

EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA

EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 16, 2023

Minutes of the Virtual School Committee Meeting, February 16, 2023 Virtual Meeting via Zoom convened at 5:02 p.m. Present by roll call: Michelle Durrance, Jennifer Starr, Caroline O'Neill, and Jacqueline Weisman.

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.

Executive Session RE: Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a) 1 To Discuss an Opening Meeting Law Complaint Against the Easton School Committee From Patrick Higgins Dated February 2, 2023 :

Chair Durrance made a motion to enter into the Executive Session and will return to Open Session for the purpose of discussion of an Open Meeting Law complaint against the Easton School Committee from Patrick Higgins dated February 2, 2023 and to discuss 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. Starr seconded the motion, with a roll call vote of 4-0, *O'Neill-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes*, the Committee adjourned to enter into Executive Session at 5:04 p.m.

Return to Open Session:

The Committee returned to Open Session at 5:40 p.m.

Minutes: 02/02/2023, Executive 02/02/2023:

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a roll call vote of 4-0, *O'Neill-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes*, the Committee approved the minutes of 02/02/2023 with noted edit.

On a motion by Chair Durrance, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call vote of 4-0, *O'Neill-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes*, the Committee tabled Executive Session Minutes to the next meeting.

Vote to Approve Out of State Trip:

James Cook, Chorus Director at Easton Middle School presented a proposal to take students to Bishop Hendricken High School in Warwick Rhode Island on March 25, 2023 to compete in a show choir competition. He said there will be no cost to students and that the bussing and competition fee will come from the student activity fund.

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 out of state trip to Rhode Island to compete in a Show Choir competition on March 25, 2023.

Vote to Approve Change to the Foreign Travel Trip to Italy:

Rebecca Gove, World Language Teacher at Oliver Ames High School presented her proposal for a foreign travel trip to Italy. It was noted that the trip had been presented to the School Committee at their December 9th, 2021 meeting with the trip taking place in 2023; however, Ms. Gove explained that she has postponed the trip to April 10-19, 2024. Ms. Gove said that the protocols in Italy were giving her concern; therefore, she wanted to push the trip out by a year. Ms. Gove said that she wanted to push the trip out due to restrictions, especially regarding trips to the Vatican. Secondly, she noted that when she booked the previous trip, if anyone on the trip tested positive while in Italy, the entire group would have to stay which caused her concern but it is no longer an issue going in 2024. She noted that the trip will take place over April vacation and that students will miss 2 days of school, the flights, hotels, and the itinerary will remain the same. Ms. Gove said there has been an increase in the cost for flights due to increase in fuel charges. She did say that they changed 1 activity, horseback riding along the Appian Way has been changed to a second segway tour. Ms. Gove noted that she anticipates the cost of the trip to be \$5,100 if 14-18 students attend.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call vote of 3-0, *O'Neill-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes*, Ms. Durrance abstained, the Committee approved the date change to April 10-19, 2024 for the foreign travel trip to Italy.

Vote to Approve the Program of Studies for Oliver Ames High School:

Kelly Cavanaugh, Principal of Oliver Ames High School presented changes to the 2023-2024 Program of Studies. She provided updates on the following courses:

- English - Public Speaking
- Math - Algebra III, Math Topics and AP Statistics
- Business/Technology - Web Page Design, Accounting I, Personal Financial Literacy
- Industrial Arts/Engineering - Introduction to Engineering Design, Civil Engineering and Architecture
- Social Studies - Applied Learning Project
- World Language - Mandarin

New course offerings for Music and Performing Arts included:

- Beginner Instrumental Music - 5 credits
- History of Music in Film - 5 credits
- Theatre Arts 2: Musical Theater Performance and Analysis - 5 credits
- Music Theory I - 5 credits

New course offerings for Social Studies included:

- Film History - 2.5 credits
 - The following electives will be opened for 11th and 12th graders
 - Applied Learning Project (formerly Senior Project)
 - Contemporary Issues
 - Human Geography
 - Law and the Legal System
 - Local History
 - Psychology

Ms. Cavanaugh noted that they removed the CPII World History course.

Ms. Cavanaugh reviewed several programs for Special Education including Academic Support for 5 credits and courses in the Foundations, Life Skills, and Transitions programs.

New course offerings in Business and Technology included:

- Principles of Business - 2.5 credits
- Business Law - 2.5 credits

- Yearbook - now open to grades 11 and 12

New course offerings for Industrial Arts and Engineering included:

- Engineering Capstone - 5 credits
- Manufacturing and Design Capstone - 5 credits

Ms. Cavanaugh noted that they removed the Architectural Drafting and Engineering Graphics II and Construction Technology I and II courses.

