

EAST LONGMEADOW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES



District Mission

"Our mission in the East Longmeadow Public Schools is to promote achievement and accountability in all endeavors as we educate today for the challenges of tomorrow"

DATE: March 8, 2021

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

WHERE: Superintendent's Conference Room

Meeting called to Order by : Gregory Thompson, Chair

THIS MEETING IS BEING HELD REMOTELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOVERNOR OF MASSACHUSETTS' MARCH 12, 2020 ORDER SUSPENDING CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE OPEN MEETING LAW MA G.L.c. 30A, SECTION 20.

Roll Call: Elizabeth Marsian-Boucher, Antonella Raschilla, Greg Thompson, Gordon Smith, Superintendent of Schools, Sarah Truoiolo, William Fonseca, Pamela Blair, Asst. Superintendent for Business (Remote), Kathy Celetti, Recording Secretary (Remote)

The Chair acknowledged the loss of a teacher Mr. Greene who was a Tech Ed teacher at ELHS. His family and friends are in our thoughts. Moment of Silence

Approval of Minutes

2.1 Approval of the February 22, 2021 regular session meeting minutes.

William moved to approve the February 22, 2021 regular session meeting minutes, Elizabeth seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

William motioned to moved agenda item 5.1.2 to flip flop with 5.1.3, also add new item under New Business 7.4 which is the Memorandum of Understanding dated March 8, 2021. Sarah seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

Opportunities for Visitors to Address the Committee:

The following parents came forward to addressed the committee with their concerns:

Adina Elfant
Chris Peteros
Kate Dugan

Committee/Sub-committee Communications :

Elizabeth: Birchland Park's Future Cities "Living on the Moon" won the regionals competition which took place on Feb 20th. The next step is the national Future Cities competition in April. We are so proud of them.

William: The Career Tech "Student of the Month Award" are as followed: Abigail Parsons (Cosmetology I); Kate Pagnoni (Early Education and Care I); and Seth Moore (Landscaping Technology/Horticulture II). Congratulations to those students, good job.

Gregory: The Community Preservation Committee meet this week, we have approved funding for the Track Project out of CPC funds. It's coming from undesignated funds. We will be moving forward with that project.

Presentations

Superintendent's Report

5.1.1 Discussion on Local Health Data with the Director of Public Health and Medical Advisors.

On Wednesday we report positive cases in the school system. At this time, we have (4) positive cases, (3) cases at the HS and (1) case at MB and (7) positive cases in the remote setting.

Ms. Petrosky : Our numbers for February are looking good compared to where they were with the holiday surge. December we had (351) total cases; January we had (288) total cases; and February we had (130) total cases. Thirty-six of those were pediatric cases. We are seeing staff members that are positive, however, we are not seeing in school based transmission. People are doing a really good job of alerting the schools and doing close contact and moving them into quarantining before it can spread.

Chair: Dr. Clarke, what are you seeing? We are looking at potentially bring more students back to in-person. What are your thoughts?

Dr. Clarke : I echo what Aimee said. The numbers for active infections have gone down tremendously. Children are not the major spreaders. If they are asymptomatic they are not spreading the disease. I think that is what is driving them back to school. If they have exposure at home, that makes a difference. Keep them home. I think it's going to be safe if we send them all back to schools. In Connecticut and Eastern part of our state they have kids in school, almost at a 100% and not at the (6) foot distance. They are not seeing any spread.

Chair: Kelly, we had the opportunity via with Mr. Maki to meet with HS kids, we talked about contact tracing, isolation, quarantining, if you don't mind could you walk us through and educate us again. If there is a positive case, we will hear from health department, can you take us through what the expectations of the student and families are.

Ms. LaBombard : Families are doing a terrific job alerting us. A lot of times we know about the positives before we hear from the Board of Health. We are able to isolate and quarantine families if we need to. If a parent tells us about a positive case, then we can go back and figure out who the close contacts are in school. The nurses are actually educating the families about what to do. If you are a close contact on (day 5 or 6) you should get tested. This way we can figure out if you were in school or not, close contact. The principals are sending letters to staff and Mr. Smith is sending letters to families. We are alerting staff and families when there is a positive case in the building. Everyone is doing a great job of reporting, especially families. We are sending information to the Contract Tracing Collaborative so they have the parents name, address and number.

Chair: We talked about bringing students back to in-person learning, we also discussed shortening the social distances, which is a minimum of (6) feet to potentially (3) maybe (4-5) feet. Certainly when we are unmasked during lunches and mask breaks we will require that (6) feet. Potentially, we are looking to have more students on busses. Are there certain things that we could do to mitigate the risk? What are the concerns as we bring more students back, closer together?

Ms. Petrosky : If at (3) feet, tracing could double, possible more quarantining. The Commissioner changed it to (3) feet, however, the CDC still has it at (6) feet.

Chair: With spring coming, we can open windows, wear mask, sanitize, is there anything else?

Dr. Clarke : If students are outside of school, continue wearing masks to decrease the spread in school. The testing turnaround time is much shorter and faster. Eastfield Mall is good. I send labs to Baystate and the turnaround time was four hours.

Sarah: Is there any information you can share with the community about the variance? Are there increase concerns on your behalf based on prevalent?

Dr. Clarke : We have to assume that variance is within our area. Keeping them at bay, some are more highly contagious than the original, so we do have to worry about that. Some are more harmful and making people sick. The vaccine seems to be giving us some sort of protection from the variance.

