

**EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA**

Minutes of School Committee meeting, September 14, 2009, Simmons Lecture Hall, convened at 7:02 p.m. Present: Caroline O'Neill, Dawn Boynton, Colleen Less, Jane Martin, Rebecca Turley, Allen Duarte, and Dr. Michael Green.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

None.

MINUTES:

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 5-0 vote, the Minutes of 7/16/09 were approved.

RELEASE OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES:

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with a 5-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 2/7/08 were approved for release.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 5-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 6/8/09 were approved for release.

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Vice Chair Boynton, and with a 5-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 7/16/09 were approved for release.

**OLD BUSINESS:
Schedule of Payments:**

Circulated for signatures.

**NEW BUSINESS:
Appointments:
Clerical Aide – OAHS:**

Dr. Green informed the Committee that Caryn Crocker has been hired as the Clerical Aide at Oliver Ames High School. Caryn has been substituting in the main office at the high school and has done an excellent job.

Retirements:

None.

Resignations:

None.

Capital Plan Revisions/Timelines:

Dr. Green included in the Committee's packets the current Capital Improvement Five-Year Plan. He pointed out that our building-related priorities include heating upgrades at Center, Moreau Hall and Parkview Schools. Also included in the plan are infrastructural upgrades including roof replacements.

The Superintendent stated that we continue to make progress in the area of technology and will continue to address any and all needs. Dr. Green mentioned that he will be updating last year's Building and Grounds Capital Plan with Wayne Southworth over the next few weeks. Relative to the technology update, he has arranged a meeting with Donna Davey.

A draft plan will be presented at a later date for the Committee's review. Dr. Green said that the timeline for submission usually occurs sometime in October.

A brief discussion ensued.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

Preliminary Enrollment Update:

Dr. Green reviewed the documents included in the Committee's packets. He pointed out the October 1, 2009 enrollment figures for this year include Project Early, which was not the case last year. In reviewing the two enrollment documents, Dr. Green stated that we are down 34 students from this same time last year, but with the inclusion of Project Early and PAL and Extended Day Kindergarten, our total reflects an increase of 23 students. He said that we still have movement in and out. Families are moving into town and some families' homes have not sold. Dr. Green pointed out that the Grade 3 enrollment at FLO and HHR is identical. He spoke about the class sizes being balanced out well and feels the district is in good shape at this time.

Mrs. Martin spoke of the grade 2 to grade 3 placement that will take place next year and that there will be some adjustments to maintain adequate class sizes next year.

Schedule Professional Status Staff Reception:

Dr. Green reminded the Committee that the Professional Status Reception is scheduled for Thursday, October 8, at 6:00 p.m. in the high school cafeteria which will be followed by a regular School Committee meeting. We will be hosting those staff members (30 total) who were granted Professional Status in June and have returned the first day of school to begin their fourth year with the district.

Elementary Report Card Committee Update:

Dr. Green stated that there has been a shift to Standards-Based Education which has led schools to develop appropriate report card formats that are linked to and reflect the standards-based teaching and learning that takes place in our classrooms on a day-to-day basis.

This past year, Dr. Beauchaine and Mr. Duarte began their work with our Elementary Report Card Committee, which is comprised of 13 staff members representing all elementary schools. The committee has been charged with developing recommendations for School Committee review regarding the implementation of a new Standards Based Report Card System for the 2010-2011 school year.

Dr. Beauchaine and Mr. Duarte provided a PowerPoint presentation on the progress of their work to date and their committee's plans for the 2009-2010 school year.

Mr. Duarte stated that a Standards-Based Report Card (SBRC) shows each subject area which is divided into a list of essential foundation skills that students are responsible for learning. Students and parents are provided with more detailed information regarding learning. SBRC depict where the student's strengths are and where support is needed. In addition, Mr. Duarte said that the SBRC provides the added benefit of keeping teachers, students, and parents focused on specific student learning goals throughout the school year

Elementary Report Card Committee Update(continued):

Dr. Beauchaine indicated that the committee identified strengths and weaknesses of the current Report Card. She said the committee developed the following suggestions for improvement:

- Place more focus on investment in learning (personal development)
- Include current reading levels
- Develop a computer generated format
- Include strand information for Social Studies and Science
- Show a continuum of individual student progress
- The format for the primary and upper elementary levels may Differ, but should flow well from grade to grade

Mr. Duarte mentioned that the Grade 6 report card will be worked on as a separate task and will be consistent with grade 7 and 8.

A brief discussion took place.

Mr. Duarte did emphasize that the Standards Based Report Card is going to assess students and provide a much better picture towards the standards. The committee will be looking for approval of the new Standards- Based Report Card for 2010-2011 this coming spring.

The Committee thanked Allen and Vanessa for providing an update regarding the Report Card Committee.

Opening of 2009-2010 School Year Update:

Dr. Green spoke about the New Staff Orientation that was held for two days in August, which has become an annual event. These two days were coordinated and facilitated by Allen Duarte, Interim Assistant Superintendent, who is to be commended for the outstanding job he does. The feedback from the survey that Allen conducted of these new staff members revealed that the participants recognized and appreciated the wonderful two-day orientation.

