

EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
EASTON, MA

EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, December 15, 2022

**Minutes of the Virtual School Committee Meeting, December 15, 2022**, Virtual Meeting via Zoom convened at 5:00 p.m. Present by roll call: Michelle Durrance, Jennifer Starr, Jacqueline Weisman, Caroline O'Neill, and Nancy De Luca.

**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. The meeting was open to the public and the Committee will take questions by the chat feature; full name and address is needed. The Committee will not read questions that have already been answered. To use zoom you will need to download the Zoom application or use the link on the agenda.

Dr. Cabral asked for a moment of silence for beloved staff member Mary Romans who passed tragically after a lengthy illness. She said they had the opportunity to celebrate Mary's life today and last night. Ms. Roman was a light to everyone. Her family was a model of strength, support and pure love, her memory will live on for sure and that she has left quite a legacy.

**Minutes: 12/1/2022, Executive 12/1/2022:**

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. Starr with a roll call vote of 4-0, the Committee approved the minutes of 12/1/2022.

On a motion by Ms. Starr, seconded by Ms. De Luca with a roll call vote of 4-0, the Committee approved the Executive Session minutes of 12/1/2022 but not to be released.

Ms. O'Neill entered the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

**U.S. Presidential Scholar Nominee for Massachusetts:**

Dr. Cabral announced that Henry Ma, senior at Oliver Ames High School, has been selected by Commissioner Riley to represent the state as a nominee for the U.S. Presidential Scholars from Massachusetts.

Ms. Cavanaugh said that Henry serves as both the National Honor Society Treasurer as well as the Class of 2023 Treasurer. He serves on the Math and Science team, he is an ADL Peer Leader as well as a member of the DECA Club. Henry has served as the treasurer for both the National Honor Society and the Class of 2023, is a peer mentor with the school's ADL group, member of the Math Team, the Computer Science Club and DECA. He also serves as a state representative for the statewide Student Council.

**Presentation of NSDC (National School Development Council) Award for Academic Growth and Student Leadership in Learning and MASS (Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents) Certificate of Academic Excellence Awards:**

Dr. Cabral announced that Henry Ma and Cassandra Passias have been awarded the National School Development Council Award for academic growth and student leadership in learning. The award is presented to high school seniors who consistently pursued a high level of academic effort, and who have also served as positive role models for the student body. Recipients of the award exemplify admirable character and accomplishment.

Ms. Susan Mancuso, Director of Guidance said that she has seen many students capable of success at the highest level of education that our school has to offer, and Henry is one of them. Where Henry stands alone is his humility, his ability to self-reflect, and his desire to improve himself not only as an academic, but socially, emotionally, and within all the connective tissue that makes an elite citizen and person too. As a high school student interested in studying medicine, Henry worked at the Boston Medical Center Volunteer program, he shadowed an internal medicine specialist within a private practice and actually observed procedures, attended oncology lectures within the Winship Cancer Institute and spent time this summer in a hospital laboratory setting.

Ms. Mancuso said that Cassandra is an outstanding, multi-talented student and is graduating at the top of her class. She is a clarinetist in the Concert Band and is also a cast member in the annual high school musical and is a member of the National Honor Society. Cassie is also a member of the Leo Club, our high school Math Team, and was chosen to serve as a Peer Leader, where with training from the ADL, she spoke to groups of underclassmen about social justice. Along with three other students, Cassie represented Oliver Ames and Easton Wings of Hope at a drug prevention seminar in Washington, DC, in order to learn ways to help our school and community with drug prevention. Cassandra is also very active in the Greek/American community and is a member of the Paradosi Greek Dance Troupe.

Dr. Cabral announced the recipients of the MASS Certificate of Academic Excellence, Molly Capece and Madeleine Bornstein. She noted the criteria for the award is 3 years cumulative average, rank in class and personal selection by the Superintendent.

