



East Greenwich School Committee Meeting

Tuesday, February 11, 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; Mrs. Maggie Baker, Director of Administration; Mr. Neil Marcaccio, Director of Student Services

I. Call to Order

Ms. Powell called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Public Comment

Mrs. Elizabeth Kenworthy, EGPS Parent

Mrs. Kenworthy praised the "1 book, 1 school event" held by Hanaford Librarian Bethany Gorder. Mrs. Kenworthy has read the book with her son at home and found it to be a wonderful experience. Mrs. Kenworthy expressed concern about the implementation of Studysync in lieu of reading full length novels.

Ms. Abigail Mansfield Marcaccio, EGPS Parent

Ms. Marcaccio said that she has recently learned that Studysync is being implemented at the high school. She raised concerns about the elimination of reading full length books. Ms. Marcaccio has heard that this high quality curriculum has lowered the morale of high school teachers. She asked whether the district can reach out to teachers.

IV. Approval of Minutes

- A. Executive & Regular Session Minutes of January 28, 2025
- B. Special Session Minutes of February 5, 2025

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Wright, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve both sets of minutes of January 28, 2025

On a motion by Ms. Cecil-Karb, seconded by Dr. Quinn the Committee voted 5-0-2 to approve the minutes of February 5, 2025. Mr. Hangan and Ms. Larsen abstained from the vote.

V. Budget Workshop: Teaching & Learning, Athletics, IT

Ms. Powell announced that there will be a public workshop on the topic of high quality curriculum at a later date.

Teaching and Learning - Ms. Courtemanche-O'Brien

Fiscal Year 2025 Successes

- **Balanced & Sustainable Professional Development**
 - Health & Safety
 - Right to Read Act
 - HQ Curriculum & HQ Professional Learning
- **Programmatic Grants Supporting Instruction & Students**
 - RIDE: Re-think Ed
 - RIDE PreK High Quality Curriculum & PD
 - BSCA Competitive Grant Awards

FY 26 Considerations

- **RI General Laws**
 - High Quality Curricular Materials
 - Mathematics; ELA, Science
 - High School Regulations
 - Right to Read Act
 - Individuals vs. Cohort Model
 - Education Accountability Act
 - School Improvement Teams
 - Site Based Management
 - Strategic Plan & Vision of the Graduate
 - Guaranteed & Viable
 - Diagnostic Assessment Data to Inform HQCM
 - New Regulations for Graduation (Class of 2028 & Beyond)
 - State Accountability Metrics
 - Continued Support - Special Education Audit, NEASC, Student Services RIDE/Local Reviews and Sub-Grants
 - Contractual / MOA

Ms. Powell explained that department heads have been asked to break down budgeting codes into descriptions of department expenses, prioritized 1-5 with 5 being the most critical, and provide an explanation.

Ms. Powell pointed out the unfunded mandates in the teaching and learning budget. These include materials for students attending schools outside of EGPS.

Mr. Munoz asked for details about the high quality curriculum (HQCM), including length of contracts and costs. Although adopted a few years ago, some of these curriculums have not yet been adopted in the classrooms or had a complete rollout.

Mr. James Mire, EGPS Parent & EGPS Teacher

Mr. Mire inquired about the cost changes in the textbooks and subscriptions line items for the math curriculum.

Ms. Courtemanche-O'Brien replied that there are changes in products between books and web based materials. When asked about HQCM for Science, she said that the State is suppose to provide 5 products to select from and have only been able to provide 2 so far. The District is waiting until there are additional options before purchasing materials.

Mr. Hangan asked what the consequences are if the district does not follow state mandates.

Attorney Lombardo said that a waiver can be applied for, however EG would not qualify due to not meeting some standards with special education students. Not following mandates can risk the withholding of State funding.

Mr. Munoz asked about professional development on HQCM provided by RIDE.

Ms. Cecil-Karb inquired about non-public textbooks - textbooks for students not attending EGPS.

Ms. Cate McDevitt, EGPS Teacher & EG Resident

Ms. McDevitt asked about professional development with *Envisions*. Will there be any EL professional development and new materials?

Ms. Courtemanche-O'Brien replied that the District is working with the publisher. It is a free program but there is a cost for printed materials.

