

**CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**PUBLIC WORK SESSION**

**WEDNESDAY, August 15, 2012**

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

**845 PARK AVENUE**

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

**PUBLIC WORK SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE  
SESSION**

**PUBLIC SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PUBLIC MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**The Public Work Session of the Cranston School Committee was held on the above date with the following members present: Chairperson Iannazzi, Mrs. Ruggieri, Mrs. Culhane, and Mrs. McFarland. Mr. Lombardi, Mr. Traficante and Mr. Bloom were absent with cause. Also present were the Administrative Team and Attorney Cascione.**

**This meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m. It was moved by Mrs. Culhane and seconded by Mrs. Ruggieri and unanimously carried that the members convene to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel; (Discussion of Superintendent's Contract), (Discussion of Certified Administrator A's Settlement Agreement), (Discussion of Applicant for Principal's Position); PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation; (Contract**

**Negotiations' Update – Secretaries), (Maintenance of Effort), (Consideration of legal options regarding status of aid to education appropriation and legal advice relating to same). All were in favor.**

**Call to Order – Public Session was called to order at 7:55 p.m. The roll was called; a quorum was present.**

**No votes were taken in Executive Session.**

**Public Work Session:**

**Presentation – Food Services – Dr. Lundsten**

**Dr. Lundsten introduced to the committee the food services, in particular, to discuss tonight, about the program, “Breakfast in the Classroom”. Dr. Lundsten noted that we ran a pilot in the Spring; they’ve been able to collect the data from that pilot which they want to share with the committee tonight and talk about where we need to go next with the breakfast program. At this time, Kathy Rocco and Lynne Conca did a power point presentation. (A copy of this presentation is attached to the hard copy of the minutes in the Superintendent’s Office) In regards to this presentation, the following information was also added:**

- Mr. Votto approved to purchase a vehicle**
- Joel Zisseron will have the vehicle in place at the start of school**
- Sodexo will share the cost of Insurance and the gas with the School Department**

- **Already set up at Eden Park and ready to go**
- **Next year there will be changes in the breakfast menu – an increase of vegetables**
- **This fits into the Strategic Plan as a District.**
- **Had studies from the food research and Action Center; basically the States perform better on Standardized Tests; better attendance; less problems in the classroom; when they have breakfast, they come to school and are ready to learn.**
- **They had three pilots last year – before the pilot at Edgewood, 33% of students had participated in the breakfast program; after the pilot at the end of the year, they had 75%**
- **This was the same at Peters; went from 15% to 61%**
- **Eden Park was at 20% and went to 62%**

**Mrs. McFarland asked what the impact is to having somebody in the classroom and we have to have a teacher in the classroom. It was noted that everything has changed. The kids go right into the classroom with the teacher in the classroom. The food is delivered in insulated bags and the students will quickly get into a procedure (saw this in Providence). They help check off lists; they pick up their food; come back to their seat; there is some type of morning board work or direction so they start their work; they do their attendance; they do their lunch routine; they have their breakfast; they go back in a pattern to dispose of everything; it's all repacked in the bag and put outside the door; somebody picks it up including the trash.**

**Mrs. Ruggieri noted that the issues in the beginning, because she is on the Wellness Committee, was the communication piece. We still need to address the communication piece; originally a letter was going home; we need to communicate with principals, teachers, and our school community because they do not understand the program and the way it works. She is already hearing from people who don't have the program yet.**

**A lengthy discussion ensued. For this to be a successful program, as she knows it is, we need to communicate with the community so there is no confusion as to what goes on.**

**Ms. Iannazzi asked if it would be possible to have Sodexo at the Open Houses in those title schools. Mrs. Ruggieri noted that they were last year.**

**Mrs. Culhane – I understand the need to have the targeted schools but my concern is that it plays into the concern of some of the parents. So...what I'm hearing is why do we have to subsidize lunch for the kids at the poor schools. This is the conversation; it's awful. A discussion ensued. Mrs. Culhane noted to a parent that this is a universal breakfast program so everyone can get it. No one has ever communicated. What she would like to see on our website, if there is a Sodexo page, links to these studies so that she can tell parents that studies show...they would have links to see these studies. Do we have to only put it in these targeted schools? Is that what the plan is? It was noted that it is going in every school; however, it is just to**

**start, you want to address the more need vs. the other schools.**

**Mrs. Culhane also suggested that they contact the people at the Herald and get a really good article about this with talking points from parents who are in the schools; from the administration, etc. talking about the benefits of this program.**