New course offerings for Family and Consumer Sciences included:

- Fashion II Textile ARts and NASA Hunch Soft Goods Design - 2.5 credits
- Interior Spaces and Upcycling Design - 2.5 credits

Ms. Cavanaugh noted that they removed Clothing and Textiles, Careers in Food, and Future in Fashion courses.

Ms. Cavanaugh recommended changing the department title for Business and Technology, Family Consumer Sciences, Industrial Arts and Engineering to Business and Applied Arts. She said that they currently function as one Department Head.

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*, the Committee accepted the Oliver Ames High School Program of Studies for 2023-2024.

DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) Tiered Focus Monitoring Presentation:

Theresa Skinner, Director of Student Services presented the Public School Monitoring (PSM) and Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM) which was formerly called Coordinated Program Review (CPR). She said that the PSM is an office within the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) monitoring teams from PSM who work with school districts, charter schools, vocational schools, and virtual schools to ensure state and federal laws and regulations for special education and civil rights are being followed. This is accomplished through a process called Tiered Focus Monitoring. Ms. Skinner explained the TFM process: The TFM is the review of select policies, procedures, student records, and building facilities to see if schools and districts are in compliance with, or following, the state and federal laws and regulations for special education and civil rights. The PSM reviews all school districts, charter schools, vocational schools, and virtual schools across the state every 3 years.

- The TFM process includes District Self-Assessment
- Parent survey
- PSM on-site visit
 - Record reviews
 - Document
 - Interviews
 - Facility observations
- Analysis and report
- Corrective action implementation and support

TFM reviews are broken into 2 groups, Group A and Group B, and each group has a different monitoring focus and different review activities:

Group A

Special Education Identification Process
Parent Involvement
IEP Development
Programming and Support Services
Equal Opportunity
Student Record Review

Group B

Licensure and Professional Development
Parent, Student and Community Engagement
Facilities and Classrooms
Oversight
Student Learning Time
Equal Access
Building Tours

Ms. Skinner reviewed Easton's TFM:

- A self assessment was completed Spring of 2022
- The district will undergo a Group A review with a focus on Special Education
- Parent orientation will take place prior to the site visit
- Parent surveys will be sent electronically on February 27, 2023 with a response needed by March 13th (will be sent out before March 1st)
- On site visit will take place the week of May 23rd and 24th, 2023
- Observations in the schools will be conducted
- Selected staff members and SEPAC board members will be interviewed during the on site visit

Ms. Skinner noted that the district's point person will be Julie Evans and that she did an orientation with the Central Office Administrative team and will have an orientation meeting with parents who have a child with special needs on March 1st which happens to be the next SEPAC (Special Education Parent Advisory Council). Ms. Skinner added that a press release will go out just before the parent survey. Following the on site visit the on site team will hold an informal exit meeting with Dr. Cabral to summarize its comments.

Final Report from DESE will include:

- Local Education Authorities (LEA) in Tiers 1 and 2, as part of the reporting process, will develop a Continuous Improvement and Monitoring Plan (CIMP) for any criteria receiving a rating of "Partially Implemented", "Not Implemented", and "Implementation in Progress". She noted that the district is a Tier 1 and 2 district and if a district is Tier 3 or 4 DESE is more involved and the process is more lengthy
- The CIMP outlines an action plan, identifies the success metric, describes the measurement mechanism and provides a completion timeframe to bring those areas into compliance with the controlling statute or regulation. LEAs are expected to incorporate the CIMP actions into their district and school improvement plans, including their professional development plans.
- LEA in Tiers 3 and 4 will receive a written report of the findings. The Draft Report will be issued within 45 working days of the on site visit. The Final Report will be issued within 60 working days of the on site visit. Final Reports are not issued from mid June to mid August.
- LEAs in Tiers 3 and 4 will develop a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for any criteria receiving a rating of "Partially Implemented", "Not Implemented", and "Implementation in Progress". Once the report is issued, PSM works with LEAs to develop an appropriate CAP, providing targeted, ongoing technical assistance to support CAP implementation. Both tiers are required to provide written progress reports.

Ms. Skinner said that this is a 6 year process, start to finish and that the district is midway into year 3 of Progress Monitoring.

Ms. Starr asked about the progress from 3 years ago to now and if there were any areas the district didn't make enough progress even though we had disruption of COVID.

