

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2006

WILLIAM A. BRIGGS BUILDING

845 PARK AVENUE

PUBLIC WORK SESSION: 7:00 P.M.

MINUTES

A public work session of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date in the William A. Briggs Building Reed Conference Room with the following members present: Mr. Archetto (arrived at 7:20 p.m.), Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lupino, and Mr. Stycos. Mr. Palumbo and Mr. Traficante were excused from this work session. Also attending were Mr. Scherza, Mr. Nero, and Mr. Zisseron.

The work session was called to order at 7:14 p.m. The roll was called.

I. Energy Conservation

Mr. Lupino mentioned that this subject came back to the School Committee because Mr. Stycos re-introduced his proposal at a recent meeting. This is a proposal that a lot of the School Committee members over the past several years wanted to go forth with. They

were prevented the last time because the legal ad for the RFP was flawed in some sense, and the second ad that came forward brought in some people who wanted to do something with capital expenditures which the School Committee could not do on their own because they would have to put it into the capital budget. Mr. Stycos now feels as he did originally that the district should start with the education component first. They should get some savings first. All of the companies the committee interviewed before came forward with projected savings without any cost to the district. The committee should start that way and then go forward.

Mr. Scherza recalled sitting through a number of meetings, and the biggest issue is what mode did the committee want to go through whether it be retrofitting equipment or education first. Mr. Lupino commented that the last committee's intent was to look at the educational component first. He recalled Mr. Zisseron saying that there can't be a lot of savings without spending some money on retrofitting. The intention of the last committee was to realize some savings and then take those funds and put them back into the asset protection budget which the committee can control and do some retrofitting with those funds. Mr. Scherza believed that the last formal action the committee took was to write a letter to the City Council asking them to join the School Committee. To his knowledge, the committee hasn't heard anything back.

Mrs. Greifer remarked that this is one of the focuses of the

City/School Department Consolidation Committee. It has been discussed a number of times. The City is very interested in doing this. She explained to that committee the School Committee's

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attempts to do it. Mr. Lupino noted that it is dumped into a committee just like something gets dumped into a committee at the State House. If someone doesn't really want to act on something right away, it is sent to committee and floats there. It came from one School Committee, went to another School Committee, and went through a couple of advertisements. The committee knows what it can do, and it can go ahead with the educational component. That won't change if they do something with the City. Mrs. Greifer added that if the committee goes forward with an education program, the committee is still looking to the City because they have the authority to bind the school department to a contract. Mr. Lupino indicated that if the company selected then takes three or six month periods and realizes some savings, and the committee can project out some savings and make a presentation through the Consolidation Committee indicating that savings realized and express an interest to the join the City who possibly could pick up some of the expenses, both could jointly purchase some asset protection.

Mr. Zisseron told the committee that Mr. Balducci and Mrs. Greifer attended an information session on energy savings. Subsequently,

Mr. Balducci and Mr. Zisseron met with Constellation Energy about their conducting an audit. This is the same organization that the school department buys their energy from. They would come in with engineers to look at each individual school and then come back with a recommendation of what had to be done in each school, what the cost would, and what the buy-back period would be. They are tentatively scheduled for next week to start the audit at all the schools. They will then know what the expenditures would be for each individual school with regard to electric only. Mr. Lupino asked if the district would be obligated to them because of the audit, and Mrs. Greifer responded that this is a service they provide as a part of the overall contract with them. She and Mr. Balducci recently found out about this at the meeting they attended. They mentioned this as one of their services.

Mr. Stycos stated that the committee needs to go at this in a number of ways. The last thing that hasn't been done is that as part of the budget somehow it didn't get in the budget when the final copy was put together, but it was voted unanimously that there be an energy conservation program that emphasizes education to be implemented by July 1st. Mrs. Greifer suggested that the proposed RFP should be examined by an attorney to make sure this time it is done right. Mr. Lupino noted that it was not the intention to exclude anyone who had a program who was trying to turn it into thermostats and upgrades on burners, etc. One of the companies told the committee to save the money or see the savings and then go into buying equipment. He

further commented that the audit would be a start, and an RFP should be developed.

Mr. Zisseron asked if the committee was referring to educating teachers, custodians, and students, and Mr. Stycos responded that if the committee were to go with an educational component, they would hire someone who would focus on energy who works with one of these companies, and then that person starts doing whatever is

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recommended to save energy. Mrs. Greifer added that this person would be similar to the energy person hired in Warwick.

Mr. Zisseron stated that the teachers have to learn about energy; they have to be educated about turning off lights when they are in and out of the classrooms. They control a lot of the usage. Students have to be educated as well. Mr. Zisseron commented that a lot of energy can be saved in house with the staff and students. He could send out a memo to the principals indicating that they make sure the staff shuts off the lights when they go to lunch, etc., but many times it doesn't happen because they are not in the habit of doing it. Mr. Lupino indicated that there is a cost related to the programs, but several of them have said that if the district didn't realize a savings there is no cost to the district. Mrs. Greifer noted that there are additional benefits. When the district has an energy manager, that is