Ms. Mancuso said that Molly Capece is one of the brightest and most academically accomplished students in her class. An amazing student, classmate, and a positive role model, Molly has made a lasting impression on both her peers and the faculty while at Oliver Ames High School. Molly has demonstrated a level of involvement in and out of school that has required an impressive amount of time and energy. She has always managed to balance all of the demands placed upon her with a level of patience, discipline and positivity that goes well beyond her age. While Molly has dedicated an amazing amount of time and energy to her academics, she has been perhaps even more impressive outside of the classroom, where she has been a multi-sport Varsity athlete, a member of our National Honor Society, a member of several additional school clubs and has volunteered through her church as a religious education teacher and as hospital volunteer at nearby medical center. Molly also has been a member of a club soccer and basketball team outside of school. It is through all of her athletic, academic, and extracurricular activities that Molly has been recognized as a league all star in track, as an AP Scholar with distinction, and as a school recipient of a Junior Year Bowdoin College Book Award.

Ms. Mancuso said that Maddy is a gifted student, who also has made a point to meaningfully pursue her passions outside of school. Maddy has found time to balance an incredibly rigorous academic schedule with an equally demanding extracurricular profile. Most notably, Maddy has been a member of a competitive dance team outside of school since she was three years old. Dance, for Maddy, is a 5 day per week commitment, and she currently serves as the Captain of her competition team and also works as a dance teacher as well. Furthermore, Maddy has never sought out token membership to any club or activity, and oftentimes has sought leadership roles whenever possible. These activities include being the Vice President of our local DECA Chapter, serving as Secretary for our local Make A Wish Club, and actively assisting our school UNICEF Chapter since her Freshman year. It is the result of all Maddy's academic and extracurricular successes that she been recognized as a member of our school National Honor Society, has been a two time Silver Medalist in the National French Exam, has been a two time DECA state champion and National Finalist, was twice

recognized with a team award for her commitment to our field hockey team, was selected as an AP Scholar with Distinction, and was chosen to be the Junior year recipient of our Yale Book Award. The Committee congratulated all the students.

### **Introduction of the School Resource Officer:**

Dr. Cabral introduced Chris Aker, Easton Police Officer and appointed School Resource Officer. She said Mr. Aker is getting ready to perform with the middle school musicians this evening.

Officer Aker introduced himself and provided some background information about himself. He said he has been with the Easton Police Department for nineteen years and was in the military for sixteen years. He said he attended the NASRO (National Association of School Resource Officers) basic School Resource Officer course about 8-9 years ago. He noted that his job description is in his title "resource" and that the goal is to bridge the gap between the community, the school, and the police. Mr. Aker said that he is also a member of the Massachusetts Juvenile Police Officers Association which consists of a group of School Resource Officers and they attend a conference every year and receive an update on all the juvenile laws.

### **MCAS Presentations (RO, EMS, OA):**

Ms. Pruitt presented the district's MCAS Assessment and Accountability Results from the Spring of 2022.

Some highlights that were noted:

- 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 increase
  - English Language Arts (ELA) scores declined
  - Science scores increased slightly
- Students have attended less school over the past several years
  - Average Easton student missed 11 days in 2022
    - 17% of all students missed 18+ days in 2022
    - Chronic absenteeism (missing 10% of days enrolled) for students in grades 3-8 increased in 2022 by 133% as compared to 2019
- DESE reports 1.7 million days of missed school because of positive COVID-19 cases in 2022
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most districts and schools, including EPS, did not receive an accountability determination in 2022
- 2022 MCAS Data will be the new baseline for accountability moving forward
- EPS 2022 Accountability Results - Percentiles
  - OA - 63rd percentile
  - EMS - 76th percentile
  - RO - 71st percentile

Ms. Pruitt compared the Grades 3-8, Grade 10 Benchmark Comparison for ELA and Math and Grades 5 & 8 STE Comparison to the state and other districts.

Chris Getchell, Principal of Richardson Olmsted School shared his MCAS results from the Spring of 2022.

