
EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING OPEN SESSION – September 9, 2025

I. Call to Order - Open Session

The East Providence School Committee met in Open Session on Tuesday, September 9, 2025 at 6:00 pm in council chambers at East Providence City Hall. Present: Davd Luiz, Chair, Antonio deSimas, Vice Chair, Anthony Ferreira, Clerk, Ryan Queenan and Jessica Beauchaine. Superintendent Forand and Assistant Superintendent Lisa Benedetti-Ramzi were also present. Mr. Luiz called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

II. Executive Session

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried unanimously to move into the conference room for the purpose of: Discussion 25-047K In re: Residence of D. Does Pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(2); Discussion re: Potential Litigation Pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(2); 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 7:04 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. Queenan, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by unanimous consent to seal the minutes.

IV. Student Liaison – Hope Moran from East Providence High School was happy to share some exciting updates as they begin the new academic year. Classes are officially in session. The staff has begun administering beginning of the year diagnostics to better understand student needs and set the tone for academic growth. The start of school was kicked off with a highly successful freshman orientation and a new school theme was revealed, “Locked In”, which has already inspired enthusiasm and commitment among students. Clubs and activities are now back in motion, with highlights including both DECA and SkillsUSA teams competing at the international level this past summer. Excitement is building for the annual Townie Pride Parade on Friday, October 3rd which is always a cherished tradition and an incredible display of community spirit. The athletic programs are off to an impressive start this season. The start of this year has been nothing short of inspiring and students look forward to carrying this momentum forward. With students, staff and families “Locked In”, there is no limit to what can be achieved together.”

V. Consent Agenda

1. **Communications** – Enrollment numbers and monthly technology data were included in the school committee packet.
2. **Home School Requests** – Fifty-three homeschooling requests.
3. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - August 5, 2025 Special Open Session School Committee Meeting
 - August 12, 2025 Executive & Open Session School Committee Meeting

- August 28, 2025 Open Session School Committee Meeting
- August 7, 2025 Building Committee Meeting

4. **Personnel Report**

Appointments – Dawn Almstrom, Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel for the District, effective 8/25/25; Christina Benoit, Paraprofessional at Hennessey, effective 8/26/25; Kiah Gemmell, School Nurse at Hennessey, effective 8/25/25; Marsha Giroux, Paraprofessional at Orlo, effective 8/26/25; Danielle Mayette, Math Teacher at Riverside Middle School, effective 8/25/25; Krista van Dale, Reading Specialist at EPHS, effective 8/25/25; Amie Plante, Art Teacher at Orlo/Whiteknact, effective 8/25/25; Jessica Chartrand-Bolton, Paraprofessional at Oldham ELC, effective 8/26/25; Victoria Blaser, Library Media Specialist at Riverside Middle School, effective 8/26/25; Christopher Kiley, Trades Tech Assistant at CTC, effective 8/26/25; Yiping Wang, Paraprofessional at Whiteknact, effective 8/26/25; Gabriella Longo, School Nurse at Riverside Middle School, effective 9/4/25; Manisha Perdereaux, Paraprofessional at Silver Spring, effective 8/26/24; Kelly Amaral, Occupational Therapist at Riverside Middle School/Orlo, effective 8/25/25; and Shayna Lepore, Culinary Tech Assistant at CTC, effective 9/8/25.

Resignations – Melissa Harrington, Paraprofessional at Kent Heights, effective 8/22/25; Lauren Demers, Library Media Specialist at Riverside Middle School, effective 8/19/25; Matthew Christensen, Resource Teacher at EPHS, effective 8/21/25; Erick Vera-Garzon, Custodian Nights at EPHS, effective 8/19/25; Taylor Streeper, Paraprofessional at Whiteknact, effective 8/12/25; Yanaiza Gallant, MLL Director for the District, effective 9/20/25; Harika Keskin, Math Teacher at Riverside Middle School, effective 7/7/25; and Dawn Houle, School Nurse at Riverside Middle School, effective 7/7/25.

