

EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
EASTON, MA

EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, February 2, 2023

**Minutes of the Virtual School Committee Meeting, February 2, 2023** Virtual Meeting via Zoom convened at 5:02 p.m. Present by roll call: Michelle Durrance, Jennifer Starr, Caroline O'Neill, Jacqueline Weisman, 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.

**Minutes: 01/19/2023, Workshop 01/24/2023, Executive 01/19/2023:**

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Starr, with a roll call vote of 4-0, *O'Neill-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes* the Committee approved the minutes of 01/19/2023.

Ms. De Luca entered the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

On a motion by Ms. Starr, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 4-0, *O'Neill-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes* Ms. De Luca abstained, the Committee approved the Workshop minutes of 01/24/2023 with noted edit.

On a motion by Ms. Starr, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call vote of 5-0, *O'Neill-yes, De Luca-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes* the Committee approved the Executive Session minutes of 1/19/2023 but not to be released.

**Personnel Change - Retirement: Special Education Teacher RO:**

Dr. Cabral announced the retirement of Richardson Olmsted Teacher Leslie Soccorso effective June 30, 2023.

Chair Durrance read Ms. Soccorso's retirement letter.

Committee members expressed their appreciation for Ms. Soccorso and wished her well in her retirement.

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call vote of 5-0, *O'Neill-yes, De Luca-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes* the Committee accepted the retirement of Leslie Soccorso with regret.

Dr. Cabral announced the retirement of Blanche Ames Elementary School Teacher Vivian Capobianco effective June 30, 2023.

Committee members expressed their appreciation for Ms. Capobianco and wished her well in her retirement.

Chair Durrance read Ms. Capobianco's retirement letter.

Ms. Pruitt read a comment in the chat:

*Lauren Loomis, 4 Abbey Rd. - "My son, Hudson, had Mrs Capiobianco last year and he loved being in her classroom everyday and learned so much. Best Wishes Mrs Capobianco, you will be so missed. Hudson is watching and is so excited to see you!!"*

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Starr, with a roll call vote of 5-0, *O'Neill-yes, De Luca-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes* the Committee accepted the retirement of Vivian Capobianco with regret.

**Possible Vote to Approve 2023-2024 School Calendar - Second Reading:**

Dr. Cabral said that 3 drafts of the 2023-2024 School Calendar were presented at the last School Committee meeting. The Committee decided to move 2 drafts forward for review and possible vote.

Chair Durrance noted that she favored draft 2 for the reason of consistency with the start date of Tuesday, September 5th for kindergarten allowing 4 consecutive days of school. She added that if school has to use 5 snow days, the 5th day would be after Juneteenth, just like the current school calendar.

Ms. Starr said she preferred draft 1 with the start days consistent with past years and having students start on a Wednesday has been helpful and that she voiced her concerns at the last meeting with having kindergarten start on a Friday.

Ms. O'Neill said she also preferred draft 1 for the reasons that Ms. Starr noted.

Ms. De Luca noted that there was not a big difference in both drafts; however, grades 1 through 12 would have 3 full days of school with draft 1 and that she was in favor of draft 1.

Ms. Weisman said she preferred draft 2 but did not have strong feelings either way.

Dr. Cabral added that the administrators prefer to start before the holiday to have as much time as possible before state testing and that she believes that they would be fine with either of the 2 drafts.

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 4-1, *O'Neill-yes, De Luca-yes, Durrance-no, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes* the Committee approved Draft 1 as the 2023-2024 School Calendar.

**Vote to Approve School Committee's Annual Town Report:**

Chair Durrance said that the School Committee's Annual Town Report had been added to the packet for the Committee's review.

The Committee reviewed the report.

Ms. Starr asked that her name be changed from Jennifer Walsh-Starr to Jennifer Starr.

The Committee expressed their appreciation for Chair Durrance preparing the report.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call vote of 5-0, *O'Neill-yes, De Luca-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes* the Committee approved the 2022 School Committee's Annual Town Report with noted edit.

**Public Comment:**

None.