The entire staff and administrators from the 7 buildings gathered on Tuesday morning, September 1st, at the high school, which was the first day for the teachers. A breakfast was served in the cafeteria and then everyone adjourned to the auditorium to hear remarks from Superintendent Dr. Green, School Committee Chair O'Neill, and EEA President Nancy DeLuca.

Opening of 2009-2010 School Year Update(continued):

Dr. Green stated that Wednesday, September 2nd, was the first day for Grades 1 - 12 and the kindergarteners started on Friday, September 4th. He had the opportunity to visit each of the 7 schools on the first few days and the energy and excitement displayed the wonderful spirit of the staff and students.

Dr. Green reported that the buildings look great, thanks to the custodial and maintenance staff in our buildings for the tremendous job that they do.

Mrs. Less remarked that it is nice for students to see the Superintendent.

Mrs. Martin spoke about the POS plan for school lunches and the bus route changes.

Dr. Green said the POS plan was working very well. He mentioned that the bus routes take a few days to smooth out but they are going well also.

Mrs. Less stated that students were arriving late and unable to get to their lockers and asked how these concerns can be alleviated.

Dr. Green said the busses are starting a little earlier.

Update on Non-Geographic Student Placement Process:

Since Dr. Green's last update to the Committee on July 16th, three meetings have been held with the Administrative Team on August 5, August 28, as well as earlier today. Dr. Green reported the progress that has been made to date:

- Updated placement cards, drafted a Parent letter, updated placement sheets, and developed a document for parents that includes potential questions and responses regarding the new placement process.
- Developed a detailed Timeline that identifies specific placement activities that will take place from February – June 2010.

Update on Non-Geographic Student Placement Process(continued):

- Scheduled Pre-Placement Week activities:
Pre-placement will include all students who receive support services. A detailed template has been developed that includes the various dates, scheduled activities, and persons responsible for follow through.
- Discussed preliminary plan regarding student bus arrival and dismissal.

Dr. Green said the next steps will be to develop information for distribution to PACs, School Councils, and families about the new placement process. We are also in the process of identifying the topics, format, and activities for our upcoming Grade 2 and Grade 3 teacher and staff meetings that will be held in the month ahead as we move to implementing a more flexible student placement process for students entering Grade 3 at FLO and HHR schools.

The administrative team is again pleased with the progress that they are making to attain our goal to effectively implement a Grade 2 to Grade 3 Non-Geographic Placement Procedure for September 2010. This team is scheduled to meet again to continue their work next Monday, September 21st.

Budget Update:

Dr. Green spoke of the budget shortfall which results in a cut of approximately \$525,000 from the budget. He stated that the school department's share of the cut is approximately \$315,000 which was voted at the Special Town Meeting in October. Dr. Green went on to say that the school department was able to save \$320,000 as a result of the unions taking a step and wage freeze until mid-year. He publicly thanked those unions for making this possible.

The Superintendent said when all is said and done, we will have a balanced budget, although there is always concern with the Special Education tuition costs. Dr. Green added that if the meal tax passes the money will be necessary as the State has lowered its reimbursement rate for some Special Education costs.

Budget Update(continued):

Another area of concern expressed by Dr. Green is the possibility of a local aide cut if the State revenue comes in lower than expected. He is hopeful that this won't happen. Otherwise, the school department may be looking at a mid-October budget freeze. Dr. Green added that traditionally we look at the budget in December and if need be freeze it at that time.

Unanticipated Expenses:

None.

SUPERINTENDENT'S NOTES:

Dr. Green referred to the H1N1 Flu document that had been included in the Committee's packet for their information from the MA Department of Public Health. He said the plan is to send this update home via students in grades K-5 in their backpacks and mail to the homes of students in grades 6-12. The update includes: Information for Parents about Flu in Schools and Flu symptom; Checklist for families and schools.

The schools continue to focus their efforts to provide liquid sanitizers, wipes, and taking a preventive approach with the cleaning of the buildings. The school nurses are working with the teachers to remind students of the importance of washing their hands constantly and to avoid touching their noses, mouth and eyes. We are also trying to stress to students that the proper etiquette for coughing and sneezing is into the arm/elbow area.

Dr. Green spoke of a meeting on the town side that he attended with the Easton Board of Health dealing with inoculations. "Green" copy paper will symbolize H1N1 updates as we move forward.

Mrs. Martin asked if a plan is in place if staff are out sick with this flu.

Dr. Green replied that we do have a substitute pool and that interviews are taking place to add additional substitutes to the already extensive list.

Dr. Green talked about the Conference Call that took place with the Superintendent, Interim Assistant Superintendent, the Head Nurse and the MA Department of Health.

Easton School Committee

September 14, 2009

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ISSUES:

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with the members polled, the Committee entered into Executive Session at 8:05 p.m. for the purpose of reviewing the Executive Session Minutes of 8/27/09 and to discuss contract negotiations through collective bargaining.

OPEN SESSION:

The Committee returned to Open Session at 8:12 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF EXECUTIVE SESSION MINUTES
OF 6/11/09 AND 8/27/09:**

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with a 5-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 6/11/09 were approved.

On a motion by Mrs. Less, seconded by Mrs. Martin, and with a 5-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of 8/27/09 were approved.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by Mrs. Martin, seconded by Mrs. Less, and with all members in agreement, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. Green, Ed.D.
Secretary