

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, 2006**

**WILLIAM A. BRIGGS BUILDING (REED CONFERENCE ROOM)**

**845 PARK AVENUE**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION: 6:00 P.M.**

**PUBLIC SESSION: IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**PUBLIC WORK SESSION: IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PUBLIC MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**A special meeting of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at the William A. Briggs Building with the following members present: Mrs. Greifer, Mr. Lupino, Mr. Stycos, and Mr. Traficante. Mr. Archetto, Ms. Iannazzi, and Mr. Palumbo were absent with cause. Also present were Mr. Scherza, Mr. Nero, Mr. Balducci, and Mr. Votto.**

**The meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. It was moved by Mr. Traficante, seconded by Mrs. Greifer 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, acting Chair, reconvened the meeting at 7:04 p.m.**

**The roll was called.**

**Mr. Lupino noted for the record that Mr. Palumbo, Mr. Archetto, and Ms. Iannazzi were excused from this meeting.**

### **I. Executive Session Minutes Sealed – July 12, 2006**

**Moved by Mr. Traficante, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that the July 12, 2006 Executive Session minutes remain confidential.**

### **II. Minutes of Previous Meetings – June 23, 2006; June 29, 2006**

**Moved by Mr. Traficante, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that the minutes of June 23, 2006 and June 29, 2006 be approved.**

### **III. Public Hearing**

**a. Students (Agenda/Non-agenda Matters)**

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

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

**There were no members of the public who wished to speak on an**

agenda item.

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

**Page 2      July 12, 2006**

**There was no consent agenda.**

**Mr. Lupino asked the committee to suspend the rules so that there could be input from the public regarding the Wellness Committee proposed policy. The committee agreed.**

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

##### **ADMINISTRATION**

##### **PERSONNEL**

**NO. 06-7-6 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following certified personnel be appointed for the 2006-2007 school year:**

**Ann Nieranowski, salary to be at the third step of the prevailing salary schedule**

**Education – University of Hartford, BS**

**Experience – Therapy Works, Inc.**

**License – Rhode Island Occupational Therapist**

**Assignment – Itinerant, 1.0 FTE**

**Effective Date of Employment – September 5, 2006**

**Authorization – Replacement**

**Fiscal Note: 14732010 511440**

**Deborah Hornung, salary to be at the eleventh step plus Masters of the prevailing salary schedule**

**Education – Rhode Island College, BS; MSN**

**Experience – Cranston Public Schools' Substitute / St. Joseph's Hospital**

**Certification – School Nurse Teacher**

**Assignment – Cranston Area Career & Technical Center, Health Occupations, 1.0 FTE**

**Effective Date of Employment – September 5, 2006**

**Authorization – Replacement**

**Fiscal Note: 17430612 512100**

**Emilie Mendillo, salary to be at the third step plus Masters of the prevailing salary schedule**

**Education – Rhode Island College, BA; Johnson & Wales, MA**

**Experience – Cranston School Based Coordinator**

**Certification – Secondary Business Education**

**Assignment – Cranston Area Career & Technical Center, Finance Academy, 1.0 FTE**

**Effective Date of Employment – September 5, 2006**

**Authorization – Replacement**

**Fiscal Note: 17430712 512100**

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

**Page 3      July 12, 2006**

**NO. 06-7-7 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement of the following certified personnel be accepted:**

**Elisa Roe, Teacher**

**Western Hills Middle School**

**Effective Date: June 30, 2006**

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

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

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

## **VII. Announcement of Future Meetings**

**Mr. Lupino stated that the next School Committee meeting will be held on Monday, July 17, 2006 at Hope Highlands School. Executive Session is at 6:00 p.m., and the public session is at 7:00 p.m.**

## **VIII. Adjourn to Public Work Session**

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

**There being no further business to come before the meeting, it was adjourned to the public work session at 7:08 p.m.**

### **I. Wellness Committee Report – Policy Development**

**Mr. Lupino noted to a member of the public that typically the committee does not allow public comment during the public work sessions, but the committee agreed during the public meeting that they would allow anyone who wished to speak about the Wellness Committee Report to speak.**

**Mr. Stycos, Chairman of the Wellness Committee presented the Wellness Committee Report. He stated that the school department has had a Wellness Committee which is required under state law, and they have met approximately eight or nine times since they started in**

**November. Most of what they have done is put together a model policy. He noted that they are required by state law to have a policy in place by September 1st. The committee took a policy that was put together by the Healthy Schools Coalition which is headed up by the Health Department and the Rhode Island Department of Education. They went through this policy paragraph by paragraph making changes as the committee saw fit.**

