

EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA

EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, August 25, 2022

Minutes of the Virtual School Committee Meeting, August 25, 2022, Virtual Meeting via Zoom convened at 5:00 p.m. Present by roll call: Michelle Durrance, Jennifer Starr, Jacqueline Weisman, Nancy De Luca, and Caroline O'Neill.

Also in Attendance:

Dr. Lisha Cabral, Superintendent; Crissy Pruitt, Assistant Superintendent; Lynn Souza, Administrative Assistant to Dr. Cabral and School Committee Secretary; and Joe Boerman, ECAT.

Call Meeting to Order:

Chair Durrance called the meeting to order by stating that in keeping with an act relative to extending certain Covid-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency, the meeting will be conducted remotely over Zoom. Attendance by Board members will be remote and remote attendance shall count toward quorum. The meeting will be broadcast live on FaceBook and recorded on ECAT. To use zoom you will need to download the Zoom application or use the link on the agenda.

Minutes: 6/9/2022, 6/23/2022, 7/11/2022, 7/21/2022; Executive Session 5/12/2022, 5/20/2022, 6/23/2022, 7/21/2022:

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Starr, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the minutes of 6/9/2022.

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the minutes of 6/23/2022 with noted edit.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. Starr, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the minutes of 7/11/2022 with noted edit.

On a motion by Ms. Starr, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the minutes of 7/21/2022.

Ms. Starr asked to have the Executive Session minutes of 5/12/2022 held for discussion at a future meeting.

On a motion by Ms. Starr, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the Executive Session minutes of 5/20/2022 but not to be released.

Ms. Starr asked to have the Executive Session minutes of 6/23/2022 held for discussion at a future meeting.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. Starr, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the Executive Session minutes of 7/21/2022 but not to be released with noted edit.

Approval of Contract with Perkins Eastman for RO Playground:

David Twombly, Director of Operations presented the contract with Perkins Eastman for the design services related to the playground at the Richardson Olmsted School. He explained that they will go out to bid in January and has a meeting scheduled with the Conservation Committee for possible CPA funding. He noted that the RO PTA may also donate funds towards the playground.

Dr. Cabral added that the funds could possibly come from multiple funding sources such as CPA funding, capital is possible and ARPA funding would be applicable and that the construction may have to be done in stages.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote of 5-0 the Committee approved the Perkins Eastman design portion of the RO Playground contract.

Vote to Approve Out of State Trip:

Dr. Cabral presented the Cross Country out of state trip for the Ocean State Invitational to be held on September 22nd in Warwick, Rhode Island.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote of 5-0 the Committee approved the Cross Country out of state trip for September 22, 2022.

Introduce New Assistant Principals and Athletic Director:

Dr. Cabral introduced the following new administrative staff members:

- Dan Mastrogiacomo, Assistant Principal for Oliver Ames High School
- Stephanie Santos, Assistant Principal for Easton Middle School
- Erin Finn, Assistant Principal for the PK-2 schools beginning in January 2023 and at Moreau Hall until January
- Ryan Gordy, Athletic Director

Review and Vote to Approve Changes to the Hall of Fame By-Laws:

Joanne Faust along with Kelly Cavanaugh presented the changes to the Hall of Fame By-Laws. Some Committee members suggested some additional edits.

On a motion by Ms. Starr, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 5-0 the Committee approved the proposed edits and additional edits to the Hall of Fame By-Laws.

Review and Vote to Approve the sign from 24 Auto Donation:

Ryan Gordy presented the signage for 24 Auto.

Dr. Cabral noted that the Committee approved the 24 Auto sponsorship of a sign for \$10,000 at the April 28th meeting. She said a Committee member requested the funds be provided after approval of the signage.

Mr. Gordy noted that the sign will be 8X3 and provided a mock up photo in the Committee members' packet.

On a motion by Ms. Starr, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote of 5-0 the Committee approved the signage from 24 Auto.

Review of Changes to OA's 2022-2023 Student Handbook:

On a motion by Chair Durrance, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call vote of 5-0 the Committee tabled the Review of Changes to OA's 2022-2023 Student Handbook to a future meeting.

Discussion and Possible Vote to Transfer Care and Custody of the Center and Moreau Hall Schools Located at 388 Depot Street and 360 Washington Street to the Select Board of Easton Upon Occupancy of the Blanche A. Ames Elementary School:

Dr. Cabral referred to the interoffice memorandum from Connor Read that was placed in the Committee's packet regarding the relinquishing of the Center and Moreau Hall Schools property upon occupancy of the Blanche A. Ames Elementary School and that this was tabled from a previous meeting to include that the Yardley Wood Rink would be included in the property to be relinquished to the Town. She noted that Connor Read has affirmed that this is the intention and that the Yardley Wood Rink would be included with the transfer. Dr. Cabral noted that Chair Durrance had asked that the Lion's Club retain the maintenance of the rink for this

year and that if the Lion's Club maintained custody of the rink maintenance for this winter, that the Town would respect that contract until it expires for this year.

