



East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, August 16, 2022

Hybrid Meeting: Cole Middle School & Via Zoom

Minutes

Those in attendance

School Committee: Ms. Anne Musella, Chair; Ms. Alyson Powell, Vice Chair; Ms. Nicole Bucka; Mr. William Hangan; Mr. Tim Munoz; Mr. Kevin Murphy; Dr. Eugene Quinn

Additional Attendees: Dr. Brian G. Ricca, Superintendent; Mr. Michael Podraza, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Maggie Baker, Director of Administration; Mrs. Amy Healey, Confidential Administrative Assistant; Attorney Aubrey Lombardo;

7:00 pm Open Session

I. Call to Order

Ms. Musella called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Public Comment

Alaina Goldberg, 50 Princess Pine Drive, East Greenwich

Ms. Goldberg requested an examination of the District's transportation policy as it pertains to childcare, specifically for Frenchtown students. There are no afterschool programs available to Frenchtown students. There is no transportation provided to bring students from Frenchtown to Meadowbrook for afterschool programs. The Meadowbrook program is affordable and has availability in its program.

Caitlin Molina, 1620 Highhawk Road, East Greenwich

Ms. Molina shared her professional background in child care matters. She said that she has spent the last two years trying to secure after school childcare for her son. Ms. Molina said that a commitment to an equitable afterschool program needs to be made for Frenchtown students.

IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings

A. July 19, 2022 Executive Session Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Powell , the Committee voted 5-0-2 to approve the Executive Session minutes of July 19, 2022. Ms. Bucka and Mr. Hangan abstained from the vote.

B. July 19 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Powell , the Committee voted 5-0-2 to approve the regular session minutes of July 19, 2022. Ms. Bucka and Mr. Hangan abstained from the vote.

VII. Action Items

A. Homeschool Request - Grades 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 SY 22-23

On a motion by Ms. Bucka, seconded by Ms. Powell, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the Homeschool Requests.

B. Ceiling Tile Replacement at Meadowbrook, Martone Construction

On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the ceiling tile replacement project.

C. Discussion/Approval: Addition to Budget for Personnel

Dr. Ricca started with the enrollment report and thanked JoAnn Robitaille and Michael Podraza for their assistance putting the report together.

- Highlighted in the report is the need for 10 - Grade 2 classes, divided 5 and 5 between Frenchtown and Meadowbrook. There were eight sections of Grade 2 last year. It is anticipated that this large class will need additional sections in the years going forward.
- Kindergarten at Meadowbrook is at capacity with 4 sections
- 7 seats are available for Kindergarten at Frenchtown with 5 sections. Both this year and last year will have a total of 9 sections of Kindergarten.
- No seats are currently available in Grade 1 at Meadowbrook. There are 5 available Grade 1 seats at Frenchtown

Ms. Musella pointed out that it is possible for additional students to register before the start of school.

Mr. Munoz asked about capacity issues at the school. Dr. Ricca explained that he has spoken with the principals and the adequate space is currently available.

Ms. Powell commented that this enrollment increase is not unexpected.

Dr. Ricca said it is possible that young students will need extra supports as some adjust to being in school for the first time.

Dr. Quinn said that the anticipated number of classrooms can be expected due to birth deviations.

Mr. Munoz asked if enrollment increases were due to the additional multi dwelling low income homes. Mr. Podraza responded that that does not seem to have had an impact on enrollment.

Ms. Bucka stated that the Town needs to understand that the school district's increasing enrollment requires adequate funding.

VI. Superintendent and Staff Reports

A. Enrollment

B. Personnel

Dr. Ricca gave a report on new hires and resignations. He noted that there are currently seven open paraprofessional positions.

On a motion by Mr. Hangan, seconded by Ms. Powell, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve a transfer of funds from fund balance to the personnel line item to cover the cost associated with the salary and benefits of an additional second grade teacher.

VII. Discussion

A. Request for Supplemental Appropriation from Town Council

Ms. Musella gave an update on the request for supplemental appropriation from the Town Council. Last night the Town Council approved the continuation of discussions with the School Committee for supplemental appropriations; to be discussed at the Joint Town Council - School Committee meeting in December.

B. Special Education Family Survey

Ms. Bucka gave a presentation on the Special Education Family Survey.

- Create the Survey
- Disseminate the Survey
- Analyze the Results

Survey built around

- Compliance
 - FAPE - Free and Appropriate Public Education
 - IEP - Individualized Education Program
 - Child Find
 - Least Restrictive Environment
 - Specially Designed Instruction
- District Strategic Plan

Glows - Areas that families felt the District is addressing well (80%)

- Elementary has more glows than secondary (Cole & EGHS)
- Elementary has strong collaboration across staff (special ed, related service, gen ed) and notable strengths in IEP implementation (compliance - FAPE)
- Another strength is in being accepted and value (compliance - LRE, FAPE inclusion/Strategic Plan - students appreciated and valued)

A discussion was held about special education needs versus language needs learners.

