
EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING OPEN SESSION – March 10, 2026

I. Call to Order - Open Session

The East Providence School Committee met in Open Session on Tuesday, March 10, 2026 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 Superintendent's contract 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 6:21 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.

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to move back the Student Liaison's Report.

IV. Student Liaison – Hope Moran, East Providence High School. This report went after the Consent Agenda.

V. District Recognition – School highlights for March were presented.

VI. Consent Agenda

1. **Communications** – Enrollment numbers and monthly technology data were included in the school committee packet.
2. **Home School Requests** – One homeschool request.
3. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - February 10, 2026 Executive & Open Session School Committee Meeting
 - February 9, 2026 Building Committee Meeting
4. **Personnel Report**

Appointments – Margaret McCauley, Paraprofessional at Orlo, effective 3/2/26; Bethany Barron, Paraprofessional at Oldham, effective 2/23/26; Bailey Drury, Paraprofessional at Oldham Early Learning Center, effective 2/23/26; and Emine Karadag, Paraprofessional at EPHS, effective 2/9/26.

Resignations – None

Retirements – Ruth Reynolds, Administrative Assistant in Pupil Personnel Services, effective 7/7/26; and Dawn Vierra, Paraprofessional at Kent Heights, effective end of the school year.

Recalls – None

Leaves of Absence – None

5. Bill List

- Voucher No. 1012 dated 2/11/26 – \$2,750.00
- Voucher No. 1013 dated 2/12/26 - \$15,604.67
- Voucher No. 1014 dated 3/05/26 - \$2,020,516.18

6. Stage III Invoices - MMS/Waddington Projects for February 2026

- Ai3 Basic Services MMS - \$46,713.27
- Ai3 Supplemental Services MMS - \$20,849.90
- Peregrine Group – MMS - \$50,600.00
- Peregrine Group – Wadd - \$21,780.00
- Stephen Turner Inc. – MMS - \$435.00
- Stephen Turner Inc. – Wadd - \$8,772.50
- Shawmut - MMS - \$2,845,772.72
- Willscot - MMS – \$2,943.97
- PODS - MMS - \$233.20
- Thielsch Engineering – MMS - \$14,698.38

Total \$3,012,798.94

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

Student Liaison – Hope Moran from the high school reported that over the past month, the high school community has continued to see success across academics, athletics and student life. The athletic programs have had an especially strong season. The girls swim team had an outstanding performance, placing third in the entire state and winning the Division III State Championship. The basketball team also had an impressive season. In hockey, Sydney Olsen, Keegan Greer and Colin McKenzie are advancing to the postseason, continuing to represent EPHS at a high level. The e-sports team won the Rocket League Championship for the second year in a row, securing back-to-back titles and highlighting the growth of the competitive gaming program. Two student athletes were celebrated during their Division I signing days. Abigail Ellison will attend Bryant University to play tennis and Julian Montero will attend URI to play soccer. In the arts, Zach Cotion earned first place in the high school division of the RI Music Education Association Student Composition Showcase, highlighting the strength of the music program. School social workers were recognized and celebrated for their important role in supporting student wellbeing. Battle of the Classes will take place on Thursday, bringing students together through friendly competition and school spirit. A new bathroom safety door system has been implemented. The door closes during the first and last five minutes of each

period. This initiative has helped improve hallway efficiency and has been successful so far. The Pathway Program continues to grow with more students joining this past month after increased outreach and promotion. The Townies Car Club will host several activities throughout March focused on student wellness, including a “stress shredding” activity where students can write down something they are stressed about and shred the paper as a symbolic way of letting it go. Overall, the past month has been filled with achievements and positive momentum for the school community.

VII. PTO/PTA/EPLAC Reports – Ms. Beauchaine spoke on behalf of the Riverside Middle School PTSA. She took a moment to publicly recognize the incredible work of the RMS PTSA team and volunteers who help run the weekly Meat & Lobster Raffles. These events are more than just fundraisers – they are a true example of what community support for our schools looks like. Because of this effort, they are able to provide meaningful experiences for their students and staff throughout the year. The funds raised help support Teacher Appreciation Week, staff lunches and activities, school field days, ice cream truck visits for students, the 8th grade end of year dance and the Kenbrin celebration. These are the moments that help building a positive school culture and create lasting memories for kids. What makes this even more special is that their raffles have also become a way to lift up other schools and causes in the community. They hosted other PTAs on select Saturdays to help them raise funds for their own students. Most recently, the community came together to raise money for Unified Sports and Special Olympics Polar Plunge, supporting inclusion and opportunities for all athletes. Ms. Beauchaine gave a special thank you to Contenders Sports Bar & Grill for their continues hospitality and support of our school community each week. Finally, she gave a huge thank you to Shawna Evans, whose dedication and support have been instrumental in making these events successful week after week. This is what a strong school community looks like – people volunteering their time, local businesses opening their doors and neighbors showing up to support our students. Ms. Beauchaine stated that she is incredibly proud to be part of a community that continues to show up for our kids.

