

# **CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MONDAY, MARCH 17, 2008**

**WESTERN HILLS MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**400 PHENIX AVENUE**

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

**PUBLIC SESSION: 7:00 P.M.**

## **MINUTES**

The regular monthly meeting of the Cranston School Committee was held on the evening of the above date at Western Hills Middle School in the auditorium with the following members present: Mr. Archetto, Mrs. Greifer, Ms. Iannazzi, Mr. Stycos, Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway, and Mr. Traficante. Mr. Lombardi was absent with cause.

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 p.m. It was moved by Ms. Iannazzi, seconded by Mrs. Greifer and unanimously carried that the members adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel and PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation (possible litigation – Caruolo Action).

Chairman Traficante reconvened public session at 7:03 p.m.

The roll was called and the Pledge of Allegiance conducted.

## **I. Executive Session Minutes Sealed – March 17, 2008**

**Moved by Mrs. Greifer, seconded by Ms. Iannazzi and unanimously carried that the March 17, 2008 Executive Session minutes remain confidential.**

## **II. Minutes of Previous Meetings Approved – February 4, 2008; February 11, 2008; February 25, 2008; February 27, 2008**

**Moved by Mr. Archetto and seconded by Mrs. Greifer that these minutes be approved.**

**Mrs. Greifer noted that a correction should be made to the February 27, 2008 meeting minutes. On page 15, in the second paragraph the minutes indicate that Mrs. Greifer made a comment regarding student parking; however, it was Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway who made the comment.**

**These minutes were approved unanimously.**

## **III. Consent Agenda / Consent Calendar**

**NO. 08-3-17 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following certified personnel be appointed for the remainder of the 2007-2008 school year:**

**Karen Burns, salary to be at the second step of the prevailing salary schedule**

**Education – Rhode Island College, BA**

**Experience – Cranston Public Schools' Substitute**

**Certification – Secondary Mathematics**

**Assignment – Cranston High School East, 1.0 FTE, Mathematics**

**Effective Date of Employment – March 17, 2008**

**Authorization – Replacement**

**Fiscal Note: 11311012 512100**

**NO. 08-3-18 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following certified personnel be appointed as substitutes on a temporary basis as needed:**

**Melissa Messa Special Education, Elementary/Middle/  
Secondary**

**Bernadette Ross Family and Consumer Science**

**Shelley Tragar Guidance, K-12**

**James Ward Chemistry**

**Kayal O'Malley Elementary**

**NO. 08-3-19 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the retirement of the following certified personnel be accepted:**

**Donna Vigneau-Carlson, Administrative Director of  
Leadership and Professional Development  
Central Administration  
Effective Date: April 4, 2008**

**Lesley Doonan, Speech and Language Pathologist  
Special Services  
Effective Date: June 30, 2008**

**Fred Menna, Health and Physical Education Teacher  
Cranston High School East  
Effective Date: June 30, 2008**

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**Anne Stickney, Speech and Language Pathologist  
Special Services**

**Effective Date: June 30, 2008**

**John Coyne, Teacher**

**Cranston High School East**

**Effective Date: June 30, 2008**

**Amelia Chouinard, Teacher**

**Hope Highlands School**

**Effective Date: June 30, 2008**

**NO. 08-3-20 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the resignation of the following certified personnel be accepted:**

**Billiegene Lavallo, Teacher**

**Cranston High School West**

**Effective Date: February 22, 2008**

**NO. 08-3-21 - Whereas, a number of administrative positions are being eliminated due to the reorganization of the middle schools and elementary schools resulting in a reduction of administrators, and there are more qualified administrators who can meet the needs of our district,**

**Be it RESOLVED, that said certified administrators' contracts not be renewed at the close of the school year under provision of Title 16 of**

**the General Laws of the State of Rhode Island, and**

**Be it further RESOLVED that the Superintendent notify those certified administrators of the Committee's action to terminate their employment.**

**NO. 08-3-22 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following individual be appointed as a volunteer coach:**

**Gary Bucci Cranston High School West Baseball**

**Debra Balassone Western Hills Middle School Softball**

**NO. 08-3-23 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following individuals be appointed as athletic coaches:**

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**Ryan Kavanagh, Assistant Boys' Outdoor Track, Cranston High School West**

**Step – 7**

**Class – D**

**Playing Competition – High School/College**

**Experience – Cranston West Coach, Outdoor Track**

**Certification – Rhode Island Coaches Certification; CPR/AED/First Aid Certified**

**Justine Boisvert, Assistant Girls' Outdoor Track, Cranston High School West**

**Step – 5**

**Class – D**

**Playing Competition – High School/College**

**Experience – Cranston High School West Volunteer Girls' Indoor Track**

**Certification – Rhode Island Coaches Certification; CPR/AED/First Aid**

**NO. 08-3-24 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, said non-certified personnel be recalled from layoff, and**

**Be it further RESOLVED that the Superintendent notify those individuals of the Committee's actions.**

**NO. 08-3-25 – RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following non-certified personnel be appointed as substitutes on a temporary basis as needed:**

**SECRETARIES**

**Amy Harrington**

**Janice Dawley**

**TEACHER ASSISTANT**

**Youssef Jorge**

**NO. 08-3-26 - Whereas, funding for certain non-certified administrative positions is not assured for the 2008-2009 school year,**

**Be it RESOLVED, that said non-certified administrator be terminated at the close of the school year, and**

**Be it further RESOLVED that the Superintendent notify this non-certified administrator of the Committee's action to terminate this non-certified administrator's employment.**

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**GRANTS**

**NO. 08-3-27 - RESOLVED, that the Cranston Public Schools submit the following grants:**

**Rhode Island Department of Education**

**21ST Century CCLC Continuation Grant \$91,410**

**Bain Middle School and Gladstone School**

**E2T2 Model Classroom Grant \$62,700**

**Park View Middle School**

**Rhode Island Foundation**

**Investing in Proven Educational Leadership to Impact \$ 3,365**

**High School Reform**

**Jean Campbell, Administrative Director**

**Secondary Reform and Special Projects (professional development at Harvard University)**

**EDS Technology**

**Making Standards Practical by Using Technology \$ 1,500**

**Stadium School**

**EDS Technology Grant - SmartBoard \$ 1,500**

**Horton Program**

**EDS Technology – LCD Projector and Laptop computer \$ 1,500**

**Horton Program**

**HomeTown Helper**

**Climbing and Sliding into the Future \$12,400**

**Horton School**

**Building a Better City Together \$10,000**

**Industrial Technology**

**Donors Choose**

**Exploring Literature with Picture Books \$ 211**

**Waterman School**

**Cut, Paste, Create with Our Library Program! \$ 180**

**Dutemple School**

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**Ezra Jack Keats Mini Grant**

**We Both Read \$ 493.75**

**Arlington School**

**Lowe's Toolbox for Education**

**School Library Furniture \$ 5,000**

**Dutemple School**

**Let's Build a Playground Together \$ 5,000**

**Horton School**

**Digi-Block Grant**

**Your Place or Mine? \$ 2,365**

**Waterman School**

**Cranston Community Development Block Grant**

**Kidventure and Bain +2 After School Programs \$18,840**

**Bain Middle School and Gladstone School**

**Daily Attendance at School is a MUST for Success! \$15,460**

**Gladstone School**

**NO. 08-3-32 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following Conferences/Field Trips of Long Duration be authorized:**

**Laura Albanese, Principal of Stone Hill School and Coordinator of the Enrichment Program, to travel to the University of Connecticut from July 14, 2008 through July 18, 2008 to attend the Confratute 2008 Conference (Summer Institute on Enrichment Learning and Teaching.**

