

# **EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT**

**East Providence City Hall**

**145 Taunton Avenue**

**East Providence, Rhode Island 02914**

**April 10, 2007**

## **Open Session**

**Mrs. Morris, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30PM. Four members were present: Robert Faria, Eileen Lovett, Steven Santos, and Mildred Morris (David Medeiros arrived later). Also present, Dr. Jacqueline Forbes, Superintendent of Schools, and Andrew Thomas, Esq. 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. Santos. Vote 5-0.**

**Public Session reconvened at 7:30PM. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to return to public session and to seal the minutes of the executive session, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 4-0.**

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

**Record of Previous Meetings – A motion was made by Mr. Faria to**

**approve minutes of**

**School Committee meetings held on March 7, 12, 13, 19 and 21, 2007, seconded by Mrs. Lovett.**

**Vote 4-0.**

### **Chair's Report**

**Student Liaison, Shawn Snead presented a report. Chair, Mrs. Morris, commented on the Citizen of Month Program at Hennessey School and congratulated all the superb musicians performing at various concerts.**

### **Hearings - None**

**Reading of Communications – Mr. Faria received correspondence concerning a fundraiser for a family at Orlo Avenue School affected by a fire and that anyone interested in making a donation, should contact the Principal or the PTA.**

### **Report of Superintendent and Staff**

**FY 2006-07 Financial Report was presented by Dr. Hilton. Mr. Faria asked about the requested transfer of \$50,000 from Benefits Incentive Program to Tuitions**

**account. Dr. Forbes explained**

**the projected deficit for tuitions of \$108,331,000. This month the projected deficit is \$58,331;**

**Special education placements indicated 13 transfers of students into the district and five leaving.**

**Personnel Recommendations – Diane Rodericks presented the following personnel items:**

### **APPOINTMENTS**

**Jennifer Roy Assistant Principal, Discipline, EPHS**

**Alex Butler Head Coach, Girls' Volleyball, EPHS**

**Greg McCarthy Head Coach, Girls' Track, RMS**

**Motion: Lovett/Second: Faria. Vote 5-0.**

### **RECALL**

**Meredith Miller Speech/Language Pathologist, SPED**

**2007-2008 school year**

**Motion: Lovett/Second: Faria. Vote 5-0.**

### **RETIREMENT**

**Francine Gruhn (16 years) English Teacher, EPHS**

**Close of 2006-2007 school year**

**Laraine Costa . Teacher Assistant, M.J. Francis**

**Effective March 5, 2007**

**Motion: Lovett/Second: Faira. Vote 5-0**

**RESIGNATION**

**Dr. Michael Almeida   Principal, Riverside Middle School  
Effective close of 2006-2007 school year**

**Frank DeVall, Jr.   Principal, Secondary Summer School  
Effective immediately**

**Peter Barilla, Jr.   Director, Buildings & Grounds  
Effective July 1, 2007**

**Nancy Hughes   Speech/Language Pathologist, SPED  
Effective close of 2006-2007 school year**

**Luis Carvalho   Head Coach, Girls' Volleyball, EPHS  
Effective immediately**

**Keith Martinous   Head Coach, Girls' Basketball, MMS  
Effective immediately**

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

**FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (Maternity)**

**Julie Denis Occupational Therapist, SPED**

**Approx. May 23, 2007 to end of 2006-2007 school year**

**Denise Swan Grade 1 Teacher, Orlo Avenue School**

**Approx. April 30, 2007 to end of 2006- 2007 school year**

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

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

**Rinda Foster Special Education Teacher, EPHS**

**2007-2008 school year (Year 1)**

**John Gendron Physical Education Teacher, EPHS**

**2007-2008 school year (Year 2)**

**Kelley Richardson Head Coach, Girls' Tennis, EPHS**

**2007-2008 school year**

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

**Facilities Update - Mr. Peter Barilla reported: New lighting installation at the high school has been completed, but will be reviewed by RISE to make sure all areas were covered or if lighting needs to be added in the pool area. Work is continuing on the heating system; the parts for the steam traps are in and the asbestos abatement plan has been**

submitted and approved by the Dept. of Health for asbestos removal in the boiler room and other areas. The boiler permit has been received from the state and the DEM has approved the installation of the new fuel tank. Also the gym corridor will be redone during the spring recess. In addition, “No Smoking” signs were posted on the fence between the Career Tech School and the High School and “No Food or Drink signs were posted in the pool areas. A session on air quality for schools will take place at the Career School on April 23, 2007. The electric main breaker will be replaced during the spring recess.

