



## East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, October 25, 2022

Hybrid Meeting: Cole Middle School & Via Zoom

### Minutes

#### Those in attendance for Executive Session and Open Session

**School Committee:** Ms. Anne Musella, Chair; Ms. Alyson Powell, Vice Chair; Ms. Nicole Bucka; Mr. William Hangan; Mr. Tim Munoz (arrived at 6:01 pm); Mr. Kevin Murphy (left at 7:35 pm); Dr. Eugene Quinn (arrived at 6:29 pm - Open Session Only)

**Additional Attendees:** Dr. Brian G. Ricca, Superintendent; Mr. Michael Podraza, Assistant Superintendent (Open Session Only); Mr. Neil Marcaccio, Director of Special Education (Open Session Only); Mrs. Maggie Baker, Director of Administration; Mrs. Amy Healey, Confidential Administrative Assistant; Attorney Aubrey Lombardo

**6:00 pm Executive Session** - Ms. Powell made a motion to Convene Open Session and Recess to Executive Session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1) Employee Job Performance - Assistant Superintendent. The individual has been notified, including their right to have any discussion held in open session. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion which passed 5-0. Mr. Munoz and Dr. Quinn were not present for the vote.

#### I. **Call to Order**

Ms. Musella called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm.

#### II. **Pledge of Allegiance**

#### III. **Seal Executive Session Minutes of October 25, 2022 and Disclosure of Executive Session Votes of October 25, 2022.**

*On a motion by Mr. Munoz, seconded by Ms. Powell, the Committee voted 7-0 to Seal the Executive Session minutes of October 25, 2022.*

Ms. Musella reported that no action was taken during the Executive Session.

#### IV. **Public Comment**

Ms. Musella stated that the District's policy limits public comment to 5 minutes per individual and reviewed the rules of decorum.

*Mr. Christopher Lamendola, 50 Sarah's Trace*

Mr. Lamendola addressed the complaint that Ms. Bucka and Ms. Powell made to the East Greenwich Police Department against his statements and actions. He allegedly read from the police report. Mr. Lamendola asserted that Ms. Bucka and Ms. Powell filed a false police report.

**V. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings**

- A. October 11, 2022 Executive Session Minutes
- B. October 11, 2022 Open Session Minutes

*On a motion by Ms. Bucka, seconded by Ms. Powell, the Committee voted 6-0-1 to approve both sets of minutes from October 11, 2022. Mr. Hangan abstained from the vote.*

**VI. Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Report**

Mr. Matthew Murray, Co-President of SEAC, gave a report from the committee. He spoke of the advancements made in policies and expanded engagement of the community.

Mr. Murray thanked outgoing Chair Anne Musella for her support of SEAC. Additionally, Mr. Murray thanked Ms. Bucka and Ms. Powell.

**VII. Action Items**

- A. Allocation of funds from Fund Balance

Mrs. Baker explained that funds from Fund Balance will be allocated for FY 24 (\$308,056) and FY 25 (\$105,471) for teacher stipends.

Ms. Bucka made a motion to commit \$413,527 from fund balance towards teacher stipends in FY 24 and FY 25. Ms. Powell seconded the motion.

Mr. Munoz made a motion to amend Ms. Bucka's motion: Funds will be transferred from the current fund balance to a restricted fund balance under the category of committed for the purpose of paying for teacher stipends in FY 24 (\$308,056) and FY 25 (\$105,471). Ms. Bucka seconded the motion which passed 7-0.

Discussion of the amended motion:

Dr. Quinn asked Mrs. Baker whether this money would have a separate UCOA code. Mrs. Baker replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Munoz requested that draft motion language be included in future action item memos.

The Committee voted 7-0 to approve the motion as amended.

## B. Approval of Superintendent Evaluation Process

Ms. Bucka explained that the packet included revisions to the proposed Superintendent's Evaluation Tool. Updates include:

- Partial 360
- Stakeholders
- Informal Communications

Mrs. Baker and Ms. Moody will look into where to house this data.

Dr. Ricca spoke in favor of the evaluation process as proposed and said that it encompasses all of the areas that he would like included. He opined that this may come to be referred to as the "Rhode Island Model" and emulated in the future.