Elizabeth Kenworthy, EGPS Parent

Ms. Kenworth inquired whether RIDE is providing professional development with the implementation of HQCM.

Ms. Courtemanche-O'Brien said that RIDE is providing support personnel both in person and remotely.

Ms. Caryn Corenthal, EG Town Council Member

Ms. Corenthal asked why the web based line item is down and the textbook line item is up.

Ms. Courtemanche-O'Brien explained that each year, based on enrollment, the needs of licenses and printed materials change.

Ms. Corenthal inquired about the debt service line under each department's budget.

Mrs. Baker replied that there is no actual debt service, that line item is a UCOA reference.

EGHS Athletics FY 26 Budget, Mr. Bob Downey, Athletic Program Manager

FY25 Leveraging Partnerships

- ACT Foundation
 - Trainer's room equipment
 - Sound system for athletic field
 - Windscreen baseball fields
 - Scoreboards in lower gym
- Co-op with NK for gymnastics
 - Middle School individual participants in state wrestling meets
- Athletic Boosters
 - Championship banners updated to single sport banners
- Parent / EGHS Beautify Club
 - Nostalgic wall mural in upper gym
- Town / EGLL / EGHS Athletics
 - New multi-sport console to control external scoreboards
- Implementation of multi-channel communication application
- Crafted true zero-based budget based on actual expenditure trends
- Designing wall pads to be extended across court width and EGHS branded

Mr. Downey explained that Mr. Sal Palermo has taken the lead in grant writing. There is a lot of support from the community. The increase in the budget comes from equipment, increases in fees with the Interscholastic League's take over of middle school sports and gas prices.

Ms. Larsen inquired about the plans to improve the locker rooms.

Ms. Powell asked Mr. Downey to prioritize the line items and asked where efficiencies can be found. Mr. Downey said that it is necessary to keep equipment, medical supplies and transportation. The rental of ice rinks and pools fluctuate and can be difficult to budget. When the teams do well, there are more rental fees. Grants and negotiations have benefited the athletics program.

Mr. Munoz asked about the support of the Boosters Club. Mr. Downey said that the Boosters Club often pays for half of major expenses.

Dr. Page said that co-op teams save a lot of money. The high school has a gymnastics team with North Kingstown and a hockey team with Toll Gate. Without the Boosters Club support, this budget could be 30% higher.

Ms. Powell asked for a report showing the grant funding, the savings of the co-op agreements and the donations of the Boosters Club. This would give an idea of the actual cost of the athletics program.

Mr. Wright inquired about advertising sponsorships.

Information Technology - Mr. Christopher Scheib

- Introduction
- East Greenwich Public Schools Technology Department Mission
- Strategic Plan
- Successes in FY 25 and Continuation in FY 26
 - Successes in FY 25
 - Student devices
 - Deployed new student Chromebooks and cases to Cole 7th and 8th grades
 - All Chromebooks are now same model, facilitating repairs and new device deployment
 - All Chromebooks will receive latest software updates until at least June 2029
 - Continuation in FY 26
 - Continue to maintain all student and staff Chromebooks and teacher Apple computers in good working order
 - Deploy new desktop computers to Cole computer lab rooms 191 and 228
 - Successes in FY25
 - Enhancing Cybersecurity
 - Mandated Google Two-Step Verification to reduce the possibility email passwords being compromised

- Conduct phishing email simulations with cybersecurity training sessions for users failing to identify phishing email
 - Applied for grants to enhance cybersecurity footprint
- Continuation in FY 26
 - Push forward with implementing MFA across other applications that contain potentially sensitive information
 - Continued cybersecurity training and awareness

Mr. Scheib explained that the cost of software has increased.

Ms. Powell complimented Mr. Scheib's priority list.

Ms. Michelle Steever, EGHS Librarian, explained how the librarians utilize the systems and the resources available to students.

Mr. Munoz inquired about addressing cyber security. Mr. Scheib replied that it is addressed district-wide. There is an extensive list of privacy policies of each platform. Attorney Lombardo said that her office carefully reviews the platforms' contracts.

