
**EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
OPEN SESSION – March 26, 2025**

I. Call to Order - Open Session

The East Providence School Committee met in Open Session on Wednesday, March 26, 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 6:01 pm.

II. Executive Session

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried unanimously to move into main office conference room for the purpose of: Hearing: appeal regarding student discipline and legal advice related thereto pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(8); Discussion regarding employee A job performance pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(1); and consider & vote on motion to adjourn and convene into public session.

III. Reconvene in Open Session (Regular Meeting)

Mr. Luiz called the meeting to order at 6:22 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. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to seal the minutes. Appropriate disclosure was made by the Chair concerning compliance with RIGL §42-46-5(a)(1) indicating that any person to be discussed had been appropriately notified in advance in writing and given the opportunity to have the discussion held in public session.

IV. Hearing: Appeal regarding Student Discipline if Requested by Parent

Attorney Henneous explained that the student discipline hearing is allowable by law and can be heard in open session. Students involved will be referred to as Student A and Student B. The parent requested a hearing because they are disagreeing with the Superintendent's disciplinary decision.

Mr. Black, Principal at EPHS and Alex Butler, Athletic Director, stated the facts of the January 13, 2025 incident at LaSalle Academy.

The police department was called and the East Providence High School student was arrested. Student A was notified that they were suspended from cheerleading. This incident is in violation of the student code of conduct that was signed. The student code of conduct is required for all athletes who register to participate at East Providence High School and is taken seriously. Meetings are held each season with athletes so they understand the conduct expected of athletes.

Assistant Superintendent stated that after the disciplinary decision was given by Mr. Butler and Mr. Black, an appeal was received. The remainder of the season was upheld. Cheerleading season is now over. Student A would have been eligible for the spring season.

Parent addressed the Committee and was well aware that the season is over and agrees that discipline should be given, but doesn't agree with the harsh punishment.

Mr. Henneous stated the Committee can support or overturn the decision.

V. Policy Committee Report

1. Naloxone Policy – 1st read – The only change in the policy is district personnel and medication was removed that is no longer used to treat. Now in compliance with procedures with the law.

2. Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Policy – 1st read - This policy was updated by the head nurse. One form was changed. AEDs are checked annually.

3. Anti-Bullying & Anti-Cyberbullying Policy – 1st read – The policy committee spent multiple sessions working on this policy and it is well structured with prevention measures. Definitions of bullying have been expanded upon from the prior policy. There will be drop boxes in each school. Principals are aware of every situation and investigations are conducted within five days.

4. Building Access Policy – 2nd read – A few changes were made based on Ms. Beauchaine's recommendations. Ms. Beauchaine stated that there should be a policy for school committee members and one for the general public that has a purpose for bad behavior, scope and definition of bad behavior. School Committee members should have a background check and sign in at every school.

Dr. Forand stated that a visitors policy was discussed at today's policy meeting. No visitor goes beyond the vestibule. If visitor behavior is inappropriate, they are not let in the vestibule. All vestibules are secure and most have a camera and a camera outside the door.

VI. Public Comments

1. Chrissy Rossi – She addressed the Committee regarding several policies; Anti-bullying Policy, Code of Conduct Policy and the Building Access Policy.
2. Karen Rebello – Principal of Pre-K recognized Jessica Beauchaine from Riverside Middle School PTSA this year and last year for sponsoring the Tiny Townies for a raffle because preschool doesn't have a PTA and they don't raise funds. Ms. Beauchaine has also supported many schools in the District. The Pre-K students have done so much work for reading week and it's important to recognize their academics and the projects they do as well.

Mr. Luiz thanked City Council President Bob Rodericks for coming out tonight and attending the meeting.

3. Kim Marratto – Teacher in the district stated that the tone at these School Committee meetings and on social media have been very negative. Negative things about schools, teachers and top administrators in the district are being said. She is hoping everyone can come together for the children, show respect and be positive. East Providence is a great community.

