



Salem Derby, Mayor

# EASTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## EASTHAMPTON MUNICIPAL BUILDING

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Michelle Balch, Superintendent

### SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

In Person Only/Hybrid Meeting  
50 Payson Avenue, 2nd Floor

January 27, 2026  
6:00 P.M.

**Present** School Committee Members: Chair Laura Scott, Mayor Salem Derby, Bonnie Atkins, Eric Guyette, Megan Harvey, and Sam Hunter

Administration: Superintendent Michelle Balch, EdD

**I. Call to Order** Chair Laura Scott called the meeting to order at 6:15 P.M.

#### II. Consent Agendas

Discussion: Chair Laura Scott explained the new consent agenda process.

**VOTE - Motion to approve the Consent Agenda Finance items as delineated in our agenda for the January 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

*So Moved: Sam Hunter, Seconded: Megan Harvey, Motion passed 5-0-1 (Eric Guyette abstained)*

**VOTE - Motion to approve the minutes of January 13, 2026 meeting.**

*So Moved: Sam Hunter, Seconded: Megan Harvey, Motion passed 6-0-0*

#### III. Announcements

A: Gifts No updates

B: Student Rep Updates No student representative updates due to school cancellation on 01/27/2026.

#### IV. Public Speak

Opened (6:17 P.M.) and Closed (6:18 P.M.) by Chairperson Laura Scott – No participants

## V. Superintendent Update

Goal Update Superintendent Balch presented her January report (See attached report)  
CKLA Update Jodi Alatalo was going to be presenting, due to the snow day, her presentation will be moved to the next school committee meeting on Feb.10

## VI. School Committee Discussion

**A. Policy Subcommittee Meeting:** Sam Hunter was elected as the Policy Subcommittee Chairperson and Eric Guyette was elected to be the Policy Subcommittee Secretary

**VOTE - Motion to enter into negotiations for a contract with MASC for policy review services to be paid for from the School Committee Contract Services account line.**

*So Moved: Sam Hunter, Seconded: Eric Guyette, Motion passed 6-0-0*

**B. Finance Subcommittee Update:** The next meeting is Monday February 9th at 3:30 at 50 Payson in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor conference and will be hybrid.

**C. CES Update:** Dr. Portia Bonner was offered the position as the new executive director of the Collaborative for Educational Services and has entered contract negotiations.

## VIII. Next Meeting Dates

The next four School Committee meetings will be held on 02/10/2026, 03/10/2026 and 03/24/2026 (Budget Hearing) and 04/14/2026.

## VI. Adjournment

**Move to adjourn the meeting**

*Moved: Sam Hunter, Seconded: Eric Guyette, Motion passed 6-0-0*

Final Roll Call: Chair Laura Scott, Bonnie Atkins, Mayor Salem Derby, Megan Harvey, Sam Hunter, Eric Guyette

**Meeting Adjourned at 6:44 P.M.**

List of Documents Viewed or Discussed During Meeting:

- January 27 School Committee Meeting Agenda
- Superintendent Goal Report

*Eric Guyette*

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Signature

## EASTHAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### School Committee Report

#### Superintendent's Goals

##### Goal 1:

By June 2026, the district will strengthen data-informed instructional practices by establishing a system of data review and action cycles in all schools. This will include the creation of a district-wide data calendar, facilitation of monthly data review meetings with principals, and the implementation of at least one documented instructional adjustment per school, based on student outcome data (e.g., MCAS, interim assessments, curriculum-embedded assessments).

##### Goal 2:

Throughout the 2025–2026 school year, the superintendent will fully engage in the Massachusetts DESE New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP). This includes the completion of a 1st year entry plan, identification of strategic priorities, school committee presentations, regular reflection with my assigned NSIP coach culminating in a submission of a final portfolio of learning and impact by June 2026.

##### Goal 3:

By December 2025, Central Office leadership will successfully launch ParentSquare as the district-wide family communication platform. This will include onboarding all schools, training building leaders and key staff, and ensuring at least 75% of families are connected and actively using the platform by winter break. Engagement metrics and family feedback will be used to refine communications and build a shared understanding of district priorities.

### School Business Manager Report

Julia provided her report at the last SC meeting. Stay tuned for February's report on February 10<sup>th</sup>.

#### Superintendent's Updates

**Goal 1:** The CKLA presentation will be rescheduled. Jodi Alatalo will be joining us to review parts of our landscape analysis and to review implementation efforts and data sets. On January 20 and 21, we conducted two days of learning walks at Mountain View Elementary in partnership with TNTP. In addition, we held a virtual professional development session yesterday. We are currently gathering mid-year data from STAR and EarlyBird, and Julie Anne and I will present this information to the committee at our next meeting.

**Goal 2:** Entry findings were presented at the most recent School Committee meeting, and the full report has been published on our website under the School Committee section. The Gazette covered this work last week. We will now begin the process of selecting members for the Strategic Planning Committee. My next NSIP session is scheduled for February 3, and my coach, Kenny, will be visiting this Thursday and joining our Equity Committee meeting.

**Goal 3:** Today—and this past week—have presented some challenges, and we are truly grateful for everyone's patience as we work through them. To be clear, this issue is not a failure of ParentSquare or PowerSchool. Rather, it involves how the two systems "talk" to each other through data mapping. At this time, ParentSquare is pulling emergency contact information instead of parent/guardian contact information. Our technology team is actively re-mapping the data to the correct fields and has been working tirelessly to resolve the issue. We are making steady progress and getting closer to a full fix. When we learned this morning that not all families had received our message, we made the decision to temporarily reboot our previous system in order to send a robo-call. While this is not our preferred approach, it was the fastest way to ensure families received timely information. We have invested significant time and effort into making ParentSquare our primary communication platform, and overall it has been very successful. That said, this experience has reinforced the importance of having reliable

backup communication methods in place, and we are taking steps to strengthen those systems moving forward.

**Assistant Principal Process:** We held our orientation session last week. All 10 screening members were present. We have representation from families, staff, administrators, and a student. We will be reviewing applications next week and hosting screening interviews on February 9<sup>th</sup> and February 11<sup>th</sup>. The instructional task, or Phase II will happen later in February, probably after February break. We are hoping to have candidates identified early March.