Retirements – None

Recalls – Molly Strong, Kindergarten Teacher at Myron J. Francis, effective 8/25/25; Eric Olson, Kindergarten Teacher at Waddington, effective 8/25/25; and Caitlin Bourgeois, Grade 5 Teacher at Silver Spring, effective 8/25/25.

Leaves of Absence – Kindergarten Teacher at Silver Spring, effective 2025-2026 school year.

5. **Bill List**

- Voucher No. 1045 dated 8/26/25 – \$57,939.91
- Voucher No. 1046 dated 9/04/25 - \$1,164,773.67

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

- Ai3 Basic Services MMS - \$59,078.54
- Ai3 Supplemental Services MMS - \$34,694.81
- Ai3 Basic Services – Wadd - \$46,980.70
- Ai3 Supplemental Services Wadd - \$9,088.38
- Peregrine Group - \$91,300.00
- Shawmut MMS - \$2,970,905.69
- Shawmut Wadd - \$2,108,053.16
- Stephen Turner, Inc. MMS - \$8,305.75
- Stephen Turner, Inc. Wadd - \$10,621.50
- Thielsch Engineering - \$13,137.72
- PODS – \$233.20

- Willscot – July - \$2,930.44
- Willscot – Aug - \$2,944.42
- COX - \$18,267.00

Stage III Total - \$5,326,541.31

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

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to move up Stop Arm Camera Update on the agenda.

Police Chief Rapoza stated that the installation of cameras on the buses will be starting on September 27th. Training will start on September 15th on the use of the cameras and will include school department representation. The Police Chief explained that the delay in installation was due to a form that needed to be signed on who was going to pay the bill. The municipal courts will be collecting fines. There is no charge to the school department. A police department representative will attend the next meeting to explain how violations will be processed.

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to move up the Building Committee Report.

Anne DaSilva from Peregrine Group went through the OPM report from the Building Committee meeting on September 8, 2025.

Martin – Site capping is underway on the north side. M/WBE is holding steady at 13% and continues to be included to RIDE and includes hard and soft costs. One item being tracked in the budget is the auditorium changes. At the next building committee meeting the full cost of the auditorium ceiling renovations will be presented.

The turnover to the school department is Thanksgiving. Phase II turnover will be in Q4 of 2027. Interior finishes are ongoing as they make their way down from 3rd floor. Site work is ongoing with pavement, curbs, sidewalk, fixtures and landscaping. Furniture installation will be the beginning of November. Photos of the progress made were presented.

Waddington – Building and fire department inspections were done the end of August. August 22nd was the classroom turnover to teachers. M/WBE is holding at 13% and includes hard and soft costs. Open item is the drainage work. Will be finalizing all the punch lists and closing out the end of the week. Site drainage improvements slated to be completed in October. Looking at two lifts at Waddington. Photos of the work completed for phase II were shown.

Mr. Luiz inquired on how confident they are that the drainage issue will be complete. Anne stated that they are very confident that issue could be finished earlier. Mr. Ferreira asked if the budget is ok on the drainage project. Anne stated that the number shown includes the drainage issue. They are making sure all improvements are made.

Ms. Beauchaine stated that the next Building Committee meeting is October 6th. It was moved due to the following Monday being a holiday. All meetings are open to the public.

VI. Superintendent's Report

1. Introduction of New Employees in Administration – Ms. Beauchaine requested to have this put on the agenda so the Committee can put a name with a face of the new employees in administration: Dawn Almstrom, Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Annie Vernon, Assistant Principal at Myron J. Francis, Madison Dulude, Staff Accountant at central office and Mileena Delgado, Controller at central office. Ms. Beauchaine thanked all for joining them this evening.