the person's focus. It wouldn't be one of Joel's hats. That is how the district received the money to retrofit the exhausts on the buses. This originally came from an energy manager who was aware of a grant because that is all he focused on. Mr. Zisseron remarked that this district applied for that grant as well, but it was ranked 170. If 169 people said no, then Cranston would have received their share of the money. They give it to the big companies such as First Student, Laidlaw, or Pilgrim. First Student received the grant, and they retrofitted their buses. They had to spend the rest of the money by the end of June, and knowing that, this person graciously called Cranston indicating that he had spent as much money as he could and asked if Cranston was interested. Warwick did not get the grant. The students and the teachers still have to be educated on energy. Mrs. Greifer indicated that she thought this was an original part of the presentation. Mr. Lupino noted that it is a comprehensive program. It does not start with the custodians or the maintenance people. It educates the staff and the students. Mr. Zisseron commented that this is all good, but it still stems to the classroom, the principal, and the students understanding electricity. This should be brought down to the first grade level. There could be a contest among the schools competing against each other to determine who could lower the electricity for the month or for the year. The School Committee could award the school with whatever the committee chooses to do. Mrs. Greifer added that this could be a factor with whatever company they choose to do it. Mr. Stycos assumed that the company would work quite closely with Mr. Zisseron because they would want to hear his

ideas, and they would bounce their ideas off Mr. Zisseron. There was a discussion regarding the energy person's salary. Mr. Zisseron added that he was not indicating that this project was not worth the money, but he would like to see the program getting into the classrooms working with the teachers and the students. Mr. Stycos noted that the RFP could be written in such a way to include this information.

Mr. Scherza indicated that any of the companies who would make presentations would tell the committee how they would work and whether or not they go into classrooms. That is all a part of the presentation. Mr. Lupino stated that he did not have a preference for the original company, but the committee was set to award to them.

They

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had a lot of success in Warwick and North Kingstown so they had success in areas of the Northeast that had similar systems to Cranston where there are buildings that were built in the 60's and 70's and buildings built in the 20's and 30's. Someone at the meeting said that they had added on a benefit package to the salary. This is an energy manager who would not be a member of any bargaining unit or any representative group. The person would not be a member of CASA or CAMS. It is an individual position.

Mrs. Greifer asked who would prepare the RFP, and Mr. Zisseron responded that the Business Office would prepare it. Mr. Zisseron suggested that someone from the School Committee should work with the Business Office to be sure that the RFP says what they want it to say. Mr. Lupino commented that Mr. Balducci knows the problem the committee ran into the last time, so he was sure that Mr. Balducci would discuss it with Mr. Piccirilli. Before the RFP is advertised, it should be presented to the School Committee for their perusal. Mr. Stycos stated that he was concerned that this be accomplished and that the committee has someone on board by July 1st. Mrs. Greifer suggested that the RFP could be sent to the committee in their update. If anyone had a problem with it, they could notify Mr. Balducci.

Mr. Lupino asked for a consensus from the committee members present to issue an RFP again and that it be presented to the committee before it is advertised. Mr. Scherza indicated that he would ask Mr. Balducci to draft an RFP, discuss it with Mr. Piccirilli, and then submit it to the committee for their perusal. If Mr. Balducci doesn't receive a response, positive or negative, it will go forward. If there are responses, he would make the appropriate amendments to it. Mr. Lupino noted that in addition to the regular advertising, it could be mailed to some of the assumed interested parties such as Energy Education, Conn Edison, and Siemens. Mrs. Greifer stated that she didn't think this was necessary because all of these companies are aggressive. Mr. Zisseron added that Siemens will

come in trying to sell an educational program tied into thermostats and boilers. Mr. Lupino responded that this is not what the RFP will say. Mr. Scherza commented that the last time when more people presented they were not addressing the specifications noted in the RFP, but they were bringing in something else that was not specified. Mr. Lupino noted that by the time they responded to the RFP the second time, they developed an education program. They didn't have one prior to that time.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Zisseron to notify the committee when the audits have been completed. Mr. Lupino asked the name of the company, and Mrs. Greifer responded that the name is Constellation.

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II. Outside Rental of Facilities

Mr. Stycos stated that he had requested that this subject be placed on the agenda because when the committee was discussing the budget Mr. Zisseron had commented that he generally doesn't rent to groups outside of Cranston such as AAU. He asked if there was an opportunity to make some money with outside rentals. Mrs. Greifer asked if the district receives many inquiries about outside rentals,

and Mr. Zisseron responded that he does get many inquiries. He further commented that during the basketball season, the gyms are utilized by the sports groups. CLCF soccer and basketball use them often. The Recreation Program also runs a couple of night programs.

From November to approximately February or March, the gyms are utilized by Cranston organizations. He emphasized this because he feels the gyms should be available for Cranston organizations. Most of the kids are respectful to the schools themselves. He has experienced outsiders coming into the facilities, and there has been vandalism and the kids are not controlled as well. When he is dealing with a local organization that has local people, they have a vested interest in the building. This is not to say that the Cranston people don't cause problems once in a while. He receives inquiries from AAU Basketball and a swim club using the Park View pool which makes him very nervous with regard to the liability. When an organization rents a gym or an auditorium for an event, they have to provide the school department with a \$1 million liability policy. They have to provide a certificate of insurance made out to Cranston Public Schools for \$1 million. With regard to the pool rental, there has to be a certified life guard on the premises, and it is very expensive when it is constantly used. The more it is used, the more it has to be cleaned. He has also received inquiries from dance studios outside of Cranston. The dance recitals that he has allowed into the schools have been sponsored by the PTO groups. They have the classes every week for the students, and then they have a dance recital at the end of the school year. He referred to the School

Committee policy regarding rentals. He believed that there is reference made to non-profit organizations and not for-profit organizations. He has inquiries from churches. A church will be renting Cranston East auditorium for three days for an Easter pageant, but it is a local organization. He has had inquiries from churches that are outside of Cranston as well.

