

MINUTES

PROVIDENCE CAREER AND TECHNICAL ACADEMY (PCTA)
40 FRICKER STREET
PROVIDENCE, RI 02903
AUGUST 22, 2011

CONVENE MEETING

1. Call to Order at 6:30PM – School Board Vice-President called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM
2. Superintendent's Comments

Board Members Present: Nina Pande, Julian Dash, Keith Oliveira, Magaly Sanchez and Natalia Rosa-Sosa

Absent Board Member: Maila Touray, Robert Wise and Brian Lalli

Julian Dash arrived at 6:55PM and Magaly Sanchez arrived at 7:30PM

Due to the fact that we did not have a quorum at the start of the meeting because some of the members were late, we started the meeting with Public Comment first.

APPROVE AGENDA

3. **Approve Agenda as Presented**
MSV – Sanchez, Wise (5-0) MOTION APPROVED

PUBLIC COMMENT

4. Public Comment – Right to be Heard began at 6:48 PM and ended at 7:00 PM
 - Michael Obeloma – Spoke in support of Charter Schools in Providence. It is great news to hear that the children will have choices when it comes to their education because each child learns differently and they all have their own needs. The main goal for all schools is to educate. Cranston and Providence will be strengthened by good educators. If we vote yes for Achievement First this will bring excellence to education.
 - Lupita Diaz – We submitted an application to the Blackstone Academy and we are waiting to hear back from the school. The school had the highest grades and they have a lot of structure at the school and they do a lot of reading. It is a college prep

school and not every school has that. If Public Education had that it would be better for the children and also provide a better education for them.

- Naomi Gonzalez – I am the parent of a 7th grader and I am looking into the option of Achievement First for my child. I see that Providence Schools are closing and I am afraid that my child will wind up in a school where he has to be bussed across town.
- Frances Gallo – I believe there is room for Charter Schools in Rhode Island. Right now there are very little choices and parents are looking for the best when it comes to their children's education. I think we can all collaborate and work together. There are a lot of opportunities in education if we choose to have these schools around.
- Jeremy Ciapetta – I am the Executive Director of the Blackstone Valley Prep. The success we have I have to attribute to PPSD. Choice is a powerful tool both Achievement First and Providence Public Schools have brought good opportunities to Blackstone Valley Prep. Providence Schools can leverage what they have done and this will bring a win, win situation for everyone.
- Mary Ellen Butke – Executive Director of RICAN said she wanted to thank everyone for allowing us to bring Achievement First forward. Latino students are the worst in reading and math and need the most help in those areas. We have attended Public Forums trying to promote success. Education is everything and every child should have a good education. The children can't wait, please support this.
- Elizabeth Ocampo – I'm here tonight to support this application. I have a son in high school and as Dr. Frances Gallo said, there is room for Charter Schools and there is a need for them.
- Osiris Harrell – I'm not here to support or not support this application. A couple of days ago Linda Borg asked me what I thought of the Mayor supporting this application and I said to me it's all suspicious. When I said that I received from Angela Romans. I don't know if the Mayor told her to call me but I don't give a damn. I was told I would not have a working relationship with the Mayor and I really don't care about that and you could tell him that for me. Achievement First looks nice at first but it might turn out to be a Trojan Horse in disguise.
- David Haller – I am here tonight as a supporter for Public Education. I believe we need Public Education. Whenever people talk about Charter Schools they say it's all about choice. Paul Cuffey in Cranston was a lottery and to me that is not by choice its bad odds. Public Education is for the public. I don't want the Wal-Mart style corporation coming in and taking over our schools. If anyone really believes we should dumb down principals I don't think that's right.
- Tobias Haller – I would like to say to the new Superintendent thank you for being here tonight. Achievement First is taking children for Cranston and Providence for charter schools and don't provide a choice for everyone. I know these types of

charter organizations are all bottom line. It's all about stats not about how parents, teachers and educators think. What if scores fall? What if they can't fund public schools anymore? At least we have a chance to vote and have a choice. I want to see Ms. Lusi work with all of us.