2. ESY Program – Ms. Beauchaine requested an update.

Mylissa Moon gave an overview of the Extended School Year (ESY) program. ESY is a special education service under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that provides eligible students with disabilities instruction beyond the regular school year. It is designed to prevent significant regression in skills that the student would be unable to recoup within a reasonable time when school resumes. The length and format is a modified version of the school day. It must align with the student's IEP goals (e.g. reading, speech therapy, occupational therapy and behavioral support). If the IEP team determines a student needs ESY, the school district is required to provide it at no cost to the family. ESY is not summer school but a tailored service to help certain students maintain critical skills so they don't lose substantial progress over extended breaks.

For ESY 2025 there were 135 students serviced with 69% in attendance; 17 teachers with 97% attendance rate; and 31 paraprofessionals with an 88% attendance rate. Other summer work this past summer included 37 team meetings and 10 screenings. ESY is funded through the general fund.

3. Homeschool/Private School Enrollment Update – Ms. Beauchaine requested the number of students that returned from private schools or from being homeschooled. There were 46 students who returned to the District. There were 53 homeschool students this month. Total enrollment is at 5,188. High school is at 1,705 students. Numbers are high and they may have to reconsider options going forward especially with students coming out of preschool. Superintendent Forand sends a chart that has the number of students in each class to the Committee every Friday. Grades K, Gr. 1 and 3 are closed. Grades 2, 4 and 5 are still open. Mr. Queenan stated that looking at the data, 46 students came back into the district with 20 students from homeschooling and the middle school seeing not just homeschool students but also private school students coming back.

Mr. Queenan asked the Superintendent to put together a snapshot of what the District finished at in May of each year to look at the enrollment. Superintendent Forand stated that the District had two demographic studies. Enrollment in East Providence is trending.

4. Transportation Efficiency Safety Update – Mr. deSimas

Superintendent Forand stated that Dr. Carreno at the Rhode Island Department of Education reached out to them in July about looking at the efficiency of bus routes. He will be able to attend the next meeting to discuss the study. Mr. deSimas stated that it could be a potential cost savings.

5. Facilities Update – Dan Carpenter

Waddington has been completed by Shawmut Construction. Drainage work will continue through the beginning of the school year to alleviate the water issues that the school has experienced in the back of the building. New pathways have been temporarily installed to let staff and students walk around the areas of construction safely. All teachers and staff were able to return on the 18th of August, punchlist work is still being completed.

Martin Middle School continues to move along smoothly. Interior finishes are being installed. Initial punchlists of the 3rd and 2nd floors are being done. Sidewalks and roadways are being formed. The landscape will start to take shape shortly. The building is still on track for the November turnover.

Many summer projects have been completed by our maintenance team and outside contractors over the summer. The list includes:

- Silver Spring teacher's lounge makeover
- Riverside MS main office makeover
- Graffiti paint/sealer installation on all high school bathrooms
- Storage cabinets at Waddington in all classrooms
- Orlo drainage pipe repair work
- Orlo parking lot and playground repaving
- Installation of the steel storage building at the high school.
- Three new dishwashers for Hennessey, Whiteknact and Orlo
- Installation of 4 new unit ventilators, two at Francis and two at Whiteknact
- Two new electrical lines were installed at Hennessey to help combat overload and breaker tripping in the kindergarten classrooms.
- Addition of convex mirrors around the district to help around corner vision from grant money from the Trust.
- Various classroom items teachers requested to be altered such as cubby areas at Silver Spring and shelving at Riverside Middle School.
- Our in-house electrician replaced outside lights with new LED units above exterior entry doors at Whiteknact and Myron J. Francis.
- New mulch to all the playgrounds
- Deep cleanings of all buildings
- Orlo parking lot painting will be taking place soon. With the simple layout they may be looking to do it in-house. He will also be getting painting contractor quotes together.

Logistics and schedule are also being worked out for the sidewalk work and paving at Hennessy.

In addition, all the annual inspections took place with the fire department, building inspector, fire alarms, sprinklers, boilers, kitchens and playgrounds.

At this point in the year they are bombarded with tickets and they are working diligently to get to everyone's requests. Lastly, Mr. Carpenter wished everyone a safe and happy new school year.

