

## **MINUTES**

### **PROVIDENCE SCHOOL BOARD**

**Providence Career & Technical Academy**

**41 Fricker Street**

**Providence, RI 02903**

**APRIL 25, 2011**

### **CONVENE MEETING**

**1. Call to order 6:30PM – Board President Kathleen Crain called the meeting to order at 6:40pm**

**The following Board members were present: Kathleen Crain, Nina Pande, Magaly Sanchez, Robert Wise, and Philip Gould**

**Brian Lalli and Julian Dash joined the meeting at 6:47pm**

**Absent Board Member: Maila Touray**

**2. Superintendent's Comments – Superintendent Brady commented on what a great turnout we had for the meeting. He also stated the Board had gotten a report of questions they had asked of the district and also stated the Board did not have an easy decision to make on Thursday regarding school closures. He asked the Public to respect and to listen to what the Board had to say.**

### **APPROVE AGENDA**

**3. Approve Agenda as Presented**

**MSV – Lalli, Pande (5-0) MOTION APPROVED**

**REPORTS ON CONTRACTS**

**4. Full Service Community Schools at Lillian Feinstein at Sackett , Multi-Year**

**5. Full Service Community Schools at Charlotte Woods and Cornell Young Elementary School**

**6. Contract Approvals: Full Service Community Schools at Lillian Feinstein at Sackett , Multi-Year; Full Service Community Schools at Charlotte Woods and Cornell Young Elementary School**

**MSV – Pande, Wise (5-0) MOTION APPROVED**

**SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS**

**7. School Board Comments – No comments made at this time**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**8. Personnel Actions**

**9. Minutes 4-11-11**

**10. Home School Candidates**

**11. Consent Agenda Approval: Personnel Actions; Minutes 4-11-11; Home School Candidates**

**MSV – Gould, Pande (5-0) MOTION APPROVED**

**WORKSHOP**

**12. Presentation Regarding Questions and Answers on School Closures by Carleton Jones**

**13. Parent Advisory Committee Presentation – Postponed until next Board Meeting**

**14. Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Presentation by Michael D’Antuono**

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**15. Public Comment Began at 8:45pm and ended at 9:47pm**

- **Councilman Narducci – Thanked everyone for coming out and supporting the teachers. He urged the Board not to vote on Thursday and told them it was ok to say no. He also reminded the Board they did not have all of the information pertaining to school closures. He told them if the neighborhood school (Windmill) was closed they would be destroying the neighborhood. He asked the Board to speak to RIDE to have Windmill become a K-8 school. He also told the Board that Perry was being rented out as a church and the city was still paying for the gas and electric. He told the Board when schools are closed they never come back. He also asked the Board not to let the Administration jam this down their throats. In closing he told Superintendent Brady he was sorry to see him go.**

- **Councilman Principe – Thanked everyone for coming out and showing their support. He said 6 weeks ago I made some comments on the closures. He said if Bridgham was transformed the children in his neighborhood would not a middle school to go to. He told the Board the reason they postponed their vote was because their questions were still not answered. He told them they didn’t need to vote in favor of the closures on Thursday and it was alright to say no. He also spoke about the handout they received from Carleton Jones**

and said the numbers did not add up. He finished up by saying to the Board that if they didn't have all of the facts and did not get the answers to their questions they should not vote in favor of the closings.

- **Michelle McKenzie** – Stated that she was a parent in the district and belonged to the Parents Advisory Council. She said she joined the PAC as a stakeholder in order to give feedback on policies the district was trying to implement. She said the method in which the closings were set-up does not follow guidelines and she stated people should join PAC or LAC if they want to be part of the process. She also mentioned that the Board should vote no on this process.

- **Steve Smith** – He thanked the School Board for asking questions before taking their final vote to close schools because not only teachers but parents and students will be affected also. If you close these schools people will not be moving into these neighborhoods. At one time we had 2400 teachers and now we are up to 1936. Let's use the same time, money and energy that were spent on Nathan Bishop. The Commissioner thinks that everything is fine in Providence? The solution would be to shut down 797 Westminster Street and stop using Perry Middle School for religious services.

