

Warwick School Committee Minutes  
Meeting of November 30, 2011  
Open Session

The Warwick School Committee met in Open Session at the Administration Building, on Wednesday, November 30, 2011. Chairperson Furtado called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. with the following in attendance:

COMMITTEE

Bethany A. Furtado, Chair  
Patrick E. Maloney, Jr., Vice Chair  
Eugene A. Nadeau, Clerk  
Christopher E. Friel [absent]  
M. Terri Medeiros

ADMINISTRATION

Peter P. Horoschak, Superintendent  
Rosemary Healey, Esq., Director of Compliance & Human Resources  
William Sangster, Assistant to the Superintendent  
Anthony Ferrucci, Chief Budget Officer

Chair Furtado said the purpose of our meeting this evening is to discuss the Resolution in Opposition to the Mayoral Academies application. Ms. Healey acknowledged Cranston School Superintendent Peter Nero and the President of the Cranston School Committee Andrea Iannazzi. The following Resolution is being proposed:

RESOLUTION OF THE WARWICK SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Date November 30, 2011

Approved: Bethany A. Furtado, Chair

RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO MAYORAL ACADEMIES

*RESOLVED*, that

**Whereas**, a formal application to the Rhode Island Department of Education to open K-5 Achievement First Mayoral Academies (two elementary schools, with one elementary school to open in Fall of 2013) was submitted to the Rhode Island Board of Regents by Angel Tavaras, Mayor of Providence, on behalf of Achievement First and the mayors of Warwick, Cranston and North Providence; and

**Whereas**, based on test scores and the latest indicators used by the RIDE, sixteen (16) of the sixteen (16) elementary schools and two (2) of the (3) junior high schools that in the Warwick Public Schools continue to reach Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP); and

**Whereas**, the Park Elementary School has been honored with the distinction of being a Blue Ribbon School; and

**Whereas**, the Warwick Public Schools needs millions of dollars in infrastructure improvements to its buildings to keep them in compliance with fire code, other health and safety regulations and to render them conducive to a 21<sup>st</sup> century education; and

**Whereas**, the City of Warwick has failed to issue bond money to address the district's infrastructure issues which was previously approved by the Rhode Island General Assembly and the taxpayers of the City of Warwick; and

**Whereas**, the Warwick Public Schools requires millions of dollars in academic improvements for curriculum work, textbooks, technology and instructional technique in order to maintain a quality education for 21<sup>st</sup> century; and

**Whereas**, for the fiscal years 2010, 2011 and 2012, the City of Warwick adopted a budget with property revenue of \$203,718,000, \$207,094,000 and \$214,157,578 respectively thereby generating a total of \$13,815,575 in new tax revenue for the three year period; and

**Whereas**, Warwick Public Schools for the same period of time incurred a reduction of community support of \$6,198,436 from 2010 to 2011 and is budgeted to receive \$5,323,436 less than the 2010

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allocation thereby experiencing a total reduction of community support of \$11,521,872 for the same period in which community taxes were raised; and

**Whereas**, neither Mayor Avedisian nor the other mayors involved in the Mayor Academy have addressed where funding for the proposed Mayoral Academy will come from; and

**Whereas**, the current funding formula process re-directs the entire per pupil cost to charter schools including the Mayoral Academy, including those fixed costs that cannot be reduced on a per pupil basis; and

**Whereas**, the state aid funding reduction of approximately \$3,300 per pupil plus the obligation to pay tuition from the district to these Mayoral Academies of \$9,300 per pupil, will thereby cost Warwick Public Schools approximately \$12,600 per pupil minus the incremental cost per pupil for providing that student with materials and supplies; and

**Whereas**, if Warwick students constituted twenty percent of a maximum student enrollment of 920 students in the proposed Mayoral Academy, the economic impact would approximate \$1,998,000 per year, resulting in an economic hardship to the district, its programs and our students.

