

EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA

EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 20, 2022

Minutes of the Virtual School Committee Meeting, October 20, 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. The meeting will be open to the public and will take questions via the Zoom chat feature.

Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve Plaque at OA in Memory of Students Who Served in WWII:

Kelly Cavanaugh, Principal of Oliver Ames High School, Cory Ahonen, Deputy Director of Health and Community Services, Financial Assistance and Veterans' Services, and Edmund Hands, Easton Historian presented information for a plaque that will be placed at the high school. The plaque will list the names of men and a woman who attended OA but was deployed prior to graduation to serve in WWII. The plaque will have about 33 names, about 9"x18" made by Bridgewater Trophy. The funding for the plaque will be private donation driven.

The Committee members expressed their appreciation for the work being done for the plaque.

On a motion by Chair Durrance, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the plaque at OA in memory of students who served in WWII.

Discussion About Banners Along the Fence at the OA Field:

Dr. Cabral said that Kelly Cavanaugh and Ryan Gordy, Athletic Director were in attendance to answer questions that came up regarding the banners along the field.

Mr. Gordy explained that there are 2 types of signage, 1 is year round and was voted by the Committee last year, it is a 5 year banner and was the result of a \$10,000 donation. Those types of banners are 96x48. The second type of banners are booster club specific and are seasonal banners, they go up during the season sport and come down following the close of the season sport. They vary in size from 50x42 to 36x24 and range in donation of \$250.00 to \$500.00.

A discussion took place.

The Committee decided that a list of sponsors would be brought before the Committee for their approval in order to sponsor a banner on school grounds. The Committee referred to the School Committee Policy File KHB "Advertising in the Schools".

Mr. Gordy added that the varsity teams have been having a super successful fall season and gave kudos to the athletes and coaches.

Discussion and Possible Vote on the Material for the Blanche Ames Dedication Plaque:

Dr. Cabral noted that at the last School Committee Meeting, the Committee approved the design and content of the dedication plaque for the Blanche A. Ames Elementary School. The Committee needs to approve the material to be used for the plaque.

After a brief discussion, the Committee chose to use stainless steel as the material for the plaque.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved to use stainless steel as the material for the dedication plaque for Blanche A. Ames Elementary School.

Update on Superintendent's Goals:

Dr. Cabral presented the progress on her 4 goals and stated that it is the first time doing this as a 2 year cycle and that the final version will have links to the evidence. A lengthy discussion took place along with several examples of each of the goals, the status of the goals, what has been completed, what is in progress, and what will be completed by June 2023. Dr. Cabral's goals are:

1. Goal #1 - District Improvement: Standard I: Instructional Leadership, A. Curriculum (I-A-1), B. Instruction (I-B-3), and Assessment (I-C-2)
Strategic Objective #3 - Curriculum Development
All Principals will be supported to ensure that staff members have the tools, resources, and support to adapt curriculum, instruction, and assessments to appropriately meet the needs of all learners in an accelerated vs. remedial learning model. Administrators will set the model high expectations for student engagement, performance, expectations, and progress toward standards-based achievements and continual growth.
2. Goal #2 - Students Learning: Standard II: Management and Operations, A. Environment (II-A-1&2), Human Resources, Management, and Development (II-B-1), and Laws and Policies (II-D-1) Indicators - Strategic Objective #4 - Educator Excellence
Develop an effective district operational system and processes for the effective support and supervision of professional and auxiliary staff that best maximizes the use of all budget and grant funding sources.
3. Goal #3 - District Improvement: Standard III: Community Engagement, A. Engagement Indicator (III-A-2)
Strategic Objective #1 - Student Achievement
Establish strategic partnerships with community organizations, businesses, and higher education institutions that focus on strengthening or expanding their role and maximizing their participation in authentic learning experiences for students and maximizing their involvement in district effectiveness.
4. Goal #4 - Student Learning and Professional practice: Standard IV: Professional Culture, A. Commitment to High Standards (IV-A-2) and B. Cultural Proficiency (IV-B-1) Indicators
Strategic Objective #2 - Student and Educator Wellness
Understand, implement, and internalize the Core Values and Transfer Goals as they relate to culturally responsive policies and learning environments that acknowledge diverse backgrounds, identities, strengths, and challenges to create a culture that accepts and affirms individual differences and nurtures social emotional awareness and strength.