- **Osiris Harrell** – How much did the city spend on assessments? Not having Flynn Elementary School in the neighborhood is just not right. Our children are suffering and you can't even see it. Thank you for postponing the vote and taking your time to make a sound decision. Carleton, how much do they pay you to be the yes man? As parents we deserve the actual facts.

• Emily – Bridgham Middle School Teacher. We have been down this road before. I have been getting data together from budget. We have also met with Mr. Jones for 4 hours. What was last year's savings on closure, \$400,000.00? At the Board Meeting for Bridgham Middle School I gave a school presentation. The Board approached me and asked me to meet with them and I said yes. After that I emailed the Board and never got a response, why is that?

• Mr. Lucini – Music Teacher at Bridgham said people united would never be defeated. At the next meeting when you will be voting I'm sure you will not be given the information you requested until hours or minutes before your meeting. Many of us feel like we don't have a voice in this process. Tonight is proof that you have been listening. Mr. Jones if you do not have all the answers, please delay the vote or vote no.

• Allen Moran – Teaching since 1968 and has never seen anything like this. I'm really afraid of all that is going on and I wish the Superintendent would stay. Through this process the Mayor has brought all of us together. I'm glad I will be retiring soon. The Chief Financial Officer has a tough job.

• Ferdinand Rodriguez-Vega – A Bilingual Teacher in the system who also works with the RI English Language Learners Coalition said we have to focus on the way education has been approached in the system. We know you are pressed for time, but if you close these schools and enrollment goes up you will then have to spend more money building new schools. We have to address classroom culture. Children need a real good education to be better productive citizens

**in the future.**

**• Frank Almeida – I work at Brown for the past 25yrs. and everyone told me if I move to South Providence I was crazy. Carleton you don't know what you are talking about and your numbers don't make sense. My daughter attends Flynn Elementary which is our neighborhood school and I could have moved to Scituate but instead I came to South Providence and now you are closing our neighborhood school. Where will these kids be going?**

**• Ms. Almeida – I have a lot more questions and as my husband Frank just stated this is bull. My son Michael went to Feinstein High School and you closed that school also. It was a tough transition for my son. He was shoved in a school with no process. I myself attended Asa Messer and then Bridgham Middle School which is on the list to be repurposed. You as the Board don't have enough information to make your decision and vote on Thursday. Tell the Mayor to shove it.**

**• Laura Almeida – Student at Flynn Elementary School told the Board not to close the school down. She also stated the teachers were great and she would definitely miss them.**

**• Philip Johnston – Told the Board that he was a product of this City. He went to Flynn, Bridgham and Classical High School and now he attends RIC. I love this city and I can really appreciate and sympathize with you regarding your decision. I implore you not to vote on Thursday. The psyche of a child is not a commodity. We can't have instant gratification.**

**• David Haller – As a coalition said its allocation. We are not a supermarket and children are not shelves. People have said**

wonderful things tonight and have asked all the right questions. You as the Board have the right to ask these questions also. It's absurd to make a decision without knowing all of the facts. My last question to you is, will all of these children be going to a better school?

- Regina – Has been a teacher at Flynn Elementary School for the past 8 years. We were told the school was being shut down because the heating system didn't work and the funny thing today it was working just fine. We ask that if you do close the school down to please move the teaching staff as a whole. We also ask that you do everything fair and justly.

- Brian – I am a volunteer at Flynn School and I feel that what you are doing is just not right. I also see that there is no translation tonight and I also want to know why is it that you only send things out in Spanish and English when you also have Hmong and Laotians in the school system. When letters are sent home they should also have translations for them too.

- Diane Thomas – School Nurse Teacher at Flynn Elementary School for the past 7 years said that if you close the school it will not only be disruptive for the children but for the teachers and families too.

