

ERVING SCHOOL COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, November 15, 2022

ERVING ELEMENTARY

SCHOOL 7:00 p.m.

Present: Jennifer Eichorn; Chair, Erik Semb, Katelyn Mailloux-Little, David Chagnon, Mackenzie Bailey; members, Jennifer Culkeen; Superintendent of Schools, Lisa Candito; EES Principal, Brittanie Mimitz; Minute Taker, Caitlin Sheridan; Director of Finance and Operations, Julian Mendoza; Gfld Recorder, Elizabeth Desorgher, Steve Kaczmarczk, Kathryn Buell, Alyson Huber, Kathleen Bridgewater, Jane Urban, Rosemary Mathey, Laura George, Michelle Arena, Heather Peterson, Tom Smith, Bryan Smith, Melissa Mazella, Wendy Arnold, Becky Allen, Rinky Black, Rebecca Bosworth-Clemens.

Meeting Minutes

A. The meeting was **called to order at 7:00 p.m.** by Jenn.

B. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

C. Reorganization of the Committee – A motion was made by Erik and seconded by Katelyn to nominate Makenzie as the U28 and CES Representative; and Jenn as Sick Bank member. AIF.

D. Public Hearings- Before opening the floor for the Public Hearings School Committee; Chair Jennifer Eichorn thanked staff members “for their dedication and hard work.” She expressed that everyone present has been “very lucky to work for the town of Erving,” citing benefits such as “extremely low class sizes,” weekly collaboration and professional development, paid resources, “generous health insurance plans” and “exceptionally generous pay.” Erving Elementary School, she noted, is “one of the highest-paid elementary schools in Franklin County.” “It certainly is a wonderful place to work as we have not had a classroom teacher leave the district other than retirements for over 10 years, to my knowledge,” Eichorn said, closing out her statement. “I am hoping to continue this trend of being thankful and looking at the positives as we emerge from the pandemic.”

- Elizabeth Desorgher (5th grade) began a statement to the committee that was then continued by Mark Burnett (6th grade) and Kathryn Buell (Pre-K); all teachers at EES.

“A fierce urgency. This is what I feel when I walk through Erving Elementary School and witness massive dysregulated behaviors, anxiety, anger, and a loss of identity. I am watching my students facing the world of 2022, post COVID. I feel a fierce urgency when it comes to leveling the playing field so that all students have equal access to learning. My work as an educator is more important than it ever has been. I am talking about working with children who are deeply complex, who are impacted by variables that are outside of our control. We have been traumatized by the past two and a half years and children are bringing their broken sense of school and misinformed sense of humanity into this learning environment. It manifests as disruptive and distracting behaviors that take away from the job of educating. I fear that you have seriously underestimated the challenges of being a teacher.

The role of a teacher has changed since I first began 20 years ago. I became a teacher to do exactly this; make a significant difference in the lives of the children I teach, whatever it takes. For as long as I can remember, I have known that teaching is my calling.

It breaks my heart to stand in front of you today justifying my professional worth. I paid out of pocket to become a highly qualified and educated teacher. I proudly wear the badge of a classroom teacher. And I'd like to believe that you are proud to be a part of this distinguished organization sitting in front of you tonight. Erving teachers deserve the security of a fair contract.

Let me paint you a picture: a day in the life of an Erving Elementary School teacher. There are approximately 6 hours of content teaching in which we prepare dynamic and engaging lessons consisting of varying activities that address the diverse needs of each of our students. We assess the way our students attend these lessons as well as the work they produce in meaningful ways. We communicate with families and collaborate with colleagues on a daily basis. We meet benchmarks and standards. We juggle, shift, supplement and triage. We bring our passion, curiosity, expertise and support to transform a post-Covid population of young developing minds.

Erving Elementary's support for students has always been impressive. I learned early in my career that the

successful schools are those that function like a village - working harmoniously and symbiotically. 10 years ago, Erving Elementary was the epitome of a smooth running organization. The administration, school committee and town community truly valued the individual talents of Erving's devoted teachers. And that organically trickled down to the well being and achievements of its students.