VIII. Superintendent’s Report

1. Facilities/Building Committee Update – Dan Carpenter

- Won doors have been installed, programmed, and are up and running. This will hopefully help out with timeframes of vandalism we have been seeing. The doors will be closed during passing periods throughout the day. We are still working on wall finishes around the doors, which was pushed back due to the blizzard.
- Waddington dishwasher has been delivered, the snowstorms pushed back delivery a few weeks. Installation will be done in the coming week.
- Overhead garage doors have been installed on the storage building behind the high school. We will be installing the side door also in-house.
- Sprinkler and fire alarm testing, along with hood cleanings by Omni pro were done over February break. Backflow inspections are going to be scheduled for their yearly later this month.

- Logistics for spring projects are being put together for when the snow melts. These would include removal of the Silver Spring fence, installing fencing around the cooler HVAC units at RMS, paving/painting projects that are left, and tree planting at RMS and Hennessey for the boys and girls club tree grove projects. Summer will bring the EPHS running track repairs. There also will be repairs to grass and other items damaged from the blizzard.
- Studio Jaed is preparing specifications and plans to be voted on and submitted to RIDE for the roof replacement for Orlo elementary school. Once approved, RFP can be put out for bid. Future date of work timeline to be established. They will have to do an asbestos survey once the snow melts.
- Lastly, I would like to thank my maintenance crew, custodians, Superintendent Forand for all her assistance, shoveling, and support, and most of all the endless cookies for everyone. My assistant director Steve Laughlin, Mayor DaSilva, and everyone at the DPW, Water and Parks departments. DPW director Dan Borges, Chris Dicecco, Corey DePina, Lou Couto for their daily equipment loan from the city side. We would not have been able to accomplish what we did without it. The hours were long, and it was not easy work, but we powered through as a team. I would also like to say thank you to Tabitha Watjen, and McShortagee's Market for supplying us with food and snacks throughout the storm. With that being said, we need to look at our current equipment and start budgeting for items to be replaced in the near future.

There was discussion about the WON doors having any issues. Dr. Forand stated that during most of the periods, staff members are outside the bathrooms. No one is there five minutes before and five minutes after class. Digital passes are shut off after so many passes are issued for a particular bathroom. In an emergency, students can use the all-gender restrooms or the nurses bathrooms. Ms. Beauchaine requested an update from the Principal and Dean at the high school. Mr. Ferreira requested data on the amount of kids using bathrooms during passing time. Superintendent Forand will request a printout from Principal Black. Mr. deSimas stated that students didn't feel safe using the bathrooms. With this new system, students are more comfortable using the bathrooms.

Building Committee Update March 2026

Martin Middle School

- Foundations were completed last week.
- Bulk excavation is complete
- Storm lines and underground piping is being installed
- Steel is scheduled to begin the first week of April
- Auditorium ceiling work punch list was done by AI3, and backpunched by Peregrine and the district.
- ATR Treehouse is completing their work on the sound and lighting on stage.

- The staging is set to be removed and lower auditorium work will begin in the coming weeks.

Waddington

- Handicapped lift motor was installed over February break. It is now fixed and was inspected on Friday, March 6th.
- Concrete slab moisture testing will be taking place in the coming weeks to measure levels for potential moisture barrier installation needed before new flooring is installed.
- 6-month warranty walkthrough is set to take place on Thursday, March 12th. All items will be recorded as to any issues within Phase 2 of construction. SF publicly thanked Danny who spent countless hours to clear up all the snow and also assisting the city. She is very grateful for all their work. Mr. Queenan asked about the short term timelines of any damages. Minor damages all around. DC already laid asphalt on walkways. AF said some of the damage is extensive and take thousands of dollars to repair. Would like to meet with DC and SF to discuss on Friday or Monday. Cracks in the parking lot at the high school which will cost big money. Very concerned about it and wants to know what the district will do about it. Will need a vote to repair. Get dollar amount for the next meeting.

2. Finance Update – Ms. Gonzalez stated that in the 51000 series, she is keeping an eye out on subs. They are trending above what was spent last fiscal year to date. In line item 51202 show removal overtime, she has added a snow removal OT code for tracking. This does not include snow related OT before February 20th 2026. Those numbers are still in regular OT 51201. In the 52000 series, 52101, she is keeping an eye on the health, working on projections. Line item 52290, there is still a credit of \$6K. They received a grant from the Trust to cover 50% of the EAP expense. The credit will sit there until they apply invoices to it throughout the year. There are no significant concerns yet in the 53000, 54000, 55000, 57000 and 58000 series. In the 56000 series, they are still keeping an eye on electric and gas. For FY25 still in the black and still working through the audit. There was a small setback due to some staff out on leave. For FY24 the auditors were unable to attend the meeting this evening due to a busy tax accounting season and confirmed their availability for the April meeting. The finance office is preparing for the FY27 budget process. Some changes were made to the overall process. They are making significant progress towards the ERP software. Ms. Gonzalez gave a special thank you to Jess Arruda and HR Director Sandy Farias-Borges who have led the payroll implementation.