Mr. Scherza pointed out that the school department is insured for liability through the Interlocal Trust, and they put out a newsletter approximately two years ago. They referred to the Pateaude Festival in Burrillville or Glocester. Every time a school committee allows a rental or a facility to be used, by extension they become an agent here, and the district assumes the responsibility as if they were a part of this organization. Mr. Lupino noted that the Interlocal has a policy that is referred to as the Tulip Policy that is a temporary rider for that particular event. It is not very expensive, but it is something that other towns have required. Anyone who rents a facility must adhere to it.

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Mr. Archetto commented that it was his understanding that the district rents out the gyms and the auditoriums. He asked if the cafeterias are ever rented out, and Mr. Zisseron said that it is done very infrequently. There is one organization who has been renting

one classroom for many years. Mr. Archetto asked if the school department could make some money if they got into the business of renting facilities, and Mr. Zisseron said that they could make money.

Mrs. Greifer asked how much money could be made, and Ms. Iannazzi asked at what expense would the district make money. Ms. Iannazzi also asked if Cranston groups would be alienated and locked out from renting a facility.

Mr. Lupino indicated that Edgewood Youth Hockey rents Providence College, Schneider Arena. Providence College has the absolute exclusive right for ice time at Schneider Arena anytime they want it. So, an outside agency rents knowing that if PC makes the playoff on a certain weekend, PC will be using the rink. They still pay the rental, but PC uses the rink. If the committee decides to do this, this will have to be understood that if an outside agency rents a facility, they will pay up front, and if a Cranston West team makes the playoffs and needs the gym for playoff practice, West will get the gym. Mr. Zisseron stated that this is the policy now. Any group he rents to understands that if the freshmen are using Western Hills gym for practice, the outside group can't use the gym until after practice is over. Peters School is rented to a soccer league, and if Peters has a school dance, the soccer league can't use it. It is always the school first. Any school event has priority. With regard to how much money could be generated, Mr. Zisseron commented that he was unsure as to the amount. If the word gets around, the district may realize approximately \$10,000 to \$15,000. When all is said and done, the

added expenses—more paper goods—toilet paper and paper towels, and at the end of the year, Mr. Balducci takes out a portion of the money and puts it into either an electrical account or a heating account. Mr. Lupino added that the rental fee pays for the custodian. He also commented that if the committee decides to do this, it should not be a money losing thing; it should be a revenue generating thing. Mrs. Greifer asked what would happen if there are damages to a building. Mr. Zisseron responded that many of the organizations don't own up to vandalism caused by the kids in their organization. Chasing the rental fees was a big issue, but it is getting better. A custodian gets paid a minimum of three hours for an event at time and one-half. If the event occurs on a Sunday, it is double time. Sometimes he has waited from four to six months to get paid. Mr. Lupino suggested that the organization pay up front for the use of a facility, and they would have to pay for it whether they use it or not. Mr. Zisseron added that he didn't want to make it complicated; he could make it work.

Mr. Archetto stated that it is a maximum of \$20,000 in revenue that could be realized. Mr. Stycos asked for the current School Committee policy on the rental of the facilities. Depending upon what is in the policy, he would put something together stating that school events are first and Cranston outside events are second. It would be a priority list. The committee would look to Mr. Zisseron to fix a rate that would bring some

revenue into the district. In addition, the policy would contain information about payment and insurance coverage so that it makes sense from a business standpoint. The committee could place it on the agenda for further discussion.

Mrs. Greifer stated that she was concerned if there was a catastrophic event where a couple of kids were killed for whatever reason. She asked if the committee was exposing themselves, even with \$1 million in liability coverage. Mr. Scherza stated that the district has \$3 million liability per person per event. That is why he pointed out the Pataude Festival in Burrillville that is held every year. A tree limb broke and fell on a person and the city was deemed liable for all injuries and damages. Once the committee sanctions it, it becomes an extension of them. Mr. Zisseron explained that everyone is exposed to liability. Even if there is a certificate of insurance and a person trips, that person will get a lawyer and include the district in a lawsuit. Mr. Lupino added that the Tulip Insurance he referred to previously deals with these types of situations. It should be required that this Tulip Insurance be offered to any of the organizations that want to rent the facilities.

Mr. Lupino commented that if this does pass, it should be considered where the generated funds will go. He asked if the funds would stay with the school that is being rented out; if the funds would go into an

athletic budget or an arts budget. Mr. Zisseron stated that if the committee's goal is to make money, he feels very strongly that Plant Operations should get a portion of that money because sometimes when the department has a few dollars it buys the snow blowers they need, the lawn mowers they need; and it buys equipment that most the time is not funded correctly. It is a matter of the way the budget always ends up. If the committee goes forward with this and there is some level of success, he wants his cut of the profits because it will help him buy the equipment he needs.

Mr. Scherza indicated to the committee that they know Cranston better than he does and asked if this is a situation where if the district brings in \$20,000 and it is identified in the budget, the district wouldn't be getting an additional \$20,000. The city would indicate that the school department has to make \$20,000 in the budget as revenue, and that will be a part of the credit of the city. Mr. Lupino added that if the school department makes money on the gate receipts at the Stadium for the Thanksgiving Day Game that gets put into the budget as miscellaneous revenue. Mr. Scherza explained that if the district doesn't make their projection, that basically will build in a deficit. He asked if this would be under the committee's control to say that this would be in addition to the budget that can be targeted into a separate account or does it become a part of miscellaneous revenue as a part of the budget. Mr. Lupino indicated that this has been done at Orchard Farms where the district rented out a portion of the rooms there. It is not a new area. Mr. Zisseron

felt that it goes into an expenditure account. Mr. Lupino said that it has also been done to a lesser degree at Stone Hill with a special program.

