

**CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLIC WORK SESSION**

**MARCH 13, 2013**

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

**845 PARK AVENUE**

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

**PUBLIC SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**PUBLIC SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING PUBLIC WORK  
SESSION**

**MINUTES**

The meeting of the Cranston School Committee was held on the above date with the following members present: Chairperson Iannazzi, Mrs. McFarland (arrived at 6:17 p.m.), Mr. Traficante, Mr. Gale, Mr. Colford and Mrs. Ruggieri. Mrs. Culhane was absent. Attorney Ronald Cascione was also present.

This meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. and convened to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws –

1. PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel
2. PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining and Litigation:
  - A. (Contract Negotiations' Update – Secretaries)
  - B. (Teachers)
  - C. (Bus Drivers)

Call to Order – Public Session was called to order at 6:20 p.m.

**The roll was called; a quorum was present. No votes were taken during Executive Session.**

**Public Work Session:**

**a. Induction Coach(es) Presentation – Gino Sangiuliano and Michelle Livsey (RIDE)**

**Mr. Sangiuliano and Ms. Livsey from RIDE, along with two teachers from Cranston Public Schools, Jessica Soccio and Kerry Holden gave an overview of the program to the members of the board. (Two handouts (#1 and 1A) are on file in the superintendent's office).**

- Funding for this program came from the Race to the Top grant.**
- Funding for this program will run out by the 2014-2015 school year.**
- It could not be stated by RIDE if this was going to be a mandate. It is already in the BEP where they talk about support for beginning teachers and the BEP is monitored.**
- CPS is under a consent order in that we are not allowed to add programming unless the funding is outside of our budget. We would not be able to divert funding to anything else until our debt to the city is paid off.**
- Programs for failing teachers, veteran teachers? Skill sets that these coaches have they could work with any educator that needs some type of growth program.**
- Cost per teacher for this service is \$6,700; salary and benefits. The training is done afterschool, before school, lunchtime, prep time.**

**b. Title I Parent Involvement Policy Presentation – Maureen Greaves**

**Ms. Greaves introduced her staff to the committee and presented the Title I Parent Involvement Policy to the board. (Handout #2 is on file in the superintendent's office). Key points of this policy -**

- Involving parents in Title I program planning, implementation and review**
- Conducting Annual Parent Surveys**
- Supporting schools in meeting Title I requirements**
- Supporting parents and families to become actively involved in their children's education**
- Providing opportunities for family engagement at school**

**c. Program of Studies Update for 2013-2014 – Joseph Rotz**

**Mr. Rotz passed out the updated copy of the Program of Studies (see handout #3 on file in the superintendent's office). This program is a listing of all the courses that are offered at the high school level for Cranston Public Schools. This document is updated annually. The School Committee asked that Mr. Rotz send electronically all the changes that have been made over the past four years.**

**d. Teacher Evaluation Handbook – Dr. Judith Lundsten (document on file in the superintendent's office – document is very lengthy).**

**Dr. Lundsten stated – we are moving to a new evaluation system. This was done cooperatively with the American Federation of Teachers through an I3 Grant. As part of that we need to document – this is a new handbook. Mr. Votto was on the committee that helped put this**

together. It was a collaborative effort between the administrators, the union and teachers. This document will need to be reviewed every year. Mr. Votto spoke about the District Evaluation Committee (DEC) and how the teachers have the first place of appeal. If a teacher is dissatisfied with their evaluation they go through DEC; hear the appeal process; make the decision; and then if the teacher is not happy with that particular decision they would appeal it to the superintendent and then ultimately to arbitration. This document, once it is approved, will be provided to all our teachers and all our administrators electronically. This document does not contain information about our special ed providers because RIDE has not given us a lot of guidance on that as well as our certified administrators that are not building administrators. That update will probably come before this committee sometime next year as RIDE finalizes its requirements. The evaluation process was explained by Mr. Votto. The SLO piece was explained by Mr. Rotz.

e. Educator Code of Professional Responsibility- Dr. Judith Lundsten  
Dr. Lundsten stated – this is standard form adapted from RIDE. By the BEP we are obligated to have this adopted policy.