**The people on the committee who were present at this meeting are Dr. Paul Cardoza, Director of Physical Education; Joanne Valk, Principal of Hope Highlands School; Peter**

**Page 4      July 12, 2006**

**Nero, Assistant Superintendent; Michael Marrocco, Food Service Director; Audrey Guttin, Program Supervisor for Family and Consumer Science; Angela Gonsalves, who heads up the cafeteria at Cranston East; Valerie Shulie, a parent who works in the cafeteria at Cranston East, and Karen Letendre who heads up the cafeteria at Bain Middle School. Mr. Stycos went on to say that at every meeting they had between fifteen and twenty people participating, and there was a lot of discussion. He noted that what is in bold on the proposed policy is what was changed from the policy recommended by the Healthy Schools Coalition.**

**Mr. Stycos explained the major points of the proposed policy. He**

noted that on page 2 the Coalition had a recommended composition for the Wellness Committee, and at Mrs. Greifer's suggestion, the committee put in the membership of the committee they formed by resolution. If at some point in the future they want to change the composition the School Committee would vote to add or subtract someone.

With regard to page 3, the Wellness Committee discussed the amount of time that children have for lunch, and a number of the committee members who have been through this before realized that the number of minutes for lunch is not a simple issue because it ties into scheduling and instructional minutes which makes it very complex. Rather than mandating twenty minutes for lunch, they substituted "that we will strive towards twenty minutes for lunch." This is something that the district needs to work on in places where it is not twenty minutes. A key difference is that there is twenty minutes at the middle school, but it is twenty-four minutes from when the students leave the classroom to when they get back. This policy talks about twenty minutes when they are sitting at the lunch table. This means that the students have gotten to the cafeteria; they have gotten their food, and they have twenty minutes to eat their food. The committee indicated that they would strive toward that goal which is recommended by the American School Food Service Association.

With regard to fund raising on page 3, Mr. Stycos commented that the issue is the fund raising that goes on during lunch periods. In some

**schools, foods that are not legally allowed in the cafeteria are allowed to be sold just outside the cafeteria door. It is technical compliance with federal law but it is not really spirit of the law. The committee said that food that is sold outside the cafeteria, whether it is in a school store or the band doing a back sale, that had to meet the same standards, the nutritional guidelines, as the cafeteria. That means the school can't sell items such as cotton candy, hard candy, or food that is 100% sugar that has no nutritional value. The committee had a discussion of limiting outside sales, and they divided it up into a middle/elementary issue, and the decision was made that they would allow once a week in a middle and elementary school for them to sell popcorn or ice cream or whatever they do in a school. Mrs. Greifer added that one of the problems the committee saw was that sometimes the students will, instead of buying lunch, they will use their money to buy ice cream or whatever is being sold during lunch. They are replacing their lunch with this treat. This was a nutritional issue the committee wanted to address. The committee didn't want to completely ban it because the PTO's raise money that goes back into the schools. The committee felt that once a week was reasonable.**

**Page 5      July 12, 2006**

**Mr. Stycos explained that with regard to high school regulations, he and Mrs. Greifer had a meeting today with administration. The**

flashpoint regarding this is the school store at Cranston East. There is a need for a meeting to take place between School Lunch people and the Special Education people who run the school store. On Monday evening, Mr. Stycos will be recommending that the last sentence is deleted until there is some kind of resolution from that discussion. Mr. Lupino added that there were members of the school store present at this work session who wished to speak.

With regard to page 4, the policy remained the same.

With regard to page 5, Mr. Stycos referred to the section concerning beverages. He stated that there was a lot of discussion regarding this subject. The suggestion was made that based on what the beverage industry has negotiated that Bill Clinton was involved with, the recommendation was that the district go with only milk, water and 100% fruit juice, but it should be delayed one year so that principals have the time to make an adjustment. Mr. Nero had suggested that it be postponed until September 2007. The committee talked about coffee milk, chocolate milk, and strawberry milk. The general feeling of the committee was that these were okay as they are currently served in the schools. They would be sold only immediately prior to school, at lunch, or after school. A question was raised about serving them at basketball games, and the committee felt it would be fine to sell soda in the machines through the use of a timer or for them to be sold at a table. They are encouraging principals to look at other fund raisers.

