

**CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**AND PUBLIC BUDGET WORK SESSSION**

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2006**

**WESTERN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**400 PHENIX AVENUE**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: 5:30 P.M.**

**PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING: 7:00 P.M.**

**IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY PUBLIC BUDGET WORK SESSION**

**MINUTES**

**A special meeting of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at Western Hills Middle School with the following members present: Mr. Archetto, Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lupino, Mr. Stycos (arrived at 5:40 p.m.), and Mr. Traficante. Mr. Palumbo was absent due to illness. Also present were Mr. Scherza, Mr. Votto, Mr. Balducci, Mr. Laliberte, and Attorney Gregory Piccirilli.**

**The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. It was moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that the members adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Law 42-46-5(a)(1) and contract and litigation pursuant to RI State Law 42-46-5(a)(2). Mr. Lupino stated for the record that the person to be discussed has been so notified and has chosen to have this hearing in Executive Session.**

**Mr. Lupino, acting Chair, reconvened the meeting at 7:27 p.m.**

**The roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance conducted.**

**Mr. Lupino recognized State Representative Robert Jacquard who was in the audience.**

**I. Executive Session Minutes Sealed – February 27, 2006**

**Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that the February 27, 2006 Executive Session minutes remain confidential.**

**Mr. Lupino stated for the record that Mr. Palumbo was excused from this meeting.**

**II. Minutes of Previous Meetings: February 6, 2006; February 9, 2006; February 13, 2006**

**Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that the minutes of February 6, 2006, February 9, 2006, and February 13, 2006 be approved.**

### **III. Public Hearing**

#### **a. Students (Agenda/Non-agenda Items)**

#### **b. Members of the Public (Agenda Matters Only)**

**Erica McCormick, 20 Lockmere Road – Erica is a student at Horton School. She stated that Horton is a great school. We love Horton. It is nice. Our teachers are the best. Don't close Horton. There are no bullies.**

**There were no members of the public who wished to speak on agenda matters.**

**Mr. Lupino asked Attorney Piccirilli for his opinion regarding Resolution No. 06-3-3. Mr. Piccirilli stated that this matter was going to be sealed.**

### **IV. Consent Calendar / Consent Agenda**

**There were no consent items for this agenda.**

### **V. Action Calendar / Action Agenda**

#### **RESOLUTIONS**

##### **ADMINISTRATION**

##### **PERSONNEL**

**NO. 06-3-1 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the**

**Superintendent, the following certified personnel be appointed for the remainder of the 2005-2006 school year:**

**Deborah Betz – salary to be at the first step plus Masters of the prevailing salary schedule**

**Education – Bloomsburg University, B.S; Michigan State University, MAT**

**Experience – Warwick Public Schools**

**Certification – ESL Elementary**

**Assignment – Edgewood Highlands School, ESL, 1.0 FTE**

**Effective Date of Employment – February 28, 2006**

**Authorization – Replacement**

**Fiscal Note: 13033212 512100**

**Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.**

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**NO. 06-3-2 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement of the following certified personnel be accepted:**

**Pamela D'Ambrosio, Teacher**

**Waterman School**

**Effective Date: March 1, 2006**

**Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.**

**NO. 06-3-3 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the termination of Employee A be accepted.**

**Mr. Lupino stated for the record that a vote was taken in Executive Session. Under RI General Laws 42-46-4, that vote shall remain closed at this time.**

#### **POLICY AND PROGRAM**

**NO. 06-3-4 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following Conference be authorized:**

**Lori Velino, Guidance Counselor at the Cranston Area Career & Technical Center, to travel to North Conway, New Hampshire, to attend the Sustaining 21st CCLC Programs Conference from March 22, 2006 to March 24, 2006.**

**Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that this Resolution be adopted.**

#### **VI. Announcement of Future Meetings**

**Mr. Lupino announced that the next meeting would take place on Wednesday, March 1, 2006, at Western Hills Middle School at 7:00 p.m. for the budget adoption.**

**Mr. Lupino commented to the public that this meeting is not to close Horton School. Wednesday evening's meeting is not to close Horton School. The purpose of that meeting is to come up with a final budget number to present to the Mayor which he in turn will scrutinize for recommendation to the City Council who will in turn guesstimate state funding and dump it back on this committee's lap, and at that time, they would make any necessary cuts.**

## **VII. Public Hearing on Non-Agenda Items**

**Ed Angilly, 28 Richland Road – Mr. Angilly distributed information to the School Committee. He indicated that he works in manufacturing, and many times his company**

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**will hire outside consultants to evaluate processes and accounting. He took some numbers out of the proposed budget with regard to the schools. Mr. Angilly explained that in the adjusted column he took one-half of the 4,600 elementary students which are the top eight schools. The average cost per student is approximately \$5,300. If he put that number in for all the elementary schools, there is a savings**

of almost \$2 million if all the schools cost per student was the same. It is not necessarily closing one school. He suggested that the committee try to look outside the box. If they did the same for the high schools and the middle schools, there would be a savings of almost \$4 million if they ran about the same. He was a little surprised to see Cranston East's average cost at \$6,400 per student in the budget, and Cranston West's is \$8,600 per student. He indicated that he didn't have the details on why one cost more than the other. He also noted that \$68 million is allocated to the schools, and the total budget is \$129 million. There is \$61 million not being allocated directly to the schools. It is just another way of looking outside the box at a possible way for cost savings. He was pretty sure that the Mayor will say the school department will not get the full \$129 million.

This is another \$4 or \$5 million in savings without closing any schools.

Mark Lucas, 28 Riverfarm Road – He commended Mr. Archetto and Mr. Stycos for putting pen to paper in trying to find a way to work the numbers to see if they can save Horton School in this budget season.

He thanked them for their hard work. He asked if any of the other committee members had any suggestions about this or if it was a done deal already. He asked what would happen next year when the committee is looking at another \$9 million budgetary shortfall. He asked if they would go after the next smallest elementary school which is Arlington. He asked what would happen the year after that when they are looking at an \$8.5 million shortfall. He asked if it would

be the next smallest school on the list, maybe Waterman. He asked where it ends. He asked if this type of cannibalism of the school system would stop and look towards finding other solutions to this budgetary problem. It doesn't seem right that Horton School is yet on the chopping block again, and no other solutions have been explored.

Perhaps they have been explored, but they have not been publicly vented, and he implored the School Committee to do this. He asked them to look at other solutions and to put them out in the public to allow them to give feedback. Let everyone work together to solve this problem.

Susan Rose, 102 Park Avenue – Mrs. Rose wished to speak regarding reducing teachers at the high schools due to budgetary reasons. She stated that she was holding a copy of a resolution that was adopted by the School Committee dated June 17, 2002 which congratulated eight students from Norwood Avenue School who participated in the Rhode Island Future Problem Solvers State Bowl. Four students won first place in a skit competition in the State. One won third place and one won fifth place in the State, and remarkably six of these students are still in Cranston; and they attend Cranston East as freshmen. Norwood Avenue School is closed, and thankfully these students and others, inclusive of gifted and talented, hard workers, and good students

have a place at Cranston East in the honors classes, and when offered, the AP classes. She could only speak of East because she is an East parent. She was asked to be on the Epoch Advisory Board representing Park View. Elementary parents are wonderfully vocal; they want the best for their children. They ask her if Epoch exists when the children reach middle school, and yes it does. At the high school level, Epoch is irrelevant because the needs of their kids will be met in honors classes and AP classes. Their kids will be challenged academically and creatively. When the time comes for these parents to send their children to East, they have panic attacks because they ask if it is all right for them to send their kids there. She tells them that their child will be in honors classes, will have a strong cohort of good classmates, and will be competitive academically. In the office of Cranston East, there is a striking display of trophies lining the wall. Many of these are for recognition of academic excellence. In the newsletters the parents receive, there is a list of impressive colleges to which East students have gained admission. East works hard, and it works its students hard. The suggestion has been put forth to help deal with the current school budget shortfall by eliminating a number of high school teachers. There is the possibility that classes, which are perceived to have small enrollment, such as certain honors classes or AP classes may be eliminated. She respectfully asked that the committee re-think this and not eliminate the opportunity for children to be challenged academically and later competitively in the college admission process. Fewer academically rigorous classes hurt these children. It

hurts their future potential. It hurts their present performance and motivation. When parents or prospective high school students ask her about East, she wants to answer them honestly that their children will be fine, academically challenged, and they will be well educated. She asked the committee not to make her into a liar by changing important characteristics of East which make it attractive to its most academically talented students. It also seems a pity to have created the Epoch Program to support talented students early on and then compress them all into one layer level of mediocrity in their high school years. There is a strong irony in adopting a resolution congratulating these students when they are in fifth grade only to erode their opportunities for academic achievement and excellence by decimating their honors class opportunities when they are in high school.

Mr. Lupino noted that Mrs. Ciarlo wasn't feeling well this evening, but she was here in spirit. She would mirror some of the sentiments of Susan Rose.