Ms. Petrosky : We know it's in Massachusetts, I don't know if it's here in East Longmeadow, the state is not letting us know if our test come back with the variance. If we start to see the variance, we will see clusters to identify those pretty quickly.

Sarah: That is not a deterrent from bring the kids back.
Ms. Petrosky: No, not at this time.
Chair: Thank you for your time and your knowledge as we move forward here.

5.1.3 Potential changes to the ELPS Instructional Learning Model was presented and discussed.
On Friday, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted to give Commissioner Riley the authority, to return students to in-person learning. Elementary school is first, starting on April 5th (PK-5) start, and starting on April 12th, (6-12) will be back to full in-person learning. We started preparing for this back in February to move from (6) feet to (4-5) feet. Only unmasking at (6) feet during lunch and mask breaks. Parents will have two options: Full in-person learning or Fully remote learning.

Chair: We need to message out this week to the parents.
Mr. Smith: We will start with the elementary grades first, then move on to the secondary grades. We need a decision from parents by March 22nd, either full in-person or remain fully remote.

Elizabeth: As a school system, we have done extremely well. I'm proud of what we have done.

William moved to change the Learning Model to full in-person for K-5 elementary starting on April 5th and Birchland/High School starting on April 12th, Elizabeth seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion?

We need to know by March 22nd if students are fully remote or full in-person learning as well as busing.

Chair: All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

5.1.2 The FY22 Budget Development was presented by Mr. Smith.

Ms. Blair: It's not uncommon for a school district to maintain a 3-4% increase. We do have some grants (Cares Act and Coronavirus). We are in negotiations with Unit A, 70-80% is salaries.

Sarah: Collaboration, we brought funds back to town. We need to provide for our students and continue our conversations with Town Council and Town Manager. We need the money.

William: Level Services does not promote growth. I don't want to lose sight of any positions.

Mr. Smith: We need to have a draft to the Town Manager by March 15th.

Chair: 3.1% increase for level services, including the four positions.

William moved for Mr. Smith to forward the budget to the Town Manager at 3.1% for Level Services for the FY22 Budget including the four positions in the narrative, Antonella seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

5.1.4 The ELHS Program of Studies new course proposal was presented by Mr. Paige and Ms. DeNardo.

Mr. Paige said there was only one change to the Program of Studies a new course called "Careers in Education". This course will be offered to students in grades 11-12 and taught by Ms. Poole. In this course students will examine careers working with children including: qualifications, responsibilities, expectations and certifications for teachers and related staff. Students will be three days in class and two days at Meadow Brook. They will participate in externships in Early Childhood, elementary, and middle/high school and/or special education under the guidance of cooperating practitioners.

Mr. Smith: Partner with colleges for possible dual enrollment.

Mr. Paige: We will reach out to Bay Path.

Elizabeth moved to add the new course "Careers in Education" to the Program of Studies, William seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose nay (0), motion carries (5-0)

Assistant Superintendent of Business Report:

Old Business:

New Business:

7.1 The Meadow Brook Principal search process was presented by Mr. Smith

Interview Committee:

- (1) Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- (2) School Committee Members
- (2) ELPS Administrators (one elementary administrator)
- (4) MB Unit A members (teachers) - ELEA will conduct a lottery
- (2) MB Unit E members (paraprofessionals) - ELEA will conduct a lottery
- (1) MB Support Staff
- (3) MB parents (Full committee by March 12th)

Tentative Timeline:

- Posting: March 2 - March 26th
- Screening/first Interview Committee Preparation (Week of March 22nd - 29th)
- Interviews begin: Week of April 5th (subject to change)
- Finalist selected: Week of April 19th (subject to change)

Committee for Finalists:

- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent for Business
- School Committee Member
- ELEA Representative

Tentative Timeline:

- Committee preparation week of April 19th - April 26th
- Interviews week of May 3rd
- Virtual learning walks with Superintendent week of May 10th
- Final reference checks and hiring decision week of May 17th

Antonella moved to appoint three School Committee members, William Fonseca, Elizabeth Marsian-Boucher and Gregory Thompson to the MB Principal Search, Sarah seconded the motion.

Chair: Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)

7.2 Ms. Brown gave an update on the MCAS - State Assessment for 2021

This spring students in grades three and up will be participating in MCAS. DESE will reduce testing time for students in grades 3-8, in which students will take only a portion of each MCAS assessment in each subject. Students will only take one session (ELA), Mathematics, and STE. High school students will take

two sessions in (ELA) and Mathematics and continue to be a graduation requirement. The high school MCAS qualifies students for the John and Abigail Adam Scholarship and Stanley Z. Koplak Certificate of Mastery Award. More information will come forward from the schools.

7.3 Adding a seconded School Committee rep to the ELPS Diversity and Equity Steering Committee was discussed. Mr. Smith said that this meeting takes place once a month usually around 5PM. Sarah said that she wouldn't mind being on the committee.

7.4 MOU with ELEA (DESE Model Evaluation System) was discussed in executive session.

**William moved to approved the MOU with ELEA dated March 8, 2021 as discussed in executive session, Antonella seconded the motion.
Chair: Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)**

**William moved to adjourn at 8:05 PM, Elizabeth seconded the motion.
Chair: Any further discussion? All those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)
Chair: Thank you Mr. Maki and Jamie**

For a more detailed version of this meeting , go to: www.eastlongmeadowma.gov (ELCAT)

Minutes Recorded by: Kathy Celetti
Respectfully submitted by: Superintendent Smith