Mr. Ferreira requested an analysis on having in-house staff do the parking lot and how much it would cost to get it done vs. an outside company. Mr. Ferreira thanked whoever for however the fire stop and aluminum work got done at Orlo Avenue School.

6. Finance Update – Ms. Gonzalez stated as mentioned before that they are very careful about spending until November. The salary line item is going to be very close, there's a small savings but not sufficient to cover all the salaries for substitutes. There is an additional \$80,000 to cover folks in FMLA which is coming out of the substitute line. Other lines in 51000 series not too concerned but there are some overages. In 52000 series, the health line will be very close and keeping an eye on that with the new hires with benefits. Moving forward in 53000 series, several lines have overages such as line item 53303 with a minor error. 54000 series have some concerns with unexpected expenses. She thanked all teachers for their flexibility for the remainder of the fiscal year. There are some concerns with electricity and gas line items being over but being mindful of expenditures. 57000 and 58000 have no significant items to note. There was a change for one of the grants, categorical grant.

Superintendent Forand stated that they are looking at coding, some things were not coded correctly and looking at expenditures that should have been charged to grants.

Ms. Beauchaine stated that the City of East Providence did the bond for the high school. There is \$2.8M left over of taxpayer's money and the City Council has agreed to hold it for the school department and put it in an interest-bearing account. Ms. Gonzalez stated that it has not been deposited. She checked on this two-three weeks ago. Ms. Gonzalez will check with the City's Finance Director tomorrow and let the Committee know. This process started in April. The amount is \$2.8M, not \$3.2M due to a \$400,000 fee.

Mr. Ferreira that they supported \$480,000 in paving projects and inquired if it is coming from that money. Dr. Forand stated half of it will be and getting reimbursed from RIDE. Invoices were submitted and they have been paid. There is a separate account for those transactions to pay. Once money is given from the city, the district will get reimbursed.

Mr. Ferreira is very upset over it, that the city is holding \$2.8M dollars that belongs to the taxpayers. When the school department gave money back to the city, it was the biggest mistake. Should be using that money to repair the track.

Ms. Beauchaine stated that she can ask the former finance director for information. They couldn't just hold the money, it's taxpayers' money and the school committee voted to give it back to the schools. She asked how much is cash on hand. Ms. Gonzalez stated that there is \$4M dollars. Mr. Queenan asked if it is on top of what is showing in the budget. Dr. Forand stated that it is for money for Waddington. The money for Riverside has not come out yet. There will be \$3M dollars left after Riverside is complete.

Ms. Beauchaine requested to have a report every month. She did not expect that number and had no knowledge of that money. It's the school committee's job to pass a budget.

Ms. Gonzalez stated that the intention is to not have a deficit. Cash is in reserves. The \$3M dollars will cover the district for three months. No surplus seen for the next three years. Counting on reserve cash but spending it would put us in a deficit.

Mr. Luiz stated they paid \$400K dollars in fees for the bond. Mr. Gonzalez stated that they don't anticipate any more fees.

Mr. deSimas requested the breakdown of specific fees given to the school committee.

Superintendent Forand stated the they have been asking for the dollar amount and haven't been able to get it from the Mayor and Director of Finance.

Mr. Ferreira inquired as to where the money came from for the metal building that was supposed to be put up for \$125K and is now approaching \$250K. \$80,000 being reimbursed. The F350 pick-up truck bought last year is paid for. He asked how the fees are getting paid. Dr. Forand stated that they don't have that money. It is supposed to be transferred into our account and we haven't paid fees. It takes almost a year to get reimbursed from the housing money. The intercom projects are paid for but haven't been reimbursed yet.

Mr. Queenan inquired if this draft budget is the best FY2026 budget and \$4M dollars is the most to expect from the city. Ms. Gonzalez stated that they can get more accurate once they know what the federal grants and allocations will look at. They will work collaboratively to not overspend.

Mr. deSimas requested an update on the school lunch account.

