

**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: June 29, 2020
TIME: 6:00 P.M.
WHERE: Via Zoom Meeting

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.

PER THE GOVERNORS' ORDER THE PUBLIC WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO PHYSICALLY ACCESS THIS SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CAN ACCESS THE MEETING VIA LIVE STREAM

<https://eastlongmeadowma.zoom.us/j/83339572704?pwd=V3pBaHJhYS1tNFhXVjBLd015OWNiUT09>

As a preliminary matter, this is Gregory Thompson, School Committee Chair. Permit me to confirm that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda are present and can hear me. Members, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative

William Fonseca - here
Sarah Truoiolo - here
Richard Freccero - here
Antonella Raschilla - here
Gordon Smith, Superintendent - here
Pamela Blair, Asst. Supt for Business - here
Sofia Iacobucci, Student Rep - here
Kathy Celetti, Recording Secretary - absent
Gregory Thompson - here

Recognition of School Committee Chair: In recognition of your leadership, Gregory Thompson, School Committee Chair from 2019-2020. This was certainly quite the year as chair with the Covid-19. Thank you.

Chair: It's been my pleasure, great team. I'm happy to be a part of it. Thank you for the recognition.

Recognition of Richard Freccero: This is a happy and sad occasion. We would like to recognize Mr. Freccero for his 9 years of service on the School Committee, that's on top of his 23 years as ELHS principal. So he has dedicated 32 years of his life to ELPS. And I think we are all the better for it, so thank you we are going to miss you. This is well deserved. Well actually, much more well deserved, but this is all we could afford.

Richard: Thank you I just want to center o one comment. What's been wonderful about serving on the School Committee "We always focused on what was best for the kids"? I just feel so proud that I was a part of this, so proud that I am a part of the five members. We worked hard together for the students best interest, so I know that you will keep up that focus all the way through. So all of you thank you. Do the best for our kids please!

Approval of Minutes

Committee & Sub-committee communications - None

Presentations

Superintendent 's Report

4.1.1 School's End-of Year presentation was presented by:

Mr. Fredette presented Mapleshade Elementary School.

Video presentation showcases the entire MS staff. Teachers did everything they could to make this experience go well for the kids. Creative connections, how we pulled together as a school, teachers, Special Ed Dept., counselors, Para's, guidance, mentor stayed on, even our librarian. Para's took on one to two students. Thank you to our IT department for your work; help desk for parents, exchanging laptops that didn't work. We did a virtual step-up day for incoming 3rd graders; Word Cloud; Measurement Tree; 5th Grade Talent Show; Immigration Simulation; Invention Convention; Wellness Week; Small group support; Social Emotional support; Remote Instructional Learning; Librarian support; Virtual Orientation for 3rd Grade; Student/parent feedback; and student mentors took on students.

Richard: Comprehensive seven different sub-categories, congratulations MS community.

Gregory: Students were very engaged

William: Very enjoyable presentation

Richard: How much student participation?

Mr. Fredette: 90-95% participation

Ms. Santaniello presented Mountain View Elementary School.

I would like to brag about my staff, students and family, I'm very proud of them. We did weekly staff meetings by grade level. Stayed connected with families, addressed student concerns. Every staff member including the secretary was assigned a student. We sent out 58 letters with the name of person working with a student. Virtual Speech/Social Skills lessons; FLAT; Life Skills; Flip Grid (favorite picture book and rapped to it); Friday Dance Parties; Virtual Spirit Week. We also helped the community. We delivered 100 snack bags to Baystate Hospital and 100 snack bags to Mercy Hospital. Teachers and students celebrated Teacher Appreciation Day; Word Cloud; Virtual Step-up for 5th grade and 3rd grade. We will also do a virtual tour of the building and a typical day at MV for grade 3 and 5. On the last day we did a parade, parents drove through the driveway.

Richard: Very impressive

Gregory: How close to where we should be?

Ms. Brown: Online programs, ST Math and I-ready more kids finished this year than last year.

Mr. Fredette: Developed skills with technology, more than normally would, beyond the academic year.

District-wide Presented - Ms. Brown and Mr. Smith

Mr. Smith: Once we got going and making more connections we excelled and I'm very proud.

We had three goals:

- Support the Whole Child: Focusing on Academic, Social and Emotional Ed., and Cultural Responsiveness.
- Instructional Practice Goal
- Continuous Learning and Achievement Goal

Supporting the Whole Child: Prior to Closure on March 13th.