The Committee expressed their appreciation for the comprehensive report.

Update on School Resource Officer:

Dr. Cabral noted that a copy of the School Resource Officer state recommended MOU had been put in the Committee's packets. She said this does not require a vote but wanted the Committee to review it before she sends it back to the Chief of Police. She noted that legal counsel has reviewed the MOU.

The Committee reviewed the document and Dr. Cabral clarified some items. Dr. Cabral said that she and the Chief interviewed the 1 candidate who applied for the position, the district will be responsible for a portion of the salary, \$42,000 and the Police Department will be responsible for a portion of the salary.

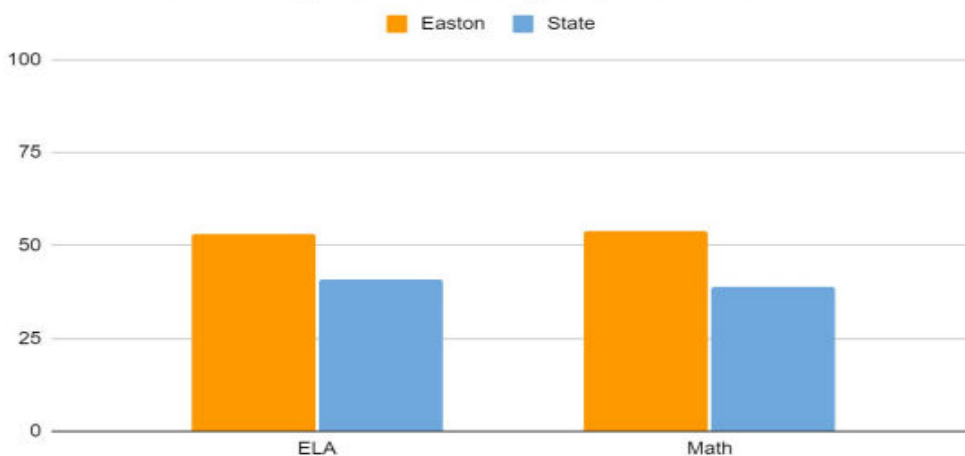
MCAS Update:

Ms. Pruitt presented the MCAS 2022 Overview. Some highlights included:

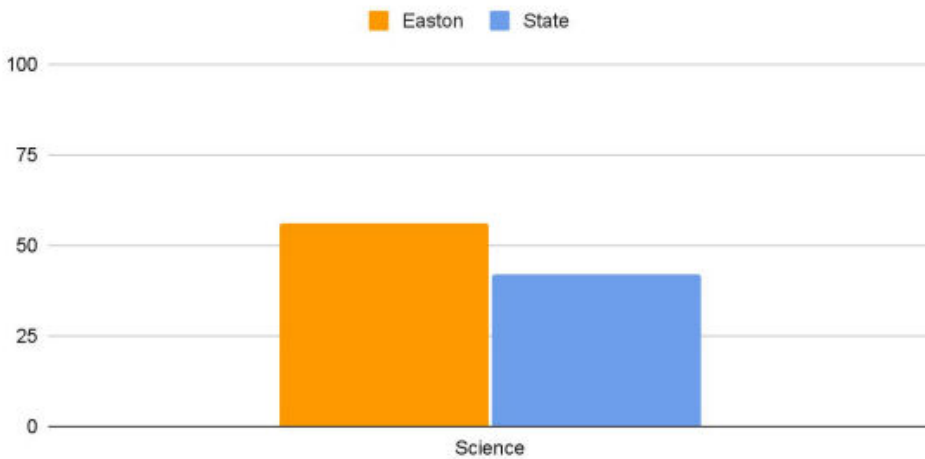
- The 2022 school year was the first full MCAS administration for grades 3-8 since 2019. Grade 10 students in 2022 had not taken an MCAS test since 2019 (grade 7).
- The 2022 MCAS showed mixed results compared with 2021 scores:
 - Math scores increased
 - English Language Arts (ELA) scored declined
 - Science scores increased slightly
- When these results were compared to pre-pandemic levels, the district has a ways to go across all subject areas to fully recover learning losses
- In ELA, 2 focus areas for implement
 - Impact of lower writing scores
 - Early literacy challenges
- Student absenteeism remains a challenge across the board for recovery efforts
- Students have attended less school over the past several years
 - Chronic absenteeism for students in grades 3-8 increased in 2022 by 138% (41k vs 98K students as compared to 2019)
 - 18% of all students missed 18+ days in 2021 and 28% missed 18+ days in 2022
 - 1.7 million days of missed school because of positive COVID-19 cases in 2022
 - Average student missed 11 days in 2021 and 15 days in 2022
 - Does not include staff absences or days missed as close contacts
 - Note: 1 million+ other school days were saved as result of the state testing program
- Similar to the Commonwealth, students in Easton have attended less school over the past several years
 - Average Easton student missed 5 days in 2021 and 11 days in 2022
 - 6% of all students in Easton missed 18+ days of school in 2021
 - 17% of all students in Easton missed 18+ days of school in 2022
 - This does not include staff absences