VII. Discussion / Action Items

1. **Substitutes** – Ms. Beauchaine would like to look at reinstating building-based subs in each building for next year. The District used to have them. She went through some teacher and paraprofessional absences who didn't have substitutes. It's harder to get subs on Mondays and Fridays. When this occurs, split classrooms have to happen with overages and may not be grade appropriate. She requested the Superintendent to consider working with the Finance Director to look at building-based subs in all buildings including preschool.

Dr. Forand stated that building-based substitutes would cost almost \$400,000. It's a big expense to the District. They were paid through a grant before. The District has greatly increased its sub list. The fill rates are the highest they've been.

Mr. deSimas requested data for days subs were filled and unfilled.

Mr. Queenan inquired if the cost is the same for building-based subs as it is for subs. Dr. Forand stated it is not the same and will show a sheet when someone who is permanently in the building vs. someone who picks up an opening. Dr. Forand stated there is a priority list when a teacher is absent. There is an order on how to handle the classroom if there is no substitute.

Mr. Luiz agrees with the need and is concerned about where to get funds and where the cuts would be.

Mr. Queenan would like to continue the conversation and find out how the system works.

2. Update on Special Education Audit – Ms. Beauchaine

Dr. Forand stated that they had an audit meeting today and she would be doing a presentation to show where the District has been and where they are going. There was some discussion on how to get engage parents.

3. **Food Bank** – Ms. Beauchaine reached out to the Superintendent due to the rising cost of food. She would like to have families come in when needed instead of making an appointment. Dr. Forand stated that they opened the food pantry two years ago. They have a partnership with the Career and Tech Center who prepare and freeze food which goes home to parents. Bags of food are sent out to schools every two weeks. If a family is in need, they can call Stacy Messier and she will meet with them. Her phone number is in the family newsletter.

Social workers also refer families. No one is turned away. Food drives have been done as well. Dr. Forand is speaking with an organization to help over the summer. Mr. Luiz supports having the pantry open more hours.

4. Establishing Hours for Track and Tennis Courts – Ms. Beauchaine stated that as a resident of East Providence she is tired of driving her daughter to use Barrington tennis courts. She inquired as to when would be the best time to walk the track and open up the tennis courts when students aren't using them.

Dr. Forand stated that the track is open up to 11pm until the end of school. Tennis courts are open to the public between 6:30am to 3pm during the summer. If open to the public after 3pm, someone would have to open and lock up. There are no custodians on the weekends.

Mr. Luis stated that residents were told the public would have access to the track and tennis courts. If they get trashed, then it will be closed up.

Mr. Ferreira stated that he supports opening up the facility to families in this city. The public owns it and it keeps kids off the street.

Mr. Queenan stated there is no signage when the courts are open. Someone needs to open and lock up. Dr. Forand mentioned to the Mayor about recreation staff being available to do this.

5. Building Access Policy – 2nd read

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by a vote of 4-1 to approve the second reading of the Building Access Policy as submitted with additional language that School Committee members must have a background check. Mr. Ferreira voted nay.

6. Uphold Superintendent's Decision for Student Discipline

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by a vote of 4-1 to uphold the Superintendent's decision for student discipline as submitted. Mr. Ferreira voted nay.

7. Proposed Certified Employee A Resignation

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by unanimous consent to approve the proposed certified employee A resignation as discussed in executive session.

8. RFP for Electrical Services – Steel Framed Building EPHS

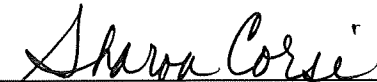
Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by unanimous consent to table this item until the next meeting. Additional information is needed.

IX. Announcements – Mr. Queenan announced there is a public art gallery on display at Weaver Library to celebrate the students artwork in the district. One student from grades K-12 represents their grade at each school.

X. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Corsi, Executive Assistant



Anthony Ferreira, School Committee Clerk