- Developed district MTSS team
- Buildings established their town teams
- Began identifying and coordinating services and support throughout the district
- Worked with the Center for Leadership and Educational Equity
- Six meetings held; conducted success analysis; explored current reality; conducted focus groups (students, parents and staff); worked with the committee to do a root cause analysis
- Equity Audit draft report received,
- Established partnership with River Valley counseling
- Enabled therapeutic counseling during the day for students
- New DPH Grant provided two RN caseworkers to assist schools
- EL Youth Safety Committee continued support with programs for families

After closure due to COVID-19

- Utilizing MTSS to coordinate outreach from the district and schools to families
- Identifying challenges and needs of ELPS families
- Did two surveys (PanoramaEd Distant Learning Well Being and Family and Caregiver)
- Providing feedback to CLEE on draft Equity report
- Develop steps for sharing final report and begin action planning
- Continue to work with NCCJ - student event in June
- Prof Dev. Sessions for School Committee in the fall
- River Valley Counseling Continued Teletherapy with students
- Prepared work in all five schools for 2020-2021
- Summer services provided for identified students

Instructional Practice: Prior to Closure on March 13th.

- Provided PD on: Chromebook instructional tools; Personalized Learning Software Programs (iReady; Albert i-o: Text Help; ST Math)
- Universal Design for Learning
- AVMR-nearly all K-5 grade (teachers now trained in Course 1)

After closure due to COVID-19

- ELPS kick-off to Remote Learning
- Partnership with EL IT Dept. and new 1:1 program - HUGE advantage to ELPS students
- Plethora of personalized learning software and UDL tools
- Overall staff felt supported and prepared
- Collaboration teacher leadership impactful
- ELPS Teacher Resources and PD for Remote Learning
- PD Courses running or planned to run: Universal Design for Learning (52 staff); Culturally Responsive Teaching (Awareness to Action); Ensuring Equity in Online Learning; Looking Deeper (Race) 32 staff interested; Remote Learning Boot Camp

Continuous Learning and Achievement: Prior to Closure on March 13th

- Focused on curriculum work with 3-5
- Review revised standards
- Create learning targets and proficiency scales
- Demo standards-based gradebook
- Outline "Habits of work and learning"
- Solicit feedback from staff and outline needed PD
- Continued work with District Management Group
- Reviewed best practices for elementary scheduling
- Goal to build more collaborative planning time for staff
- Students and teachers across the district were utilizing personalized learning software for the first time this year (i-Ready, Albert i-0, ST Math, Lexia, etc.) and accessibility tools (Read and Write and Equat-io)

After closure due to COVID-19

- ELPS staff continued to utilize personalized learning software and in a number of places the usage and staff expertise with the software increased
- ELPS staff collaboration actually increased during the closure
- ELPS staff pushed themselves and others to learn new things

ELPS - Now and into the future

- MTSS training and framework helped immensely the support all school could bring to students and families during closure
- We will need to strengthen the coordination of this as we look to reopen for the 2020-2021 school year
- Use survey data to set direction for the targeted support
- Continue to help staff embed social and emotional support and opportunities for students to master the competencies within the content areas
- 1:1 program made the Remote Learning Program a huge success
- Personalized learning software was used more comprehensively by staff at all grade levels this spring; this will help set-up platform for any needed Remote Learning Program in 2020-2021 school year
- Staff collaboration was crucial to success during the closure
- Overall, this spring ELPS may have had in some areas more efficient family communication, collaboration, engagement and relationship-building efforts
- We will need to build on this for 2020-2021

Assistant Superintendent for Business Report

4.2.1 Mountain View gift donation from Stop & Shop's A+ School Rewards Program was presented by Ms. Blair

Richard moved to accept the MV gift donation from Stop & Shop's School Rewards Program for \$352.89, William seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)

Richard moved to amend the agenda adding 6.2 "Discussion and Approval of End of Year Transfer", William seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)

4.2.2 Mapleshade gift donation from Stop & Shop's A+ School Rewards Program was presented by Ms. Blair

**William moved to accept the MS gift donation from Stop & Shop 's Rewards Program for \$957.25, Richard seconded the motion
Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)**

4.2.3 Birchland Park gift donation from Stop & Shop's A+ School Rewards Program was presented by Ms. Blair

**Richard moved to accept the BP gift donation from Stop & Shop 's Rewards Program for \$151.45, Antonella seconded the motion
Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)**

4.2.4 Birchland Park gift donation from Coca-Cola was presented by Ms. Blair

**William moved to accept the BP gift donation from Coca-Cola for \$24.00, Richard seconded the motion.
Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)**