VII. Building Committee Report – This was moved up on the agenda.

Ms. Beauchaine read a message to MLL Director, Yanaiza Gallant, who is resigning on September 20, 2025.

It is never easy to say goodbye to someone who has left such a lasting mark on our school district. You have been nothing short of transformational through your vision, dedication and leadership. As Principal, you turned Orlo Avenue School from one of the lowest achieving elementary schools into a statewide model school. As MLL Director, you have always brought outside-the-box ideas to best support our students and during the most challenging times, especially through COVID, your creativity and determination shined the brightest. You have the rare gift of changing the trajectory of peoples' lives through your teaching and leadership. You've built systems that empower, inspire and lift others, whether through professional

development, strategic planning or creating equitable opportunities for our language learners. You haven't just guided us, you've empowered us to grow, believe in ourselves and reach higher. You have inspired us, challenged us and believed in us. You have made East Providence a stronger, more vibrant and more hopeful place. While it's hard to see you go, we are deeply grateful for everything you have given us, and we know you will continue to change lives wherever you go. I wish you the very best in this next chapter of your journey knowing you will keep inspiring and empowering everyone fortunate enough to work alongside you.

VIII. Public Comments

1. Chrissy Rossi addressed the Committee regarding a new OPT form that was sent to families for parents to opt out of LGBTQ curriculum. She collected several questions from concerned residents. Superintendent Forand stated that LGBTQ is not part of the curriculum and the District's curriculum is online on the website and can be accessed at the EPSD Parent Curriculum Site. Families were recently given the option to be notified if certain LGBTQ topics were going to be taught in the classroom. The East Providence School Department curriculum hasn't changed from prior years. What has changed is the Supreme Court ruled that school districts need to give parents the option to be notified if an LGBTQ lesson was going to be taught, ultimately giving parents the opportunity to not have their child participate. The District is obligated to comply with the law. The District's intent is always to focus on respect, kindness and inclusion in schools and they will continue to do so. Ms. Rossi will email the remaining questions to the Committee.

IX. Discussion / Action Items

1. Stop Arm Camera Update – This was moved up on the agenda.

2. Silver Spring Outdoor Classroom Update – Mr. Luiz stated that there were concerned residents about the safety of the outdoor classrooms at Silver Spring. Mr. Carpenter went through the structure to make sure it was safe and secure for students. He is waiting on the shades.

3. FY2026 School Budget 4-1

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by a 4-1 vote to approve the FY2026 School Budget as submitted. Mr. Ferreira voted nay.

4. Athletic Trainer's Contract

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to table this item.

5. Tyler Technologies Contract Renewal

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to table this item. The contract is being reviewed by legal counsel.

6. 25-047K In re: Residence of D. Does, RIDE

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to table this item.

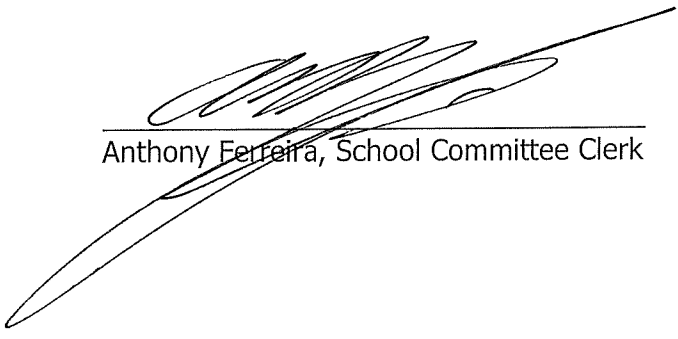
X. Announcements – Mr. deSimas stated that there are many positives happening in the district – Congratulations to Whiteknact Elementary School for being recognized by RIDE at the State House in September for their attendance award. Thank you to their attendance team, school staff, students and families for working together to achieve this goal.

XI. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 9:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Sharon Corsi, Executive Assistant


Anthony Ferreira, School Committee Clerk