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Mr. Scherza noted that the money has to be spent for what it has been brought in for. Mr. Stycos stated that, absent some other direction, it should go into the general account.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Zisseron if there were any areas he didn't wish to get involved in, and Mr. Zisseron indicated that he didn't wish to get involved with the pool. The pool is a tremendous liability. It would be mainly the auditoriums and the gyms. Mr. Stycos asked if the committee members would like to exclude the use of the pool, and Mr. Lupino responded that it should be excluded. Mrs. Greifer and Ms. Iannazzi stated that they are leery of the whole thing. Mr. Stycos responded that the district can take care of its own community first. Mr. Archetto added that the Cranston organizations could be given first preference. Ms. Iannazzi commented that she received calls from CLCF parents constantly who are upset that the gyms are not available when they want them. The gyms they do rent are too expensive. Mr. Zisseron commented that CLCF has always felt that they should not have to pay for gyms. Ms. Iannazzi felt that the phone calls would triple if AAU is allowed to rent the gyms. Mr.

Lupino added that CLCF hockey is not exclusive to Cranston residents, so he didn't know about CLCF wrestling, soccer or basketball. Mr. Zisseron thought that CLCF soccer and basketball are all Cranston residents.

Mr. Zisseron commented that he had a conversation with the City Recreation Director today, and he mentioned to Mr. Zisseron that Councilman Livingston is planning on submitting an ordinance that if one person is on a team and they are a resident of Cranston that any field should be made available to them.

Mr. Archetto referred to a study done by the School Committee in Warwick. There is a law that logos cannot be placed on the outside of a school bus. However, there is no law that states that logos cannot be placed on the inside of a bus. The School Committee did some research and determined that they can possibly earn \$250,000 to \$300,000 in revenue. If the buses are privatized, then this committee cannot go in that direction. Right now, the district has its own buses.

He would like some feedback as to whether or not a sub-committee should be formed to look into this. Mr. Zisseron checked with bus inspections, and he talked with Mr. DiMascio who is in charge of the school bus office at the Registry of Motor Vehicles. They will not allow anyone to do anything inside the bus because when one paints advertising over the rivets, they are preventing inspection of the rivets on the inside of the bus. They will not allow this based upon that ruling. Warwick's large buses are privatized, but the small buses

are owned by the district.

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III. Proposed Technical Education Course Offerings

Mr. Scherza stated that the proposed technical education course offerings grew out of the fact that with the Cranston High School East renovations, woodshop and automotive would be out of commission. Administration probably would not bring woodshop back into Cranston East, but they would do more programs to prepare students for the future that are more contemporary.

Mr. Paul Graves, Technology Education Coordinator for Cranston Public Schools, and Mr. Chuck Boucher, Department Head of Technology Education and President of Technology Teachers Association joined the work session. Mr. Graves indicated that Mr. Boucher has been extremely helpful in meeting deadlines and developing courses.

Mr. Lupino stated that Cranston High School East offers technology education, and there is a Career and Technical Center that comes under the guise of the state at Cranston, but yet there are some

technical education classes at Cranston West that are outside of the scope of the Career and Technical Center. He asked how this all ties together. Mr. Boucher responded that in order for a teacher to teach in a vocational setting, one needs five years of industrial experience as a minimum to teach in a vocational area. Technology education majors go to RI College for a typical four-year program and graduate with a degree in technology education. In that program, there is Central Connecticut State University that offers a very good program. In that program, they will train a student to teach electronics, computer aided design, construction, and manufacturing. It is broad based so that one can go into a comprehensive public high school and offer the gamut to the entire school population. In his system, very few kids choose the vocational setting. Most of the kids stay in the comprehensive tracks. His community realized early on in the game that their best and brightest as well as their entire population need exposure to high tech skills. In his classrooms at the high school, he teaches bio technology, engineering design, 3-D animation, wood construction, robotics, electronics, and computer design and repair in a comprehensive program. Mr. Lupino asked if they teach plumbing or HVAC, and Mr. Boucher responded that those interested students would attend Woonsocket Vocational. They would have it three hours a day for three years. Mr. Scherza added that this is something Cranston would have at the Career and Technical Center because it would be a full program. These are courses in what use to be called shop. These are individual courses and not a full program. Mr. Boucher added that shop has evolved

quite a bit over the years out of necessity. Typically these would be one-year courses that would be offered to the students of any ability level. In his present classes at the high school, he would have typically the top 10% of the class of every class in his classes along with special needs students. He has the gamut on a daily basis. Because his school has engineering and design, his students tend to go on to college, tend to become engineers, and tend to become doctors and nurses from his bio tech program. They have not had the courses like they would at a vocational school; they

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have had it for one year. If they had engineering in their sophomore year and have bio tech their junior year, and in the bio tech class they will use the skills learned in the engineering class to be designing prosthesis where they then go to Johnson Laboratories and fabricate prosthesis based on the best designs. The kids are getting real world experience doing very interesting things, and from a career orientation perspective, it can't be beat. By the time they are done with those kinds of courses, engineering design in particular, they are being shown why they need that math course. They are being shown how they can apply what they are learning in AP calculus, geometry, and trigonometry. When he was in school he was always saying he wouldn't be using the material.