- Ana Kuperman – Stated that she was a Providence teacher and the answers the school department was giving for the closures were not good enough. No one got answers to the questions that were being asked. She said we should make sure our children were safe in the schools. Vote no on Thursday you have not had enough time to make a sound decision, please listen to the people.

- Tobias Haller – Parent of 2 children said he just got his 1st year

**Teaching Certificate. I want to thank you guys for asking all of the questions. We also have to think of safety for the children. We have information that shows the numbers and instead of 44 teachers it will be actually more than that terminated. How much will be saved when they leave? My children have had very good teachers. I want to know, why were Perry and Feinstein High School closed. How much did we save by doing that?**

**• Ed Gordon – Teacher in the system wants to know why were all of the teachers fired? I have never been fired from anywhere in all my life. A big disservice is being done to our children. Stakeholders need to come together. The Broad and its literature recommend 18 months for closures. The average savings will be 3-5 cents on every dollar.**

**• Nate Reed – I see a problem and that is you don't have a plan as to where these children will be going. Communities are concerned as to what is really going on. We want more answers and want to be involved.**

**• Megan – I live on Messer Street and I have a question, are the people in the neighborhood just expected to accept what's going on as if they didn't have an option. The board is being given 34 days to make a decision that will have an impact on a lot of children in the district. We have spoken to RIDE and the school department can go into receivership. There are too many inconsistencies. I know you have a hard job ahead of you but I do hope you make the right decision.**

**• Judy – The Mayor told us at the Community Forums that Boston, NY and other places were doing this also. We did the research and NY and Boston were doing this but they were all doing it in a 12 month**

**process. Philadelphia has 67% school capacity and they have a shortfall of 629 million shortfall. We don't even know if these are the right schools that should be closed. We are asking you the Board not to vote or to delay the voting.**

- **Michael Udris – People have been talking about negative impacts and inconvenience the closures will have it is far worse than that. The biggest impacts will be on the Latino, African Americans and the poor populations. Some children have attended 5 schools in 5 years and that is a circus. I implore you with good conscious not to vote on Thursday. It's ok to vote no if you have to. Your obligation is to the students, vote no.**

- **Donna Clifton – Belongs to the Parent Advisory Council and the Parent Teacher Organization at Classical. She stated the PAC Leadership meets on a routine basis to have an input in policies and so forth. She also stated that the parent's representation for the closing of these schools was none. She thanked Carleton for putting the information together and she also implored the School Board not to vote or to take more time in coming to a decision.**

- **Paula Joel – Physical Education Teacher at Flynn Elementary School. We at Flynn believe we could teach every child. Knowledge and learning is power. We love our students and our school very much.**

- **Iman Sanchez – When I came to Flynn Elementary School I was in K and I could read or write English so well. Now I am doing very well and you are closing the school down.**

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

**16. April 27, 2011 – Open Forum; April 28, 2011 – Special Board Meeting; May 9, 2011 – Regular Business Meeting**

**9:55PM – A Vote was taken to Convene in Executive Session**

**MSV – Dash, Pande (7&#8208;0) MOTION APPROVED**

**Roll Call: Lalli Aye, Dash Aye, Wise Aye, Crain Aye, Touray Aye, Pande Aye, Sanchez Aye**

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**17. Vote to Convene in Executive Session Pursuant RIGL 42&#8208;46&#8208;5(a)(1)Suspensions/Terminations; RIGL 42&#8208;46&#8208;5(a)(1)Superintendent's Evaluation/Job Performance & School Board Evaluation/Job Performance; 42&#8208;46&#8208;5(a)(2)Collective Bargaining & Litigation**

**A Vote was taken to come out of Executive Session, Seal the minutes and adjourn the meeting**

**MSV – Lalli, Wise (7&#8208;0) MOTION APPROVED**

## **VOTES TAKEN IN EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**18. No votes were taken**

## **ADJOURN**

**19. The meeting adjourned at 11:35PM**