

EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
EASTON, MA

EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MINUTES  
Thursday, January 5, 2017

**Minutes of School Committee Meeting, January 5, 2017**, Simmons Lecture Hall, convened at 6:32p.m. Present: Laurie Han, Jackie Weisman, Caroline O'Neill, Nancy De Luca, Jane Martin, Dr. Keough and Dr. Cabral.

**Minutes: Regular 11/03/2016; Executive Session 11/03/2016, 12/22/2016; Workshop 10/28/2016, 11/18/2016, 11/29/2016, 12/06/2016, 12/22/2016:**

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a 5-0 vote, the Regular Minutes of the 11/03/2016 meeting were approved.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a 5-0 vote, the Executive Session Minutes of the 11/03/2016 meeting were approved but not to be released.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. De Luca, with a 5-0 vote, the Workshop Minutes of the 11/18/2016 meeting were approved.

On a motion by Ms. De Luca, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a 5-0 vote, the Workshop Minutes of the 12/22/2016 meeting were approved.

On a motion by Ms. Martin, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a 5-0 vote, the Executive Session minutes of 12/22/2016 were approved but not to be released.

The Subcommittee minutes of 10/28/2016, 11/29/2016 and 12/06/2016 were not voted on as these minutes will be reviewed by the respective Subcommittees at later dates.

**Schedule of Payments:**

Circulated for signatures.

**Proposal for Chinese Exchange:**

Dr. Keough introduced Wes Paul, Principal of Oliver Ames High School and Mr. Lee Chen from Bostonwise. Mr. Paul and Mr. Chen will present to the Committee a proposed 2017 Student Exchange Program to China.

Mr. Chen from Bostonwise presented a powerpoint presentation regarding the proposal of a Student Exchange Program to China. He stated that it is a three way partnership in collaboration with Bostonwise, the schools and host families. Mr. Chen said a group of

English speaking grade 10 students will come to America, stay with host families and attend school. He continued that this program would run two weeks March 26-April 8 or April 23-May 6. Mr. Chen said ten (10) to fifteen (15) students from China will participate this Spring and in the future, Oliver Ames students will go to China.

A question and answer period took place.

The Committee agreed that Mr. Paul will send a letter out to the families of Oliver Ames High School to see if it generates any interest in the Exchange Program.

**Chair Han called for a moment of silence in honor of the Fleming Family.**

**Budget Discussion - FY18 Preliminary Discussion:**

Dr. Keough said the packets included the preliminary budget that the Administration put forth to the School Committee. He continued that the process was different this year as there were opportunities available for teachers to hear how the process moves forward and that the principals had conversations with their teachers regarding priorities and needs. Dr. Keough said that the School Committee formed a Budget Subcommittee, which includes three (3) members of the School Committee. He continued that the one page document, which will be posted on the website, is the proposal of an increase over last year of 3.24% which just includes the contractual increases. Dr. Keough said the additional increase brings the budget needs to 4.42%.

Dr. Keough explained in detail each line item listed on the "Easton Public School Budget Needs 2018-2019".

Dr. Cabral said she and Dr. Keough were extremely appreciative of the exercises that the principals did in each school. She continued that everything was considered and discussed, and a lot of thought went into getting the information and that it is a collective list from the entire district.

Dr. Keough said that Marilyn Gordon, Director of Business, does an amazing job and deserves a lot of credit. Dr. Keough stated that this is a preliminary draft, just the beginning of conversations. Ms. Gordon said the government's budget comes out the second week of January. Dr. Keough said that the "Budget Discussion" will remain on the agendas moving forward.

