
EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING OPEN SESSION – April 8, 2025

I. Call to Order - Open Session

The East Providence School Committee met in open session on Tuesday, April 8, 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 6:04 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence were observed.

II. Student Liaisons – Ty Messier shared some updates from the high school community. The third quarter has officially wrapped up. Final grades will be submitted on Friday and report cards will be available for families on Skyward by end of day of April 22. The National Honor Society hosted a successful paint night fundraiser with a fantastic turnout. This week EPHS is proud to host the Rhode Island High School Band Festival during the school day from April 9-11. PSATs and SATs went smoothly with over 90% participation. The class of 2025 will be hosting a car wash fundraiser at the end of the month. Congratulations to the EPHS Theater for their performance of *Newsies!* It was a fantastic show. Spring sports are in full swing.

Ms. Beauchaine asked TY, in his opinion, if the cellphone use policy among students is working at the high school. Ty stated that last year it was definitely a problem but is much better this year. In his classes, it's not a huge problem or that big an issue now.

III. Consent Agenda

1. **Communications** – Enrollment numbers, monthly technology data and information on Coastline Employee Assistant Program services.

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

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

March 11, 2025 Open Session School Committee Meeting

March 26, 2025 Executive & Open Session School Committee Meeting

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

4. **Personnel Report**

Appointments – Ashley Campbell, Paraprofessional at Oldham Pre-K, effective 3/17/2025;

Veronica Smith, Paraprofessional at Oldham Pre-K, effective 3/20/2025; Susie Teves,

Paraprofessional at Oldham Pre-K, effective 3/14/2025; Brittany Roy, Paraprofessional at

Waddington Elementary, effective 3/24/2025; Shannon Costa, Administrative Assistant at

Oldham Pre-K, effective 3/25/2025; and Nadia Cabral, MLL Family Service Coordinator at Admin Office, effective 4/14/2025.

Resignations – Stephanie Munro, Paraprofessional, effective 3/12/2025; Erica Perez,

Administrative Assistant at Oldham Pre-K, effective 3/26/2025; Edward Camara, Plumber in

Maintenance, effective 4/5/2025; and Craig Enos, Director of Finance for the District, effective 5/31/2025.

Retirements – Kathryn Davey, Music Teacher at Silver Spring/Martin Middle/Pre-K, effective end of the 2024-2025 school year.

Leave of Absence – Paraprofessional at Whiteknact, effective 4/3/2025.

5. Bill List

- Voucher No. 1063 dated 10/31/2024 - \$149,344.09
- Voucher No. 1064 dated 10/31/2024 - \$52,830.10
- Voucher No. 1020 dated 3/12/2025 – \$892.50
- Voucher No. 1021 dated 3/14/2025 - \$324.89
- Voucher No. 1022 dated 3/26/2025 - \$194,482.27
- Voucher No. 1024 dated 4/3/2025 - \$1,848,863.07

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

- Ai3 Basic Services MMS - \$46,713.27
- Ai3 Supplemental Services MMS - \$23,350.43
- Ai3 Basic Services Wadd - \$18,792.28
- Ai3 Supplemental Services Wadd - \$5,258.00
- Peregrine Group - \$62,920.00
- Shawmut MMS - \$3,347,511.32
- Shawmut Wadd – February 2025 - \$92,610.61
- Shawmut Wadd – March 2025 - \$34,632.25
- Stephen Turner, Inc. MMS - \$1,987.00
- Stephen Turner, Inc. Wadd - \$102.00
- Thielsch Engineering – \$9,418.48
- Willscot – April - \$2,038.75

Stage III Total - \$3,645,334.39

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

Ms. Beauchaine stated that she has had the privilege to work with the Finance Director the past several years and Craig Enos has been the ultimate best and this District will miss him. He has worked on the Martin project and school district and has put his heart and soul into it.

IV. PTO/PTA/EPLAC Reports – Ms. Beauchaine announced that the 17th Annual EPLAC Recognition Night is Thursday, April 10th and invitations have gone out. The event will be catered by Rosa's Tavern in East Providence. Please respond as soon as possible if you haven't already.

V. Superintendent's Report

1. Project Change Presentation – Steven Bernard gave a presentation on bullying in schools and shared a personal tragic event that happened in his life thirty-seven years ago when he was in high school. He requested to address the students about bullying.

