

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2004

WILLIAM A. BRIGGS BUILDING (REED CONFERENCE ROOM)

845 PARK AVENUE

EXECUTIVE SESSION: 7:00 P.M.

**PUBLIC WORK SESSION: IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PUBLIC WORK
SESSION**

MINUTES

A public work session of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at the William A. Briggs Building in the Reed Conference Room with the following members present: Mr. Eramian, Mr. Lupino, Mr. Palumbo, Mr. Stycos, and Mrs. White. Mr. Cardarelli and Mr. Drager were absent. Also attending were Mrs. Ciarlo, Mr. Scherza, Mr. Balducci, Mr. Votto, and Mr. Scaffardi.

The work session was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The roll was called. It was moved, seconded and unanimously carried that the members adjourn to Executive Session to discuss personnel pursuant to RI State Laws PL 2-46-5(1) and PL 42-46-5(2) collective bargaining and litigation.

Let it be duly noted that the student disciplinary hearing pursuant to RI State Law 42-46-5(8)(a) did not take place because of illness. It was postponed to Monday, November 15, 2004 at 6:00 p.m.

I. Public Session:

Presentation by edSolutions

Mrs. White convened the work session at 7:37 p.m.

Moved by Mr. Stycos, seconded by Mr. Eramian and unanimously carried that the November 9, 2004 Executive Session minutes remain confidential.

Mrs. Ciarlo stated that administration had invited Mr. Tim Rees from edSolutions to come to this work session and share with the School Committee a proposal for an after-school program for Cranston Public Schools. In addition, administration asked Mrs. Lundsten, principal of Arlington School; Mrs. Gamba, principal of Edgewood Highlands School, and Mrs. Mulligan, principal of Dutemple School, to join this session since they were the principals who brought this program to the administration's attention. It is nothing that the school department is sponsoring, but it is something that deals with latchkey kids after school. One of the components that administration is interested in is the after-school care and educational help.

Mr. Tim Rees stated that he is the district manager for edSolutions in the Massachusetts and Rhode Island areas. This company has been in existence for approximately ten years and operates in twenty states in the United States. Their hallmark is they provide not only the after-school care but also academic help for the students. He distributed an elementary after-school program schedule that could be implemented for Cranston Public Schools.

Mr. Rees further commented in his presentation that this company provides ten key solutions. They do not depend on the school system for anything. They provide the staff and training. They hire the staff, and take care of the payroll. They often use staff from the school district, but they are hired by a separate entity. They are solely responsible for the recruitment and retention of the children in the program. It is always better when edSolutions has the support of the school principals and administration behind them helping to identify students who are at risk.

He further commented that edSolutions takes care of all the accounting problems with regard to delinquent payments. There is always someone associated with the program at the site. There is a

site manager who operates the program who is there during the program hours and one-half hour after the program ends. There is an area manager who would be in charge of the local area. Someone is working in Providence who would be able to cover Cranston as well. He stated that he is always available by telephone.

In response to Mr. Lupino's question as to whether or not they carry their own insurance, Mr. Rees said that they do carry their own insurance and are fully insured. In response to Mrs. White's question regarding custodial fees, Mr. Rees said that there is the possibility of custodial fees, and that this is in the early stages of negotiations. If there are fees to be incurred by the school district, this is the time to make the district aware of them so that they can be factored in to the tuition rate. Mr. Rees confirmed Mrs. White's statement that his organization is a self-sufficient organization and that this program will not cost the district five cents.

Mr. Rees stated that the programs are research based. The approach is very much hands on. When the children come to the program at the end of the school day, the teachers are very aware of the fact that the students have already put six hours in the classroom. Most of the activities are centered around fun activities and games which teach the concepts of math and reading. The students develop at their own speed and collaborate with the teachers to set goals and motivate themselves to make progress.

