

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 16, 2006

WILLIAM A. BRIGGS BUILDING (REED CONFERENCE ROOM)

845 PARK AVENUE

EXECUTIVE SESSION: 5:30 P.M.

**PUBLIC MEETING: 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: Mr. Archetto, Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Lupino, Mr. Stycos, and Mr. Traficante (arrived at 6:12 p.m.). Mr. Palumbo was excused with cause. Also present were Mr. Scherza, Mr. Nero, Mr. Balducci, Mr. Votto, Mr. Laliberte, Mrs. Lundsten, and Mr. Zisseron.

The meeting was called to order at 5:42 p.m. It was moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that the members adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Law 42-46-5(a)(1) and contract and litigation pursuant to RI State Law 42-46-5(a)(2).

Mr. Lupino, acting Chair, reconvened the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

The roll was called.

I. Executive Session Minutes Sealed – August 16, 2006

Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that the August 16, 2006 Executive Session minutes remain sealed.

II. Public Hearing

a. Students (Agenda/Non-agenda Matters)

b. Members of the Public (Agenda Matters Only)

There were no students who wished to speak on agenda or non-agenda matters.

There was no one from the public who wished to speak on agenda matters.

III. Consent Calendar / Consent Agenda

No resolutions fell under the consent agenda.

IV. Action Calendar / Action Agenda

ADMINISTRATION

PERSONNEL

NO. 06-8-1 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent and in compliance with Policy 2410, the Organizational Chart for the Cranston Public Schools is hereby amended to reflect the changes as presented by the Superintendent.

Moved by Mrs. Greifer and seconded by Ms. Iannazzi that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Scherza commented that often people have heard it said that school departments should run more like businesses, and administration has attempted to refine its organizational chart and structure to a business model by eliminating bureaucratic levels. Hopefully, they can achieve some efficiencies and make decisions a little quicker. The decisions will be made by people most competent to make them. It is basically a textbook business model the district is going to.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

NO. 06-8-2 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the appointment of Assistant Principal, Cranston High School East, be approved.

Mr. Lupino stated that per the request of administration this Resolution was withdrawn.

NO. 06-8-3 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the appointment of Assistant Principal, Middle School, be approved.

Moved by Mrs. Greifer and seconded by Ms. Iannazzi that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Scherza stated that he was seeking the advice and consent of the School Committee regarding the appointment of Ms. Wendy Parente to the position of Assistant Principal at Western Hills Middle School.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

NO. 06-8-4 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the appointment of Assistant Principal, Middle School, be approved.

Moved by Mrs. Greifer and seconded by Ms. Iannazzi that this Resolution be adopted.

Mr. Scherza stated that he was seeking the committee's advice and consent on the appointment of an Assistant Principal who would be a replacement at Park View Middle School. It gave him great pleasure to put the name of Mr. Dennis Charpentier before the committee. Dennis has been with Cranston Public Schools since 1990 most

Page 3 August 16, 2006

recently as a science teacher at Western Hills. He has been involved on the School Improvement Team. Prior to that, he served as an elementary teacher at both Arlington and Oak Lawn Schools. He has a Bachelor Degree from Rhode Island College and his Masters of Education in Administration from the University of Phoenix. When this was discussed among the administrative staff, there was a lot of enthusiasm for Mr. Charpentier.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

NO. 06-8-5 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignation of the following non-certified personnel be accepted:

Alicia Ruginis, Secretary

NEL/CPS Academy

Effective Date: August 18, 2006

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

BUSINESS

NO. 06-8-6 – RESOLVED, that the following purchases be approved:

Used 1997 Chevrolet Mid-Bus in the amount of \$6,120.00.

Number of bids issued 7

Number of bids received 3

Resilient Flooring and Vinyl Base in the amount of \$22,961.92.

Number of bids issued 13

Number of bids received 1

Moved by Mrs. Greifer and seconded by Ms. Iannazzi that this Resolution be adopted.

With regard to the resilient flooring and vinyl base, Mr. Lupino stated that this was an emergency appropriation. Bids were issued, and the district received only one back. He suggested that because the district is in a tight financial situation and because there are various unforeseen things that do arise, there is a state bid that is utilized

occasionally. He knows that the district does buy better than what the state does for some items, and in some cases, the district can't use the bid list because they can't provide the product in a timely manner. He suggested that in the future if the district ever run into this situation again, that if there is only one bidder returning a bid that the

Page 4 August 16, 2006

district go either with the person bidding or the state bid list, whichever is lower provided that the state bidder can produce the material in a timely manner.

Mr. Traficante asked Mr. Balducci if this was legal and proper. He also asked that if someone bid on a particular item as the lowest responsible bidder and the district doesn't accept that lowest responsible bidder and jump to the state bid what was the possibility of a lawsuit. Mr. Balducci responded that when they have utilized the state bid it is a decision that this is the road they have chosen because the state has done their due diligence and awarded contracts to certain vendors for certain items. In this case, the district would be doing both at the same time. He felt that the committee may be opening up the district to a possible litigation or complaint at a minimum. Mr. Traficante added that he had the same situation when he was Mayor. They had to either piggyback with the state or go out to bid. Mr. Balducci commented that if this is a

direction they would like administration to explore, he would call legal counsel and ask for an opinion. Mr. Lupino suggested a caveat that states that in the event only one bid is returned this committee has the option of either going with the low bidder or the state bid list. He suggested it so that the committee would be more accountable. He added that there are companies that would take advantage especially when a project has to be done in a timely manner.

