



## East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, July 19, 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; Mr. Tim Munoz; Mr. Kevin Murphy; Dr. Eugene Quinn

**Additional Attendees:** Dr. Brian G. Ricca, Superintendent; Mrs. Amy Healey, Confidential Administrative Assistant; Attorney Aubrey Lombardo; Mr. Michael Podraza, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Maggie Baker, Director of Administration, Attorney Matthew Oliverio (Executive Session only)

**Absent:** Ms. Nicole Bucka, Mr. William Hangan

**6:15 pm Executive Session** - Ms. Powell made a motion to convene Open Session and Recess to Executive Session pursuant to RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1) for discussion of Employee Job Performance - Individual has been notified, including their right to have any discussion held in open session; RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining - East Greenwich Education Association (EGEA). Mr. Murphy seconded the motion which passed 5-0.

#### **7:00 pm Open Session**

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

Ms. Musella called the meeting to order at 8:11 pm.

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

##### **III. Seal Executive Session minutes of July 19, 2022 and disclosure of Executive Session votes of July 19, 2022**

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 5-0 to seal the Executive Session minutes of July 19, 2022.*

Ms. Musella disclosed that no action was taken during Executive Session.

#### **IV. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meetings**

##### **A. June 21, 2022 Executive Session Minutes**

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 4-0-1 to approve the Executive Session minutes of June 21, 2022. Mr. Murphy abstained from the vote.*

##### **B. June 21, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes**

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 4-0-1 to approve the Regular Meeting minutes of June 21, 2022. Mr. Murphy abstained from the vote.*

#### **V. Public Comment**

#### **VI. Superintendent and Staff Reports**

##### **A. Superintendent Entry Plan**

Ms. Musella welcomed Dr. Ricca to his first meeting of the East Greenwich School Committee as superintendent. Dr. Ricca presented his entry plan.

- Who am I, as a person?
- Who am I, as a professional?
- Entry Plan Outline
  - Kasserian Ingera - How are the children?
- Immediate Actions
  - Director of Student Services
  - EGEA Negotiations
- Strategic Conversations
  - School Committee members,
  - Leadership/district employees/principals
  - Faculty/staff/families
  - Town Manager/Town Council/community members
- \*Why did you choose East Greenwich?
- \*What do you see as the places that are opportunities for growth?
- Fiscal Issues
  - Prepare for FY 24 budget & long-term planning through FY 29
- Strategic Plan Next Steps
  - Move further along in the plan through conversations and attention to data currently being collected
- Goals
  - To be discussed in September
- Our Work is about relationships

Ms. Musella and Dr. Quinn both thanked Dr. Ricca for the entry plan and expressed that they are excited to work with him.

B. Personnel Report

Dr. Ricca shared a list of newly hired personnel.

**VII. Action Items**

A. Homeschool Request - Grades 4, SY 22-23

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the Homeschool Request.*

Public Comment

*Ms. Donna McPhee, EGEA President*

On behalf of the teachers, Ms. McPhee welcomed Dr. Ricca to the District and said that the teachers look forward to working with him.

B. *Accessit* Library Automation Software

*On a motion by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the purchase of the software.*

C. Purchase of Math Curriculum Materials

Mr. Podraza outlined the purchase options noting that his previous recommendation of a one year purchase was before the budget had been finalized. With more information on the budget now known, Mr Podraza recommends a 3 year purchase of *Envisions* materials to be paid over two consecutive years with the third year essentially being free. In FY 23, the year 1 payment would be made. The year 2 payment would need to be included in the FY 24 budget.

*Dr. Quinn made a motion to approve Mr. Podraza's recommended purchase. Mr. Munoz seconded the motion.*

Attorney Lombardo explained that both contracts (*Envisions & Reveal*) can be approved by the School Committee pending legal review.