The School Committee was present and involved holding monthly meetings that allotted a section of time to hear classroom updates from various teachers. Members were genuinely enthusiastic about our work and frequently visited classrooms during lessons of interest. I remember feeling honored to share a snippet of what was happening in my classroom and there was a reciprocal sense of trust and appreciation. I have regard for this unique school and community, particularly because I have worked in schools with poor funding, overflowing class sizes and minimal support. Our school is amazing because of the people who show up every day. And our students need us now more than ever. We go above and beyond without blinking an eye. Technically our work day begins at 8:15, but you can be sure that many of us show up earlier. And technically our work day ends at 3:30, but I assure you that most of us are here much, much, much later. And when we do finally walk out of the building, it is often with our plan books, laptops, and papers in tow. We go above and beyond the hours in front of students because that is what it takes to do the most important job in the world: educate the children of our future.

Unit A teachers have been working for the past 54 days without a contract. I wonder if some of you would perform with this level of dedication if you were on our side of the table? Negotiations began in the spring, and we are beyond disappointed that a respectable, reasonable, fair agreement has not happened yet.

The consumer price index increased 8.2% from August '21 to August '22. We are experiencing the largest 12-month increase since 1982 and it is not projected to go down anytime soon. Social security received a 5.9% increase in 2022 and will receive an 8.7% increase in 2023. That's the cost of living increase, net zero. The district's negotiating team has shared that for every 1% increase in teacher salary calculates to approximately \$16,000 divided among 28 teachers. That figure is out of a 3.5 million dollar budget. Your low and quite frankly perplexing offers are insulting.

I have always believed that we are all here for the children. That every decision is centered around students. At this particular juncture, I am not confident that you are putting the students first and I question your motives. It is naive to think that Erving teachers working without a fair and worthy contract isn't impacting the overall morale and success of this school."

After the EES staff members addressed the committee; Jenn thanked EES staff for their hard work and dedication.

Mackenzie then addressed the EES staff members, reassuring them that she "Heard what they said."

Lastly, Long time staff member Kathleen Bridgewater spoke to the committee. Kathleen Bridgewater, who said she taught for nearly 30 years at Erving Elementary School, used her "good sense of what has happened in the past" to put the current situation in perspective. "We need a harmonious working situation," she said. "The real respect comes, in the end, in paying people fairly. ... Wonderful words are terrific. (But) being told you've got it better than everybody else is not really a way of saying, 'We respect you.' It's saying, 'You're being greedy.' That's how it sounds to me and that's not what Erving has been about."

E. Approval of Minutes from

- A motion was made by Erik and seconded by Katelyn to approve the minutes from **September 20, 2022.* AIF.**

F. Warrants – Accounts Payable:

1010	10/6/2022	\$8,332.02
------	-----------	------------

1014	10/6/2022	\$4,373.96
1104	10/6/2022	\$6,660.00
1015	10/20/2022	\$21,985.30
1016	11/3/2022	\$42,383.18

Payroll:

107	9/29/2022	\$103,482.61
108	10/13/2022	\$103,360.30
109	10/27/2022	\$102,990.86
110	11/10/2022	\$104,203.74

- **Gifts: Acceptance Vote- None**
- **Grants: Acceptance Vote:**
 - **Title I FC 305 - \$30,542**
 - **Title IIA FC 140 - \$4,061**
 - **Title IV FC 309 - \$10,000**
 - **IDEA FC 240 - \$52,812**
 - **EC-IDEA FC 262 - \$1,582**

A motion was made by Katelyn and seconded by Erik to accept the grants. AIF.

G. Report of the Gill-Montague Representative- None

H. Collaborative for Educational Services Report- Dave was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict. Mackenzie will attend the next meeting.

I. Regionalization Update- Katelyn shared that there has been one meeting. During the meeting they shared a presentation or video that would be shared at the individual town meetings. Gill-Montague met last night. Erving will need to think about the commitment they want to make. Will the town want to be voting members or pay tuition for the students to attend? Things that will need to be considered before any decisions are made. Katelyn will have more information to share at the next meeting.

J. Capital Planning Committee Update- A tilt kettle was purchased for the kitchen. It's just a matter of getting a plumber and gas fitter to install it. There is also a walk-in refrigerator that will hopefully be installed by the end of the year.

K. Superintendent's Report

- **Grants Update-** Operational efficiencies for union 28. Shutesburry applied for a \$32,000 operational efficiency grant as a benefactor for the union. The Collins Center will be conducting the study on all aspects of the current governance structure. The grant will allow up to two years to complete the study.

