

Pre-K Through 5 And Eagle Academy School Pre-Referendum Building Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 2, 2025

The Pre-K And Eagle Academy School Pre-Referendum Building Committee held a meeting on July 2, 2025 at Enfield Town Hall, 820 Enfield Street, Enfield, CT.

1. CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Randy Daigle

2. ROLL CALL
MEMBERS PRESENT

Randy Daigle, Christine DeBonee, Gina Cekala, Bob Cressotti, Janet Cushman, Kate Flanagan, Jim Nasuta, Amanda Pickett, Jeff Rousseau, Scott Ryder, Chris Cykley, Jeffrey Wyszynski, Antonia Ciaverella

MEMBERS ABSENT

Tina LeBlanc, Lauren Andrews, John Dague, Steven Moccio, Charlotte Riley

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion made by Bob Cressotti to Approve the Meeting Minutes of May 21, 2025

Seconded by Christine DeBonee

Motion Passes by a Show of Hands

Motion made by Jim Nasuta to Approve the Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2025

Seconded by Bob Cressotti

Abstained by Gina Cekala, Jeff Rousseau, Scott Ryder

Motion Passes by a Show of Hands

4. INTRODUCTIONS

Committee introduces themselves. Randy thanks everyone for their dedication.

5. ARCHITECTS PRESENTATION

Jeff distributes a kick off agenda that outlines all the necessary steps of the project. What is important for our team is to understand the communication protocol. Typically it will be myself, Justin and Antonia getting all the communications and have Chris on copy. What is the preference for streamlining communication?

Randy states everything should go through me and I will read it. We can figure that out in house if everyone wants or needs to be on it. There will be a lot of communication. For now, why don't we have it for myself and Tina LeBlanc who is the vice-chair.

Jeff states we need to set up meet and greets with the schools, find out what you have for existing conditions data.

Randy states we need to have the principals involved in that.

Scott states it should include the superintendent's office, as well.

Jeff states any communication that goes to the superintendent's office, I will copy Randy and vice chair. Is there a communications committee in the schools or town?

Randy states that will be established once the PAC is formed. We can't put this on the Town's website, it has to come from the PAC once it's formed. Scott and his team will play a major role.

Jeff states it's important to us, we like to post all of our presentations as we progress through so community has access to the history of how we progress through. We talked about community conversations, we can talk about when certain boards need to be updated. We'd like to put a strategy together and map out the dates and meetings. That would be through the superintendent's office and the website.

Scott asks are you doing that from the perspective of now or from the potential voting date?

Jeff shows a graphic that was shown as the last meeting (Proposed Milestone Schedule) and what would be ideal is populating dates and locations for community conversations, appropriate dates to present to Town Council and Board of Ed. Those are all activities we would expect to participate in. This is something our team needs to flush out a little bit more. Give that some thought so we can start putting together what we recommend as far as update meetings, and placement. We found that a well documented and thorough schedule gives everyone a roadmap. We will map out the committee dates, what we will talk about and what we are going to present and what we are looking for, for feedback.

Randy states that will help me as far as what the next step is. If you can let us know what you need as far as it might be available land, existing conditions of buildings. John Dague has been doing focus group meetings with end users for each of the schools. He has the ball rolling. He has that information started for each of the buildings.

Jeff states we will have the progress at our presentations and posted to the project website. The last page of this handout shows our design team and contact information, these are the people involved in the project. If you have questions, send them to myself, Justin or Antonia. Jeff states the name of the committee is PRC, is the name of this committee?

Randy states they have it as Pre-K through 5 and Eagle Academy Pre-Referendum Building Committee. We will shorten it.

Jeff asks if there is a published calendar for meeting dates?

Randy states we started doing bi-weekly. Now that we have you on board we can do bi-weekly or if you need something we can do a special meeting. Right now you are collecting information. Once you gather all the information, we may need to meet weekly for a few weeks. Right now, we are doing every 2 weeks, Wednesday at 6:00.

Jeff states we will marry up Wednesdays with our work flow. The main goal over the next month is to get through all of the buildings. Is there a preference of how many days you want to see what we are presenting?

Randy states if your looking for feedback, a couple of days before. If you're providing information you can share the day before. You and I will be talking a lot. If you need information from specific users, a couple of days before.

Jeff states if there are other boards, Town Council, BOE, organizations or groups that you feel we should be giving presentations to, if you could filter those to the Chair we will start putting those on the calendar.

Randy states we have representation from TC and BOE here and they will update their respective groups. At some point they will need a presentation.

Jeff states in regards to access to the buildings, building data and facilities. We'd like to get our hands on drawings, reports. We like to look at a year of utility bills. We measure energy consumption.

Randy states John Dague has this information. We have already established a Microsoft TEAMS file, we can upload that information and give you access.

Jeff states in recent reports there were enrollment projections, data. I want to be sure the group is confident in the enrollment projections. Those are important.