In response to Mr. Lupino's question regarding the bus, Mr. Zisseron responded that it is a wheelchair bus. He explained that the district needs the additional bus for Meeting Street School. The numbers have gone up for the school. He has been running two buses to the school for the past seven to nine years, and the numbers are too high, therefore, the reason for the additional bus. There is also a time change for this school.

Mr. Stycos asked if the bid amount for the flooring was a reasonable amount, and Mr. Zisseron responded that it was a good buy. In asset protection, he had estimated \$27,000 for the three schools. This is a savings of \$4,000.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

V. Public Hearing on Non-agenda Items

There were no speakers on non-agenda items.

Page 5 August 16, 2006

VI. Announcement of Future Meetings

The next School Committee meeting will be held on Monday, August 21st, at Hope Highlands School at 7:00 p.m.

VII. Adjourn to Public Work Session

Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi 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 work session at 6:55 p.m.

Mr. Lupino convened the work session at 6:56 p.m.

1. Framework/Curriculum for Kindergarten-Grade 12 School Counseling Presentation

Mrs. Jean Greco, Guidance Program Supervisor presented the School

Counseling Framework/Curriculum Guide Kindergarten through Grade 12 to the School Committee. Mrs. Greco's remarks are attached to these minutes.

Mr. Stycos indicated that he had spoken with Mr. Bonaventure at Cranston East regarding a scheduling issue at the school. Mr. Bonaventure told Mr. Stycos that there was one section of AP Calculus at Cranston East and four sections at Cranston West. This fact bothered him, but one explanation may be that people on the eastern side of the city are genetically inferior, but another possibility may be that somehow this school system is failing some kids. His gut theory is that those children are from immigrant backgrounds whose parents may not advocate for them as he would for his child. Some of these students are just as bright but aren't getting pushed and encouraged to try the tougher courses. This is an indication that something may be wrong in this system. His children have indicated that some minority students are quite bright but aren't encouraged to go for those tough classes that they intellectually could handle.

Mrs. Jodi Murphy, a guidance counselor at Cranston East, responded that she has been a counselor at East for the past year. She is very familiar with the population at the school and has been a counselor on the eastern side of the city for twelve years. At East, the faculty doesn't lower the classes and standards for the minority students. Even if a child doesn't put in 100% effort and if a teacher feels the child can do it academically, they are pushed to do well. They push

children to the maximum. With regard to the curriculum guide for guidance and Cranston East, the counselors are going into the classrooms more. They are able to do it because of what Mrs. Greco and

Page 6 August 16, 2006

the Guidance Department have done. Over the past year at East, the entire staff pushes children to the max.

Mrs. Greco referred to Mr. Stycos's comment regarding equity and access and noted that the counselors have recently been trained by Education Trust. They have taken it on nationally to make sure all students have access to rigorous courses. She knows that this is a passion of Mr. Laliberte's. Until there is 100% graduation rate, the district has not met the needs of all students. The district still has work to do but has made tremendous gains. One of her hopes for the coming year is to have guidance counselors take a closer look at course taking patterns and some of the demographics to see what more they can do to encourage students for further achievements.

Mrs. Lynne Burke, Assistant Principal at Cranston West, indicated that there is one AP Honors Calculus class at West. Mr. Stycos stated that he would be interested in the number of students at each of the high schools by track level and an ethnic breakdown of the students who are in the top track. Mr. Laliberte responded that he

would get this information for Mr. Stycos.

Mr. Lupino noted it is an elective situation, and if a student is Asian American and he calls himself an American and he doesn't put down the color of his skin, that sometimes skews the results. Mrs. Greco added that it is a definite difficulty especially with high school students because they identify themselves.

Mrs. Greifer commented that she did spend several hours going through the curriculum guide document. She stated that she was really impressed with the quality of the document. The lesson plans are so well thought out and nicely done. She congratulated Mrs. Greco and her department for such a fine document.

Mr. Lupino stated that he knew one of the goals in this document was that every student sees a counselor in September. He asked that knowing that school starts after Labor Day and there are holidays in September how it could be possible to see every student. Mrs. Greco responded that she didn't know how he could make that interpretation. She wouldn't state that. On the elementary level, all students will be seen through September and October through the developmental guidance lessons. This is done through the classroom lesson. The national model has the guidance counselors moving from a one on one. They can no longer be standing at the bottom of the waterfall catching the babies one by one. They need to go to the top of the waterfall and find out why they are falling. That is

why a curriculum has been developed in order to reach all students to teach them the knowledge and skills to develop the attitudes they need. In order to do that, the counselors need to go into the classrooms because they cannot see 11,000 students one by one and deliver six pages of standards to them. In terms of seeing all students in the month of September, that is not accurate. At the middle school level, they hope to see every student first quarter. At the high schools,