Representative Robert Jacquard – Mr. Jacquard apologized to his constituents for missing the first meeting that was held on the Horton School closing. He had the wrong date in his date book. He had no excuses; he just missed the date. Mr. Lupino indicated to Mr. Jacquard that it was not totally his fault because the committee had to juggle a few dates because of the vacation week. He may not have received all of the information he should have. Mr. Jacquard

indicated that he wished to speak about this issue a little differently than many of the speakers did and will do so at this meeting. He knows that a lot of the parents and teachers are telling the committee about the type of

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school Horton is, and he understands that it is an award winning school. The parents, students, and teachers are very involved there, and they really have an investment in their school. It goes well beyond just that building. He wished to speak from his perspective being a member of the legislature for the past fourteen years. In particular, he has been on the House Finance Committee for twelve years. This has given him some experience and a look at how not only other districts in the state handle issues and approach education but also the impacts that decisions have on a broader basis. He read the report from the school department and the articles in the newspaper. He can appreciate the fact that the school department and this committee have a responsibility for the budget they need to adopt, but they need to look at it from a broader perspective as to the impact that it has on the city as a whole, and, in particular, on the property values, the quality of life, and what people on the outside think about the Cranston school system. As an example, if one were to take two communities in the state that are considered to have very good school systems, one would probably think first of Barrington and East Greenwich. At the same time, those homes in Barrington

and East Greenwich generally cost a lot of money to live there. One can spend a lot of money on a house in any community. One can spend just as much money on a house in Providence as one can in East Greenwich, but the real difference is there when it comes to the properties in those two towns and why people want to live there; and the difference is the school systems. School systems have a reputation for excellence, and that is primarily the reason why people want to move their families there. It is not just to spend a lot of money on a house. One could imagine in their mind two school systems in this state that are recognized for not having good school systems. Some expensive houses could be found there also. In Barrington and East Greenwich, one can guarantee that that the property will appreciate in value. He firmly believes it is because those towns invest in their education and maintain this belief that their schools are excellent and don't let it slip away. Cranston has enjoyed that reputation for a good long time, and he felt the members of this committee and previous members before them are largely responsible for that. This School Committee and this school department went through a fiscal crisis, weathered the storm, and stood their ground that they cannot cut back on education in Cranston. It is not the right thing to do. The district and committee deserve a lot of credit for that. It is not always politically popular. Many of the members have been in politics much longer than he has. He knows that they did not get involved in politics to close schools nor they did not run for this committee or other elected office to close schools. They are here in invest in the schools and have a

responsibility to this budget. With regard to East Greenwich and Barrington, those other towns that don't have great school systems, don't have a lot of increase in value over the years or the same percent increase in value of their property to keep up the school systems either. There is a lot of evidence that every dollar the committee puts into their schools they will get a corresponding increase in property values. He believed that it more than pays for itself. The average person would understand that if the leadership was in place in this city to explain that to people. In Cranston, the city has made it through some tough times, and they didn't lose that

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reputation of having excellent schools; but they could have. It is decisions like the one the committee is going to make about the Horton School that can influence how people think about education, whether or not Cranston is a good place to buy a home and educate their kids. If the city loses that, if people start hearing negative things about the schools such as Cranston cutting back \$800,000 to close an award winning school versus Cranston has one more award winning school; Cranston is willing to have small neighborhood schools. If he wants to send his child to a small neighborhood school versus a larger elementary such as Gladstone School, he has an alternative in Cranston for a neighborhood. He can go to a middle class neighborhood and get that for his child. The city can lose that very easily. He asked what that would transfer into. In the Horton

**School area, there are approximately 400 houses. If those houses lost just 1% of their value, that would be over \$1 million in property value. If the tax rate is \$23, that is \$230,000 right there lost off the tax rate with just a 1% decrease in the value of those homes in the area of the Horton School. He didn't think this was far-fetched at all. If that is transferred citywide, if the reputation of the city's schools diminishes 1% on a city level, that is transferred into 5,000 houses at an average cost of \$250,000 each, the city is open to a loss of tens of millions of dollars in property value they would have to sustain. That leads to a spiral that some of the poorer districts have to contend with. It can only go down at that point versus making the investment in the schools, keeping up that image of a good school system, and having the property values increase. He felt that there is substantial evidence that this is what happens, and this is why it shouldn't be just a parochial issue about Horton School, about Ward 2, or about anything like that. It has to be placed on a citywide basis. This is something that could potentially affect the property values across the city. If one took a look at the Hope Highlands School or the Orchard Farms School, those two schools were built because the people in this city voted in bond referenda to build those schools. The people in this city could have said that they wouldn't go for that; they can bus those kids. If people really want to live up there, they can bus those kids down here and educate them in the schools there now, but they didn't. He was willing to bet that both those bond referenda passed in every single ward and in every single voting machine. He doesn't recall any ward or voting district going against those two**

**schools. The people recognize that this is not a parochial issue. The people in Edgewood weren't going to say that they had nothing to gain by the Orchard Farms Schools; they supported it instead and would support Horton School. They would support the Woodridge School where there is the same argument. Both schools are being kept open. If the district didn't have the Orchard Farms School, imagine how much less those houses in that area would be worth right now. If it were \$5,000 per house, it adds up to a lot. He felt the average house in that area probably went up easily \$10,000 to \$20,000 in value just because that school was built. It is an investment. He stated that he would be happy to answer any questions from the committee.**

**Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Jacquard to keep up what he has been doing for Cranston Public Schools. He has been very kind to the district over the past few years getting extra**

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**dollars from state funding. The committee is still sitting here waiting for funding of mandates. The legislature allows the Department of Education to dump mandates on the districts, and they don't come up with the funds for it. He has been on this committee for eight years, and he has never seen a formula for state aid.**

**Brenda Carbone, 23 Red Oak Drive – She thanked the committee for**

the opportunity to speak. She indicated that at Hope Highlands there is an issue of the children being in large classes. She has a third grader who struggles. She works very hard to get the grades she has. The smaller class size has helped her because the teacher is able to work with these groups of kids more. She also has two children at Western Hills. They are both honor students, and they don't struggle. Class size is still an issue for them. She has an 8th grader going into high school, and she is concerned because they just went through the class schedule to pick classes. Her daughter is an honor student, and when they went to Cranston West to listen about picking classes, they were discouraged from putting their children in honors classes. They were told not to overload the students in honors classes. She is not from Rhode Island so she doesn't have a large network of parents who have high school students whom she can ask. She did ask why if they are in honors classes now and handling it fine were they being discouraged from putting them in honors classes in high school. After hearing Mrs. Rose speak, she is very concerned and hopes that it is not a political issue and a numbers thing where administration is trying to reduce the honors size classes so that those teachers can be eliminated. She hopes this is not the case because these kids deserve to be in those classes. They work hard and need them. She is speaking for elementary, middle, and high school because she has children in all three levels. It is not a one school issue, and she is not talking for just the classes her children are in. She feels very strongly for the parents at Horton School as well. She would hate to have her local

school closed and wished there was some alternative to help them keep their school open. With regard to the mandates, she asked the same question. The district gets the mandates but there is no money.

If the district can't have study halls where does the money come from to pay for the teachers? It should come along with the mandates to help the budget. She wished there was something the committee could tell her to do so that she could help to get those extra funds. Many parents would be willing to do that, but she is not an educator. If she had some guidance, she would be more than willing to lobby for it. Many parents signed up a few weeks ago. She asked the committee to use them if they could help.

Ann Hampson, 16 Edgewood Avenue – She stated that she could speak on a number of issues tonight, but she was putting on her band parent hat on behalf of the many band parents at Cranston East who could not be here tonight. She recognized that this was a late request, but the full extent of the problem has just come to their attention. She wasn't aware of the fact that the Cranston East Band has been operating with a deficit of \$8,000 due to the fact that their major fund raising activities, the home show, each year for the past two years has been rained out. She didn't realize it had this

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impact. People don't seem to be aware that the Cranston East Marching Band is the only high school competitive marching band in

**the State of Rhode Island, and currently it receives no district funding whatsoever. The program is an excellent one and is being held together by chicken wire and chewing gum. Mrs. Hampson explained that the salaries of the faculty are paid for, but the costs of the program are not funded by the district at all. She knows that money is a tough issue, but if the School Committee could find some way of making a contribution to the East Band for all that they do and some of the extraordinary expenses which then incur in terms of transportation and equipment would be greatly appreciated. In terms of Cranston's commitment to excellence and high performance, there is ample evidence from the Rhode Island Music Educators Association that ties music participation to higher academic performance in school. When the East Band had an assembly performance honoring a Cranston soldier who died in Iraq, the freshmen honors classes were decimated since almost all the students were in the band. Making a contribution to the band and helping deal with two years of catastrophic weather would be contributing to some of the highest academically performing students in the school. It would also be supporting a music department that provides a public face to the well deserved high reputation of the district. This seems to her to be a worthwhile investment.**

**Steve Fishbach, 158 Arnold Avenue – He stated that he is the delegate from Cranston High School East to the Cranston Education Advisory Board. CEAB is a parent organization of all the different schools in Cranston, and they try to advise the School Committee**

about issues of concern relating to the school department. Some of the budget issues are impacting Cranston High School East. The band is a concern among parents at Cranston East as are the projected cuts to the teaching staff, the loss of five high school teachers that they have been informed about that is to take place as a result of budget cuts. They are particularly concerned because at the same time that these cuts are happening the state is mandating study halls which means that 125 students who have been in study hall will have to be taught by five teachers so there is a squeeze effect going on. There is a need for more teachers at the same time as a loss of teachers which translates into larger class sizes and fewer course offerings. The parents at Cranston East want to know what impact the loss of those five teachers are going to have. They have heard that it is hard to project that because it is unknown what the course selections the students will make for next year, but administration should have some idea based on this year's enrollment and this year's course selection as to what courses are going to be lost. He asked if the loss of five teachers at Cranston East means a loss of honors programs and if it would mean a combination of the comprehensive classes with the college prep classes. If this is the case, the committee needs to be transparent and let the parent know what the impact of these cuts are. The committee should know what the impact is before they take a vote on Wednesday. The parents are asking that they be informed what the impact of these cuts are, where the courses are going to be reduced from, but to please let the parents know where they are.

**GINNY MCCORMICK, 20 LOCKMERE ROAD – She stated that she came to the meeting to save her school, Horton School. She thanked Steve Stycos and Paul Archetto because the Save Horton Amendment came in her e-mail box, and she was completely blown away. She felt that it is terrific that they took their valuable time. They actually crunched real numbers. She was the one who made reference to the “make a believe numbers” at Bain. What they are proposing does make sense. It is a great solution, and she hoped that the committee would consider this amendment. It is an obvious alternative to closing her precious school.**

**KEN MCDANIEL, 56 CIRCUIT DRIVE – He stated to the committee that he didn’t envy their position, and he was becoming less and less envious of his own position. As a consumer who has a daughter who has just entered her first year at Cranston East, he was looking at what options prior to that he might exercise in the sense of her going to a private school in or out of Cranston versus going to Cranston East. He has seen a number of relatives’ children and other families he knew with a variety of options in terms of the direction a child could choose. They could choose to get in deeper into various activities and go into multiple levels of academic studies. With the potentials he saw and with the collapsing of the options in terms of the levels a student would have available to them, it almost seems**

like a breach of contract to change after they had signed up. In looking at the students at Park View going up to high school, he sees the limiting of options and beginning the wanting to express real concerns from having been a consumer from the other end. Formerly he was an admissions officer at one of the local colleges. Very few students would get into college if it was based on only academic performance. The other activities are very important if they are married up to course work that is challenging. There is a very small fraction of kids, if the course offerings are collapsed at East, that will be strictly in the high academic level where they will compete against students from other areas on strictly an academic basis. If he were back in that admissions office now looking at kids who took very mediocre, in terms of challenging courses, with just about all the activities in the world, they would not be admitted. However, if they had honors courses with activities, they are in the running. He is stepping back and looking at it from the standpoint of as opposed to juggling funds trying to match up dollars, there is the other issue of not creating harm. Quite frankly, that is one of the bottom line things that whatever vote the committee has to take and whatever considerations they have to make, consider trying to mitigate harm that may be done.