**Steven Krous, teacher at Cranston High School West, and five students (National Ocean Sciences Bowl Team) to travel to Seward, Alaska to compete and attend the National Finals from April 24, 2008 through April 28, 2008.**

**Meaghan McGonagle and Jessica Palumbo, both teachers at the Cranston Area Career & Technical Center, and approximately fifteen**

**students to travel to Atlanta, Georgia from April 25, 2008 to April 30, 2008 to compete in the National DECA Competition and to attend leadership/career development conferences.**

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

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**Mr. Scherza referred to Resolution No. 08-3-19, retirement of certified personnel. He commented that tonight there are good number of individuals who have served Cranston Public Schools. There are five people leaving the district for the purpose of retirement at the end of the school year who collectively have served the children of Cranston in excess of a century and a half. He acknowledged their time, their efforts, and all they have contributed. He stated that they will be missed. Amelia Chouinard has served the district for thirty-eight years as a Kindergarten teacher; she is currently at Hope Highlands School. Fred Menna has spent thirty-five years in the district as a health and physical education teacher. Anne Stickney spent thirty-one years as a speech and language therapist serving the children of Cranston. Leslie Doonan has been in Cranston for thirty years as a program**

**supervisor most recently and prior to that as a speech and language pathologist. John Coyne spent twenty-three years in technology education here in Cranston, and is one of the people who really helped the Career and Technical Center be much of what it is today. All five of them will be missed; they are great people. Mr. Scherza wished them a wonderful retirement.**

**SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE**

**NO. 08-3-15 - Whereas, each year approximately 2,500 junior and senior high school students from the State of Rhode Island audition for the Rhode Island Music Educators' All-State Ensembles, and approximately 600 students are chosen, and**

**Whereas, forty-five Cranston students were chosen, which is an exceptionally large number of students,**

**Be it RESOLVED that these talented musicians be recognized by the Cranston School Committee for their outstanding accomplishments, and**

**Be it further RESOLVED that they be presented with a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of the Cranston School Committee.**

**Junior Division Honors Chorus Senior Division All-State Chorus**

**Alyssa Males Western Hills Rachel Muncy Cranston East**

**Valerie Maccarone Cranston West Matthew Baker Cranston West  
Mark Gauvin Cranston West**

**Junior Division All-State Chorus Brendan Macera Cranston West  
Lisa Castore Western Hills Amanda Neves Cranston West  
Sudha Panneerselvam Cranston West**

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**Junior Division Honors Band**

**Allison LaPlante Western Hills Senior Division All-State Band  
Allyson Marino Western Hills Wendy Kalver Cranston East  
Rebecca Scialabba Western Hills Sara Larrabee Cranston East  
Emily Tilton Western Hills Jamil Jorge Cranston East  
Kelsey Alpaio Cranston East Mark Gauvin Cranston West  
Aubrey Olstead Cranston East Laura Johnson Cranston West  
Tyler Matthewson Cranston West**

**Senior Division All-State Orchestra**

**\*Rachel Milito Cranston East**

**Junior Division All-State Band \*Joanna Phillips Cranston East  
Gina Savella Cranston West Rachel Damiani Cranston West**

**Jiyeong Hwang Cranston West**

**Junior Division All-State Orchestra \*Vanessa Landes Cranston West**

**Erica Bachand Park View Nicole Leporacci Cranston West**

**Siri Cospes Park View Johnna Mernick Cranston West**

**\*Adrienne Gendron Park View Robert Millerick Cranston West**

**Emma Stanton Park View Amanda Neves Cranston West**

**John Castore Western Hills Elizabeth Ruggieri Cranston West**

**Ian Chalmers Western Hills Meaghan Sullivan Cranston West**

**Jonathan Gelfuso Western Hills**

**Hwang Hyeyeon Western Hills**

**\*Kate Nottage Western Hills**

**Douglas Davis Cranston East**

**Abby Van Horn Cranston East**

**Alec Nadeau Cranston West**

**Joshua Nottage Cranston West**

**\*Received number one rankings in the entire State on their instrument.**

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

**Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway read the Resolution and presented it to the students. She commented that everyone is very proud of them.**

**There are asterisks where some of the students have ranked entirely No. 1 in the state on their instrument as well. She congratulated**

**forty-five wonderful students for their accomplishment.**

**This Resolution was adopted unanimously.**

**SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATION**

**NO. 08-3-16 - Whereas, on Monday, January 28, 2008, a seventh grade student at Park View Middle School, was retrieved from the bottom of the Park View swimming pool, and**

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**Whereas, Michael Crudale, a physical education teacher and certified swim instructor in Cranston Public Schools for the past fourteen years, and Robert Bouchard, a physical education teacher and certified swim instructor in Cranston Public Schools for the past eighteen years, saved a seventh grade student's life by retrieving her from the pool and administering CPR and calling 911, and**

**Whereas, the student was alert and responsive and then taken to Hasbro Children's Hospital for observation and subsequently released,**

**Be it RESOLVED that the Cranston School Committee and Administration commend, congratulate, and honor Michael Crudale and Robert Bouchard for saving the life of this young person, and**

**Be it further RESOLVED that they receive a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of the Cranston School Committee.**

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

**SPONSORED BY THE COMMITTEE**

**NO. 08-3-14 - Whereas, talented art students in grades 7 through 12 in middle, junior and senior high schools of Rhode Island had an opportunity to win recognition for themselves and their school by participating in The Scholastic Art Awards of 2008, and**

**Whereas, this competition is sponsored regionally by Fidelity Investments in cooperation with the Rhode Island Art Education Association and Rhode Island College and conducted nationally by The Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, and**

**Whereas, approximately 125 Silver Keys have been awarded for outstanding work on the regional level, and 75 Gold Key finalists have been selected and will be forwarded to New York City for the national competition where they will compete with finalists from over sixty other regions across the United States, and**

**Whereas, five entries have been selected as the outstanding entries to be given the American Vision Award of \$100, and Esternesha Marzan, an eighth grade student at Park View Middle School is one of**

**the recipients. This is the tenth year that such a distinction has been bestowed upon a student in the Cranston Public Schools, and**

**Whereas, students in Cranston Public Schools earned fourteen Gold Key Awards, nineteen Silver Key Awards, one Portfolio Nomination, and an American Vision Award,**

**Be it RESOLVED that these talented artists be recognized by the Cranston School Committee for their outstanding accomplishments, and**

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**Be it further RESOLVED that they be presented with a copy of this Resolution signed by the members of the Cranston School Committee.**