- Ana Kuperman – I am a public school teacher in Providence. The Mayoral Academy got special legislation passed. The Mayor of Providence saw this as an opportunity to try to become Governor someday. \$1,000,000. Will be siphoned out of our schools and we don't really need that we need other things. Once the money leaves the system it will never come back. They fired the last Superintendent because he made \$168,000; do you know the salaries these people will be getting? They also brought a Colonel from PEMA for the opening of schools.
- Ed Beseu – Public Education is a civil right it's a foundation of democracy and prosperity. I was a Professor of Finance for 40 years. Our prosperity came from colleges and public education has a bad rap now. This bad rap is because people are going after money. In 2010 a study was done and charter schools did do better in some parts. We need better criteria.
- Cathy Keiser – I am the Chair of Jamestown School Committee. I have been an opponent of charter schools and Mayoral Academies such as Achievement First. My son who has a masters is a Principal in NY. I am here to share personal observation. I am a public school teacher in Massachusetts myself and I don't like sending children to the office myself. At Achievement First there is no nagging and no controlling. They are against transgression.
- Elizabeth Burke Bryant – I am the Executive Director for Kids Count and I want to thank you all for all of the work you have done for the kids in Providence. I urge you to support Achievement First it's an excellent charter school and will give the children more options to improve education. I urge you to support this application and I want to thank you for letting me testify.
- Chris Larson – This evening what is at stake? This application should be approved to support better education for our children. Should this application be denied we will be taking a pass on many federal dollars? Focused leadership will show where achievement can be made in the classrooms. This will bring millions of federal dollars in funding and we hope you support this application.
- Tom Nolan – I am a teacher and also live in Providence. When the Board decided to close schools we were made promises and none of these promises were kept. When I went to PD last week we were told that reading was first so now we have reading for 2 hours and a 1 hour writing block. If that's the case I won't be able to build community in my classroom. All of the demands being put on teachers are not fair. I'm asking you reconsider day one.

- Susan O'Connell – I want to first and foremost thank the Board for opening with a moment of silence for Councilman Luna. He said we must build new schools for our community. Before Diana Lam our children had choices and then our choices were stripped under the direction of Lam and Johnson. Now over the past 6 months this Board has done a lot of damage. I plead with you not to endorse this application.
- Daniel Wall – Good evening Superintendent Lusi and Board Members, I am a History teacher in Providence. I've heard everyone trying to convince parents about these charter schools and the citizens of Cranston were not fooled. Three Senators stated this application is fool hardy and Cranston remains steadfast on opposing these schools. The Charter School proponents will have you believe these schools are the best and that is not the truth. Funding is based on student enrollment. Please vote against this application.
- Erika Sanzi – Thank you I am a Board Member in Cumberland and mere accountability is possible. We are working with these schools. Blackstone Valley Prep provided classrooms and charged us nothing. As districts we get stuck and progress is slow. I am a firm believer that these schools will definitely work. I am convinced this school will put us on the map.
- Jean Link – I have 2 children in Providence Public Schools. The City has closed 7 schools over the past 2 years, fired all of our teachers and now Perry Middle School is being used as a church and now Asa Messer will be a Charter School. I would like to know how many more schools are going to be closed. What is wrong with this picture? Instead of renovating our schools they build a Charter School. This is not a good choice for either Cranston or Providence. We should never forget that in 2011 we were all railroaded.
- Susan Friendson – We are opening our doors to these corporations and that is not a good idea. Achievement First says they are good choice, are they really? They will council our non-performing from their schools. Despite all of the bad press we do have good educators. Please think carefully as to what you are doing before you approve this application.
- Kathleen Crain – I am here as a concerned parent and supporter of Providence Public Schools. Having served as President I know about forced placement and it is truly ineffective. At my sons school the teachers were already placed and the School Department cannot ignore the CBA that has yet to be ratified by the City Council. The Providence Public School District is violating policies. The placement of students in the classroom is very important. The political buzz going around now is just to make the Mayor look good. If this application is approved you will have a lawsuit on your hands regarding education reform.

