

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence City Hall

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island

School Committee Meeting

December 14, 2004

Open Session

Mr. Antone Gouveia, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. All members were present: Robert Faria, Eileen Lovett, David Medeiros, Mildred Morris and Antone Gouveia. Also present: Mr. Manuel Vinhateiro, Superintendent and Mr. Andrew Thomas, Esq. of Silva Law Group. A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to move to Executive Session in accordance with RI General Laws, Section 42-46-5 (a) (1) Personnel & (a) (2) Litigation, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Gouveia, aye.

A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to return to public session at 7:30 PM, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to seal the minutes of the Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

Mrs. Morris led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence was observed for Brian Lundstrom, a graduate of East Providence High School Class of 2004, who passed away last week.

Record of Previous Meetings – A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to approve the minutes of the November 9, 2004 and December 1, 2004 School Committee meetings, seconded by Mr. Medeiros.

Vote 5-0.

Chair's Report

Student Council Liaison to the School Committee – Mr. Vinhateiro advised that past practice has determined and School Committee wished to have representation from the student body. Dr. Caroline Caswell, Assistant Principal and Student Council Advisor explained that because of commitment to academics and activities, two students have decided to share the responsibility of School Committee Liaison. She introduced Nicole Gauthier, a sophomore and Student Council officer and John Butler, a sophomore and class representative. Mr. Gouveia welcomed them and asked that they report each month at School Committee meetings; the School Committee is very interested in knowing what is going on in the schools. John reported that the Student Council collected can goods and held a coat drive for the East Providence community center. They are also working on a newsletter, which the School Committee

will receive a copy of when it is completed. Students have also been tutoring in the elementary schools. Mr. Gouveia advised that he will be in touch with their advisor to set up a meeting with the student council.

Recognition of East Providence High School Volleyball Team – Coach Luis Carvalho introduced the members of the Girls’ Volleyball Team who won the State Championship for 2004. The team members were welcomed and congratulated by the School Committee.

Mr. Gouveia asked that the order of the agenda be changed; he wished to move to the Personnel Recommendations. Mr. Vinhateiro explained that teachers, who have successfully completed the three-year probationary period, are now eligible to receive tenure. Ms. Zambarano, along with building principals, presented certificates with congratulations to the tenured teachers who were present.

Mr. Gouveia felt that day to day, money saving efforts should be recognized and he wished to commend several employees for their efforts:

- Mr. Linneman for his efforts in maintaining an effective transportation system**
- Mr. DeVall for his efforts in fundraising for books for the Martin Middle School library**
- Credit to Mr. Anderson, Asst. Principal at Riverside Middle School and the librarian, Mrs. Robinson, who applied for and received a grant**

of \$15,000.

- Mr. MacNamara, Director of the Music Department along with the two music directors at the elementary level.

Mr. Gouveia also asked that all those who schedule events to please try to coordinate with the master calendar as the School Committee would like to attend as many events as possible and hope to avoid conflicts where two events are held on the same night. Mr. Gouveia also commended a school program at Riverside Middle School, which was recently presented by students regarding Immigration. He wanted to note that there are many good things going on in our schools all the time.

Hearings – None

Reading of Communications – Mr. Vinhateiro advised that the School Department recently received notification from the US Department of Education that Hennessey School is a state nominee as a Blue Ribbon School. The Principal, Mr. Britto, will complete and submit the required application. Mr. Vinhateiro pointed out that two of our schools have been recognized this year by the Commissioner of Education; Kent Heights and Hennessey. The Principals, staff and community of East Providence should be very proud.

Report of Superintendent and Staff

Budget Update/Monthly Financial Statement- Dr. Hilton presented the November report, the first for fiscal year 2004-05. Mr. Gouveia questioned several line items, which indicated zero expenditures. He expressed concern about the School Committee's ability to be able to track expenses monthly. If some items may be running over in the budget, the School Committee would not know it. An example would be the expenses for electricity during November; he questioned how there could be a zero balance when November has already passed. Dr. Hilton advised that other individuals in the School Department track certain expenses such as special education and utilities. Mr. Gouveia asked why there are no expenses recorded for transportation, when he knows the band has already traveled. If these expenses are known, they should be listed even if we do not have the bills yet. Mr. Gouveia felt that the financial reporting document needs to be improved. Dr. Hilton said he will prepare something for the next meeting.

