



East Greenwich School Committee Meeting

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

6:00 pm

Archie R. Cole Middle School, 100 Cedar Avenue, EG

Minutes

Those in attendance

School Committee: Ms. Alyson Powell, Chair; Dr. Eugene Quinn, Vice-Chair; Ms. Clare Cecil-Karb; Mr. William Hangan; Ms. Melissa Larsen; Mr. Tim Munoz; Mr. Kevin Wright

Additional Attendees: Attorney Aubrey Lombardo; Dr. Brian Ricca, Superintendent; Mrs. Amy Healey, School Committee Clerk; Ms. Sarah Courtemanche-O'Brien, Assistant Superintendent

I. Call to Order

Ms. Powell called the meeting to order at 6:08 pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Recess Open Session and Convene Executive Session

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Ms. Cecil-Karb, the Committee voted 7-0, 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

- A. RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1) Employee Job Performance - Building Administrators, Individuals have been notified, including their right to have any discussion held in open session
- B. RIGL 42-46-5(a)(4) Legal Advice

IV. Adjourn Executive Session and Reconvene Open Session

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Wright, the Committee voted 7-0, to adjourn executive session and reconvene open session at 7:22 pm.

V. Seal Executive Session Minutes of January 28 2025 and disclosure of Executive Session votes of January 28, 2025.

On a motion by Ms. Larsen, seconded by Mr. Wright, the Committee voted 7-0 to Seal the Executive Session Minutes of January 28, 2025.

IV. Public Comment

Caryn Corenthal, Town Council Member

Ms. Corenthal said that she spoke with a representative from RIDE regarding alternate funding sources. It has been proposed that state transportation costs be covered by the state and she urged a joint effort to advocate for that change.

Ms. Corenthal shared what she learned from an interview with Karen Wilson - social emotional learning and what impacts it:

1. Mindset
2. Diagnose anxiety and depression
3. Sleep
4. Screen time - should be limited outside of academic time
5. Physical activity

Ms. Corenthal asked whether the study sync program allows teachers the autonomy to supplement with novels. Ms. Courtemanche-O'Brien replied that while there is no blanket answer, it is included in some cases. This depends on the pacing for each grade level which is set by the teachers. Study sync is not an elective but is part of core classes.

V. Approval of Minutes

- A. Executive & Special Meeting Minutes of January 8, 2025
- B. Executive & Regular Session Minutes of January 14, 2025

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Ms. Larsen, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve both sets of minutes of January 8 and January 14, 2025

VI. Action Item (Discussion and Possible Action)

- A. School Committee Approval of School Construction Committee Appointments

On a motion by Ms. Cecil-Karb, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the appointment of Mr. William Hangan and Ms. Coleen Smith to the School Construction Committee.

- B. School Committee Approval of One Year Only Non Renewals - Certified Employees

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Hangan, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the non renewal of the certified one year only employees.

C. School Committee Approval of One Year Only Non-Renewals - Non-Certified Employee

On a motion by Ms. Cecil-Karb, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the non renewal of the non-certified one year only employee.

D. School Committee Approval of Custodian Substitute Rate – \$17.50/hr

Dr. Ricca explained that this is the first step in trying to shore up shortages in the maintenance/custodian union. There have been a number of recent resignations and retirements. A MOA will likely come before the Committee at a later meeting which will also address ongoing needs.

Ms. Cecil-Karb made a motion to approve the custodial substitute rate increase to \$17.50/hour. Dr. Quinn seconded the motion.

Ms. Cecil-Karb made a motion to amend the original motion to indicate that the new rate will take effect on February 3, 2025. Mr. Wright seconded the motion. The Committee voted 7-0 in favor of amending the motion.

The Committee voted 7-0 to approve the amended motion which sets the custodian substitute rate at \$17.50/hour, effective February 3, 2025. .

E. School Committee Approval of Legal Engagement Agreement - Conley Law & Associates

Attorney Lombardo explained that there is an employee disciplinary matter in which she has a conflict and needs to recuse herself, thus the need for outside counsel.