Mr. Rees went on to say that the students have a very structured afternoon moving from station to station throughout the afternoon. They are always moving and always active. Since introducing this curriculum, the behavioral problems have gone to a minimum. The curriculum is aligned to national standards and state standards. There are four

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stations including homework assistance. The students are kept on task to do their homework. There are academic lessons including math and reading. There are enrichment activities which are typically done at the end of the day and recreational activities.

Mr. Rees distributed to the committee a schedule of a sample afternoon for the program. A group of thirty students are divided into groups of ten at three different stations. Mr. Rees explained the schedule in detail. The last sixty minutes for all students is considered a free choice of creative corner arts and crafts. He explained some of the arts and crafts activities in detail. Mr. Rees, in his remarks, stated that edSolutions makes every effort to provide the students with a rich experience at the school.

With regard to tuitions, a sibling discount of 15% is offered. He reiterated that there is no cost to the school district. In all of Massachusetts, their tuition rate is set at \$299 per month for a

five-day program, \$257 for a four-day program, and \$221 for a three-day program. edSolutions does a market comparison. The programs they run in Rhode Island are Title 1 programs, so they do not have a lot of information on similar parent funded programs. They will also research the salary requirements of the teachers here. In response to Mr. Eramian's question as to what type of program he envisions, Mr. Rees indicated that the program in Cranston would be parent funded. Mrs. Ciarlo added that the school department does utilize the Y program, and she could see edSolutions as a replacement for the Y program. Stadium is one school that buses to the Y program, and some schools have an after-school enrichment program.

Mrs. Lundsten, principal of Arlington School, indicated that last year Mr. Laliberte asked her to survey the parents at her school. There are 100 parents, and she received forty responses. When she talked with the parents, they told her that they definitely wanted help with after-school care. She indicated to Mr. Rees that if edSolutions could come in just under the market price in the area of her school, there would be a substantial number of parents who would enroll their children.

Mrs. Gamba, principal of Edgewood Highlands School, stated that they do have after-school programs at her school such as dance, etc., but it is a small part of the day. She has parents who are paying \$60.00 for every session for a one-on-one situation. She looks at this

as a much easier thing to organize. The dance teacher's program could be integrated into edSolutions' program. Parents in the Edgewood community are looking for the school to be opened for a longer period of time. Mr. Rees added that many parents don't want their children to be bused to a second location. With the program, the parents must pick up their children by 6:00 p.m. The staff would stay in the building until 6:00 p.m. They encourage people to go through the entire program, and they don't sell certain blocks of the program.

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Mr. Lupino indicated to Mr. Rees that the proposed schedule is approximately 2 hours and 50 minutes, and this averages out to approximately \$5.00 per hour. With regard to the timing, schools in Cranston close on a staggered schedule. Some schools end at 2:30 p.m. and some at 3:00 p.m. and asked if the staff would stay until 6:00 p.m. Mr. Rees said that this would be a possibility. Some schools are operated from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and other schools are operated from 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Edsolutions wants to make sure that they are satisfying the needs of the customers. If they can't enroll people because they are closing too early, they will stay a little later.

Mr. Scherza indicated that Mr. Laliberte, who was attending another meeting, asked him to point out that this program could help students

with IEP's who require an extended school day. When the school department provides those services, the fee starts at \$25.00 per hour. There is also the possibility of an extended school year.

Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Rees if his company ever does a sliding scale for families based on income, and Mr. Rees responded that they do not. For every ten full-time equivalent students enrolled, they offer a 50% scholarship which can be split between two families, 25% and 25%. However, there is no sliding scale offered. In response to Mr. Lupino's question as to what a babysitter charges, Mr. Rees said that his daughter charges \$7.00 per hour. Mr. Lupino commented that Stadium School's cafeteria is filled for the Make It and Take It Program. The students cry when the program is not offered because of a vacation day or break in the program. These kids need somewhere to go after school. They don't want to go home to an empty house; they want to be engaged. This gentleman does not have to sell him on what happens after school. Just knowing that something educationally would be going on after school, has sold him on this program.

