

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: September 7, 2021

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

WHERE: Superintendent's Conference Room

Meeting called to Order by: Sarah Truoiolo, Chair

Chair stated that this meeting is being both audio and video taped, and asked if anyone else was taping the meeting.

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

Approval of Minutes

2.1 Approval of the August 12, 2021 regular session meeting minutes

William moved to approve the August 12, 2021 regular session meeting minutes, Elizabeth seconded the motion. Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose nay (0) motion carries (5-0)

2.2 Approval of the August 23, 2021 executive session meeting minutes.

Gregory moved to approve the August 23, 2021 executive session meeting minutes, Antonella seconded the motion. Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose nay (0) motion carries (5-0)

2.3 Approval of the August 23, 2021 regular session meeting minutes

Antonella moved to approve the August 23 2021 regular session meeting minutes, William seconded the motion. Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (5), those oppose nay (0) motion carries (5-0)

Opportunities for visitors to address the Committee:

Committee/Sub-committee Communications

Elizabeth: I just know that my daughter had a good start off to her year. I'm happy the kids are back in and they seem to be doing pretty well so far.

Antonella: ELEEf is sponsoring a Spartan Sprint on September 26th at the HS. People can sign up, go to their website on Facebook, the link is there. Support them, they have really done a lot for our teachers here. Great organization, thank you.

Sarah: Great start to the academic year. I think everyone exercised a lot of patience as we worked out some of the first week kinks. Convocation was great, I know that Gordon is going to speak to that in a bit. But just a successful launch the academic year.

Superintendent's Report:

5.1.1 ELPS Opening of 2021-2022 school year was presented by Mr. Smith

Mr. Smith showed some slides from the first week of school. We opened the school year with Convocation on the 30th of August. It was engaged and well attended. We spaced everyone out by opening up the walls between the cafeteria and gymnasium. We had a guest speaker Abel Lee, he is a social studies teacher as well as a graduate of ELHS. We also had a tribute to Dr. Allen who suffered a heart attack back in July and is making incredible progress. He is always on our minds and in our hearts. Mr. Martin, who is the acting principal at BP got up to introduce his new staff, but before doing so, took a picture of everyone in their Timmy Strong t-shirts, we all rose in a standing ovation.

At Meadow Brook a couple of staff members ramped up some of the excitement for day one and purchased these rainbow mask. Staff wore these masks as they welcomed back our students on the first day. The outside entrance was also decorated. People were excited, even with the safety protocols that we still have in place.

We have masking, distancing and hand hygiene throughout the building. It's allowing us to be in person. Unfortunately, the numbers in the state and East Longmeadow continue to rise. Some folks at home already rec'd a letter from two of our schools, unfortunately we will have a third school that I will be announcing. We have had an identified case and we are going through our safety protocols to ensure that people are safe.

We had a lot of personal touches last week. We had the high fives going as students came into the building. At Mapleshade, their car line exits right into the back of the classrooms. So teachers were out there greeting their individual students. Which is not out of the ordinary pre-COVID days. It's such a nice touch as we reconnect with our students. As we start any school year, we have to get back into certain routines. This is the third grade spread out in the gymnasium, working with the teachers and physical education teachers and they are learning the hallway practices and routines that they are going to be utilizing on a daily basis.

Some of the events at Mountain View you have personal touches. Staff outside greeting students, as well as getting back into some of the things that they know such as "Caught in the Act" of doing something good. MV highlights that and takes individual pictures post it on their wall. Just getting back into classroom activities, students getting orientated at their desks, getting back to morning meetings.

At Birchland they welcome students back, making sure students understand where the different teams are, different grade levels. You see students eating lunch, in the lunchroom spaced out. You have a faculty meeting on convocation day at BP, you have Mr. Pearson who is acting Asst. Principal and that is the handing over of the scooter from Mr. Martin. If you have ever seen Mr. Martin in action, he rides around on a scooter so he can be in many places quickly.