Some highlights that were noted:

- Grade 3 ELA results compared to the state - 15% stronger than the state average than they were pre-pandemic and Grade 3 Math compared to the state - about 10% increase over the state average
- Comparison of males versus females in Grade 3 ELA results - 46% of males are meeting or exceeding ELA compared to 71% of females (25% difference) and Grade 3 Math males versus female had less of a gap in Math compared to Reading
- Grade 4 ELA results compared to the state - higher growth than before the pandemic and Grade 4 Math - about 10% above the state average

- Comparison of males versus females in Grade 4 ELA results - 38% of males met reading standards compared to 59% of females (21% difference). Comparison of males versus females in Math, less than 5% difference
- Grade 5 ELA results compared to the state - 10% stronger than the state average and Grade 5 Math - lower growth than the state average
- Comparison of males versus females in Grade 5 ELA results - 45% of males met ELA standards versus 59% of females (14% difference) and the comparison of males versus females, 25% difference of females outperforming the males
- Grade 5 Science results compared to the state - had the lowest drop (2%). This result was attributed to the new Science Program, Know Atom

Luke Carroll, Principal of Easton Middle School shared his MCAS results from the Spring of 2022.

Some highlights that were noted:

- Grade 6 ELA students - 60% met or exceeded expectations (10% decrease from 2019) and Grade 6 Math students - 65% met or exceeded expectations (4% decrease from 2019)
- Grade 7 ELA students - 51% met or exceeded expectations (12% decrease from 2019) and Grade 7 Math students - 64% met or exceeded expectations (6% decrease from 2019)
- Grade 8 ELA students - 50% met or exceeded expectations (16% decrease from 2019) and Grade 8 Math students - 46% met or exceeded expectations (20% decrease from 2019)
- Grade 8 Science/Technology/Engineering students - 54% met or exceeded expectations (16% decrease from 2019)

Mr. Carroll introduced Jeanne Baxter, Literacy Coach and Reading Specialist at Easton Middle School noted that the goal of her and Lindsey Whalen, Math Coach is to focus on teaching and learning and providing interventions. She shared the following information on data meetings and data decisions:

- Universal screener administered to all students (fall, winter, spring) to identify those most at risk for not meeting end of grade level proficiency in grades 6, 7, or 8 in Math and ELA
- Additional screener (DIBELS/IR/IXL) administered to students below 40th percentile rank and/or not meeting expectations on previous MCAS assessment
- Data meetings conducted with teachers to share screening information and comparisons made from spring results to MCAS results. (STAR appears to be a very good predictor of MCAS performance. Discussion with teachers of successes and barriers.)
- Review of standards - met with grade levels to analyze “glows and grows”
- In-class support and FOCUS block interventions
- Professional development/department meetings/coaching cycles

Ms. Baxter named the members of the Literacy Team and intervention Staff and reviewed the objective, eligibility, notifications, and what the advantage provides for Math and ELA.

Kelly Cavanaugh, Principal of Oliver Ames High School presented her MCAS results from Spring 2022 for grades 9 and 10.

Some highlights that were noted:

- Grade 10 Math students - The achievement of the “high needs” population has increased from 2019-2022 (increase of 14% meeting or exceeding expectations). Students with disabilities continue to significantly underperform when compared to non-disabled students
- Grade 10 ELA students - Exceeding has dropped by 11% since 2019, meeting expectations has increased by 7%. The achievement of “high needs” population increased from 2019-2022
- Grade 9 Physics students - Achievement levels for each year are baseline for the Next Generation STE/Physics exam. Students with high needs and disabilities underperform when compared to “all students”

**Discussion and Vote to Approve Sponsor List of Vendors to be added to the Athletic Sponsor List:**

Kelly Cavanaugh presented a list of banner sponsors for non athletic activities and the Robotics Team.

The Committee reviewed the list.

Chair Durrance noted that many of the sponsors have supported the Robotics Team for years.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Starr with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the sponsor list of vendors to be added to the athletic sponsor list.

#### **Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve the 2022-2023 EMS Student Handbook:**

Luke Carroll, Principal of Easton Middle School said he had heard that there were negative vibes about the student handbook and had created a Handbook Subcommittee to address the concerns. He noted that they had parents, teachers and students to be part of the Subcommittee. The Handbook Subcommittee reviewed the handbook and made some changes, the handbook was then presented to the Easton Middle School School Council and they voted to accept the changes. Mr. Carroll said he then presented the handbook to the School Committee and although the Committee did not vote to approve the handbook, he said that he has not received any feedback to make any changes. He added that any changes that the School Committee may make to the handbook would then go back to the School Council for them to approve.

