
EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING OPEN SESSION – June 26, 2025

I. Call to Order - Open Session

The East Providence School Committee met in open session on Thursday, June 26, 2025 at 6:00 pm in the auditorium at East Providence High School. 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. BusPatrol School Bus Safety Program Question & Answer Session

Brad Macdowall, Community Partnerships Manager from BusPatrol, gave an update on the school bus safety program. It addresses illegal passing of school buses and is AI generated. A law was proposed in Washington mandating this equipment be on all new school buses by 2027.

There was discussion on the financial breakdown of revenue for the district. Waiting on new legislation to pass in RI. Mr. Luiz stated that the Governor signed legislation today. Mr. Macdowall stated that he met with the City and they were frustrated with the breakdown of revenue.

BusPatrol will install and maintain cameras from start to finish on all buses. Law enforcement will be involved and agreement has to be approved by the Police Chief. City and the District will need to sign the contract.

Ms. Beauchaine stated the Committee would like to do this the best way they can before the first day of school without putting the district in a deficit. School safety is a top priority.

Mr. Luiz stated that, per legal counsel, the Committee cannot vote on this program because it was not on the agenda for approval this evening.

Mr. Queenan requested an approved contract be shared with the Committee and legal counsel.

III. Ocean State Transit Question & Answer Session

Andy Donnelly from Ocean State Transit appeared for the Committee to answer any questions regarding bus transportation. Mr. Queenan inquired what the policy is on having outside vendors using cameras on the buses. Andy responded that there is no issue, just need an installation coordination piece added to the contract.

There is training and professional development for all staff. They do drug testing and background checks as well. All drivers have been trained. There is another training on August 12 for the startup of school. There are eight trainings per year for drivers.

Ms. Beauchaine stated that the contract they were given didn't have indemnity, liability and driver qualifications. Andy stated that the contract references the RFP that has the information in it.

Buses and vans do have internal cameras.

Ms. Clarkin stated that Oceanstate has been a good partner with being transparent. All student issues on buses go to her. The district has 36 buses and 15 vans. Stop arm cameras are on 8 of the 36 buses.

Ms. Clarkin stated that it was the decision as to which buses received cameras of the police department. The district has an older contract which has rolled over since 2010. They are attempting to change this.

There are four head cameras on order to be installed in a few weeks.

A few changes need to be made to the contract. Ms. Beauchaine requested that all school committee members get confirmation that legal counsel reviewed the contract.

Dr. Forand stated that the district's requirements for transportation needs have changed over the last few years.

Andy stated that they review all contracts and work with districts to improve. They investigate new technologies regarding student safety.

Mr. deSimas stated that Ms. Clarkin has done a great job with reviewing transportation costs. There will hopefully be some opportunities for savings but there are some things out of their control.

Mr. Ferreira stated that Ocean State buses are very clean on the inside and outside.

IV. 2025-2026 Budget Update

Superintendent Forand stated that she and the finance director are currently working on the budget and are still waiting on two federal grants to have the final dollar amount. Federal funding was cut by \$339,000. The district has 793 employees and they are going through transfers and new hires. Last year the first budget workshop was on July 30th.

The District will lose \$468,000 in state aid for the CRAFT program but no longer have to pay for out of district transportation. Letters have been going out to notify all districts that East Providence will no longer be responsible for CRAFT students as of July 1st. There will be additional savings in out of district and transportation line items.

Staffing is the biggest line item. Interviews were finished in early May and the majority of positions were filled already. There are only a couple of openings left to fill.

Mr. Ferreira would like to sit on the interview committee for the carpenter position which was posted on April 30th.

V. Public Comments

1. Renee Ignacio thanked Brad Macdowall for speaking. She stated that a month ago she spoke about a service being offered for free and the school committee liked the idea and did some research on the school bus safety program. In February she was asked to bring information to the city which she did. She went back to the city council last Tuesday evening for support. The city council said it was a school committee decision. Student safety has been her passion.