Page 7 August 16, 2006

sometimes because of the numbers, students may not be seen until mid year. They are hoping to change that, and the committee can help them by appropriating money for more counselors in the future. Mr. Lupino commented that he doesn't know how there is enough time to do what should be done. Mrs. Greco responded that at the elementary level, the counselors embrace the counseling model because they see the dramatic effect it has upon students. They are able to schedule the classrooms at the beginning of the school year to get into classrooms every couple of weeks. In some of the grade levels in the larger schools, it might be once a month. At the middle school, this is something that has to be worked out as they are looking at middle school reform. If the district is serious that all students need the knowledge and skills of these standards, she asked where the appropriate delivery system is. It varies at each of the middle schools, and she is hopeful to be able to come up with a

set plan for the three middle schools during this next year. At the high schools, both East and West have a totally different delivery system based on their schools.

Mrs. Joanne DiOrio, a guidance counselor at Cranston West, stated that prior to this year most of the time the counselors would be going into studies or pulling students out of study halls. This year will be a little bit different and more challenging because there won't be any studies for students. They will be working with advisories more closely. They will also be working with portfolio teachers in working with the 9th, 10th, and 11th graders trying to deliver their lessons and programs through the portfolio classes. Mrs. Murphy added that the counselors go into the classrooms in the beginning of the year so that all students are seen by October. They do it through the English classes.

Mr. Lupino thanked Mrs. Greco and her staff for all their hard work.

Mr. Scherza introduced Mrs. Wendy Parente, the newly appointed Assistant Principal at Western Hills Middle School. He further indicated that Wendy has her Bachelor Degree from the University of Rhode Island. She has her Master of Arts and Science Education from the University of Rhode Island and her CAGS from Rhode Island College. She has been a science teacher since 1982 at Bristol-Warren High School and has served one year as the Dean of Students which is the disciplinarian of the high school. Most recently she has been

the science chairperson at Toll Gate High School. There was a very good pool to select from, and it is testimony to her ability that she has been appointed.

2. Proposed Increases in School Lunch Prices

Mr. Balducci stated that he had given a memo to the School Committee highlighting certain pieces of information regarding the Food Service Program for both this past fiscal year 2005-2006 as compared to 2004-2005. Mr. Balducci referred to page 2 of the information and noted that it was participation numbers broken down by school for 04-05 as compared to 05-06. Almost across the board, there was less number of

Page 8 August 16, 2006

lunches being sold at each of the schools. That is key because one of the things that happened this past year is that sales district wide went down approximately \$76,000.

Mrs. Greifer noted the figure for Edgewood Highlands School where there was a loss of over 9,000 meals. Mr. Marrocco, Food Service Director, explained that for Edgewood Highlands and Cranston West there are other things going on such as school stores. He is looking into it right now. He is working toward working with the schools to gain back some of that revenue by having the students eating their

lunch and not going into the school stores and eating.

Mr. Lupino asked if any of the decreases were the result of eating disorders because there is a definite epidemic of eating disorders especially at the middle and high school levels. Mr. Marrocco responded that he didn't think it was because of eating disorders because there are checks and balances in place for those people who have disorders and get special meals from Food Service. Rather it is from the bad PR that the School Lunch Program received stating that it makes children obese. It isn't true, but parents shied away last year and this year from School Lunch because of the bad PR on TV and the media. It had an effect on everyone. He has done new things to make the kids eat products that are healthier for them, but they just aren't taking them.

Mr. Lupino mentioned that the freshmen hot dog roasts are coming up at the high schools and middle schools. This might be a time to put a plug in with the assistant principals and principals to let the parents and students know what is offered for lunch. Maybe some of the students or parents are getting the wrong impression because they don't know what is offered, and the program is offering a healthy alternative to what can be packed in a lunch. Mr. Marrocco felt that it was more the parents who are getting the wrong impression. He did say it in his letter to the parents that is sent with the application for lunch.

Mr. Archetto asked about the hours the school stores are allowed to be opened and asked if it could be addressed to ask the schools to not open the stores during lunch time or open after lunch. Mr. Lupino stated that this information was contained in the policy and that a discussion had been held previously. Mr. Archetto suggested that the district should study the schools that are doing something right; they are adding lunch programs. Barrows, Eden Park, Arlington, and Stone Hill Schools' lunches went up. They should look at why their sales are up. Mr. Marrocco responded that the same menu is being served at those schools as are served throughout the city. He could serve spaghetti on one side of the city, and the other side of the city won't like it. He does make changes in the menu to accommodate schools.