**Superintendent Lundsten reported that our website is being revised as we speak. We'll be ready to launch by the middle of next week. If this information can get to Donna-Marie, she will have a link on there.**

**Dr. Lundsten reported that she has seen a Sodexo Page in other districts where they have a newsletter; if they could talk to Donna-Marie on Monday about how to link to their page and she will get us a link so that when she rolls this over next week, it will be on there.**

**Mrs. Ruggieri noted that we would also like the breakfast menu on the website along with the lunch menu which is already on. She also noted the nutrition page and how that would be helpful to be on the link also.**

**Lynne Conca – We have a schedule of indication as to which school would be first so they can forward that to the committee so they can take a look at it. A discussion on serving hot breakfast ensued. Also noted was that buying this equipment is going to help them improve the quality of lunch too. They will be able to take some of the items that they have currently and be able to prepare it right there in school**

**and will be a much better product. It's not going to sit in the transport oven for 1 ½ hours.**

**Also discussed in regards to breakfast program:**

- What are some of the hot breakfasts that will be served**
- Letting parents know a way they can opt out of breakfast; children who eat at home**
- People who will now want to bring their own food in, i.e. wheat toast and fresh fruit**

**Presentation – RI New Accountability Measures – Dr. Lundsten**

**(Please see hard copy of presentation on file in the Superintendent's office)**

**At this time, Superintendent Lundsten presented the RI New Accountability Measures to the committee. (Power Point available in Superintendent's office) She also passed out to the committee the schools report cards and a general overview of the RI New Accountability Measures. Dr. Lundsten noted that she would be happy to send a copy of this power point to the folks in the audience. The school report cards are on the RIDE website. Principals will also be instructed that each school's report card has to be sent home with the students and Dr. Lundsten is going to suggest that they go home with the first quarter report cards unless they want to do something at open house. Each school will be required to share the information in a public session because that is the directive from RIDE. At this time, Dr. Lundsten gave an overview of the presentation. In this**

**Accountability System we have to meet efficiency by 2017. We need to use more than one measure. Dr. Lundsten also pointed out that if a school did not have 95% participation, automatically you get put into the Warning Column. It did not make any difference if you had good proficiency, good growth, you closed the gap, etc. Dr. Lundsten pointed out that we have schools that last year we were told were under-performing; now they are typical. We've got schools that we were told last year that were wonderful; like Woodridge; that are warning. Dr. Lundsten also noted that as she was delving into all the materials, she found a document where even the commissioner said, "This is one measure but one day be careful how you look at it; it does not indicate that there's a trend at this point or a pattern. Maybe after collecting it for three years, we can say that. It took us a good three years, in reference to NECAP, to start to see patterns evolve around it. Mrs. Culhane asked about the idea of 100% proficiency; as educators, everybody here know that we've got kids and no matter how hard you try and no matter how hard you work in earnest and their parents work; they are never going to meet proficiency. What is the thinking behind this whole idea? A discussion ensued. Mrs. McFarland asked what happens to the child where the growth piece comes into play and we're up here for fourth grade; but we're down for fifth grade, etc. A detailed discussion ensued regarding this question.**

## **Monthly Review of Year-to-Date Expenditures/Monthly Financial Reports – Mr. Balducci**

**Mr. Balducci reported that he issued two monthly reports for June and July 2012 (See on file in Superintendent's Office). He noted that we ended the year with a surplus of \$131,467. In the first paragraph in the Executive Summary, the surplus is identified as \$137,467; it is actually the \$131,467. He noted the high points and the low points as follows:**

- On revenue side; State Aid came in fully funded.**
- The Federal Jobs Bill; we took in approx. \$22,000 more than what we were originally told by RIDE**
- Medicaid Reimbursements; small deficit overall – about \$9,300**
- City Appropriation – Fully funded, Athletic Programs – Fully funded, Vocational School Tuition - \$273,000 deficit; with situation of fewer students coming to Career & Tech. This is not a trend. 10-11 we budgeted \$1.5 million; we took in \$1.7 million – that is the reason why Mr. Balducci budgeted \$1.7 million; and just the opposite happened this past year. In 12-13 he budgeted \$1.4 million**
- Summer School – From a revenue standpoint, we did incur a deficit less money coming in but we also expended less money than we anticipated. That year we had about a \$7,000 deficit**
- Summer School Program that just ended this year – we had a surplus of just under \$10,000.**
- Charter School Contributions – on the revenue page we budgeted \$21 but we took in -0-. Mr. Balducci explained this to the committee**