Dr. Quinn asked about the increasing pricing of software. Mr. Scheib replied that most platforms have moved to subscriptions and pricing continues to rise.

Ms. Powell inquired about line items that can be reduced. Mr. Scheib said that many items include a price buffer due to potential breakage.

Mr. Scheib explained his goal of a refresh cycle for Chromebooks.

There was a discussion about student screen time.

VI. School Construction Committee Update

Dr. Ricca explained that last week's meeting was canceled due to weather. Decisions need to be made so the meeting has been rescheduled for next week. A recommendation is expected to come before the School Committee at the February 25th meeting.

VII. Action Items (Discussion and Possible Action)

A. School Committee Approval of adjusted ala carte prices for school meals

Mrs. Baker explained that Aramark requested an increase in these prices due to the rising cost of food. Prices have not been increased in several years. These are modest increases for secondary schools.

Attorney Lombardo explained that this is technically an amendment to the food service contract.

Ms. Powell explained that there are ongoing discussions regarding the District's food offerings.

Committee members questioned the availability of "bad" foods.

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Hangan, the Committee voted 5-2 to approve the adjusted ala carte prices for school meals. Ms. Larsen and Mr. Munoz voted against the motion.

B. School Committee Approval of \$49,350 payment to Royal Flush Plumbing, EGHS Sewer Repair Part 2

Mr. Robert Wilmarth, Director of Facilities, explained the repairs. There was toilet plugging back in December. The line had been flushed several times before the holiday break. A break was found and in order to repair the line, it was decided to shoot a liner down it. Royal Flush is the only company in the area who does this work. This was pipe Repair # 1.

After the holiday break, the issues with the clogged line moved down the plumbing line. Several vape devices were found in the lines. The additional work on the old pipes caused further problems. Repair # 2 was cleaning out the rest of the line. Repair # 3 will be to line the pipe which would cost an additional \$30-40,000. The lining process turns the old cast iron pipe into a new plastic pipe, replacing many pipes. To push the project into the future would cost significantly more. Only the part of the line that is being kept would be lined. The part of the line that will be part of the high school construction would not be lined because it will be replaced.

Ms. Powell and Attorney Lombardo said that Repair # 1 and # 2 were emergency work and came from a sole source. Repair # 3 would need to go out to bid.

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Wright, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the payment of \$49,350 to Royal Flush Plumbing, EGHS Sewer Repair Part 2

C. School Committee Approval of Revised Personnel Subcommittee Charge

Ms. Powell explained that this revision is an effort to improve the representation on the committee.

On a motion by Mr. Munoz, seconded by Mr. Wright, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the revised Personnel Subcommittee charge

D. Hiring process for EGHS administrators

Ms. Powell said that Dr. Page and Ms. Sylvia will be returning to their teaching positions after this school year. The Committee has an opportunity to discuss how the leadership search will be conducted. With School Committee approval, the Personnel subcommittee will be authorized to begin this process. They will make a recommendation to either begin a candidate search or hire an outside firm to assist with the process.

Dr. Ricca explained that ideally the job would be posted by the end of the month, interviews would be in late March. The principal would be hired first then the assistant principal. Ideally a new principal would be selected in early May and early June for a new assistant principal which would allow for a transition period before the official July 1 start date.

Attorney Lombardo said that it is likely that a RFP would be necessary before a search firm is hired. She said that school improvement teams are meant to be a major part of the search.

Mr. Munoz said that community involvement is welcome in this search.

Public Comment

Mr. James Mire, EGPS Teacher & Parent

Mr. Mire inquired about Dr. Ricca's statement that an external search would be conducted to find a new principal. He asked for clarification that both internal and external candidates would be considered.

Dr. Ricca replied that both internal and external candidates would be considered.

With the potential turnover of all of the department chairs, Mr. Mire raised the issue of how the selection of new chairs would proceed with a new principal.

Dr. Ricca and Attorney Lombardo replied that it will be a part of teacher negotiations and addressed during the transition period.

Ms. Michelle Steever, EGHS Teacher

Ms. Steever asked Mr. Munoz to elaborate on his earlier comment about the culture at the high school.