**Discussion Regarding the Plans for the Superintendent of Schools Position:**

Chair Han said that the Committee is sad to see Dr. Keough leave the district as they know he enjoys working in this district, and although Dr. Keough is still in negotiations, the

Committee must start discussions of planning for the Superintendent vacancy. Chair Han said the Committee started this discussion at the last workshop and she wanted to remind the people at home that this is the only opportunity the Committee has to discuss this topic. She continued that an article in the newspaper had misrepresented what she was saying when they were discussing Dr. Cabral. Chair Han said she was trying to convey that Dr. Cabral is so invested in this district and knows this district so well that she can separate the true goodness and strength of this community, from the negative "chit chat" that is out there. She continued that everyone at the table knows that they have an extremely qualified Assistant Superintendent who has been with the district since 2013. Chair Han said that she wanted to suggest the possibility of doing an internal search. Ms. Martin said that there are a number of options that they discussed such as, naming Dr. Cabral as interim and doing a search, do a search right now, just an internal search, or none of the above and appoint Dr. Cabral. Ms. Martin said that a lot of people have expressed how sad they will be to see Dr. Keough leave as well as a tremendous amount of support for Dr. Cabral. Ms. Martin thanked members of the community of who have shared their feedback with the School Committee. Ms. Weisman said, as a person who has not been thorough a Superintendent Search, asked if any of the options that Ms. Martin stated were part of other Superintendent searches. Chair Han said that some districts have done internal searches and others will contract with MASC or NESDEC. She continued that the packets included the "NESDEC Easton Public Schools Superintendent Search Successful Candidate Profile" from February 21, 2014.

Dr. Keough said that Dr. Cabral has been by his side the entire process and has the benefit of being included in so many discussions that Assistant Superintendents are not normally involved in. He continued that this is how to groom people to be future leaders, they need to be part of that process. Dr. Keough said he agrees with what the Committee is saying, his departure will be a hit to the system as it threatens momentum. He continued that the community of Easton has been a wonderful place for him to work and the kindness and decency that he has received from the community on hearing that he will be leaving has been very difficult for him.

Ms. O'Neill said that even when Bill Simmons was the Superintendent, he would share articles with the Committee about how hard it was to find qualified Superintendents. She said that Dr. Simmons was Superintendent of Easton for sixteen (16) years but now the average tenure of a Superintendent is four (4) years. She continued, compared with Dr. Simmons' time, it is now even more difficult to find top quality candidates. Ms. O'Neill noted the number of searches underway or recently completed, and when she looked at the qualifications of some of the candidates, she found that they were not nearly as strong as Dr. Cabral. Ms. O'Neill said she wants to do what is right for Easton and the kids.

Chair Han said this is the perfect opportunity to reach out to the community for their input and that the Committee can be reached by email. She continued that things will move

forward after Dr. Keough signs his contract with Dover-Sherborn and he submits his letter of resignation from Easton.

Dr. Keough said he expects to sign his contract very soon and at that point he will submit his letter of resignation for June 30th.

Chair Han asked Dr. Cabral if she would like to make a comment.

Dr. Cabral said she welcomes an opportunity to serve Easton in any capacity, she said she wants what is best for Easton.

**Update on the MSBA Application:**

Dr. Keough said he heard back from Diane Sullivan of the Massachusetts School Building Association, in response from the Statement of Interest that Easton submitted. He continued that although we stated that Easton has three (3) schools that are in need of updating, the MSBA said that they needed one school identified as the highest priority followed by a second and third; funding will not be for all three simultaneously. Dr. Keough said Center School was listed as the school with the highest priority however, MSBA is aware that Moreau Hall and Parkview are also on the list as it was included on the SOI (Statement of Interest). He continued that a letter from MSBA was received stating the Moreau Hall and Parkview did not make the cut, their staff identified Center School as one that they would recommend but it has to go through their process. Dr. Keough said we should hear back after February 15th.

**2017-2018 School Calendar (Second Reading):**

Dr. Keough said that the calendar that is in the packets include changes that the Committee made that was discussed at the last meeting. He continued that November 13th was decided as the best day for professional development by Dr. Cabral and the Cabinet, the day before winter break was also added as a half day, and May 11th was added as a half day as needed for placement decisions throughout the district and at the bottom of the page it is now indicated that the last day of school is half a day for students but full day for teachers.

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a 5-0 vote, the Committee approved the changes to the 2017-2018 calendar as recommended by the Administration.

**Possible Appointment of Member to the ECAT Board of Directors:**

Dr. Keough said that ECAT would like to have a member from the School Committee on their Board of Directors. The Committee requested more information on the meetings before they appoint a member of the School Committee to the ECAT Board of Directors.