Jim DeLuzio, 151 Columbia Avenue – He stated that he was in support of the issues Mrs. Hampson, Mr. Fishbach, and Mr. McDaniel so eloquently said before him. With regard to the music program, his son has been in the program for the past two years. He couldn't

**speak highly enough of Mr. Colozzi's efforts. In contrast, some of the bands they compete against, the South Dartmouth band for instance, has a \$40,000 budget. They have their own trailer truck emblazoned with school logo. They have brand new uniforms and sparkling instruments, and the equipment is carried onto the field by**

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**several tractors. Cranston East doesn't need any of that, and \$8,000 will keep them going. They do a tremendous job even at that. He has a middle school student who is already practicing to be in the band. He asked the committee to consider finding some funds to make sure that his son finds a band there. This may be their last year as a competitive band, and he hoped that wouldn't be true.**

**Terry Gibbons, 14 Ruby Street – She stated that some things that she hopes doesn't come to pass came to her attention. Her son attends Cranston East and is in the chorus. They don't get money either. The band and chorus raise all their own money by selling Yankee candles, candy, etc. She definitely supports the band and would like to see the chorus get some money too. They are both award winning groups. The Chamber Choir and Chorus are always winning awards in the state. They win the excellence award at the RIMEA Festival in Portsmouth every year. At the Gaspee Day Parade the Cranston East Band always wins the top award for the best band in the parade each year. She hoped the committee would empty their pockets and pull**

out their pennies. At the Gaspee Day affair, they approached a legislature from the City of Warwick, Joe McNamara, and he found a little bit of money in the General Assembly for the parade. Maybe the committee could find a little money for the arts. She further commented that Rhode Islanders live very close to Massachusetts, and Massachusetts has some very fine colleges as well as Rhode Island. Her son was telling her that he would like to attend RISD or Brown. The only way this will happen is if he gets good grades in high school. He is also an honors student at East. According to her son he told her that the school had an assembly and they were told they have to take an extra math course or an extra science course before the students leave. Now what has come to her attention is that the school is thinking about dropping chemistry 2, biology 2, and maybe even French. Her son takes chemistry 1 honors, and he has been taking French for two years. She told the committee that French is the second most spoken language in the world, not the country, not the nation, but the world. The committee needs to keep French because students going on to other colleges have to have certain courses. If a student wants to go to Brown, they would expect a student to have chemistry 2. If her son wants to go to any good colleges in the country or in other countries, they will expect a selection of languages such as German, French being the major, and Spanish. It has come to her attention about the possibility of these courses being dropped, and that is insane. Really good courses should not be dropped from a school everyone really worked very hard at making. She commented that it is the best high school in

Rhode Island. She looked at other high schools before sending her son to Cranston East. He was accepted at Bishop Hendricken, but she decided to send him to East because the school had more to offer him. She suggested that the committee not give up these teachers. They are needed in order for the kids to be smart. The kids should be able to go out into the world and have all kinds of jobs, chemistry to be a scientist; French to be leaders and interpreters. Her son wants to join Habitat for Humanity next year because he has been taught for a long time to not just do the academics but to do things where he can give back to people. He has been learning that in a big way. With

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regard to doing away with the study halls, the kids don't need to be killed in high school. They need some sort of a break. Right now there is one teacher who can sit and keep the kids quiet reading books. There is one teacher to watch 125 kids whereas if another course is being offered it doesn't make any sense to her. She again asked to give money to the band, keep French and chemistry. The school needs these courses and teachers so that the students can go on to do great things.

Andre Arujo, 20 Stevens Road – He stated that everyone lives in a very competitive world. He takes a look at himself and his family and the folks around him in his neighborhood. They are in a very blue

collar working neighborhood. Most of them own their own home; they work; they have to pay their bills; and they have reached what they think is the American dream, but they need to send their kids to college. They can't afford prep schools so they look to the public schools. When the kids go to public school, they are at the committee's mercy. The parents want their kids to go to college. They won't get anywhere in this world with just a high school diploma unless they want to work in a factory. There aren't any factories around here any longer unless they move to India. He asked the committee if they would want to send their children to India to work in a factory to make Nike shoes. With this competitive world, more kids are entering college. A lot of the kids in college are not American kids any more. They are coming in from China and India, and then they go back to China and India. The American students have to compete against those kids. At Brown and RISD, he asked how many students come from Rhode Island or from Cranston. He said that it is a very tiny portion. In Cranston they should be graduating many kids and sending them to college. The high schools should be prep schools, not just high schools. The parents are at the committee's mercy. They can't afford to send their children to prep school, but he would send his daughter to the most expensive prep school there is; but he can't afford it so he is at the committee's mercy. He asked the committee to please keep Horton open.

Mr. Lupino commented that some points were made from the public, and he asked administration to address those points first. The

**loudest thing he was hearing was the compacting, and particularly at the high school level. There is a rumor that administration is cutting honors classes and cutting programs.**

**Mr. Scherza stated that with regard to cutting back, the move to eliminate study halls is not an option. That is something that Cranston cannot say they are not going to do it. That grows out of the No Child Left Behind requirement that was promulgated in Washington a few years ago and is also regulated by the State Department of Education. Under high school reform, it is not an option not to cut those. He does hear people talking about things such as this, and they are not falling on deaf ears. That is something that the district has to do. The district is not cutting out teachers; they are cutting positions, some through attrition. Some of those positions are not teaching full time. They are going to give more teachers teaching a full class load and full schedule.**

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**As far as the classes that will or will not be offered, that is not determined by the School Committee whether it be French, sciences, math, history, or any other discipline. That is strictly determined by the demand of students, and that decision is made at the school level.**

**The administration is not looking to cut out a lot of things. They are looking to have students take more electives, have more students in class, have more teachers teaching full loads, and more students**

taking full class loads. Mr. Lupino commented that the parents particularly mentioned the honors classes and language programs.

Mr. Laliberte commented that the honors and AP classes have already been compacted over the years. When administration did a review of all classes and their size, they can't touch AP and honors classes because they are already at their capacity so those would be pretty much left alone. The language classes depend upon students who are available for the class. They are looking at alternative ways of providing as an example French 1 if there is a large enough population between both high schools to learn distance learning so that there may be some students at East and some at West and together they make up a class that can be taught. If there aren't enough students asking for French 1, then French 1 may be dropped. As the Assistant Superintendent said, it would be according to student choice. Mr. Lupino asked how many students would be required to have a French 1 class, and Mr. Laliberte responded that they would need approximately fifteen students to keep a class open. Mr. Lupino asked how he as a student elects French 1 if it isn't offered. He asked how they would get the fifteen students in the first place. He wants to take French 1, but it isn't offered so he doesn't ask to take it. He asked how that happens. He asked when he gets to choose French 1 if he wants to take it. Mr. Laliberte responded that he may not be able to choose it just like there are students who want to take Russian 1 or there are students right now in Chicago who want to take Chinese where it is very popular. Cranston is currently

not offering Chinese. Mr. Lupino asked if there was a point in time when he as a student tells his advisor that he would like to take French 1, and the answer is his name will go on a list, and when they get fifteen students, he will have French 1. He asked if there is a mechanism for that now, and Mr. Laliberte said that there is as students transfer from the 8th grade to the 9th grade. Mr. Lupino indicated to Mr. Laliberte that he had said the honors programs are maxed out and asked if that means that a student who struggled with a difficult home life at Park View and is now at Cranston East and maybe that situation is taken care of, and now the student starts to blossom, would that student be prevented from going into an honors program because it is maxed out. Mr. Laliberte responded that maxed out means that they have compacted them as much as they could, and they have not reached thirty where it would be completely maxed out as far as size. As far as compacting them, administration has done what they can do, but they have not done it according to size. Size is still room for growth there. Mr. Lupino added that the guidance department at Cranston West has done a good job of advising the students that they should challenge themselves a little bit or maybe that they are maxing themselves out. He was hearing from the public that

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the district is not offering these programs any longer, and this is not the case. Mr. Laliberte added that the reference was made to encouraging kids not to take honors classes has nothing to do with

the compacting that was mentioned. It is more on truly judging what the students can handle at that point. Sometimes the freshmen year can be a difficult year as they make that transfer so they shouldn't be overwhelmed with honors courses if they are truly going to be taxed.

Mr. Traficante indicated to Mr. Laliberte that he had mentioned the magic number was fifteen, but if there were eleven or twelve students sign up for French 1, he was sure that the course would be considered. He asked why fifteen was the magic number, and Mr. Laliberte said that it was not a magic number. They may be able to have some students in the other high school who would be able to join that group. There would be a good size class where it could be taught. They can say that they can offer a class to any group of students if there are five students, but it becomes very expensive in order to do that. Mr. Traficante asked if the elementary enrichment program had been impacted at all in this budget process, and Mr. Laliberte said that it wasn't as it stands right now. In fact, there is in the budget 2.5 Epoch teachers.

Mr. Stycos indicated that he was asked by some parents who have been told that there is an idea of merging college prep and comprehensive classes into one category. He asked what is happening with that, if anything, at the high school level. Mr. Scherza responded that he was not aware of any movement to do that. There are different disciplines where there are probably too many levels—AP, honors, high level college prep, low level college prep,

and comprehensive in all the same subject. He doesn't think there is any great movement to make college prep and comprehensive one and the same. Mr. Stycos said that he was hearing it from Cranston East parents and asked if this was a decision that would be made at the high school level or would have to come before the Superintendent first. Mr. Scherza responded that it would have to come before the Superintendent and technically before this board because adoption of curriculum is a part of the committee's purview. As far as writing the curriculum, it would require rewriting not only course description but also a full curricula as well. All of these discussions he has just heard in the last couple of minutes on this one question highlights the problems they face which is trying to be everything to everybody, and they want to be but can't be. They can't offer every single class in every single class section to every single student as much as they would like to. That is one of the dilemmas facing this School Committee, and that is why they are struggling so hard over this budget.

