should be looked at in the spring. A resolution for the running track may need legal counsel.

6. Finance Update – Mr. Enos stated that FY25 continues to be off to a good start with really no significant items to note. He still cannot provide a year end number at this time for FY24. There are no invoices from DCYF and still waiting for some revenue to come in. They remain cautious for FY24. He will have an update next month and will have bills paid. The audit just got wrapped up and finalized and should be ready to present next month.

VI. Policy Committee Report

1. AI Policy – 1st read

This policy was put together by the Policy Committee. Dr. Forand stated that this policy was started before the new Committee came on board. It talks about acceptable use for staff and students, classroom policies and protocols, discipline and training in professional development. Guidelines can be seen on the Secretary of State's website. This policy has been reviewed by legal counsel and the review cycle is annually.

This policy will be reviewed again and approved for a second read at the next meeting.

VII. Building Committee Report

- 1. Building Project Update** – Mr. Carpenter reported that sheetrocking and brick install has started at Martin on the 3rd floor. Export of excess soils is complete. Waterproofing, fireproofing and framing is complete. In three months, windows will be installed.
- 2.** At Waddington moisture site mitigation starting. Windows replacement mock up. Added wall sprinklers on wall for compliance next week.
- 3.** Riverside six-month warranty walkthrough. Eleven-month walkthrough is scheduled.

VIII. Public Comments – Barbara Richardson, parent of a set of twins at East Providence High School addressed the Committee regarding her son's life skills teacher leaving and being replaced with substitutes. She voiced her concern and advocated for his son. Ms. Beauchaine

stated that the Committee cannot discuss individual students but wants what is best for her child and all students. Dr. Forand will get back to Ms. Richardson in the morning.

Renee Ignacio, taxpayer and bus driver for East Providence shared her concern about buses and school vans and people running the red lights. Drivers don't see the vans as school buses and don't see the signs that are on top of the vans. There are no cameras on the vans which is a state law in Rhode Island. She stated that need a stop sign arm that can come out. She asked the School Committee to see what they can do to help to put the law into effect. They do have bus monitors on the bus.

Mr. Ferreira recommended that she go to a City Council meeting and the School Committee will do whatever they can. Mr. Queenan stated that the next steps to take would be to continue the conversation with the Superintendent, Mayor and Police Chief.

IX. Discussion/Action Items

1. Health & Wellness Update – Mr. Queenan

The Health & Wellness Committee met in January. Mr. Queenan had a conflict and couldn't attend that meeting. He gave an overview. The H&W policy was updated last year and will continue with its goals. At the last meeting the conversation focused on goal number 1 - to recommend resources to promote student wellness. Stacy is working on policy to share district wide with goal #2 to develop guidance on the health & wellness policy. Goals #3 & #4 are all about evaluating and measuring the implementation of the policy. EPHS has a goal to have 1,000 meals being served. Chartwells will be highlighting recipes. The next meeting will be March 7th. Karin Wetherall is the Director of the Rhode Island Healthy Schools Coalition and will be sharing some tools on how to evaluate the policy.

2. Actively Promoting Kindergarten Registration – Mr. Queenan stated they he had asked to place this back on agenda out of respect for what has happened. Doing a disservice in our community by not properly promoting kindergarten registration and getting the word out. Internally the District can communicate that kindergarten registration open. Externally, there is little communication which would include families moving into the city. Children in preschools don't have information. Mr. Luiz reached out to the Mayor to ask the City to put a stamped message that kindergarten registration is now open on their water bill. The message would include contact information. He will follow up with the Mayor.

Dr. Forand stated that we do reach out to daycares and preschools in East Providence. The City Council posted K registration on their web page. It is also advertised in The Post. The water bill is great for expanding external communication. Some suggestions were to drop off a flyer/notice at the realtors office and at markets and to advertise on a portable billboard. There is no deadline to register, but is on a first come basis.

3. Amended 2025 School Committee Meeting Schedule

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the amended 2025 School Committee meeting schedule as submitted with a time change for open session to begin at 6pm.

4. RIDOH/RIDE 2025 Youth Risk Behavior Survey for Middle and High School Students

Motion by Mr. deSimas to approve the 2025 youth risk survey for middle and high schools students as submitted. Motion failed due to the lack of a second.

5. Substitute Salary Increase

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

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and passed with 4 votes in favor and 1 against to approve the substitute salary increase for sub administrators, sub teachers, sub paraprofessionals, sub administrator assistants, sub custodians and sub nurses as submitted. Mr. Ferreira voted nay.

6. Human Resources Director Status and Pay Range – Mr. Ferreira requested an update. Dr. Forand stated that the District has an Interim Human Resources Director who was the HR Office Manager/Benefits Coordinator. The salary range for the HR Director position is between \$95,000-\$105,000. The position has been posted twice. Someone was hired but changed their mind and was within that salary range. Salary ranges are updated every year in March.

7. Creation of the Grant Funded Multilingual Language Learner Family Service Coordinator Position

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to approve the creation of the Multilingual Language Learner Family service Coordinator position as submitted.

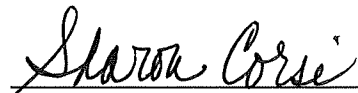
X. Announcements – Ms. Beauchaine announced that a few weeks ago there was a hockey tournament at Providence College and one student from East Providence High School, Sydney Olson, was chosen to play in that All-Star tournament.

Ms. Beauchaine stated that at the last meeting at the high school when Ms. Reilly presented the state school report cards, she went home and went over the report cards. East Providence needs to do better. She also stated that she went to a special meeting with the Mayor and Governor regarding attendance and attendance has improved.

XI. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Corsi, Executive Assistant



Anthony Ferreira, School Committee Clerk