**Public Comment:**

Gary Erickson, Curriculum Leader, Union Vice President, Teacher of Easton, resident of Easton, attended schools in Easton and has a daughter who will be attending Parkview next year spoke. Mr. Erickson said, as a parent, he thanked Dr. Keough for his service in Easton and wished him luck in his next opportunity. Mr. Erickson said being a part of Easton education for the last thirteen (13) years, he has noticed a lot of turnover in the Office of the Superintendent and feels it has been detrimental to the town and to the students. He continued that they need someone strong steering the ship. He stated that he came before the Committee this evening to talk about the Committee's selection for Superintendent. He said he is very excited to hear that they are looking in house and that if Dr. Cabral is selected as the next Superintendent he wishes her the best of luck however, he urges the Committee to not shy away from if in fact, that Dr. Cabral would be the best candidate and whether they do a search for Superintendent or Assistant Superintendent, he challenges the Committee to select the best possible person. He said he wants the Committee to think very carefully about the person who replaces whatever position in the Office of Superintendent. He continued that they need to make sure that person is willing to dedicated themselves to Easton. Mr. Erickson said he works very closely with Dr. Cabral and he is not saying that she is not the best candidate, he wants the Committee to be 100% sure that Dr. Cabral is the best candidate and that there isn't someone outside the district more exceptional than Dr. Cabral. He continued that he urges the Committee to return to School Committee practices of putting educators and teachers on a hiring committee. Mr. Erickson thanked the Committee for listening.

Mahsa Khanbabai from Easton, said she has four children in Easton, one of which is special needs and not in the district; she said she would love to give a shout out to the wonderful Special Ed Director, Theresa Skinner. She continued that she has not had an opportunity to work with Dr. Cabral but hopes she will in the future but she would like to echo Mr. Erickson on making sure the Committee does do a very thorough analysis on what is the right thing for the children and the community and that the head of the schools is a person who cares about the students, the community and the education of our students. She continued that she commends everyone on the School Committee for all their dedication and hard work and looks forward to being involved as a parent and as a member of the community.

Ms. Martin said that some of the members of the School Committee have sat on search committees in the past, in terms of understanding the complexity, understanding how you involve stakeholders and how you reach out to the community, has happened as they have had focus groups on these searches in the past. She continued that the Committee understands the importance of listening to the community and educators and getting feedback is the goal of the Committee.

**Superintendent Notes:**

Dr. Keough said that he has news regarding the water testing. He continued that the district went through the initial testing of our water as a proactive step, the first testing was free of charge, we found that some of the taps tested slightly beyond the threshold that was not acceptable of what is considered acceptable. He said it is commonly understood that you should run your water before you fill your cup. He continued that when they flushed the pipes, the problems went away, and that two schools, Parkview and Moreau Hall, indicated faucets that still pertained a slight level of lead and copper. Dr. Keough said that those faucets will be replaced and retested, and anticipates the problem will be resolved. He continued that a notice will be sent out via School Messenger on the water update. Dr. Keough said how much he appreciates Mr. Paul's efforts in the aftermath of the terrible tragedy in Easton and that he was impressed how Mr. Paul handled the situation. Dr. Keough expressed his condolences to the Fleming and Desrosier families.

**Assistant Superintendent Notes:**

Dr. Cabral said she wanted to remind everyone that Easton University and Easton Community brochure went out just before winter break and the due dates are coming up quickly. She said that another brochure will be out in the Spring and that she is always looking for feedback on potential offerings. She noted that both brochures are on the district website.

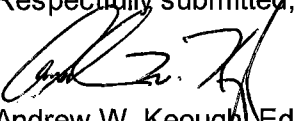
**School Committee Notes:**

Ms. Weisman said she received an alert from MASC regarding the new Public Records Law that went into effect requiring that municipalities appoint a Public Records Officer. Dr. Keough said that he is the Public Records Officer and it is on the website.

**Adjournment:**

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Ms. Weisman, with a 5-0 vote, the Committee adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Andrew W. Keough Ed.D.  
Secretary