- From a UCOA standpoint those reimbursements can't be counted as revenue; they have to be counted as credit against expenditures.
- We received all the money that we were supposed to get from the Charter School
- Special Education, Charter School Tuition; this is the money that the Charter School collects from outside districts that eventually make it into our budget as revenue; unfortunately we budgeted \$135,000 based on a prior year number; it came in significantly lower than that
- Outside rentals – surplus
- Other revenues – surplus

Ms. Iannazzi asked about the funding formula. Throughout the course of the last year when we had so many frequent meetings with RIDE, they had been talking about how we were exaggerating our numbers in regards to Special Ed. and our argument back was that they were not giving us the money that we believe we're owed under the Funding Formula for Special Ed Tuition. Did we realize any of that money? Mr. Balducci answered that the 12-13 budget, Cranston received \$35,000 as part of fair funding formula. Mrs. Coogan explained this procedure to the committee. It was noted that this contribution was outside of the Fair Funding Formula.

## **EXPENDITURES**

Mr. Balducci explained that he broke this down to the major areas.

- With regards to Salaries – we did incur a deficit of just under \$400,000. The share of that was \$327,000 in substitutes. We had

many long-term leaves that we had to then put a substitute in that person's position.

- **Transportation – A small deficit of about \$45,000**
- **The good news is that in this year's budget, when it comes to receiving additional State Aid as compared to what we thought we were going to get from the State, one of Mr. Balducci's recommendations was to put that in (about \$170,000 more than what we budgeted last year) to offset a problem this year and the non-public drivers were fully funded from this year's budget.**

Mrs. Culhane asked about the \$327,000 for substitutes; noting that it seems a lot over what we normally have in one year. Superintendent Lundsten answered that we have had so many people go out on long-term leaves. It's not the short-term; for the one or two days. It's the people who go out and are out for four or five months, i.e. severe illness, pregnancy, etc. The more days the subs are in for a teacher out, they receive more money, i.e. after 90 days.

Mr. Balducci noted with respect to Benefits, we made a \$3.2 million surplus in different areas, i.e. health, dental, certified pension, non-certified pension, Medicare, etc.

- **Purchase Services – total of \$403,000 deficit**
- **Nursing Services (Services that we purchase outside of the district)**
- **Transportation – Special Ed., outside maintenance – We had a bad year with the Special Ed buses that had to be repaired outside of what**

**our mechanics could handle**

- **Special Ed Legal Services ran over**
- **Auditing Services – Normally these are dead on but the problem we incurred – ARRA Grants or the additional Title One Special Ed that we had caused them to do a little more compliance for it outside of their contract.**

**A discussion ensued regarding the auditing company.**

**Mr. Balducci noted that another component of this overage was UCOA. This is putting more of a burden on the auditors which the cost is passed on to us.**

**Mrs. Culhane asked about the nursing services and if that was because we are not able to see any reimbursement from Medicaid on any of that for outside nursing services. Mrs. Coogan explained this deficit to the committee. Ms. Iannazzi suggested that we have another nurse on staff to move from building to building as the need arises. Dr. Lundsten noted that once they become part of our staff, we own them. If we were to give a decrease in numbers, we would still have to keep that nurse on. This way we can be flexible with the needs. Ms. Iannazzi asked if we could negotiate with the union like we did with the ARRA funding. Mr. Votto answered that we are still paying \$125,000 for a nurse and it could increase from year to year.**

**Mr. Balducci noted that to avoid this conversation in that category**

**next year, he did put in a total budget allocation for outside nursing at \$280,000 to hopefully have enough dollars in the next budget.**

**At this time, Mr. Balducci read from the reports to the committee. He noted that he is not going to go over the July report noting that not much has been happening the first month of the year.**

**Mr. Balducci reported that yesterday he went over to City Hall to Bob Strom and handed him a check of \$1,571,900.**

**Presentation by PCG – This was cancelled and being carried over to next month.**

**Adjourn Public Work Session to Public Meeting**

**Ms. Iannazzi reported out that no votes were taken during Executive Session.**

**Executive Session Minutes Sealed – August 15, 2012**

**Moved by Mrs. McFarland, seconded by Mrs. Ruggieri and unanimously carried to seal the Executive Session minutes of August 15, 2012.**

**Adjournment**

**A motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Culhane and seconded by Mrs. Ruggieri. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Frank S. Lombardi**

**School Committee Clerk**