2. Educational Update Presentation – Lindsey Reilly gave an overview of the EPSD priorities. The District has a number of teams and committees with over 125 stakeholders guiding work that is aligned to the goals and priorities of the District Strategic Plan. Her presentation was a high level overview of the work leadership teams play and what each of the major focus areas are. SRSD is an evidence based writing framework being implemented in phases across the district and is currently in all elementary schools, in ELA and Social Studies classrooms at the middle school level, and more recently, in grade 9 ELA at EPHS. Much of the success in implementing SRSD in schools is credited to the teacher leadership supporting these efforts. This work started back in the 2021-22 school year. Ms. Reilly and MLL Director, Yanaiza Gallant continue to collaboratively lead it.

This year the PD Committee has centered its efforts on the DSP goal of fostering professional learning communities. The Committee is creating a resource bank for all staff to make the most of professional collaboration time, ensuring it is used as efficiently and effectively as possible. Two key areas of focus for PD have been LETRS (Right to Read proficiency training) and Math Advantage. There are teacher leaders in the district who have become trainers for these programs and courses, enabling the district to provide high-quality professional development opportunities to teachers within the district.

Leading for Learning is a professional learning and collaboration series designed for administrators. This learning occurs within schools through focused instructional rounds. Through this process, they also support the host schools and their school improvement teams by aligning their work and findings with their identified problems of practice.

MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) is a framework that provides varying levels of academic, behavioral and social emotional support to all students. It serves all students by offering universal support for everyone, targeted interventions for those who need extra help and intensive support for those with more significant needs, ensuring that every student receives the appropriate assistance to succeed. The district level MTSS initiative is a multi-year effort which began in the 2023-2024 school year by conducting a district-wide needs assessment. This school year, they have split into two working groups; academic and behavioral/social/emotional and are currently developing a framework that includes systems, structures, flowcharts and decision rules that will guide this work in each of the schools.

Lisa Benedetti-Ramzi reiterated that the MTSS Teams have broken into two groups, (A Academics and B Behavioral/SEL). The B group has worked together to establish vision for SEL supports and interventions in the District that works within the mission for MTSS as a whole. Their goal is to provide guidance for teachers as they work with their students at the varying levels of intervention.

The work in Health and Wellness is lead by Stacey Messier and Ryan Queenan with a committee of students, teachers and administrators who meet quarterly. They have created a one-pager

infographic to highlight the elements of the wellness policy. They are meeting with a RIDE representative to look at best offerings for schools. They are working on an action planning template to ensure all health and wellness goals are met and monitored.

The Safety Team is a district-wide collaboration with the union members and leadership and administrators at both the district and school levels and are working on a new Code of Conduct to create a district-wide discipline matrix.

The District Threat Assessment Team is a comprehensive team of teachers, administrators and members of the EPPD and EPFD who meet monthly. Their focus is on ALICE implementation and safety throughout the district.

Dr. Forand has the Supt's Advisory Committee which is made up of members from all schools and meets bi-monthly and was created to provide an important voice for teachers and staff in the district's decision-making process and to provide the Superintendent with insights, suggestions and perspectives on critical educational issues. The committee will enable better educational and administrative decisions, which will ultimately lead to creating a better environment for teaching and learning. The teachers create the agenda based on questions and concerns from the staff in their schools.

The District Evaluation Committee is made up of teachers and administrators and meets quarterly. The purpose of the committee is to review the effectiveness of the evaluation system, the validity of the data, the fairness, accuracy and consistency of decisions made and the currency of the system. The committee uses the information from the analysis to make recommendations for revisions. Committee members also hear appeals to evaluation ratings.

The Special Education Advisory Committee is working on the ten recommendations from the audit that was conducted in the 2023-24 school year. Subcommittees are currently focused on four of the recommendations for this year which include MTSS, Placement of Framework, Quality Inclusion and Purposeful Collaboration. At the May meeting there will be a full presentation by the Pupil Personnel Department on the work that has been done.

Dr. Forand stated that they are truly grateful to all of the 125 staff members and administrators that have volunteered to participate on these committees. Many of the meetings are held after school. They look forward to continuing the work.

Ms. Beauchaine inquired about when the social/emotional referral document will be available. Ms. Benedetti-Ramzi stated that they have a referral document which is in the works. There is another session with the collaborative groups and will be doing more work and getting out this year as a pilot. The document to refer to refer will be improved and should be ready for next year.

Also, Ms. Beauchaine asked about the health and wellness committee and their action plan template which helps guide their work. She also asked about when they will see the policy infographic and where the public can find it. This will be discussed at the next health and wellness meeting in May.

She also inquired about when the discipline matrix that the safety team is working on will be implemented. It will be ready the beginning of next year.

Ms. Beauchaine would like to revisit the special education advisory committee in May. She wants a parent involved in the committee.

Dr. Forand stated that today she met with Family Service of RI. The district has a partnership with EBCAP, a school based clinic across from the high school for mental health services, a food pantry and they just hired an MLL coordinator this week who can help direct families to services. Stacy Messier also connects families to food and services. She is very proud of the work that this district is doing that goes unrecognized.