Ms. Pruitt shared the school vs state results:

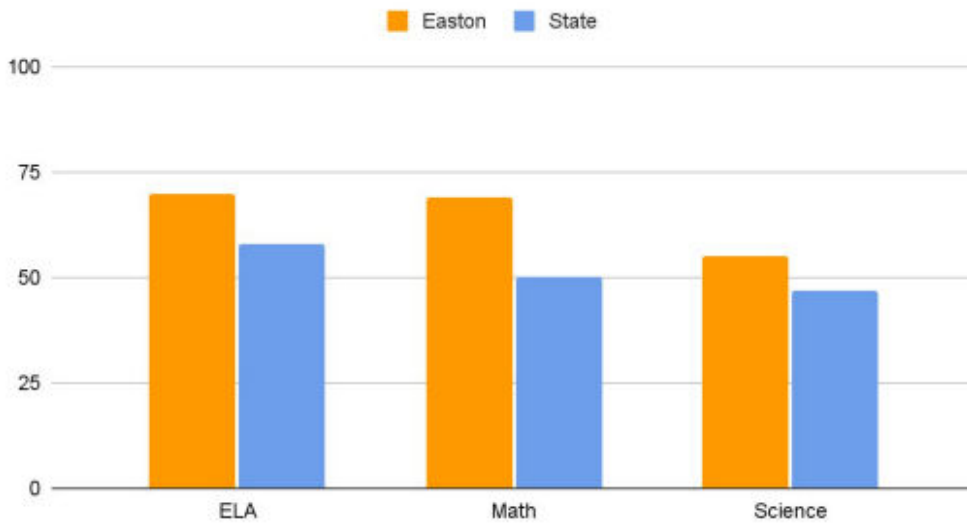
2022 Gr3-8 Meeting or Exceeding Expectations



2022 Grades 5&8 Science and Tech/Engineering Meeting or Exceeding Expectations



2022 Gr10 Meeting or Exceeding Expectations



Ms. Pruitt reviewed the next steps:

- Families were sent home student achievement reports this week
- Accountability information will also be sent home for each school and districts in the coming months
- Identify areas of improvement with schools focusing on subgroups
- Schools will present findings to School Committee
- It is an expectation that the district will use this data to identify and address achievement gaps and are equally as committed to educational excellence and equity for all students

COVID Update:

None.

Public Comment:

None.

Superintendent's Notes:

Dr. Cabral stated that the district is coming up on the last year with the transportation provider contract for the big buses and that they had put together a streamline bid that had gone out. She said the bid meeting took place on Tuesday but wasn't sure how many vendors had bid on it. Dr. Cabral noted that dates have been set up for the PK-2 staff to enter the new building and that movers will be part of the project. Staff has been packing for several months. She reminded families that even though classrooms may start looking different from now until the move, the kids' quality of education is not wavering. She asked for patience during this time. Dr. Cabral said that the district received a capital grant for \$50,000 for the playground. She noted that she has begun having her lunches with students and staff and visits on a quarterly basis. Dr. Cabral said that she and Ms. Pruitt will be attending the MASS/MASC Joint Conference November 2-5, 2022 and if any Committee members are interested in attending or would like Dr. Cabral or Ms. Pruitt to collect information they would be happy to do so.