Mr. Stycos stated that one of his concerns with the study hall issue is that the elimination of study halls will force those children into classes, but the students who are currently taking things such as chem. 2, physics 2, and biology 2, most of their schedules are pretty packed; and they don't have study halls. The elimination of study halls doesn't create as a general rule more students who are going to want to take

these high level science courses in particular. This course selection process goes on, and the low hanging fruit, the class with the fewest children signed up, are going to be chem. 2, physics 2, French, and if past history occurs again, those are the courses that will be cut in this compacting move. He asked Mr. Laliberte if he agreed with this thinking, and Mr. Laliberte responded that the elimination of study halls is a state mandate, and the elimination of study halls will provide the opportunity to present to some students who may be having difficulty in particular subject areas. If a student is taking basic integrated math, instead of assigning that student to a study hall, he could be assigned to either a math lab or a math ramp up program to ensure that the student is going to be mastering at least Algebra 1 and Geometry because they will need those subjects to pass the state assessment. As far as merging the comprehensive and college prep, the state and the No Child Left Behind are holding all children to the same standard. Whether a student is in college prep or in comprehensive, there is a basic level that he or she must reach and pass the state assessment. In order to do that, some students will need extra help, so they could use the study halls to provide that extra help. They could also use the study halls currently given to provide enrichment opportunities for those students who are advanced. Mr. Stycos referred to the high level science courses that generally get in the low teens and asked if those were the most

vulnerable for elimination if they are using the standard of how many students sign up for a class. Mr. Laliberte indicated that they wouldn't be if the students who are on the higher ends begin to take some of those courses instead of a study hall. Mr. Stycos remarked that the students on the higher end tend not to have study halls; they are taking band, chorus, and their schedule is jammed. They can't take chem. 2 not because they don't want to but because there are only so many periods in a day. There is not a pool of students who are currently sitting in study halls who are going to take chem. 2, therefore, when the numbers come out, chem. 2 is going to have a low enrollment; and he is afraid that someone in administration will indicate that it has a low enrollment, and they shouldn't have the class. Mr. Laliberte stated that he didn't believe that would happen because he believed they would make sure that if a student has taken chem. 1 and they want chem. 2 they will be given the opportunity to take it. Mr. Stycos cited as an example that this year's students as they are picking their courses for next year it comes out exactly as it did this year, he asked what the courses would be that administration would look at to eliminate in a compacting. Mr. Laliberte responded that when they looked at it across the board, the classes that are currently in place this year, the majority of the classes were at the comprehensive level; and they were classes of fourteen, fifteen, and thirteen students. At the high school level, they have the ability to go up to twenty-seven students so that when they are compacted they might be able to squeeze out a class here and a class there and eliminate one teaching position but spread the remaining students

over that. Very few of them had to do with the honors students or the college prep because pretty much most of the college prep classes already had somewhere between twenty-five and twenty-eight, and on occasion they had thirty students in a class. Mr. Stycos remarked to Mr. Laliberte that he was saying that the main impact is that if this year is like last year it is likely to be

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on the comp level and instead of five section of comp English with fifteen students in a class, there may be four with twenty students.

Mr. Stycos asked that if this budget were passed in tack as it has been proposed, is it the same number of high school teachers as this year; is it five fewer or ten fewer. He thought the Superintendent said it was five fewer positions, and Mr. Scherza responded that it would be five fewer positions at each high school. There would be ten fewer high school positions that they would be looking to move. Mr. Stycos referred to the budget presentation and stated that it talked about six positions. Mr. Scherza said that they were looking for five full-time equivalent positions at each high school. That would be done in a number of ways. One way might be that instead of having twenty-five class sections of Spanish 1 at seventeen or eighteen, it might be twenty-four classes. With regard to the upper level classes, the upper level colleges require in some cases a fourth year of a science or a fourth year of a language. They are reluctant to cut those; they are

treated a little differently than an elective that has a low number. So, those are largely untouched right now. He would be surprised if they were cut to any great extent. In terms of losing those, he thought it was unlikely. This committee passed a resolution requiring an increase in the number of math courses that would have to be taken in order to graduate. That is also going to come along in the next year or two, and the same thing will be done with science as the number of requirements is increased. The district has gone to Physics First, and the intention there is not only to get the sequence of sciences but also to get the students to take more sciences at an early level. If they have to take an additional science to graduate, more students will be taking it to a higher level. He hopes that comes to fruition.

Mr. Archetto referred to the honors programs, and asked if there was any department that eliminates the honors program meaning there is a CP class and then it would go right to an AP class. Mr. Laliberte responded that most of them will offer an honors class and an AP class. Sometimes they don't offer an AP class if there isn't a teacher trained in the AP program. Mr. Archetto commented that he received a message from a number of parents that there was an elimination of the honors classes, and they felt this left the honors students going to either the AP advanced placement or back to CP 1 level where the honors students wouldn't be challenged enough. The only elimination would be possibly an AP class. Mr. Laliberte added that there could be an AP class where a student may take the AP class,

and this is one thing they are looking at, that if they take the AP exam and score at a certain level, they can be given the AP credit for it. If they don't score within the right range, then they can be given honors credit. It is still being taught at a higher level than the college prep course. Mr. Laliberte commented that Mr. Traficante had asked him about the enrichment program at the elementary level. Originally administration had asked for 2.5 Epoch teachers to be added to the budget, but they had to take that out because of finances. There is no impact in the sense that they are not decreasing any Epoch teachers that they currently

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have at the elementary level; but they are not adding either. They chose to add the 2.5 math coaches.

Mr. Lupino stated that the next issue the committee heard a lot about was the band shortfall and the fact that someone said the district doesn't fund the band. He asked someone to address that situation. Mr. Scherza stated that they most certainly do fund the music program including band and chorus. With regard to certain trips and excursions, there is a lot of fund raising that goes on by the members of those entities. Each of the high schools is given an amount of \$65,000 a piece for student activities, and that is determined at the high school level by the principals and staff and Cranston East and

**Cranston West respectively as to how the money will be spent. Mr. Lupino added that if Mr. Frederick at East would base it on past history that if the marching band was successful in their fund raising and did not lobby him for extra dollars he would assume they didn't need those dollars and would allocate that money somewhere else. It seemed to him that it would be up to the band director and or the parents and students to lobby the principal to say they would like a portion of that funding because they have had a short fall. The worse case scenario would be that he would meet them halfway and they would have to do some canning and begging.**

**Mr. Traficante commented that a speaker had previously said that there was an \$8,000 deficit. He asked if this deficit was in the line item, and Mr. Lupino said that he believed they do fund raising and usually attain a certain amount of fund raising. This year their fund raising was down by approximately \$8,000. They rely on a particular event to accomplish that. The answer is to lobby Mr. Frederick for more of those dollars.**

**Mr. Lupino remarked that the public spoke about class size, and he knew that if Mrs. Ciarlo were present she would state that she had started the program in the primary grades for K, 1 and 2 to keep class size at a minimum. The committee is still trying to get back to that situation again. It was a noble program which had a lot of success. As far as the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades, he didn't know what to tell the public. The committee would if at all possible try to keep the classes**

below the contractual maximum whenever they can. He recognized Mrs. Gamba, Principal of Edgewood Highland School. He asked her how successful her after-school school has been as far as addressing the concerns from the Hope Highlands School parents. He knows that there can't be fifteen students in Kindergarten even though the committee would like it that way. He asked if her after school program addressed a need for this. Hope Highlands School is about to embark on one of these programs if they have not already, and some of the other schools have done it as well. Mrs. Gamba commented that Edgewood Highlands has been very successful for several reasons. First, it is much better to tutor the students in the fall rather than in the summer program for Edgewood because the teachers who have the kids are tutoring them after school, and it is a Title 1 school so she can put money one side to pay them hourly. Just about every one of her faculty members tutors after school. They usually go by the assessments during the day, and then the teachers

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will again put more instruction based on the weaknesses during the day. It has also helped them with the 5th graders. They have a yearbook club, and she could honestly say that some of the needier students joined the yearbook club, the students who were struggling academically, and they are totally doing the whole yearbook on their own. When the teachers have the kids during the day are willing to

tutor after school, it is successful. It is least successful when teachers or people from other schools are brought in. It works when the teachers know the kids because after school they are small groups, and it is very prescriptive. They use different materials, and the reading consultant also supports it and tutors after school. It works if it is done right. Their scores prove it. They have 43% poverty at Edgewood Highlands, and they are a high performing school and improving. Mr. Lupino commented that Edgewood is a Title 1 school, but Hope Highlands and Orchard Farms are not able to do that. Mrs. Gamba added that they started the program in the fall which was supported by Literacy money. Mr. Lupino asked about the private groups, such as Kids Klub, that the district entertains. Mrs. Gamba responded that this is getting larger. It started off very small, and like anything, no matter how many notices are sent with the children, she has to keep soliciting. It is slowly growing, but it is something where the parents are paying. It is totally different from the tutoring taking place at the school. That is similar to daycare where parents have the children stay until 6:00 p.m. Many of these Title 1 students don't join Kids Klub. Mr. Lupino commented that the way it was presented to the committee, and he hoped they were adhering to this, it was a multi-faceted program and not just daycare, that there was a chance for enrichment and tutoring and all the things that Mrs. Gamba is paying for with Title 1 money, so he hoped this was happening because the answer he was trying to give the parents at Hope Highlands is that these are some of the programs they should be looking for in their after school program, not just

**babysitting. They don't need babysitters up there; they need enrichment. Mrs. Gamba added that Kids Klub meets with the teachers, and they do enrichment and theater programs. Many of her children who are being tutored don't necessarily go to Kids Klub because a lot of the Kids Klubs stay until 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. They are the needier kids who stay for one hour after school, and then the parents pick them up. It is almost like two different clientele. What makes the tutoring successful is the fact that the teachers during the day know the problems of the kids so it is more prescriptive. There has been talk about lengthening the school day, but some of those needier kids need to be instructed over a longer period of time with prescriptive instruction that will suit their needs.**