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Ms. Larsen, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the approve the Legal Engagement Agreement with Conley Law & Associates

F. School Committee Approval of Teletherapy Professional Services Agreement, Hazel Health Inc

Dr. Ricca said that he was anxious to get this program started. He expressed gratitude to the legislature and RIDE Commissioner for making these services available to students and adults at no cost to the District. Mental health services will be available both at school and at home.

On a motion by Ms. Cecil-Karb, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the Teletherapy Professional Services Agreement with Hazel Health, Inc.

G. School Committee Approval of the allocation of \$20,000 from FY 25 operating budget to the capital reserve account - \$10,000 from building improvements and \$10,000 from HVAC account

Dr. Quinn inquired whether these expenses count towards the maintenance of effort requirements. Mrs. Baker replied that all monies spent, regardless of what account they are from, go towards meeting those requirements.

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Ms. Cecil-Karb, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the \$20,000 allocation from the operating budget to the capital reserve account; \$10,000 from building improvements and \$10,000 from HVAC account.

H. School Committee Approval of Kahn/Khanmigo Resources Agreement

Ms. Courtemanche-O'Brien gave thanks to RIDE for making this available to every district across the state for grades 9-12. This agreement has no cost to the districts.

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Hangan, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the Kahn/Khanmigo Resources Agreement.

VII. FY 26 Budget (Discussion and Possible Action)

Ms. Powell announced that this is the start of the budget process.

Dr. Ricca explained that due to the RIDE funding formula, the state aid to East Greenwich is projected to be reduced in excess of \$800,000. He said that this can be seen as an opportunity for us to see if we can do with less. There is an opportunity to come together and better understand this from the perspective of the state. East Greenwich has the largest decrease in state aid. Dr. Ricca said that the District will work with the Town and teachers union to come up with creative ways to serve the community and sustain student achievement. He acknowledged that it is very difficult to take this big of a cut.

Dr. Quinn said that the purpose of the state's funding formula is to provide support for communities that do not have an adequate tax base to support public education through property taxes. East Greenwich's median household income is the highest in the state. East Greenwich - 191%; Little Compton - 166%; Barrington 165%; Jamestown 163%.

Ms. Powell explained that these cuts seem to impact East Greenwich more than other communities. The Governor is recommending a reduction to East Greenwich of

\$820,000 for East Greenwich. The formula aid is even less. The final state aid amount will not be known until the state budget is approved in June.

Ms. Powell discussed a draft letter to East Greenwich's legislators requesting support for additional state aid. Additionally, she presented a draft resolution on impact fees. Developers are allowed to fast track projects that include affordable housing and skip the impact assessment on municipal services. The District has an interest in knowing what the impact of development will have on schools and other municipal services. It is difficult to budget and allocate resources when there is no ability to know what impact is forthcoming.

On a motion by Ms. Larsen, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the state aid letter to East Greenwich's General Assembly members.

Mr. Wright made clear that the letter is one step in advocating for increased state aid and encouraged the continuation of in person discussions. It needs to be made clear what the impact of reduced state aid has on the community.

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Ms. Larsen, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve Resolution in Support of Legislation Requiring Affordable Housing Developments to Conduct Impact Assessments on Municipal Services and Operations.

Ms. Cecil-Karb stated that the goal is not to thwart low income housing development but to support careful consideration of its impact.

Dr. Ricca, Ms. Baker, Dr. Page, Ms. Courtmanche-O'Brien and Ms Oliver took this opportunity to distribute baked goods to the School Committee members in recognition of School Committee Appreciation Month. Members also received cards and letters from students thanking them for their work on behalf of the District.

VIII. Superintendent and Staff Reports (Discussion and Possible Action)

- A. Priority 2 - Distinguished Teaching & Talented Staff - Frenchtown Elementary
- B. MTSS Update - Ms. Leigh Oliver, Director of MTSS

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

- Tier I: Universal Supports School & classroom culture
 - Asset-based approaches, relationship-building, practice & feedback, teacher clarity, teacher collaboration & data review HQCM
- Tier II: Focused Supports
 - Small group instruction, peer tutoring, check-ins