Mr. Munoz replied that a lot of the administrators' time is spent away from academics. He added that the culture includes staff turn over, growing incidents between staff and parents, staff and students and Title IX investigations.

On a motion by Mr. Munoz, seconded by Mr. Wright, the Committee voted 7-0 to authorize the Personnel Subcommittee to begin the search process for new EGHS administrators.

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

A. Priority 3 - EGHS, Efficient and Innovative Systems

B. SRO/Security MOU - Town of East Greenwich

Dr. Ricca reported that Town Manager Nota has shared the draft MOU with the new police chief. He anticipates an update after he and Mr. Nota meet later this week.

C. Extra Curricular Activities Audit

Ms. Powell explained that there was an incident last year which involved a tennis team at Cole Middle School. That incident prompted a comprehensive audit of sports, clubs and extracurricular activities. The policy subcommittee will use information from the audit to review policies related to student activities; whether they are run by the school, PTGs or private organizations.

Ms. Courtemanche-O'Brien said that a draft of the BCI procedure and spreadsheet of organizations reviewed in the audit will be shared with the Committee.

Ms. Cecil-Karb asked whether the role of 501cs was examined. Ms. Lombardo said that may not be relevant to the safety issues. Ms. Courtemanche O'Brien and Attorney Lombardo met with each principal and PTG to conduct this audit.

D. Special Education Update - Mr. Neil Marcaccio

"Mental and Behavioral Health Support Partnerships"

Student Services Updates & Strategic Priorities

- Priority 1: Learning
- Priority 2: Teaching
- Priority 3: Systems
- Priority 4: Community

Rhode Island Fact

- More than one in four children age 3 to 17 has a diagnosable mental health problem
- Nearly one in ten children age 6 to 17 have significant functional impairment
- 62.1% of adolescents, ages 12 to 17, did not receive mental health treatment for a major depressive episode in the past year

Suicide Among Rhode Island Children and Youth

Psychiatric Hospitals

Existing Mental Health Supports & Current Capacity @ EGHS

- School counselors
- School psychologist
- School social worker
- B.A.S.E.S class
- S.S.T.
- Community partners (Thrive, Unite Us)
- Surveys and data collection

Thrive Behavioral Health & EGHS

- Adult Mental Health Programs
- Youth and Family Programs
- Substance Use Programs
- Housing Programs and Services
- Teen and Youth Adult Programs
- Crisis Behavioral Health Services
- Court Ordered Programs

Collaboration; direct referrals, 1:1 client meetings during the school day; attend IEP/504/MTSS meetings; stress/anxiety management groups for students; support/check-ins post SOS screener (suicide prevention); direct counseling referrals - wraparound services; supporting 10-15 students directly at EGHS; B.A.S.E.S. classroom support

UNITE US & EGPS

Connecting People to Care

Student/Family → Screening → Referral → Resolution → Feedback

Hazel Health & EGPS

- Telehealth - RI focus on mental health services
- 5M students across 170+ districts in 16 states
- Online therapy
- Billed through student's insurance - no insurance, no cost
- Process/procedure training for existing district mental health professionals

Hazel Health Statewide Rollout Process

1. Hazel Informational Sessions
2. Meet with the Hazel team
3. Sign MOU between District & Hazel
4. Complete Hazel implementation
5. Monitor program impact & school success

Hazel Health fits in school districts' multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS)

- Online therapy

- Educates educators on how to detect early signs of mental health issues
- Helps to coordinate care to higher level interventions like long-term counseling or psychiatry

Mr. Marcaccio said that Thrive has been grant funded. Mr. Wright asked about the expiration of the grant which ends during next year. Mr. Marcaccio said that he is looking for a way to continue with Thrive. He explained the new Hazel Health program and said that it is a sustainable program. The District is exploring partnerships with Brown University Health & Bradley Hospital. More wrap around services are needed.

Dr. Ricca said that this is a problem that is not isolated in student services. He said that he will be meeting with Hazel Health representatives next week to discuss implementation.

IX. Subcommittee Reports

A. Personnel Subcommittee

X. Adjournment

On a motion by Dr. Quinn, seconded by Mr. Munoz the Committee voted 7-0, to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy J. Healey
School Committee Clerk

Approved 3-4-25