Be it **RESOLVED** that the Warwick School Committee voices its opposition to the proposed Mayoral Academies until such time as the Warwick Public Schools are funded at a sufficient level to address its infrastructure and academic needs and maintain its programs to the BEP level; and

Be it **FURTHER RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be sent to members of the Board of Regents, Governor Chafee, Speaker of the House Fox, Senate President Paiva-Weed, and the legislative delegation from the City of Warwick, the Warwick City Council and the Honorable Scott Avedisian.

Ms. Healey reviewed the Resolution presented to the Committee saying this is in response to the application to the Rhode Island Department of Education to open K-5 Achievement First Mayoral Academies (two elementary schools). To the best of her knowledge this was submitted October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011. We learned about it in the last two weeks. There are public hearings scheduled next week in Providence (December 7<sup>th</sup> and December 8<sup>th</sup>) and she urged everyone to appear at the hearing. She said we are particularly concerned given the millions of dollars that are needed for our infrastructure improvements and economic impact to the district should these academies open. She said that this Resolution does not address defects saying the first defect is current legislation requires that the building is identified in the application and has not been identified and funding has not been identified. She also commented that the current funding formula process re-directs the entire per pupil cost to charter schools, including fixed costs that cannot be reduced on a per pupil basis.

Superintendent Horoschak commented on the financial impact with students being recruited it will take away state aid which will go to a private entity which we know very little about. It would cause us to consider reductions in our programs and what advantage would that be. It would also take way from our students, taking them off to another site. We have a strong staff; committed people both in administration and teaching, and I really do believe that trying to recruit away our students not going to provide anything more than they would get in our school district. I urge the School Committee to pass resolution so we can make it known to the Board of Regents, our own legislators, to the Mayor and to the Commissioner there are concerns and it “takes funding away from our students.”

Mr. Ferrucci addressed the money issues. He said that when students leave to attend Charter Schools, the state aide paid to the City of Warwick is redirected to the Charter School. We pay \$9,300 to Charter Schools per pupil, the amount that RIDE calculates. If you take state aid funding of approximately \$3,300 per pupil, plus the obligation to pay tuition from the district of \$9,300 per pupil, it will cost Warwick Public Schools approximately \$12,000 per pupil, minus the incremental cost per pupil for providing that student with materials and supplies. We cannot reduce our costs when a student leaves the building.

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Ms. Medeiros said she did some research and explained some of her findings. Mr. Maloney was concerned that there had not been enough open discussion with the public and they have not been given the chance to express their feelings. He had concerns about public tax dollars being sent directly to a private company, and wanted to know who would be accountable for that money. Mr. Nadeau said there are a never ending series of rule, regulations, programs, and changes coming down that adversely affect our school department, teachers, parents, students, and wanted to know when it will all stop.

Superintendent Nero commented that he felt everyone had done their homework, they have been fighting for over eight months, and he didn't understand why outsource when we already do pretty well ourselves. He supported the Committee in fighting this fight. Ms. Netcoh remarked they don't serve special needs or ELL students and said she "loved this resolution." She also said there were twenty-two organizations in Providence that have banded together to oppose this Mayoral Academy.

Chair Furtado said we are all in agreement and appreciate Cranston joining us today. She called for a vote of the Committee.

MOTION 2011-16: Moved by Mr. Maloney, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to pass the Resolution presented.

**MOTION PASSES (4-0)**

Bethany A. Furtado – Aye	Patrick E. Maloney, Jr. - Aye
Christopher E. Friel – Absent	Eugene A. Nadeau - Aye
M. Terri Medeiros – Aye	

MOTION 2011-217: Moved by Mr. Maloney, seconded by Mr. Nadeau, to adjourn.

**MOTION PASSES (4-0)**

Bethany A. Furtado – Aye	Patrick E. Maloney, Jr. - Aye
Christopher E. Friel – Absent	Eugene A. Nadeau - Aye
M. Terri Medeiros – Aye	

**Meeting adjourned: 7:00 p.m.**  
 Eugene A. Nadeau, Clerk