Committee members spoke in support of this evaluation model. Ms. Musella asked that an effective date be added to the model with an indication that the calendar would be more strictly followed next year. The language of the survey is the rubric and will be administered by the Personnel Subcommittee.

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Mr. Munoz, the Committee voted 7-0 to adopt the Superintendent Evaluation Process.*

## C. Approval of Superintendent's SY 22-23 Goals

Dr. Ricca's draft goals:

- 1) Advancing the Strategic Plan - under development
- 2) Continuing the growth in student services
- 3) Leadership of the building initiative

Dr. Ricca recommended that his goals be discussed further and brought for finalization at a later meeting.

Ms. Musella questioned the necessity of including "advancing the Strategic Plan" as a goal since all actions of the Superintendent should include that goal. She suggested identifying barriers to accessing education. Ms. Musella also suggested a goal of implementing policies that are not being implemented.

Ms. Bucka spoke about the importance of defining the priorities of the next seven months - policy, strategic plan, buildings. She said that specificity comes with the rubric. Ms. Bucka spoke about the need to convey a consensus of priorities to the Superintendent.

Mr. Munoz spoke of the importance of the Strategic Plan being the # 1 goal - a unique responsibility of the Superintendent. Dr. Ricca should put together an execution plan for the Strategic Plan and finalize the data dashboard.

Ms. Powell noted the struggle between goals that are too broad and those that are too specific. She encouraged additional discussion on the Superintendent's goals.

Committee members were asked to identify their priorities for the Superintendent's goals.

Mr. Munoz: strategic plan, student services, buildings initiative

Ms. Musella: barriers to access to education, buildings initiative and related policies

Mr. Hangan: strategic plan and policies

Ms. Powell: access to education, buildings initiative and related policies

Mr. Murphy: strategic plan, student services, buildings initiative and related policies

Dr. Quinn: strategic plan, building initiative, student services

Ms. Bucka: strategic plan, student services, building initiative - community relations

*On a motion by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Powell, the Committee voted 7-0 to table the approval of the Superintendent's goals until the next School Committee meeting.*

#### D. EG Association of Educational Support Professionals MOA - Covid Leave

Dr. Ricca explained that the teachers' new collective bargaining agreement includes a distinction between sick days and covid days. The paraprofessional's union has asked for the same distinction, retroactive to the start of SY 2022-2023.

*On a motion by Ms. Bucka, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the MOA on Covid Leave.*

#### E. Approval of Assistant Superintendent Contract Renewal

Dr. Ricca explained his rationale for recommending a \$10,000 raise and contract extension (until June 30, 2025) for Mr. Podraza.

Mr. Munoz spoke in favor of this contract. Ms. Bucka asked why the District does not post contracts online. Ms. Lombardo explained that contracts are all public records and some districts choose to post them and others do not. The Committee members thanked Mr. Podraza for the work he does for the District.

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Mr. Munoz, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve Mr. Podraza's contract.*

*Mr. Murphy left the meeting at 7:35 pm.*

### **VIII. Superintendent and Staff Reports**

#### A. Superintendent's Report

##### a. Personnel Report

Dr. Ricca reported that a school psychologist has been hired. The District continues to work to fill the additional vacant positions.

##### b. Superintendent's Goals

#### B. After-School Transportation Survey Update

Mrs. Baker, Mr. Seger (Eldredge Principal) and Mrs. Crudale (Frenchtown Principal) worked on a transportation survey in response to a matter brought up by parents at a School Committee meeting. Mrs. Baker explained that a survey was sent out asking Eldredge and Frenchtown families about their after school transportation needs.

Findings:

- 2.3% families have an urgent need for transportation that could be addressed on a case-by-case basis.
- Explore a partnership with EG Parks and Recreation for after school programming
- 14 families have a need for transportation that is not currently available. The Finance office will reach out to these families for more information and address potential capacity issues.
- Robust number of families take advantage of the programming at both schools.
- This is not a transportation issue, but an after school programming issue.

Recommendation: Dr. Ricca has agreed to survey our elementary schools to assess the need for after school programming as a part of the FY 24 budgeting process.