**CRANSTON HIGH SCHOOL EAST**

**Lindsay Amoroso   Gold Key   Drawing**

**Caitlin Cannon   Gold Key   Painting**

**Leonardo DeLuzio   Gold Key   Animation**

**Leonardo DeLuzio   Silver Key   Graphic Design**

**Joshua Freedman   Gold Key   Sculpture**

**Joshua Freedman   Fine Arts Portfolio Nominee**

**Ryan Lariviere   Silver Key   Painting**

**Carlton Lonergan   Gold Key   Drawing**

**David Nikitskiy Silver Key Ceramics**

**CRANSTON HIGH SCHOOL WEST**

**Kimberly Enos Silver Key Drawing**

**Elinor Wollenweber Silver Key Graphic Design**

**Ariana Colapietro Silver Key Graphic Design**

**Rachel McCrystal Silver Key Mixed Media**

**Kaitlin Malloy Gold Key Drawing**

**Kaitlin Malloy Fine Arts Portfolio Nominee**

**Sara Pollard Gold Key Drawing**

**Sara Pollard Silver Key Painting**

**BAIN MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**Victor Lei Gold Key Painting**

**Stephanie Diaz Silver Key Painting**

**PARK VIEW MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**Esternesha Marzan Gold Key Printmaking**

**Esternesha Marzan American Vision Printmaking**

**Samantha Companatico Gold Key Printmaking**

**Caitlin Souza Gold Key Printmaking**

**Leazia Berry Gold Key Printmaking**

**Vanessa Robley Gold Key Ceramics**

**Ryan Marshall Silver Key Drawing**

**Talya Fischbach Silver Key Drawing**

**Lyza Baum Silver Key Graphic Design**

**Hannah Achadinha Silver Key Drawing**

**Michelle Peralta Silver Key Ceramics**

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## **WESTERN HILLS**

**Jennifer Arraial Silver Key Painting**

**Klaryssia Gasbarro Silver Key Apparel**

**Brianna Stravato Silver Key Mixed Media**

**Kelsey Swanson Gold Key Sculpture**

**Rachel Vierra Silver Key Painting**

**Michael Musco Silver Key Mixed Media**

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

**Mr. Archetto read the Resolution and presented it to the students.**

**This Resolution was adopted unanimously.**

## **IV. Public Acknowledgements / Communications**

**1. Auditor's Presentation of the Comprehensive Annual Financial**

## **Report of the City of Cranston for Year Ended June 30, 2007**

**Mr. Balducci stated that there were two resolutions on the agenda this evening. One is to accept the Annual Financial Audit for 2006-2007 and also the single audit for the same year. Mr. Ronald Nossek will present a brief presentation to the committee and answer any questions they may have.**

**Mr. Nossek made a presentation to the School Committee. A copy of this report is available in the School Committee Office located at 845 Park Avenue, Cranston, Rhode Island. In his remarks, Mr. Nossek indicated that the committee is monitoring and managing the budget well. This is the second year his firm has done the audit in the city, and they had a wonderful time dealing with the accounting staff and Mr. Balducci. The quality of the information that the committee is getting on a regular basis from the accounting department is at a very high level, and to be honest, it is somewhat rare in the governmental sector.**

**Mr. Stycos referred to page 58 of the report, health fund. He asked Mr. Nossek to explain this information. Mr. Nossek indicated that this is the self-insurance fund, and it is city wide. It is not just the school department's. The self-insurance fund in the city actually encompasses even more than just health care. There are other risks that are managed through that fund. This is indicating that the beginning balance or the net equity in that fund was \$3.3 million. The**

**school district incurred claims of \$33.9 million which are actually funds that are dropping into it, less the payments going out attributable to those claims of \$28 million for health and life and \$377,000 for other. It is showing a net residual in the equity of \$8.1 million going into the next fiscal year. It is**

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**taking it from where they began and where it ended and what caused it. Mr. Stycos stated that it is a \$5 million difference and asked if this would suggest that there is some money there that could be removed from that account and used for other purposes. Mr. Nossek responded that there is usually a third party that is giving the estimates for what the district is going to pay it. There is an actuary determining what the contribution should be on an annual basis. The actuary takes into consideration the fact that there is a residual balance at the end of this fiscal period of \$8.1 million. It is two years by the time the data is received, but they would see some savings come across the board; but he couldn't address how much the savings would be because he isn't an actuary.**

**Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Balducci if he had comments on this. Mr. Balducci explained that the school department does not have a separate risk management trust fund. He would have to look to see what is behind the numbers. This is school and city combined, so the school department does not have a separate fund available to help**

**budget next year's health and life insurance. As was noted on a previous page, there is about \$250,000 set aside for future health costs. That is the only amount of money that is set aside to assist the school department in future years. Mr. Stycos commented that this would suggest that the city has far more money. Mr. Balducci responded that, as Mr. Nossek indicated, this is a city wide audit report. He would have to look to see if the majority of this is related to the city which it probably is. He is not in a position to comment on that.**

**Mr. Traficante asked if a management letter to the city would explain this situation, and Mr. Nossek said that it may be an issue that they would probably address verbally with management that they should beef up their third party and get some sense as to what they have in residuals. Logic should indicate that the contribution should go down. He emphasized the word "should" because all it would take is one catastrophic claim to have it eaten up quickly. Mr. Stycos said it wouldn't happen if the district had re-insurance. This is something the district should look into. He asked Mr. Balducci to examine it further.**

**Mr. Stycos referred to page 93. It states "percentage of delinquent taxes". Usually the amount is .2% or .4%. Last year it was 2.2%. He asked if this was an indication that the city is having trouble collecting its taxes as opposed to previous years. Mr. Nossek responded that it could mean that. Before sounding an alarm, he**

would want to look at another year. There is some growth in that older tax balance come the end of this fiscal year. There may have been some significant collections just subsequent to June 30th that took place that would knock the number back down to where it should be or where it has been in the past. Mr. Stycos indicated that the delinquent tax line is blank and asked if this is a number that gets adjusted annually based on the previous year delinquent collection. Mr. Nossek said that he would be more concerned with the percentage of current taxes. That is the indication of the current tax base and both willingness and ability to pay the levy. When that starts dropping, that is when there

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should be concerns. The older they get the harder it is to collect them. Mr. Traficante observed that based on this report, the city's tax collection rate is extremely good at 98%.

Mr. Stycos indicated that he didn't understand how the collection rate from 06 to 07 goes up, and the delinquency rates also goes up. Mr. Nossek explained that this statistic has to do with the prior year lists. That entire column is a calculation only on the current year levy. What were the new taxes that were levied and collected for that fiscal year, not old ones that the tax department is trying to collect.

Mr. Archetto asked if there were any significant findings in the

management letter, and Mr. Nossek responded that there were not. There was one recommendation, and it was addressed last year as well which had to do with the handling of encumbrances at year end. As he stated last year, Mr. Balducci is managing on a budgetary basis. They have made the recommendation as to how encumbrances are handled, but he understood Mr. Balducci's position, and he hoped that Mr. Balducci understood his. It is something he would not consider to be significant.

Mr. Archetto asked Mr. Nossek in his opinion how he would characterize the fiscal controls of the school department. Mr. Nossek said that they are very strong. In the end, the rubber meets the road when one looks at the quality of the information the committee is getting on a regular basis. That is the information that is used to make decisions.

## **V. Chairperson Communications**

Chairman Traficante commented that the committee will present its budget to the City Council on Wednesday, April 23rd. He believed it will take place at Cranston High School East. No time has been designated at this point. He will keep the public apprised of this situation. He hoped to see the public's presence there in support of the school department budget.