Mr. Lupino asked who deals with bargaining unit issues and if Mr. Rees had run into issues where a union has indicated that only their people could be used. Mr. Rees responded that he has never run into this type of situation. It is a separate entity and is not a part of the bargaining unit. They do take into consideration wage and salary levels. Mr. Lupino asked if edSolutions goes through a screening

process for the staff similar to the process used by the school department. Mr. Rees responded that the staff would be licensed through DCYF.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Rees if they would be able to join two adjoining schools if there was insufficient enrollment at one of the schools, and Mr. Rees said that they would do their best to accommodate those students. Currently, there are three different schools converging for this program. In all three of those instances, the district provides the busing. Mrs. White stated that she felt edSolutions would pressure the school department to provide the busing.

Mr. Palumbo asked if a person would be certified to teach a student with an IEP, and Mr. Scherza responded that there must be certified teachers teaching certified

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instruction. A teacher assistant could function only under the direction of a certified teacher. If there were students with an IEP, then a certified teacher would have to work with those students. This will be negotiated at the proper time.

Mrs. White asked Mrs. Ciarlo if this would be a school sponsored program, and Mrs. Ciarlo indicated that this would not be sponsored by Cranston Public Schools; it is an offering. Parents have heard

about it. She wanted to bring it before the School Committee. There is a contract between the parents and edSolutions. The committee does not need a resolution to approve this program. She stated that she does not want to get into the after school program business. Mrs. White stated that if the School Committee were to receive any phone calls relating to this program, they would refer the calls to Mr. Rees. Mrs. White asked if edSolutions would be renting the building, and Mr. Rees said that this would be part of the negotiations.

Mr. Eramian asked Mr. Rees if he required any permanent space for the program, and Mr. Rees said that they require storage space. All programs operate out of the cafeteria/gym and media center. They have all their equipment enclosed in carts that are locked and can be rolled into closets.

Mrs. Mulligan, principal at Dutemple School, indicated that sixty-two parents responded to a survey from seventy-five children. Her after-school activities are very well attended.

Mr. Lupino indicated to Mr. Reed that Cranston has difficulty getting substitute teachers for a regular day and asked how this company manages this problem. In response, Mr. Rees said that they know in advance so this gives them time to readjust their staffing. They over staff in terms of recruiting so that they can have floating substitutes available. In terms of recruiting in general, hopefully they are able to use some of the staff from the schools. They also go to the colleges

in the area to get undergrads or graduate students. Recently retired teachers or teachers on maternity leave are willing to work this program.

Mr. Lupino asked if the program has a maximum ratio of students, and Mr. Rees indicated that they like one teacher to ten students or less. There are different levels of children. The ratio is usually between seven and ten. In Massachusetts, they staff at one to ten students.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Rees how long the company has been in Massachusetts and what the typical increase would be. Mr. Rees responded that they have increased prices quite steeply in the past two years. This is his fourth year with the company, and in the first year he was with the company, it was approximately \$260 to \$270 for the five-day program; and it went up to \$299. When he came on board four years ago, the

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company was purchased by edSolutions. Many changes were made to make it a viable company. There was a cash flow problem. Prices were raised in 30% of the schools this year. Mr. Lupino commented that edSolutions has a captive audience, and then they raise the rate.

He asked Mr. Rees if he would put in the contract a clause that the rate increase would be limited to a certain percent, and Mr. Rees said that this could be put into any contract.

