

**ESSEX TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL**  
*565 Maple Street, Hathorne, Massachusetts 01937-0362*

**SCHOOL COUNCIL**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 10, 2018**

**In Attendance:** Dr. Thomas O’Toole, Director of Academic Programs; Jen Skane, Assistant Principal; Paul Crofts, Faculty; Maura Stone, Faculty; Lisa Tocco, Parent; Lou Schirripa, Parent; Chris Coleman, Parent; Brian Curley, Student; Sunny Marcus, Student; Cam Lampert, Student; Virginia Vienneau, Student; Deb Scarfo, Minutes Recorder

**Absent:** Brad Morgan, Principal; Shannon Donnelly, Assistant Principal; Don Gibson, Assistant Principal; Kathleen Holman, Director of CTE-West Academy; Lisa Berube, Co-Op Coordinator; Brooks Clark, Faculty; Richard Chouinard, Faculty; Pam Boardway, Parent; Brian Curley, Student

**Call to Order – Welcome:**

Ms. Skane called the meeting to order at 7:50 a.m. and welcomed all in attendance. She motioned for acceptance of the March 26th minutes. Mr. Coleman seconded the motion and all were in favor.

**Finalize Handbook Recommendations**

Ms. Skane reviewed the handbook and recommendations from the school council, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Gibson and Ms. Donnelly. Ms. Skane asked the members if there were any new recommendations from the group. There was not.

**Finalize School Improvement Plan**

Dr. O’Toole discussed finalization of the School Improvement Plan. He asked the members to briefly review the plan and offer any additional recommendations. Beginning with Goal #1, Dr. O’Toole explained that the Natural Research Management and Environmental Tech project previously discussed was now split into two programs. Carpentry and Arboriculture would perform in the Eco-Quality Challenge contest in Boston. They have built many wonderful things by reusing materials from desks. The students will also offer a PowerPoint presentation. Joel Spruance was working with an 11th grade elective class on generating PowerPoint presentations and films on social media. Obviously, 1.3 projects - opportunities created for CTE/Academic integration through project-based learning modules- were the most well-known. Concerning Goal #3, Dr. O’Toole believed we could work on informing communities of our students’ expertise and consult with them on their local needs. He mentioned the student-led project of building and updating the wooden walkway across the swamp in Wenham. Dr. O’Toole suggested our students visit surrounding towns to offer these types of projects. He explained how Mr. Spruance encouraged his students to spread the word this way. His goal was to host an exhibition night after February vacation to showcase multiple projects to parents, press, etc. Ms. Skane added that coastal towns such as Revere and Ipswich wanted to implement similar plans with their tech students. Now, we’re working with several communities by word of mouth and it’s impressive to see the planning and presentations offered to city and town councils. The students were definitely getting hands-on learning through these opportunities.

Dr. O'Toole brought up the outside work done by our electrical and carpentry programs, and he would like to enhance these projects. Ms. Tocco mentioned that she knew of a trustee from the Conservation Trust who wanted to make a connection with the school. Ms. Skane said she would look into it. Dr. O'Toole agreed they could help us professionally. He also said that the biotechnology teachers met with biology teachers last month, and we should also encourage the English Department to speak with Environmental Tech as well. Ms. Stone was glad the content teachers were working together and thought these projects added to our culture. Project-based learning allowed students to identify their school and town's needs organically. It would be great to amass numerous resources to offer them.

Mr. Crofts brought up a meeting he attended with teachers from around the towns who presented different types of learning. We had the materials and resources to show other schools. Ms. Skane suggested we offer Professional Development on these types of presentations to help students prepare for when they go out into the world.

Cam Lampert spoke about a Career Day we held in the gym a few years ago. He asked if we could have students from each shop offer something similar and present their own tables and exhibits. We could put the word out by advertising through graphics and social media. Ms. Skane thought that was a great idea. We could have students from every CTE area showcase as a reverse career fair. Ms. Skane also brought up our recent Career Fair where some of the companies were so impressed with our students, they hired them onsite. Dr. O'Toole agreed the Career Fair was excellent exposure. Cam Lampert also thought that Career Day encouraged students to look for jobs at companies they may not have considered before.

Mr. Schirripa asked if we collaborated with groups like North Shore Chamber of Commerce, and Ms. Skane confirmed that Carissa Karakaedos, our Community Relations Coordinator, had attended Gloucester's Chamber of Commerce as well as North Shore Chamber of Commerce's community meetings to develop relationships and opportunities for our students' projects.

Goal 3.3 of #3 - Community:

Dr. O'Toole discussed how a charter school in San Diego applied for a preliminary license to train and work with students and teachers for project-based learning. He would like to try this strategy at our school. Obtaining a license would increase curiosity about Essex Tech, position ourselves brand-wise, and gain unique recognition.