Awarding of Bids - None

Personnel Recommendations

Appointments

Sharon Waterman Director, Special Education

Thomas Hargreaves Technical Ed – Robotics, MMS

Samantha Benetti Asst. Coach, Girls' Outdoor Track, SHS

Alan Svendsen Freshman Baseball Coach, SHS

Motion: Morris/Second: Medeiros. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye, Mr. Medeiros, aye Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Gouveia, aye.

Mr. Vinhateiro said he looks forward to working with Sharon Waterman as the Director of Special Education, describing her not only as a solid educator, but a fiscally responsible administrator who truly cares about children with special needs. Mr. Gouveia asked about the possibility of holding a special meeting in January regarding test scores. After the holidays, he would like to meet to develop a report indicating future plans.

RETIREMENTS

**Maria daGraca (29 y) Supervisor, ESL Program
Effective January 1, 2005**

Motion: Morris with regret/Second: Lovett. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye, Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Gouveia, aye.

FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE (Maternity)

Erin Schwab Science Teacher, MMS

Approximately January 14, 2005

Carolyn Sanders Spec. Ed Teacher, Resource, SHS

Approximately February 1, 2005

Alissa Tatarian Special Ed Teacher, Resource, MMS

Approximately February 28, 2005

Motion: Medeiros/Second: Lovett. Vote 5-0.

PARENTAL LEAVE

Lori Kiley-Garcia English Teacher, SHS

Remainder of 2004-2005 School Year

Megan King Grade 5 Teacher, M.J. Francis School

Remainder of 2004-2005 School Year

Crystal Monteiro Grade 3 Teacher, M.J. Francis School

Remainder of 2004-2005 School Year

Motion: Medeiros/Second: Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Facilities Update – Mr. Harry Mutter reported the following:

- Riverside Middle School – New doors have been installed.**
- Maintenance Department – New dump truck has been delivered and outfitted with a 9-foot plow.**
- Attendance Office has been relocated to the first floor; now it is more handicap accessible.**
- Recycling in the school district has increased over the first three months of school, which allows us to keep our trash hauling fees lower.**
- Heating – With the winter season upon us, our heating problems have been minimal. We are installing a new computer program that will save us money at the High School.**
- Looking into new partitions for some school bathrooms.**

Mrs. Morris asked that Mr. Mutter check on the lights outside the high school gym and lights near the pool area door. Also, curtains in House A & C at Martin Middle School were never replaced after the construction. Mr. Vinhateiro will look at the expense of replacement and use ingenuity to come up with some ideas to remedy this problem.

Home School Requests – A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to approve a request for home schooling (recommended by Assistant Superintendent Jacqueline Forbes) seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

Prospective Grants/Consultants – A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to approve the payments to consultants (recommended by Dr. Jacqueline Forbes) seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Field Trip Requests – The following requests were presented for consideration:

The High School Ski Club requested approval of ski trips in December, January, February, March and April (up to five trips). Motion to approve by Mr. Medeiros, seconded by Mrs. Morris for discussion, as she had a concern that a nurse should be part of the chaperone team on these field trips. Mr. Langella said he has asked for this in the past, but it is strictly a voluntary situation. Vote 5-0.

The French Club at the High School requested permission for students to travel to Montreal and Quebec City on April 19-22, 2005. Motion by Mr. Medeiros to approve, seconded by Mrs. Morris. Questions arose about a medical person as part of the chaperone team and the safety and security of our students during a trip out of the country.

Mr. Gouveia said he would be requesting that the School Committee review the existing policies including the field trip policy. He wanted the School Committee to be aware of this and asked to place this item on the agenda for next month. He thought that possibly a committee of parents and the Superintendent could review the policies. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye, Mr. Medeiros, aye Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Gouveia, aye.