Mr. Balducci referred to the revenue and expenditures for School Lunch. He noted that unaudited the program had an approximate \$160,000 deficit for 05-06. A piece of that deficit is depreciation. The difference between money coming in versus money going

Page 9 August 16, 2006

out is approximately \$130,000. He attempted to identify the major areas that caused the approximate \$130,000 operating deficit. From the revenue standpoint, the sales went down approximately \$76,000. The government reimbursement increased by \$62,000, and the Lunch Program does get some money from the State which is called State

Match. This increased by \$1,600. Overall the impact was approximately \$12,000 which was a shortfall. On the expenditure side, looking at purchases, the Lunch Program did spend less last year because they were seeing that participation was down. However, payroll went up \$31,000, benefits went up \$52,000, and under repair and maintenance it went up \$36,000. From a revenue standpoint, there was a deficit of \$12,000; from an expenditure standpoint, the expenses went up \$97,000 which would bring it over \$100,000. He also identified certain areas of expenditures, and these are the ones he hoped to do something with. One is the register staff in the amount of \$97,000 for salary and benefits. At the elementary level, the Food Service Program now has a register person. A few years back that responsibility was given to the classroom teacher of collecting the money from the students and then transferring that information to a person in Food Service and getting the information to one of the production sites. Now that responsibility has been put on the Food Service Program, and they have to pay for a three-hour register staff. This is year four of this service. This was done because the teachers complained that it was taking away from instructional time. The teachers still ask what the student's choice for lunch is, but they don't collect any money.

Mr. Scherza pointed out that the government reimbursement has been increased by \$62,485 which is almost exclusively a result of School Max. When a family qualifies for free or reduced lunch, there would be many elementary students filling them out and bringing

them back, but the high school students would not. Now with School Max when one member of the family qualifies, every member of the family gets it.

Mr. Balducci went on to explain that the food drivers are members of the custodial staff. They go to the state warehouse for the government commodities. The district sends a truck to the warehouse every Friday to pick up those items that are used in preparing food items. 40% of their salary and benefits are borne by the Food Service Program based on the amount of time they service the program. Gasoline for the trucks is to support the trucks used for the program. Mr. Stycos asked if the drivers were a change or if it was always that way. Mr. Marrocco responded that this change was made approximately four years ago. At one point, the state was delivering to the district, and then they did away with their drivers.

With regard to the administrative fee, this consists of Mr. Balducci's time and his staff's time in reviewing the Food Service Program, and Mr. Marrocco is billed for a portion of Mr. Balducci's salary and his staff's salary. Last year the program was charged \$8,088. Mr. Lupino added that a few years ago the School Committee asked that this fee be included.

Page 10 August 16, 2006

Mr. Balducci explained that the repairs and maintenance went up

\$36,000 last year. One of the biggest components of this is the upgrade of fire suppression system. In the new fire codes the school district has to adhere to, the fire suppression systems in eight of the schools had to be upgrades. The Food Service Program bore the cost of it last year. This did contribute to the overall deficit of \$130,000 last year.

Mr. Balducci referred to the current pricing at the elementary schools which is \$1.50 and at the secondary schools it is currently \$2.25. Administration has proposed some increases of \$1.50 to \$1.75 for elementary. He noted that he was using the same participation numbers that were used in 05-06. If they raise the elementary level by 25 cents, they estimate they will take in another \$90,000. If they increase the elementary level by 50 cents to \$2.00, they are looking at \$181,000 as compared to last year's revenue. At the secondary level, the lunch is currently at \$2.25. If they raise the price to \$2.50 it will realize an additional \$82,000 or if they go to \$2.75, it will realize \$164,000 additional revenue. For comparison purposes, he listed a number of other school districts in Rhode Island to give information as to where they stand on both elementary and secondary lunch prices.

Mrs. Greifer asked when the last price increase took place, and Mr. Marrocco indicated that it was three years ago. She asked if there were figures available that would show what happened to the participation rate based on the price increase. In response, Mr.

Marrocco said that it was slow in the beginning, and then it came back to where it was. He received the rates yesterday for the reimbursement figures, and for free lunch this year the program will receive back \$2.40 for elementary and secondary schools. If the committee raises the price to \$2.50, it isn't comparable because for a paid student the program is receiving 23 cents. If the committee raises the price to \$2.50 at the secondary level, the district will be in line. It will also be in line with other systems. Some of the other systems are thinking of raising their prices. The food is most likely going to cost 3% to 4% more on some items because of fuel costs.

Mr. Archetto asked if the Cranston school lunch prices would then be on a higher tier than those across the state, and Mr. Marrocco responded that the district is up there now. Mr. Archetto indicated that the two schools that most could afford the price increase, Cranston West and Western Hills, are the least likely to use the program. The wealthiest students are not utilizing the program; therefore, if the price is increased, the students least likely to afford the increase have to utilize the lunch program. He is not too thrilled about adding 50 cents or 25 cents to the lunch program because it will hurt the less fortunate. Mr. Marrocco added that there is minimum time for lunch and it does play a factor. When cafeterias were originally set up, they weren't built to hold the number of students who pour into them. They can't get them through the lines because of the way they are set up.

Mr. Lupino noted that there were three lunches at Cranston West for one year. The first year the addition was open, they had three lunches of twenty-two or twenty-four minutes. Now they are back down to eighteen minutes because of the increase in population. Mr. Marrocco remarked that this works against the lunch program as well.

Mr. Nero added that at Western Hills the issue has been since the Station fire it has limited the number of students who can be in the cafeteria at one time. They went from three to four lunches based on the increase in students. Even if they wanted to go back to three lunches, the fire laws would prohibit them from doing so.

