

EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA

EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, November 17, 2022

Minutes of the Virtual School Committee Meeting, November 17, 2022, Virtual Meeting via Zoom convened at 5:02 p.m. Present by roll call: Michelle Durrance, 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 but because it is a workshop so no public comment.

Discussion and Vote to Approve the EWOH and CADCA National Forum Out of State Trip:

Kelly Reed, Easton YMCA, Lisa St. Mary, OA Guidance Counselor, and Danielle Erickson, EMS Family Consumer Science Teacher presented a proposal for students in grades 7-11 to attend the CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) overnight trip to Washington DC on January 30, 2023 to February 2, 2023. The YMCA will be funding the trip; however, students were asked to bring \$200.00 to cover food for the trip. Ms. Reed noted that students were offered financial assistance if they could not afford the \$200.00 but no student requested assistance. Ms. Reed said approximately 10 students in total would be attending the trip.

Dr. Cabral acknowledged that some of the grant funds for this trip come from the advocacy of Senator Timilty.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote of 4-0, the Committee approved the Easton Wings of Hope trip to attend the CADCA National Leadership Forum on January 30, 2023 to February 2, 2023.

Discussion and Vote to Approve the Sponsor List for Banners:

Athletic Director Ryan Gordy and OA Principal Kelly Cavanaugh presented the list of sponsors for banners. Mr. Gordy said that they have 122 businesses that the Booster Club has worked with one time or another and presented the list to the School Committee.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 4-0, the Committee approved the sponsor list for banners as it pertains to sports.

Mr. Gordy gave a shout out to the Girls Cross Country team for being named Division 1C State Champions last week and the Girls and Boys Soccer teams are playing in the State Championship double header on Saturday.

Vote to Approve the EMS Student Handbook for 2022-2023:

Luke Carroll, Principal of Easton Middle School, presented the EMS Student Handbook for 2022-2023 school year. He thanked all the members who were on the Handbook Subcommittee who worked on the handbook over the summer. Mr. Carroll highlighted some changes and additions to the handbook. He reviewed:

- Dress Code Guidelines
- Field Trips
- Concussions/Pediculosis (head lice)
- The groups of disciplinary appendix actions
 - Group A - potential consequences: counseling, loss of privileges, office detention, or in or out of school suspension and parent notification
 - Group B - potential consequences: counseling, loss of privileges, office detention, up to 3 days in or out of school suspension and parent meeting with administration
 - Group C - potential consequences: office detentions, up to 5 days in or out of school suspension, restitution for any damage, and/or involvement of the Police and/or Fire Departments and parent meeting with administration
 - Group D - potential consequences: up to 5 days in or out of school suspension with restitution for any damage, involvement of the Police and/or Fire Departments, Leadership roles in athletics, co-curricular, and student government will be terminated. 5 additional days may be imposed by the Principal or designee with the possibility of an expulsion hearing being held.

Following the presentation, it was open to questions and comments from the Committee.

Ms. O'Neill asked if it would be agreeable with the Committee to approve the handbook but revisit the dress code language in the very near future or postpone approving the handbook. She noted that there have been a slew of reports by parents expressing a great deal of concern of inconsistent standards for girls and boys and inconsistent enforcement. She noted that there have been many articles in major publications about dress code concerns. Ms. O'Neill said given that there have been a lot of input from parents and that the Committee cannot discuss things prior to meeting, and the very large number of parents that have concern about the dress code, she said that she wasn't sure that the changes that have been made at this point would be sufficient to address all of their concerns; therefore, she asked if the Committee could take a little more time to explore the topic.

Chair Durrance agreed with Ms. O'Neill.

Dr. Cabral noted that she hasn't heard anything about this and asked if Mr. Carroll was aware.

Mr. Carroll responded that in the spring there was some discussion, particularly in the social media realm around inequities in the dress code which is why they put together the Subcommittee to particularly look at different areas. He noted his disappointment because he did reach out to the masses and didn't have many parents who wanted to get involved with the Subcommittee. He added that they did try to have representation as much as they could from parents and students that helped drive the changes that are in the dress code.

