

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence City Hall

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

School Committee Meeting

Open Session

October 10, 2006

Mr. Gouveia called the meeting to order at 5:30PM. Three members were present: Robert Faria, David Medeiros and Antone Gouveia. Also present were Jacqueline Forbes, Superintendent of Schools and Attorney Andrew Thomas. A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to move to Executive Session in accordance with RI General Laws, Section 42-46-5 (a) (1) Personnel, (a) (2) Litigation, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 3-0.

Public Session reconvened at 6:00PM. A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to seal the minutes of the Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 3-0. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence were observed.

Public Interviews were held for the position of Assistant Superintendent: Mr. Robert Gerardi, Ms. Rose Clair Bulgin, and Mr.

Edward Daft.

A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to return to Executive Session in accordance with RI General Laws, Section 42-46-5 (a) (1) Personnel, (a) (2) Litigation, seconded by Mr. Medeiros.

Vote 5-0.

Open Session reconvened at 7:30PM for the Monthly Meeting Business Agenda. Motion by Mr. Medeiros to return to open session, seconded by Mrs. Morris. Vote 5-0.

Dr. Forbes, Superintendent of Schools, recommended that the School Committee appoint Mr. Edward Daft to the position of Assistant Superintendent, effective December 1, 2006. Motion by Mr. Medeiros to approve the appointment, seconded by Mrs. Morris and all members. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Gouveia, aye.

Record of Previous Meetings - A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to approve the minutes of the School Committee meetings held on August 2, 15, 29, 2006 and September 5, 11, 27, 2006, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

Chair's Report

Dr. Forbes presented a commendation award to Mr. Glen Piro for

saving the life of a high school student during lunch period, by administering the Heimlich maneuver.

Chairman Gouveia presented a commendation award to Mr. John Butler, a senior at East Providence High School, who served as the student liaison to the School Committee last year.

Dr. Forbes introduced the new School Committee liaison, Mr. Sean Snead and welcomed him to the Committee. Mr. Snead, secretary of the Student Council, presented a report.

Marcia from Rhode Island Parent Information Network (RIPIN) presented an award to the East Providence School Committee acknowledging their efforts to promote parent involvement in East Providence Schools.

Mr. Gouveia thanked everyone for their support by attending the recent City Council budget hearing; he encouraged everyone to continue to support the School Committee; the School Committee needs support from the community especially this year. Mr. Gouveia reported that arbitration was held recently regarding the buy back issue. He also criticized the Mayor's recent comments in reference to singling out the teachers' union president by name. Mr. Gouveia said the School Committee needs the help of the bargaining units; the deal between the City Council and police and fire departments is a fair one for this time; if the School Committee goes beyond this year, it will be

more difficult to ever meet that deal.

Mrs. Lovett invited everyone to attend the Townie Pride Parade, which will kick off at 6:30PM on Friday, October 13, 2006 at Pierce Field.

A School Committee candidate forum will be held on October 19, 2006 at Riverside Middle School at 6:30PM.

Hearings - None

Reading of Communication – None

Report of Superintendent and Staff

Dr. Forbes related that in light of the recent incidents of school violence across the country, she wanted to reassure the community that we have an Emergency Response Plan, in place. A Security Review Team has been re-examining our security measures and this past spring, every school was visited by the team to determine needs.

As a result of this visit and our concerns over the years, specific measures have been taken to secure our schools. Dr. Forbes advised that other areas are being explored; however, because many of the items require resources, they will be included in future budgets for grants and the district's operational budget. Mr. Faria recently attended the Governor's Summit at CCRI and reported that Westerly was recognized for secure schools. They discussed low cost options

for security including a team trained by the police department. Many interesting ideas were discussed, such as why violent acts occur in the community. Mr. Faria would like to discuss some of these issues at a later date.

