

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence City Hall

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

School Committee Meeting

January 9, 2007

Open Session

Mrs. Morris, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. All members were present: Robert Faria, Eileen Lovett, David Medeiros, Steven Santos and Mildred Morris. A motion was made by Mrs. Lovett 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. Vote 5-0.

The School Committee returned to Public Session at 7:30PM. A motion was made by Mrs. Lovett to return to public session, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0. A motion was made by Mrs. Lovett to seal the minutes of the Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence were observed.

Record of Previous Meetings – A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2007 and December 18, 2007 meetings, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

Chair's Report

Student Liaison – Sean Snead presented a report.

Student Recognition - Mr. Edward Daft, Assistant Superintendent congratulated John Butler, who participated in the Senate Youth Scholarship Competition at state level and will represent RI in Washington D.C. Mr. Daft commended Mr. Butler for receiving this award and representing East Providence High School and Townie Pride in the competition; he was congratulated by School Committee members for participating and will receive a \$5,000 college scholarship.

Mrs. Morris, Chair, reported that she would be accompanying Dr. Forbes and other School Committee members to a State House meeting regarding various legislation, which affects educational programs in East Providence.

Hearings - None

Reading of Communications - None

Report of Superintendent and Staff

Dr. Forbes thanked families, staff and students for the response to the Mycoplasma Pneumoniae concern this past week. Although East Providence had no outbreak of any kind, nurses monitored student and staff absences. Dr. Forbes thanked Mrs. Rees, head nurse and all nurse teachers for their efforts. Maintenance and custodial staff are taking extra steps to keep soap and paper towels in the lavatory dispensers and to monitor any repairs to faucets. Mr. Barilla and his staff are to be commended for their rapid response to this health and safety issue.

Dr. Forbes advised that Mrs. Linda Succi, Principal of Whiteknact School has been selected to receive the “Excellence in Mentoring Award” by the RI Mentoring Partnership for exemplifying the Spirit of Mentoring in RI and will be honored on January 18th at a State House reception. Ms. Succi was commended by Dr. Forbes for her accomplishments and leadership.

The FY 2006-07 Financial Report as of 12/31/06 was presented by Dr. Hilton for review. Mr. Medeiros asked about the projected \$145,000 deficit balance in the tuitions account indicated under Expenditures.

At the request of Dr. Forbes, Sharon Waterman, Director of Special Education reported there are generally three basic reasons for the deficit balance: as students turn three years old, the School

Department becomes responsible for them; students who move into the city, foster placements, etc. with Individualized Education Plans; or students in public school who require a more therapeutic placement. This month, some students moved into the system and some left; there are many daily successes on the part of the staff with these students. Mr. Faria commented that we gained six students and lost two, therefore, four students impacted the budget. Mrs. Waterman related that the tuition numbers vary greatly depending on the needs of the particular student.

In response to Mr. Faria's question regarding the status of the healthcare insurance situation, Dr. Forbes, under the advice of counsel, requested that the subject not be up for discussion.

Mrs. Morris asked if any funds could be transferred from money allocated for heating. Dr. Forbes said we will need to carefully look at this; we not have revenue to cover the costs of these tuitions; however, she did not feel comfortable to make transfers now. The information presented was just an update on this time. Mrs. Morris appreciated being informed. Mr. Santos advised that he received a public request regarding the new GASBE accounting requirements. Dr. Forbes stated that the School Department will be in full compliance and she will respond to the constituent with a copy to Mr. Santos. A motion was made by Mrs. Lovett to accept the financial report, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

Personnel Recommendations

APPOINTMENTS

Meghann Kelly Newspaper Advisor, EPHS

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

RETIREMENTS

**Jean Kern (35 years) Librarian, Special
Subject-Waddington Close of 2006-2007 school year**

Anthony Gouveia (20 years) Custodian, Administration

**Motion: Lovett/Second: Santos. Vote 5-0 Effective December 21,
2007**

RESIGNATION

Glen Salgueiro Head Coach, Baseball, MMS

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

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE

**Melissa Natusch Teacher, Special Education
Meadowcrest School**

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

**Facilities Update – Mr. Peter Barilla reported on the following
projects:**

Francis School - Two skylights were replaced in the front entrance area. Martin Middle School - All storm drains were cleaned out and some have been repaired; the area behind the school (where old oil tanks were removed) has been leveled out and asphalted. This project was completed with the help of the City Highway Department. Silver Spring School – The removal of the old stairs in the front of the building has been postponed to the February vacation recess. The area was too wet to complete the project over the Christmas break.

All school custodians have been informed to make sure that all paper towel and soap dispensers are kept full and in working condition. All hot and cold water faucets are being checked to make sure they are working correctly. Custodians have been instructed to make a list of concerns to be submitted to the Maintenance Office as soon as possible. In addition, hand sanitizers have been installed in all classrooms and nurses' offices.

The High School heating system - On January 8th there was discussion as to why the bid went out so early; Mr. Barilla reported that the design needs to be developed and then reviewed by the engineers and then materials need to be ordered, which takes four to six months. The oil tank needs to be registered every year; testing was done by a company; air is forced through the system to check for any leaks. The tank failed the test due to bubbling on top of the tank and the company notified DEM. Mr. Faria asked about the purpose of

the test. Mr. Barilla explained this is proactive testing. Mr. Faria asked what does the heating system change require. Mr. Barilla said the boiler system, steam traps, piping and asbestos removal are involved; however, we are still in the design mode right now.

