



East Greenwich School Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 16, 2023
6:00 pm

Hybrid Meeting: Archie R. Cole Middle School & Via Zoom

Minutes

Those in attendance

School Committee: Ms. Alyson Powell, Chair; Ms. Nicole Bucka, Vice-Chair; Ms. Clare Cecil-Karb; Mr. Tim Munoz; Dr. Eugene Quinn; Mr. Kevin Murphy (6:24pm)

Additional Attendees: Dr. Brian G. Ricca, Superintendent; Mr. Michael Podraza, Assistant Superintendent; Mrs. Maggie Baker, Director of Administration; Mr. Neil Marcaccio, Director of Student Services; Ms. Melissa Ferreira, Confidential Administrative Assistant; Attorney Aubrey Lombardo

Absent - Mr. William Hangan

I. Call to Order

Ms. Powell called the meeting to order at 6:13pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. School Committee Recognition of Retiring Employees

The School Committee recognized EGPS employees who are retiring at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

Patricia Baker: Paraprofessional @ EG High School, more than 20 years with EGPS

Beth Richman: Guidance Counselor @ EG High School, 22 years with EGPS

Elaine Balkcom: Secretary @ Cole Middle School, 40 years with EGPS

Jeanne-Marie Vaughn: School Nurse Teacher @ Cole Middle School, 40 years with EGPS, recognition by Melissa Centracchio

Lynn Bushoven: Grade 1 Teacher @ Frenchtown Elementary, 20 years with EGPS- recognition by Maryann Crudale

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Diane Dyer: Paraprofessional @ Meadowbrook Farms Elementary, 31 years with EGPS
- recognition by Dom Guisti

Recognitions concluded at 6:21pm. Ms. Powell thanked the retirees for their years of service to East Greenwich Public Schools.

At 6:22 pm on a motion by Ms. Bucka, seconded by Ms. Cecil-Karb, the Committee voted 5-0 to recess open session and convene 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)(2) - Potential Litigation.

On a motion by Ms. Cecil-Karb, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 6-0 to adjourn executive session and reconvene open session at 6:38 pm.

IV. Seal Executive Session minutes of May 16, 2023 and disclosure of Executive Session votes of May 16, 2023.

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Murphy, the Committee voted 6-0 to Seal the Executive Session minutes of May 16, 2023.

Ms. Powell disclosed that in the Executive Session, the Committee voted 5-0-1 to enter into a special education settlement agreement. Ms. Bucka abstained from the vote.

V. Public Comment - none

VI. Discussion

A. *Learn365RI* - Mr. Andrew Nota, Town Manager presenting Rhode Island Education Vision Discussion 4/11/23. Governor McKee and the RI League of Cities and Towns 4th district in the state to agree to be a part of it. Mr. Nota shared what he learned at the 4/11/23 meeting. Difference with this program than others - initiative Engagement site up - people can read and understand it. Targeting areas - some are Education, FAFSA, community responsibility. Program for non school hours - vacation, summer. Supplement what goes on in schools
Craft what will work for EG. Goal to close gaps like Mass did.
By 2030 close gaps, all levels of ed, not just top tier.

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What was left out was - what does it look like? Governor leaving that open. Craft a curriculum that is Education focused. Bring outside consultants. It is an opportunity and to be impactful- Mr. Nota mentioned. Can't come up with a reason why we shouldn't. Link in social issues families facing. Students who need supports. Little community, little ed. Alliance of various stakeholders, Mr. Nota would like to reach out to community based organizations and work on programming to focus on off school times. Solid funding to help achieve. Core programs to sustain after funding ends. Pilot program to support the district to close the gaps.

Signature ed initiative - replicate success in Cumberland as mayor. Goal to improve RICAS scores, aligns with school goal

Social emotional

Concerns - commit to reviewing K-12 ed scores with RIDE.

Mr. Nota- Municipalities are not really able to close gaps, since they can't do the ed, can align the program with what school does. Rudimentary strengths within a community to provide not just relying on DOH.

Concern of structural boundary of program. Very early in the program, something to be on the lookout for. MOU developed when the time is right.

Mr. Nota - Impacting a handful of students or having a handful of programs with sustainability, makes the program worth participating in.

Ms. Bucka - students with disabilities haven't been able to access these programs. Municipalities don't have to follow IDEA. Will there be a goal to make some aspects accessible to all. RIDE afterschool grant. Modeled after unified sports programs with peer models. Neil Marcaccio and Ms. Bucka worked on this, but they didn't get it.

Program in Cumberland, said the students were just not welcome.

Mr. Nota will keep updating the site as info comes in. Ms. Powell's concern is "funding" wrap-around enrichment programs. If programs developed are meant to be free, has there been any talk at state level.

Mr. Nota - Currently impact funding from the state, community to sustain it long term. Subsidize for those in need.

Mr. Munoz - positive aspect of it hopefully, it seems as it wants to unlock innovation & partly why it is so open ended. Connections with universities and businesses. Seems it

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wants to have municipalities competing for funds, welcoming to ideas. Opportunity to do something unique & specific to what our needs are.