Ms. Skinner noted that one area prior to her being hired was translation and interpretation and that the district has come a long way. She noted that indicator 12 which is Early Childhood transition, are students coming out of early intervention and there are so many days that children at the age of 2 ½ need to be evaluated and that legally by age 3, if they are eligible for special education the district has to have an IEP and a program in place for that child. One of the issues they had was the pre-registration process because at the age of 2 ½ the child is not attending public school yet so they need to be added into the students information system to create the workflow to be able to complete the evaluation and one of the issues was getting the pre-registration paperwork completed with the parents. If paperwork is not submitted, a child cannot be entered into the system. The parents then have to go through the residency process and complete the paperwork. A system is in place and the district submitted the corrective progress to the department, they accepted it and the district is 100% in compliance now with the 3 indicators that they looked at.

Ms. Pruitt added that from a civil rights perspective, she has to ensure that the laws are up to date because they change often and that by having the check and balance system it ensures that the district is updated on all the district's documents. She noted that the district had to submit more information pertaining to civil rights in the 3rd year than the past year because it is checked more frequently.

Ms. Skinner added that because the district is in Group A this year, the focus is more on Special Education and that there may be another year when the district would be Group B with the focus on civil rights.

Ms. Skinner added that the Special Olympics will be held this year on May 5th and she hopes everyone can attend.

Dr. Cabral added that the rain date will be May 12th.

Personnel Change - Retirement: Grade 6 Teacher:

Dr. Cabral announced the retirement of Margaret Folan, Grade 6 Teacher at Easton Middle School effective August 3, 2023.

Chair Durrance read Margaret Folan’s retirement letter.

On a motion by Chair Durrance, seconded by Ms. O’Neill, with a roll call vote of 4-0, *O’Neill-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes*, the Committee accepted the retirement of Margaret Folan effective August 3, 2023 with regret.

Discussion and Possible Vote to Approve the Preliminary Requests for Capital:

Dr. Cabral presented the 5 Year Capital Improvement Plan. She noted that on the spreadsheet items in pink or red symbolize “reactive”, yellow “proactive” and the “strategic” in green. She reviewed the Capital Improvement requests for each school, Athletics department, and Technology Department covering the next 5 years. The following is a summary of the items for the FY 2023:

• Richardson Olmsted School - Security System Upgrade	\$ 173,000
• Richardson Olmsted School - Security Upgrade	\$1,215,834
• Richardson Olmsted School - Playground Project	\$ 500,000
• Technology Department - Computers	\$ 250,000
• Furniture (district wide excluding Blanche Ames)	<u>\$ 25,000</u>
Total	\$2,163,834

Ms. Weisman asked what the schedule is moving forward with the request.

Dr. Cabral responded that the town asked the district for a final number and if the Committee approves the Capital Improvement requests then it will be forwarded to the town. The Capital Committee will meet and invite the School Department to be present to answer questions that they might have and then they will put forward their recommendations. She added that ultimately the decision is made by the Town Administrator.

Ms. Weisman asked for the Committee members to be informed when the Capital Committee meeting is scheduled.

On a motion by Ms. Weisman, 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 \$2,163,834 requests for capital as presented.

Discussion and Possible Vote to Change the 2023-2024 School Calendar:

Chair Durrance proposed having another discussion about the 2023-2024 School Calendar as a result of receiving feedback from parents concerned about the start date for kindergarten being before the Labor Day holiday. She noted that in the packet was the calendar that the Committee voted to accept along with draft #2.

Ms. Pruitt noted that as requested by the Chair, she gathered information from all of the 9 kindergarten teachers asking if they preferred to start kindergarten before or after the Labor Day holiday and 9 teachers responded to start after Labor Day and 2 teachers responded with no preference. She said she spoke with Mr. Cederbaum, Principal of Blanche A. Ames Elementary School and Mr. Cederbaum feels that it is best to start before the Labor Day holiday because it is such a big school and it would give students a taste of what to expect going into the long weekend. Ms. Pruitt said that Mr. Cederbaum explained that on the Wednesday before the students start he will have a parent information meeting and on Thursday Open House for the families and the students will start on Friday.

Ms. O'Neill expressed her preference for starting kindergarten before the Labor Day holiday and keeping the 2023-2024 School Calendar as they voted on previously.

Chair Durrance expressed her preference on starting kindergarten after Labor Day on the 2023-2024 draft #2 School Calendar.

Ms. Weisman expressed her gratitude for getting Mr. Cederbaum's feedback.

Ms. Starr expressed her preference for starting kindergarten before the Labor Day holiday and keeping the 2023-2024 School Calendar as they voted on previously

Public Comment:

None.

Superintendent Notes:

Dr. Cabral announced that the 2nd Annual Special Olympics will take place once again in Easton on May 5th; however, it is not open to the public but is open to the parents of the athletes. She noted that the School Committee members are invited to attend and if anyone is interested in volunteering they can contact the Special Education Department at the Central Office.