Mr. Lupino asked if he could provide for his elementary school child a comparable meal for \$2.00 that the Lunch Program produces. Mr. Marrocco indicated that if a parent bought a bologna sandwich, an apple, a granola bar, and milk it would cost probably more than what he is selling it for. That is where the reimbursement comes in from the government. Mr. Lupino added that it is probably half the cost of fast food. If a child buys lunch every day at 50 cents per day, it is an extra \$90 for the year. Mr. Marrocco said that the costs are being passed down to him because of the gas price increases. People are pulling out of bids because they wanted to deliver a certain amount of food to the district, anywhere from \$250 to \$500. The program can't

meet that, and he is having a hard time getting them to come out to bring food. The food distributors still want to make their profit margins of years ago. All these costs are being passed on to the lunch program. The program is absorbing the cost of health benefits as well.

Mrs. Greifer stated that the committee has to keep in mind that the reason they are studying this is primarily because the committee has a contract they have to settle; and this was supposed to help them decide the economic issues in the contract negotiations. Because the Food Service budget has been running a deficit regularly, the committee had to find out where they stood and how they could afford to pay for the contract. Mr. Balducci said that they are studying Food Service for two reasons. One is the contract and the other is to stop the bleeding to turn this program around so that it can remain self-sufficient and the school district won't have to supplement additional funds into the program.

Mr. Traficante asked Mr. Marrocco what he was proposing with regard to the price of meals at both the elementary and secondary levels. Mr. Marrocco believed they would go to \$2.00 at the elementary level and \$2.50 at the secondary level. With those increases, the program would be in good shape; it would help them with the increased food and labor costs this year. He has never received any money from the city side or the school side to help with the deficits. They have paid for maintenance costs and adjustment costs on their equipment, and

this hurts them at the end of the year. This year they fell short a little bit, but they were hit with the large bill on the suppression system that had to be replaced. This year they have to go out to bid for health reports. Two per year must be done, and this is a federal mandate. He has seen price ranges from companies from \$200 to \$560. There are twenty-six sites two times a year at the

Page 12 August 16, 2006

bid price, and that is another added expense. The state use to do the inspections for free. Mr. Traficante indicated to Mr. Marrocco that he could potentially pay for a contract, take care of paying down some money toward the deficit, and at the same time take care of the State of Rhode Island requirements. Mr. Marrocco replied that it could be done as long as the participation stays the way it was this past year. He talked with his staff today regarding increased participation so they are looking for ways to improve it. Mr. Balducci referred to the deficit he mentioned earlier and noted that Food Service was able to absorb it. He didn't have to put the \$130,000 back into the system to make them whole. They did have enough in reserves to absorb it, but the problem is that the reserve is going down. The reserve is approximately \$160,000.

Mrs. Greifer asked Mr. Marrocco if he was recommending an increase of 50 cents at the elementary level which is about a 33% increase but only 25 cents at the secondary level which is a 12% increase. She

asked why he wouldn't consider increasing the prices 50 cents and 50 cents. Mr. Marrocco responded that because there are other things happening at the high school with the students not coming through the lines because of long lines, if he raises it more, it will hurt them at the secondary level. The last time he raised prices, he was looking for only 10 cents, and the School Committee encouraged him to raise prices 35 cents. He felt that they will be okay with these increases.

Mr. Stycos referred to Mr. Archetto's earlier concerns regarding the reimbursement of \$2.40 on a lunch. A low income child who gets a free lunch pays nothing, but the program gets \$2.40. The child that pays the full price which may be \$2.00 at the elementary school, the district gets \$2.00 from the child and 23 cents from the federal government. Mr. Marrocco added that for the reduced price lunches, the program gets 40 cents, and \$2.00 reimbursement of government money. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Marrocco what he intended to do with the a la carte items. Mr. Marrocco responded that a la carte pricing is only in the secondary schools, and it is pretty much in line with the outside prices. He is looking at new items to bring in. He went to a seminar on health choices for kids. They had approximately 50 vendors there, and the items he has to bring in are a lot more expensive. The wellness cookies which are low in sugar and transfat will cost 90 cents to \$1.00.

Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Marrocco if he was making any suggestions on

the top items because three or four years ago he re-shifted \$160,000 worth of cost to the School Lunch Program and now it is losing money. This seems to be a pretty direct relationship between the shift and losing money. He asked Mr. Marrocco if he was suggesting any changes in the drivers or the register staff. Mr. Balducci responded that he would have a conversation with Mr. Scherza as they move forward. The Lunch Program absorbed the cost of the suppression system, and Mr. Scherza felt that this expense should have been borne by the district because the equipment will remain there even if the Food Service Program isn't there. It will remain as school department property. He may have to re-categorize that particular expense. With regard to the

Page 13 August 16, 2006

other expenses, they will be up for discussion. Mr. Traficante commented that if the city continues to provide the school department the extra money for asset protection that can be included in that particular line item.

Mr. Scherza added that in those districts where food service has been outsourced, the district has to provide the steam tables, dishwashers, and fire suppression systems. Those are physical assets of the school district and not of food service. It becomes a permanent asset of the district and should be borne by the district as opposed to food service.