## **VI. Superintendent Communications**

**Superintendent Scherza remarked that again this year administration and the committee will try to go out to the PTO's and PTG's to explain the budget to them. This will be posted and will send notices home through the schools.**

**Chairman Traficante noted that the two dates for the presentation are April 8th at Cranston High School East in the auditorium and April 21st at Cranston High School West in the auditorium.**

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## **VII. School Committee Member Communications**

**Ms. Iannazzi stated that she knew there were many people in the audience who came tonight to speak about the special education directors. She commented that she wanted to make it clear that the School Committee voted to reduce the budget by \$119,000 and to eliminate the position of a special education director; however, the personnel behind that was up to the Superintendent. The Superintendent made a selection. For everyone who has sent the School Committee letters, they have received those letters, but she wanted to let everyone know that it was the Superintendent's decision as to what person was laid off.**

**Secondly, Ms. Iannazzi remarked that she wanted to voice some frustration on behalf of herself and she thought her colleagues that the administration has decided to implement policy changes without consulting the School Committee. Apparently, a memo went out to all elementary school principals informing those principals that they were not to plan for itinerants in Kindergarten. This was a decision that was not brought before the School Committee. This was not discussed, at least to her recollection, and, if it was discussed, she would encourage Liz Larkin, Steven Stycos, and Deborah Greifer, to correct her. She does not recall this being discussed at the sub-committee meetings for the 6th grade change. She wanted to voice her frustration that if policy changes are being made, they should be brought before the School Committee.**

**Mr. Nero responded that they had a meeting with the principals going back about four weeks ago regarding the fact that they felt as though some of this time would be better served on task versus being with itinerants. The bottom line to it all is that they checked the contract and checked with their attorneys on this, and they felt it was not a policy issue and not a contract issue but an administrative prerogative on that. Nowhere has it ever been a policy. They checked on the physical education to make sure that they were following the guidelines about the Wellness Committee and state law.**

**He doesn't believe it to be a policy issue as they discussed it as an administrative team.**

**Superintendent Scherza explained that as far as the health and physical education are concerned, that is covered under state statute; and it cites the necessity to do so to provide it from grades 1 through 12. It does not say Kindergarten or pre-school in that statute. He is not aware of any policy violation; there is no attempt to violate policy.**

**Ms. Iannazzi stated that she is not necessarily opposed to changing Kindergarten. She felt it was a discussion that the entire School Committee needs to have, and it is a change in curriculum. If Kindergarten students are receiving one thing this year, and they are not going to receive the same services next year, then there is a change there; and it should be brought before the School Committee.**

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**Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway said that she was blindsided by this because she didn't know anything about it until it was brought to her attention.**

**She asked if this meant that the Kindergarten children won't be getting any physical education or any art. She asked what they aren't getting that they always have gotten. She felt that it does constitute change in policy if they are changing the curriculum and changing what their day is or what their activities are and what they are not**

getting.

Mr. Nero explained that they tried to follow the contract as they interpreted it through discussions with the executive team and in discussions with their attorneys on this. They felt it was not a violation of policy. They looked at the contract and felt it was appropriate to do so based on the principals wanting to have more time on task with content area with the students.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway stated that this concerns her because this is Kindergarten, and there should be a discussion of what the Kindergartener's day looks like. The curriculum and the activities are certainly something that the School Committee should have been allowed to address. For that reason, she objected.

Chairman Traficante suggested that the School Committee take up this subject at the next work session on Wednesday, April 9th.

Mr. Stycos asked if this was a change that is being proposed effective now or in September, and Mr. Nero responded that it is for September.

Mr. Stycos commented that he was approached by some people from Stadium School who said to him that when he voted to move the 6th grade back to Stadium School, they had two classes of special education; and because there isn't room for the 6th grade and the

special education students, the special education students are going to be mainstreamed into the classroom which creates problems for the special education students and the regular education students because it takes more work and more attention for the teacher to deal with the special education students. He asked if this information is accurate.

Mr. Scherza stated that he didn't believe this was accurately portrayed to Mr. Stycos. Mr. Laliberte commented that Stadium School was in the process of talking about going into an inclusive model, and when the 6th grades were moving back, it was suggested that they go with an inclusive model, and that any particular student within those two classrooms who would not be appropriate for an inclusive model, then they would find another self-contained classroom in the city. Most of the children would be able to be involved in an inclusive program, and it was also discussed about the possibility of adding a third teacher so that it would be covered for the entire elementary spectrum at that school. Mr. Scherza asked Mr. Laliberte for the approximate number of students who would be impacted in that way. Mr. Laliberte said that he didn't know right now.

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He further explained that they have students at Stadium School who would be from grades 1 through 6, so they try to keep it so that there

is a teacher and a teacher assistant in an inclusive model so if a teacher is not in the general education classroom the teacher assistant is in the general education classroom. In order to do that over six grades, they need a special education teacher for every two grades. They don't follow that model in all schools, because in some schools they are able to use the resource teacher in order to fill in for some of the times when either the teacher assistant or the special education teacher are not able to be in that classroom. The Stadium School resource teacher has a particularly heavy load and would not be able to fill in, so they were considering an extra teacher there with a teacher assistant to make it an inclusive school. Mr. Stycos asked if this was separate from the 6th grade move, and Mr. Laliberte responded that it would be because of the 6th grade move that they would add a teacher because they would need that teacher over the one teacher for every two grades. Grades 1 and 2 would have a special education teacher, Grades 3 and 4 and 5 and 6. Mr. Stycos commented that they already have two special education teachers and two aides there so that is covered. Mr. Stycos asked where that plan for an additional teacher stands now. Mr. Laliberte responded that they are losing some special education teachers at the middle school level and also losing some special education teachers throughout the city due to down sizing some of the special education programs. They are re-allocating these teachers. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Laliberte if he was anticipating re-allocating that third teacher to Stadium, and Mr. Laliberte said that he was. Mr. Stycos commented that there would be two regular education classes per grade and then

there would be a special education teacher and an aide for every two grades who would jump around on some type of schedule from room to room. If a child could not handle the regular education classroom, he or she would be sent to a separate special education class in another school, and Mr. Laliberte said that this was correct. It is the model they follow throughout the city, and more and more of the schools have been turning into inclusive models because they are finding that students in special education classes who are in an inclusive model perform better on assessments when they give them; and they are exposed to the general education curriculum with the support of a special education teacher and teacher assistant. Mr. Stycos asked Mr. Laliberte to give the committee in the future a prediction of the special education students at Stadium as to how many of them will stay there and how many are going to move.

Ms. Iannazzi asked Mr. Flynn to have a representative from art, music, library, and physical education specialties at the work session so that they can enlighten the committee as to what is taught at the Kindergarten level. Mr. Flynn responded that he would attend also along with those requested and a Kindergarten teacher. He stated that in his opinion it is clearly a violation of the contract language.

Mrs. Greifer reported that the grant application total for this month totals just under \$232,000.

**Mrs. Greifer congratulated Mr. Balducci, his staff, and administration for once again performing extremely well. Year after year the committee receives these audit reports, and they are always full of high praise for the professionalism of Mr. Balducci and his staff. This district should be proud because she knows for a fact that this doesn't happen in every other district.**

**Chairman Traficante congratulated Mr. Balducci and his staff on behalf of the entire committee.**

## **VIII. Public Hearing**

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

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

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

**No one from the public wished to speak on agenda items.**

## **IX. Action Calendar / Action Agenda**

**NO. 08-3-28 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Cranston School Committee accepts the school**

**district's 2006-2007 Financial Audit as presented in the Auditor's report of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report of the City of Cranston, Rhode Island for the year ended June 30, 2007.**

**Moved by Mr. Archetto and seconded by Mrs. Greifer that this Resolution be adopted.**

**Mr. Stycos stated that he didn't understand the difference between Resolution No.**

**08-3-28 and No. 08-3-29. In response, Mr. Balducci explained that one document is the financial side of the audit and the smaller document is the single audit. It is part of the financial audit. The auditors have to look at the federal grants to make sure that the district is in compliance based on federal and state regulations that they are expending the dollars the way the grant states they should be spending them and that those dollars are shown properly in the financial statement. This smaller document is the result of that audit from a compliance standpoint. Because they issue it to the district under separate cover, he felt it appropriate that the committee approve both documents. Mr. Traficante asked if the single audit is a sample audit of a federal grant or grants, and Mr. Balducci responded that it is the compliance side of the federal audit to make sure that the dollars are expended appropriately.**