f. Discussion of a proposed MOA between the RI DCYF and the

**Cranston Public Schools – Jim Dillon (handout #5 on file in the superintendent's office)**

**Mr. Dillon explained the MOA (draft) to the committee. After much discussion it was determined that Mr. Dillon would need to provide more information to the committee.**

**g. Report of All Day Kindergarten Committee – Janice Ruggieri**

**Mrs. Ruggieri stated – we have begun the process of working to come up with some type of plan for All-Day K. What ended up happening, as everyone knows, is the General Assembly came down with a proposal for districts to give them an incentive to start full day K. The original proposal attached funding for one year for startup costs for a district that would be willing to go full district, full day K. Knowing that our district would not be able to do that and sustain all day K I went to Senator Gallo who had sponsored the legislation and asked if they would be willing to change the wording so that we could kind of begin it and eventually get to our entire district and what happened was they passed it and they passed it without funding. So they passed the legislation for the full day with no funding attached. We were kind of starting at a zero level. We formed a sub-committee that had teachers, retired teacher, administrators, school committee members, Joel Zisseron, Sodexo, because we wanted to look at the complete picture to make sure we were covering every aspect of what it was going to look like, what it could look like and what it was going to cost us as a district. Ultimately we all know that full day K benefits everyone. When you look at it and you have your curriculum and we**

we were able to find out that our curriculum does align to all of the standards. We also found out that there is a curriculum kindergarten binder which now all k teachers have. What we ended up looking at was room in our buildings that we currently have. We looked at current populations. What we originally determined was that the most cost effective way for our district to look at all day K was to look at it over a five year plan. We know the funding will follow the child. We also know there is a lag between the time for all day K to start and the time the funding kicks in. What we were going to look at was doing a cluster of schools that will allow us to use our current spaces only in the first year. The first year we would only be offering the option of all day K to parents who had children at Barrows, Dutemple, Eden Park, Edgewood Highland, Rhodes, and Waterman. These students would be taken out of those schools, 71 K students would then be sent to Edgewood Highland for a full day K. This would be done by lottery. This would be for the first year. There are 250 students for K. We would be looking at three additional classrooms. 17 from Barrows, 21 from Dutemple, 17 from Eden Park, 3 additional from Edgewood and 13 from Waterman. That's how the numbers played out. Discussion ensued regarding the lottery.

Ms. Iannazzi stated- a ruling just came from RIDE regarding a lottery that states you cannot have separate lotteries; you can only have one general lottery where all of the students are in the same pool. Mrs. Ruggieri stated – the reason for the lottery is because the numbers at those schools would have warranted two classrooms vs....so we wanted to make sure...Ms. Iannazzi stated – but RIDE policy prohibits

**this.**

**Mrs. Ruggieri stated – then we won't be doing that.**

**Mrs. Ruggieri continued – so in the second year we would be looking at offering the same type of system at Orchard Farms. As we looked at all of those things we looked back and said how will you be able to offer this as a district and what we had originally talked about was doing three or four hub kindergarten buildings. Early Childhood and kindergarten hub buildings; similar to the middle school setup where it would just be located centrally throughout the city so that students wouldn't be on the bus for long. It would be done in a regional kind of breakdown similar to what the middle schools do. That makeup we looked at and said the schools would house full day k district-wide and hold our pre k and additional spaces could be used to house other programs. We looked at some of the issues logistically, obviously the first one was that we need buildings, and of course it costs money to renovate those buildings because K has very specific requirements for their classrooms, 1500 square feet per room, direct access to the labs, etc. Some of the other issues were logistical because start and finish time so they were not conflicting with other schools such as a transportation issue. Classroom makeup – we talked about keeping kids that would be going back to their same home school in classrooms together. It also works for parents; they get to know each other in the K setting and then move onto an elementary school where they would see these same parents and siblings. Itinerant schedules and the increase in early interventionists that would be needed. Those were some of the issues that we looked**

at that still need to be addressed. We came back and said by year five we would like to be able to offer full day K but we don't have existing space in our buildings. We don't have the funding. Joe (Balducci) gave us a budget for food, facility, renovations costs, transportation, all those things that come into play when we are talking about starting this program. I also met with the mayor so he could be part of this discussion. Obviously we need the funding from him; we also would have needed an amendment to the consent order. He indicated he was not willing to amend the consent order for the programming unless the funding came first. I went through the whole process with him and explained how the funding would kick in but there would be a lag and that's where we would need some kind of help from the city. He did agree to keep us in mind when buildings become available but that was about all he offered.

