

CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE PUBLIC WORK SESSION

MAY 13, 2015

WILLIAM A. BRIGGS BUILDING (REED CONFERENCE ROOM)

845 PARK AVENUE, CRANSTON, RI

EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:00 P.M.

**PUBLIC WORK SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

AGENDA

The School Committee meeting was held on the evening of the above date at Cranston High School East (Library Media Center) with the following members present: Chairperson Ruggieri, Mrs. Culhane, Mr. Gale, Mr. Traficante and Mr. Wall. Attorney Cascione was not present during Executive Session.

It is noted that Mr. Colford and Mr. Fusco were absent with cause.

The meeting was called to order at 6:08 p.m. It was moved by Mrs. Culhane; seconded by Mr. Gale to convene to Executive Session pursuant to RI State Laws. The roll was called; all were in favor: Mr. Colford – Absent; Mrs. Culhane – Yes; Mr. Fusco – Absent; Mr. Gale – Yes; Mrs. Ruggieri – Yes; Mr. Traficante – Yes; Mr. Wall – Yes

PL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel:

A. Assistant Superintendent Position

B. Teacher Staffing

PL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining/Litigation:

PL 42-46-5(3)

A. District Safety Plan

Call to Order - Public Session at 6:52 p.m.

The roll was called; a Quorum was present.

Executive Session Minutes were sealed – Mrs. Ruggieri stated that no votes were taken in Executive Session and that all individuals listed under Personnel were notified. A motion was made to seal the minutes of the executive session. Moved by Mr. Wall; seconded by Mr. Gale. The roll was called; Mr. Colford – Absent; Mrs. Culhane – Yes; Mr. Fusco – Absent; Mr. Gale – Yes; Mrs. Ruggieri – Yes; Mr. Traficante – Yes; Mr. Wall – Yes

Adjourn to Public Work Session

Sodexo Food Service Presentation

Representatives of Sodexo appeared before the Committee to answer questions regarding the documentation they submitted through the RFP for Food Service vendor. (See handout A on file in the Superintendent's Office for additional information)

Assessment Piece – Dr. Judith Lundsten

Dr. Lundsten stated – If you recall earlier this winter we brought forth at a meeting a document on the Comprehensive System, which we need to have based on the Basic Education Program and rules and regulations. At the time we tabled it and we said we would bring it back in the spring to discuss further. We were right in the midst of doing a lot of testing and needed some time to think about this and how we wanted to move forward with this document. Tonight we wanted to revisit it with you, see what your thinking is about it, answer whatever questions you may have, see what parts are problematic for you or that you wasn't to keep in. What do you want to do with this because we need to move forward with a document like this. (See handout B on file in the Superintendent's office for additional information) I have met with the Executive Team on this. We feel that we are real comfortable with the policy as it is written. Jeannine and I have both met with representatives from RIDE in regards to assessment and state testing. It was also reviewed with all the Superintendent's last week at an in-service. One of the things that became very clear to us is that the 95% participation rate is going to stay. It is a Federal requirement and it is here to stay. The other thing is that if you do not have the 95% participation, even though you were in that high range, you still will not be considered a Commended school, which would affect some of our buildings. We have buildings who are really moving and we have several who are moving towards that level.

Mrs. Nota-Masse stated – We had a webinar from RIDE a few weeks

ago. I handed you an abridged version of it. (See handout C on file with the Superintendent's Office for additional information). Our concern is on the 95% rate because admittedly we have vacillated with our messaging as to whether or not it will affect schools. That is a result of the messaging that we get from the State. We are very concerned because we do have schools who historically have been labeled "Commended" and we have one in particular that did not have 95% participation on PARCC due to parents refusing to allow their children to take the test and that will negatively affect them. I know this is the first year for it and there are a lot of mixed messages, but what I would ask you to look at is in the abridged version of the webinar that I passed out, the page that says "Accountability" for 2015-2016 through 2018-2019. The second bullet said that we will continue to calculate 95% participation rate. Schools not reaching the rate will have an alert and not be eligible to be Commended or Leading schools. That has nothing to do with the school proficiency of the cohort that took the test and that is really bothersome to us.

Mrs. Culhane stated – What is the rationale behind that?

Mrs. Nota-Masse stated – Because they want to make sure that all of the students are having equal access to the assessment. Historically kids were not all tested. If you wanted to fudge numbers, you would have certain groups of kids who did not take the test. We are talking about years ago. That was the Federal push to make sure that every child is assessed. This way you could really see if schools had gaps, where the problems were. You could target certain schools or kids to give them growth and support in proficiency. They want every kid to

be tested.