**This Resolution was adopted unanimously.**

**NO. 08-3-29 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Cranston School Committee accepts the school district's 2006-2007 Federal Single Audit of the City of Cranston, Rhode Island for the year ended June 30, 2007.**

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

**NO. 08-3-30 - RESOLVED, that the following purchases be approved:**

**Vacuum Cleaning of Boilers and Insurance Inspection Preparation in the amount of \$9,597.00 (08-09); \$10,076 (09-10); and \$10,580 (10-11). (Pending the availability of funding)**

**Number of bids issued 12**

**Number of bids received 2**

**Snow Plowing awarded to Jen Reality as per the bid specifications (see attached). (Pending the availability of funding)**

**Number of bids issued 11**

**Number of bids received 4**

**Pumping of Waste Water, Grease Traps, and Sewer Ejector Tanks in the amount of \$9,710.50 (08-09); \$9,773.50 (09-10); and \$9773.50 (10-11). (Pending the availability of funding)**

**Number of bids issued 6**

**Number of bids received 1**

**Elevator Maintenance in the amount of \$30,000 per year for 2008-2009; 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. (Pending the availability of funding)**

**Number of bids issued 4**

**Number of bids received 3**

**Subscriptions in the amount of \$6,556.25. (Purchases are contingent upon the availability of funds.)**

**Number of bids issued 4**

**Number of bids received 4**

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**Printed Forms in the amount of \$10,685.40. (Purchases are contingent upon the availability of funds.)**

**Number of bids issued 5**

**Number of bids received 2**

**Student Planners in the amount of \$24,719.50. (Purchases are contingent upon the availability of funds.)**

**Number of bids issued 10**

**Number of bids received 6**

**Trash Liners in the amount of \$19,410. (Purchases are contingent upon the availability of funds.)**

**Number of bids issued 17**

**Number of bids received 11**

**Custodial supplies in the amount of \$104,017.56. (Purchases are contingent upon the availability of funds.)**

**Number of bids issued 22**

**Number of bids received 10**

**Athletic Supplies in the amount of \$22,220.04. (Purchases are contingent upon the availability of funds.)**

**Number of bids issued 22**

**Number of bids received 18**

**Moved by Mrs. Greifer and seconded by Mr. Archetto that this Resolution be adopted.**

**Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway referred to the student planners in the amount of \$24,719.50. She asked if this district could do what other districts do which is to have the students download them, print them out, and turn in their signed sheet. This is what schools do in other parts of the country. The schools in Texas do it, and they have a very diverse population. It would save a whole lot of money and a whole lot of trees if this district could do something like that.**

**Mr. Nero explained that this began approximately twelve years ago at Cranston High School East when they were having their NEASC accreditation process problems, and the administration felt it was important. Three years later the committee adopted to buy them for middle schools. As a former principal, the planners are extremely important**

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**especially when dealing with students who won't or don't follow through on things. When they sit down at a team meeting with the parents and the student about not doing their homework or doing an IEP meeting or a 504 meeting, one of the first things they discuss when a student is not performing well is communications back and**

forth from the student and home using the planner. The assignments are in the planner, and the teacher will initial them at the end of the period. Most of the principals at the middle and high schools will state that the planner is very valuable in that regard for students who have difficulties with organizational skills and things of that nature. It has been approximately eight years that the district has been paying for them for all students in both the middle and high schools.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway knows that the planners are being used, and she understands their role. She asked if it was possible to get a better deal on planners. Someone mentioned to her that there is a way to go to a universal planner with a flexible calendar so that a unique planner wouldn't have to be printed every year, and they could buy larger amounts. She asked if this was feasible.

Mrs. Lundsten told the committee that one of the things they needed to keep in mind in talking about the planner is that within the planner there is also the district's policies regarding technology and discipline. It is a way of making sure that parents see it and that it is returned. At the elementary level which doesn't include this, it is also part of the Title 1 schools where it is used as a communications device in making sure that the parents are being informed; and it is a two-way communication. She cautioned the committee to be careful with this. At the elementary level, they looked around for the best price, and they are very competitive. It is more than just a universal calendar. Most times they didn't put the calendar on it because it was

made available by the School Committee and was sent home on a regular basis. Each time the different policies are added, it changes the price.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway remarked that the schools in Texas do PDF files so that when a policy changes or there is a new policy, they have a signature sheet. Mrs. Lundsten also said that not every child has access to a computer and access to a computer in Cranston to download this. Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway responded that he was sure that Texas has its challenges too. There are public libraries and computer labs in the schools. She felt it was a lot of money. Other districts can do it, and some of them are Blue Ribbon Schools and have very different demographics.

This Resolution was adopted unanimously.

NO. 08-3-31 - RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the 2008-2009 School Calendar be adopted.

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

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Superintendent Scherza indicated that there were two possible scenarios for the school

calendar. These are the universal calendars that are put out through the Superintendent's Association in conjunction with the Commissioner. It is basically to make sure the holiday periods such as the February and April vacations are consistent throughout the state. The two models are identical with the exception that on one the students would be in attendance on December 22nd and December 23rd before leaving for the Christmas recess, and there would be an eight-day school recess. The second calendar has two full weeks off at Christmas. The students would leave school on December 19th and not come in on December 22nd and 23rd. In both of them everything is identical except the end date. The first one is June 16th and the second is June 18th. He stated that he was recommending the calendar with two full weeks at Christmas. This would allow them to shut down some utilities or cut them way back. They could also do some extensive cleaning and do some repair projects.

Mr. Archetto moved to designate the eight-day off calendar as Item A and the two-weeks off calendar as Item B.

Mr. Chairman Traficante stated that he believed the Superintendent was recommending the calendar that indicates two weeks off.

Mr. Stycos seconded the motion.

Mr. Traficante stated that the recommendation is to recommend Item B on the recommendation of the Superintendent. The resolution as

**amended is to approve Item B which is the two weeks off during the Christmas holiday.**

**This Amendment was adopted with Ms. Iannazzi and Mr. Traficante opposed.**

**This Resolution as amended was adopted unanimously with School Calendar Schedule B adopted.**

## **TABLED RESOLUTION**

**NO. 08-2-15 - RESOLVED, that Policy No. 5113, Student Attendance for Middle and High School, and accompanying regulations be amended for first reading.**

**This Resolution remains on the table. No action taken.**

## **X. New Business**

**There was no new business.**

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

**Mary Genco, Robinlynn Drive – She stated that she was representing the Special Education Parent Advisory Board who represents one in five students in the City of Cranston. According to the Rhode Island Department of Education regulations, the function and responsibilities of the local advisory council are: “ The committee shall advise the school district or regional program on matters concerning the unmet needs of the students with disabilities, comment on improvement plans including school support plans resulting from Part B Compliance reports, local compliance with federal and state regulations pertaining to the education of students with disabilities, comments on applications for federal and state funds and serve as advocates in partnership with parents with students with disabilities to ensure they receive the entitlements provided to them under state and federal laws.”**

**Mrs. Genco went on to say that she had before her, and some committee members may have received them in the mail, a post card which reads as follows: “Dear School Committee Member, I am not in favor of decreasing the number of Special Education Directors. This will directly affect students, programming and outcomes. Accessibility to parents will decrease as well as support to parents, teachers, principals and staff. This position is vital to the education of students. Please do not vote to eliminate this position.” Their position as a board is not to de-fund but to refund this position. As far as what has been stated, she has personally called the**