Ms. Tocco asked if any of these projects would influence our students' college potential because her daughter was accepted to Penn State, but was waitlisted at Northeastern and Tufts. Ms. Tocco wondered if the reason was due to the reputation of a "tech" school. Ms. Stone believed the reason was that some colleges accepted fewer in-state students. Ms. Skane mentioned that The Hechinger had reported positively about us and The Boston Globe had recently stated technical education was the way to go. She believed there was a lot of positive press out there, but many times colleges were focusing on international students and diversity.

Mr. Schirripa wanted to know what percentage of Essex Tech students applied to college and how many got accepted to their first choice. If we could obtain these stats and advertise them, it would make a powerful statement. No matter where the student goes to high school, most were looking to get into the top colleges of their choice. Mr. Crofts said he didn't know one graduate from Environmental Tech who had been rejected from a college and many had received scholarships.

Ms. Stone added that being accepted to first choice colleges could be tricky, but if the public saw a large percentage of our students getting into their first choice, it would be a huge advantage for us. Ms. Skane believed that could be done as currently 79% of our graduating class would be attending college and the rest had full-time jobs straight out of school.

Mr. Coleman brought up the labeling issue with the Aggie; he wanted to enforce the idea that we were not the Aggie. He believed we needed to focus on marketing to improve our reputation. Many parents did not understand all that we offered and possibly many colleges did not as well. Our students were the best marketing tools and we should try and share our state-of-the-art programs with professionals more often.

Ms. Skane said our CTE Department, especially Biotech, was developing as many partnerships as possible. Most industries did not have the high tech equipment we did. Once they saw that, it helped build relationships with them.

Sunny Marcus agreed that our tech lab was as good if not better than any college, and when potential people toured our facilities they were always impressed with our equipment. Mr. Crofts added that it wasn't just our equipment, but showing the projects we do and how the students work with the equipment that was most impressive. Ms. Skane commented on how articulate our students were. She also mentioned that the state required we provide five and ten-year data on our students. This information would clearly demonstrate our success.

When Cam Lampert visited UMass Lowell and viewed other shop school areas, he realized there was no comparison to our shops. Cam believed we should build confidence to get this information out there. If colleges saw how skilled our students were, our acceptance would be more in demand.

Ms. Stone thought if students had the opportunity to visually compare Essex Tech to other schools/colleges, they'd be more appreciative and respectful of what we offered here. Students should realize they're working on million dollar machines that may not be in the workforce. She also suggested our students visit middle schools and/or have middle school students come here to view for themselves. Sunny said her friend was accepted into Essex Tech a few years ago and was impressed by the school it made Sunny want to go here too.

Mr. Coleman asked if there was an informational link available that students could submit when applying to colleges. Ms. Skane said our school profile was included with every application, along with the student's transcript, AP courses, etc. A profile of our courses, statistics, and SAT averages were sent as well. Mr. Coleman asked if this information could be shared with other school communities. Ms. Skane informed him it was on the school website, but we could open awareness by making it available to other venues. Mr. Coleman suggested we send the profile to outside communities and surrounding towns to spark interest and that videos be included as well. Ms. Skane confirmed our Admissions Department was filming a recruitment video for communities, businesses and schools. Sunny said that would be helpful as she often received many questions from friends in her hometown about the school. Mr. Coleman believed this would increase co-op opportunities and help educate against false labelling. Mr. Crofts thought it would help maintain our reputation. Mr. Schirripa suggested we list companies representing us on our website for additional advertising. Ms. Skane confirmed our school profile had a list of colleges our students went on to. The group suggested a list of companies that employed Essex Tech students, as well as the colleges Essex Tech graduates attended, be more accessible on our website. Ms. Skane explained

that this information was currently listed on the bottom of our website, but they would work on improving accessibility.

Cam Lampert suggested to network with other tech schools to help rid the stigma. Ms. Skane informed him of a vocational teachers association whose mission was to promote technical education in the state of Massachusetts. Dr. O'Toole mentioned of a PBS link where one could access interviews of alumni's experiences. If you Googled it on YouTube, you would see a brand, a common logo, and Larry Rosenstock, a made up title. These were high-end video clips and he suggested we use these as promotional videos under our name. We needed to promote ourselves in that direction so when someone Googled us, five videos would immediately pop up.

Mr. Crofts suggested we hold Professional Development with other teachers to show them how to make a documentary for branding and how to advertise in the saturated media. When This Old House visited, they wanted to stay the entire day because they hadn't realized everything we offered. Ms. Stone suggested we also promote the levels of services we provided through the restaurant, cosmetology and graphics. Ms. Skane said these were great brainstorming ideas and all of them would be considered.

### **Senior Week and Graduation**

Ms. Skane reviewed senior week, graduation rehearsal, BBQ after the rehearsal, and Awards Night, as well as the situation of decreasing graduation tickets from 6 to 4 due to the growth of our school.

### **2018-19 Calendar**

Ms. Skane passed out a copy of the proposed 2018-19 school calendar for review. The school committee needed to approve it, but she would welcome recommendations from the group.

Ms. Skane thanked everyone, especially parents of graduating students as this would be their last meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 a.m.