· **Foundation Enrollment**

Thank you to all the school secretaries and Gail Dubrielle for completing the SIMS reporting which is student level data. That helps inform the foundation enrollment. CPI crisis prevention, de escalation and blue card training. Schools have conducted lock-down drills and visitor training. MCAS results have come in and grades 3-8 math scores have increased but ELA scores have gone down. There have been budget meetings and getting ready to conduct learning walks at each of the schools.

L. Director of Finance and Operations Report*

- **FY22 End of Year Report – Submitted – Vote to allow the Chair to sign the EOY Certification Statement** A motion was made by Katelyn and seconded by Erik to allow the chair to sign and approve the EOY Certification Statement. AIF.

EES was eligible to apply for an HVAC grant that will improve and increase the efficiency of the HVAC system. If received, the grant would go toward studying and fixing the HVAC

system. Caitlin attended a MASBO training that was very beneficial.

M. Principal's Report- It has been a busy start to the year. The EES band was able to go to UMASS for a performance. Pre-k went on a field trip. There was CPR training for staff this month. Jennifer Smith did an amazing job putting together the Veterans Day assembly. This week is conference week. Next week the 1st and 2nd graders will be walking in Monte's March. Teaching and Learning has changed post pandemic. The full-time adjustment counselor and psychologist have been a huge help. Jill Buck does lunch groups, and has 14 students she is seeing currently; 6 of them are new referrals. All new referral process. Jordan Miller currently has 7 new referrals and has 4 students she sees for IEP services. Each grade has several new referrals. There are 5 new referrals for 1st grade students, 4 new referrals for 2nd grade students, 2 parent referrals for 4th grade, and 1 for 6th grade. They have done an amazing job. The literacy and math teams have been performing assessments school wide. Currently there are 29 students that are below grade level. The tiered instruction will help to meet the students where they are. Currently all grades except 4+5 have students receiving tiered 2 support. Open DCF cases and emotional needs of the students and community have greatly increased. Current enrollment is 126 students pre-k-6. Lisa will send out a survey to families and staff on pick-up and dismissal processes. All dismissals have been completed by 3:25p.m. Drop-off is similar to pick-up. Mackenzie requested that the pick-up and drop-off process be put on the next agenda to continue the discussion.

N. Budget and Personnel Committee Report-

- Next Meeting Date – TBD Waiting on more information.

O. Union #28 Committee Report-

- Next Meeting Date – January 30, 2023 @ 6:30 p.m.

P. Old Business-

- **Gill-Montague Agreement** - The committee discussed the different options for Erving and how to proceed if Gill-Montague continues with regionalization. At this juncture Erving does not have a vote. Katelyn will be attending the meetings and the video presentation will be distributed to all the member towns and the financial departments.

Q. New Business

- **Family Handbook** – A motion was made by Katelyn to approve the 2022-2023 Family Handbook with edits.* The motion was seconded by Erik. AIF.
*Edits- Pre-k tuition update, Suspension section is up to date based on new law, PTO to P.I.E.E., Lunch alternatives, and update school committee members.

Update on new Pre-k tuition plan on agenda for the January meeting.

- **CES Capital Reserve Fund** – A motion was made by Jenn to allow the CES to put \$5 million in a separate account. The motion was seconded by Makenzie. AIF.
- **PIEE Report-** PIEE is currently working on The Original Works fundraiser which will be going home this week. The Erving Apparel website is up and running. Only a few more days to place orders in time for the holidays. P.I.E.E. recently sent out a staff survey to better individualize teacher appreciation and other events. Next meeting is the first Monday in December.

Professional Development Days- Some staff members and families have raised concern over the professional development days on the Friday before a long weekend. It places a lot of burden on families and staff who may be unable to take the day off to provide childcare.

R. Policy Review and Update

Policy Review and Update

Second Reading, First Vote on:

Final Vote on:

- o AC – Non-Discrimination*
- o ACAB – Sexual Harassment*
- o JICK – Harassment of Students*

A motion was made by Erik to approve a final vote of policies AC, ACAB, and JICK. The motion was seconded by Katelyn. AIF.

S. Future Business

· **Next School Committee Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 17, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.** · Erving Policy Committee – **Tuesday, January 17, 2023 – 6:30 p.m.**

T. Executive Session and Adjournment

·A motion was made by Jenn to adjourn the general meeting and move to an Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining. The motion was seconded by Katelyn. AIF.

Roll Call out

I Eichorn, I Mailloux-Little, I Semb, I Chagnon, I Bailey

*** Enclosures**

Respectfully submitted,
Brittanie Mimitz
Minute Taker