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

I. Call to Order - Open Session

The East Providence School Committee met in open session on Tuesday, March 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 6:00 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence were observed.

II. Student Liaisons – Ty Messier shared some updates from the high school. SkillsUSA competitions are in full swing. There are 113 students competing in 31 different events in the next couple of weeks. A shout out to Mrs. Piros for organizing this extremely complex schedule. Three outstanding female students were recognized by the National Center for Women and Information Technology during National Women's Month. Keira Enos and Madison Stawicki were named winners of the regional award and Emma McCoy was a runner up. The National Honor Society Paint Night has been rescheduled to March 28th and they are looking forward to a fun and creative evening. Class committees have come together to revive the Battle of the Classes which will take place this Thursday from 5-7pm in the Ramos Gym. Winter sports has concluded and all teams had a phenomenal season. The eSports team also had a tremendous season. Spring sports is just around the corner starting with Unified Basketball.

III. Consent Agenda

1. **Communications** – Enrollment numbers, monthly technology data and CTC grant fund purchases announcement were included in the packets.

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

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

February 27, 2025 Executive & Open Session School Committee Meeting

February 10, 2025 Building Committee Meeting (MMS/Wadd/RMS)

4. **Personnel Report**

Appointments – Lauren Souto, Administrative Assistant in Transportation/Maintenance, effective 2/18/25; Brad Correa, JROTC at CTC, effective 3/3/25; Melissa Nobrega, Administrative Assistant to Assistant Principal at Riverside, effective 3/10/25; Katelyn DeAngelis, Science Teacher at EPHS, effective 3/3/25; Diona Lomax DiCarmo, Paraprofessional at Waddington, effective 3/10/25; Michelle Sousa, Night Custodian at Riverside, effective 3/3/25; Jose DeSousa, Night Custodian at EPHS, effective 3/4/25; Robert Goulart, Night Custodian at EPHS, effective 3/4/25; Gisela Lopes, Day Custodian at Oldham, effective 3/6/25; Michael Martins, Paraprofessional at EPHS, effective 3/7/25; and Clotilde Mateo, IT Support Specialist, effective 3/24/25.

Resignations – Michael Martins, Paraprofessional at EPHS, effective 2/15/25; and Jaclyn Liolios, Paraprofessional at Waddington, effective 2/25/25.

Retirements – Deborah Turbitt, Paraprofessional at Kent Heights, effective end of the 2024-2025 school year.

Leave of Absence – Paraprofessional at Myron J. Francis, effective 3/3/25.

5. Bill List

- Voucher No. 1017 dated 2/26/25 - \$205,220.81
- Voucher No. 1019 dated 3/06/25 - \$1,844,808.22

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

- Ai3 Basic Services MMS - \$46,713.27
- Ai3 Supplemental Services MMS - \$14,872.21
- Ai3 Basic Services – Wadd - \$18,792.28
- Peregrine Group - \$62,920.00
- Shawmut MMS - \$4,061,928.67
- Stephen Turner, Inc. MMS - \$1,140.53
- Stephen Turner, Inc. Wadd - \$376.25
- Thielsch Engineering – \$8,747.34
- Willscot – March - \$2,038.75

Stage III Total - \$4,217,529.30

7. EPHS Trip to Orlando, Florida April 26-30, 2025

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 – No Reports.

V. Superintendent's Report

1. Project Change Presentation – Steven Bertrand – Presentation to be rescheduled.

2. Facilities Update – Danny Carpenter

EPHS

The clock tower issues have been worked on by the contractor responsible. They have come out twice so far and repaired the lighting issues to both the clock tower lettering and the EP symbol on the gym side of the building. They will be returning to finish up the wiring work required by the electrical inspector.

Out at the baseball field, they have selected the area where they will be installing a composting bathroom. The Director of Finance and Mr. Carpenter met with the distributor, city engineering, and DPW to get the excavation and installation on their schedule. The product is projected to have a 14-week lead time, so this will take place in the summer.