3. Finance Update – Mr. Enos reported that FY24 has officially closed and they are processing the final invoices. FY24 ended with a surplus of \$38,778. For FY25 they continue to stay the course and will monitor all the lines.

Ms. Beauchaine inquired about the 2025-26 school year and how it looks for the district. Mr. Enos stated there will be some challenges. State aid projection looks good but won't be solidified until June. If there's a cut, it won't be so good. The District is looking at a health care increase of 8.25% and next month will be doing an RFP for transportation services. The Paraprofessionals contract will be coming up and they will need to do negotiations.

VI. Policy Committee Report

1. Visitor Behavior Policy – 1st read

Dr. Forand stated that this policy will be posted on the doors at all schools. There were a few suggestions that will be added to this policy for a second read. Ms. Beauchaine would like to add offensive comments regarding school staff on school grounds under district prohibits the following behaviors by parents/guardians and visitors. Mr. Queenan stated that who has the authority to provide a written warning or suspension is not outlined in the policy. The building Principal, in consultation with the Superintendent, will determine consequences as appropriate will be added so that it is clearly defined. He also recommended that *on school buses* be added to the list of locations for bad behavior.

Mr. Luis stated that the District has had an increase in complaints at our schools about inappropriate behavior by visitors towards our staff. Ms. Beauchaine stated that this policy is to protect staff and students in our schools.

Mr. Ferreira asked for a breakdown of assault and battery on staff members. Dr. Forand always informs the School Committee if there are any serious issues. He also requested a report on

the buses and a copy of student conduct reports. Dr. Forand stated that there are consequences for inappropriate behavior on the bus and is addressed. Ms. Clarkin and principals are involved in the writeups.

2. Anti-Bullying & Cyberbullying Policy – 2nd read

Ms. Beauchaine mentioned at the last meeting for the 1st read about adding the loss of bus privilege as a consequence. It will be added to the 2nd read. She inquired about a legal agreement where the school department can press charges for bullying. This will be followed up with legal counsel.

3. Naloxone Policy – 2nd read – No discussion.

4. Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Policy – 2nd read

Dr. Forand thanked Amanda Lakin, District Head Nurse, who added additional language to this policy for compliance with the law and best practices.

VII. Building Committee Report

Building Project Update – Mr. Carpenter highlighted some items from the April 7th Building Committee meeting. At Martin the ceiling grid and paint has started on third and second floors. Outside work to begin next week. RI Energy will be working on a new gas line to be installed over April vacation. At Waddington wall tiles have been installed. Boilers will be demoed. The site mitigation is under the review of DEM and the Army Corps of Engineers. If approval is received, it should be done in June. He explained that the Army Corps of Engineers is involved because the building is considered historical.

Mr. Enos stated that in the initial approval from RIDE in 2022, was for Waddington, Martin Middle School and Orlo Avenue with a five-year timeline. The approval was for accessibility upgrades at Orlo. The \$600K set aside for housing aid approval can be requested from RIDE to allocate funds to Waddington for this issue. The project needs to be completed by 2027. Mr. Enos stated that it simply requires a letter of request from the Superintendent and submitted for approval by the School Committee. An MOA will be sent for the School Committee to sign. Moving funds from Orlo to Waddington will be good.

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to move public comments to after the discussion/action items.

VIII. Public Comments

1. Marco Pacheco, parent of a student at Waddington, spoke about the conditions of the grounds at Waddington school, specifically in the back of the building leading towards the basketball court and classrooms. The conditions are horrible and it's been a decades long problem. He questioned the drainage issue there and why it hasn't been addressed.

2. Brad Macdowall, who works with BusPatrol, gave an overview of the school bus safety program. The program is to reduce illegal passes of school buses and can be installed on every bus.
3. Renee Ignacio - Shared her support of the BusPatrol school bus safety program for the safety of the students.
4. Julia Dempsey – Addressed the Committee regarding students who park their cars near the senior center. They continuously drive through her yard and park in her yard. She addressed this issue with the Mayor as well. Mr. Luis will follow up on this matter.
5. Tori Jessop Crowley – She is following up from October and has a deep concern about students identifying with dyslexia in the district and is requesting the District to fully implement the RIDE PLP guidance and train educators in appropriate interventions.
6. Kim Maratto – Taxpayer and Reading specialist at the middle school level stated that they are piloting a PLP program to identify students who were identified through the MTSS. She also stated that the district needs to get it together and start speaking about education, not facilities for most of the meeting.
7. Logan Moniz – Parent in the district and EPLAC Chair. She stated that in January, February and March, EPLAC had three awesome workshops. April 10th is EPLAC Recognition Night to recognize students, staff and administrators. EPLAC continues to engage in family outreach. She thanked the School Committee for their continued partnership.