Ms. O'Neill asked if some students met with guidance counselors and with Mr. Carroll about their concerns.

Mr. Carroll responded that they tried to have those students be part of the Subcommittee; however, it's one thing to voice a concern but another thing to be part of the change and that some students were on the Handbook Subcommittee.

Dr. Cabral asked for some specific concerns that are being addressed with this could be shared as she feels that she is at a disadvantage to comment because she was not aware of the issue.

Ms. O'Neill said that one example were spaghetti strap undergarments that girls would wear with an over the shoulder top. She said that kids have been pulled out and told they have to go home and change or they have to put on an old sweatshirt that has been lying around and that she is referring to about several dozen people

who have voiced concern about this particular issue which could represent a lot more than several dozen people. Ms. O'Neill added that she has not visually witnessed the particular kind of tops that girls would wear but that they are being pulled aside and told that they have to cover up with a sweatshirt. She spoke of how some parents felt that the dress code was basically gender based, that young men were able to show their abdomen and that they were never pulled aside but if a young woman showed her abdomen they were consistently pulled aside. Ms. O'Neill noted that she had received a phone call prior to the meeting from a School Committee member who could not attend the meeting reminding her to address the concerns of the dress code. Ms. O'Neill said that although most of the discussions have been over social media, part of the School Committee's obligation is to be connected to the community and to know what people are thinking or concerns that people have particularly parents of youngsters in the schools. She noted that they do not respond over social media posts but do monitor the discussions.

Ms. De Luca said she disagrees with Ms. O'Neill and that she felt the dress code covers pretty much everything and suggested that the parents that Ms. O'Neill is hearing from on social media call the Easton Middle School and speak with a guidance counselor or someone in Administration and air their concerns.

Ms. O'Neill said that she thinks that to some degree there is a widespread thought that most parents won't follow through because of the completely inaccurate perception that somehow if they complain that their children will be seen differently by the teachers or administration in a negative light.

Dr. Cabral expressed her concern over the direction of the conversation and that she does not validate the behavior of expressing dissatisfaction over social media and that if a person has a concern that they need to call the school and if there are dozens of people discussing this topic on social media that not one person has contacted the office or emailed the office. She guessed that no one has contacted Mr. Carroll as well and that if people have gone to the public or to the School Committee they can't solve problems that way. She doesn't want to encourage that behavior because it is very inefficient, parents need to contact Administration if they have a concern and if Mr. Carroll advertises for people to serve on the Handbook Subcommittee and they don't respond and if they have a complaint they need to come and speak with Administration. Dr. Cabral said that this is a complaint about the Administration and it is very inappropriate for a complaint about the Administration to happen in this manner and it needs to come to her and Ms. Pruitt to handle and investigate if it did or did not happen, and that this is not the procedure.

Ms. Pruitt added that in her 6 years working in the district she has worked with 1 or 2 parents in her first couple of years of being in the district and it was directed back to Mr. Carroll and it was inconsistencies with who was being addressed about what they were wearing or not wearing and Mr. Carroll addressed those staff members immediately. She said 1 of the 2 staff members no longer works in the district. She said it was about the length of shorts that was being discussed and she noted that 2 people could have the exact same pair of shorts but if one was taller than the other the shorts could potentially fit differently in length. She said that Mr. Carroll addressed those issues immediately specifically because there were inconsistencies with how it was being outlined by staff.

Mr. Carroll added that he did hear of some rumbling in the Spring and had he gotten a number of complaints he would have done exactly what they did which was to create a Subcommittee to review the handbook over the summer. He said they tried to be inclusive and include parents and he did try to reach out specifically to people that he knew had a strong opinion either positive or negative about the dress code and they did make some changes and every year the handbook is under review and needs to get approved. He noted that parents are able to be on the next Subcommittee when they meet again over the summer.

Ms. O'Neill asked Mr. Carroll, what is the best way for parents to contact him.

Mr. Carroll suggested that they call the office.

