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**EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
OPEN SESSION – November 18, 2025**

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**I. Call to Order - Open Session**

The East Providence School Committee met in Open Session on Tuesday, November 18, 2025 at 6:00 pm in the auditorium at East Providence High School. 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 Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried unanimously to move into the main office conference room for the purpose of: Discussion regarding EPEA Cost Share Grievance and Proposed Resolution pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(9); Discussion regarding Non-certified Employee Termination pursuant to RIGL §42-46-5(a)(1); and consider & vote on motion to adjourn and convene into public session. 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. No request had been made.

**III. Reconvene in Open Session (Regular Meeting)**

Mr. Luiz called the meeting to order at 6:43 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. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to seal the minutes.

**IV. Student Liaison** – Hope Moran shared what’s been happening over the last month at East Providence High School.

**V. Presentation – Rhode Island Department of Health** – Jillian Angell, Youth and Young Adults Coordinator from the Center for Health Promotion, Tobacco Control, gave a presentation on several topics: the RIDOH Tobacco Control Program (TCP); data trends among Rhode Island youth; 100% tobacco-free schools; and alternative to suspension programs. Their mission is to protect and promote health, prevent chronic disease and death among all Rhode Islanders using a comprehensive approach to reduce tobacco initiation, use and exposure to second-hand and third-hand smoke. The Tobacco Control Program is made up of seven members. Ms. Angell discussed ways that schools can create 100% tobacco free schools. Schools can adopt the RI Tobacco Free Schools Model Policy. There is evidence-based alternatives to suspension programs and tobacco free signs and resources are readily available at no charge through the RIDOH. TCP can help schools transition to 100% tobacco-free schools. A Dean or Student Assistant Counselor would be assigned to this program. Chariho Public Schools has used the

program and had great success. South Kingstown is doing a pilot study as an alternate to suspension.

**VI. District Recognition** – Monthly highlights from Oldham Pre-K, Waddington, Hennessey, Orlo Avenue, Myron J. Francis, Silver Spring and East Providence High School were presented. Dr. Forand thanked Karen Rebello for spearheading this presentation and Jill Usenia for creating the video.

## **VII. Consent Agenda**

1. **Communications** – Enrollment numbers and monthly technology data were included in the school committee packet.

2. **Home School Requests** – Six homeschooling requests.

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

- October 14, 2025 Executive & Open Session School Committee Meeting
- October 30, 2025 Open Session School Committee Meeting
- October 9, 2025 Paraprofessionals Negotiation Meeting
- October 6, 2025 Building Committee Meeting

4. **Personnel Report**

**Appointments** – Mario Purro, Event Tech Director, effective 11/6/2025; and Sarah Charpentier, Culinary Tech Assistant, effective 11/6/2025.

**Resignations** – Leila McCarthy, Social Studies and Department Head at Riverside Middle School, effective 10/17/2025; Sonia Aguiar, Paraprofessional at Whiteknact, effective 11/11/2025.

**Retirements** – Thomas Hargreaves, Robotics at Martin Middle School, effective end of the 2025-2026 school year; Philip McCormick, Reading Teaching at Myron J. Francis, effective end of the 2025-2026 school year; Linda Lewis, Reading Teacher at Waddington, effective end of the 2025-2026 school year; Robert Duarte, Social Studies Teacher at Riverside Middle School, effective end of the 2025-2026 school year; Richard Silva, Guidance Counselor at East Providence High School, effective end of the 2025-2026 school year; and David Nelson, Science Teacher at Riverside Middle School, effective end of the 2025-2026 school year.

**Recalls** – None

**Leaves of Absence** – None

## **5. Bill List**

- Voucher No. 1001 dated 11/13/25 – \$475,394.64
- Voucher No. 1052 dated 10/16/25 - \$585.00
- Voucher No. 1053 dated 10/28/25 - \$38,607.01
- Voucher No. 1054 dated 10/28/25 - \$23,124.44
- Voucher No. 1055 dated 10/31/25 - \$900.00
- Voucher No. 1056 dated 10/31/25 – \$1,881,006.55

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

- Ai3 Basic Services MMS - \$49,713.27
- Ai3 Basic Services Wadd - \$5,181.75
- Peregrine Group – MMS - \$50,600.00