Mrs. Greifer asked if there was any possibility where this is an area of sharing the warehouse rungs with Warwick. Mr. Scherza indicated that it probably wouldn't happen because they outsource through Aramark so they don't run their own system. Mrs. Greifer asked if there were any other surrounding communities willing to do it, and Mr. Scherza remarked that there are very few systems running their own food service. Mr. Lupino added that at the first meeting of the Consolidation Committee with Warwick they were more interested in bringing back things that they had privatized than to advocate for privatization. Mr. Marrocco said that he talked with the Providence School Department because they have a truck but the cost of doing the deliveries was a lot higher.

Mr. Lupino asked if a comparison was done with school districts the size of Cranston, and Mr. Balducci indicated that at one of the Consolidation Committee meetings with the Business Office in Warwick, they do privatize their Food Service Program. Mr. Balducci explained how the contract works with an outside company. Mr. Lupino commented that he was thinking along the lines of a like school district with a school funded program. He asked if Cranston was compared to any of the others. Mr. Marrocco responded that the other districts are much smaller, and the only ones left are North Kingstown and Scituate.

Mr. Scherza pointed out that to a certain extent Food Service has

actually been subsidizing the school district because of such payments as the fire compression system and equipment. Those are usually bought by the community, and in this case the program is subsidizing the district rather than the district subsidizing them. If it was a private enterprise, the school district would have to provide the fire compression system, steam tables, etc. It is the responsibility of the community, and it is pretty standard in all the contracts when food service is outsourced.

Mr. Stycos asked how the register staff is handled in other districts, and Mr. Marrocco indicated that usually the management company has their staff handling the register, and they bill the district a management fee for the service.

Page 14 August 16, 2006

Mr. Lupino asked if the length of time for lunch was addressed, and Mr. Scherza replied that Cranston West is two minutes shy in terms of school minutes in the day. That will not be addressed to lengthen the times for lunches if they are going to keep the educational time within the regulated minutes until collective bargaining comes around. They will have to negotiate a longer day to build in those minutes. They need to have 330 minutes per day of instructional time, and that does not count lunch, passing time, etc. Right now West is short two

instructional minutes and just about on the nose at East with the lunches they have. In order to increase lunch time or build any additional time, more than likely they would have to increase the school day. It is a matter for collective bargaining and probably won't be able to get to it before next year when the committee opens the contract for discussion again. Mr. Nero pointed out that there was a lot of discussion on this subject when the Wellness Committee met. It goes even beyond the contract. It is almost impossible to do. Mr. Scherza commented that the lunch times for middle and high schools are very short, but the elementary schools seem to have ample time. He also noted that in order to lengthen the school day it will cost additional dollars.

Mr. Archetto asked how many lunches were held at Western Hills, and Mr. Nero said there were four. Mr. Archetto asked if there was any room for expansion of the cafeteria, and Mr. Nero indicated that they have discussed an expansion there. With serving more students, it creates problems for food service with hiring more staff. Mr. Scherza added that in order to do that it would be bonded capital from the city, and there are some projects that go back five to eight years; and the money has not been released. Mr. Zisseron reminded the committee that a part of the ongoing project at Cranston East is a smaller cafeteria which will hold approximately ninety students just to help the overflow in the main cafeteria and maintaining the cafeteria in the Briggs Building. Mr. Marrocco noted that this will be added cost to the Food Service Program.

Mr. Lupino asked for a consensus from the committee regarding the school lunch prices. He saw no problem with trying the suggested increases on a trial basis. Mr. Balducci reminded the committee that there is an agenda item for the August 21st meeting at which time the committee will vote on the new prices for school lunches. Mr. Stycos backed Mr. Marrocco's comments regarding how to make the program work, and he would go along with his judgment. Mr. Lupino agreed with Mr. Marrocco's thinking. The other members of the committee were in agreement as well.

3. Proposed School Committee Energy Management Conservation Policy

Mr. Scherza stated that when the committee entered into a contract with EEI they required that the School Committee pass a policy as part of the contract. A sample of the policy was distributed to the committee. It would take a resolution from the committee in order to do that because it is a policy issue. It is boiler plate information

Page 15 August 16, 2006

obtained from EEI. It has been slightly edited from what EEI recommended. If the district is moving forward, it is one more "i" that will be dotted and one more "t" that will be crossed.

Mr. Lupino referred to the general responsibilities on the proposed

policy regarding classroom doors remaining closed when HVAC is operating. He noted that this is not just an energy conservation but also it comes under the fire codes. The committee has to spend money this year for door closers which means that the schools have to do away with the wooden wedges.