**Mr. Lupino called for a five-minute recess at 8:52 p.m.**

**Mr. Lupino reconvened the work session at 9:08 p.m.**

**Mr. Lupino asked if the figures were available regarding the questions he had asked regarding health care costs. He noted that the contract proposals were changed from 26 years of age to 24 years of age for coverage. The state law states up to 25 years of**

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**age. It seemed to him that there was a discrepancy. He asked how many people would be effected and to what extent would the budget**

be affected by that. In response, Mr. Votto stated that he respectfully disagreed with Mr. Lupino. He believed that the district was within the purview of the state law because the age is 24. The law indicates under the age of 25. He didn't think the district had any problems. The contracts address the age of 24. The concern should be that if the General Assembly passes legislation that changes that over the next three years with a tier approach where they go to 21, then 23, and then 25, that will put the district in a situation that could be difficult for them. Mr. Flynn, CTA President, noted that he saw a memo recently, but he has not asked for a legal opinion. They negotiated this in good faith so he is standing behind what was negotiated until he gets a legal opinion. Mr. Lupino stated that if this was negotiated and the committee passes a budget that does not include an amount for that, the union gives up its rights to that particular situation. Mr. Flynn stated that they agreed that the ceiling is 24 years of age on July 1; both parties entered into that willingly and agreed to it. Mr. Lupino asked if anyone knew how many people it would potentially be. The legislation is attempting to add non-student dependents. Mr. Votto responded that he would have to run reports on the dates of birth of all dependents. If this legislation were approved, it would obviously have an impact on the district, and it would be required by state law to comply with it.

Mr. Lupino referred to a question he had asked at a previous work session. He restated his question. Mrs. Ciarlo got the committee to agree to a successful program that says that class size in grades K

and 1 should be maxed at eighteen students. Any classes that had over eighteen students would have a reduction aid. In Grade 2, the number would be twenty-two. Once a class reached the twenty-third student, there would be a reduction aide. He asked the question, how many classes projected for 06-07 in those particular grades would benefit from a reduction aide and what would the cost be to the district. Mr. Lupino commented that the answer he received from administration was a figure for all classes throughout the district. He was particularly interested in nineteen students in K and 1 and twenty-two in Grade 2. Mr. Votto responded that he misunderstood his question the first time and did not understand Mrs. Ciarlo's program a few years ago. He gave him information if they put a teacher assistant in every Kindergarten and every first grade which would be in addition to what they presently have. He thought the figure was \$168,000 that would impact this budget, but he can re-calculate it based on the formula Mrs. Ciarlo used in the past.

Mr. Lupino commented that Mr. Traficante had a proposed figure for girls' ice hockey. Mr. Traficante indicated that he did not bring the entire package with him, but the figure was approximately \$21,000. That is a co-op team between Cranston East and Cranston West if approved by the Interscholastic League. It includes coaching salaries, equipment, ice time, etc. At the Wednesday hearing, he would have more information available. Mr. Lupino indicated that he received correspondence from the people who are trying to organize girls' ice hockey. Their contention is that they have most of the

equipment needs taken care of already. He would be interested in knowing what portion of that is for equipment, and if that amount could be reduced so that students in need coming in would have some availability of equipment on an as-needed basis. Their claim is that most of the players already have their equipment, and they are looking for jerseys. Mr. Traficante added that there is plenty of equipment to be utilized by the females remaining from the boys' hockey at both East and West. More than likely, that line item could be reduced.

Mr. Traficante remarked that he has been reading some talking points on the FY 2007 federal budget for the American Association of School Administrators. It indicates that President Bush is proposing the largest funding cut in the Department of Education's history. In FY 2007, Bush proposes cutting education funding by \$2.1 billion. Local school districts will be forced to cover the federal shortfall. There is one line item he is really concerned about which affects Cranston. Medicaid reimbursement for school districts is eliminated. Based on the discussions Mr. Traficante has had with Mr. Balducci, he believed the amount was approximately \$1.6 million. Mr. Traficante asked Mr. Balducci if there was any word from any federal source regarding this issue, and Mr. Balducci said that he hasn't seen anything yet, good or bad.

**Mr. Archetto asked Mr. Balducci what the cost was of operational expenses for the Special Services Center on Sprague Avenue. He believed it to be approximately \$65,000. Mr. Archetto asked if there were any classes held in that building, and Mr. Laliberte responded that there are students who are serviced in that building. Testing is done as well as there are pre-school students who are receiving speech and language therapy. There is some psychological testing being done there, and there is some occupational therapy as well.**

**Mr. Traficante stated that the committee read in the newspaper about an amendment that is being proposed by Mr. Stycos and Mr. Archetto regarding the Save Horton Amendment. He asked to address this issue at this time in order to clear up some matters as to the erroneous nature of this situation and to try to clear up the fact that some of the things discussed in that amendment are totally improper before this board. Hopefully, both Mr. Stycos and Mr. Archetto will go in a different direction and come forth with another Save Horton resolution if that be the case. Mr. Traficante asked Mr. Stycos if he had any problem with him doing it at this time, and Mr. Stycos thought it was a good idea. Mr. Traficante stated that if that resolution or amendment comes before this board on Wednesday, he would have to abstain since he is the Chairman of the Board of New England Laborers' Cranston Public Schools' Construction Career Academy. However, it will not prevent him from vigorously objecting to such a proposal. Mr. Lupino interrupted and indicated to Mr.**

**Traficante that the method for doing that is inherently wrong. The committee is not deleting line items on the budget at this time. The committee will send an appropriation. Mr. Traficante commented that if there was an amendment on the floor he would have to object to it based on the reasons he will**

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**bring forth. He is not proposing anything or objecting anything. If it does come forward, he would have to oppose it based on certain facts and reasons. He was happy that Attorney Piccirilli was present to verify what he was saying.**

**Mr. Traficante went on to say that his reasons were as follows: (1) The proposal is, without question, improper before this body because of the illegality of capping enrollment at the Charter School. That enrollment is inherent in the Charter itself, and that Charter was approved by both the Cranston School Committee some four years ago and the Board of Regents. If one were to read the Charter that was approved, it clearly states under enrollment "it assumes a population of 80 students in the first year; each year thereafter 55 additional students are included until a maximum of 245 students is reached in four years and then maintained in year five. Therefore, this School Committee has absolutely no right, no legal grounds, no privilege of capping that particular Charter School enrollment. This is not only applicable in this city but also in all cities. If the School**

**Committee cares to investigate it, and Mr. Piccirilli can verify it as well, they can speak to Mr. Keith Oliveira who is the Charter School Coordinator for the State of Rhode Island and the RI Department of Education, and Mr. Paul Pontarelli who is legal counsel for the RI Department of Education. (2) The proposal is erroneous and flawed regarding the Charter School paying its fair share of administrative services which includes human services, business office, insurance, superintendent, etc. (3) The proposal encompasses what he believes to be educational discrimination against a targeted population of Cranston students by threatening withdrawal of that partnership in that amendment. (4) The proposal educationally demonstrates, in his opinion, a very unsounding dangerous direction by this committee of pitting one group of parents, students, and teachers at the elementary level against another group of parents, teachers, and students at the secondary level. It is not a direction this committee should be taking.**

**If this particular resolution had been discussed in a workshop, he was sure they would have saved a lot of anxiety by the parents from Horton. It would clear up this situation and gone in a different direction. It reached the media, and it forces him to address the issue tonight. He was hopeful that he can clear the air once and for all for everyone regarding the Charter School so that amendments such as this will not raise its ugly head again.**

**Mr. Traficante referred to state law Chapter 77 under legislative purpose, the purpose of this chapter is to provide an alternative within the public education system, and that is the whole purpose of**

**the Charter School by state law. The Charter School was established by the New England Laborers and the Cranston Public Schools in partnership to provide an alternative for teachers to be creative, to be innovative, to think outside the box, and to be non-traditional. It is an alternative for students to expand and experience a project-based, problem-based, job-simulated, hands-on curriculum. That is the intent of the Charter School. It is an alternative to the traditional chalk, talk, and test methodology. That is the whole intent of Charter Schools throughout the State of Rhode Island and throughout the country. It is clearly stipulated**

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**in that particular statute. Secondly, the chapter establishes the following as stated in state law: establish and maintain a public school according to the terms of its charter. Mr. Traficante commented that the charter is a blueprint for this Charter School and for everyone established in the State of Rhode Island. In fact, Charter Schools in Cranston by state law are allowed to have two charter schools. The legislators right now are working on removing that cap and increasing it to 304, but that is something to be discussed later on. It was approved by the School Committee and approved by the Board of Regents. That chapter stipulates on page 27 of the charter that the committee has no legal grounds to capping that. Legal opinions can be set forth by contacting the RI Department of Education. As he had stated previously, he said that this proposal**

**bordered on educational discrimination toward a targeted population.**

**Mr. Traficante read from state law as follows: All students and prospective students of a charter school shall be deemed to be public school students having the same rights under federal and Rhode Island law as students and prospective students at a non-chartered public school. Mr. Traficante emphasized that they have all the rights and privileges of a public school student even though it is a charter school situation. In Cranston, all but seven of the students are Cranston kids. These are students who come to the academy because they cannot survive in a traditional setting at Cranston East, Cranston West, or the vocational school. These are students who try and succeed in a hands-on project-based type scenario and environment. These are the same students who have all the same rights and privileges to avail themselves of a very solid educational experience. Several of these students are at-risk kids, and without that Charter School, they would not be in a classroom and would be on the street. The dropout rate will probably increase from 7% to 10% if this Charter School didn't exist. It is an experience for students that builds character, self-esteem, builds work ethics which very few courses teach in that particular area in Cranston; it gives them job experience and contracts them to a career in the construction industry to do exactly that. By threatening withdrawal from this partnership, clearly demonstrates to him educational discrimination toward a group of students, in his opinion, who have been disserved for a number of years not only by this school department but also by every school department in the State of Rhode Island. Mr.**