- Peregrine Group – Wadd - \$21,780.00
- Shawmut MMS - \$2,901,988.75
- Shawmut Wadd – \$210,528.32
- Stephen Turner, Inc. MMS - \$14,326.25
- Stephen Turner, Inc. Wadd - \$3,894.00
- Thielsch Engineering – \$2,833.41
- Willscot – \$2,988.58
- COX – MMS – \$15,355.72
- Data Pivot – MMS - \$45,501.15
- Data Pivot – MMS - \$62,336.98
- North Eastern Tree Removal – Wadd - \$3,880.00

Stage III Total - \$3,387,908.18

**Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to approve the consent agenda as submitted.** Ms. Beauchaine requested to proceed with past practice and acknowledge all retirees at the end of the school year.

#### **VIII. Superintendent's Report**

**1. Special Education Report including Advisory Committee – Ms. Beauchaine requested this item on the agenda.** Leslie Anderson, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, gave an update on special education in the district. As of this day, there are 117 IEPs (23%) in the district; 497 elementary students with IEPs; 200 general education resource students; 100+ speech or related services only; and 148 elementary students in specialized settings. There are 14 self-contained settings in the district; 4 general education self-contained; 4 bridges programs; 2 behavior support classrooms; and 4 functional living and learning classrooms. There are 83 incoming kindergarteners; 37 required specialized classroom in district; and 6 students require even more specialized settings outside of the district.

With regard to the special education survey that was put out at the end of the year and feedback, overall this was one of the smoother transition years. Students are well placed. The volume of needs can be overwhelming. Teachers are asking for more time to collaborate with co-teacher/colleagues and they have been satisfied with the planning that went into the program design.

The special education advisory goals are to establish implementation guidelines for MTSS that explicitly define and consider the relationship between MTSS and special education. There is ongoing work with MTSS teams and the Office of Teaching and Learning; and create a decision framework to assist IEP teams in making informed decisions about special education placements. The framework is completed and implemented and now in the evaluation phase.

The national average of students who attend self-contained classrooms is 12%. Currently, in East Providence 20% of students who have IEPs are placed in self-contained classes. The goal is to decrease the percentage of students placed in self-contained classrooms from 20% to 18% by June 2025 and to 16% by June 2026. Elementary % is still high, much in part due to the volume of students. The goal is to evaluate schedules at each level and adjust to provide staff

time for purposeful collaboration. Schedules have been gathered and principals are working to make sure that collaboration time is available to teachers. The Advisory Committee will meet in January to review goals and establish future goals.

There was much discussion on how the district can improve the percentage of students at the elementary level. Ms. Anderson stated that they will be asking resource teachers to help support the special educators, who will be the sole provider. Dr. Forand stated that more professional development for teachers, tier I instruction will help address gaps earlier for tier II and III. The needs in the district are greater than they have seen them.

Ms. Beauchaine stated that the school committee has to put forth the budget and may need to hire more special educators. Ms. Anderson can't say that more paraprofessionals are the answer.

Mr. deSimas shared his concern that resources are for self-contained students and not enough resources for regular education students and that teachers working with special needs takes away from the regular ed students. Ms. Anderson stated that grades 1,2,3 are supported by building based paras. Speech services are tight. Mr. deSimas inquired if the priority is self-contained students. Ms. Anderson stated that any IEP is the priority.

Mr. Luiz inquired on how the district supports regular ed students. Dr. Forand stated that they are providing intervention. She added an extra classroom for self-contained.

Ms. Anderson stated that RIDE is releasing a blueprint and districts need to address rightful presence. Every student, regardless of disability or not, has a rightful presence. It means shifting our mindset. Every student is rightfully entitled to presence in grade level classrooms in their schools. Mr. de Simas stated that it can only happen with proper support.

Mr. Luiz inquired about professional development if there are no additional paras. Ms. Anderson stated that embedded PD to have supports going into the classroom to implement supports specific to the student in their classroom. They also provided support in environmental changes. They made purchases with IDEA funds to put common corners in all of the classrooms, visual classrooms.

Ms. Beauchaine stated that the School Committee passed a budget with no PD funds. Mr. Ferreira didn't support the budget. Ms. Beauchaine inquired if there are more students with IEPs and less staff, how do we do this. Certain positions were eliminated. The district needs to continue to promote inclusion for the students and promote students.