2. Chrissy Rossi stated that the contract for cameras was signed by the last police chief and Superintendent Forand. The contract expired in December. She suggested the school department double check with new legislation and East Providence has a municipal court. Tickets are being issued through the police department. It doesn't say it has to go to the City Council or Mayor through Title 16. The School Committee has all the power.

VI. Discussion /Action Items

1. Facilities Summer Projects Update – Mr. Ferreira

Dan Carpenter stated that Orlo windows project started Wednesday, June 18th, approximately four rooms per day and should be wrapping up later this week/early next week. EPHS steel building electrical has been run to the building. Duarte Corporation has stated assembly on Wednesday, June 18th. PA systems have been started at Myron J. Francis by SYNET and they will work from school to school throughout the summer. Dishwashers are set to be removed on July 2nd with delivery of the new ones on July 17th. Startups are scheduled for August 15th. Two uninvents have been pulled and are being replaced currently in rooms 1 and 2 at Whiteknact. Two others are being saved for Francis kindergarten rooms to upgrade existing undersized units and will be installed after Whiteknact is finished. Kent Heights playground shade install for kindergarten will be taking place once Orlo is completed with the window work.

RIDE submission work (July 1) will include Orlo drainage work and Hennessey/Orlo paving to start as soon as the District gets the green light from the state.

Silver Spring teachers' lounge cabinets will be painted by school department painters next month. Eighty cabinets are set to be shipped on July 7th for Waddington cabinet installation. Duct cleaning RFP is set to come back for bid opening on Wednesday, June 25th. EPHS repairs to bathroom walls are to take place next week by school department painters. Mulching of playgrounds will take place at the end of July/early August to coincide with our playground inspection that has been scheduled with the Trust. AirMasters HVAC is procuring the required items for the installation of the new BMS systems throughout the District. Photos of work happening around the District were given to the Committee.

Mr. Ferreira inquired about dates for the summer projects. Dr. Forand stated that this is summertime and dates are flexible. There was a small crew working this week and they were

working on issues due to the hot weather. The goal is to have all projects done by the end of the summer.

Mr. Ferreira requested a list of what each trade is working on. Mr. de Simas stated that this should be brought up at a facilities subcommittee meeting. The next meeting is Wednesday, July 2nd.

2. 2025-2026 Chartwells Food Service Agreement

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the 2025-2026 Chartwells Food Service Agreement renewal as submitted.

3. Award RFP for Bus Transportation

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to award the RFP for bus transportation to Ocean State Transit as submitted.

4. Bus Transportation Contract

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to table this item until the next meeting.

5. EPHS Ital Trip in April 2026

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to approve the East Providence High School trip to Italy April 17th – April 25, 2026 as submitted.

VII. Announcements – Mr. deSimas took a moment to thank Senate President Lawson, Senators Britto and Lauria, House Majority Whip Kazarian and Representatives Dawson, Furtado and Boylan for their leadership in passing critical legislation that changes who is financially responsible for students attending the Children’s Residential and Family Treatment—CRAFT—Program at Bradley Hospital.

For too long, East Providence taxpayers have shouldered the cost for students from across the state attending this program simply because it’s located here in our city. Over the past three years, that has cost the district over \$2.5 million—including more than \$600,000 in transportation—while only receiving \$1.4 million in state aid, leaving local taxpayers to make up the difference.

This legislation will now require that the student’s home community cover these costs, just as they would with any out-of-district placement. It’s a fair and long-overdue change that protects our resources while still ensuring these vulnerable children receive the care and education they need.

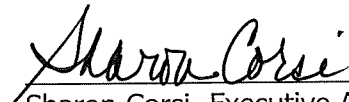
Again, we’re grateful to all our local and state leaders who helped make this happen and stood up for East Providence’s students and taxpayers.

Ms. Beauchaine thanked Superintendent and Mayor DaSilva for speaking. Happy 4th!

VIII. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. deSimas 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