Chair Durrance asked if students and families will have the opportunity to go into the new school to see their classrooms and meet teachers.

Dr. Cabral responded that is the intention; however, they are at the mercy of the builder, inspections, and occupancy permits. She said if occupancy is provided by December 1st then yes.

Ms. Starr asked for an update on the status of bus drivers.

Dr. Cabral said that 2 members in training have passed the test and will start driving and that they have 2 drivers that move to Florida during the winter months. She added that as of today, all buses are staffed with regular full time bus drivers.

Assistant Superintendent's Notes:

Ms. Pruitt said that she met with Kelly Reed and Kendall Bennett from Easton Wings of Hope this morning and that EWOH will be sending out an optional survey to parents after Thanksgiving. The survey is to collect information on what programs they would like to see come to Easton. She noted programs such as substance abuse, marijuana, alcohol, and vaping. She repeated that the survey is completely optional and will be sent out to all PK-12 families and will remain open for 3 weeks. She noted that EWOH applies for grants to bring specific programming to the district; therefore, responses from the survey would be helpful. Ms. Pruitt said she was awarded a scholarship to go to Panama with 30 other educators and that it was such a wonderful experience and she said she will prepare a presentation for the Committee at a later date. She noted that she had applied for the scholarship through a joint partnership with MASS (Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents) and EF Tours and the focus of the trip was on global competency. She said that she now has a cohort of 30 educators that she did not know prior to the trip and are still texting one another over a week later sharing ideas and documents in a shared folder. Ms. Pruitt said part of the process was to create an action plan and when she submitted her application it really focused on the district's transfer goals and how to bring those to light. She learned of some of the issues that Panama is facing at the moment especially with a lot of pollution. She spoke of a session through a company called World Savvy which focused on global competency and identifying ways that they can work on this throughout the district. Ms. Pruitt said that she is focusing on becoming a global, competent person which will then help her be a global competent leader for the principals and the staff. She said she shared photos over social media and that the Panamanian people were absolutely wonderful, kind, and caring. She said that EF is partnering with Easton on some upcoming trips that will be brought before the Committee for approval. She said there is an actual course that students can do on their own and will be able to take after they travel that they can apply for undergraduate credit at minimal cost. Ms. Pruitt added that staff can also get graduate credits learning about global competency.

Chair Durrance asked for an update about the reading pilot program.

Ms Pruitt responded that she was just in a kindergarten classroom that is piloting Wit and Wisdom, the literacy program and Geodes, a companion to the district's foundation's phonics program for K-6. She noted that the district received all the materials to pilot the next program called EL and that is through Open Up Resources and the professional development for the staff piloting the program will take place next Tuesday, October 25th in some classrooms and she extended an invite to the Committee members. She noted that when she updated the Curriculum Leaders about the pilot some of the Curriculum Leaders have children in the classrooms that are being piloted so it was great to hear a parent perspective as well as the teacher perspective. The EL pilot will begin November 1st and the hope is that it is completed just before the December break.

School Committee Notes:

Ms. O'Neill said that they have established a Naming Subcommittee and that they are creating policies to allow individuals for a designated donation amount to name spaces in any of the schools. She said that for many years OA had a Naming Campaign; however, it was for OA and they wanted to establish a Naming Subcommittee for all schools. She said they established a goal for community membership and will be reaching out to members of the school community, both staff and parents of current students, and to the larger community to solicit interest in joining the Subcommittee. She said the goal is to have a total of 9 members, 3 School Committee members, (Chair Durrance, Ms. De Luca and Ms. O'Neill) , 2 staff members from EPS, 2 parents, and 2 community members. Ms. O'Neill said that Ms. De Luca is working on putting together an application form for people to apply. Should they have more than 2 people apply for any one category they will then look at the qualifications and if there are a number of people with ample qualifications they will have to do a lottery.