VII. Action Items

A. School Committee Approval of Administrator and Non Union Employee Contracts

Contracts to be approved:

Beth Cauley - Principal for Hanaford Elementary

Maryann Crudale - Principal for Frenchtown Elementary

Amy Healey - Confidential Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and Confidential Clerk to the East Greenwich School Committee

Christopher Scheib - System Administrator

Dan Seger - Principal for Eldredge Elementary

Jonathan Mendelsohn- Assistant Principal for EG High School

Dr. Ricca apologized, and mentioned wrong salary info. \$116,478 for Mrs. Beth Cauley and Mr. Chris Scheib - \$78,030 in draft contracts.

Dr. Ricca mentioned being reminded by Ms. Lombardo, that he was not going to do a big change in the first year as they talked about contracts.

Evaluation times w/in contracts Student data/outcomes conversations

All contracts 3 years w/ exception to Mr. Mendelsohn. As he wanted to see how the relationship developed with the new principal.

Dr. Page only finalized put forth by Brian. Brian is happy to offer.

Financial constraints we've been talking about, passionate, caring who put the district at top of their priority list.

Commitment to school committee work with policy committee to develop better contracts

Gaps we uncovered our role for admin contracts. SITE based management removed SC from writing contracts. We were not clear what our role / responsibilities. The School Committee will be working to be internally consistent. Deeper understanding of the language within . Be a better part of the process.

Ms. Lombardo - you have the power and duty to enter into contracts 16-211 SC has power to enter into contracts. Other districts are also confused what their role is, many districts have adopted a policy, that has a wage chart - based on # of years, school grade level. Becomes like a rubber stamp, uniformity among administrators.

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Ed accountability act - take away the approval of appointments. Superintendent makes recommendation(s), School Committee appoints. There have been instances where Superintendent makes a recommendation and the School Committee blocks. When using rubber stamp method this gives the Superintendent the power.

Underlying job description is what may need to be amended. SC to ask admin to look at job description and then amend contracts and approve accordingly.

When educational regulations get passed, this changes the role of the administrators.

Dr. Ricca is uncomfortable changing contract talks that he's already had with people.

We don't evaluate to the job description -

Less is more, than the work with the contracts with next year's contracts. Then amend the ones from this year if needed.

Discussion about review of employee evaluations by the School Committee. Dr. Ricca pointed out that would only happen if the employee agreed. The School Committee can review Dr. Ricca's only because they are his supervisor.

Considered the idea of tabling the approval of contracts, but not confident that all changes that may need to be made in a timely manner by the next school committee meeting. It would take a while to get it on the next agenda

Ms. Lombardo - add line to job description "these duties are subject to change and to be updated by the administration" covers matching what people do to what is in contract.

Ms. Powell was comfortable with that. School Committee to be part of discussion of modifying lang and develop their role.

Dr. Ricca put forth the commitment to the School Committee over the next year will work with the policy committee & Ms. Lombardo to put better contracts in place that more reflect the values not only of this community, the school committee and himself.

Dr. Ricca asked if there were any questions.

Ms. Powell acknowledged one gap in the role of the school committee found was its role as it pertains to administrative contracts. Stated legislation passed in late 2020, early 2021 commonly called "site based management act" but name is the School Accountability Act that removed any school committee member from any sort of personnel role or responsibility. Prior school committee approved almost all hiring, but with this passing it gave building principals and superintendent's much more autonomy in the hiring process removing the school committee with exception to administrator and non-union contracts.

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Ms. Powell - school committee will be working to have internally consistent contracts in addition to their other work.

Ms. Lombardo - school committees have the ability to enter into a contract unlike the superintendent who does not have that ability or power to do so. Under 16-211, school committee has the power and duty to do so. Other districts have also felt confused what their role was as well. Prior to this law, the role of the school committee was very explicit. Many districts have developed their own policy using wage charts, years of service, comparable service consideration. Some have sample contracts which are updated year to year. Rubber stamp, uniformity, equity amongst administrators and their contracts.

Ms. Bucka brought up the contract does not mention the LEA role administrators perform.

Ms. Lombardo discussed the list of duties/ responsibilities is the job description right now and that is probably what needs to be amended. Have administrators look at the job description and see what duties to be added and amend accordingly.

Dr. Ricca - uncomfortable with the changing contract conversations that he has had with people, but would not stand in the way of the committee. Could cause question in future with contract coming before the School Committee. We don't evaluate to the job description, work with the contracts we have now and work to improve over next year.

We inherited a format of jobs/responsibilities. Prior to Ms. Lombardo, cut/paste, inconsistent. Some did not have contracts. Way to get a clean slate & reset. Don't want to hold up anyone's contract by wanting to change the language.

Ms. Bucka asked about a mechanism of seeing evaluations. Dr. Ricca stated that employee permission would be needed. Relationship between employer and employee.

Ms. Powell - action item that we need to move on. Any specific / discreet things that we're missing from the contract that materially affect what we are approving & would we entertain amending for those very specific things or do we feel comfortable and taking what we have had and changing this in the future. Asked for legal advice.