Ms. O'Neill said she was glad that the language about the way some girls dress can be a distraction was removed..

Dr. Cabral added that the public should contact the Administration directly for any issues. She said that it is illegal to target students and it is doubtful that it happens and if it does, it is illegal and needs to be reported.

Chair Durrance suggested tabled the vote to the December 1st meeting so that Ms. Starr would be in attendance.

Dr. Cabral noted that the former EMS Student Handbook is currently online.

On a motion by Chair Durrance, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 3-1, the Committee tabled the EMS Student Handbook for 2022-2023 until the December 1st School Committee meeting.

Discussion and Possible Vote on Surplus Furniture at Center, Parkview, and Moreau Hall Schools:

Dr. Cabral said the contents, not furniture at Parkview, needs to be removed before the demolition and all the contents of Central Office and other 2 schools removed as well. There will be a small window of opportunity to have the other schools come through to look at what is remaining and then it will be opened up to the Town Departments and a small number of non profit social service organizations that serve the district's students and families. Dr. Cabral noted that the School Committee has signed over all 3 elementary school buildings to the Town the first of the new year.

Ms. De Luca asked if families wanted to get some desks for their children and how could they go about it.

Dr. Cabral noted that due to the tight timeline, the 4 buildings won't be open to the public and families could contact the non profit organizations that the district will be working with such as the YMCA, My Brother's Keeper, and Schools on Wheels.

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call vote of 4-0, the Committee approved to label the contents at Center, Parkview, and Moreau Hall Schools surplus.

Update on the Timeline for Blanche Ames Move:

Dr. Cabral said that she doesn't really have an update and that the substantial completion date is scheduled for Friday, December 2nd and partial moving is scheduled for Monday, December 5th. She said that she would like to continue to keep this item on the agenda moving forward because things could change the entire schedule.

Public Comment:

None.

Superintendent Notes:

None.

Assistant Superintendent Notes:

Ms. Pruitt said that the Professional Development Day was a big hit. The PK-2 staff spent the day packing up and getting ready for the move. Grades 3 through 8 teachers were fully immersed into understanding the Science of Reading. She gave a shout out to the Literacy Coaches, Jeanne Baxter and Karen Daley, and also Reading Specialist Cindy Olson. She said they created the presentation, facilitated the session for their colleagues and the feedback was wonderful. Ms. Pruitt said that the high school focused on mental health during the Professional Development Day and had a speaker from Minding Your Minds and participated in Ed Camps in the afternoon about mental health topics as well as curriculum topics. She noted that the January 13th Professional Development Day will be focused on school safety. Ms. Pruitt said they are fully immersed in the second pilot of the EL Education Program from Open Up Resources. She noted that this is a free online

program but if the district were to purchase the program there are a lot of consumables that the district would purchase. She noted that anyone could go on their website and look to see the program for themselves. She said they are continuing the science professional development in the elementary grades and had 2 teachers host a group of educators in their classrooms. She thanked Christen Foote and Meagan St. Martin who opened up their classrooms and had their colleagues and other administrators in there as well. She said it was a wonderful experience diving into how students learn and how they navigate the scientific thinking and scientific method.

School Committee Notes:

Ms. O'Neill mentioned that yesterday evening the School Planning Committee had a tour of the new school and going through it she was overwhelmed by the wonderful features that are age specific. She expressed her gratitude to the community for supporting the new school project.

Ms. De Luca thanked everyone who voted at the election and congratulated those who won. She said on November 4th Bridgewater State University held an award ceremony for alumni and Hazel Varella was the 2022 award recipient for the Nicholas P. Tillinghast Award for Achievement in the Field of Public Education and Laney Clement Holbrook was the 2022 award recipient for the Dr. Catherine Comeau Award for Professional Achievement in Physical Education. She said both women worked in Easton. Ms. De Luca said Hazel said it was a great honor for both her and Laney and that they both gave speeches.