**Mr. Stycos referred to the last paragraph on page 4 which concerns candy. This is a recommendation from the Health Department, but it will be changed from what is stated now. Effective September 1st, there can be no candy in the machines. There can be other things but no candy. The choir can sell candy bars at the end of the school day, but they can't sell them during the school day.**

**Mr. Stycos explained that page 6 is pretty much what the State recommended. Dr. Cardoza had indicated to the Wellness Committee that the district is utilizing its physical education curriculum to implement strategies as noted on page 6.**

**Mr. Stycos commented that at the meeting held this afternoon with administration, it was pointed out that if this policy passes, there would be a likely loss in revenue on September 1st and that the School Committee needs to think about it when they put together a budget next time and give the principals some discretionary money to replace what is lost. He commented further that no one knows how much is going to be lost, but it won't be everything. There will be sales of juice, milk, and water; but there won't be sales of soda. The impact will vary by school depending on what the contract says. Some schools have a higher percentage of sales agreement with the soda companies.**

**Mr. Stycos thanked everyone who served on the committee. There**

**was a lot of good discussion and participation. People compromised to get to where they are today.**

**Page 6      July 12, 2006**

**Mr. Stycos indicated that the legislature just passed a law on healthy beverages and snacks which was passed after the Wellness Committee had finished their work. The law only pertains to elementary and middle schools with no high school rules at all. In the middle and elementary schools, the law states that there should be healthy beverages by January 1, 2007. In the middle and elementary, the law is referring to nine months before what the Wellness Committee is proposing. On the snacks, the law defines in detail what a healthy snack is. From what he could determine, it is not heavy sugar and heavy fat items. This would knock out potato chips and candy bars and allows nuts, non-fat yogurt, low fat yogurt, grain products that don't have high fat and high sugar content, and items that are fruit or vegetable based. Mr. Lupino asked if there were vending machines other than those in teacher rooms in the elementary schools, and stated that if there were none, it was a moot point in the elementary schools. He asked if the law addressed teacher rooms which are not accessible to students. He asked if a teacher could have a soda if she or he wished to. Mr. Scherza responded that this particular piece of legislation when it was listed to go before the Senate and the House Committee, it was listed as an**

act to address obesity in children. Mr. Stycos felt that it didn't seem to make a distinction. Mrs. Valk noted that at Hope Highlands School there is a water machine with some power drinks. This school is used for outside activities by athletic groups, and it is funding for their PTO. She wasn't sure if the power drinks would be allowed. Mr. Marrocco added that if the vending machines are used for after school activities, they will be left alone. Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Stycos to get a clarification on this point. Mr. Nero pointed out that the Cranston East gym is rented out often, and asked if the vending machines would be allowed there. Mrs. Greifer noted that none of this applies to high schools. Mr. Stycos stated that the only thing that would apply to high schools would be whatever the School Committee passes in the policy. Mr. Lupino stated that the Wellness Policy is required by September 1st and asked if the state law that requires it asks that the Wellness Committee or School Committee report to anyone. Mrs. Greifer responded that there is a reporting requirement which must be done on an annual basis. Dr. Cardoza added that Rosemary Riley from the Department of Health has been advising him through e-mails, and it has to be submitted to her. Mr. Lupino asked that the policy be forwarded to her for her approval. Dr. Cardoza added that Ms. Riley may make suggestions once she looks it over.

Mr. Lupino referred to fund raising and asked when it is strictly for fund raising and when it was to support an education program as it is at Cranston East. Sometimes funds are raised by an educational

program and puts the money back into an educational program and not the traditional fund raising per say. Mrs. Greifer responded that the committee is saying that the schools cannot sell candy as a fund raiser during school hours. The students would have to raise funds after school. Mr. Lupino asked about the students who would be raising funds for a football team to buy oranges for them for half-time.

He asked about the special education director who sells items in the school store. This person teaches students who are at risk or have special needs. The funds that are generated would go back to the program. He felt that this was not fund raising. Mrs. Greifer commented that this is the reason the Wellness Committee is pulling that last sentence until the entire school store issue could be discussed. It is a very complicated issue, and Mr. Stycos had indicated that he would

Page 7      July 12, 2006

be making a motion to remove that section from the policy for the time being. Mr. Traficante stated that if fund raising is going to be allowed at the elementary and middle schools, the high schools should be afforded the same opportunity. Mr. Lupino responded that the elementary schools conduct an ice cream sale once a week to support their programs.

Mr. Lupino opened the work session for public discussion.