Mrs. Greifer referred to that portion of the proposed policy dealing with air conditioning equipment, No. 9. She felt that the fire issue would have to be addressed and eliminate that portion. If the committee makes it part of the policy, they would be in violation of the fire codes. Mr. Zisseron commented that the stairwells act as an air shaft and that is the reason corridor doors are open in the schools. The air comes up and circulates down the corridor and gives air flow. That is how the schools were designed years ago. When the doors are closed, the air is cut off. With fire code, no corridor doors can be kept closed unless there are magnetic door holders. They are connected to the fire alarm, and if there is a fire, the alarm goes off and the doors de-magnetize and close. Not that many schools have magnetic door holders. He has not had an opportunity to look at this policy. He asked the committee to make sure that it won't put the district in a bind. Mr. Lupino suggested that the committee add a caveat that these conservation methods will be adhered to except when they violate fire and/or other building regulations established by the State of Rhode Island. Mr. Scherza commented that it is a catch 22. The ventilation system is leaving windows and doors open. On the other hand, problems are created.

Many of the schools have unit ventilators for each room, and each of those ventilators is predicated and determined by the size of the room. When the door is open, it creates a vacuum. The unit ventilator for the exchange of free air is going to be hurt when the door is open, but yet if the door is closed to accomplish what EEI is suggesting, now they won't get the cross ventilation balancing with doors and windows. Mr. Zisseron added that teachers are famous for putting all kinds of materials on the top of the unit so there isn't any air coming out and circulating. This was a big issue a number of years ago at Park View. Mr. Traficante commented that this is the reason for hiring the individual to teach and educate. Mr. Zisseron tells them also. Mr. Scherza added that to do what they say will satisfy the district in one way but it will create another problem in the process.

Mr. Lupino commented that this proposed policy would appear on the August 21st agenda for first reading.

Mr. Zisseron indicated to the committee that the chiller at Edgewood Highlands School went down. It is an outdated unit from 1963. The windows at this school don't give a lot of cross ventilation, and there is a need for air conditioning. Administration went out to bid for an emergency purchase with three proposals. They bought a compressor that

should be received within the next couple of days. It will be installed before school starts at a cost of approximately \$12,000. Mr. Scherza added that they estimated the cost at \$15,000. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Zisseron if the district buys the most efficient equipment in cases such as this, and Mr. Zisseron responded that they do, but they are putting it on an old unit. It was hard to find a unit because of the age of the unit itself. If they replaced the entire unit, it would cost \$175,000 to \$200,000. Mr. Scherza noted that after so many years a rebuilt unit is offered. The \$12,000 expense buys the district a little bit of time whereas to replace the entire the system they wouldn't be able to replace it before school opens. Mr. Zisseron noted that he was able to get a five year warranty for the unit.

Mr. Zisseron also indicated that there is another item coming up for another compressor at Hope Highland School. This school operates on two compressors, and one of them is dead. Money will be saved by installing the unit in-house.

Mr. Stycos mentioned the college preparatory classes and the comprehensive classes for this school year. It was his understanding that there wouldn't be college prep or comprehensive designation on the courses. He asked if the committee could decide to change it in September or if it would be too late. This ties into college admissions. It was fine with him to have the discussion in September, but he was concerned about things being in place. Mr. Lupino remarked that this was not an agenda item for this work

session. He suggested that Mr. Stycos discuss it with Mr. Laliberte after the work session. Mr. Stycos stated that if his concern wasn't addressed, he would like to have a special meeting before the beginning of the school year. Mr. Scherza commented that administration did not have the ability to get a comprehensive study done for this work session. Mr. Stycos asked if changes could be made, and Mr. Laliberte responded that changes could be made, but it will be against what the State wants the districts to do. Mr. Stycos suggested making changes in September if the committee feels that there is a change that needs to be made.

VIII. Adjourn Work Session

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

**There being no further business to come before the work session, it was adjourned at
8:30 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony J. Lupino

Clerk

**Presentation on the
K –12 School Counseling Curriculum
to the School Committee**

August 17, 2006

Briggs Conference Room

6:30 PM

Presenter: Jean Greco, Program Supervisor of K-12 Guidance

**Participants: Joanne DiOrio, CHSW Counselor, Jodi Murphy, CHSE
Counselor**

It is an honor and a privilege to stand before you to present this outstanding K-12 Curriculum for School Counseling in Cranston Public Schools. This detailed document is the culmination of many years of dedication and hard work by our current and recently retired guidance counselors. I applaud their commitment to excellence. Their names, as well as the names of the visionaries and genuine supporters of transforming Cranston Public Schools' guidance program into a K-12 developmental guidance model are included on the acknowledgement pages in your curriculum binders. Cranston Public Schools' Counseling Program was chosen by the Commissioner of Education to be the exemplar model for the state

because of our well developed comprehensive, developmental K-12 guidance program. To enhance your understanding of what it means to have a comprehensive, developmental guidance program, I will briefly highlight the components of this extensive binder.

Section 1: Introduction

The Introduction explains the purpose of our framework and curriculum: to help ALL students succeed- not just those who are applying to college or who show up at our doors – but ALL students. Rather than just providing reactive, supportive services for some students, we are now charged with providing an organized, planned, sequential, clearly defined program with expected results for all students. Our K-12 school counseling program (known to many of you as our guidance program) employs strategies to enhance academics, provide career awareness, develop employment readiness, encourage self-awareness, foster interpersonal communication skills and impact life success skills for All students.