Ms. Weisman said that walking through the new school always makes her feel happy and that people are reaching out to her wanting to see the new school; however, it is still under construction and hopefully they will have substantial completion on December 2nd. She said that first and foremost will be getting the kids and teachers into the building and that she is working with ECAT to do another video tour in December. She said she is grateful for all the support for the new school.

Ms. O'Neill said that she is a member of the Naming Subcommittee for all 4 schools and she, Ms. De Luca, and Chair Durrance are working together on the Naming Subcommittee application form for people who wish to join the committee. She noted that the Naming Subcommittee is to offer naming opportunities for spaces in or outside all of the school buildings in honor of loved ones or people admired for a specified donation. She noted that the goal is to have a small committee which will consist of the 3 School Committee members who currently reside on the Subcommittee, 2 parents who currently have children in the schools, 2 Easton Public Schools staff, and 2 members of the community. The application will be sent out via email by Dr. Cabral and Chair Durrance will post the information and application form on Facebook. Ms. O'Neill said they will vet the applications to make sure that people have skills or experience that is relevant to the efforts of the committee.

Chair Durrance said that the Tri M had their induction ceremony on November 17th for the music department which is equivalent to the National Honor Society. She congratulated the 29 students who were inducted into the Tri M this year. The marching band participated in the Veterans Day parade and they will also be participating in the Lion's Club Holiday Festival Parade on December 4th. The OA Choir will be performing at the Rockery from 4:00 to 5:00 on December 4th. She said Bay State was a huge success, 10 schools came to OA, worked for 2 days learning songs and choreography. She said having never worked together before, by day 2 they gave an amazing performance.

Chair Durrance provided Ms. Starr's notes in her absence. She said volleyball, field hockey, and football had great seasons that ended early in the playoffs. She said good luck to the football team with their Thanksgiving Day game. She said Fall Cheer also finished their competitive season. Last weekend Boys and Girls Cross Country competed in the MIAA Division and girls finished first and were the Division 1 C State Champs, boys finished second and as a team they swept the podium with winners in first, second, and third place. Both teams will compete in the All State Meet this weekend in Devens. She said that Soccer made it to the finals and will compete Sunday for the D State Championship. Laney Clements Holbrook was named the Division 2

Coach of the Year. She added that all fall sports registration closes tomorrow and wished good luck to those who will be trying out for winter sports the week after Thanksgiving.

Executive Session RE:Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21 (a) 7 - To Comply with Open Meeting Law to Review Minutes of Prior Executive Session 10/6/2022, 10/20/2022, Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a) 3 To Discuss Strategy with Respect to Collective Bargaining for Paraprofessional Unit and SPEA Units (Custodial, Secretarial/Clerical, and Food Service):

Chair Durrance made a motion to enter into the Executive Session and will return to Open Session for the purpose to comply with Open Meeting Law to Review Minutes of Prior Executive Session 10/6/2022, 10/20/2022, and discussion of strategy with respect to Bargaining for the Paraprofessional Unit and SPEA Units (Custodial, Secretarial/Clerical, and Food Service) and stated that, in her opinion, having this discussion in public would be detrimental to the bargaining position of the School Committee. Ms. Wesiman seconded the motion, with a roll call vote of 4-0, the Committee adjourned to enter into Executive Session at 6:15 p.m.

Return to Open Session:

The Committee returned to Open Session at 6:42 p.m.

Minutes: 10/20/2022, 11/3/2022; Executive Session 10/6/2022, 10/20/2022, 11/3/2022:

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote of 4-0, the Committee approved the minutes of 10/20/2022.

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call vote of 4-0, the Committee approved the minutes of 11/3/2022.

On a motion by Chair Durrance, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 4-0, the Committee tabled the Executive Session minutes of 10/6/2022 to the December 1st meeting Executives Session.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote of 4-0, the Committee approved the Executive Session minutes of 10/20/2022 but not to be released.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call vote of 4-0, the Committee approved the Executive Session minutes of 11/3/2022 but not to be released.

Chair Durrance said the next scheduled meeting will take place on December 1st at 5:00 p.m.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote of 4-0 , the Committee adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Souza
Secretary