Mr. Scherza commented that one of the reasons administration

started looking into this is to take the place of lower end kids who are not college bound, and who are not going to be taking calculus. It is to replace courses for that portion of the population who would be taking things such as woodshop. Mr. Boucher stated that courses such as these, engineering and design, and 3-D animation for next year, they offer to the student who is of mid range to lower mid range skills, it can give that student a solid background in engineering design with Solid Works. The student can graduate from high school and start at \$32,000. If he knows Solid Works Software and AutoCad Software, he can go to almost any company around here and tell them that he can handle 2-D, 3-D, understands the design process, and has fabricated prototypes. He can show them his portfolio and be able to find meaningful employment. With many of his students when they get into the work environment, these companies pay for their educations while they work for them. For the high end student, he will be motivated and turned on to engineering and design and go on to Northeastern, Worcester Poly Technical Institute, and URI has an excellent five-year program now. He has put through close to 37 students in the past seven years, and they are all making a lot more money than he does when they graduate. The typical starting salary for these students is \$65,000 to \$68,000 to start.

Mr. Boucher went on to say that it is a comprehensive high school program and is not meant to be a vocational program. A two-year succession of courses could be done at a comprehensive level, but it won't be a four-year continuum where the focus is really focused.

This is more his idea of a high school experience as well as a middle school experience in an exploratory environment where they are being exposed to a broad range of technical skills and a broad range of careers that they may not have thought about or knew existed. It is estimated now that approximately 60% of the jobs five years from now don't exist today. If the students can receive cutting edge skills combined with a solid math, science, English, and the ability to communicate effectively, the school districts are setting them up for success as opposed to restricting them to math, science, and English where the drop out rate goes through the roof because they don't see the relevance and are bored. Consequently, they quit school.

Courses likes

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these will keep kids coming to school every day. He hears so many times during the day that the only reason they come to school is for this class.

Mr. Scherza added that in addition to the things Mr. Boucher was telling the committee, it also addresses the elimination of study halls.

These courses provide another whole avenue of alternatives to study halls for literally every range of student from the very lowest to the

very advanced and those in between.

By providing skills, it will help prepare the students more for the future than the district traditionally has. These would be elective courses.

Mr. Boucher explained that in his school they have six people in the technology department, and they offer a very broad range of courses to the students. Their middle school program has two teachers; one takes care of the business perspective and the other takes care of the technology perspective. Regarding the middle school exposure, they work through the entire student population for a one quarter segment and expose them to as much technology as they can so that when they get to the high school they have a clue. They may not be savvy, but they will have a clue as to what interests them so they can pursue it when they get to the high school level. Mr. Lupino commented that he thought it was going beyond the scope of the students this district was addressing or plan on addressing.

Mr. Boucher made a Power Point presentation to the School Committee highlighting his students projects in the engineering class. He commented that he has students with IEP's in his classes as well as the Class Valedictorian. He and his students tackle real world projects. He wants to show them how to apply the math, science, and English skills that they have acquired and use them in a meaningful way to solve a problem because this what anyone does for a living on a daily basis. This year his students did a community

service project which they chose. They came up with the idea to build a memorial park for all the kids they lost to Cancer and for the accident victims who didn't get to graduate. Many times the ones who are not the most elite in the class come up with the most creative and artistic design ideas. They may not know how to create them completely, but their ideas are very well respected and often times are followed through. Mr. Boucher added that it is not meant to be a vocational program but rather to expose the student body to avenues that they may have never considered where there are good opportunities out in the real world.

Mr. Lupino referred to the course descriptions that Mr. Graves distributed to the committee. Mr. Graves explained that these were a brief description of the courses being offered because deadlines were involved, and students had already signed up for the courses at Cranston East. Students were signed up already in auto, metals, and wood. They have been fighting that battle to get the students signed up. He also noted the constraint by the state not to have study halls. These descriptions went to the

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students via the guidance counselors, and the students were called in and offered these courses as substitute courses. It is a brief course description that is in the curriculum guide. He left off some of the information because he was afraid it would scare away some of the

students. Mr. Lupino commented that many of the courses involve a computer based situation, and knowing the constraints with computers, he asked how and if the district was obtaining additional computers for this. Mr. Graves indicated that they were and that they were looking to buy another twenty-seven computers. They will be able to handle the graphics in this program and in the automation program. Mr. Scherza added that some of the money is coming from grants for the software. Mr. Boucher stated that Solid Works would be used for the engineering course. Solid Works is an industry standard. Light Wave software is an animation course, and this is the industry standard in Hollywood. If he is going to develop a course, he would use the industry standard. If the student leaves the classroom and decides that he wants to pursue that career, he is well equipped to do so. Mr. Lupino asked the cost for licensing Solid Works and Light Wave, and Mr. Graves said it was approximately \$7,500. Mr. Boucher explained that if a person is a graphic designer, he or she would pay \$3,400 a seat for it. He uses these programs all the time. He use to have Auto Cad, but they came to him every year indicating that they liked the idea he was using Auto Cad for the students, but it would cost \$6,000 a year. Solid Works indicated to him that they see his students winning national competitions, and they want him to use their software instead of Auto Cad. They sold him 30 seats of their software for \$1,800. He asked what would happen if he couldn't afford to update next year, and they indicated there would be no problem; they just wouldn't have the most recent version. Light Wave conducts business the same way. With other

software companies, they take the software out at the end of the school year if they don't pay for it.