**Superintendent's office and asked to meet with the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent a week ago, and neither one of them has returned her phone call.**

**Mr. Traficante indicated that many School Committee members have received their cards. Mrs. Genco said that they made sure that they were signed by voting, taxpaying, Cranston citizens.**

**Mr. Stycos asked administration if they plan to meet with Mrs. Genco. Mr. Scherza stated that at this time he has nothing scheduled to meet with Mrs. Genco. She did pop in at the office one day when they were tied up on another issue. She was told personally at that time that they would not meet on individual matters to go through the budget piece by piece. Mrs. Genco commented that she had called his office three or four days prior to that, and the secretary said that she would pass the message on and that she would hear from them.**

**Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway asked Mrs. Genco that as a representative of the board did she wish to speak to administration about the concerns of the board. In response, Mrs. Genco said that she was sure she could get members of the board to speak to them. She would also like to speak with administration as a parent one on one to express her concerns as to what is happening as well. Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway said she was curious as to whether or not the administration plans on meeting with any of the parents of the**

board or the board to discuss their concerns at all. Mr. Scherza responded that at this time he has had no request from SEPAB or from any of its officers directly. If Mrs. Sowhegan or any of the officers were to call, they would always contact them and meet with them. He has not had that request as of yet.

Ms. Iannazzi suggested to Mrs. Genco that perhaps her board could schedule a special meeting and invite the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent to join them. Mrs. Genco commented that she would pass that message on.

Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway asked Mr. Scherza what the best way would be to invite him. She asked if it would be best to pass the message on through the secretary or try to contact him in writing so that the message gets through to him. Mr. Scherza responded that either one was appropriate. They deal regularly with people, and whether it is Mrs. Sowhegan or one of the other officers, they could contact the office directly either by phone or by mail. They always accommodate.

Richard Vespia, 23 Brook Street – He stated that he has two special needs children in the Cranston School system. He came here tonight to ask this committee to restore the position that was removed from the special education department. He knows that they have a very

difficult job especially in economic times that are hard. Governor Carcieri has left many cities and towns in the eleventh hour having to make deep cuts in their budgets. He knows that the committee has tough decisions to make. He asked do they cut the music program or the athletic program. There are no winners in that type of decision. But, to do more with less doesn't work. It sound good, but the reality is that the case load that belongs to the individual that was cut is now going to be given to someone else who doesn't know these children, who doesn't know the families, and doesn't know the other children and teachers. That means that decisions that will affect children with special needs and their families will be made by someone who is overwhelmed with caseloads of children all over the district. That means that IEP's will not be done because people are spread thin; that means that parents, teachers, principals, and special education teachers will have to wait even longer to resolve issues or to get help that the IEP Team feels is in the child's best interests. This is all in the name of saving money. These children, parents, and teachers work very hard to do what is best for the students, and this will set many of them behind. He and his wife have been very lucky. His experience with the Cranston School system in the Special Education Department has always been one that he can tell this committee about some truly wonderful people. Regular education teachers, special education teachers, aides, principals, and members of the Special Education Department have always been professional, caring and dedicated to what was in the best interest of his two boys. Everyone should be proud that the City of Cranston has an excellent

**school system and that the Special Education Department needs to be supported, not under-staffed and overloaded with cases.**

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**Mary McLaughlin, 195 Greenwood Street – She stated that her daughter is an 8th grader at Park View Middle School in a self-contained classroom. She came here tonight to tell the committee a little bit about their experience with special education as did the previous Dad. Her experience with Cranston goes back to the year 2000 when she purchased her home in Cranston because of the school system. She didn't look in Warwick, Pawtucket, or Providence. She is a native of Massachusetts and lived in an apartment in Providence for a number of years before it came time for her and her daughter to purchase a home. They came to Cranston because of the schools. Shortly after her involvement in the schools, it became clear that she had some special needs and required special education services. She did very well in school up until the time she got to middle school. At middle school, for some reason it was unexplained, she had an emotional breakdown, and they worked very closely with the school to get her back into the school system. It was at that time that she worked very closely with Norma Colaccio and the special education team at Park View Middle School. She also needed at that time to meet with the Director of Special Education Gerry Schimmel. Mr. Schimmel met with her and assured her that her goals**

were his goals, that they were committed to getting her daughter back into the school, that they did not want to send her out of district, and she was happy to report tonight that she did go back to Park View where she is graduating from the 8th grade this year. It was phenomenal to her the commitment from the Special Education Program, from the Special Education Director, right through everyone at Park View and their dedication and devotion to her daughter. She asked the School Committee to look and think clearly about the kinds of decisions made and how they affect the families and impacts the children in our community. The community came together for her daughter; the school came together for her daughter. They came here to live because of the school system, so she encouraged the committee to think of the long haul. She would like her daughter to raise her children in Cranston. They are very happy living here, but this is a community that has an exceptional school system. She is not naïve; she works for the State of Rhode Island and spent the afternoon in union meetings discussing where her benefits will be cut and how many furlough days she will need to take. She is not naïve to the difficulties that come before this committee, but she asked them to take into consideration that the schools really drive this community. She is very proud to be here to speak on behalf of the special educators in Cranston and to ask the committee to carefully consider the kinds of cuts that will alter this community.

Eileen Brothers, 66 Shirley Blvd. – She read the following statement:  
“Happy St. Patrick’s Day. My parents emigrated to this country from

Ireland to live the American dream. Dad worked all holidays, Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving, but never on St. Patrick's Day. We have always celebrated it as an extended family. I am so proud to say that twenty-six years ago tonight my husband Bob and I met and are twenty years happily married. This has always been a special day to us. No matter what has happened, we stop on this day and thank God for the gifts in life we have received, the greatest being our family, our three sons. Also, one of our sons is a goal tender at

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Cranston High School West. Tonight was the final game of the semi-finals in Portsmouth. We were not there to support him or his team as usual. Rather we are here to support our children's education and other children in the school system who are less fortunate and have disabilities. Tonight I am standing here to support our Special Education Department. I hope everyone in this auditorium realizes how important it is to keep in tact the model of the City of Cranston Special Education Department. It is working. Our son has autism. He is doing well because of the teachers he has had and the continued support of the Cranston Public School System. Autism is my passion. Helping those who are struggling is my mission. We know as a family the difficulties and stress that this might cause by having a child with a disability. We are experiencing this first hand. Through our twelve years in the school system, the Directors of Special Education, Cheryl Calvano, Ann Marie Zodda,

and Gerry Schimmel have guided and supported our family through some very difficult times. We have been blessed to have had each of these directors as part of our lives. When difficult situations arose, they were always there to support us, the teachers and the staff at each of those schools. Our children would not be where they are today if not for the intervention and support of the Special Education Directors. This is not about any particular Special Education Director; it is only about the children in the Cranston Special Education Department. We firmly believe that it is in the best interest of the children, families, and school department to keep the structure of the Special Education Department in tact in order for our Special Education programs to remain effective. Bob and I have been to the last few School Committee meetings. The challenges of trying to reduce the school budget is difficult to say the least. Your interest as a team is on the bottom line or the savings to the City of Cranston. As Cranston taxpayers, we respect your position. As parents of two children with disabilities, we strongly believe that the Special Education Department needs to remain in tact. The support and guidance of these directors have been instrumental in providing our children with the best education and savings to the taxpayer in terms of keeping these children educated in the city rather than farming our children out to other placements. With all due respect, the \$100,000 a year salary of one of the Directors of Special Education could have been spent many times over just on our children. I could write a book about the impact the Directors of Special Education have had on our children and our school system. To the School Committee members,