We are in line with standards for curriculum so that was something good. We did talk about working on a mentor program for the new K teachers using our current retired K teachers to help them similar with what RIDE is doing but we would do it within our own district. We talked about working with the area colleges, volunteer program, VICS program and our own CAC&TC who will provide teacher assistants to our K teachers which would be free so the benefit would be for everyone there.

The teachers got together and worked on the curriculum, that was their piece and basically what they determined was that using our

existing curriculum and not adding new curriculum to it but increasing the breadth and the depth of our current curriculum that would help us increase learning capacity for a full day. That process would need to be worked on. That is a huge process and we would need to offer some kind of professional development in order to get that curriculum up to that level. We would need some type of funding for that as well.

In the meantime, we all know that things have happened insofar as our numbers and our student population and what's going on right now with Barrows. Based on all that information I looked at it and said we may have to actually look at opening new buildings; a new elementary school; reopening one that we shut down. We may need to start looking at reconfiguring our elementary schools so that we can find a way of fitting all day K into our existing building structures. If we got a new building, Ms. Iannazzi mentioned we would need to put that to the voters for a referendum. However, if we look at our existing buildings and try to move some things around...discussion ensued.

Ms. Iannazzi stated – just to clarify the referendum issue – we would probably have to do that no matter which scheme you picked because if you are talking about six million dollars in renovations just in classrooms, that is something that has to be put to the voters as well.

Mrs. McFarland stated – you would either need a renovation bond or a

**new construction bond, either way. You may see that eight years from now.**

**Mrs. Ruggieri stated – I guess what my concern is once we started looking at this and we know there is not a way to do it without getting buildings and then we look at what we are currently dealing with, there's not a way for us to currently deal with what we're dealing with without a building. It's great that there is a short term solution set up for this problem at Barrows but it's a short term solution and you can't tell me that people are going to be thrilled with this solution either but we have to do something and we have to start thinking long term because when I look at our numbers, our populations are up one year, down another year, there is no flat line. If you go back to our K now, there is no flat line, K registration is starting and those numbers are pretty high, some of our schools are already over 50 K kids right now and that's without people moving in or out of the district.**

**Mrs. McFarland stated – the problem is there is no state funding or federal funding. When you look at the gap right now those kids that don't get full day K are going to a Headstart program or an afterschool program. The federal government is talking about cutting Headstart. The state department just told you well go ahead but we're not going to fund you. So what is the answer? It's going to bond referendum to do either scenario that you talked about. Even the shifting, do any of these classrooms meet the guidelines except the one at Edgewood Highlands? So we talk about piloting for one year and not being able to go any further until we reach a bond**

referendum.

**Mrs. Ruggieri stated – what I started out looking at was all-day K and then when this issue came up I really started thinking that it's not just an all-day K issue, it's an entire issue and as much as we want to focus on all-day K I think that you need to include all-day K in our issues and say that and look at our numbers. We have 859 5th grade students, you go up and now you are talking about – is 6th grade going to be bad next year?**

**Mrs. McFarland stated – this is just difficult to sell to the taxpayers because we closed schools and now you are going to ask me to open a school. That's very hard for me as a taxpayer.**

**Mrs. Ruggieri stated – all-day K is going to be mandated and it's going to be mandated without funding within the next few years and we are going to have to find a way to do it so my...I guess when I finished this and I was thinking let me present, I can't present it and say I think we should ask for three buildings and nine million dollars and go ahead and do that because that doesn't address any of our other problems.**