Linda Mahdesian, 32 Rhodes Avenue – Mrs. Mahdesian stated that this policy is good, and it is a work in progress. As the mother of a special needs student, she didn't see any special needs issues in the policy. Food plays a big role in how a special needs student with autism or Asberger behaves during school. Sugar, caffeine and complex carbohydrates that break down into sugar aren't good for a child like her son. Her son attends Cranston West where they serve French fries. He is allowed to get fries and whatever else high fat and high sugar foods every day. This is not good for him. She would like to see some representation on the Wellness Committee of a special education professional to give their input. This person should have experience and knowledge about the nutritional aspects of special needs students. She would also like to see a middle school student on the committee. She indicated that she would volunteer if no one else was serving. Mr. Lupino responded that the committee is pretty much done with this project. It was now up to the School Committee to vote and accept their policy. As regulations change or are re-visited, they may meet. Mrs. Greifer commented that state law required that the district have a Wellness Committee. It will probably be inactive most of the time except when they have to file annually. Dr. Cardoza added that meetings are recommended twice a year. This policy is an activity of the committee, and the committee is ongoing. Members can change periodically either being added or deleted. Much of the activity relating to physical and nutritional activity is supposed to be reported to the committee. Mr. Lupino suggested to Mrs. Mahdesian that she put her name in to be notified

when they meet again. He asked Mr. Stycos that if he were still on the School Committee he invite Mrs. Mahdesian on to the committee. Mr. Traficante suggested that she could be appointed by one of the School Committee members. Mrs. Greifer added that the parents were to be appointed one by each School Committee member. Mr. Nero indicated to Mrs. Mahdesian that a Western Hills Middle School student represented middle school on this committee. Mr. Traficante clarified Mr. Stycos's earlier comments that if he wishes to come back to the School Committee Monday evening and amend the paragraph regarding the nomenclature of the committee, he can do so. Mr. Lupino added that the School Committee had already approved the resolution that created the committee. Mr. Traficante stated that the committee could amend the make-up of this committee Monday evening. A special education parent could be added to the nomenclature.

Mrs. Mahdesian referred to the policy section regarding beverages and indicated that she has a daughter who is lactose intolerant and asked if soy milk was an option. Mr. Lupino stated that the committee has tried different options. Mr. Marrocco, Food Service Director, stated that if Mrs. Mahdesian had a letter from her doctor she could forward it to his office. He will make any modifications in food necessary for her child. At the high schools, there are vending machines with soy milk in them. Mrs. Mahdesian

noted that it is beneficial for autistic children as well. She commented that she wasn't sure what a student could bring to school for lunch. Mr. Lupino responded that there is no policy because that would be infringing upon their right to bring whatever they want. She asked if the schools prohibited any kind of soda, and Mr. Lupino said that this borders on a parent's responsibility. The school lunch is not intended to replace a parent's responsibility. If the school lunch didn't offer soy milk to the students, the parents could put soy milk in a cooler with ice so that the child could take it to school. Mrs. Mahdesian noted that her son has told her that the lunch offerings are simply horrendous in terms of nutritional value, and she is very encouraged about this policy. Mr. Lupino added that Mr. Marrocco has tried salad bars and other items. Mrs. Greifer defended the Food Service Program and noted that Mr. Marrocco has to meet federal guidelines. Mr. Marrocco said that at Park View this year he has done away with the heavy laden fat snacks and replaced them with snacks with less trans fats. French fries are offered three times a week versus every day. They have a baked potato bar on Wednesday along with a salad bar every day. A salad is the same price as a meal. Mrs. Mahdesian mentioned a company called Nature's Oven which is the healthy version of Sydesco. She encouraged Mr. Marrocco to investigate this company. The food costs the same, and they do great work. Mr. Lupino noted that the students are choosing the food. Mrs. Mahdesian added that there are schools around the country who have behavior problem students who now get healthy

foods from this company, and they have a marked improvement in their behavior. Mr. Lupino indicated to Mrs. Mahdesian that as a future member of the Wellness Committee, she could bring that information forward to them.

**Al Casale, Special Education Teacher at Cranston High School East –** He stated that half of his day is devoted to school-to-work coordinator and transition coordinator for the special needs population. He has been the coordinator for approximately twelve years, and he is very protective of the program. He wrote Mr. Laliberte a detailed five-page letter at the end of the school year regarding this program. They operate on-campus work sites. Panda's Pantry which operates in the Briggs Building is a food service simulation. It is designed for students as a prerequisite before they go out into the community to get a job to work on appropriate work habits, behaviors, and attitudes. At one time, they had four on-campus work sites. There was Panda's Pantry which still exists since 1980, Thunderbolt Copy Center which is an office simulation, and Café East which was operated one day a week in the cafeteria for students with developmental disabilities. They would make one or two specialty baked items, set up tables with napkins and tablecloths and serve people who came in from the public. Five years ago they opened a school store which was basically a portable cart which was outside the cafeteria. Two of the work sites were lost because of space. The Thunderbolt Copy Center was needed for a classroom so they had to shut it down. Café East which was located

in the cafeteria was lost because of space again. The cafeteria was needed for study hall. They put a lot of emphasis to continue Panda's Pantry which is the gem of their program. They also have the retail simulation which is the school store. Last year at the urging of Mr. Frederick they took the front of a bookroom and petitioned it off with the help of the Charter School to have a retail simulation. They now have a fixed location to sell cookies, candy, ice cream, school supplies, and wearing apparel. It was a great hit this year. Some items were donated