Assistant Superintendent Notes:

Ms. Pruitt said the district has been very busy with the adoption of Wit and Wisdom and in discussion with the vendor Great Minds who will be working on creating a leadership team within the district for full implementation in the fall. She gave a shout out to her colleague, Brent Conway, Assistant Superintendent of Pentucket Regional School District in West Newbury Massachusetts. She said they are in year 3 of full implementation and have extended an invitation to Easton to visit them and see the program in action. Ms. Pruitt said that Ann Weintrob, the Director of Curriculum and EL along with 8 teachers will visit Pentucket in March. She noted that they initially had concerns about kindergarten and developmentally appropriate practice but Wit and Wisdom responded to the concern and they are working with 2 of the district's kindergarten teachers this year on implementation. Ms. Pruitt said that she also filled out a form with the Boston Globe who will be sharing the data that the district is starting a new program as they surveyed several districts in the Commonwealth. She gave a shout out to the new Director of Curriculum and English Language Learners, Ann Weintrob who has hit the ground running supporting our EL Teachers as they just completed their access testing and that Ms. Weintrob did some testing herself to get a sense of what it was and what the students and teachers went through. Ms. Pruitt said Ms. Weintrob is doing a phenomenal job and she is happy that Ms. Weintrob is in this position. Ms. Pruitt added that Ms. Weintrob is coordinating efforts with getting teams back to writing the curriculum using the UbD (Understanding by Design) and meeting with the Curriculum Leaders at the elementary levels. She said things are moving quickly and they have stage 1 published for the public and all information will be added to the district website. Ms. Pruitt noted that the district is working with their public relations firm to redo the district's website. She added that the Director of Technology, John Sousa has been instrumental in coordinating this project.

School Committee Notes:

Ms. O'Neill expressed her excitement about the new website and noted that she has been so impressed with John Sousa and that he has a lot to deal with the increasing security issues and that he is on top of everything. Ms. O'Neill said that she attended the School Planning Committee meeting last evening that was held at Blanche Ames Elementary School and that every time she enters the new school it lifts her spirits and she is so grateful to the community members who voted for the school. She noted that at the meeting Ms. Weintrob

shared stories of how the kids are excited everyday coming to the new school and that it was wonderful to observe and be part of the whole building experience.

Ms. Weisman echoed Ms. O'Neill's remarks about the new school and that it is vibrant, fun, full of love, and really great to be there as it does lift your spirits.

Ms. Starr provided an update on the winter sports. Indoor track had a great showing at the Hockomock League championship and that the boys won 4 events and placed pretty high in the league championship. She congratulated the wrestling team who finished with the D2 sectionals and finished 6th overall, 3 wrestlers won in their division and will be moving on and 1 of them was named outstanding wrestler of the whole tournament. She said the gymnastics team won the Hockomock League championship with 2 finishing 1st and 2nd overall and they will go on to sectionals. She congratulated the gymnastics team and said that 3 previously qualified for the state tournament which will be on Monday, the 20th. She said the rest of the teams are wrapping up their regular season and wished all the athletes good luck. Ms. Starr added that Blanche Ames will be having a school dance tomorrow night which will be their first big school event.

Chair Durrance said that while she didn't get to see it in person, she watched the Winter Pops, formerly known as the Dessert Show, on ECAT and it was amazing and wonderful to see the progression, the musicians' confidence and music ability throughout the years in the program. The Show Choir, also known as Panache, had their central mass competition and they earned a Silver medal. She added that 39 Oliver Ames and Easton Middle School students made it into the SEMSBA Festival, in which the Senior SEMSBA will take place March 17th to the 18th and the Junior SEMSBA will take place May 5th and 6th. The music department has its annual musical this year, Footloose on Friday, March 17th at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, March 18th at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, March 19th at 2:00 p.m. Chair Durrance said the Tri-M had karaoke night event and she watched the video and Mrs. Cavanaugh, Principal of Oliver Ames High School performed with the kids.

Chair Durrance noted that the start time for the next scheduled meeting has been changed from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on March 9th.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Chair Durrance, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a roll call vote of 4-0, *O'Neill-yes, Durrance-yes, Weisman-yes, Starr-yes*, the School Committee adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Souza
Secretary

Documents:

Minutes

Out of State Trip Proposal

Foreign Travel Trip Proposal

Oliver Ames High School Program of Studies 2023-2024

Public School Monitoring (PSM) and Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM)

Margaret Folan's Retirement Letter

Capital Improvement 5 Year Plan

2023-2024 School Calendar (Approved and Draft 2)