Amendment:

*Dr. Quinn amended the motion to approve the purchase contingent upon legal review of the Envisions and Reveal contracts. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion to amend the motion which was approved on a vote of 5-0.*

Amendment:

*Dr. Quinn amended the motion to approve a 3 year purchase of materials from Envision and a 5 year purchase of materials from Reveal. Ms. Powell seconded the motion to amend the motion which was approved on a vote of 5-0.*

*On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Ms. Powell, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the purchase of mathematics curriculum materials as amended.*

D. Contract Modification - Amy Healey, Confidential Administrative Assistant

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve an amendment to Mrs. Healey's contract with the added duty of APRA Coordinator with a commensurate salary increase of \$4000.*

E. Contract - Carol Brown, Interim Director of Student Services

*On a motion by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Ms. Powell, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve Ms. Brown's contract.*

Ms. Musella thanked Dr. Lisa Hughes, outgoing Director of Student Services, for her service to the District.

F. FY 23 Supplemental Appropriation Request to Town Council

Ms. Musella explained that this is a follow up to the discussion held at the June 21, 2022 meeting. A budget request for FY 23 was made to the Town Council and the final appropriation included a \$500,000 reduction. This was a hard hit to the budget when anticipated state aid was reduced by \$581,0000. At that time, it was too late in the budget process to lay off teachers and make cuts to the budget. The School Committee will rely on fund balance for a large number of expenses in FY 23.

Dr. Quinn said that the Committee has a dilemma in taking a large amount of money from fund balance to cover operating expenses. That will have to be made up next year from the Town appropriation - around 2% in the hole next year. With a 4% cap, the District will be unable to meet its statutory and contractual obligations as things stand. Dr. Quinn said that it is advisable to request a supplemental appropriation. The amount was derived from an assessment of needs, reflected in the 3% appropriation request. Had pending cuts in state aid been known, the request to the Town would have been the max of a 4% increase. Final budget numbers for FY 22 will be known in November, however a supplemental appropriation of 2.1% is needed.

- 1.1% that was cut by the Town for FY 23
- 1.0% additional the District would have requested had the cut to State Aid been known.

Mr. Murphy thanked Dr. Quinn for his summary of the Committee's discussion on the matter.

Ms. Musella cautioned about the reality of programmatic cuts and teacher layoffs if the District can not meet its operating needs.

Ms. Lombardo stated that there are limited options for budget cuts if there isn't a balanced budget.

Ms. Powell asked Dr. Quinn whether the District can meet its obligation without a supplemental appropriation request of 2.1%. She noted that the original budget request was based on anticipated state aid.

Dr. Quinn said that an additional 2.1% would put the District in a better position at the start of FY 24 budget.

Ms. Lombardo said that without additional appropriations, the District potentially will need to ask for waivers from state law.

*Dr. Quinn made a motion to request a supplemental appropriation from the Town equal to 2.1% of the 2022 appropriation to the schools. Ms. Powell seconded the motion which passed 4-1. Mr. Munoz voted against the motion.*

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

### **A. Policy # 4215 Health & Wellness**

Ms. Musella explained that this policy is updated regularly and has been reviewed by the Health & Wellness subcommittee and legal counsel. Mental health considerations have been included in the scope of the sub committee's work. Ms. Lombardo added that this policy aligns with updated law and regulations, includes provisions from the ADA and seeks to be as inclusive as possible. Links in the policy have been updated and the food safety language was added. The policy subcommittee also reviewed the policy and made revisions.

### **B. Policy # 9115 Energy**

Ms. Musella explained that this is a facilities related policy and currently exists as an undated policy. Ms. Powell made some markups in the policy in conjunction with the facilities subcommittee. Language was included to recognize the District's practices implementing energy policies.

### **C. Policy # 9125 Recycling**

Ms. Powell explained that the policy was revised based on new state legislation and the recycling provisions are set to be expanded.

**Policies (Second Read)**

D. Policy# 4210 Child Abuse and Neglect

Ms. Musella said that this version is similar to the one for first read. It is an update to an old policy.

*On a motion by Mr. Murphy, second by Ms. Powell, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the policy.*

E. Policy # 8240 Missing Persons

Ms. Musella explained that this was a previously undated policy which was re-written by Counsel. Its focus is on procedures.