Martin MS

Martin Middle School is progressing well. Curtain wall and glazing has been installed in the cafeteria and media center. Masonry continues around the building along with preparation for cement fiber panels. Inside the building sheetrock and taping continues with rough trades finishing up on the 2nd and 1st floors. April will continue the start of the next phase of construction inside the existing building with the construction work in the gymnasium, auditorium, and band room. This work is expected to continue into November when the new school is turned over.

Riverside MS

At Riverside Middle School, the maintenance team finished the work in the old freezer area. The former area is now an office for Chartwell's staff, along with an entrance into the new freezer unit. The new unit is now in full operation. Exterior work is to be completed as to paving of a ramp and landscaping this spring. Refrigeration units that are now extra at Riverside have been distributed throughout the district to buildings in need of replacements.

Waddington

Over February break work was done to get a timeline of window installation. One window was installed. Electrical work required for the second phase this summer was completed by Sully Mac. Contractors will return during April vacation to get a jump on more items. Preparation for this summer's work is now in full swing, along with the new drainage system that will be installed to combat the water mitigation issues.

Other notes

PA system wiring was run at Francis, Orlo and Whiteknact over February break. Full system finishes are to take place at participating buildings this summer.

Capeway Roofing completed the insurance repairs to the Administration building facade that was damaged by a delivery truck. The work was completed February 27th.

The maintenance crew has made repairs to steam lines at Hennessey Elementary School. The age of the steam lines underground are becoming an issue. The lines are located in tunnels under the older section of the building leading to confined space work, and abatement. Looking to the future for possible replacement of the HVAC system with heat pump cassette units that will provide heat and air conditioning to the building. Pricing, engineering, and timelines are being sourced for RIDE submissions.

On Friday February 28th, custodial interviews were conducted for four vacant positions. The open spots were filled with two at the high school, one at Riverside Middle School and one at Martin Middle School. Along with the positions that were vacated, Mr. Carpenter wished Jim Watson and Gil Soares a happy retirement. He thanked them for their time with the District and wished them the best of luck in the future.

3. Finance Update – Mr. Enos stated that FY24 is still not closed out yet. There are still some outstanding invoices from DCYF from September and October. There has been communications with the Auditor General. Mr. Luiz inquired about a deadline with DCYF. Mr. Enos stated that DCYF will give invoices to the Superintendent that are six months old. The invoices are already late. DCYF is having staffing issues. Revenue seems to be in a good spot.

- **FY23 Audit Presentation** – David Hansen, CPA from CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, reviewed the fiscal year 2023 audit results. As a best practice, they recommended the School Department establish a plan to rectify any potential fund deficits.

VI. Policy Committee Report

1. Building Access Policy – 1st read

Mr. deSimas reported that the purpose of this policy is to ensure the safety, security and privacy of students, staff and facilities by regulating access and visitor accompaniment protocols for School Committee members and District personnel. Legal counsel has reviewed the policy. Ms. Beauchaine stated again that School Committee members should have a background check on file and that she would like that added to the policy. Disciplinary action should be stated in the policy also.

Mr. Ferreira stated that he would support a background check. Only issue he has is where School Committee members are not allowed to go beyond a locked door. That would be a hindrance.

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

VII. Building Committee Report

Building Project Update – Mr. Carpenter reported that **Martin Middle School** construction is at 40% complete for phase I. Paint is ready for the 3rd floor and sheet rocking started on the 2nd floor. Curtainwall is complete and ductbank install for permanent power started. Interior finishes will start, electrical, fire protection and plumbing is ongoing.

Waddington Elementary School- During February break installed one window as a mock up. Ongoing coordination in preparation for phase II. Rooftop curving going in with five more windows during April break. Code compliance for library offices.

Riverside Middle School – Sprinkler adjustments in media center completed. The six-month warranty walkthrough was completed. 21% M/WBE participation was approved by RI DEDI. The eleven-month warranty walkthrough to take place in July.

Mr. Ferreira requested the engineering report regarding the water issues. He will put that on the agenda for the next meeting.