Report of Sub-Committees

Cafeteria Committee – Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Lovett visited Hennessey School last week and talked with the kids about food items; they want better portions. A nutritionist met with them and will go back in February or March for further discussion. There seem to be few complaints; Melissa of Chartwells, visited all the schools to check out the menus and possibly make some changes. A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to accept the report, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Family Friendly Schools – Mrs. Eileen Lovett reported that she attended the RI Department of Education’s Fall Leadership Institute held on November 12, 2004. Dr. Steven Constantino led the workshop and presented a 5 Step Process by which all schools and districts can benefit from the power of families that are truly engaged with their children’s education. The research has proven beyond dispute the positive connection between parent involvement and student success. She urged all parents to get involved and applauds those

who do already. A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros, seconded by Mrs. Morris to accept the report. Mr. Gouveia commented that the School Committee members are committed to making parental involvement a priority.

Unfinished Business - None

New Business – School Committee meeting dates were set for the first half of 2005 on the second Tuesday of each month as follows: January 11, February 8, March 8, April 12, May 10 and June 14, 2005. A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to approve the meeting dates, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0. All regular monthly meetings are held at East Providence City Hall at 7:30 PM.

Budget Preparation for 2005-06 – Mr. Vinhateiro related that salaries comprised 64% of the School Department expenses and that the salary line item is the foundation of each budget and the first focus of building the budget, since there are not a lot of other items we have flexibility with. Contributions to the retirement system have been increasing and we have no control over that. Collective bargaining units agreed to give back \$907,000 in 2004-05 and everything else compounded as any raises are based on the last year' base and the new budget is built on the lower base. Other items were also frozen such as overtime pay, home teaching rates, etc. The \$907,000 was just purely salary and does not include additional savings realized by reducing pension contributions and other dollar related items frozen

in the various collective bargaining agreements.

The salary figure for 04-05 is \$34,987,000. If staffing remains the same, the projected salary figure for next year is \$36,325,000; the difference is from the renegotiated base. Collective savings of renegotiating over a three-year period is \$1,989,000. We need to project staff needs for next year before February because of March 1st deadline for layoffs. He explained that he will be starting in January to look at all staff positions and retirements in order to present a staffing scenario to the School Committee. When that information is available, he will be able to present a number for salaries.

Mr. Gouveia said without help from the unions, it would have been impossible to balance the budget. Mr. Vinhateiro said it was a cooperative, collaborative effort between the School Committee and our employees. Mr. Gouveia, Mr. Fazioli and Mr. Vinhateiro spent many hours along with Mrs. Brady and Mr. Sarganis. We saved \$1 million and it was a good job by all. Mr. Vinhateiro related that he just received a report from RIPEC on public education which indicated that 57% of the school burden is on the local taxpayer; RI ranking is so low and the taxpayers are carrying too much of the burden and need help from the state and federal government.

Payment of Bills

Local Operating Bill List:

Warrant #000529 12/1/04 \$1,000,927.50

Motion: Morris/Second: Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

Federal Bill List:

Warrant #000527 11/24/04 \$171,160.85

Motion: Morris/Second: Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

Warrant #000532 12/9/04 \$285,652.21

Motion: Morris/Second: Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

Warrant #000534 12/10/04 \$ 31,513.69

Motion: Morris/Second: Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

Question and Answer Period

Patti Streit, Riverside, spoke regarding the Family Involvement issue and asked the School Committee and administration to look at practical things that can be done through the strategic plan and to implement them through School Improvement Teams as a way to move forward. She asked that the School Committee review the Family Involvement policy. Mr. Gouviea asked that the School Committee review/revise the policy to do whatever is necessary to move this issue forward.

Through the Superintendent and at the request of Eileen Lovett, Dr Forbes explained that it is required by Title I that a home school compact be established; there are few who have something in place but we now have a piece in the Strategic Plan and every School Improvement Plan has a parent involvement Action Plan. Representatives from nine schools attended the RIDE conference and took information back to share with their school. They will be working to meaningfully engage parents in their schools. Mr. Gouveia would like the School Committee to also review/revise this policy to make it more substantive. Motion by Mrs. Morris, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye, Mr. Medeiros, aye Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Gouveia, aye.

The School Committee wished happy holidays to all. A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to adjourn at 9:25 PM, seconded by Mrs. Morris. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Executive Secretary

David A. Medeiros, Clerk of the Committee