*On a motion by Mr. Murphy, second by Ms. Powell, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the policy.*

F. Policy # 8220 Interrogation of Students by Police

Ms. Musella noted that Ms. Bucka previously had raised questions about what is considered exigent circumstances and expressed concern about students with special needs not having a parent present during interrogations.

Attorney Lombardo recommended taking extra time to have a parent involved in any interrogation.

Mr. Munoz inquired about the relationship between students and Student Resource Officers (SRO). He suggested educating students about the role and responsibilities of the SRO.

Ms. Musella asked what the mechanism would be for educating students on the role of the SROs.

The Committee's census was to review the policy once again and bring it back for a third read.

G. Policy # 4150 Medical Marijuana

Ms. Musella explained that this policy was reviewed by Counsel and the school nurse teachers.

*On a motion by Dr. Quinn, second by Ms. Powell, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the policy.*

H. Policy # 4145 Medication Policy

Ms. Musella explained that updates to this policy are consistent with policy #4150.

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, second by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the policy.*

I. Policy # 1225 Drug Free Workplace

Ms. Musella explained that this was a previously undated policy which was re-written by Counsel.

*On a motion by Ms. Powell, second by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 5-0 to approve the policy.*

J. Policy # 1235 Communication Protocol

The Committee discussed the mechanism for addressing a non response and escalating an issue. Various suggestions were considered for the length of time in which an issue must be addressed. Suggestions included response times be based on which step in the protocol the issue is at. Other suggestions differentiated a response time on the school based level vs. district based level.

Dr. Ricca asked what the scope of this problem is. How frequently are people not getting an answer? Do parents feel they have enough communication with teachers as needed?

Ms. Musella said that much of what she knows of any problem is anecdotal.

Dr. Ricca indicated that 24 to 48 hours is a reasonable response window to acknowledge a matter but not necessarily for a resolution.

Mr. Munoz suggested expanded language about the role of the superintendent

The Committee's census was to review the policy once again and bring it back for a third read.

**IX. Discussion - New EGSD website**

Mr. Munoz requested direction from the School Committee on content for the new website. It is anticipated that the new website will launch in late November. Mr. Munoz

suggested that the process of writing content begin now. Ms. Powell and Mr. Munoz will work together on developing content.

Dr. Quinn asked who is building the dynamic content. Dr. Arnoff replied school construction and school safety are areas that will be highlighted on the website.

## **XII. Subcommittee Reports**

### **A. Building - Ms. Powell**

- The Committee gathered feedback from the 3-29-22 School Committee meeting, educators, the community, and are working on a plan to present to the School Committee. A deeper dive was given to consideration of Eldredge in the master plan. The consensus is that any recommended proposal going forward will not include keeping Eldredge as a school.
- Recommendation for the formation of a committee to examine alternate plans for Eldredge.
- Teacher visioning: 100 responses from survey, most are positive towards the plan proposed. Discussion on revisiting some of the original proposed plans that would offer a choice of proposals for stage 2
- Next meetings: July 27 and August 10

Mr. Munoz asked about converting Eldredge to an administration building. Ms. Powell replied that if a repurposed Eldredge does not include educational space, the renovation costs would not be reimbursable. There is a concern about future use of the building for educational space due to the need for significant upgrades and cost to make the building a 21st century educational space. There is no intention to abandon the building.

Dr. Quinn asked where Eldredge students would go. Ms. Powell replied that a proposal exists for a single, new 3-5 school on the Frenchtown property.

Ms. Musella inquired about buses. Ms. Powell said that transportation and traffic studies will be conducted and will be included in the Stage 2 submission to RIDE.

### **B. Policy - Ms. Musella**

Other policies currently under review:.

- 1 - Combined physical health and mental health
- 2 - Suicide prevention
- 3 - Maintenance of recreation facilities

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

- Update on Special Education Survey
- Update on School Improvement Teams

## **XII. Adjournment**



*On a motion by Ms. Powell, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

Amy J. Healey  
School Committee Clerk

*Approved 8-16-22*