**Traficante invited the committee to take the time to visit the Charter School to experience what goes on in the classroom and experience what goes on in the technology classes. They would be pleased at what they see, and they will thank the Charter School for being present within this community.**

**With regard to payment for services, state law clearly stipulates the following: The state share of the per pupil amount for each student attending a charter public school shall be paid by the state directly to the charter public school and shall be the percent or share ratio previously calculated under Chapter 7 of this title minus the 5% of per pupil cost designated for indirect costs to support the student's school district as defined in this sub-section. Mr. Traficante explained that they are saying when the district receives its per pupil expenditure, and as an example it is \$11,000, before the district receives that \$11,000, 5% is removed from that amount which goes directly to the Cranston Public**

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**Schools. That money is utilized for those particular administrative services. He told Mr. Stycos that he was proposing in his particular amendment that 1.4% is paid of the amount which is approximately \$35,000. With the 5% that is paid, it is \$90,000 in next year's budget which is \$45,000 more than Mr. Stycos asked for. The Charter School pays for not only human services, business office, MIS, insurance,**

legal, etc., it also pays for transportation, gas, maintenance of those buses, and food service. That amounts to approximately \$60,000, and the district is receiving \$90,000 for those things above and beyond. If Mr. Stycos wants to accept the 1.4%, the Laborers will gladly accept that and reimburse the school \$55,000. It bothers him that there is a vocational school in Cranston, and no one seems to get upset regarding the \$600,000 subsidy that the school district appropriates each year to the state run vocational school. One-third of the population there of 450 students are out-of-city students out of the district. No one complains about \$900,000 that is doled out each year for Cranston students going to parochial and private schools for transportation, for books, and for resources; but yet the committee attempts to save dollars on the backs of Cranston students attending Cranston Public Schools. He hoped he has put this issue to bed once and for all. The Charter School is not always supported by the per pupil expenditure. The per pupil expenditure is certainly a great help to any charter school in the State. About one-third of the expense of a charter school comes from the State of Rhode Island, approximately one-third comes from the City of Cranston, and the remaining one-third comes from the partner, the New England Laborers. They pay approximately \$400,000 per year to help run, operate, and maintain the Charter School. In addition to that, they also raise roughly \$80,000 to \$100,000 per year through fund raising to support the extras that the Charter School needs. In the future, he hoped that this committee won't pit parents against parents, students against students, and teachers against teachers. He was sure they could all

save money that way. Before they know it, they would be pitting the football team against the soccer team, the advanced placement against the enrichment program, and certified people against non-certified people. This is not the way to go. He knew Mr. Stycos was on the committee for the right reason which is to support the kids whether they are bright, average, at-risk, handicapped, college bound, or career bound. That is the fashion in which they should approach the budget.

Mr. Stycos referred to the argument of pitting one group of kids against another group of kids and stated that the intent of this amendment is obviously not to close the Charter School as is being proposed with Horton but to try to contain costs there. If one were to look at the budget, it is the largest major account, the most expanding, the most growing major account in the budget. It is a \$300,000 item of extra money to the Charter School. Mr. Traficante told Mr. Stycos that he was correct. He continued to say that whether the New England Laborers are partners with the Cranston Public Schools or not; as an example the school department stood on its own and created a charter school, the school department would have no choice by state law to allocate \$10,000 or \$11,000 per child to attend that charter school. By being partners, they save dollars because the Laborers bear some of the expense of a charter school. The school

department could create a charter school and by charter have 500 students. The Laborers don't want to grow any more than 240 students or even to that number. They would like to stay at approximately 160 students. Mr. Stycos stated that he agreed that the Cranston School Committee does not have a right to deny any child the right to go to any charter school; that is established in state law. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Traficante if he were reading from the application, and Mr. Traficante said that it was the application approved by the Board of Regents. It is on file with the Board of Education. Keith Oliveira read the exact same paragraph to Mr. Traficante and told him that Cranston's cap is 245. He further told him that there are legal grounds to meet that cap if they care to do so.

Mr. Stycos commented that he will re-work the amendment and address the impression that it is illegal. The district does a lot of things with the Laborers' Charter School that they don't do with a lot of other charter schools. When Mr. Traficante is talking about the 5% administrative cost, it was an accurate depiction of the financing and how it works, but this district doesn't handle personnel for the Highlander School. This district doesn't handle the books of Textron Academy. A Cranston child goes to those schools. The district doesn't do payroll for any other charter school, but they still get that 5%. That 5% in the law doesn't have to do with the district supplying these services. In the second part of this amendment what he did when he put this part together is he added the school budget and the charter school budget because they are separate budgets and came

up with a total. He then asked himself what percentage of that is the charter school, and that is 1.4%. He did this because he asked an accountant how it could be done fairly to allocate costs for these somewhat nebulous services that are offered to the Laborers' Construction Academy that are not provided to any other charter school in the state. The accountant told him that this happens all the time in corporations where they want to allocate costs to divisions, and it is done by a percentage system. The reason these items are on this is because this district doesn't do it for any other charter school, and they are not obligated by the law to provide payroll, to handle grants, to handle human relations for any other charter school. Mr. Traficante responded that when the New England Laborers and the Cranston Public Schools sat down to establish this partnership, negotiations took place and negotiations dealt with human resources, MIS, payroll, etc. He asked Mr. Piccirilli to verify the state law on this where they did negotiate those particular items when the charter was being formed.

Mr. Piccirilli stated that what Mr. Traficante was referring to is that there is a provision in the charter school statute which addresses the local school district's contributions to a charter school in terms of providing central services. That law is 16-77-6(d). It talks about when there is an agreement between a charter school and a local school district to provide for those services, it says "It shall be subject to negotiations between the charter public school and the local school district and paid for out of the revenues of the charter school and

disputes with regard to the cost for services requested from local districts would be adjudicated by the Commissioner of Education.” He went on to say that it appears that when this partnership was created it was a somewhat unique

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situation in Rhode Island whereas when most charter schools are created without partnering with the local school district this one was created as a partnership. As part of that partnership, there was an agreement made between the parties, the Laborers and the school district, that certain services would be provided. As he understood it, the Laborers provide some services themselves. Mr. Stycos interrupted and asked where it was written down, and Mr. Piccirilli responded that he was not sure it was written down. He further commented that there is a longstanding practice that has been conducted between the partners as to what partners would pay for various services. If one of the partners wants to change that relationship, a couple of things could happen. They could engage in negotiations with the partner to change the manner in which they do this, what they pay for. His guess is that the other partner would want to change what they provide to the Charter School without charge. Ultimately, he would imagine that if the parties can't agree on how to differently allocate their costs, that dispute would ultimately go before the Commissioner of Education, and then the Commissioner would decide, most likely based on the history

between the partners, how to address those costs. One way may be a percentage; another way may be to look at time studies of how much those services are actually utilized, but it would be a two-way street. The district would be potentially faced with asking that it be reimbursed more for what they are providing, but the Laborers may ask that they be reimbursed more for the services they provide. It is unclear as to how it would be ultimately resolved. He did think that the Commissioner would look at the past history as a partnership as to what they agreed to. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Piccirilli if he was familiar with any cases that have come before the Commissioner on this charter school financing issue, and Mr. Piccirilli said no. Mr. Stycos remarked to him that he was giving the committee a hypothetical personal, off-the-cuff decision. It is not based on any legal background. Mr. Piccirilli responded that it was not personal and off-the-cuff; it is based upon his reading of 16-77-6(d). Mr. Stycos indicated to Mr. Piccirilli that all these items that are listed here there is nothing in writing. Mr. Piccirilli responded that he was not sure about that. Mr. Stycos said that Mr. Piccirilli also read a section that said that the community and the Charter School can negotiate over those things. Mr. Traficante remarked that this did take place. They discussed a number of items in establishing the partnership with the administration, both the Laborers and with the school department. It clearly states with regard to the 5% under Chapter 7 of this title, minus the 5% of per pupil costs designated for indirect cost support to the students' school district.... Mr. Stycos interrupted and stated that this district doesn't do that for any other charter school. Mr.

Traficante stated that the district has approximately twenty to twenty-five students in other charter schools, and the district pays even more dollars because many of them are for special needs kids. He was not arguing Mr. Stycos's figures. Mr. Stycos asked if Cranston provides payroll services, and Mr. Traficante responded that he had no idea of what the district provides anywhere else. He also indicated that Mr. Stycos had no idea of what other charter schools get for in-kind services. The Laborers pay \$341,000 for salaries. He asked if they were going to ask for reimbursement for that and negotiate it with the Cranston Public Schools. That was talked about and negotiated.

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They talked about a variety of items. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Balducci if this district provides payroll services or personnel services for any other charter school in the same manner we provide to the Construction Academy. Mr. Balducci responded that Cranston does not provide them. He believed that when negotiations took place to establish this Charter School, there was the belief, because the teachers were members of the CTA, the students attending the Charter School would most likely be Cranston students, as far as the purchasing of supplies, etc., it was discussed that Cranston Public Schools would take care of that because if the teachers were not teaching at the Charter School, they most likely would be at Cranston East or somewhere else in the district. That is how the conversations

took place. Mr. Lupino asked if there were any other charter schools in the state where Cranston students are sent where there are Cranston Public Schools' employees at those locations. Mr. Balducci responded that there were not. Mr. Lupino added that the reason for providing some of those services is the fact that some Cranston Public Schools' teachers are at the Charter School. Mr. Traficante added that there is a custodian and a secretary as well. Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Balducci if he would assume that the tuition for the Textron Academy that is in his budget there is a line item for the services that Mr. Stycos is talking about, and Mr. Balducci said most likely.

Mr. Traficante commented to Mr. Stycos that he had brought up a point that for no other charter school, private school, or parochial school does Mr. Balducci provide in-kind services regarding the administration such as payroll. He asked Mr. Stycos to name for him another charter school that the Cranston School Department is in partnership with, and the answer is none other than the New England Laborers. He told Mr. Stycos that he was not disagreeing with his figures. What he came up with is a fair estimation of costs. He was stating that the 5% that comes out of the per pupil expenditure covers these expenses and more. There is more to this than just that 5%. There are a great number of things they discuss in establishing the partnership that involves a variety of things that both the Laborers and the administration agree to to make sure that these two tremendous resources will be of benefit to the kids that they service.