**Mr. Scherza, Mr. Nero, Mr. Laliberte, Mrs. Lundsten, administrators, and teachers, you probably do not hear these words often enough, but thank you for all the time and effort you devote to our children and their families. There are difficult decisions to be made at this time, but reducing the number of Special Education Directors would only burden our school system more.**

**Jane Johnson Wall, 4 Grove Avenue – She referred back to an agenda where Mrs. Tocco-Greenaway brought up the issue about the student planners. She agreed that \$25,000 for student planners seems like a huge chunk of change. She knows that there is at least one elementary school in the district where the PTO pays for the student planners for the 3rd through 5th graders. She asked if there was a way to ask families,**

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**more so at the upper grades, to make a contribution to help offset the cost. She is in a financial position where she would be willing to pay for her child's student planner and somebody else's, maybe a few of them. There are some families who have a financial disadvantage, but it will still be done. That \$15,000 could ideally be used elsewhere.**

**Mrs. Johnson Wall referred to the no itinerants for Kindergarten issue. She is sending her daughter in the fall to Garden City School.**

If Kindergarten is such that they don't have time for itinerants that they need to be spending that time on task, what is needed is full-day Kindergarten. The bottom line is that they need to look at educating a child as the whole child, the whole person. This is her area of expertise. Part of going off to the big kid's school, and she made the decision with her husband to have their daughters go to Garden City School as opposed to keeping her in her pre-school that has a certified Kindergarten program, and she has been very happy. She needs a big kid school and needs to have the experience of taking the mail to the office. Her Kindergartener who is presently at Waterman School loves that experience when they get to deliver and see the bigger kids. She is happy to go on the bus, and they are going to do this. She is happy about having art class. She has signed her pre-schooler up for an art class and pays extra. She asked if she would have to do this again. There are basic things that complete a child's education. She further commented that they should look at the awards that went out to Cranston students in the arts, music, and vocal. Those are the areas that have now been put down for cuts. Now they are saying, sorry Kindergarteners but they have to focus on task. They can't allow them the opportunity to have music which they only get every other week; art every other week; music every other week. They get physical education once a week. That is not enough, but at a minimum, the little ones deserve that. They can go into obesity and other things. There should be a balance. Two and a half hours is not enough time. They need to have the something extra; they simply deserve it whether it be policy or whether it be a

**contractual issue. It is best practices at a minimum; that is what is best for these kids.**

**Paul McDonald, 21 Jay Court – He stated that he is a new resident to Cranston. He has been living here for only eighteen months. He has three children in Cranston. Two of them are in public school, and one is at Hendricken. He has a child who is at Western Hills who will be moving on to LaSalle next year, and he has a first grader who has autism, and he was asked by another family to come here tonight. He did not plan on speaking, but he is a problem solver. He is the second youngest of eight children. He knows what it is like to have a tight budget. He was also the president of a school in Buffalo where they had 352 families to make up 500 students in a Catholic school. He knows how to stretch a penny. The committee does have a difficult situation to cut the budget. It is his understanding that \$119,000 has to be saved, and he has been in only two schools in Cranston. One of them is Orchard Farms School, and he can't say enough. His 17 year old is a junior at Hendricken and has been in Catholic school his whole life. His 14 year old, until they moved here eighteen months ago, had only been**

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**in Catholic school his whole life. Orchard Farms School is one word is amazing. They have just taken care of his little girl; he can't put it into words. They have to look at the school they are standing in right**

now, and it is not being operated correctly. They are not even close to running the electrical system efficiently. There are inefficient lights. These are lights that are no longer in code. One might ask what that has to do with special education. He could guarantee the committee, and he would put it in writing and will go to the bank and guarantee it that he can find \$119,000 savings in the electrical bill. This is what he does for a living. If the committee doesn't want to use him, that is fine. He will volunteer his service and tell them what they have to do to save money on their electric bills. They should put in occupancy sensors; they can save 50% with occupancy sensors in a school. That is not his number; that is the federal number from the government who does these studies. It is impossible for any school district to make everyone happy, but if the kids aren't educated, the district will be in trouble. They will be paying for them in prison which costs a lot more money than to educate them. They spent \$62 million down the street for the new youth center, and it has already been said that it is too small. They already have better privileges there than some of the kids do here who stay out of trouble. The committee has to make the tough decision. They may have to tick off the union. They have to do whatever it takes to keep this Special Education Program where it is right now, not hold it back, not cut, and not change unless they are changing for the better. Cutting and adding on to someone's work load is going to be just like welfare throughout the country. People are going to get forgotten; people are going to get lost; and everyone will pay for it when these kids go to jail. That is how dramatic it is. Education is the magic bullet; the

committee has to keep these kids in mind when they are looking at their budgets. To the fact of the scheduled planners for \$25,000, it is foolish. Charge each family \$2 or \$3, whatever it takes. They are ¼ of the way in the budget for this person who is being cut. He has lived here for only eighteen months. He has no allegiance to this person. He doesn't know who it is, but he can tell the committee that Orchard Farms has taken care of his little girl. Other families have spoken here about their children. The committee has to take and make a tough decision. Send a letter home with those day planners and say because of special education, music, and physical education, the committee is going to charge for them. His son came home last week and took three boxes of tissues to school. He asked his son what he was doing with them, and his son told him that he gets a homework pass if he brings in these tissues. He is paying \$8,000 a year in taxes, and he has to send three boxes of tissues to school so that his son gets a break on his homework. It is a good thing he is an A student. If he has to send in toilet paper for the whole school, he will do it. Cut the fat; there is not a budget he has ever seen in his life that doesn't have fat in it. Cut the fat; make the unpopular decision on the other things and not on the kids. He challenged the committee to challenge him to come forward and find that \$119,000 in the budget. He will take a second mortgage on his house and pay them if he is wrong, and the committee has a room full of people witnessing it. Don't cut special education; it is not worth it.

**Mark Colozzi, Music Program Supervisor – He made the committee aware that already the vultures are out to pluck the remaining feathers off the carcass. In Saturday or Sunday's newspaper, they are proposing to build a new Catholic school in Cranston. He was taken back by the article. He knows this pastor very well. He is a wonderful man. He was taken back by his comments in the newspaper. He is thinking about writing an editorial retort in the paper. Already they are boasting arts programs beyond belief, and they want to attract children from public schools. Perception is not always reality. There is no way that a private school, particularly a parochial school, will match the comprehensive arts programs Cranston had, even in difficult times. He cautioned the committee when it comes to cutting Kindergarten specials. This is just another entity of it all, and it upsets him that these comments are made publicly. The public may have a perception what they are going to offer is going to be better for \$6,000 or \$7,000 a year for a K through 8 education. He tends to doubt it, but the committee has to be careful what they cut because the perception of the public may be such that they will send their child there instead of Cranston Public Schools. There is no way that any Catholic school is going to match what Cranston has particularly in the arts programs. His first teaching job was at Bishop Hendricken. He taught there for six years and loved it. It is a great education; it is not a better education; it is a different education. He always told parents who considered sending their**

sons there that if they can afford it and it is the best education for their son by all means send him there; but it is not better; it is different. One has to be careful when making these very difficult decisions.

## **XII. Announcement of Future Meetings**

Chairman Traficante announced that on April 7th at 7:00 p.m. at Western Hills, the School Committee will hold its regular meeting. On Wednesday, April 9th, the committee will have a work session at 6:00 p.m.