Mr. Boucher further commented that the version that the district will be purchasing is a network version where it is installed on the server, and if the lab in the B wing is being closed down because of renovations, the same software can be opened up in the A wing. In his case, he has 30 seats with a site license. If he has a class of 24, he can have 6 students in the media center on line doing it there as well. It is perfectly legal and legitimate. He has gone with these companies because it is an industry standard, and they are very understanding with educational systems. Light Wave will sell a district 20 seats for \$3,400, and that is the most recent version they have. This is an incredible price. They would charge a business person that same amount per seat. They are intelligent enough to understand that this is a marketing tool for them. When these students go to work in industry, they will want to work with Light Wave. The business owners will pay \$4,000 to Light Wave for one seat, and this is good business.

Mr. Graves explained that he has broken the courses down into semester courses because of the lateness of getting the students involved. It also upsets some of the other elective courses and gives a student a shot to get his feet wet and take the courses. The first part of the course is learning the software; the second part of the

course will get the student into the engineering concept. Mr. Lupino asked if the students who were already signed up for woodshop and auto mechanics were given first preference. They were given preference because they were called in by the guidance counselors and offered these courses individually. Mr. Scherza added that no one was registered because the master schedule wasn't done when they first started looking at this possibility. A request went home with all students of what they wanted to take. From that a master list is developed. Some had put in for woodshop and auto mechanics. Those students were the first ones called in by the counselors, so they have been notified first, the first ones to get the descriptions, the first ones to hear the explanations, so they have first dibs to say they want their names on the list first. Mr. Lupino asked if they have been given the option to take woodshop and auto mechanics at West, and Mr. Scherza responded that they would have to transfer because they would lose time in transit plus the two schools don't have parallel schedules. If someone wanted to go to West for one elective course, administration would probably say no at this point in time. If they want to go for a program which is a sequence of courses, much like JROTC, then the student could change schools. If a student wants a program at East that is not at West, it is the same situation. Administration is looking to offer these courses at both sites, because they can have people at both locations. Once the schedules are aligned, it would allow them to have students in both schools

working simultaneously on this program.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Graves who the engineer is at Cranston East who will be teaching this program, and Mr. Graves responded that all the teachers involved in this program have started a PDI Program with Mr. Boucher. There are thirteen people who are taking the course. Mr. Boucher added that the teachers do not need a five-year certification in technology to teach these courses; that is for vocational schools only. He is training Cranston's technology educators to have a comfort zone with the software and the course, and he is willing to share his curriculum and expertise. Mr. Nero added that he was an industrial arts teacher. They all come out of Rhode Island College with the course work. The teachers know that this is the area they have to go into. Cranston has the quality people at East in order to do this. Mr. Nero said that even a doctor who graduated ten years ago has to be re-trained in the new technology. They are constantly updating their skills. It was a breath of fresh air when they switched to technology. It is still the basic concepts but computer aided. Mr. Lupino indicated that he was trying to understand the two concepts. He knows there are vocational teachers who have spent twenty years as a chef, received their Bachelor Degree in general studies in the evening in order to obtain education credits. Mr. Boucher responded that it is significantly different to teach at a vocational school versus a high school. In a vocation school, often times the teachers have worked at a job for four or five years and then decide they want to teach it. They get

vocationally certified and teach that one thing at a vocational school in a four-year continuum. For tech ed, the teacher is trained in electronics, drafting design, construction, computers, engineering design, and animation. That is the program deliberately exposing the teacher to all these diverse

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areas so that when the teacher is in a school system, as the system evolves, he or she would evolve with it and feels comfortable.

Mr. Scherza commented that one of the tech ed teachers, Michael Boyajian, did mechanical drawing, woodworking, and some computer work. His specialty in this training has been technical education working with computers and Auto Cad. For the past several years, he has been relegated to teach four years of woodworking which is really not his specialty although he is certified to do that. People are trained to this. The only difference is they are using a new software they have not used before. Mr. Lupino hoped that this would generate some excitement with the students and also with the staff. Mr. Scherza commented that he used Mr. Boyajian as an example because he has been a good soldier to do it. He almost left this system last year to go to another system because he could teach industrial arts or tech ed in this computer technology course which he feels are the skills students need at East. Because he wasn't the senior person at East, he was relegated to teaching all woodworking

classes. He is thrilled about this and indicated that this is the way the district should be going. The department chair at Rhode Island College encouraged the district to get away from some of the dinosaur courses. The district no longer has the metal shop and mechanical drawing. The faculty is very excited and volunteered to be re-trained. Mr. Lupino asked why thirteen are being trained, and Mr. Graves responded that it was offered to everyone. One person is undergoing Cancer treatments and some are coaching.

Mr. Nero had a conversation with Dr. McLaughlin from Rhode Island College who is also a parent in his school. He still feels that the program at Western Hills is by far the best in the State and maybe the best in New England. When Mr. Nero saw this program, he was completely flipped by it. The part of the program that sold him the most was the fact that there is no requisite knowledge needed for the student who is difficult to educate, and this is what sold him the most about this program. If a student is delayed in middle school for whatever reason and then catches on in high school, he or she can still be fine with this program. He felt that his students at Western Hills would be on fire to learn this type of program. Mr. Lupino asked if it would be offered at West at some point. Mr. Graves responded that before any of this discussion had come up, he had ordered 15 sets of this software for West. They were going to use it for the drawing course for next year. Mr. Scherza added that it wasn't a thought until the building project at East was discussed. It was a springboard to have administration move very quickly. It will be

offered at West, but it will be done at East for the first year until it is implemented. It can also be done so that the district doesn't have two teachers at two different locations. They can be combined through a virtual classroom because it will be on line. Mr. Lupino added that this will be an alternative to the robotics course at the vocational school, and Mr. Boucher felt that it would complement the robotics course.