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Mr. Munoz - should we table this and revisit at next meeting. Concern of timetable expressed by Ms. Powell.

Ms. Lombardo suggested to add a line at the end of the job description to each of the contracts to include “these duties are subject to change and to be updated by the administration within X amount of time”

Covers all concerns, doesn't totally revise the contracts that employees were a part of already. Contract concerns can be discussed at policy committee.

Interim language will be added to the contracts that were to be put forth tonight.

Timeframe for this change - by December.

Concern about this discussion occurring tonight. Approve contracts and move on with agenda.

Ms. Powell - Entertain motion to approve all 6 employee contracts

Ms. Lombardo recommended name each with title and then approve them all at once.

Ms. Crudale - concern about the wording “inheriting”. Clarification was given by Ms. Powell that it was about the formatting of the contracts. Ms. Crudale was very upset it is being done like this. This should be ironed out along the way, not in an open forum. Should not be the way to resolve these discussions. Ms. Powell clarified & apologized that this is only about their process, not about job performance or anyone not meeting, that this is the only time the 7 of them can talk is within an open forum.

Ms. Powell - entertain a motion to approve the administrator and non-union contracts

Ms. Lombardo - suggested reading name and job title

Ms. Powell reads:

Beth Cauley - Principal for Hanaford Elementary

Maryann Crudale - Principal for Frenchtown Elementary

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“Subject to job descriptions being changed and updated by the administration”
Dr. Quinn motioned, seconded by Mr. Murphy. 5-0-1, Mr. Munoz abstention contracts were approved.

B. School Committee Approval of Purchase Agreements for Security Upgrades

- \$42,470 - K&M communications
- \$366,158.06 - EPlus tech
 - \$12,106 of the total for EPlus is upfront costs (bond)
- \$2,851.90 Raptor Tech

Motion by Cecil-Karb, Quinn seconded, unanimous approval.

VIII. Policies

First Read

A. Policy 7415: Loan of Textbooks to Students in Non-Public Schools - Revision, First Read

Revised the policy due to 2 reasons:

1. Eliminate reimbursement to parents who purchase on their own- avoid managing on the back end. Encourage parents to order during the ordering window.
2. Eliminate deposits and late ordering

Dr. Quinn, wondering why we're doing this during this meeting. First read is information only, has to come before the School Committee twice.

IX. Superintendent & Staff Report

A. Financial Report

FY23 Monthly Fiscal Report

Not too much of a change, closer to a firm number. Integrated stem grant added
Capital reserve fund hasn't changed.
Encumbrances line is large.

B. Data Dashboard Update - Mr. Michael Podraza, Assistant Superintendent
Update on ESPS Strategic Plan KPIs & Committee Discussion on Next Steps for Dashboard

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6/7/22 Presentation to School Committee:

Why's of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) /Dashboard -

Track progress

Maintain focus

Decision making

Inform budget

Transparency

RIDE

They are front and center of the strategic plan. All of our actions align to help us with our decision making.

Since 6/7/2022

Promotors

- Accountability systems
RIDE coming forward with a district accountability metric, something not had before. District rankings were given as part of their composite star rating as part of ESSER or federal requirements. District rating is related to the statewide education accountability act.
- Collections - collecting, tracking data using it in our reports for budget or with school improvement team as we chart the course for next school year.
- SY 23-24

Inhibitors

Even some promotors can be inhibitors.

- Delay in release of scores
- Align with State-wide goals that don't match our metrics.
- Website delay, question what the portal will be able to do and display in real time
- Consistency of format between old and new consistency of data presentation, gone back to spreadsheets.

What is needed

- What we have and don't have yet
- What would the committee like to see in terms of next steps in how this info is communicated in the short term

Strategic Plan Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) Outlined on strategic plan

Academic performance

Attendance Rates

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Student, Teacher & Staff Well-being
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Graduation Rates
Post-Graduate Success
Community Engagement

Discussion of KPIs since 6/7/22: Superintendent's field memo shared the data being collected and tracked a few weeks ago.

Next Steps: Mapping KPIs to Theory of Action

1. Next Short Term Options:

Making existing data available in existing formats- google tools on website
Provide links to sources of existing data

2. Create Google Site whose sole purpose is about KPI and to communicate strategic plan data

3. Superintendent end of the year - State of the District Report

Theory of Action Tracking - Survey Works 22-23 not yet released

For Discussion

Do you see the short term actions as being aligned with the principals of the strategic plan of transparency and results?

In short term, are the listed actions to promulgate date associated with the strategic plan sufficient?

Can't look at an individual data point in isolation or a vacuum, the big picture will be missed. Ex. "attendance" - attendance means more than just coming to school. Are they engaged, safe

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Design dashboard to be common sense, straight forward.

Suggested by Mr. Munoz to structure the dashboard to populate the 7 areas, even if it is just district data, and with link to RIDE.

Mr. Podraza correlating the KPI's to Theory of Action, not thought of until discussion with Ms. Bucka.

X. Subcommittee Reports

- A. Policy
- B. SEAC
- C. Finance

XI. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Bucka, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 8:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Ferreira
Confidential Administrative Assistant

Approved 6-20-23

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