The district lost \$350K in federal funding. They are applying for grants as they come through. There has been some categorical funds to help support regular ed teachers. They are being creative in supporting everyone with the resources that they have. They need to have the tools to support educators and prioritize the needs.

Mr. deSimas stated that he doesn't think that PD is the answer. Dr. Forand stated that they receive a lot of feedback on how to support teachers and teachers ask for the support and for training.

## **2. Facilities Update – Dan Carpenter**

The Waddington drainage project has wrapped up. Paving took place on Oct. 25th. Loam arrived between the 24th and 27th and was hydroseeded on the 28th. Access to the area is now restored. A maintenance plan for the new drainage lines is being put in place to avoid any issues with future clogs. I worked in conjunction with the city DPW to repair asphalt in two areas of concern at the parent drop off area. The wiring of the heaters for the hot box out front was completed on Wed., Oct 29th. Additional emergency buttons were wired in the library. On Saturday and Sunday November 1st and 2nd ironworkers and Aid 4 Mobility installed the handicap/wheelchair lifts. Plumbing valve replacement was done on Monday November 3<sup>rd</sup> to replace some defective products. Ongoing warranty items are continually being documented and addressed by Shawmut and the district.

Hennessey paving was finished on October 18th. Painting was completed the following Saturday on the 25th. A gate from the teachers' lot was added into the playground area for easier access on pavement versus entry into the new grass area. Mr. Carpenter worked in conjunction with the Boys and Girls club to plant fruit trees along Mercer street as part of a grant project they received. Trees will also be added at RMS and Orlo as part of their grant project.

Riverside MS teachers' parking lot is up next for paving. We are looking to get this done before the winter plant shuts down. This will also make the lot safer and easier to plow in the coming months. Projects slated to take place in springtime, prior to the June 30th deadline, include Myron Francis sidewalks along the building and Orlo will be getting poured concrete sidewalks and granite curbing on Blanche Avenue and concrete sidewalks in conjunction with the city DPW.

Building management system work continues around the district with installation of wiring, valves and controls. Management of areas and time has been crucial to keep this moving along smoothly.

Mr. Carpenter is currently working on gathering all needed information, approvals, permits and specifications to get the WON DOOR project in motion for this upcoming winter. Doors are on order. Permits have been submitted and materials are to be ordered. Syntex is figuring two weeks between wiring and programming for their work timeline. Depending on when he receives the doors by December 1st, hoping to have this installed by February.

Martin Middle School logistics for the move to the new building are in progress. Furniture is being placed in classrooms and items moved over for the transition. Final touches are being done around the building to be handed over. Phase two will begin soon after with abatement of the existing building. Ribbon cutting is Nov. 25th at 10am. The official opening is December 1st.

- District Fire extinguisher inspections took place the week of Oct. 27th.
- Seasonal operations are underway with leaves and snowplow preparation.
- Radon inspections are to take place Dec. 1st thru 3rd.

Mr. Luiz confirmed with Mr. Carpenter that there is access to the old Martin Middle School after December.

Mr. Luiz inquired if the public was made aware of the traffic flow at Martin. Mr. Carpenter is still working with Shawmut and the city to get the signs up right before the switch and will be working on it during Thanksgiving break. Dr. Forand stated that the signs are ready to go and she will send them to the school committee. She stated that they can't flip the one way until they open the new entrance and close the old entrance. Martin will be open on December 1<sup>st</sup>. A notice will be put in the Post and sent out to parents in advance.