Randy states this is information that John Dague. I met with John because enrollment is the basis of a lot of things, such as occupancy loads, required square footage allowed, which coincides with the lot size the State allows.

Gina states I've been involved in the EHS and the JFK project, the enrollment numbers are going to be skewed a little because once we build the new schools, kids always come back and we keep building schools that are too small. That is one of my big worries. We are using the projections that we have but there's always an influx.

Randy states that is a fine line we have to go with the State. You're absolutely right, we tried pushing them. We had 7 extra classrooms at JFK and we used them all before the building was completed.

Scott states knowing that is the case, can you provide us data outside of our own? Can you get us external data?

Randy states the State won't allow you to do build like that.

Gina states it won't be reimbursable at the same rate, we're still going to have to do it.

Bob states there is a lot of plans for apartments, 600-700 units or more. You're going to get younger families knowing there are going to be nice schools.

Jeff states I didn't look too deeply into the enrollment projections. Did they look at the developable land? They should have outplaced students in that data.

Randy states we have the Eagle Academy where other towns can send their students.

Jeff states last report was 11/5/2023, usually updated every year.

Scott states we can talk to our State Reps about what has happened in other towns.

Jeff states in other towns, they build 55+ communities and it opens the homes to younger families. If we can get the data on what the high school was sized for and then get the data of the current enrollment. Other data we need the is the strategic plan, new initiatives of future curriculum. Current use floor plans of the elementary schools, it will show the challenges. Summer school and community scheduled use of the schools, what benefit is there for the community. Need data on the 'rooferendum', and any open/active grants.

Scott states we are very familiar with this process.

Jeff states we'd like to understand goals/visions/priorities/hot button items.

Gina states you should be talking to teachers, administrators, parents. Anyone who works in the schools, support staff.

Jeff asks has there been any conversations on reconfiguration or consolidation?

Randy states there has been.

Janet states our current model is K-2 and 3-5 sister schools. The overwhelming opinion is to go back to Pre-K or K-5 schools.

Chris asks overwhelming opinion from the BOE?

Christine states from teachers and parents. You will see it when you look at John Dague's reports. It's overwhelming that everyone wants to go back to the K-5 model.

Jeff states it's consistent in the market that it is K-5 or K-6.

Kate states when John and Steve came to do the focus groups it was hands down that was the direction and many of those people live in town.

Jeff asks for more information on the Pre-K program, it's centralized now?

Christine states yes and there is no space left.

Jeff states you might lose some operational efficiencies if you put them in 2 or 3 different sites. The benefit to that is the new legislation that it gives you some increased reimbursement. It should be a strong consideration in my opinion. Is there a philosophy on the pre-K being centralized or distributed?

Janet states for many years they have appreciated having all the programs under one roof. But because the roof was leaking they had to move 2 pre-K classes from Stowe to Enfield Street School. The teachers liked that the older kids were mentoring the younger kids.

Christine says they have a lot of transitions. This is one of my kids 4th schools.

Jeff states that's why you're seeing a consolidation of keeping them together longer.

Scott states Eagle Academy needs to be expanded, right now there are only 24 seats. There are usually 26-27 students. That is a program we want to see regionalized. Our superintendent will work with other towns to offer seats that Enfield students aren't using.

Randy asks what do we charge other towns? That is how we can educate the town. We could be getting funds from other towns. We are educating the town, not selling it to them. It is affecting the entire town.

Scott said it could be approximately \$125,000.00.

Bob states when you're looking at the Eagle Academy it is elementary all the way up to high school. The building has to be divided differently.

Chris asks is it one class or one building?

Christine states it's one building, the former Head Start building.

Scott states a pressure point for the town people is unused buildings.

Kate states there are multiple programs in an elementary school, An ASD, DLP or SOAR program. We are up to 3-4 classrooms per school.

Jeff states there will be a separate conversation about the specialized programs. We will get our hands around the program needs.

Randy states in a SOAR classroom, you need specific requirements for a SOAR classroom. We really have to understand where we are moving these classrooms.

Kate states such as DLP or ASD those kids are medical fragile where they need storage for their medical equipment. We have gone from 1 to 3 classrooms in the last 10 years. Who knows what we will see in the future. Placement for the program is really important, such as their specials, the lunchroom.

Randy states they need to be treated special for their needs.

Bob states when teachers have their interviews, and construction starts the teachers feel they aren't being heard.

Kate states we talked about flexible seating, very difficult when an 8 year old doesn't get the chair he wants and throws it. Sometimes the high top stools aren't appropriate. Furniture needs to be age appropriate.

Randy states we have to design it for the program, not the teachers specific request.

Jeff states we will need a lot more information about the specialized programs. That will be a specific conversation. Are there any other lessons learned?