- Tier III: Intensive Supports

MTSS Updates & Strategic Priorities

- Priority 1: Learning
 - Collaborative work with the office of teaching and learning focusing on core instruction with a standards based focus
 - Streamlining access to resources to support core instruction as well as intervention at Tiers II and III
 - Collaboration with the office of student services to support enhance access to core instruction, and targeted interventions for differently abled learners
- Priority 3: Systems
 - Infrastructure of teacher leaders
 - System of CPT facilitation/communication that includes Tiers I, II, III

Better Together: Teaching & Learning, Student Services, MTSS, School and Community

MTSS Tier 1 = core instruction HQCM and supplemental resources

- Equal access to HQCM for ALL: General Educators, Special Educators, MLL/ELL, Services Providers and Specialists

MTSS Facilitated Collaboration for Learner Success

- Learner: high quality intervention materials (HQIM) high quality enrichment materials (HQEM)
 - Teacher Leaders as Facilitators
 - MTSS Process
 - Specialists
 - Service Providers
 - Collaborative Planning - CPT

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

- School Improvement Cycle
 1. Identify local Needs
 2. Select Relevant Evidence Based Interventions
 3. Plan for Implementation
 4. Implement
 5. Examine and Reflect
- Determining Tiers of Evidence
 1. Study Design
 2. Results of a study
 3. Findings from related studies
 4. Sample size and setting
 5. How students and setting overlap with those in the district

- Understanding the ESSA Categories of Evidence
 1. Tier 1 Strong Evidence
 2. Tier 2 Moderate Evidence
 3. Tier 3 Promising Evidence
 4. Tier 4 Demonstrates a Rationale

Tiered High Quality Supplemental and Intervention Materials

- EnVision; Edgenuity; Lexia CORE 5 Reading; Aleks, Imagine Learning, RethinkEd, Renaissance Resources, SuccessMaker, aimsweb plus, imagine learning

On the Horizon

- Shift from Renaissance STAR to i-Ready - all tiers
- Continued Co-Teaching Implementation - all tiers
- RethinkEd - all tiers
- AimswebPlus - tiers 2 and 3

Dr. Ricca explained that the best first instruction from high quality instructional material is the first step before looking at enrichment beyond Tier 1.

Ms. Cecil-Karb said that co-teaching is truly human, face to face instruction.

IX. Policies (First Read)

A. Policy # 1215 Title IX, revised

Ms. Powell explained that while policies normally go through the policy committee, these policies are coming straight to the School Committee due to the need to quickly address these policies.

Attorney Lombardo explained that there has been a back and forth journey with Title IX. The rules enacted in August were vacated and we have to revert back to the old policy. Topics such as pregnancy, reporting, expanded protections, gender identity expansion and the jurisdiction of schools, were changed and shrunk Title IX. These topics can still be addressed and are covered through school committee policies. There are also state protections of topics that were removed from Title IX. Any outstanding matters / investigations revert back to the previous policy.

Ms. Cecil-Karb said that functionally kids who would have been protected under Title IX, are still protected under school department policies. There is no change to the commitment to students. Any attempt to change these protections would come under scrutiny from RIDE.

Ms. Powell stated that protections are still in place, however the investigations will just not follow the Title IX protocol.

Dr. Ricca stated that students will be made to feel safe and included in East Greenwich Public Schools.

B. Policy # 2201 Safe Schools, new

Attorney Lombardo said that there is a change in the long standing guidance where churches and schools were protected from ICE immigration raids. A directive by Homeland Security and the Department of Justice has removed those protections. This proposed policy was written before the Attorney General's guidance was issued but is in line with the Attorney General and Commissioner's guidance.

Attorney Lombardo affirmed that the principles and practices are already in place; we do not let people into buildings who are not allowed and we do not release student information or students without permission..

Dr. Ricca said that if we continue our current practices with FERPA and the release of students, this change will not be a problem.

Ms. Cecil-Karb thanked the staff in the schools who are on the front line on this issue.

Attorney Lombardo said that directory information should be reviewed with any concerned families. It is an opt-out and directory information can be distributed.

Mr. Munoz suggested that a special school committee meeting be scheduled to quickly pass these policies.

X. Adjournment

On a motion by Ms. Larsen, seconded by Dr. Quinn, the Committee voted 7-0, to adjourn the meeting at 9:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy J. Healey
School Committee Clerk

Approved 2-11-25