**3. Finance Update** – Ms. Gonzalez reported that they are still in the process of closing out Fiscal Year 2025. The reports show transactions to date as they go through the report. She pointed out areas that are final and where they are still closing. In the 5000 series: 51110 salaries - there is a remaining balance from positions that remained vacant for most of the year; 51115 substitutes – they have closed out this year with \$757K over budget due to leave of absences; 5100 series are final numbers unless RIDE or auditors have opinions regarding reclassifications of account # of transactions. In the 52000 series: 52101 health – includes retiree health. There will be small changes where they collect employee/retiree share; 52103 dental – includes retiree dental as well. There will also be a small change as they collect the final employee/retiree share; 52203 and 52208 certified and municipal pension; 52122 and 52125 retiree health and dental – budgeted but transactions live in 52101 and 52103; and all of the 52000 series are final numbers unless RIDE or auditors request reclassification of account #s. 53000 series – still collecting the final numbers for many of the line items . They did make a change to account coding which is why in 53404 has a balance of \$125K. The audiologist is unbudgeted but has expenses there. Truancy Officer has been moved from salaries to 53403 other Ath supervision. In the 54000 series most lines are final numbers, most significant expenses have been booked. There are still occasional expenses that will likely come in but doesn't expect anything significant at this time. In the 55000 series transportation – still waiting on invoices from statewide and expect to spend down most of the balance here. Still waiting on invoices for #s55610, 55620 and 55650 tuition ed in state and tuition ed out of state, district in state. In the 56000 series still collecting final numbers. Concerned about electric and gas bills. Keep receiving estimated bills. The finance team has been working with RIE to run meters for final bills. No concerns in the 57000 series and still closing final numbers in the 58000 series. For revenue, still pending TIAA reimbursement and Medicaid reimbursements should be finalized soon.

## **IX. Building Committee Report – Dan Carpenter**

### **Martin Middle School**

Final preparations are underway for staff and students to begin in the new building December 1st. We have passed all inspections and keys are being turned over. Furniture and fixtures continue to be installed . Building flush is currently taking place to regulate heat and airflow from 11/10-11/24. Gym scoreboards were installed on 11/13 and 11/14 . Landscaping is ongoing with hydroseed, loam and plantings. Auditorium work continues on track for the

May/June 2026 timeframe. Training has all been completed and Phase 2 demolition and abatement will be starting next month. Graphics that had bubbling issues in the building are being replaced with a better product that has shown no signs of issues.

### **Waddington Elementary School**

Handicapped accessible lifts were installed. Site drainage improvements were completed. Monitoring of the area is ongoing. The slab of the building will be moisture tested multiple times to see how the drainage has helped the previous water situation as the seasons progress. Warranty items are being addressed by Shawmut and the district as they pop up.

Mr. Luiz inquired if there are any leftover materials from the project. Mr. Carpenter responded that there are leftover materials and he is looking to find storage at the moment.

Superintendent Forand stated that the Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (TCO) came in on Friday and Martin teachers are starting to unpack boxes. They are opening the building to set up classrooms on Saturday. Ribbon cutting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 25<sup>th</sup> at 10am. Mr. Carpenter confirmed that he will have access to the building after December 1<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Beauchaine stated that at the building committee on November 10<sup>th</sup>, Shawmut stated that they will be filling up the pantry at Martin with toiletries and food for students. Shawmut will also be supplying clay for the new kiln in the ceramics classroom.

Mr. Ferreira asked Mr. Carpenter to clean up the metal shelving, three blue barrels and the railing along the wall at Waddington.

### **X. Public Comments – No comments**

### **XI. Discussion / Action Items**

#### **1. Update on Martin Middle School Graphics – Mr. Ferreira**

There was some bubbling on some of the graphics. Shawmut is taking it all down and changing it all out using 3M control tech.

#### **2. Repair of the High School Track – Mr. Luiz**

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve repairing the high school track as submitted. This was reviewed by legal counsel. June would be the timeline to repair.

#### **3. Athletic Trainer's Contract**

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Athletic Trainer's contract as submitted. The trainer moved from Highbar Physical Therapy to University Orthopedics. The contract was reviewed by legal counsel and the salary will be funded from a grant. The contract maintains the same services.

#### **4. EPEA Cost Share Grievance and Proposed Resolution**

Motion by Mr. Queenan, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by unanimous consent to approve the EPEA cost share grievance and proposed resolution as discussed in executive session.

#### **5. Non-certified Employee Termination**

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to approve the non-certified employee's termination as discussed in executive session.

**XII. Announcements** – Mr. Ferreira thanked every teacher and staff at Martin who worked for the last couple of years through the construction. They will be moving to a beautiful school. He hopes to open the building for the public to see. He thanked Shawmut for the work they did and their response time. It's a building to be proud of.

#### **XIII. Adjournment**

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 9:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharon Corsi, Executive Assistant



Anthony Ferreira, School Committee Clerk