Page 9      July 12, 2006

from the community, and Sign Graphics made signs for them. He stated that he came to this session to defend the school store because he knows that it has been a hot topic. He has nothing but praise for food service people, and Mr. Marrocco has worked with Panda's Pantry. He urged the people on this committee to allow them to continue with the school store. If they limit their ability to sell food items, and he wants to stay within the guidelines of the Wellness Committee, it would be similar to having a convenience store without selling gasoline. Because of the limit in student movement, during the lunch period is when they get the traffic and the students have a little flexibility to this store. They are looking to get rid of some of the candy items which are a hot topic. They want to be more creative with the items as well. The retail aspect is something some of the students are very interested in. It is for a wide range of the students.

**Students with disabilities make the cookies while other students with more abilities are the cashiers and help maintain the store inventory. He hoped that everyone was sensitive to this issue because they have lost two work sites. If they lose the school store, only Panda's Pantry would remain; and this would limit their ability to do what they need to do. The school store helps the students develop their transition plan and prepare them for post-secondary options.**

**Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Casale if their profits were generated back into the program, and Mr. Casale indicated that 50% of the profits went to the school and the other 50% was divided between the Business Department which is a partner with the Special Education Department and the other 25% to the Special Education Department to help pay for field trips and buying instructional materials for the children in that program. Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Casale if there was a scheduling mistake and he could not meet with the Wellness Committee. Mr. Casale responded that Mrs. Narcisi was out because of an operation, and they were unable to meet with the Wellness Committee. He could not make the last meeting. He has a very good working relationship with Mrs. Gonsalves and Mr. Marrocco. Mr. Lupino noted that the school store is crucial to the special education program. Mr. Casale stated that his schedule had been arranged this year so that his classes meet during the rotating period during lunches so that his students could be involved in that. Mr. Lupino added that some of the School Committee members were given mis-information that the school store has been around for four or five years; it is only recently**

that they had a more permanent place. Mr. Casale noted that his records mention the school store as far back as 2000.

Diane Narcisi, Business Department Chair, Cranston High School East – Mrs. Narcisi stated that when she was hired one of the first things she asked about was the school store. She ran a school store in Exeter-West Greenwich, and they were interested in getting one up and running at Cranston East. They did this the following year. She and Mr. Casale worked together to put it together. They did not have a permanent location, and the whole objective of the store was to have her students and his students work together. Her students do all the financial records; she doesn't touch them. She oversees everything, and the students get the deposits ready which she makes.

The students take care of the books in Quikbooks so it is run similar to a little business. Both her students and Mr. Casale's students work at the store. She never worked with special education students before, but it is very rewarding to watch them progress. Mr. Casale had some students who could barely count change, and by the

Page 10      July 12, 2006

end of the year, they were counting out the change. Her business students had not worked hand in hand with special education students, and it is quite an experience for them to understand the disabilities these students have. They worked extremely well together. Mr. Casale added that some of his students are very

sensitive to the fact that they are in special education, but by being in a partnership with the Business Education Department, it allows them to have a blending of the two groups. That is another positive of having the store. Mrs. Narcisi noted that it is amazing to see honor students working hand in hand with the special education students. She would hate to see the school store demolished because it is a great program. It is not just a store but rather it is a program. It is similar to the West marketing program that runs a school store.

Mr. Casale stated that during the recent NEASC evaluation one of the areas evaluated was school climate. Things such as a school store do add to school climate. It is another activity, another location and another destination that is tied to the school. Mrs. Narcisi added that she understood the concerns for nutritional value. She does not eat sugar and is on a very low fat diet, and she understands this situation. However, she also knows that in the vicinity of Cranston East a student can get any kind of food they want by walking one block. Students come to school with large cups of coffee every morning, and it is coming from the home. Someone taught them to drink coffee. Mr. Lupino asked if coffee is allowed in school, and Mr. Scherza responded that they are not supposed to bring drinks into school. He has had a conversation with the new principal, and it has been an issue at Cranston West. Mrs. Greifer added that she has seen an administrator at Cranston East tell a student to put the coffee in the trash. Mr. Lupino noted that he has also seen teachers walk into the classroom with coffee. This is something that will have to be