Chair Durrance said that her concerns were that in talking about the equity of the language and that revealing and immodest are very subjective.

Ms. Starr added that her thoughts are to keep it simple and respectful of the work that has gone into the handbook. She suggested removing the words "revealing" and "immodest" because they are subjective and suggested that changing item E to read "*clothing, such as strapless tops, visible undergarments, and clothing that reveals the abdominal area, lower chest, or buttocks.*" Ms. Starr brought up the inconsistency within the district of hats being allowed in some schools but not others.

Mr. Carroll said that there was a time when the high school and middle school had very similar policies when it came to head covering. He added that there had been a student at the high school battling cancer and the rules were relaxed to make it an environment so that everyone was comfortable. He said that at the middle school having students without their hats and not wearing hoods is important and that you can see the student's face and that students can look different with a hat on compared to without one. Mr. Carroll added that there are moments when they have to go back and look at surveillance cameras and when hats are pulled down or hoods are up it makes it difficult. He noted that they do make some exceptions.

Ms. Starr expressed concern over the sentence "*Inappropriate dress shall be defined, but not limited to the following.*"

Ms. O'Neill suggested changing it to "*Inappropriate dress such as.*" She asked Mr. Carroll to suggest the School Council reconsider strapless tops being inappropriate dress.

Ms. Starr pointed out language on page 18 "*The School Committee has also established the following policy: Any student who commits an act of vandalism, destruction of property, breaking and entering, or other criminal acts, will be turned over to the police for prosecution*" didn't reflect the policy and that it should read "*the Superintendent or Designee may refer to law enforcement*" in the events of certain acts.

Mr. Carroll noted that the language has been there for years.

Dr. Cabral suggested it read "*The Superintendent or Designee may refer a student to law enforcement in the event of an act of vandalism, destruction of property, breaking and entering, or other criminal acts.*"

Ms. Starr referred to page 22 Honor Courses for Grade 8 and that in the program of studies there is no reference to honor courses any longer.

Mr. Carroll noted that they will clear up that language.

Ms. Starr referred to page 24, item 2 under Medication. She said language is dated and wondered if the language is necessary.

Mr. Carroll will speak with nurse Eileen Gardner before bringing it before the School Council to clean up the language.

The Committee thanked Mr. Carroll.

**Discussion About the Naming Subcommittee:**

Dr. Cabral said that the Naming Subcommittee was put together to provide people to name spaces within or outside a school.

Ms. O'Neill said that the Naming Subcommittee will create standards for the types of spaces that could be named in honor of someone and establish the recommended donations for those spaces. She said the Subcommittee consists of 3 School Committee members; herself, Nancy De Luca, and Chair Michelle Durrance. She added that they are looking to add members of the school staff, parents of current students and of the larger community to help make the determinations she spoke of. She thanked Dr. Cabral for sending out an email to staff and parents per her request, letting them know that the Subcommittee is looking for members along with a link to the application. She said that they would like people with experience in communications and property valuation and working together as a team with other members of a group.

Ms. De Luca added that experience in nonprofit fundraising, experience in the field of communications, ability to attend 1 to 2 meetings a month, ability to collaborate and openly communicate as part as a team, and experience in assessing the value of property. She noted that spaces could be a classroom, cafeteria, and that last year the senior class donated money to have the administrative offices named.

Dr. Cabral said that the funds from naming goes into a special account for Naming Committee funds and they go directly to facilities. She added that they try to keep any money that is earmarked for a specific location such as money for the naming of the Dalrymple Auditorium would go towards stage lighting, replacing seats, and carpets. If there are no significant renovations needed for that area then the funds are put towards other spaces in that particular building.

Ms. O'Neill added that if they received more than 2 applications for a position on the Subcommittee that applicants are chosen based on criteria and then they would use a lottery system to select those members.

Ms. De Luca said that anyone who had questions she answered them via email and that applications are due by February 28th to [ndeluca@easton.k12.ma.us](mailto:ndeluca@easton.k12.ma.us).

**Personnel Change - Retirement - MH Secretary:**

On a motion by Chair Durrance, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the retirement of Moreau Hall Secretary.