**Mr. Archetto stated that none of the committee members advocates the closing of the Charter School. They do a wonderful job there. Mr. Traficante was kind enough to invite him to the Charter School where he did take the tour of the building, and he was very impressed. It is a great and wonderful idea, and as a teacher he knows that all kids can't learn in a classroom. There are alternative ways of learning, and the Charter School addresses that. However, this committee is faced with a crisis situation, the closing of a high performing Blue Ribbon elementary school. He believed that everyone must be willing to make a small sacrifice in order for the children to have a first rate education. At this crossroads, he sees this Charter School and the New England Laborers as being the champions and heroes of the Cranston school system. If they would agree to a one-year slow down of the growth of the school, he felt it would save the Horton Elementary School issue. That is basically what he and Mr. Stycos are**

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**asking for. Mr. Lupino asked the committee to understand one thing here and now. He has said the following a couple of times privately to all of the members. He has said it to the public, to the press, and he has had it suggested to him from parents and teachers at Horton Elementary School. If the committee was to pass an adjustment to the budget and they were to include Horton Elementary School in that amount, if they go to the Mayor and the City Council, they have to**

bounce the budget back to the committee; and there will be a cut. The committee knows it will not get the full amount. The committee is facing federal cuts, facing possible state cuts, and a City Council that does not want to raise taxes. The committee will be back here again with Horton School. He felt that the fairest assessment that one can make of the situation is that it should be done once and for all. The principal cannot staff a school that is constantly under fire for a low enrollment. Someone said that the committee is going to close a Blue Ribbon School; it is not like the committee is going to send them to Central Falls tomorrow or to a bad school. They will be sent to other Cranston schools, and Cranston schools perform very well. Any assessment of the situation has to take into consideration what is the fairest assessment for the students, the staff, and the teachers. He asked if it should be done now, do it in two months, is there still the threat next year. That school was decimated a couple of years ago when it showed up on a cut list. All the teachers went to Jamboree; they all left, not because of lack of loyalty. They were loyal to their school; they were also loyal to their families. They were not guaranteed a position if the school closed. The committee is into that same situation right now. He agreed that the committee wants to contain costs somewhat. He doesn't agree that the committee should discriminate against a particular group, and that is what is being done by targeting this particular Charter School. If the proposal were to target all the schools equally across the district or if all the Charter School students were targeted who attend other charter schools and place the same restrictions, then it wouldn't be discriminatory; but

**this certainly is. In their heart of hearts, and he knew there were some political issues here; some people are saying they agree with administration; the number of students does not support that amount of expenditure; one would have to vote because he or she is afraid of getting voted out of office; that is an issue for any politician. Think about what is fair to the kids, the staff, and the district. Keep in mind that everyone talks about the report that Mayor Laffey paid for that said that the district should close some schools, and the aside that said that the district is proud of good neighborhood schools. The committee has come to a crossroads where there is a reality there. He asked when the cost would be justified for a situation like that. The committee can add Horton back into this budget at some point in time as far as the dollars are concerned, but he asked where the committee will be in two months when they get the budget back, and they have been given only \$124 million or \$123 million or less than that. It is time to look at the situation and look at it from a different standpoint.**

**Mr. Stycos asked if the professional development for teachers at the Charter School is paid for out of the district's regular budget, and Mr. Balducci said that it was. Mr. Stycos**

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**asked how the professional development is budgeted, and Mr. Scherza responded that it is paid for out of the school budget, and**

the bulk of the funds come from restricted aid that is determined by the General Assembly for professional development. Normally the number is level funded in the prior year until and unless the General Assembly tells them the district differently. When the district falls short, they try to recoup it from grants. That failing, administration would have to go to its operating funds to pick up the slack.

Mr. Stycos referred to page 146 in the budget, professional development line item. He noted that \$316,000 was requested for this year. He stated that when he looked back at previous years, this year is a lot more than the two prior years' actuals. Looking at the prior years' budgeted, the 04-05 actual was \$178,000, but actually \$262,000 was budgeted. Almost \$100,000 was budgeted than was actually spent. In the prior year, 03-04, \$250,000 was budgeted and \$204,000 was spent. He asked why the \$316,000 is so much larger than the other numbers and why there seems to be a pattern of under spending that account or over-budgeting it. Mr. Scherza responded that several factors were involved. The amount is larger because the state has given the district more and targeted more. They have determined what portion has to go into restricted areas. When the state required that every secondary teacher has to have fifteen hours of professional development in Literacy, they had to help pay for it. As the state has put on some of the mandates, they have given some aid, but they are also telling the district to a greater degree how to spend certain segments of it and in what proportions. Also, with high school reform being what it is, the state has increased that. With

regard to the actual \$250,000 budgeted and \$204,000 actually spent, administration budgets based on the number of teachers and hours they have to put in. Included in that are the eight hours by contract they have to put in which is over and above at the rate of \$27.00 per hour. Often times, whether someone goes out on maternity leave, someone passes away, retires, or resigns without competing it, they don't get paid that stipend and the district doesn't spend that money. It is, however, carryover money into the next year. Mr. Stycos asked if in that \$316,000 there was district money that could be moved for other uses based on the anticipation that not everyone will do their eight hours. Mr. Scherza responded that they can't do that. It is much like salaries; they can't take away from that account until they know it hasn't been used. They have to encumber; the money is restricted. It comes from the state with a string on it. Mr. Balducci referred to page 12 which is the revenue page of the budget which itemizes all the total aid. He indicated that Mr. Stycos had asked why it went up so much this year and next year and explained that in total the district received \$420,000 under professional development. Not knowing where state aid was going to go, he level funded that category for next year. During the last couple of years, the district has spent approximately \$200,000, and it is based on what is received from the state. Because it is contractual and there is a Professional Development Institute, the teachers have to be put in so many hours times a certain rate, sometimes the state funding is not enough; and he has to budget above and beyond the allocation. For the year he budgeted \$250,000, the district only

received \$237,000 from the state so the district had to put in more because they were contractually obligated. At the present time, there is approximately \$316,000 in that line item. The rest of that money they were able to give approximately \$100,000 directly to the schools, and they weren't able to do that the last couple of years. Administration told them they were giving them a certain allocation, and at the school level could decide how they wanted to spend that money for professional development, under the category of professional development. This money is carried over to the following year if it is not spent on professional development. Mr. Scherza added that the carry over amount is reflected in the audit report.

Mr. Stycos referred to the Charter School expenses. He asked if it was accurate that the staff who works at the Charter School are covered by district worker's compensation, errors and omissions and property insurance, and Mr. Balducci said that they were because they are members of the CTA organization. The district gets no reimbursement for that. Mr. Stycos asked what would happen if a child gets hurt on a construction job or at the Charter School. He stated that it is the district's policy so they would be responsible. In response, Mr. Piccirilli said that there is another provision in the charter school statute, 16-77-7, which talks about immunity and

liability. It states “that the charter public schools have the same immunity possessed by school districts. Charter schools shall also have the authority to indemnify its employees to the extent that they are not already indemnified by the school district.” He went on further to explain that the insurance policies that the district has, both for premises liability and also for the employees which is the errors and omissions, protect the district from suit as the public school district for the acts of those people acting in the capacity of a public school teacher as provided by the statute. He suspected that the Laborers have their own insurance as well to cover any errors and omissions by their employees or by any premises liability they may be subject to. The school department is the lessee of the building so they have to have premises liability, That covers the district; it doesn’t necessarily cover a lawsuit. As an example, a Laborers’ person is teaching a class and negligence is alleged to have happened, and there was a question as to whether or not it was the teacher’s fault, was it a slip and fall on the property and he or she would sue everybody, the district’s insurance would cover it, and the Laborers’ insurance would cover them. That is what the district is paying for. He didn’t think the district was paying for coverage for the Laborers but rather for coverage for itself. In the statute that refers to central services and the rights to charge them, none of them are included as items the district can charge back. There are specific items mentioned that the district is allowed to charge. Those items are transportation, food services, custodial services, maintenance, curriculum, media services, library, nursing and warehousing. Mr.

**Traficante added that the Laborers pay for custodial and secretarial services. Mr. Archetto asked who picks up the insurance for the students when they go out on site for various jobs, and Mr. Piccirilli explains that if there is a Laborers' person and a Cranston Public Schools' teacher accompanying those students on the job site and the student has an accident and an allegation is made that there was improper supervision by the**

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**teacher and the Laborers' person, both of them will be sued. The district's insurance will cover for the alleged negligence of the teacher, and the Laborers would cover for the allegations of any negligence by the Laborers' person. Mr. Archetto asked if it would make any difference if the student wasn't a Cranston resident, and Mr. Piccirilli said no.**

**Mr. Stycos referred to the rental fees that people pay to rent the gym. He indicated that administration had supplied information indicating that it was approximately \$90,000 a year. It seems to him that this should be a part of the regular budget just because it is a public facility, and it is money being paid to a public facility; and the expenditure of that money should be controlled by a public body which is the committee. However, that doesn't seem to be the case. He asked if there was any reason for that. He was thinking of offering an amendment to make sure that happens. Mr. Balducci responded**

that he believed that it was supposed to be a break-even situation. He believed that was the reason it was not reflected in the operating budget. Both the revenues and expenditures were shown as the agency fund that he maintains. The money comes in and it is spent. At the end of the year, it is a break-even situation. The district is not looking to make a profit on any of these organizations. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Balducci to think about this. He said that he would bring up this issue on Wednesday evening. He noted that this is public money, and he thought it was similar to the situation in Providence where they were in trouble with their Parks Department in that the Parks Commissioner was keeping parks fees from the City Council so that they could ensure that the money went to the parks. He understood that when the school department rents a building there is a cost with a custodian, and obviously they would have to pay those costs. He believed the breakdown was approximately \$70,000 to the custodian and \$20,000 went to supplies and materials. There was some flexibility there, and he felt that money should be in the district's budget and the committee should have their eyes on it as the public body in charge of school properties.