IX. Discussion/Action Items

1. Facilities Committee Meeting Update – Mr. Ferreira stated they had a positive meeting on Wednesday afternoon and discussed four to five items. He will bring them to the School Committee for a discussion or action item so the items can get taken care of.

2. Continued Discussion on Building Based Subs – Mr. Queenan wanted to pick up this discussion after the last meeting. Dr. Forand stated that she sent the Committee a document showing the fill rate for this year and last year. This year the District had fill rates of 90% filled. Lynn Fontaine has done an amazing job getting subs. A building-based sub cannot take the first listing. The system is not designed for that. Last year they couldn't fill classroom positions so they had to pay covers. This year there was a huge improvement. Unfortunately there is a lot of mandatory professional development that is required to be done during the day. The Committee will continue to have conversations during budget season, especially with the 8.25% increase in health care and 20% in transportation, step increases and contractual increases for next year.

3. Late Buses – Mr. Luiz inquired about the protocols with Diana Clarkin, Director of Operations, on the three late buses at Riverside, Martin and the high school. If a student is on one of the late buses, an administrator or teacher will have a list of names of who should be riding the bus. Very rarely has anybody gotten on a bus that shouldn't be on the bus. If there are students misbehaving on a bus, the proper protocol for the bus driver to take is to calm students down with the help of a bus monitor if there is a monitor on the bus. The driver will identify the infraction and a write up is submitted to Ms. Clarkin's office which in turn gets sent to the Principal.

If there is an instance where a bus driver is directed to call the police when on the road, the protocol is to call dispatch to get information on what to do and Ms. Clarkin will get called.

Mr. deSimas inquired if the bus drivers have a panic button. Ms. Clarkin stated they have a radio and their cell phone. The cameras on the bus are not remote cameras.

4. Anti-Bullying & Cyberbullying Policy – 2nd read

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the 2nd read of the Anti-Bullying & Cyberbullying Policy as submitted with modifications.

5. Naloxone Policy – 2nd read –

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to approve the 2nd read of the Naloxone Policy as submitted.

6. AED Policy – 2nd read

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the 2nd read of the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) policy as submitted.

7. RFP for Electrical Services-Steel Framed Building EPHS

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to approve the RFP for electrical services-steel framed building at EPHS as submitted.

8. Martin Middle School Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment (FF&E) RFP Award

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Martin Middle School furniture, fixtures & equipment award to Fischer Science Education, C&G Fitness Equipment, Inc., Hertz Furniture Systems, Inc., Johnson Scientific, Lakeshore Learning Materials, LLC, Monitor Equipment, Inc., Sheehan's Office and WB Mason for a total of \$1,178,177.26 for phases I and 2 as submitted.

9. RIDE Stage II OPM Contract for Services

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Owner's Project Management contract for services to Peregrine Group, LLC for \$8,000 per month as submitted.

10. RIDE Stage II Architect Contract for Services

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to approve the architect contract for services to Studio Jaed for \$145,000 for RIDE Stage II 2025 submission as submitted.

11. Repair High School Track – Mr. Ferreira

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by unanimous consent to repair the high school track with much discussion. No action will be taken until a price is received.

Mr. Ferreira stated this issue came up at the facilities meeting. 400 feet of cracking on the track has been ongoing since it was discovered four years ago. It needs to be addressed before it becomes a legal matter. A quote was given for \$500K to repair the issue. The asphalt is pulling away and it could be a water issue. There may have been other contributing factors they're not aware of. The cracks **do not** affect the running lanes. The Committee will explore different options on how to permanently fix this issue. Currently, the track has a five-year warranty. Mr. Carpenter stated that three other high schools are having the same issues.

12. Fix Fire Stop on Top of Windows at Orlo – Mr. Ferreira

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by unanimous consent to fix the fire stop on top of the windows at Orlo Avenue School as submitted with discussion. Mr. Carpenter stated that this has passed fire inspections in 2023 and 2024. Sprinklers are in the schools. This project will be started next week when the students are on spring break and will be complete before school starts in September.

13. Have Ducts Cleaned in all the Schools – Mr. Ferreira

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to have the ducts cleaned in all the schools with discussion. No action will be taken until prices are received. This project may have to go out to RFP. Mr. Carpenter to get more quotes.

X. Announcements – Mr. deSimas acknowledged Deborah Brun who was recognized as the 2025 Rhode Island Mathematics Teacher of the Year.

XI. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Corsi, Executive Assistant


Anthony Ferreira, School Committee Clerk