**addressed at some point in time.**

**There was a discussion regarding Mr. Marrocco meeting with Mr. Casale and Mrs. Narcisi. Mr. Lupino suggested that they meet after this work session and report back to Mr. Lupino who in turn would report to Mr. Stycos for Monday's School Committee meeting.**

**Lynda Wagner, Director, Cranston Area Career & Technical Center – She indicated that the school also has a school store, and it is in the process of a makeover. It is waiting for a committee to be formed so that it can address some of the things they are going through at this point. They have a food service program coupled with the marketing and finance program. They sell calzones on a daily basis which is a healthy food. They want to continue to do this because it defrays the cost of students going to the DECA Programs and the very large contingent of students who go to Skills USA. She was happy to report that they won eight gold medals. It is a very worthwhile program but very expensive. Every year travel costs increase by 15%. This year it cost each student \$851. They were able to defray some of this cost through the school store and the money from the soda machines and their Coke contract which is a very large donation each year from Coca Cola. With that in mind, she would like to be included in the conversation as to how to continue to support those activities through students. It is very important in a career and technical facility; they are the heart of their activities. They don't have student council or actual sports. This is their big team efforts**

on both of these fronts. Mr. Lupino noted that before Mr. Lemoi left in discussion with a Nutrition

Page 11      July 12, 2006

Committee that was formed, they spoke in the neighborhood of \$70,000 to \$80,000 generated from his soda machines at West. East was in the \$50,000 to \$60,000 range per year. Mrs. Narcisi stated that she is the fiscal advisor for Cranston East, and the school realizes between \$42,000 and \$43,000 from soda machines. Mrs. Wagner added that the technical facility has a separate contract for soda machines, and it goes until 2009. Mr. Lupino stated that the discussion at this work session goes beyond what the Legislature had intended. Because of concerns like Mrs. Wagner's and those of Cranston East, they did exclude high schools from the mix. The committee will take it under advisement when they vote on the proposed policy.

Mr. Scherza commented that there are a number of pieces that come into play. Administratively, as a superintendent or as a principal, they would be looking for the dollars, and they can't do without them in a lot of ways. That is how the students go to such places as Colorado, California, and Hawaii when they win national competitions. With that said, he asked the committee to consider before Monday's meeting which is that this is a health and safety issue. He asked if the school department was going to exploit its students to make money or were

they going to do what is in the best interest which is not to offer unhealthy items. That is why a law was passed. There are alternatives to the stores such as selling frozen yogurt instead of ice cream; market healthy alternatives so that the schools would be doing a social favor to the community, supporting a policy and not taking away from the curriculum. They could sell oatmeal raisin cookies with Splenda and those types of things. He didn't think that the fact that the schools don't sell candy bars or ice cream is going to make or break them. Programmatically, he agrees; there are some wonderful programs. He has seen Panda's Pantry operating first hand. He will be recommending approval of this policy. There are some minor pieces that he has some issues with, but overall he would endorse it because it is in the best interest of children. If the district is really doing what is best for kids, it won't continue to amass a problem that has been identified.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Scherza if he was recommending that the committee pull the soda machines. Mr. Scherza responded that he was recommending that the School Committee pass this policy knowing that any policy can be amended or upgraded. This will not go into effect until one year from September with regard to the soda machines, but everything else does go into effect. With regard to the concern on school stores, they have to be re-invented. The district won't have study halls any more so there won't be students who are free. School stores won't be opened during class time when every student is expected to be assigned a class which must be done

starting this year. Administration has to look when they will open these stores and how. That discussion has taken place, and hopefully it will take place soon. Mr. Scherza went on to say that if everyone is concerned about children they have to ask themselves if they are concerned about the children or the dollars. Programmatically there are alternatives, but to create a healthy and safe environment, then the policy makes sense; and it is also law. No one would put children into an unsafe environment, a room that was unsafe or unhealthy. The same holds true with the food items made available to them. This does not impede any parent or family who wants to send a can of Coke, Pepsi, or brownies with their children. It is a family decision. If the district knows it is not in their best interest, they should not contribute to that issue.