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Mr. Stycos asked why the decision was made to eliminate woodshop rather than add these courses in addition to woodshop. Mr. Scherza responded that woodshop is a dinosaur the way it has been taught. It is not the wave of the future. The woodshop course is more artsy craftsy as opposed to a construction program. The district is not preparing its students at the lower end with skills to go out into the world. They are not the same life skills they will have with the new program. They won't be able to teach woodshop or automotive for at least one year because of the building project at East, and it would be removed. Some things are sacred, but they should be re-evaluated every year to see what is sacred and not as sacred but also what new skills are emerging. Districts can't be so steeped on the things that are sacred from the past that don't prepare students for the future. In talking with the colleges, this is what they are turning people out to do. One thing Cranston will be criticized for

is the inadequacy of the programs for those students who don't go right on to college. Some of those graduates will have a skill that they didn't have before, employable skills where they can go right into a vocation or industry without having gone through an entire three-year program or four-year program such as the vocational center. Mr. Boucher added that the standards for technology education will be right there along with the standards for science so that they complement each other so that the two will develop a nice collaborative relationship the way they should have all along. There is a huge push toward engineering and design. Mr. Nero commented that once this program shifts to Cranston West with the Physics Program, the tie-in is incredible.

Mr. Graves understood that automotive would start late but it will start next year. Mr. Scherza responded that he didn't know. Mr. Lupino commented that a lot depended upon the weather. The project is being delayed because of a mistake on the schedule and the snow days the district had this year. Mr. Scherza commented that he wouldn't pay attention to rumors. He would listen to what is coming from the School Buildings' Committee. It is basically how soon they can clean the area to where it is safe to use it. That may be several weeks into the school year. It is an unknown at this moment. He asked if auto classes would be set up. Mrs. Greifer commented that at the next School Buildings' Committee meeting she thought the members would be given a tentative construction schedule. Mr. Scherza remarked that auto shop may have to be done as a theory

class in the beginning of the year until the structural steel frame is up. The principal has alternative places for the students because theory can be taught in other classrooms other than the auto shop area.

Mr. Stycos asked if the courses are taught at the comprehensive level or CP level. Mr. Boucher responded that the leveling system at his school is advanced, standard and traditional. The animation class is standard level; the engineering class can be either depending on the approach taken. At his school, they are both advanced level, but even though it is an advanced level elective, anyone can choose to take it because there are no prerequisites which means that the woodshop student who has worked with his Dad framing houses during the summer and who is into design would be in this

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class even though this may be his only advanced elective. Mr. Stycos asked what the plan is for Cranston East, and Mr. Graves responded that they are homogeneously grouped so that anyone can take them. Mr. Scherza indicated that they are all at the comprehensive level. The original reason for doing it was to take the place of the woodshop courses that served either CP students who wanted to take an extra elective or for those lower level students who traditionally have been counseled into those electives or chosen those electives. At the entry level, he is not putting in college

preparatory type courses with that in mind, although it can serve that function. They are basically comprehensive level for all students so that anyone from the lowest to the highest and both can be in the class at the same time.

Mr. Stycos noticed on line that the words comprehensive and college prep are not used any more for an English class, social studies class, etc. He also noticed that the word comprehensive is not used in these course descriptions. Mr. Graves responded that they are not describing the courses in that manner any longer. They are not limiting the expectation of the course. They are doing more differential education so that the student who is ready to run can help the student who is a slow learner. As an example, Mr. Scherza said there would still be a college prep level for English and also have a comprehensive level. All English classes, for all intent and purposes, will still teach the same thing but in a much greater depth. Mr. Graves noted that on the course descriptions it states outside assignments and maintaining a B average which would be a higher level class.

Mrs. Greifer asked if any electives are labeled with college prep or comprehensive. Mr. Scherza responded that there are electives in science and math. Most of these would be a general level which could be called comprehensive because they are not upper level. Mr. Stycos stated that somewhere a decision was made to eliminate the words comprehensive and college prep from the course offerings. If he looked at the course catalog looking to take comprehensive

English, it is not there. Mr. Scherza responded that in secondary reform there are grade level expectations. Whether a student is in a comprehensive or an advanced placement program, the state and the No Child Left Behind Act require the district to require that there are certain minimums in each of those. There is no difference. There is the same minimum standard for all. Mr. Stycos stated that he would like to discuss this more at length. Mr. Lupino noted that the CEAB sent packets to the committee members, and he asked them to not throw them away.

Mr. Boucher referred to the animation course which utilizes Light Wave software. He showed the committee some of the work his students have done using this software. The state is looking for the student's ability to prove that he or she has the capabilities in a diverse range of skills to bring to the table, and they want this exhibited in their digital portfolio. This shows that they understand mathematics, communications, technology, and they have good presentation skills. That covers half the standards they are looking to address with the digital portfolio. Light Wave software is pretty complex software, but

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in his animation class he is running three classes this year of twenty-four students; and he has a waiting list of 150. Most of his classes this year are seniors and juniors because they are given

preference in the elective selection process. The students love it because it is genuinely fun, and it is a very valuable skill. Mr. Scherza commented that a low performing freshman student could take this course as a novice. Mr. Boucher added that he has three students with IEP's in the same class. Mr. Boucher explained the various steps in the process to develop a project. Almost all the animated cartoons are entirely done in Light Wave software. It is high end software that is industry standard.