Dr. Forbes explained it takes two to three months to design the system. Mr. Santos asked what happens if we do not like the design; how much latitude do we have and would the company come back with one or more design? Dr. Forbes advised that the design team will continue to meet along the way with periodic updates. Mrs. Morris said they will have weekly meetings now to keep the School Committee. Mr. Santos asked if the tank needs to be empty or full when tested. Mr. Barilla advised that it is not the level of fill, but the pressure per square inch. Mr. Santos asked if there are records on the tank which would indicate any other problems throughout the years. Mrs. Morris believes this test is done periodically. Mr. Daft advised that it had been checked before. Mr. Faria asked about soil contamination. Mr. Barilla advised that this can only be determined when the tank is removed during April vacation week. Dr. Forbes advised that it is the recommendation of the engineer to burn the oil.

Requests for Home Schooling – Mr. Rodericks presented a request and the Superintendent recommended approval. A motion by Mr. Medeiros to approve, seconded by Mrs. Lovett.

Vote 5-0.

Dr. Forbes reported that the East Providence Education Foundation has been established and hopes to do some fundraising to supplement the school budget. Mr. Vinhateiro has been named President , Mr. William Conley, Vice President, Mrs. Valerie Perry, Secretary, Mr. DeSilva and Mr. Barilla, Treasurers. The Foundation is a 501C3 company and the hope is to do good things for the city. Many others will be involved and serving on various committees. Dr. Forbes hopes to have the support of the community, as this effort will not conflict with other scholarship funds.

Report of Sub-Committees

Mr. Faria requested that a report on school security be placed on the agenda each month. Mr. Rodericks advised that the process of finalizing code red drills has been completed and the drills will continue throughout the year. The School Department was not successful in obtaining a grant to provide funds for replacing hardware, doors, locks, etc. or surveillance equipment. Dr. Forbes has initiated a five year plan for capital improvements. We have recommendations for some physical changes in some of the building, such as a designated front door at the High School, Martin Middle School has a vestibule area to the main office and we are looking at every school to do this. Will continue to look for funding to follow the recommendations of the review committee. Old doors at the high school; trying to do what we can afford. Instituted a mandatory system of badges for staff members and are looking for ways to be

able to produce the badges ourselves; talking with the city regarding this.

Dr. Forbes asked Mr. Barilla to report on the tactical team training which will be conducted at the High School. Mr. Barilla will be meeting with the training supervisor regarding this training which will be conducted during school vacation in February and April. Dr. Forbes explained that our SRO's will be able to attend free of charge because we are hosting this initiative which is worth the trade off to be able to work with the police who will be gaining training that our SRO's will be able to put into place.

A short recess was taken. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to return to open session, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

Unfinished Business

Dr. Forbes advised that a committee was formed to research the pilot Breakfast Program. Mrs. Eileen Palenchar and Mrs. Patti Streit presented a PowerPoint report.

Several speakers Frances Dougherty, Maggie Rogers and Liz spoke in favor of continuing the program.

Mr. Antone Gouveia spoke against the program and was concerned about the program losing money, which concerns him as a taxpayer.

He said there is no conclusive study that breakfast makes a more productive student. Those students whose families meet the criteria will still get breakfast without the universal breakfast program; he would rather see the money go toward educational programs. He strongly urged the School Committee not to extend this program any further.

A motion was made by Mr. Faria to accept the recommendation of the committee to return to the regular program, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Roll call Vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye.

New Business

IV.B.3.a. Early Admission to Kindergarten – Amended Policy – Second Passage – A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to approve, seconded by Mr. Faria. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye.

School Committee Benefits (Robert Faria) – Mr. Faria believes that elected officials should not have a benefit package as it should be an honor and privilege to serve and he promised that elected officials should not have full health care packages. A motion was made by Mr. Faria that the School Committee rescind their healthcare coverage and remove it from the healthcare package, seconded by Mr. Santos. Mr. Santos felt it was disturbing that people run for public office and

get free health care at the expense of the taxpayers; the School Committee can show the community that they are taking action in this first step. Roll Call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, nay; Mr. Medeiros, nay; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, nay. Motion failed 3-2. Mrs. Lovett said it is easy because they do not need the benefits; she puts hours in and takes the job seriously; if someone needs benefits, they should have the opportunity to take them.

Payment of Bills

Local Operating Bill List:

Warrant #000705 12/27/06 \$1,460,094.49

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

Federal Bill List:

Warrant #000703 12/19/06 \$ 125,925.49

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

Mr. Faria suggested that we look for ways to reduce expenses related to advertising through the Providence Journal. Dr. Forbes explained that advertising of School Committee meetings is required by the Open Meeting Law

Question and Answer Period

Bob Enos requested answers to questions posed at the last meeting regarding custodians. Dr. Forbes provided answers to him, but he

felt he needed to report the information out to tax payers: \$10,000 overtime in two weeks, 80% in one school; 29 people on vacation the two weeks prior to opening school; 3 people out the week before school opened. He said there is a management problem when 29 out of 55 people were out on vacation before school started; SD can limit number of employees on vacation at one time. Wants to see more working with the City.

Mr. Faria commented that going forward Mr. Barilla is the right person for the job and looks for cooperation and help of the City. Mr. Faria said asking questions now with budget problems – taxpayers have to ask questions; it is very frustrating for the SC and more people should get involved, more questions, more discussion, etc.

Discussion regarding updating the website.

Ms. Rogers spoke again in favor of the breakfast program.

A motion was made by Mr. Faria to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Eileen Lovett, Clerk of the Committee