

Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, May 5, 2015

Archie R. Cole Middle School Library

100 Cedar Avenue

East Greenwich, RI 02818

6:00 p.m. Executive Session, Mrs. Winters made a motion to go into executive session for discussion and/or action regarding those items of business exempt from open meetings under Rhode Island General Laws §42-46-4 and §42-46-5, (a) (2) Custodial negotiations. Dr. Sun seconded the motion, which passed 6-0.

Those in attendance were Ms. Carolyn Mark, Chair; Dr. Deidre Gifford, Vice-Chair (arrived at 6:31 p.m.); Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters; Mr. Clark Smith; Dr. Yan Sun; Mr. David Osborne; and Mr. Michael Fain. Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Mrs. Gail Wilcox, Director of Administration; and Mr. Bradley Wilson, Director of Student Services were also present.

7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting

I. Call to Order

Ms. Mark called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

III. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

IV. Recognitions

- a. Colby Anderson, EGHS, Student Representative, Council on Elementary/Secondary Education**
- b. @realEdRI EGHS Students**
- c. Jackson Cronin, EGHS, Invest Write, First Place RI/US**
- d. Personal Finance Challenge-Cole and EGHS students**
- e. Debra McMullen, EGHS Wall of Honor Inductee**

The Committee recognized and congratulated all on their accomplishments.

V. Approval of Minutes

- a. Regular and Executive for April 28, 2015**

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the regular and executive minutes.

VI. Superintendent's Report

This week's field memo will have a link to RIDE for feedback on No Child Left Behind.

A curriculum forum is scheduled for Tuesday, May 12, 2015 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the EGHS library. Last week Dr. Mercurio participated in a RIDE webinar regarding dual enrollment at CCRI, URI, and RIC. While tuition is covered by the state's budget, transportation is not included. There are questions concerning books and supplies, which are not covered by the Governor's budget. The entire course catalogue for all three colleges is open to high school students. Concurrent enrollment, which could be taught by EGHS teachers, was also discussed. While this is a tremendous

opportunity for students, there are many unanswered questions (GPA, costs to the district, equity issues with transportation). RIASC and RIDE are working to draft policy templates, as each district needs policy in place by June 30, 2015. This policy will need to be reviewed by the Policy Committee. More information will be shared during upcoming meetings.

The next Strategic Planning community forum is scheduled for Thursday, May 28, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Cole library. Non-academic metrics will be discussed. This week is teacher appreciation week and today is teacher appreciation day. Dr. Mercurio thanked all teachers in the district for their work in making differences in the lives of students.

VII. School Committee Concerns

Mr. Osborne asked if there are plans for an end-of year report on Chromebooks. Ms. Mark asked if there would be an end-of-year report on the revamp of senior project. Dr. Mercurio indicated both items would be on the June 2, 2015 agenda.

VIII. Action Items

a. Parental leave-Caroline Bradshaw, Guidance Counselor, Cole

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 7-0 to table this request.

b. Appointment-Cole, Volunteer Coach Softball-Karen Lockhart

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Osborne, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the appointment pending the necessary certifications. Dr. Gifford asked if the Committee could be updated on the certifications at the next meeting.

c. Approval of World Language Summer Camp Proposal for Summer 2015

Mrs. Kristin Pontarelli, World Language Department Chair, provided details on a proposed World Language Summer Camp for students in grades 2-5. Spanish and French would be offered with weekly sessions determined by the language and age of the student. This is the first time an academic camp would run during the summer. Elementary principals' surveyed parents to determine interest and received an overwhelming response from 150 people. Two lead teachers and several assistants will lead the camps. Class sizes will total 25-30 students and will take place in the EGHS library. Appropriate paperwork will be completed for all teachers/assistants. On a motion by Mr. Osborne, which was seconded by Dr. Sun, the Committee voted 7-0 to approve the World Language Summer Camp Proposal.

d. Award Athletic Training Services Bid

This proposal is a three-year contract with an optional extension for year four and year five. On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Mr. Fain, the Committee voted 7-0 to award the bid to Performance Physical Therapy.