At the High School our 9th graders began a week earlier with orientation. They first met in the gymnasium and cafeteria with different speakers as they rotated through the different venues. Then they walked in smaller group tours of the high school. On the first day, they also had a greeting and welcoming committee. You see Mr. Paige, Mr. Maccarini and Ms. Blain as students were walking into the building. One of the things we are doing in all of our school buildings, we are utilizing tents and the outdoor spaces where you don't necessarily need to maintain the same masking that we do inside. Here you have students utilizing the tents outside during lunch.

We wanted to reconnect with our students, make sure that they understand, even though we are going certain things making sure people are safe, we are open, we are person, we are revisiting a lot of activities that we use to do. We hope to continue to do that.

When we were remote, we were at 98% in attendance. During that first week, we are a little bit lower than that, closer to 97%. But we were 96.7% across the district for attendance. Birchland at 97.4%; Meadow Brook at 97% excluding kindergarten and pre-school; High School 96.4%; Mountain View 96.3% and Mapleshade 96.2% for the whole week.

We are also working through, and I know a lot of families are concerned about this, working through the challenges that we had with transportation. We are working closely with LPVEC to make sure we are getting all of our buses to stops, and school on time and then back from school to homes on time. We had roughly 1,250 riders when we started last week, and looking to add another 109 riders that

came through and registered in late July and August. Forty nine were late registrations and sixty which were new student registrations. So adding 109 to buses will cause some re-routing and time changes. We did have some bus passes go out today. We are cleaning up a lot of the communications pieces, if people remember initially central office had sent out the bus passes. LPVEC printed passes off the route sheet, and somehow they ended up at the school. We are looking to correct that and have everything come through central office. It's a process that is more efficient and not scattered over five destinations and then handing off to backpacks. Our point of contact for the most part have been Mrs. Blair and Mrs. White in our office. They are working closely with Ms. Sarnelli and Ms. Donovan over at LPVEC. We are working on what's the best way to handle different questions that come up. Is that a direct call to LPVEC or should that come through central office, because that is something we can answer quickly for people. We do ask that you continue to be patient with us. We still have some challenges with time and hoping to continue to improve that as we add those 109 new riders.

Elizabeth: Are we going to be working to adjust the routes so that elementary kids are getting picked up on the side of the road that they should be.

Mr. Smith: Parents who have sent those requests in, we have tried to handle quicker than you know three days or next day. For the most part Mrs. Blair has been able to accomplish that.

Mrs. Blair: Thank you everyone for being so patient with the district. This has been a big change for the district. We no longer have a Transportation Coordinator internally, so things are different. The pandemic has made things different. So for a myriad of reasons, we are going through a little bit of a challenging time, people are really working with us. The Collaborative has been excellent in partnering here with central office. So we thank you for your patience, if you do have a concern, call central office and we will do our best to help you. There were 109 registrations that came in after the closing date of June 30th. That is a significant number. We also have our Birchland and High School buses that I believe are at currently at capacity. We are evaluating that, knowing things do change as the year goes on. We are working on the numbers, working with Collaborative, and appreciate your patience.

Sarah: It's great that we were able to field those questions and I would encourage families to call central office and make sure they are communicating their concerns whether it's a bus stop or concerns around time of day that the child is getting picked-up or location so that we can start to handle and process them so folks are getting picked up safely each and every day.

Mr. Smith: There seems to be across the state, a shortage of bus drivers. We were fortunate to have drivers for each of our routes. LPVEC has drivers, some are very new, and so they are still learning the process and routes.

Greg: Can you go over since it's a new year, we are going to have situations and we are going to need to ask students and families to quarantine. Has it changed from last year, what are our quarantine policies and testing!

Mr. Smith: It's already starting to happen, letters went out this morning. We did the contact tracing for two schools (Saturday and Sunday into Monday) then once we finished the contact tracing, now you have close contacts, yes they quarantining or if they are positive case they are obviously isolating. We are following the same protocol that we had in the spring of last year. If you have to quarantine, there are variations because now if you are vaccinated there is a different element to that, you may not have to quarantine. If you quarantining, at least seven days, with still looking to get that PCR test on the fifth day, and then with a positive quarantine, if negative you can come back on that eighth day. Remote learning is no longer an option. They gave certain structured options where you could go all remote to you know an academy, districts could have set that up, we did not choose to do so. There are recognized online learning academies in the Commonwealth. Each school building has a designated staff member who will be connecting with anybody who's quarantining and will be a live connection. Every classroom and on secondary level every class in all content areas has a google classroom. Students are aware of this, they know how to log in and get into the google classroom. That is where assignments, information and notes from the teacher can be posted and live check-in on a daily basis where a staff member will be coordinating with students who are quarantining.