Ms. Gonzalez to send the Committee the capital improvement balance with state allocation which is due to be received on the 15th. She will also send a summary of FEMA expenses with overtime and other expenses related to the state of emergency/blizzard.

IX. Policy Committee Report

1. Attendance Policy – 2nd read. There were no changes from the 1st read.

X. Public Comments

1. Renee Ignacio attended the meeting tonight regarding the community forum on March 19th. She handed out some information on the history of Meadowcrest School and stated that

changing the name back to Meadowcrest shouldn't be an issue. The district needs to keep Meadowcrest open and redistricting needs to be done. She suggested looking into possibly getting a grant from the Historical Society to restore the school and presenting a plan to the City Council. Explore options before the school is closed. Meadowcrest has historical and agricultural significance.

XI. Discussion / Action Items

1. End of School Year Options for Snow Days – Mr. Queenan inquired about the five school days that were missed due to the blizzard. Superintendent Forand is looking to have two days waived and three days to make up at the end of the year. She is waiting for approval from the Commissioner of Education/Board of Education. June 17th would be the last day of school. From an educational standpoint, it is beneficial to keep those three days for instructional time.

2. List and Age of Maintenance Equipment – Mr. Ferreira thanked Mr. Carpenter for providing a list of current school department equipment. Some equipment has been handed down from 22 years ago and some equipment is junk and parts cannot be acquired anymore. Some equipment is worn out. Mr. Carpenter provided a list of equipment to be replaced/purchased in the future. It would cost approximately \$100K to replace some of these items and rebuild a fleet. The district has 13-15 snowblowers that are getting old and the road salt is highly corrosive to trucks causing rust and damage. They would be looking to replace the old ones.

Mr. Ferreira suggested looking at the Martin project for extra money. He stated that the School Committee could demand that equipment is purchased for Martin. The Committee should get a list from Mr. Carpenter and address the Building Committee. This wish list takes priority. Mr. deSimas inquired if there is a replacement schedule in the capital plan. Ms. Beauchaine agrees with Mr. Ferreira and as a School Committee, they should ask the City Council for some of this money to replace equipment. Ms. Beauchaine to set up for the next meeting. Mr. Queenan requested from Mr. Carpenter an itemized list of equipment with the ideal time for items to be purchased.

3. Purchase of a New Sander – Mr. Ferreira

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Ms. Beauchaine and carried by unanimous consent to approve the purchase of a new sander with amendment to not exceed \$10,500 and to purchase immediately.

4. Superintendent's Contract

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by a 4-1 vote to approve the Superintendent's contract as discussed in executive session. Mr. Ferreira voted nay.

5. Attendance Policy – 2nd read

Motion by Mr. deSimas seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by a 4-1 vote to approve the second reading of the Attendance Policy as submitted. Ms. Beauchaine voted nay.

6. EPHS/CTC DECA Trip to Georgia in April 2026

Motion by Ms. Beauchaine, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by unanimous consent to approve the high school/CTC trip to Atlanta, Georgia on April 26 to April 29, 2026 as submitted.

7. Updated 2026-2027 School Calendar

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Queenan and carried by unanimous consent to approve the updated 2026-2027 school calendar as submitted. Dr. Forand stated the graduation date for seniors was too early. The date was moved from June 4th to June 11th. Dr. Forand stated she received approval from RIDE to have a full day for parent/teacher conferences. Last day of school is June 22.

8. Change Name of Oldham School to Meadowcrest School

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by a 4-1 vote to approve changing the name of Oldham School to Meadowcrest School with amendment at the end of the school year. Ms. Beauchaine voted nay.

There was some discussion that based on policy the Committee may not be able to vote this evening. Meadowcrest is an existing facility. Mr. Luiz to discuss with legal counsel and will get clarification either way. There is much confusion with Oldham and the old Oldham School.

9. Resolution in Support of House Bill H7455 – Additional State Categorical Funding for Student Mental and Behavioral Health

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by unanimous consent to approve the Resolution in Support of House Bill H7455 – Additional State Categorical Funding for Student Mental and Behavioral Health as submitted.

10. RFP for District Feasibility Study

Motion by Mr. Ferreira, seconded by Mr. deSimas and carried by unanimous consent to approve the RFP for a district feasibility study as submitted. Superintendent Forand to see what the cost would be to have a study done on utilization of all the buildings and bring in a professional to look at options. It's a two-part study. The District doesn't have to commit to it. The RFP would go out immediately on 3/27, deadline is 4/17 for proposals and awarded at the May 12th meeting. The study would start during the summer.

XII Announcements – Mr. Luiz thanked Superintendent Forand for her leadership throughout the blizzard. She was shoveling and salting and kept the School Committee in the loop during the entire process.

XIII. Adjournment

Motion by Mr. deSimas, seconded by Mr. Ferreira and carried by unanimous consent to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Sharon Corsi, Executive Assistant


Anthony Ferreira, School Committee Clerk