Ms. Powell said that there should be more after school programming at all schools. Ms. Bucka expressed her appreciation of the outreach to the community and noted that SEAC parents have expressed difficulty with their children being able to access after school programs.

## **IX. Policies (First Read)**

### **A. Policy # 4216 Suicide Prevention (New)**

Ms. Musella explained that this policy has been reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee twice and is based on a template from the State. Attorney Lombardo said that there is a statewide mandate to implement a suicide prevention policy and that this proposed policy fulfills and expands upon RIDE's guidelines on the policy.

Ms. Bucka raised questions about:

- 1) reporting options through an app
- 2) referrals - follow up, case management and student return to school are not addressed
- 3) gray zone area - red flag risk that doesn't reach the threshold of imminent or high risk

Ms. Musella asked Dr. Ricca and Mr. Podraza to review this gray area and bring policy revisions back to the Committee.

Dr. Ricca thanked Ms. Brianna Moody for her contributions to the discussion of this policy.

### **B. Policy # 8210 Releasing students to the custody of persons other than their parents or legal guardians**

Attorney Lombardo explained that this policy has been greatly enhanced and codifies what the District should be doing by law. Dr. Ricca discussed the need for parents to put any changes to pick-up authorization in writing 48 hours in advance.

C. Policy # 8140 Academic Eligibility for Student Participation in Extracurricular Activities (Repeal)

Ms. Musella explained that these guidelines are already embedded in the Athletic Handbook and are in the Superintendent's jurisdiction.

D. Policy # 8215 Unsafe School Choice Option (Repeal)

Ms. Musella explained that this policy is out of date. Attorney Lombardo said that students have other avenues available to them.

**Policies (Second Read)**

A. Policy # 9110 Cleaning and Maintenance

B. Policy # 9220 Recreational Facility (Repeal)

Ms. Musella said that no changes have been made since the first read of these policies.

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Ms. Bucka, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the revision of Policy #9110 and repeal Policy # 9220.*

**X. Subcommittee Reports**

A. Facilities

Ms. Powell reported on the last meeting.

- Colliers update on work completed over the summer
- District-wide security projects and potential state funding
- Cost analysis of security camera project and visitor management software project
- Replacement of end of life kitchen equipment through meal program surplus dollars
- Cleaning and maintenance program modernization
- Virtual net metering
- Proposed solar projects
- Energy efficiency
- Energy broker

B. Finance

Mr. Munoz reported on the last meeting and noted that it was a good discussion with Town Manager Andy Nota in attendance. The Finance committee plans to meet again next week.

- Policy 3115 Midyear Budget Reallocation
- Policy 3410 Fund Balance
- Policy 3110 Budget Cycle

Ms. Musella inquired when the policies will be ready for a second read. Mr. Munoz indicated that they should be ready for either November 1st or November 15th.

Ms. Bucka expressed concern that funds are lumped together and noted her preference that funds be specifically allocated to identified needs. Ms. Powell asked whether money can be earmarked without restricting the funds. Mrs. Baker explained that monies can be separated.

The Committee discussed committed, assigned and unassigned funds.

#### C. Personnel

Ms. Bucka stated that the personnel subcommittee's activity was covered in the previous action items.

Mr. Munoz inquired about a change to the charge. Ms. Bucka stated that will be looked at in the future.

#### D. Policy

Ms. Musella thanked Ms. Powell for chairing the last Policy Subcommittee meeting.

Policy #2120 Superintendent Communication to the School was discussed.

### **XI. School Committee Suggestions for Future Agenda Items**

Ms. Bucka - Adherence to the rules pertaining to public comment.

Ms. Musella asked that if Dr. Quinn and Mr. Munoz have any comments or questions about the current policy on public comment to please forward them to Mrs. Healey.

Announcements:

Dr. Ricca announced that both Cole Middle School's boys and girls soccer teams won their first playoff games tonight

Dr. Ricca announced that he will be holding a community office hour at Felicia's Coffee on Monday, October 31, 2022, 10:30 am - 11:30 am.

### **XII. Adjournment**

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn at 8:36 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Amy J. Healey  
School Committee Clerk

*Approved 11-15-22*