

EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA

EASTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORKSHOP MINUTES
Friday, April 15, 2016

Minutes of School Committee Workshop Meeting, April 15, 2016, 50 Oliver Street, Upstairs Conference Room, convened at 8:32 a.m. Present: Fred Isleib, Laurie Han, Caroline O'Neill, Sean Mullen and Dr. Cabral.

Call meeting to order:

Chair Isleib called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

Policy Sections C, D and E (first reading):

Chair Isleib stated that the district is taking a look at all the policies that we have to make sure it meets the standards of education and the standards of the state. He continued that we are receiving assistance with this from the Mass Association of School Committees along with two School Committee representatives, Sean Mullen and Laurie Han.

Chair Isleib asked if File CA should reference the Strategic Plan in this policy. Mr. Mullen suggested adding in paragraph four (4), *"These goals will include a description of the actions necessary to achieve system wide goals consistent with the vision outlined in the Strategic Plan, and individual goals as well as the evidence that will be collected to evaluate each goal"*.

Dr. Han said that the changes were made in yellow to File CHCA and CHD.

Chair Isleib suggested adding to paragraph five (5) in Policy File DB, *"In developing a budget, care shall be taken to make the documents associated with the budget clear and understandable to the School Committee, Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen and to the general public."*

Chair Isleib mentioned the wording in Policy File DBC, the last paragraph, *"local newspaper"*. Dr. Han and Mr. Mullen will mention this to Jim Hardy.

A discussion took place on Policy D File DJE, paragraph four (4); *"All bids will be submitted in sealed envelopes, addressed to the Superintendent and plainly marked with the name of the bid and the time of the bid opening. Bids will be opened in public at the time specified, and all bidders will be invited to be present."* This statement falls under the bidding requirements of Chapter 30B.

A discussion took place regarding Policy E File EEAG. The Committee suggested having Jim Hardy revisit this File EEAG for suggestions.

A discussion took place regarding File EEAJ. Mr. Mullen offered to reword the first paragraph and bring forth to Jim Hardy.

VGo Remote Student Subscription:

Dr. Cabral explained that VGo Remote Student is for students who are compromised in some way and unable to participate in a regular school day. She continued that this is a student who is fragile, physically or emotionally, and has a documented condition that keeps them from attending school for a significant amount of time. She continued that the middle school has been pursuing this as an option as they have a student that will benefit from this device. Dr. Cabral said the middle school brought this in last year as a demo and were able to secure a grant this year from F.O.R.E. (For Our Residents of Easton) group that is buying the device and a one year subscription. She continued that after that, there is a yearly subscription, it is a one year contract.

Chair Isleib said this is a great opportunity to eliminate out of district costs. Dr. Cabral said it would eliminate the tutoring costs for students using the device.

On a motion by Chair Isleib, seconded by Ms. O'Neill, with a 4-0 vote, the Committee approved to accept the donation of the VGo Remote Student.

Good Friday Attendance Discussion:

A discussion took place regarding the attendance data for the religious holidays.

In attendance at the workshop were members of the community.

Chair Isleib stated that there were a total of fifty eight (58) members of the Easton Public School staff were absent on Good Friday, March 25, 2016.

Dr. Cabral said out of the fifty eight (58), twenty two (22) were teachers and out of those teachers, ten (10) were out for a Personal Business day.

Mr. Mullen commented that during the month of March there were several days that the number of staff absent were comparable to the number of staff absent on Good Friday.

The Committee felt that the number of students that were absent could possibly be inaccurate due to the fact that they did not recognize that school was in session on Good Friday. Dr. Cabral stated that she did get similar feedback from parents. Therefore, a reminder will go out next year.

Dr. Han mentioned that on FaceBook there was a campaign to keep students home for Good Friday and it may have inflated the absenteeism data.

A parent that attended the workshop stated that some students attended on the religious holidays in the fall because they felt they would be missing school work, tests, etc., therefore, the attendance data was not accurate.

Chair Isleib stated that the Committee drafted a policy that was followed by the staff from the Administration as well as giving the staff a reminder, that no testing would take place. He continued that a couple of instances did occur in the fall with testing and they did make that adjustment. However, the Committee did not hear of that occurring on this Good Friday. He continued that there were more students absent on Good Friday than there were during the religious holidays in the fall.

A member of the community who attended the workshop asked if there were enough subs to cover the absence of staff because she heard that a Recess and Lunch aide did not observe her religious holiday because there were no subs to cover her position.

Dr. Cabral answered that it is possible on any given day there is difficulty in getting subs. However, students will never be unsupervised due to contingency plans that are always in place and staff are never denied the opportunity to exercise their right to use their personal days for religious observance.

A member of the community who attended the workshop stated that she felt the Committee should eliminate the February vacation and reinstate the Jewish holidays and Good Friday.

Chair Isleib stated that the state is currently evaluating eliminating the February and April vacations and possibly combining the vacations to one week in March.

Chair Isleib stated that the Committee has reviewed the attendance data and there is no need to revisit the religious holidays on the school calendar.

Budget / Override - Update / Discussion:

Chair Isleib stated that they continue to have discussions on the budget and to update the public regarding the need for the override.

Dr. Cabral updated the Committee on the 1.0 Math position at the high school and a discussion followed.

Posting Anticipated Positions - Informational:

Dr. Cabral informed the Committee that Dr. Keough felt it important to post the anticipated positions after the April vacation to be sure the best candidates are informed of possible positions. However, no hiring will be done until the decision of the override is decided. She continued that interviews will be held after May and the potential employees will be told that it is contingent to the override.

Superintendent Notes:

None.

Assistant Superintendent Notes:

Dr. Cabral distributed the brochure from the Red Cross Heroes Breakfast that Dr. Keough attended to honor the Easton Firefighters, Ann Weintrob and Colleen Clark. She stated that they were honored for saving the life of a student at Center School.

Dr. Cabral said that the Robotics Team is competing this weekend and should they come in the top four (4), they will be invited to compete in St. Louis. She continued that this out of state travel trip was already approved by the Committee and that the school department is funding the registration only for any educational group that makes it to a National Level Competition.

Chair Isleib said the Robotics Team is so talented.

School Committee Notes:

Dr. Han said they have been busy informing the community about the override.

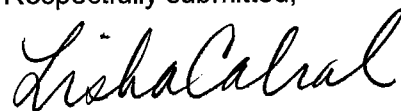
Mr. Mullen announced that this is the last meeting for Chair Isleib and that he will be missed dearly.

Chair Isleib said he appreciated all the help and that it has been a good team.

Possibly Executive Session: Contract Negotiations:

On a motion by Ms. O'Neill, seconded by Dr. Han, with a 4-0 vote, the Committee approved to enter into Executive Session not to return to open meeting at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Lisha Cabral, Ed.D.
Secretary