**Superintendent Notes:**

Dr. Cabral said that the district has begun the budget process. The new Finance Director is reviewing everything and she is very sharp, very smart, and very excited to be working on it. She explained that they will be having staff meetings over February and March focusing on the reactive and proactive strategic needs of the district and reviewing the strategic plan. She said along with reviewing the School Improvement Plans they engage in robust conversations on what resources are needed that support the staff and those are then reported back to the entire Cabinet Team and then to the District Leadership Team. A district prioritized proposal for the budget is then presented to the School Committee at the beginning of April. Dr. Cabral asked to have a preliminary review of the capital budget requests added to the February 16th School Committee agenda. She said due to the cybersecurity issues that are going on in school districts, the district is working on beefing up the cybersecurity as well as the district's insurance coverage. She noted that the staff will be involved in some changes to help make the system more secure. Dr. Cabral spoke of the arctic-like temperatures that are expected Friday and Saturday and that precautions are in place for the facilities and reminded parents to layer up their children for the bus stop. She noted that recess will be indoors on Friday.

**Assistant Superintendent Notes:**

Ms. Pruitt said that they are finishing up the scheduling audit with New Solutions for grades kindergarten through twelve. She said she and Dr. Cabral met with the 2 consultants today and said that they will be meeting with the middle and high school teams over the next 2 weeks to discuss the action steps. She added that the Special Education audit is currently in process and they have not met to report the findings yet.

**School Committee Notes:**

Ms. De Luca noted that if anyone is interested in being a member of the Naming Subcommittee that they can submit their application or email her at [ndeluca@easton.k12.ma.us](mailto:ndeluca@easton.k12.ma.us). She noted that she believes that the link to the application will be in the Town Crier and that it went out to staff and parents via an email.

Ms. Starr said that Art Teacher Kristyn Shea shared on Twitter a gallery of photos that were submitted and won at the Scholastic Art Awards, which is a National competition. She said the gold key winners are being considered for national awards. Oliver Ames High School earned 24 keys; 6 gold, 10 silver, and 8 honorable mentions. She said it was a tremendous amount of work for students and their teachers and thousands around the state participated. Ms. Starr said that the Easton Wings of Hope sent some students to the CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) Forum in Maryland and they are scheduled to return today from the week-long trip. She said she looks forward to hearing about how it went and thanks the students and the adults who helped and provided the incredible experience.

Chair Durrance thanked Ms. Weisman for providing the information about Blanche Ames Elementary School for the Annual Report. She said that Richardson Olmsted School held their Winter Concert that included the grade 5 band, orchestra, and chorus and it was a wonderful night. She added that the Easton Pops Winter Show which was previously called the Dessert Show and over COVID, the Dessert Less Show, will take place on Friday and is sponsored by TEMPO. She explained that they start with the Richardson Olmsted groups in an ensemble and go into Easton Middle School and Oliver Ames High School and the TEMPO show incorporates all the ensembles. The way that the program is set up first is IMAGE which is choir and dancing at Easton Middle School level, then the presentation by Panache and the pit band and they do the same thing for the Easton Middle School Chamber Orchestra followed by the Oliver Ames High School orchestra, 2 Easton Middle School jazz bands followed by Oliver Ames High School jazz bands, and the guitar ensemble. It is a wonderful event and it will be held from 6:00 - 9:00 pm. She said another upcoming event is the Oliver Ames High School Tri-M Karaoke Night on the 7th from 6:00 - 8:00 in the Oliver Ames High School cafeteria.

Chair Durrance noted that the next scheduled meeting will be February 16, 2023 at 5:00 pm.

**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 not return to Open Session for the purpose of discussion of strategy with respect to bargaining for the Paraprofessional Unit and SPEA (Custodial Unit) and stated that, in her opinion, having this discussion in public would be detrimental to the bargaining position of the School Committee. Ms. Nancy De Luca seconded the motion, with a roll call vote of 5-0, the Committee adjourned to enter into Executive Session at 5:47 p.m. *O'Neill-yes, Weisman-yes, De Luca-yes, Starr-yes, Durrance-yes.*

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Souza  
Secretary

Documents:

Minutes

Leslie Soccorso Retirement Letter

Vivian Capobianco Retirement Letter

2 Drafts of 2023-2024 School Calendar

School Committee's Annual Town Report