Old Business

5.1 FY2021 Budget Discussion

Chair: I do know that Mr. Smith has had a meeting with the Town Manager. We sent in our budget request to the Town Manager and Town Council Finance Oversight Committee. They discussed it once. I followed up with an email. I haven't heard anything back from them since I sent the email. I did watch the Town Finance Oversight Committee last week. I wanted to discuss what is actually happening in the process. I am a little concerned that we as a town are not necessarily following the Charter. We are not executing the proper checks and balances. Why I say this is the Town Finance Oversight Committee is designated by Town Council. They are a legislative body. We as the School Committee are an executive body for the Schools and the Town Manager is an executive body for the Town. The Charter requires the executive boards to create the budget which we have done in conjunction with the Superintendent, Asst. Superintendent and Town Manager. Then those two budgets are sent forward to the Town Council after approval from both Town Manager and School Committee. I believe what we are doing is deviating from that process because the Town Council appointed a Finance Oversight Committee and they have had meetings with the Town Manager and developed a budget. On the Finance Oversight Committee, there are three Town Council members and one Dept. Head, they are creating a budget and sending it back to the legislators. I believe we are in violation of the checks and balances. That means if the school budget is forwarded to the Council for discussion, then again that would be in violation of the Charter. The process is not looking as it's supposed to this year. Again the Finance Oversight Committee is made up of two Town Council members, the Town Council, President (who sits in and can discuss everything), and a Dept. Head. I'm not sure how one Dept. Head votes on other department heads requests. I don't despair their intentions, I believe they have good intentions. I think they are working hard and trying to do what's best for the Town. I'm just really concerned about the process.

Mr. Smith: I spoke with the Town Manager; she was very candid and open to continue to work with us. She also recognized that she did see Mr. Thompson's email. And knows that we voted on a School Committee budget at our budget hearing which had that reduction of \$143,000, that is what she will be presenting as they go before the Town Council to present a draft budget. She also spoke about the uncertainty of what the revenue will look like and when we may have a budget from the state. On the town side they did furlough roughly 19 employees, and on the school side we chose not to furlough, we kept our employees. One concerning point is that the state has moved back the deadline for excise tax and meal tax until September 15th. She is also aware that we got hit with opening school guidelines. A lot of give and take between the School Dept. and Town Manager. The town is keeping a COVID-19 spreadsheet.

Chair: I'm addressing the process. I think the discussion with the School Dept. and Town Manager is appropriate. I think as a non-elected sub-committee to act as the executive to create a budget is what I am questioning. It's almost as if the Town Council is acting as Board of Selectmen that we no longer have. I understand all those points and it should be a cordial relationship between the School Dept. and Town Manager. I think the Finance Oversight Committee is overstepping in my opinion. Our proposal is different from the Finance Oversight Committee, and according to the last meeting, those members on the committee are pretty confident that theirs will be the one that passes with Town Council. I'm worried if we allow this precedence be set, to have this non-elective sub-committee of legislatures create our budget number, that is different than our request and the Town Managers. The Town Manager works with Finance Oversight Committee to create a budget that they are pretty sure will get passed by the Town Council, why wouldn't the Town Manager want that process. It's an easy process. The hard process would be creating a budget that goes to Town Council, to send down to Finance Oversight Committee. I just have a problem with how the process has happened this year in terms of Finance Oversight Committee going through everything before it's been submitted as an official budget and manipulating our budget before it goes to Town Council.

William: I agree with you Greg, what should have happened with the budget, it should have been presented to Town Council and at that time they could have brought in the Finance Oversight Committee to review it. That's the way it should have been done. My understanding, prior to COVID they were presented with a preliminary budget not an official budget. There were instructions for the Town to cut a couple of million dollars because they were concerned about the tax rate, so to your point they are doing it backwards. The Finance Oversight Committee does not have the authority to cut our budget the Town Council does. I personally don't believe that the Town Manager has done her job. She was supposed to send our budget to Town Council. I don't think that has happened yet, that's the problem. There are a lot of unknown factors. The state is worried about loss and revenues, they are starting to talk about the Student Opportunity Act, level funding, Chapter 70. Other districts are passing their budget with as much hassles as us.

Chair: More than one option for funding. I don't know if it's appropriate to have an unelected board decide on our budget. In the end the Town Council could agree on our full budget, funding it by local tax increase, not proposing we want to go with that. The town has priority on education. This is a very unique year. I agree with that. It is not for the town Finance Oversight Committee to decide on our propose budget based on revenue, because the council itself could create revenue easily. I'm just concerned that we are not following the process.