Mr. Eramian stated to Mr. Rees that he assumed that this program was open to students with special needs, and Mr. Rees said that it was and that they do have this situation in other districts where they offer this program. Mr. Eramian asked how this program would work for those children who have a full-time aid and where these children are transported portal to portal. Mr. Eramian asked if this was an arms-length arrangement. In response, Mr. Scherza indicated that the extended day students are the at-risk students and are not the multi-handicapped students. If it were a school sponsored service that required a para professional, the school department would be obligated to provide one. Most of the people in that category go 230 days with a shorter day. It would be unlikely that anyone from that population would sign up for this program. If the parents have a transaction with edSolutions, Cranston Public Schools would not be obligated to the parents. Mr. Rees added that edSolutions would sign the child in after school, and they take full responsibility for the child. Mrs. Ciarlo commented that the IEP would talk about educational experiences, and edSolutions would not be the only way of doing it, but it could be done there.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Rees if it was his intention to try it as a test market first, and Mr. Rees indicated that they would first survey the

parents to gauge their interest. They will mention prices to get a more solid feeling for what the demand is. Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Rees how he would get this information because the school district cannot provide the information to him. In response, Mr. Rees said that they gain access to the students through the school. They send a survey out with the children, and it is returned to the teacher. Mr. Lupino asked that once they receive the approval, how long would it take to set up the program. Mr. Rees said that it usually would take four to eight weeks. It would take only four weeks if there was a lot of cooperation from the school district, and eight weeks if they are unable to access teacher mailboxes to put out flyers for the school staff. If they can't use the school cafeteria, it would take longer to get an outside vendor. Four weeks is the minimum, and eight weeks is the maximum length of time.

Mrs. White referred to the schools where there are working class families and asked if all schools would be surveyed or just the three schools that showed interest in this program. Mrs. Ciarlo replied that they would start where there is interest and try not to make the program too large. These three schools brought it to the attention of administration, and this would be a good start. They discussed it with their PTG groups. She would not neglect any of the schools. Mr. Scherza added that administration could put out the information so that they could survey their parents. Mrs. White cautioned

administration that once this program is put into place in one of these three schools, other parents will call the School Committee complaining that it wasn't offered in their schools. Mrs. Ciarlo responded that all principals received a folder in August 2003. Some parents have come forward asking for this type of program. Mr. Scherza commented that he knows there are at least two other larger schools who have expressed an interest in an after-school program. Mrs. White said that she knows that there is a want and a need in other schools.

Mrs. White asked if there were five schools starting with this program and there is a neighboring school with twenty students would they be given the option to join, and Mr. Rees said that there would be an option. Mr. Scherza added that it is much like a day care provider. It is between edSolutions and the parents. Mr. Rees said that there would be a transportation issue. Mrs. White said that she found this very unfair. Mr. Stycos responded that it is not the school department's program.

Mr. Eramian asked Mr. Rees what the most school buildings he had started up at one time in a district, and Mr. Rees said that they have opened five at one time on a two-week time notice in Providence. Four weeks later they opened four in Central Falls. Mr. Reed noted that he is responsible for the openings in all of the schools.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Rees if they limit enrollment to Cranston residents or would there be a carryover from other districts. Mr. Rees responded that they service only the children in the city or town from public schools. This is written into the contract. Mr. Lupino added that he would like to see this written into the contract. Mr. Rees said that they have no schools where children from other towns or cities come in.

Mrs. White asked if there would be a reduction in cost during school vacation weeks, and Mr. Rees indicated that the \$299 for five days and the \$221 for three days are based on 9-1/2 payments regardless of the number of days school is in session. This is a way of keeping the tuition costs down and not having to bill per school day. They do have an option where they run three centers for vacation programs in towns where there are large concentrations of students where it would be economically viable. They run 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. programs during the vacations. The cost is \$35.00 per day. They don't follow the same program schedule as does the after-school program. The parents that come to the vacation program do not have to register for the after-school program. They can try it out with very little risk. They use the school buildings during this period of time.

In response to Mrs. White's question as to whether or not Mr. Rees would be sending a contract to the School Committee, Mr. Rees said that this was something that should be discussed further. Mrs. White commented that the new School Committee should make this

decision. Mrs. Ciarlo noted that given the fact that administration brought this to the committee's attention, they would send the draft contract to this committee. The School

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Committee has to be comfortable with this program. Mrs. Ciarlo wants to keep this program at much a distance from the school department. It is not something that needs to be done by resolution of the committee.