Mrs. Culhane stated – So a school that did not have the 95% participation rate, lets say they were Commended in year 1 and that following year they had 89% participation, they can't be Commended?

How is that going to affect the students?

Mrs. Nota-Masse stated – I would find it very difficult for them to be able to cut funding. I know they have been throwing that around.

Mrs. Culhane stated – What is the impetus for a parent to opt out? If it does not mean anything they how are we getting people on board to turn the tide of that and understand why we need that 95% participation rate.

Mrs. Nota-Masse stated – We like to say that we have commended schools because that shows all of the hard work of the parents, the teachers, the administrators, etc. It says that we are achieving at a high rate at different schools.

Dual Enrollment Policy – Dr. Judith Lundsten

Dr. Lundsten discussed Dual Enrollment. She handed out a template put together by the Rhode Island School Superintendent's Association for a Dual Enrollment Program Policy. (See handout D on file with the Superintendent's Office for additional information)

Employment First Policy – Michele Simpson

Mrs. Simpson discussed a new mandate by the RI Department of Education to have an Employment First Policy which is to meet the needs of our students with intellectual disabilities. (See handout E on file with the Superintendent's Office for additional information).

Building Projects – Ed Collins

Mr. Collins provided the Committee with an update of the various building projects and their status.

Bus Routing – Tom Reali

Mr. Reali updated the Committee regarding the GEOTAB hardware that was installed on all the school vehicles and the computer over February vacation. (See handout F on file with the Superintendent's Office for additional information)

MUNIS Presentation – Possibly John Campellone

John Campellone and presented the Committee with a proposed software purchase, Munis Software. (See handouts G & H on file with the Superintendent's Office for additional information)

Curriculum Update – Joe Rotz

Joe Rotz presented the Committee with a new Credit Recovery Program to replace the one that we have which is dated. He is looking to update our virtual learning program with Edgenuity. (See handout I on file with the Superintendent's Office for additional information)

Affordable Care Act – Ray Votto

Raymond Votto spoke on the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. Votto stated – we had to begin our look back to all our employees who worked 30 hours or more on an average week and then we had to give them healthcare. John Campellone and Kathy Park have worked very hard in identifying those individuals. It was very complicated because you had to compute all their work time. If we have someone who is coaching and also doing something else for us, that is combined together. These are all our folks who are not in bargaining

units. We have come up with approximately 20 people that we know are now eligible for healthcare benefits based on the number of hours worked. We do not have to come up with the same healthcare plan that we currently have. We can find one that is a lower cost to the District, as long as we supply them with a healthcare plan. We met with Blue Cross and they seem to be the only players. We have Healthmate Coast to Coast, but we want to mirror image our plan to look like our other employees plan. The recommendation that we are presenting to you is that it would be a \$500 individual deductible, \$1,000 family deductible, but it would also have greater out of network costs. Currently we do not have any out of network costs that are exuberant. Also, we are increasing the pharmaceutical costs.

At the end of the day we have to provide an individual plan to all these folks and it is going to approximately 10% less in terms of our cost than what is currently in place for the bargaining units. They have that opportunity to reject it or accept it. You have to also keep in mind under the Act we cannot charge the person more than 9.5% of their gross income. We also had to build in systems to identify what they are making to make sure that we are actually going to have a different cost share plans for all these particular people if their 9.5% does not meet the 20% threshold that we have for all our employees. As long as you are okay with it, we are going to go forward. Our open enrollment is taking place now so this will be in place, mailing this plan to them and giving them the opportunity to accept it or reject it.

Draft Resolution on Gun Free Schools – Janice Ruggieri

Chairwoman Ruggieri presented a resolution that was brought to her

by Lisa Pagano from the Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence. Essentially, there is a loophole in some of the concealed weapon permit laws that were around. This resolution that has been going around through the Rhode Island Association of School Committees is a bill that is pending approval and this is a resolution to help support the bill. It closes the loophole so that we are not allowing anyone who is not law enforcement to carry a concealed firearms onto school grounds.

Discussion on All Day Kindergarten

A discussion amongst the Committee took place regarding All Day Kindergarten to answer additional questions.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn this meeting was made by Mr. Traficante; seconded by Mrs. Culhane. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephanie A. G. Culhane

Vice Chairperson