William: My suggestion is to reach out to the President of Town Council and express your concerns. Because they are not following the Charter where the Town Manager presents to the Town Council and council has the authority to cut?

Sarah: After watching the Finance Oversight Committee meeting, I think because we haven't presented the budget, there is also some confusion what our budget entails. Some of things spoken about that were included in our budget, like the Feasibility Study. I know which is no longer part of our budget. I was going back checking my notes that were put out there publically, the Feasibility Study was included in our budget and it's not. It would be great for our committee to present our budget, that one thing led to confusion.

Chair: In that meeting, we didn't have representation; other departments were fully represented to create a town-wide budget without representation from the School Committee. Should not be happening that way. I don't think it's fair to the students of this town. You are talking potentially (11) less staff members this year based on the decision of an unelected board this is inappropriate and our students will suffer by this.

Sarah: We should have representation there to answer questions that may not be clear. Because there hasn't been a formal presentation points of concerns. Some representation from this committee to be present to ensure clarification so that the Finance Oversight Committee can make a formed decision, when they make a recommendation for us to the full council.

Chair: They should not be developing the budget, line by line, item by item to send back to itself. It's ridiculous to have a sub-committee to Town Council send a budget back to the council and have three members and a Dept. Head as part of that committee. I know everyone has good intentions; we all need to work together. We all need to get through this together, it's a unique year, but it's no excuse to abandon the Charter, no excuse to get rid of checks and balances. I would urge everyone out there to watch the Town Council Finance Oversight Committee from June 24th. We are working for the people of this district, moving forward.

New Business

6.1 MASC Resolutions was presented by Mr. Smith
RESOLUTION: COVID-19 STATE FUNDING

Whereas, if schools are to re-open this fall in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is the responsibility of each school district to do so safely and responsibly; and Whereas, it is the responsibility of the state to ensure that each school district is able to pay for the enormous additional staffing, transportation and material expenses required to do this; Whereas, the state cannot expect mandatory COVID-19 safety guidelines to be followed without also ensuring that each school district has the funds required to implement these guidelines; therefore, let it be

RESOLVED: that the state must guarantee every school district full reimbursement for whatever COVID-19 expenses are required to follow state mandates. We must ensure a statewide school re-opening that is safe, responsible and equitable. THERE CAN BE NO UNFUNDED MANDATES FOR COVID-19.

Richard motioned that the state must guarantee every school district full reimbursement for whatever COVID-19 expenses required to follow state mandates, William seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)

RESOLUTION: SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANTI-RACISM RESOLUTION

Whereas, as schools have the responsibility to equip students with their civil right of obtaining a free and appropriate public education, it is the responsibility of each school to ensure we create a welcoming community for ALL students; and Whereas, it is the responsibility that every district provide to all district staff, including School Committee members annual professional development on diversity, equity and inclusion; and Whereas, every district will commit to recruiting and retaining a diverse and culturally responsive teaching workforce; and Whereas, every district will examine their policies for institutional and systemic racialized practices and implement change with sustainable policies that are evidence based; and Whereas, every district will incorporate into their curriculum the history of racial oppression and works by black authors and works from diverse perspectives; and Whereas, we as school district leaders can no longer remain silent to the issues of racism and hate that continue to plague our public and private institutions;

RESOLVED: that East Longmeadow Public Schools and all the school districts in the Commonwealth must guarantee that racist practices are eradicated, and diversity, equity and inclusion is embedded and practiced for our students, families, faculty and staff.

We must ensure our own school culture and that of every district in the Commonwealth is antiracist that acknowledges that all lives cannot matter until black lives matter.

Richard motioned to approve School Committee Anti-Racism Resolution, William seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)

6.2 End of Year Transfer

Richard moved to approve the FY20 End of Year Transfer, Antonella seconded the motion

Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose (0), motion carries (5-0)

Chair: With sadness in my heart, I don't want this meeting to end; my friend Rich will longer be at our side during our School Committee meetings. Rich you are my friend; you are a great asset to our town. We are going to miss you more than you will know. I've always appreciated your counseling advice with all your years of experience in education. And certainly you at our sides, at the School Committee table. It's always been enriching and fulfilling. You moved the meetings right along, we appreciate that, your anxiousness and anxiety. So thank you Rich for all that you've done. We wish the best of luck moving forward. Richard: Thank you very much

At 8:16pm Richard motioned to adjourn, William seconded the motion.

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

Minutes Recorded by: Kathy Celetti

Respectfully submitted by: Superintendent Smith

Signature