**Update on the Timeline for Blanche Ames Move:**

Dr. Cabral provided an update on the timeline for the Blanche Ames Elementary School move. She said that the move in is currently January 3rd and that the building inspection will take place next week. She noted that the Central Office Staff will be operating out of the new building as of December 27th and the children will come in as of January 3rd. Some rooms are set up completely, others are still in transition. She said the students have been visiting the school with their teachers as soon as we have the occupancy permit. The district will lose control over the Parkview School on December 23rd so students will go directly to Blanche Ames for the half day of school. Mr. Cederbaum is planning to send out correspondence on all of this and traffic directions as well. This will also be included in the district newsletter. She noted that traffic patterns will be challenging and asked parents to allow extra time in the morning and afternoon. Dr. Cabral said that the Blanche Ames address will be 50 Spooner Street and we are hoping to have a different address for the Central Office which still has not been determined and that the phone numbers will be the same. She spoke of several requests for an open house; however, until the project is completed an open house won't take place until over the summer when everything is completed.

Ms. Pruitt reiterated for parents to watch for email updates.

**Naming Subcommittee Update:**

Already discussed.

**Public Comment:**

None.

**Superintendent Notes:**

Dr. Cabral said other than the building and the significant impact of Mrs. Roman's passing last week, she did not have anything new.

**Assistant Superintendent Notes:**

Ms. Pruitt said that they are in the final stages of the second pilot of the EL Program by Open Up Resources and that they met with the pilot committee team today and that they will be working over break and will meet again in January to compare both programs. She said once they consolidate the information they will be meeting with the larger group of the Literacy Adoption Committee and the Literacy Pilot Committee to present their findings of the 2 programs and which they will be adopting. She said will have an update on which program they will be choosing at the February School Committee meeting. The 2 programs they have been looking at are Wit and Wisdom and EL.

**School Committee Notes:**

Ms. O'Neill said she had to go to a clinic and she met a person who was a tech and noticed that Ms. O'Neill lived in Easton and the person went into the most eloquent and touching speech about how much she loves the schools and how she moved to Easton from another state. She told Ms. O'Neill that she wished some of the parents who are not satisfied or are unhappy in Easton should spend 2 years in the district from which she just left in another state because they would have their eyes really opened. She asked Ms. O'Neill to share with the School Committee how thrilled she and her husband are with the school district and in particular, when the School Committee had to make so many changes in the early stages of COVID was handled beautifully.

Ms. De Luca congratulated the Concert Choir Band and Orchestra at last Thursday's winter concert, it was fabulous. She gave a shout out to all the OA faculty especially during the beginning of the year when they would send Mrs. Roman videos, gift cards, baskets, and at the service they mentioned it today. She said it is a community, a family and she will be missed.

Ms. Starr said that the drama department had a successful play with 3 showings called "Play An" and it was hilarious. She said she attended the National Honor Society Induction which is always a wonderful event and she congratulated all the students who put in all the work to earn that honor. The SEPAC had a guided meditation session with a professional who came in and did it over Zoom Monday night and with the stress of the holidays around the corner it was perfect timing. She said Messiah Sings was Tuesday at the Immaculate Conception and it was amazing and she highly recommends everyone to attend.

Chair Durrance said that the EMS concert is tonight and began at 7:00. The RO and EMS grade 6 concerts are in January.

**Executive Session RE: 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 of 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. Starr seconded the motion, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee adjourned to enter into Executive Session at 7:50 p.m.

**Return to Open Session:**

The Committee returned to Open Session at 8:06 p.m.

**Possible Vote to Approve MOAs for SPEA Units (Custodial, Secretarial/Clerical, and Food Service):**

On a motion by Chair Durrance, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the one year contract for the Food Service Unit.

On a motion by Chair Durrance, seconded by Ms. Starr, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee approved the one year contract for the Secretarial/Clerical Unit.

Chair Durrance said the next meeting is scheduled for January 5th at 5:00 p.m.

**Adjournment:**

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. Starr, with a roll call vote of 5-0 , the Committee adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Souza  
Secretary

Documents:

Minutes

District MCAS Presentation

RO MCAS Presentation

EMS MCAS Presentation

OAHS MCAS Presentation

EMS 2022-2023 Student Handbook