Elizabeth: At some point, when does DESE discuss that threshold if the numbers of students out due to quarantine. Like say it gets really bad, we have no clue what's happening. Do they have any guidance or will they give you guidance?

Mr. Smith: At the moment, we have not gotten guidance regarding that, like what happens when you have a staff shortage, how does that work. I think it's forthcoming. I think it could be coming this week. Your vaccine is sort of a way from quarantining. If you are vaccinated and not showing symptoms you are able to be in the classroom. If you are masked and you are three feet or more from individuals then you are not a close contact. Vaccine and masking, those things have really come into play and take you out of the quarantining. If you are a close contact, vaccinated and start to become symptomatic, then you should stay home and go get tested. On a daily basis, we should do that self-inventory.

Sarah: When we say no remote programming, that means we are not offering a remote only option versus if a child or student isn't quarantined we are still able to support them in a virtual environment. We do not offer a remote only option, however, that doesn't stop us from to your point half of those educators that are designated at each building to connect in.

Mr. Smith: Yes live connect, we are not doing the live streaming.

Sarah: We are still connecting with kids.

Mr. Smith: Our goal is to have a daily connection.

Assistant Superintendent of Business Report :

5.2.1 FY2021 ELEEF Grants was presented by Ms. Blair

ELHS - Nikki MacGillvray (K'nex Education: Renewable Energy) \$3,425

BPMS - Gary Blanchette (Airtech Scout 2.0 Wind Tunnel) \$2,195

MV - Steve Guay (Promethean Interactive Display) \$7,016.89

MV - Chris Tyler (Robotics) \$7,211.63

MV - Amy Pelzek (iPad and case for social media intern) \$368.95

MV - Danielle Horan (Orff Xylophones) \$3,470

MS - John Wiedersheim (News Studio and Control Room) \$7,500

MS - Erin Tighe (Recording Studio) \$1,974

Totaling Grants = \$33,205.47

Thank you ELEEF

Antonella moved to accept the \$33,205.47 from ELEEF Endowment Grant, Elizabeth seconded the motion

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

5.2.2 MV gift donation from Stop and Shop A+ School Rewards Program was presented.

William moved to accept the MV gift donation from Stop and Shop A+ program in the amount of \$324.40, Elizabeth seconded the motion.

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

5.2.3 BP gift donation from Stop and Shop A+ School Rewards Program was presented.

Elizabeth moved to accept the BP gift donation from Stop and Shop A+ program in the amount of \$243.68, William seconded the motion.

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

5.2.4 HS gift donation for "Spartan Walk" was presented

Elizabeth moved to accept the check for \$100 EJB Assoc. and the check \$175 form Rebecca Moriarty on behalf of the Spartan Walkway, Antonella seconded the motion.

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

Old Business:

6.1 MOU - ELHS Head Teacher/Dean of Academics

Gregory moved to accept the MOU for ELHS Academic Dean position, William seconded the motion.

Chair: Any further discussion, hearing none, all those in favor say aye (4), those oppose nay (1) motion carries (4-1)

6.2 MOU - Stipend for Acting Assistant Principal at BPMS.

Gregory moved to approve the MOU for stipend for Acting Asst. Principal at BPMS as presented, William seconded the motion

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

New Business:

7.1 School Committee rep for upcoming negotiations for Custodians and Secretaries was presented.

Gregory moved to appoint Elizabeth as School Rep for the Custodians and William for the Secretaries negotiations.

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

Chair: Thank you everyone

William moved to adjourn at 6.50 P.M. Elizabeth seconded the motion.

Chair: 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