Page 12      July 12, 2006

Mr. Lupino stated that he would like to look into the budget for next year which shows the replacement of those lost funds. That is funding that administration doesn't have to support through their operating budget. Mr. Scherza responded that children are being exploited to get those funds. Mr. Lupino commented that he felt that the school department is just offering a choice to someone. His son didn't drink soda; he bought water from the machines; that was his choice. Mr. Scherza responded that a child will take the meal money sent by his or her parents and buy ice cream instead of a meal. There are students who go without proper nutrition in lieu of the sweets and

**treats. Mr. Lupino stated that he was not arguing any portions of the policy other than the fact of the dollars generated from the machines.**

**Mr. Traficante stated that he would support the policy providing the school store remains alive and well. He knows how it functions and has experienced it on many occasions as an educator. He indicated to Mr. Lupino that this School Committee cannot afford to appropriate any money whatsoever to replace the monies that will be lost. The committee just took \$2 million out of health care, and that has to be replaced somehow somewhere. The School Committee is not in a position to dole out money to the principals. Mr. Lupino added that the committee is not in a position to throw away revenue sources either. Mr. Scherza told the committee that no one should rush to judgment. There is no evidence that would suggest that there is a loss of revenue. In fact, there is evidence to the contrary. Dr. Cardoza sited one instance at a previous meeting. Mr. Nero instituted a policy at his school where he eliminated the soda machines and went to milk, juice drinks, and water. The revenue didn't go down; it went up slightly.**

**Mr. Nero told the committee that he came before the School Committee several times as a principal. He has been on the Wellness Committee for nine months, and whether they do it or not, the soda companies have agreed that they are going to begin to bring in all the contracts on their own. There is a group of people out of Harvard**

University who have threatened the beverage industry, and Coke and Pepsi have decided to come to the table to do something on their own. They are being faced with a class action suit about obesity. When he started on this committee, he voluntarily called Coke and Pepsi. He told them that he didn't want any soda sold near the cafeteria. They sold Zero which is a Coca Cola product and Powerade along with milk and water products. Their profit actually went up during that period of time. His school brought in between \$32,000 and \$35,000 per year. He could have never survived the last seven years of growth in his school with the portables unless he had the soda machines. He does see where there will be some kind of equilibrium in terms of where they will be in terms of the amount of money they will make. It may be less or it may be more. He told Mr. Lupino that they won't pull out the vending machines but rather pull out the products in the vending machines that are high in sugar.

Mr. Lupino asked Mr. Nero if he decided as principal what products went into the machines, and Mr. Nero said that he negotiated the contract. It is a certain number of each product that is put into the machines. They find out what is selling the best. Mr. Nero made a suggestion at the last Wellness Committee meeting telling them that they if they were going to do this don't do it for September 2006 but rather September 2007.

**It would give principals the ability to sit down with the companies. The companies see the writing on the wall. They will come to the principals, and they will be instituting products with healthier choices and still have profitability.**

**Mr. Lupino commented that there are two major dining halls at Cranston West, and there are ten machines there. He asked if this committee could tell Pepsi or Coke or whoever has the contracts there that they want one machine with soda in it and the rest with alternative products. Mr. Nero responded that he didn't think the district would have a problem with it. The companies did it with Mr. Nero when he was at Western Hills. Mr. Lupino said that he didn't want to see the programs that were supported by the sale of some of these products being affected. If what Mr. Nero is saying is true, then the committee should become aggressive and do it now. He didn't think that a contract between a soda or beverage company and a principal is enforceable if the School Committee says they don't want them doing it. Mr. Scherza responded that there are other districts that are already doing it as long as the contract is kept with their products. Coca Cola and Pepsi have bottled water. He suggested that by going to an alternate product and as long as it is their product, the schools can't make the assumption that they will be going from approximately \$35,000 to \$0. The school will get something, whether it goes up or down. Chariho has been doing it for over two years, and they are finding that some of their sales are up. It is now very fashionable for each child to have a bottle of water,**

and Pepsi will take advantage of it. Instead of selling 16 oz. bottles of water at \$1.00, they will make more money by selling a 20 oz. bottle for \$1.50.

Mr. Marrocco remarked that the beverage companies have already agreed that by 2009 they are going to do this anyway. They are geared up to do it now, so if the district asks them to do it now, they would be glad to. Mr. Nero commented that the schools have a partnership with them. They are making a profit, and the schools are making something. There is a balance there with them. The district should be aggressive on this because other people will make the decisions for them.

Mr. Stycos added that he didn't discuss that the Wellness Committee had discussed starting an intramural volleyball program at Cranston East as a pilot intramural program. This program would be coed. It has a \$3,400 price tag. The committee didn't discuss where the money would come. Mr. Lupino commented that the first \$3,400 profit from the vending machines could pay for the intramural volleyball program. It could be done by resolution. Mr. Stycos commented that the intramural portion of the policy is not on the agenda and suggested that it could be on the August agenda. Mr. Lupino remarked that this proposed policy will be on the July 17th agenda for first reading.