On a motion by Chair Durrance, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the transfer of care and custody of the Center and Moreau Hall Schools located at 388 Depot Street and 360 Washington Street to the Select Board of Easton upon occupancy of the Blanche A. Ames Elementary School with caveat that they will honor the Lion's Club contract for this particular year of transfer.

Vote to Approve Request to Hire Unit A Candidates Above Step 7:

Dr. Cabral noted that it is towards the end of the hiring season and that 30 new teachers attended the New Teacher Orientation. She requested approval to hire 3 new staff members and 2 potential candidates in Unit A above Step 7 as per the Unit A contract. She discussed the challenges facing districts and that the district has lost candidates to other districts.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved Dr. Cabral's request to hire the 3 candidates and 2 potential candidates over step 7.

School Committee Review and Possible Vote of School Council Assembly Process:

Dr. Cabral explained the assembly process for School Councils. She noted that each school Principal serves as the Chair along with parents, teachers, community members, and at the high school level, one student. The schools advertise for members via newsletters, back to school nights, emails to parents, and flyers in students' backpacks. She said that the PTA/PACs run elections for members and at the high school level, the Principal will run the election. She noted that the 3 elementary schools have been meeting together. The Committee reviewed the School Council Assembly Process document.

On a motion by Ms. Starr, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee accepted the proposed School Council Assembly Process.

COVID Update:

Dr. Cabral noted that Jeff Benson, Chair of the Music Department, provided some guidance for music proactively should the district revert back to restrictions. She noted that the district follows the International Music Association's guidance and their most recent guidance is that the district should be following what the rest of the school does in all of the other programs. The guidance is to follow what the school will be doing in terms of any mitigation.

Ms. Pruitt added that we have come to a point with learning to live with COVID and that some strains are not as contagious and that families need to be mindful of symptoms and to not send kids to school when they have symptoms. She noted that testing will not take place, the state will not be providing tests, COVID reporting will not take place, no letters will be going home for close contacts, and the district will not be maintaining the COVID dashboard any longer. Masks are required in the Health Office in each school and that the elementary schools should be reviewing the hand washing protocols with the students.

It was noted that the Committee's policy on being vaccinated for overnight travel will remain in place.

Public Comment:

None.

Superintendent's Notes:

Dr. Cabral noted that she has been working with the Town to come up with an agreement for a School Resource Officer (SRO) and once she has the language it will be added to an agenda for the Committee's review. She noted that the school department's current position is that the first line of defense is being proactive to the mental health needs of the students and to have the appropriate mental health supports in

place. She noted that the district is at a point where she feels comfortable to look at what she considers to be a proactive initiative. She said she has been working with the Police Department and having an SRO in the district and that the district has learned a lot from the participation in the SRO Program. Dr. Cabral added that in the past the district shared a School Resource Officer with the Southeastern Regional School and it was not a successful model for the district and that if the district was going to have a SRO in the district it needed to be full time. She said she has been working with the Town Administrator as well as the new Chief of Police and have determined that the cost would be split among the operating budgets until further notice. The state requires the district to have a Memorandum of Understanding which the Chief and she is working on and have a list of expectations that they mutually agree upon and that she will share it with the Committee. She noted that it includes the Superintendent to be part of the interview process and that the Chief has also agreed to work with the Superintendent on monthly check-ins on the program and will evaluate the officer in their capacity as a School Resource Officer at the end of each year. Dr. Cabral added that professional development will be provided to the officer and have the officer provide professional development to the staff. She noted that the School Resource Officer is not an armed guard or security guard for the buildings; they are highly trained as both an Officer and a School Resource Officer which is an independent training program. Dr. Cabral noted that the district continues to work with the district's security advisors, the Police department, the Fire department, and the first responders. She noted that the district had not been able to have staff drills for an intruder during COVID; however, a plan is in place for this school year. The School Resource Officer does not respond to any school related issues in terms of discipline or daily events as the district has its own procedures in place for intervention, for discipline, and for restorative justice.

Ms. Starr added that when the topic of School Resource Officer came up she had done some research and that there has been a lot done at a legislative level in the state in the past few years that it has been a lot of work into thoughtfully defining the role of the SRO and best practices and that she was very encouraged to see all of that information. She said some working groups spent the better part of the year going over, researching, and talking to focus groups and different stakeholders about what an effective SRO program would look like and that she was encouraged by the outcome of that work. Ms. Starr noted that the information can be found online and that there is a lot of interesting and encouraging information at the state level about how Massachusetts designs the ideal SRO Program.

Dr. Cabral announced the posting for a Director of Finance and that it can be found on School Spring, Linked In, Indeed, and several professional organizations. She provided an update on school lunches and that any limitations are the result of having staffing issues. She noted that working in the district for the food service provider, Whitson's, would be the perfect schedule for parents who have students in the district and are looking for some work during the school hours. She added that the district is also in need of bus drivers.