**Ms. Iannazzi stated – if I could just make a suggestion, I think maybe what we could work on is have Joel here at either the April or May work session and work on presenting the different plans with a fiscal**

**note attached so that we now Plan A; the three hub schools; Plan B; one new building; Plan C; renovations, with the fiscal notes attached for each item and he could also be present to explain the bond process and the actions the school committee would have to take and the timelines.**

**Mrs. Ruggieri stated (see handout #6 – 5 year plan) – the handout I gave you is the 5 year plan which is cluster school one year, cluster school second year and then for the next three years the renovation. I had asked Joe to run a budget of what it would cost to run, like an Eden Park, and that was my way of looking at that.**

**Mrs. Coogan stated – there are very strong rules as to what we can and cannot use (insofar as buildings) for K students. (See handout #7 – on file in the superintendent’s office entitled – Standards for Approval of Preschool and Kindergarten Programs)**

**Dr. Lundsten stated – something we need to consider is we need to sit down and prioritize what it is we want to do and have a long range plan so we know where we are going and what we are going to do. We need to do it transparently and have it open to the public. There are many issues we need to look at. That will help us direct our resources and know what to do.**

**Michelle Simpson spoke about (handout 7A – Changes to RIDE CECE Standards on file in the superintendent’s office).**

**h. Report of Special Education Committee – Stephanie Culhane**

**Ms. Iannazzi read Mrs. Culhane's report into the record – and stated this is an outline of what the sub-committee will look like –**

## **Committee to Review Special Education**

### **Committee Membership**

**Chairman of SEAC or designee**

**Chairman of CEAB or designee**

**School Committee Member Janice Ruggieri**

**School Committee Member Stephanie Culhane**

**Cheryl Coogan**

**High School Assistant Principal**

**Elementary Principal (Preference given to principal who is certified in Special education)**

**Teacher of Special Education**

### **Issues to Review**

**Compensatory Time – Do we need to review and or develop a District Policy regarding make up time for services in a student's IEP that are not provided due to absence of provider or any other reason?**

**Training – What type of additional training, if any, do administrators need to enhance their ability to meet the needs of special education students in their building? What type of training do regular education teachers need to enhance the program? How can we encourage**

**teachers to take advantage of the training?**

**Communication – What are the procedures for notifying staff from grade to grade, school to school, substitutes, and itinerants of what works for students?**

**IEP meetings – Who is invited to an IEP meeting? What is the role of a parent advocate? What is the role of an attorney? How can we structure IEP meeting so that the format is similar at all meetings. How long should IEP meetings last per session?**

**Assistive Technology – What technology is available in the district? How is the technology made available to students**

**Timeline – How do we educate parents to the timeline? Is the district in compliance with the timeline requirements?**

**Review of audit report – With a cut of 10% in the Special Education budget are we still meeting the needs of students- Review 5 year trend**

**Personnel – Do we have an effective use of special education personnel?**

**Ms. Iannazzi stated -those are the issues that will be discussed and as soon as Stephanie has recovered she will be calling a meeting.**

#### **i. School Calendar for 2013-3014**

**The draft calendar was reviewed. It was suggested that we go back to two days of new teacher orientation. Last year we did three days because of the new teacher evaluation tool. The second issue was the December winter break. The Christmas holiday lands in the middle of the week as well as New Years' – why are we coming back in the middle of the week? It was suggested that we leave it as it is because we need to allow for snow days.**

**Ms. Iannazzi stated – East Greenwich sent out a poll to the parents and they have decided to eliminate the February and April vacation and just take one week in March.**

**It was suggested that Dr. Lundsten put a notice out to RISSA to find out what the majority is doing.**

**Adjourn Public Work Session to Public Meeting.**

#### **3. Executive Session Minutes Sealed – March 13, 2013**

**A motion to seal the minutes of executive session was made by Mr. Gale; seconded by Mrs. Ruggieri. The roll was called; all were in favor.**

#### **4. Adjournment.**

**A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Gale; seconded by Mr. Ruggieri. All were in favor.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Paula McFarland**

**Clerk**