Section 2: The ASCA (American School Counselor Association) National Model

The ASCA National Model provides a framework for developing school counseling programs that are aligned with the ASCA National Standards and are comprehensive in scope. This means that the school counseling program focuses on what all students from pre K – 12 should know, understand and be able to do in the academic,

career and personal/social areas. School Counseling programs are to be pro-active and preventive versus reactionary. They are to be developmental, for kindergarten through 12th grade. The ASCA National Model outlines the delivery system for school counseling programs with certain percentages of time to be spent on four major areas:

- first, guidance curriculum,**
- second, individual student planning,**
- third, responsive services (which includes individual counseling, small group counseling, consultation with parents, teachers, administrators, support staff and community agencies), and**
- fourth, systems support (so that counselors have time to plan and manage their programs and participate in school improvement).**

Section 3: Comprehensive School Counseling in RI

The RI Framework for Comprehensive K-12 School Counseling was adopted by the Board of Regents in January 2006 and is grounded in the ASCA National Model. Are you aware of the high level of support that the state of RI gives to K-12 school counseling??? This section includes regulations that articulate how comprehensive school counseling programs are a vital contributor to student success and educational reform. For instance, Article 18, RI General Assembly (2003) encourages every district to implement a K-12 standards-based, comprehensive, developmental school counseling program. Cranston Public Schools has just that. The RI Department of

Education Guidance on the High School Regulations (2004) requires strategies for recording and planning for each student's social/emotional, academic and career needs. It also proposes that 1 of 6 strategies that districts can use to create personalized learning environments is to implement a comprehensive school counseling program as the infrastructure for personalization in a Personalized Learning Plan for each student. Finally comprehensive school counseling is identified as a critical player in meeting the requirements of the RI High School Diploma System 2005. "Comprehensive guidance makes sure that systems are in place such that all students are well prepared to leave school ready for a career, whether they immediately go on to college, further training, the military or directly into the workforce."

Section 4: Cranston Public Schools K-12 School Counseling Program
CPS's K-12 School Counseling Program is aligned with Cranston Public Schools' vision and mission statements and guiding beliefs. This section also includes the developmental characteristics of students ages 3 through 18, classroom strategies for English Language Learners and special education accommodations, as well as a brief overview of our K –12 School Counseling program.

Section 5: Focus on Accountability

Our school counseling program is to be held accountable, as are all academic areas. Our school counseling department has a 3-year strategic plan for our K-12 school counseling program. Cranston

Public Schools has developed specific role and responsibility descriptions for elementary and secondary counselors. This section also describes possible sources of data that can be used to evaluate the impact of school counseling programs and interventions.

Section 6: Appendix A: Alignment with Standards

The K-12 School Counseling Curriculum is totally aligned with the ASCA National Standards in the academic, career and personal/social areas, as well as with the National Career Development Guidelines, the RI Applied Learning Standards and SCAN skills.

Section 7: Appendix B: References and Glossary

This section is self-explanatory. It includes references used in compiling this document, as well as sources and websites for counselors to access for information and to improve their practice. It also includes a glossary of terms used in the ASCA National Model, the RI Framework and in this curriculum.

The next two sections are the most exciting and innovative aspects of this entire framework/curriculum!

Section 8: Appendix C: K –12 Scope and Sequence

- Elementary: At the elementary level, we developed a month-by-month chart of topics to be delivered at each grade level. The results we expect students to achieve are also delineated after each section.**

- **Middle School:** At the middle school level, topics are addressed at each grade level quarterly.
- **High School:** A separate scope and sequence was developed for each of the high schools. Although their delivery system differs, the standards that are addressed are the same.

Section 9: Appendix D: Documented Curriculum Activities

Cranston's counselors are to be commended for the level of excellence they have achieved in electronically documenting quality lessons/activities for K-12 students. Utilizing the same format for uniformity, K –12 counselors identified the standards addressed, expected results, preparations and resources needed, detailed steps to implement the lesson and included any handouts or rubrics used for assessment so that a new counselor could comfortably implement these lessons. I can attest to the high quality of these lessons after reviewing various states' curriculum and searching the web for district's curriculum during the development of this curriculum. Our counselors' lessons are truly exemplary! As a matter of fact, people were so impressed with our curriculum at the ASCA National Conference in Chicago this summer that they were willing to pay for copies of it!

Section 10: Appendix E: Documentation Template & Rubric

This section includes the fine tool developed by Dr. Karl Squier and adopted by RISCA (the RI School Counselor Association) for use in developing our quality curriculum lessons.

Section 11: Appendix F: ASCA Ethical Standards

This section contains the ASCA Ethical Standards that are included as a guide for the ethical practices of all professional school counselors, regardless of level, area, or population.

Section 12: Appendix G: Planning for Results

In this section there is another tool for counselors to use in planning their comprehensive school counseling program so that all students can achieve the counseling standards in the academic, career and personal/social areas.

Summation

Tonight you have received an outline of this exemplary framework/curriculum for K-12 school counseling. You have been given a glimpse of the importance the State of RI places upon school counselors as contributors to educational reform and student success. You have also received a snapshot view of the quality work and passion Cranston's K-12 counselors devote on a daily basis to remove barriers and enhance student success.

Are there any questions?