FY 2005-06 Financial Report – Dr. Hilton presented the report, which he indicated was in order. Motion by Mrs. Morris, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Personnel Recommendations

APPOINTMENTS

Jill Jackson-Fernandes Elementary Librarian, Special Subjects

Nancy Anthony Kindergarten Teacher, Full Day, KH

(1 year only)

Loretta Morissette Bus Assistant

Mary Woodcock Bus Assistant

Kelsey Quinones Head Coach, Cheerleading, SHS

Football, Basketball,

Leanne Walker Beard Supervisory Assistant, Kindergarten, KH

Nancy Flanagan Sophomore Class Advisor, SHS

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

RETIREMENT (Close of 2006-2007 School Year)

J. Michael Elmer (29 yrs) School Psychologist, ADM
Linda Forster (35 yrs) Grade 5 Teacher, Francis School
Elizabeth Maresca (25 yrs) Grade 3 Teacher, Waddington School
Arnie McConnell (33 yrs) English Teacher, SHS
William McEnery (35 yrs) Social Studies Teacher, SHS
Irene Tatarian (35 yrs) Grade 3 Teacher, Francis School
Betty Ross (20 yrs) Educational Specialist, SHS
(SA-9/87, TA-10/96, Ed Sp- 2/01)
Motion: Morris/Second: Faria. Vote 5-0.

RESIGNATION

David Langlois Bus Assistant
Effective October 2, 2006
Motion: Morris/Second: Lowell. Vote 5-0.

FAMILY & MEDICAL LEAVE (Maternity)

Amy Watson Grade 5 Teacher, Whiteknact School
Effective November 14, 2006

Melissa Guillet Elementary Art Teacher, Special Subjects
Effective February 26, 2007 – April 23, 2007
Motion: Morris/Second: Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

RECALL

Delroy Seton Bus Assistant

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

Facilities Update – Mr. Harry Mutter reported that dumpsters at all schools have been painted and have received new covers; part of the front wall at Riverside Middle School had to be taken down; two additional exit doors and fire alarm strobes were installed at Whiteknact School. Mr. Gouveia commented that Mr. Mutter and his staff have always been able to smooth out the problems; Mrs. Morris, commented that Mr. Mutter always responded to the School Committee’s questions. Motion by Mr. Medeiros to accept the report, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Requests for Home Schooling – Mr. Rodericks presented the requests for home schooling and recommended approval. Motion by Mrs. Morris to accept, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

Field Trip Request – Mr. Rocha, Career Center Director, presented a request for students to attend the DECA SONAR Leadership Conference November 2-5, 2006 in Washington, DC. Motion Mr. Medeiros to approve, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Connect-ED System Update - Mr. Rodericks presented an overview of the Site Usage for the Connect-ED System, which is used to call the

residence of every student registered in school and all school employees. Over 238,000 calls were made by the system in the first year of implementation and all school sites are using the program. The High School Attendance Office is using the system to contact homes and parent/guardians regarding the absence of students. It is hoped that the program may be expanded in the near future. Dr. Forbes reported that the School Department has been able to fund the contact system through the Safe & Drug Free Schools Title Four Grant.

Mr. Gouveia advised that the contract of Dr. Jacqueline Forbes, Superintendent of Schools, had been discussed and finalized in Executive Session. A vote was taken in Open Session; motion was made by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. Medeiros to approve. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mrs. Morris, nay; Mr. Gouveia, aye. (Mrs. Morris explained that her vote was against the performance based contract only)

Report of Sub-Committees

Wellness Committee Report – Mrs. Morris reported that the Wellness Committee requested a grant from Representative Paul Moura and has received a grant of \$5000 to purchase fitness equipment for the High School to increase physical activity to combat obesity. Thanks to Mr. Moura for his help; the program will be evaluated and efforts will be made to apply for more grants in the future.

Unfinished Business

Vocational School - Culinary Unit Repairs - Mr. Gouveia requested that this item be placed on the agenda. Mr. Rocha, the Director of the Career/Technical Center explained that seven years ago, culinary equipment was purchased and the students have never been able to use it; the State was to provide space for culinary instruction. Mr. Rocha explained that a \$15 million bond had been passed to update the state vocational schools; this amount was based on a survey of all the schools. Unfortunately, when the costs came in for the renovations, twice the amount was needed to repair and update those schools. RI Department of Education decided to focus on safety issues first and the Career Center heating system was one of the needs/priorities; the kitchen was another priority but was the first to go because there was not enough money. Several legislators toured the school with the Superintendent and others, including Rep. Crowley who noted the inadequacies in the culinary department at our school. The state is aware of our problems and our kitchen will be a top priority again; prior to five years ago, money was allocated and then never given out. Mr. Gouveia asked how much it would cost to have equipment in and the program up and running. Mr. Rocha said it is not that easy; about \$300,000 according to Mr. Rocha. He has contacted several legislators about this. Mrs. Morris asked Mr. Rocha about legislators from East Providence who are on the House Finance Committee. Dr. Forbes advised that the School Committee