Mr. Boucher went on to say that some of his students have worked with potential clients to develop marketing and showed some of the students' projects. He noted that they started with businesses, and one they work with every year is public utilities. His engineering class designs an energy conservation kit for them, specifies the components that will be in it, designs the packaging, makes the labels, packages the kits, gives it to the utility, which in return they ask what the students want. If he wants a revision in the software package or a couple of computers, they supply them because the school is saving them a lot of money. It was costing the utility company \$42,000 a year for what the students are doing for nothing. The kids love it, and they treat the students very well. The students present everything they do. The students make instructional videos for them as well, so they create intros for the videos. He expects and looks for professional quality from his students. He has found with his students that he gets what he expects from them.

Mr. Boucher commented that one can develop power point presentations with Light Wave software. Animation can be included as well. Mr. Lupino asked if the licensing comes with tech support, and Mr. Boucher responded that it does. The bottom line is that the way he is training the teachers in Solid Works, he would be willing to train them in Light Wave after the fact. There is ongoing tech support from the company. He taught himself Light Wave, and it took him two years to do it. Now he can teach them in two months what it took him two years to learn, the nuances of the software, and what to avoid and how to teach it effectively to the students. Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Boucher if he was being paid by Solid Works or Light Wave, and Mr. Boucher indicated that he was not. He has been sharing what he is doing for the past fifteen years with schools throughout the state. Much the same way Cranston's middle schools are ranked among the best in the state, his high school program is considered the best in New England and one of the best in the country for a long time.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Boucher if he used any funding through the RI Builders' Association, and Mr. Boucher indicated that the construction program does use it. Mr. Lupino asked how many dollars they receive from them, and Mr. Boucher indicated that he could probably get \$3,000 or \$4,000, but he doesn't take their money because he doesn't need it. They have a proven product. Instead of a company paying someone to

do their letterhead set up for \$35,000, his students will do it for free just for the experience. To value the service, the companies help out his program. He is saving them \$35,000, and if he goes to a company at the end of the year stating that he needs \$5,000 for a new piece of equipment, the company doesn't hesitate. It is channeled through in-kind contributions to the program.

Mr. Graves explained the courses needed for next year. He stated that he would like to run a course on animation and design engineering. They have video production on the schedule for the following year pending ample room at the school. This will enhance their capabilities tremendously. The software they presently have is outdated. They have been restricted for a number of years due to the city finances. They were forced into a situation, and they are trying to use it to the best of their ability. They are looking for top end, quality material that is proven. Everyone is on board who is willing to go for the training. There is PDI money to pay Mr. Boucher \$37.00 per hour to teach the teachers. Mr. Scherza added that the professional development and the software is being funded completely through grants. Mr. Lupino asked what would happen to the people who are not participating. Mr. Graves responded that several teachers are out ill and some are coaching. It all happened very quickly. Mr. Scherza responded that some will be able to pick it up from within through training sessions or additional training. Some won't be able to bid on these positions. The people attending have added dimensions that

others don't have. It increases options for the students as well.

Mr. Boucher noted that in industry there are motivated people who are looking for advancement and new challenges, and there are some people who have been in a job for quite some time and are comfortable. The difference is that five years down the road, one of two things will happen. Repeatedly he has seen that those people who are a little hesitant for a number of reasons, the same reasons people in industry are hesitant to do new and different things. The bottom line is that as courses gain in popularity, animation will take off. The students will totally love the class. With engineering, hopefully if the guidance department is savvy, the school will have its valedictorians in that class. They know that if they take that class here and go to Worcester Poly Tech, his students teach in the computer labs there. They know it more than the instructor does. Mr. Lupino noted that Cranston has had some success with the Robotics Program where graduates have skipped some entry level engineering courses because of it. Mr. Boucher added that there will be collaboration with this new program between science and technology. It is a perfect transition and a perfect place for it to happen.

Mr. Lupino asked if these courses would appear as a future agenda item to be approved, and Mr. Scherza responded that this is a work shop to explain it to the committee. He would like to have it approved as another area to come before the committee. It has to be approved as a part of the program of studies, and it will appear on the May

School Committee agenda. Mr. Lupino asked if anyone from the art department inquired about this program, and Mr. Scherza responded that the district

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hasn't gone that far at this time. They will get to a number of the departments. This began as an emergency in the last two months. Mr. Lupino asked where this program would fit in for graduation requirements. He asked if it would fit in under science, math, or art. Mr. Boucher explained that in his school it fits in under technology. Mr. Scherza added that it could fall under technology or general elective which is what the district's technology courses are. This program was brought in to replace those. They felt they wanted to build on something for the long term. Mr. Boucher suggested having everyone in math, art, science, and everyone else trained in this program because they all have their curriculum. What this offers is a perfect opportunity for collaboration. The art student who tried to create a 3-D sketch brings it to his class can bring it to this class and ask if he can make it into an animation. Now there would be art collaborating with technology. He went to his math teacher today asking his students to determine how much PVC tubing and flexible forming board would be required for the memorial park his students are designing. The math teacher's students were very excited about presenting how much material would be required.

Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that the work session be adjourned.

There being no further business to come before the work session, it was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony J. Lupino

Clerk