IX. Discussion

a. Budget FY2016

At last night's joint Town Council/School Committee meeting, additional cuts to the FY2016 were discussed (\$80,000-\$150,000+). There was discussion surrounding using funds from the West Bay consortium surplus. In spring 2008, the School Committee voted to

withdraw \$150,000 from the surplus. The current cumulative surplus is approximately \$1.4 million. Dr. Mercurio discussed concerns related to withdrawing surplus funds and said this has not been used as a revenue source. Mr. Alan Lord, West Bay, may be invited to meet with the town. After a lengthy discussion, it was determined the options are to use fund balance money; withdraw from the healthcare account; change budget assumptions, and program cuts (possibly including the equity kindergarten model). Teacher layoffs need to be done by June 1st with proper notice to employees. Previous suggested layoffs may be back on the table, which include librarians, school nurses, PBGR coordinator, and coaches. Although no teachers applied for early notice of retirement, a potential retiree may still come forward. Ms. Mark and Dr. Mercurio will discuss the budget again with the town on May 7th. A joint School Committee/Town Council meeting is scheduled for May 11th and possibly May 12th. The Town Council's budget deadline is May 15th.

b. Strategic Planning

The community survey initially received a high number of responses, but numbers have since tapered off. The survey will be sent out again on this week's list serv. All are encouraged to take the survey, which has a May 11th deadline. The first community forum was held April 30th and was videotaped. The link will be provided to the community. District administrators are drafting priorities, which will be reviewed during their administrative council meeting, and then shared with the Ad Hoc Committee.

Ms. Patty Harwood, SELAC representative, expressed concerns about the last forum, which she said focused on AP classes and not discussion about the other 90% of the student body.

c. School Start Times

Ms. Mark asked Committee members for comments/concerns and what additional information is needed to make a decision on this issue. Mrs. Winters would like to finish the strategic planning process before changing start times. She would like Cole and EGHS on the same schedule, which would affect the sharing of itinerants, professional development opportunities, etc. She does not think the change has been vetted sufficiently for FY2016. Mr. Smith supports a change, but noted budget concerns do not allow for FY2016 implementation. He would like the district to plan for a change and voiced approval of all elementary schools on the same schedule (without a later elementary start time). He asked the Committee to delay implementation until the next budget cycle, which will allow additional time to determine costs on several issues including athletic bussing. Dr. Sun expressed her support for later start times and reminded the Committee of the supporting survey results. Dr. Gifford supports the evidence for later start times, but explained the myriad of implications that need to be vetted (before/after school activities, bussing, communication). Dr. Gifford asked that an implementation team be put in place to start the process, which will give the district and families' time to plan. Mr. Fain voiced support for changing start times and thinks the district could work through the challenges for the upcoming year. Mr. Osborne supports a

change, particularly option #2, but does not think implementation can be done for FY2016. Ms. Mark also supports changing start times, but has concerns about athletic bussing costs, especially with the budget cuts being discussed. Ms. Mark would like to further investigate other districts and find out what made implementation successful. An implementation plan was never part of the Ad Hoc Committee's work. Ms. Mark would like the Committee to declare its intention and vote on May 19th.

Numerous students, parents, and community members voiced their support/concerns regarding school start times. Matthew Durant, EGHS student/Ad Hoc Committee Member, discussed the possible additional costs for bussing for athletics, schedule overlap, and the possibility of later game start times for community groups (EGBA), which will affect sleep. Elise Hasseltine, Cole student, read a letter in support of changing start times. Dr. Mercurio explained the need to look at the schedule for the "middle" of the school day. Academic time, sharing staff, and scheduling needs to be examined. Community members discussed various topics/options such as looking at a third party for transportation and working to get other districts on board to change start times. Other concerns included student safety (driving), the optimal time to start school, amount of homework given, and the evidence supporting a start time change. Mr. Robert Durant asked the Committee to postpone the change for a year since an implementation plan was not a focus of the committee. He reminded members that Sharon High School has study halls,

which assists students who are involved in after school sports/activities.

X. Advisory/Subcommittee Updates

a. Health and Wellness Subcommittee

The subcommittee met on April 30, 2015 to discuss two primary areas: end-of-year wellness assessment and wellness promotion.

The subcommittee plans to provide an end-of-year report to the School Committee by the end of June or end of summer. Wellness promotion using best practices at Frenchtown and Meadowbrook will be provided in a short animated clip, which will be sent out via email.

XI. Adjournment

On a motion by Mrs. Winters, which was seconded by Dr. Sun, the Committee voted 7-0 to adjourn at 9:10 p.m.

CHRISTINE DIMEGLIO

SECRETARY