should contact the legislative contingent to see if they can help with this. Mr. Gouveia asked if we can contact the parents by ConnectED. Mr. Rocha would like to send a date and time to invite Rep. Crowley to the school. Mr. Gouveia said his interest is in the approximately 75 students who he feels have been cheated; Perkins Grant gave us the money and the students are not getting the benefit. It was decided to draft a letter to legislators and extend an invitation to meet. Mr. Rocha said the equipment is still in crates and out of warranty; however, he is trying to extend the warranties. Mr. Gouveia said that \$300,000 over seven years is unbelievable and shameful. He would like a letter drafted from the School Committee strongly requesting legislative involvement and he would also like to involve the Commissioner of Education.

New Business

Building Use Policy – A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to approve second passage of the amended II.D.5. Use of School Buildings Policy, seconded by Mr. Faria. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Gouveia, aye.

Student Disciplinary Code – First Passage - Mr. Gouveia requested that this item be placed on the agenda, as he would like to see the policy language strengthened. He reviewed some of the changes he would like to propose: Zero Tolerance (page 4) requires an automatic ten day suspension and expulsion hearing for violation of the

drug/alcohol zero tolerance policy; the same penalty for weapons, no discretion and automatic expulsion hearing. At the hearings, the School Committee has to decide if this is a first time event or a continuing pattern. He believes in early intervention. Mrs. Morris agreed that this is necessary to keep drugs out of the schools, but she is concerned with the cost of educating the expelled students; possibly Watters School, which was established as an alternative school, could be used if we hire another teacher. Mr. Gouveia asked what message we are sending when kids are suspended and then allowed to come back and do the same thing all over again. Mr. Medeiros supports zero tolerance, seconded by Mr. Faria. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Gouveia, aye.

Mr. Gouveia said that legal counsel should review the policy. He said there are other suspensions in the course of the school year for fights, smoking, etc.; but there are only about 24-36 trouble makers affecting every teacher, student and the image of the community and school. He feels that if a student is suspended twice during the school year and suspensions are more than six days combined, the third offense should be an automatic ten day suspension; next 30 days no participation in any extra curricular events; any additional suspensions, they are out of extra curricular activities for the remainder of the year. Mr. Gouveia believes it should be a privilege to be involved in school activities and there needs to be a deterrent. 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.

Mr. Gouveia related that the state says we are responsible for home to school, but he could not find any information if a student gets involved in an illegal act away from school. Unless the policy is changed, we cannot do anything about it. He would like the policy to include any act which would be cause for a suspension on school grounds to be carried to one quarter mile radius to any bus stop, but he is not sure about the legality of it. Motion by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Dr. Forbes cautioned the Code of Conduct is regardless of geographic locale; Page 2 of the present code is more expansive. Mr. Gouveia is concerned with the legality of where the act takes place; if a suspected illegal activity is off site, the school has no standing. Dr. Forbes believes there is, if there is a connection to a school function. Attorney Andrew Thomas will review the policy. A motion was made by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mrs. Morris. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye; Mr. Gouveia, aye. Mrs. Morris said she was happy to see this issue come to the forefront; she doesn't want to ruin the good reputation of the school for a few students.

Special Education Report - Mr. Gouveia said his issue was budgetary and he asked that this item be postponed until after the next City Council meeting, since the School Committee will need to meet again anyway, he will hold off making any changes.

Payment of Bills

Local Operating Bill List:

Warrant #684 9/26/06 \$1,093,366.25

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

Warrant #685 9/27/06 \$ 374,476.68

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

Federal Bill List:

Warrant #000681 9/11/06 \$ 713,043.25

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

Question and Answer Period – Mr. Rodericks commented on the Code of Conduct policy; he is in support of everything but one. He is increasingly frustrated with Rhode Island Department of Education, because we need to for a student to be tutored or schooled at home; the cost is astronomical for expelled students. It seems unfair that the good kids are in school, but we have to provide an approximate \$25,000 education for an expelled student plus transportation costs. He believes this should be reviewed. Mrs. Morris asked about the costs and if this issue had been brought up at a Superintendent's meeting. Dr. Forbes advised that we are required to provide an

alternative education.

A motion was made by Mrs. Morris to adjourn at 10:00PM, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Executive Secretary

David A. Medeiros, Clerk of the Committee