## **XIII. Adjournment**

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

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

Respectfully submitted,

**Andrea M. Iannazzi**

**Clerk**

**5113**

## **STUDENTS**

### **ATTENDANCE**

#### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Attendance is mandated by Rhode Island General Laws 16-19-1. Regular attendance is absolutely necessary for academic success, as it develops a sense of responsibility, which is indispensable for survival in the workplace.**

**Policy Adopted: March 20, 1972 CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Policy Amended: July 16, 2007 CRANSTON, RI**

**Resolution No.: 07-7-21**

**Policy Amended:**

**Resolution No.:**

**STUDENTS 5113(a)**

## **MINIMUM ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS**

**Students in Middle and High School must be in regular attendance for a minimum of 90% of their course work per quarter. Students with excessive (more than five (5) unexcused class absences) will have**

**their term grade reduced by 10 points of their quarterly grade. Students enrolled in minor classes (3 meetings per cycle) will receive a 10 point deduction for more than three (3) unexcused class absences. Students in Middle School in Unified Arts classes will receive a 10 point deduction for more than 3 unexcused class absences.**

**The following shall not be considered absences and shall not count against students:**

- Absence from class due to in-school or out-of-school suspension**
- Absence from class due to attendance at school-sponsored events**
- Absence from class due to attendance at scheduled meetings with school personnel**
- Absences from class due to religious observance**

**The following excused absences determined by the regulations of the Truancy Court:**

- Illness confirmed by a Doctor's note within 2 days of return to school**
- Dental appointments confirmed by a Dentist's note within 2 days of return to school**
- Family bereavement confirmed with a newspaper obituary or death notice**
- Legal/court obligations confirmed by a note from the courts**

- **Verifiable college and military appointments, prior permission from the Guidance Department and appointment verification forms are required (High School)**

**All notes must be submitted within two days of the student's return to school.**

**Students that have absences exempted from counting against the 90% minimum requirement are still required to complete and turn in all make-up work missed due to their absence.**

## **ABSENCE, TARDINESS AND DISMISSALS**

**1. Parents should call the school at 270-8049 for Cranston West, 270-8126 for Cranston East, 270-8030 for Western Hills, 270-8090 for Park View, or 270-8010 for Hugh B. Bain to report a student's absence.**

## **STUDENTS**

**5113(b)**

## **ABSENCE, TARDINESS AND DISMISSALS (CONTINUED)**

**2. Students who are absent or suspended will not be allowed to report to school or to attend any school activity during the period of absence or suspension.**

**3. If a student is absent (unexcused) from a class or classes in excess of five (5) times per quarter, the teacher will lower the student's**

**quarterly grade by ten points.**

**4. Absences or dismissals by the school nurse are considered excused.**

**5. Family vacations during school time will not be excused by the School Committee Policy unless previously approved by the school department.**

**6. Parents wishing to appeal an attendance-related grade reduction should submit a written appeal to the Administration in the following order: Assistant Principal, Principal, Superintendent, and School Committee.**

**7. Excessive tardiness to school is unacceptable. Students who accumulate more than three (3) unexcused tardies per semester will receive detention for each subsequent tardy according to school department policy. Should excessive tardiness become a serious or chronic problem, a student may be assigned Alternate Discipline Program, could be suspended out of school, Saturday Detention, or receive social probation. All days tardy beyond the 3 per semester will result in disciplinary consequences unless excused with verifiable documentation (i.e., doctor's note, dental note, legal obligation, etc.). All notes must be submitted on the day the student is tardy or least by the next school day.**

**A student who arrives late to class more than half way through the class, regardless of the class, will be considered absent from that class.**

**8. Students with unexcused tardies after 11:00 am are considered absent and are ineligible to participate in athletics or extra curricular**

activities on that day. Should the tardiness occur on the last day before a weekend, the student will be likewise, ineligible to participate in school related activities or athletics.

9. Personal family appointments, which can be scheduled during non-school hours, will be included in absence and tardy totals.

10. The classroom teacher will assign students who are tardy to class without an acceptable or verifiable reason appropriate disciplinary action. Students who are habitually tardy will be referred to the administration.

11. Students who miss a class period or a whole day of school without permission will be considered truant. All students who are determined to be truant will be subject to disciplinary action and will receive no credit (zero) for all work missed or due during the truancy.

**STUDENTS**

**5113(c)**

### **ABSENCE, TARDINESS AND DISMISSALS (CONTINUED)**

12. Students may be dismissed from school with a parental note, with an acceptable reason. All dismissals will be excused only with verifiable documentation by a doctor, dentist, legal obligation, death, religious observance, etc. These notes from verifiable sources or

**appointment verification forms must be turned in to the Main Office by the next school day that the student is present.**

**13. Students dismissed from school are ineligible to participate in athletics or extra curricular activities on that day or the ensuing weekend should it occur on the day before a weekend. Students may be allowed to participate in these situations with administrative approval.**

**14. For eligibility purposes with respect to extra curricular activities and athletics, students dismissed for medical, dental, legal appointments, etc., must have such dismissal pre-approved by an administrator or designee. Upon the student's return to school from the appointment, verification documentation must be turned in to the office or to the coach or activity advisor, if school has ended, to be eligible to participate (parental notes will not suffice.) Any student clinically dismissed by the nurse due to illness may not return to school and is ineligible to participate in athletics or school activities.**

## **MAKE UP POLICY**

**A student absent from school from one (1) to three (3) days will have one (1) class meeting per absence to make up missed work beginning on the initial day they return to school.**

**For students absent or suspended from school for a period of more than three (3) days, school work may be requested by the**

parent/guardian. A twenty-four (24) hour notice for such requests is required and will be made available by teachers through the main office. Students suspended from school will be allowed to make up all work as dictated by this policy.

In the event that a student is absent on the day a long-term project/assignment is due, the grade for that assignment will be reduced at the discretion of the teacher. Should the student submit verifiable documentation for the absence (medical, dental note, etc.), the grade reduction may be waived.

Serious long-term illness make-up will be made up at the discretion of the teacher(s) and guidance counselor.

Any student that makes arrangements with a teacher to make-up work at an arranged time and fails to do so will be assigned a zero (0) for the work in question.

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### **FINAL EXAMS (HIGH SCHOOL)**

A. Final exams are required in every course in grades 9 through 12. The final exam grade for each course will be weighted 15% of the final grade.

B. An exam schedule is published in June. Senior high school students are expected to report for their scheduled final exams and

**must remain in the exam room for the entire period. Depending on the schedule, students may be dismissed following their exams.**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR EXAMS (HIGH SCHOOL)**

**1. Final exams will be administered in all courses. Seniors with a grade point average of 90 or above may be exempt from their final exam in the courses with that average.**

**2. Should a student be tardy to an exam without an excuse or prior administrative approval, he/she will be admitted to the exam and allowed to take the exam during the remaining time in the exam period only.**

**3. If a student is going to be absent from an exam and wishes to be granted the opportunity to take a make-up exam, a parent must contact the administration in writing or by phone (Main Office) prior to the start of the exam.**

**4. If a student is absent from an exam and the administration has not been contacted in advance, the student will not be given a make-up exam and will receive a grade of zero.**

**5. Make-up exams will be given at a time to be determined by the teacher.**

**6. All students must remain in the testing site until the conclusion of the exam period.**

**Regulations Adopted: March 20, 1972 CRANSTON PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS**

**Regulations Revised: August 20, 1990 Cranston, Rhode Island**

**Regulations Revised: July 16, 2007**

**Resolution No.: 07-7-21**

**Regulations Revised:**

**Resolution No.:**