Mrs. White asked that if a PTG has a dance program after school would they still be allowed to run those programs, and Mrs. Gamba said that they could incorporate them into the after-school program. She added that when edSolutions does their recruitment she has a parent who teaches at Rhode Island School of Design. This would be a win-win situation for her. She is alone in her building many times after 4:00 p.m. Mr. Rees added that this is an opportunity where people are running programs, and they could work for edSolutions. Additionally, he commented that they charge people \$1.00 per minute if they are late. Staff has lives after 6:00 p.m. He would make a presentation to the PTG groups. In Central Falls, they are sponsoring a parent newsletter on study habits. They are also interested in helping with stage productions.

Mrs. Mulligan asked what the difference was between Title 1

programs and tuition programs. Mr. Rees responded that the Title 1 programs last for two hours, and they are not custodial. They have different reporting requirements. They run progress reports that are mandated by the district and the state. Many of those parents don't want that level of academic activities for their children.

Mrs. Gamba stated that she has a Title 1 school, and there are students with very specific goals. She asked if a child could meet for tutoring for thirty minutes, and Mr. Rees responded that they have a specific form for this.

Mr. Stycos commented that when Mr. Rees puts the contract together, he hoped that the school department would get a fair rental fee. It is a for-profit program; it is not the YMCA. When Mr. Rees sits down at the table, he needs to remember this. They have access to hiring qualified staff and higher access to students to fill their slots. Mr. Rees said that Mr. Stycos raised a valid point because they could have a very good effective relationship.

Mr. Lupino mentioned that the custodian is another factor to be considered in the contract. Mr. Eramian asked how many states edSolutions operates in, and Mr. Rees said that they operate in approximately twenty states since 1995.

II. Adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to Rhode Island State Laws

**42-46-5(1) Personnel and 42-46-5(2) Contract and Litigation
Superintendent's Evaluation**

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Let it be duly noted that the Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation was not held due to a family emergency. The evaluation will be rescheduled.

Moved by Mr. Eramian, seconded by Mr. Palumbo and unanimously carried that the meeting be adjourned.

**There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was adjourned at
8:45 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

**Jacqueline A. White
Chairperson**

edSolutions

Elementary After-School Program Schedule

School District Classroom Set-up Program Days

Cranston RI

30 student (1:10 ratio)

3- 5 Days per week

Staffing All

Group All

Time	Component
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30 min	Transition/ Snack
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Energy Zone Game

30 min	Study Niche
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Gym Time/Energy Zone Knowledge Nook

20 min	Study Niche
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Gym Time/Energy Zone

Knowledge Nook

30 min	Study Niche/Creative Corner
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Gym Time/Energy Zone

Knowledge Nook

60 min

Creative Corner/Free Choice

Program assistant Program assistant Teacher

Program assistant Program assistant

Teacher 2

Program assistant

Program assistant Teacher

All

4th & 5th Grade

K-1st Grade

2nd & 3rd Grade

2nd & 3rd Grade 4th & 5th Grade

K-1st Grade

K-1st Grade

2nd & 3rd Grade 4th & 5th Grade

All

As the regular school day ends, the ESI program begins. Children are sent from their classrooms to be welcomed at the ESI program. This is usually a time for catching up and socializing for the children. Soon after arrival, children receive a snack and a drink. What happens next varies from site to site and season to season.

In a typical school, children start a rotation of activities. Over the next two hours, they join different groups that address the different needs of the children, and their families.

The Energy Zone comprises physical activities that are led by a teacher and which encourage teamwork and physical development.

In the Study Niche, students have an opportunity to complete homework, and can get help from one of our staff.

In the Know/edge Nook, students are in a small group tutorial in math and English with a teacher, although they probably won't realize that they are doing schoolwork!

The Creative Corner gives students a chance to participate in arts and crafts activities that encourage children to investigate the world around them

The rest of the day is spent on free choice activities, and topics that the site staff introduces in response to student interest.

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