Randy states the biggest problem we have is maintenance. They can go to a computer and pick a light fixture and order the part. They are still contacting Gilbane. We've trained them 3 times. I have a meeting next week because ballast are popping and they never called the manufacturer. Maintenance is the biggest issue. This committee is second to none, they are here for the right reasons. Listen to the end users, we have an incredible amount of knowledge. Building wise, I have been going through town owned property. We must have swing space. I've been talking to legislation about CREC. I've seen property where we could build a building, I have that information. I talked to board of regents to see if they could relax the acreage requirement. They said they may consider it. Also acquiring land, they could reimburse at a lower rate. We've got so many balls in the air. We have to come up with generic swing space.

Jeff states the acreage per pupil is more of a guide. I understand your concern about swing space and strategy for logistics.

Jeff Rousseau states that buildings are the primary focus. Our secondary focus needs to be athletic fields. They are absolutely terrible and embarrassing. I don't want to lose any field space or parking. If we acquire land let's get as many acres as possible and it would be nice to have athletic fields. At some of our fields, there are multiple fields but you have to stagger the game because of parking. I understand we have to expand, hopefully upwards. This is an opportunity to fix athletic fields. I've seen other towns and it's embarrassing. We have more weeds and dirt than we have grass. Our fields are small, condensed, not the proper size. There are complaints from other towns. They use these fields for recess and with sports the fields are used 7 days a week. One of the issues is they are being over used.

Scott states I don't know if athletic fields would be reimbursable.

Gina states if we're going to lose a field then we need to find it somewhere else.

Christine states there are a lot of people on this committee who are involved in sports.

Jeff asks do we know by each elementary site, do we know which fields are used by the community?

Gina states yes we do.

Jeff Rousseau states SLR did a study last year.

Kate states the school playgrounds are not sufficient. Eli Whitney has one of the smallest playgrounds and limited parking. Next door is the library playground and we can't use it during the day. Crandall has double the yard space. I can't put 5 or 6 classrooms on the playground at once.

Randy states you need to take into consideration the parent drop off and pick up area and the bus loops. There are a lot of balls juggling to do the parking, bus loops, parent pick up/drop off, playground and fields.

Jeff states this has been helpful and a great starting point. Let us map out a schedule of realistic dates that will inform a lot of the community engagement. One of the areas Antonia shines is strategy with website, social media, flyers, videos, surveys. The days of getting a couple hundred people in an auditorium are gone. They will listen to a one or two minute prerecorded video, some will do in person forums. You need to hit them with various touch points because everyone is different.

Randy states that is what the PAC will do. We have to hit every PTO, senior center. We have to hit them a couple of times. When closer to the final, we may want to do a public community conversation. We will use your assistance. Everyone on the PAC will be as knowledgeable as the committee members.

Chris states you mentioned John Dague has done focus groups. Are they scheduled out beyond today?

Randy states they were done, ending last month. It's new data.

Jeff states next step we have a lot of work to do behind the scenes, collect data, walk through buildings. They usually take about 3 hours each depending on the size of each building. The entire team is there, we will sit with principal, facilities and whomever else they ask to be there and learn everything and anything. We will walk and look at every inch of the building, meet again and make sure we covered everything. It will probably take 4 days or more. We will work with the superintendent's office. We'd like to do that before we come to this group and give you a presentation of our thoughts on the conditions of the buildings. We will define and map out a better schedule. We will collect data and map out a better milestone schedule. This is necessary and it builds a good foundation. It's important that we set that baseline. If we missed anything, let us know. What is most important is we are hitting all the marks and making the proper progress. We are excited to get started.

Randy states we will give you access to the TEAMS website. If there is anything you need, let me know. John will be the one at the walk throughs. I will notify the town we will be doing bi-weekly meetings. If we need a special meeting, I can make those arrangements and we're flexible.

Randy asks if he has started the PAC yet?

Scott stated he will be running it and I have volunteers. If you know if anyone who wants to be on the PAC, have them contact me.

Randy states once this passes we will need a building committee. There are going to be a lot of committees. We have to go to the State one building at a time. First school will be 2-3 years, 18 months to design and 18 months to build. This is a big commitment. The referendum is for one school, you can't put a referendum on a building you haven't designed yet. The State is not going to give us \$300 million to cover this. We can't design a building we're not going to use for 5 years, the codes and programming changes. Each of these will be a separate grant application.

Jeff states they will all be separate grant applications. Depending on logistics and swing space maybe you go for 2. The further out you go, you can't predict inflation. It will come down to phasing, logistics, and affordability. The community still has to pay something. What is that affordable number? As we move through the options we will show you cost, cost to the community and options.

Randy states we are going to tentatively schedule the next meeting for July 16 and July 23.

Chris states schedule meetings for July 16, July 23 and July 30 and we can cancel if needed.

- 6. COMMENTS**
- a. Committee Member Comments**
 - b. Liaison Member Comments**
 - c. Good to the Order**

- 7. Motion to Adjourn**
- Motion made by Gina Cekala
Seconded by Christine DeBonee
Motion passes by a show of hands

Adjourned at 7:20 PM

Submitted by Ellen Smith