Ms. Weisman said the Budget Subcommittee met recently and went over the draft town warrant for the November 14th meeting. She said that furniture has started to be delivered at the Blanche Ames Elementary School this week and that it is very exciting and construction is progressing.

Ms. De Luca asked about the October 1st enrollment update.

Dr. Cabral responded that October 1st is the date the state uses and that we are compiling the information and will get the Committee the enrollment information soon.

Ms. De Luca asked about STEM activities in the district.

Ms. Pruitt responded that grade 5 is participating in STEM week this week and that they are working with the program I2 Learning. She said Katherine Honey from the South Shore STEM Consortium will be visiting RO on Friday. She said the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders will also be doing the I2 Learning but they need another year to review and will be doing the full STEM week in December. STEM activities have been taking place at the high school in the Industrial Arts Program.

Ms. De Luca said the Policy Subcommittee met today and they are reviewing the policies. She noted that the Special Town Meeting will take place on November 14th, 7:00 p.m. at the high school and that there are several interesting items on the docket. She added that voting early starts October 22nd through Friday, November 4th at Town Hall and that your vote by mail must be postmarked by November 8th. Ms. De Luca said that Tuesday, November 8th is professional development day for staff and no school for students. She said she attended "Make A Difference Day" today at Richardson Olmsted School. She said that Mr. Getchell and Mr. Aries had several activities planned and will be coming to a School Committee meeting in November to make a presentation along with Ms. Cunha, Mrs. Luke and the whole fourth grade. Ms. De Luca said that Linley Menard passed away 2 ½ years ago and RO wanted to create a way to honor her memory. She said kids were planting tulips, painting kindness rocks, learning the science of tulip bulbs, and making cards. A beautiful bulletin board was set up in the cafeteria and everything was blue. She said she worked with the kids

painting rocks and gave a shout out to grade 4 and that she was happy to participate and that doing these types of activities makes it all worthwhile.

Ms. Starr said that the marching band has been doing phenomenal this season and their first big competition of the year was Tigerama which is the first time it's been in Easton since 15 years. She congratulated and thanked the marching band, TEMPO, band parents, and everyone who was involved with the event. She said the event was well attended, they had food trucks and it was a beautiful night. Ms. Starr said the students put on great performances. She added that since that night she believes they had 2 performances that went well. She noted the successes of the boys and girls cross country, golf, boys soccer, and volleyball teams. Ms. Starr said she attended the "Just Talk About It Minding Your Mind" presentation last week at OA and it was a great presentation. She noted that one of the main presenters had done a virtual presentation at the end of last year but he was a practicing mental health professional and was very engaging and connected a lot with what they are seeing coming out of COVID with anxiety. She said the presenter was a young man in his early twenties and talked about his personal experience dealing with anxiety and that he grew up in Sharon so he understood the culture in Easton and was able to connect well with the audience. He took questions from the audience and most were directed towards him along the lines of what his parents could have done differently, what helped him, and if he got the help he needed. Ms. Starr said she had attended the Senior Project presentation last week at OA. She said 10 kids are participating this year and they went through their project plans and as always they are very ambitious, creative, and thoughtful. She noted how one student was coming to present at a designated time during her athletic practice and that her whole team came in with her. She gave kudos to the Social Studies department and said that she looks forward to seeing the students' projects.

Chair Durrance said that she was unable to attend Tigarama but was involved in the planning and gave a shout out to Jeff Benson for taking that on. She said it was an immense amount of work and organization. She explained the work that goes into moving everyone around campus and that it is a humongous project and she heard quite a lot of positive feedback about it. She noted that the Marching Band is $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way through their season and have had several competitions; MICCA state finals are on Sunday with NESBA finals the following weekend and Baystate will be November 11th and 12th. She noted that the next meeting will take place on November 3rd at 5:00 p.m.

Executive Session RE: Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a) 3 To Discuss Strategy with Respect to Collective Bargaining for 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 for 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 8:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Souza
Secretary