Mr. Stycos referred to the match coaches and asked where they were located in the budget. It was his understanding that there are 1.5 now, that they work in the elementary schools, that the proposal is to go from 1.5 to 4 and have them cover both elementary and middle schools and the money to create those extra 2.5 are coming out of the high schools. Mr. Scherza explained that Mr. Stycos was correct. As

the administration had stated in their presentation the first evening to the committee and to the public, the funding for those positions would come from the compacting at the secondary level which was previously discussed. There are three new math coach positions they are looking for and would come from that funding. The math coaches would be deployed not only to the remainder of the elementary schools but also enter into the middle level educational system. Since this is one of the areas administration is looking to improve performance; they are going the same route they did with Literacy coaches. The past has shown that if they put the resources they get results. They are trying to beef it up now because it is an area of weakness they have identified. Mr.

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Laliberte added that one of the things they were discussing today with the math coaches and the math department chairs is begin with the 6th grade in the middle schools using part of one of the match coaches to deal with the transition of students from 5th grade to 6th grade.

Mr. Stycos stated that there is a full-time reading teacher at Horton, and the committee was told that a .4 reading teacher at Horton was paid for with Title 1 funds. He asked if the one teacher is .4 Title 1 and 60% school department funds. Mr. Laliberte responded that the school has a 1.0 reading consultant and the .4 is over and above that

which services approximately 27 students who qualify for Title 1 services. That is a second position.

Mr. Stycos referred to page 3B of the health report and indicated that there were some numbers on the health report that he didn't understand. It looked like the district had spent less than was budgeted. Mr. Balducci commented that he wished that were the case that the district spent less than budgeted. In most years recently, it has been going the other way. He referred to the estimated claims and administrative projections, that is the working rate that the underwriting department of the particular carrier is suggesting what is going to be spent. In some cases, unfortunately, they estimated. One year it came in at 109% and another year at 105%. Then there were some good years at 85% and 89%. For the past couple of years, he has not used the underwriters' projection of what they refer to as the working rate. He has built the budget on the prior year actual and then moved it forward 10% or 11% and adjusted it along the way. He referred to 04-05 and indicated that the district was pretty close to the \$15 million that is being identified for that year, but if he used the actual working rate as suggested by the carrier, he would have added another \$3 million to last year's budget. He chose not to do it that way but rather on the prior year actual and adjusted it for the percent increase. Mr. Walsh attempted to show the underwriters' projection plus or minus 5%. Mr. Scherza asked Mr. Balducci if this was due in part to the fact for the reason the way it was being calculated to come in line with exactly what the city

administration does. This was done for the first time in 04-05. Mr. Balducci said he sat down with Mr. Barron and chose to budget it using prior year actual and used a percent increase above that figure.

Mr. Lupino mentioned that one of the speakers, Mr. Angilly, gave the committee a spreadsheet and commented that the expenditure for Cranston East was \$2,000 less than Cranston West. He meant to make the point earlier and apologizes for it. It appears that Mr. Angilly grossly underestimated the population of Cranston West at 1,282. He didn't know what other figures on the spreadsheet were incorrect. He obviously forgot approximately 500 students at Cranston West. He asked Mr. Laliberte if part of the difference is due to the fact that Cranston West is totally handicapped accessible and Cranston East is not and that there are courses associated with special needs students. Mr. Laliberte responded that this would be part of the reason. Mr. Lupino noted that Mr. Angilly's numbers were way off. He had 1,730 students at

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Cranston East and 1,282 at Cranston West, and it is a fact that Cranston West has approximately 1,700 students.

Mrs. Greifer referred to page 200, computer software. She noted that for 04-5 the actual is \$1,900, next year it is budgeted for \$10,000, and

**this coming year it is budgeted for \$92,000. She asked Mr. Balducci for an explanation as to why the numbers were fluctuating. Mr. Balducci explained that approximately \$90,000 of the \$92,000 is to support the licensing for School Max which is the new student information system that the school district implemented this year. For the first year, this year, there was no cost to the district because it was entirely funded by a RIDE grant, but moving into the second year and thereafter, there is a per-student cost. In Cranston's case, it is \$8.00 per student. He budgeted approximately \$88,000 for the licensing fee and put in an additional \$2,000 because this is the district's first year and they may have to purchase some additional supplies. If he didn't have to do that, it would have gone from \$10,000 to \$2,000 next year; and that line item would have been cut.**

**Mrs. Greifer referred to page 198, coverage, and asked what the item was. In response, Mr. Balducci explained that this account is used in several instances. If a district administrator is out on a medical leave and the position has to be covered, and as an example if an elementary principal is out on medical leave and the district has to bring in a retiree to cover the school for a short period of time, this is the account where he will charge the expenditure. He has used this account in the past when an administrator leaves the district and they have to pay him vacation time. That would be charged to this account as well.**

**Mrs. Greifer referred to page 194, property insurance. She asked why**

it jumped from almost \$108,000 in 04-05 to more than double in the 05-06 budget and it is a bit more for 06-07. Mr. Balducci explained that in 05-06 the insurance carrier, the RI Interlocal Trust, wanted to be reimbursed for approximately two to three bad years as far as liability claims were concerned. In the past, there were a number of water claims where pipes froze during the winter months. The carrier was paying out all this money, but they weren't asking for reimbursement for those particular years. Unfortunately, during the 05-06 year that bill came due. When they were rating the district for that year, that is when the district took the hit.

Mrs. Greifer referred to page 192, fluctuation. She noted that it went from \$90,000 actual in 04-05 to \$16,000 in last year's budget, up to \$15,000 in the coming year's budget. Mr. Balducci explained that this is an account where he would budget district wide curriculum development or professional development. Because this year the state is giving the district more money, and once he accommodates what the teachers will be paid for PDI, and this year they are giving more money to the schools, administration chose not to budget as much because between the district level appropriation and money being given to the schools, they felt they did not have to budget as much in this

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area. Mr. Stycos asked how the total compares because he noticed

there were curriculum accounts under each school. Mr. Balducci responded that all the schools added together, it amounts to between \$90,000 and \$99,000. Mr. Stycos noted that it is approximately the same as the 04-05 actual.

Mrs. Greifer referred to page 190 of the budget, performance. She noted that it appeared to be a relatively new category. Mr. Balducci explained that this first came into existence three years ago. It is the account that is used to allocate the raise for central office administrators, he being one of them. In 03-04 and in 04-05, it shows zero because during the first budget revision, money that was originally budgeted in that location was then placed in the salary account of the administrator. This year there is \$8,600 remaining in that account, and next year approximately \$21,000 which will be the projected raises of central office administrators and in some cases step increases as well.

Mr. Archetto said it was his understanding that there is an \$8,600 surplus from last year's budget, and Mr. Balducci said he was incorrect. It is in the 05-06 budget; there is \$8,500 still unspent. Mr. Archetto indicated to Mr. Balducci that he was asking for an additional \$21,500, and Mr. Balducci said he was correct. The \$8,500 will not be added to that figure.

Ms. Iannazzi referred to page 197, director of human resources. She noted that it is reflecting a \$7,000 plus raise. She asked if this was a

**\$7,000 raise or the result of a misprint from this year's current budget. Mr. Balducci indicated that he believed the 2005-2006 amount budget wise is understated. He believed the position is being paid at a higher level. The amount in the budget was not fixed in the first budget revision so it does look like a larger than normal raise if one goes budget to budget. If one were to go actual salary to proposed budget, it is a much smaller increase.**

**Ms. Iannazzi said that she submitted a question in writing, and hopefully she would have an answer by Wednesday evening. She asked for a breakdown of what the five special education directors do. The line item is listed on page 193. Mr. Scherza commented that the administrators got together this morning, and they will be delivered tomorrow to the committee's homes. Mr. Stycos had some questions as well, and they will be included in the same packet.**

**Mr. Stycos referred to page 173 and noted that it appeared that an Alternative Education assistant director had been added. Mr. Scherza explained that this was added this year by the committee in approximately November 2005, and the person was appointed. The position was always there but had not been formalized. Mr. Balducci added that the position was paid for out of the teacher account. The AEP has had an assistant for quite some time. He tried to clean up the accounting of it, so as Mr. Scherza mentioned, the position was formalized as assistant director, so he re-allocated**

money from a teacher account and placed it into the assistant director's account. Mr. Scherza commented that administration did not add any dollars to that. That was the salary the individual had been making.

Mr. Stycos asked what was happening with the computer accounts. He noted that it seemed that there was a huge amount of money that is being added to them. He said that there are elementary computers, middle school computers, high school computers, and a general account. When he added up the actuals for those accounts in the 04-05 year, it is approximately \$25,000. In this budget, what is being proposed is approximately \$270,000. Mr. Balducci explained that he is replenishing the reserve level of the district level reserve accounts.

They budgeted approximately \$1 million district wide, \$750,000 they spread out among the schools so they can buy their consumables, approximately \$250,000 was set aside in district level accounts. Those accounts mentioned are referred to as district level reserve accounts. In prior years he reflects what is actually spent, and then in the following year when he builds a budget back up, he grosses up those accounts to get back to the \$250,000 level. Mr. Stycos said there is \$1 million in extra supplies in the budget over actuals. Mr. Balducci said that every year he budgets \$1 million for annual order allocation. Unfortunately, he has had to level fund it. He hasn't added money in a few years of which 75% is given to the schools, and

then he holds back 25%. Mr. Stycos asked how it relates to last year, and Mr. Balducci responded that last year there were other areas in the budget where he had to spend that \$250,000. That is where the expenditure ended up some of which met the definition that he could put it into the computer accountant, some may have been used for utilities, and some elsewhere in the budget. To start off the next fiscal year, he is grossing up the budget again reflecting \$1 million for total purchases, \$250,000 of which will be district level and \$750,000 will be given to the schools. For this year there is approximately \$250,000 which is a part of the \$1 million. Mr. Stycos noted that the pink book has the \$1 million; the budget that they are operating in this year has \$1 million also. It is just in different accounts. Mr. Stycos stated that this issue has to be addressed because it is impossible to track these items.

## **VIII. Public Hearing on Non-agenda Items**

**There were no speakers on non-agenda items.**

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## **IX. Adjourn**

**Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Mr. Traficante and unanimously carried that the work session be adjourned.**

**There being no further business to come before the work session, it was adjourned at 10:35 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Anthony J. Lupino**

**Clerk**