- Laura Coughlin – I’m a retired teacher in Providence. Blackstone Valley Prep failed to accommodate all children’s needs. We need to service all the children not just some. We need more transparency and I believe children need to be enrolled in reading programs. They should not be charged for education. I believe that what is going on is not fair and we need to put our money into what we already have.
- Steve Smith – Good evening everyone I am here to say the same thing, this is happening because PCTA is the house of bad decisions. We fired teachers and closed schools here. Those supporting this application said nothing and approved the teachers being fired. This application is founded on falsehood and it endangers funding for Race to the Top. The Commissioner is keeping all of the money. Do you ever watch Wal-Mart commercials? I applaud Cranston for not accepting this application. I was born at night but not last night.

SCHOOL BOARD COMMENTS

5. School Board Comments

CONSENT AGENDA

6. Home School Candidates
7. Minutes 8-9-11
8. Personnel Actions
9. Consent Agenda Approval: Home School Candidates; Minutes 8-9-11; Personnel Actions
MSV – Oliveira, Sanchez (5-0) MOTION APPROVED

REPORT ON PERSONNEL

10. Executive Director of Curriculum Development & Implementation – Rachel Mellion – Effective: 8-23-11; Salary: \$110,411.
MSV – Oliveira, Sanchez (5-0) MOTION APPROVED
11. Juanita Sanchez High School Complex – Assistant Principal – Rodolfo Vargas – Effective: 8-23-11; Salary: \$93,098.
MSV – Oliveira, Dash (4-1) MOTION APPROVED Abstained: Sanchez
12. George J. West Elementary School – Acting Principal – Kelly Spaziano – Effective: 8-23-11; Salary \$95,998.
MSV – Oliveira, Dash (5-0) MOTION APPROVED
13. Roger Williams Middle School – Acting Assistant Principal – Leonard Kiernan – Effective: 8-23-11; Salary: \$84,192.
MSV – Sanchez, Oliveira (5-0) MOTION APPROVED

REPORT ON CONTRACTS

14. Whitmarsh Corporation Vision School Contract
MSV – Dash, Oliveira (5-0) MOTION APPROVED
15. Whitmarsh Corporation Title I Contract
MSV – Oliveira, Dash (5-0) MOTION APPROVED
16. Urban League of Rhode Island Bridge Collaborative Middle School Program
MSV – Oliveira, Dash (5-0) MOTION APPROVED
17. The Urban League Alternative Education Contract
MSV – Dash, Oliveira (5-0) MOTION APPROVED
18. Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy Alternative Education Contract (CHISPA)
MSV – Oliveira, Dash (5-0) MOTION APPROVED
19. Aramark Contract 3rd Amendment
1 year contract no further extensions – RFP ASAP for next year
MSV – Dash, Oliveira (5-0) MOTION APPROVED
20. Contract Approvals: Whitmarsh Corporation Vision School Contract; Whitmarsh Corporation Title I Contract; The Urban League of Rhode Island Bridge Collaborative Middle School Program; The Urban League Alternative Education Contract; Center for Hispanic Policy and Advocacy Alternative Education Contract (CHISPA); Aramark Contract 3rd Amendment

ACTION ITEMS

21. 2011-2012 School Board Meeting Calendar
MSV – Oliveira, Dash (5-0) MOTION APPROVED
22. Achievement First
MSV – Oliveira, Sanchez (5-0) MOTION APPROVED

RETIREMENTS & RESIGNATIONS

23. Retirements & Resignations

EXECUTIVE SESSION

24. Convene in Executive Session Pursuant to RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel; RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1) School Board Job Performance; RIGL 42-46-5(a)(2) Collective Bargaining & Litigation; 42-46-5(A)(9) Level B Grievances

9:45 PM – A Vote was taken to Convene in Executive Session

ROLL CALL: Oliveira Aye, Rosa-Sosa Aye, Pande Aye, Sanchez Aye, Dash Aye

REPORT ON EXECUTIVE SESSION VOTES

25. There were no votes taken in Executive Session

ADJOURN

26. The meeting adjourned at 10:40 PM