Dr. Cabral noted that they continue to work on the FY 22 turn back amount to the Town and will let the Committee know when they have a final figure. She noted that they are still getting information about outside funding sources. She added that they received word that there will be a free universal lunch program.

Dr. Cabral added that the Superintendent's Advisory Committee and Central Office participated in filling backpacks for the Schools on Wheels program. She reminded everyone that the first day for staff will be August 30th and the first day for students will be August 31st with PK and Kindergarten beginning in September. She noted that due to the construction of the new Blanche A. Ames Elementary School, driving and parking will be affected and asked for everyone's patience especially at the Easton Middle School and Parkview School areas as they will be impacted the most.

Assistant Superintendent's Notes:

Ms. Pruitt said she welcomed the new teachers in the district during the New Teacher Induction Program. She said she had Tweeted a picture of the new teachers outside of Hilliards following the tour of the town. Ms. Pruitt said about 30 new teachers have been hired this year and gave a shout out to Kristin Marani, OA teacher who is in charge of the Mentoring Program. She gave a shout out to the district's new HR Director, Melissa Medeiros and Judy Canty, her Administrative Assistant, formerly from Easton Middle School. They have been inundated with onboarding new staff. She provided an update on the literacy program for K through grade 6. The district is piloting 2 programs this year, the first one is Wit and Wisdom and Geodes through Great Minds. The teachers piloting the program participated in professional development for the program. The second program which is EL through Open Resources will also be providing professional development for the staff. Ms. Pruitt added that whichever program the district chooses to purchase the teachers can finish the year with that program while the rest of the staff gets trained and full implementation will take place for the 2023-2024 school year. She gave a shout out to Jeannie Baxter, Literacy Coach at EMS, Karen Daley, Literacy Coach at RO and Cindy Olson, Reading Specialist at Parkview School. She said they provided a full day of professional development on the science of reading for the literacy, adoption pilot teachers and that it was phenomenal. Ms. Pruitt noted that she has been studying the science of reading, attending workshops, reading articles and they have put together a comprehensive fantastic day. She added that they will be replicating the professional development to the staff at the November professional development day. Ms. Pruitt said they continue to explore early college and career pathways at the high school and that she, Dr. Cabral, and Kelly Cavanaugh, Principal of Oliver Ames High School attended an event with Secretary of Education, James Pyser where he shared some of the initiatives that the state is putting in place. She said they were able to network with some of the universities that are interested in partnering with districts. Ms. Pruitt added that she will be meeting with the Curriculum Leaders tomorrow for a full day of work around the curriculum review process which she will present to the Committee.

School Committee Notes:

Ms. De Luca reminded everyone that Tuesday, September 6th is primary voting day and asked about the Easton Middle School parking lot and if it will be done by the 1st day of school.

Dr. Cabral noted that it will be safe but it probably will go until the end of September early October.

Ms. De Luca asked about the time for Opening Day.

Ms. Pruitt said she will provide that information to the Committee.

Ms. De Luca said she was privileged to give the School Committee remarks to the new teachers and the new administration and that Kristin did a great job. She said the student who spoke was fabulous. She said she attended Laney Holbrook's basketball retirement party over the summer and there were several people from the past and the one thing that struck her was that students from 1977 through 2022 attended and that it was an amazing tribute. She wished Britney, Laney's replacement good luck. She gave a shout out to Gretchen Eldridge, EL Teacher who resigned and said she is an amazing person and wished her the best.

Ms. Starr asked that if the district has appropriate food service staffing if things will be pre COVID such as sharing tables in the cafeteria and if a student didn't want something that they choose they could place it on a table where another student could have it.

Dr. Cabral responded that it depended on staffing.

Ms. Starr wished everyone good luck with the start of school.

Ms. De Luca added that she wishes everyone good luck with the first day of school and that she hopes it will be more of a normal pre COVID year.

Chair Durrance wished everyone good luck for the new school year and thanked Ms. De Luca for representing the School Committee at the New Teacher Orientation. She asked Ms. Pruitt if the pilot teachers will be teaching from 3 different programs.

Ms. Pruitt responded that they will be teaching 2 programs Wit and Wisdom and EL and whichever program is chosen, materials will be received and they will finish the year with that program.

Chair Durrance said the next meeting is scheduled for September 1st at 5:00.

Executive Session: Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a) 3 To Discuss Strategy with Respect to Collective Bargaining for Unit B and Paraprofessional Unit :

Chair Durrance made a motion to enter into the Executive Session and will not return to Open Session for the purpose of discussion of strategy with respect to Bargaining with Unit B and the Paraprofessional Unit and stated that, in her opinion, having this discussion in public would be detrimental to the bargaining position of the School Committee. Ms. Weisman seconded the motion, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee entered into the Executive Session at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Souza
Secretary