Grows - Areas that families felt the District is not doing well

- Need: Families report getting their child's disability-based needs met (through an IEP or 504 plan) is an unclear & difficult process
Recommendation: RIDE Support Visit Focus 1st with interview of parents who have been through the process
- Need: Families report that services defined in the IEP (social-emotional & behavioral) are not consistently provided.
Recommendation: 1) Per policy 8515 Special Education Staffing, the Director should lead a Special Education (inc. related services) staffing and caseload evaluation to explore the feedback that personnel adequacy is contributing to this compliance need. 2) Have an auditor review the staffing and caseload baseline data gathered to consider future/longer term recommendations.
- Need: Families report access to math curriculum and instruction is an issue districtwide, K-12 for students with IEPs.
Recommendation: Do an audit with this focus for at least K-5 (6-12 is adopting a new curriculum)
- Need: Families report that academics, in general, for students with IEPs is a concern (as early as elementary, 1 in 5 families are concerned)
Recommendation: ELA curriculum adoption is happening at upper elementary, so an audit at this time would not be helpful. An audit focusing on Specially Designed Instruction in our secondary settings is recommended.

Success - What does "success" look like? Why are we doing this?

- All School Committee members and upper level leadership should tour our special needs' programs K-12
- Special education lens and expertise should be in ALL major decisions; not just "voice" but decision-making influence in line with our "All Means All" strategic plan (e.g. recent math curriculum adoption given the data we just saw)
- Each school-specific data set from this survey should be shared with the School Improvement Team to inform improvement planning
- Infuse the survey's data into the District Data Dashboard
- See growth and improvement from survey to survey because, even if one at a time, issues are systematically addressed starting with an audit of focus areas identified here

- RIDE audit - Child Find/Eval for IEP/504 plan
- Outside audit - K-5 math access to instruction and curriculum, specially designed instruction secondary, personnel adequacy

The Committee expressed their appreciation of Ms. Bucka's leadership and insight into the special education survey.

Ms. Musella recommended that next steps include an RFP to conduct an audit. She spoke of families whose students are not currently receiving services but feel that there is a need for services but that the process is too difficult. She inquired about the org chart showing that the Director of Student Services reports directly to the Superintendent.

Public Comment

Matthew Murray, SEAC Co-Chair

Mr. Murray said that the survey targeted everything that has been said anecdotally. He thanked everyone for the attention brought to special education.

Caitlin Molina, EGSD Parent

Ms. Molina asked whether the survey identified who initiated the IEP - families, social service agencies or schools.

Ms. Bucka replied that that question was not included in the survey.

Ms. Lombardo recommended going back to RIDE to inquire which areas they would be able to audit.

Ms. Bucka suggested an outside audit on the math portion. Ms. Musella suggested a goal of having audit results in time to contemplate recommendations for the FY 24 budget.

VIII. Policies (Second Read)

A. Policy # 4215 Health & Wellness

Mr. Munoz asked about the rationale to have this policy include so many areas. Mr. Murphy replied that counsel advised combining some policies. Ms. Lombardo said that there are still separate policies that address mental health. This policy broadly addresses health and wellness.

On a motion by Ms. Bucka, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve Policy # 4215 Health & Wellness.

B. Policy # 9115 Energy

Ms. Musella noted that a couple of formatting corrections are needed.

On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve Policy #9115 Energy.

C. Policy # 9125 Recycling

On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve Policy #9115 Recycling.

IX. Subcommittee Reports

A. Building Committee

Ms. Powell reported that the Building Committee has met twice since the last School Committee meeting in preparation for a special School Committee workshop to discuss the Master Plan. There is a need for a Stage 2 - Necessity of Construction submission to RIDE. A lot of additional feedback has been gathered. The next building committee meeting is scheduled for September 14th. All pertinent materials related to the subcommittee are being gathered together for a website.

Ms. Bucka noted that the enrollment report correlates with the planning of the building committee.

Ms. Powell explained that there are windows in which submissions can be submitted and reviewed by RIDE.

Dr. Quinn noted that East Greenwich funds much of their educational costs. This is an opportunity to get the most reimbursement possible with RIDE construction reimbursements.

Dr. Ricca expressed his support for moving forward thoughtfully and expeditiously.

Mr. Munoz agreed that this is a great opportunity and suggested making this more known throughout the community.

Ms. Musella noted the technical challenges of running a subcommittee meeting and thanked IT for their assistance with the building committee meetings.

The Committee discussed involving as many stakeholders as possible in this process.

B. Finance Committee

Mr. Munoz reported that the committee met on July 28th and discussed the supplemental appropriation request. The committee will look to standardize five year capital plans for technology, facilities and special services. Additionally, the committee is working on a grant writing plan. Grant writing candidates are being interviewed next week. The committee is looking to create an alumni donor group.

X. School Committee Suggestions for Future Agenda Items

Ms. Musella

- Process and policy for reallocation of line item budget funds
- School Improvement Teams

Mr. Munoz

- A student representative on the School Committee

Ms. Powell

- After school transportation for Frenchtown students

XI. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy J. Healey
School Committee Clerk

Approved 9-6-22