VIII. Public Comments

1. Libby Merrill, a resident of Ward 3 and parent of an East Providence elementary student, expressed sincere gratitude to Attorney General Neronha and RIDE Commissioner Angelica Infante-Green for recent guidance in supporting commitment to diversity in RI schools. She also thanked the District for maintaining current practices and collaborating to make East Providence schools a welcoming place for all students.

2. Tabitha Watjen shared a few comments. The Building Access Policy just discussed is not just for construction purposes but for all community members who may want to visit schools and to protect teachers, students and staff. It's not just for School Committee members. Mr. Ferreira brought up trust as elected officials and that should go both ways. It's a two-way street and needs to be cultivated. In this community, respect is lacking for teachers and administrators, especially on social media.

IX. Discussion/Action Items

1. Discussion re: School Bus Routes – Mr. deSimas – Superintendent Forand stated they give Oceanstate Transportation a CSV file. The District reviews the bus routes every year and does make adjustments. Mr. deSimas asked Dr. Forand to provide the Committee with that information regarding in-district and out-of-district routes. He has a concern with two students being dropped off at the same time.

2. Update on Numbers and Details on Maintenance Trucks – Mr. Ferreira

The District should look into labeling the back of the box trucks so they can separate what the trucks are being used for, such as plumbing, electrical etc. The maintenance trucks have been labeled with facilities and have numbers on the front fender and rear doors. Mr. Carpenter stated that trucks are mainly assigned to each maintenance member because their tools are there, however, that can change due to vehicle maintenance or necessities of the daily tasks throughout the District.

3. Missing Parts of Heating System at High School – Mr. Ferreira

Mr. Carpenter stated that the system is functional as is. The parts that were suggested would be add on parts. It may increase the efficiency, but not necessary. The District paid \$3,000 to reset and the system has been working well.

4. Three-inch Gap around Orlo Ceiling – Mr. Ferreira

Mr. Carpenter reported that the gap issue at the top of the windows at Orlo was addressed with the design team during the window installation in August of 2023. This was not a punch list item. The issue is that the width of the new window frame is now wider than the original which is causing a wider gap between the glass and ceiling. This has been discussed with the fire marshal on site and working on a solution to have a fire rated system to bridge the gap to stop the allowable airflow above the ceiling. Mr. Ferreira requested a cost analysis be put together.

5. Schedule to Clean Ducts in Cafeteria/Gym at all Schools – Mr. Ferreira requested an update on the last time the ducts were cleaned. Mr. Carpenter stated that they are cleaned two to three times per year. The filters were cleaned in February. A schedule has been put together for the summer for cleaning of ducts, vents, returns and coils. Also doing refrigerator and cooler/freezer units in kitchens, and the changing of rooftop unit filters, belts and needed repairs with the in-house HVAC technician.

Ms. Beauchaine suggested a facilities sub-committee to review what needs to be fixed in the buildings. Dr. Forand stated that the first Wednesday of the month at 8am is a Facilities Committee meeting. Mr. Ferreira requested the time be changed to later in the afternoon.

6. Consider & Vote to Approve FY23 Audit

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Fiscal Year 2023 audit as submitted.

Mr. deSimas inquired if there are any concerns with the audit. Mr. Enos stated that Mr. Hansen highlighted all the important points and the District has a surplus of \$60,000. Ms. Beauchaine stated she would like to have a Fund Deficit Policy for the District as recommended by the auditors. Mr. Enos gave credit to Mike Hubert for all his work.

X. Announcements – Ms. Beauchaine announced that the EPLAC Recognition Night will be held on Thursday, April 10th. Invitations will follow. Nominations have come in and judging has happened. The winners will find out soon. Next meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 25th at 6pm at Kent Heights School. Dr. Dana Brodin will be doing a presentation.

Mr. Queenan announced that Youth Art Month Opening Night will be held on March 12th at 5pm at Weaver Library. It's a gallery opening to celebrate students' artwork.

XI. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Corsi, Executive Assistant



Anthony Ferreira, School Committee Clerk