## **II. Administrators' Organizational Chart**

**Mr. Lupino stated that the committee had an overview of the Organizational Chart during Executive Session. Mrs. Greifer asked where art and music would fall, and Mr.**

**Scherza responded that it would fall under program supervisors who are under the supervision of the Executive Directors of Educational Programs. Mr. Scherza indicated that the question was asked during Executive Session as to why teachers fall under the**

**Page 14          July 12, 2006**

**Assistant Superintendent, and he had responded that they are under building principals who in turn fall under the Assistant Superintendent. Some teachers would fall under the Literacy Director or the Special Education Directors because they are more programmatic. The comment was made by a committee member that both Mrs. Lundsten and Mr. Laliberte have pretty hefty plates. This chart will appear on the August School Committee agenda. Mr. Scherza remarked that if the School Committee members had any concerns or questions regarding this chart, they could call central administration.**

**Mr. Lupino stated that under communications, he would like to see a response regarding after-school program. He knew that Mrs. Valk at Hope Highlands had an unsuccessful program, and Mrs. Gamba at Edgewood Highlands has a very successful program. These are the**

after-school paid programs. Mr. Scherza added that it is the same company servicing both schools. Mr. Lupino requested a report regarding participation and experience with this company. He has received calls from Hope Highlands' parents expressing their disappointment that the program was discontinued. When a program is offered, there has to be some accountability. Parents have jobs and they make arrangements for a program and pay for it. They make lifestyle decisions based on those programs. There has to be some accountability for those companies running these programs. Mr. Traficante is addressing some of the funding situations with the use of the buildings.

Mr. Scherza stated that the parents were surveyed in the building as to how many would be interested in the after school program and child care. There were forty-one families of those surveyed who indicated they would be interested. Kids Klub came into the school, and he noted that they are not hired by the school department. When they started the year, there were twelve families. Some of the families didn't use it every day; they wanted to use it one or two days a week. By mid year, there were only four families using it. To run the program with four children is impossible to do. He added that he was not defending this company. The same company does a smaller program at Edgewood Highlands which is more stable and people stayed with it. Kids Klub have also made those services available to people from Hope Highlands.

**Mr. Nero said that when he was at Western Hills he surveyed the parents approximately five or six years ago. The interest in western Cranston, for a variety of reasons, is just not there. One of the reasons is travel time and the students are involved in many other outside activities. The intramural participation at his school last year was heavy, and this year it was very light. There are too many competing factors on the western side of Cranston. Mr. Lupino added that there are other areas of the City that want programs such as this. Mr. Scherza commented that there could be potentially seventeen different programs at seventeen different schools. The reputable ones have to be sanctioned by DCYF to deal with children. The license is co-signed. There are three after-school programs for this district. There was a general discussion regarding Champions which is a new program to Rhode Island.**

**Page 15      July 12, 2006**

**Mr. Lupino stated that he gave members of the committee a copy of a letter directed to Mrs. Ann Marie Zodda from Mrs. Hilterman concerning the extended school year programs and the cost of the programs. He was taken aback by correspondence sent to parents of the children attending the program. Mr. Scherza asked Mr. Laliberte to elaborate on this. Mr. Scherza asked Mr. Lupino not to rush to**

judgment but to hear the entire story first. Mr. Laliberte explained that this program came about because when some of the students are placed outside for an extended year program who are special education students, and the parents said they wanted the out-of-district programs because these programs gave them community based experiences. The district said that they could build their own program and actually provide better community based experience than the ones they get in the out of district. When they are sent out of district to a placement, they will take them to a park or bring them to feed the ducks. These field trips were all arranged by a classroom teacher, and when they go to Pizzeria Uno these children go through the process of making a pizza. They are not going there just to read the menu and select pizza. When this was originally sent out, there was some idea that they may not be able to afford them because the district wasn't able to get funding up to that point for all of the trips. Since then the district has procured funding for all these field trips. It is now funded, and it will not cost any student any amount of money. There are twenty-two students in the program. Mr. Lupino asked if Mrs. Zodda would answer Mrs. Hilterman's letter, and Mr. Laliberte responded that she had already answered her. She spoke with Mrs. Hilterman; a letter was written. Mr. Lupino requested a signed note from Mrs. Zodda indicating the time and date that she spoke with Mrs. Hilterman. Mr. Laliberte detailed the special needs of one child attending a specific field trip, and the parent agreed to keep her child home for that trip.

### **III. Adjourn Work Session**

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

**There being no further business to come before the work session, it was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Anthony J. Lupino**

**Clerk**