Mr. Faria asked about the air quality meeting. Dr. Forbes advised that a policy adopted in 2002, Indoor Air Quality for Schools, requires that a team be in place in every school to review the requirements.

Mrs. Morris thanked Mr. Barilla for modeling a collaboration with the city to complete projects.

**Payroll Calendar:** A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to approve the calendar as presented, seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Vote 5-0.

**Curriculum Update –** Mr. Edward Daft, Assistant Superintendent reported on Positive Behavior Programs at Silver Spring and Orlo Avenue schools. Mrs. Ellen Reinhart, presented a PowerPoint detailing the program. Mr. Daft advised that two more schools, Hennessey and Whiteknact, will be participating in the program next

**year; principals attend training and take the training back to the schools; this program is a more proactive approach. Mrs. Lovett witnessed the positive behavior program through the students at Orlo. Dr. Forbes was impressed by the program and encouraged all schools to participate. Mr. Daft recognized the principals of Orlo Avenue, Ms. Gibbs, and Ms. Marcotte of Silver Spring School.**

**Mr. Daft reported that recent state mandates have changed the way schools may meet the needs of students excluded from school; i.e. suspended, expelled, home-bound, home-schooled, etc. Sending students to alternative school settings is substantially more expensive than home-tutoring, which the state no longer allows for expelled students. These additional costs are forcing districts to examine alternatives to educating students outside of school. Mr. Daft recently observed the Woonsocket Virtual Learning Academy of the Northern RI Collaborative, which is a customized, technology driven, independent alternative curriculum, specifically designed to meet the individual course/credit needs of unique student populations. At this time, there is some concern about how to manage the senior project piece for some students; however, many schools are looking at this alternative to sending students to East Bay Career Academy. Mr. Daft advised that RI Department of Education has accepted this program which is aligned with state mandates and curriculum.**

**Dr. Forbes advised that with School Committee approval, this**

**program could be implemented in the fall. Mrs. Morris said she would like to see this program implemented because of the cost to the district for sending students to East Bay Academy. Mrs. Morris asked that materials be provided to the School Committee for review.**

**School Security – Mr. Faria asked if all staff are using photo identification cards. Mr. Rodericks reported that some new staff or staff absent when pictures were taken, do not yet have the ID's but 99% of staff have badges. He has asked to collaborate with the city regarding having a machine on site to produce new badges when needed, as there is an on-going, permanent need to address this area.**

**Mr. Faria asked about homeland security grants. Mr. Rodericks reported that Kathleen Reese has been applying for new grants; however, there is a need for big ticket items such as locks, doors, security and a new round of code red drills.**

**Mr. Faria mentioned that dates are on the website for meetings to discuss and analyze the budget and that negotiations are ongoing with bargaining units and there is hope to have a positive report some time soon.**

**Mr. Medeiros asked for people to come out to the budget sub-committee meetings; principals will present first, then directors and then public comments will be taken.**

**Unfinished Business – Dr. Forbes recommended second passage of Policy V.A.21 Suicide Crisis Policy. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to approve, seconded by Mr. Medeiros. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye.**

## **New Business**

**Policy IV.D.1. Placement, Promotion and Retention Policy – Mr. Daft and Dr. Caswell presented the policy, which must be in place to meet PBGR requirements (Project Based Graduation Requirements) Dr. Caswell reviewed the changes and additions with the state requirements in italics; these changes were made to assist and support students in meeting the state requirements. Mr. Daft commented that the State will be looking for this policy to be implemented in order to qualify a diploma system. Motion by Mr. Faria to approve first passage, Seconded by Mrs. Lovett. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, aye; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, aye.**

**Mr. Santos received comments from parents who were concerned about what is in place for testing air quality in school buildings; what are the policies, state regulations, etc. that are in place now. Dr. Forbes reported that a School Committee policy has been in place since 2002, IAQ-Tools for Schools – Indoor Air Quality, which is the process we use to address any concerns. She said that every school has a binder and a team which includes the principal and updated**

training has been planned. Good air quality is important, and if there is a problem, the team at the school level knows the protocol. If there are any concerns, we look to the Department of Health or an outside agency for assistance. Mr. Barilla, Director of Buildings and Grounds advised that there are no standards or regulations for air quality according to state. If there is a problem, it needs to be reported. He explained that testing costs money and you need to know what you are testing for. In addition, the outside air quality is important in the process. He can call Mr. Vanderslice at the Department of Health at any time if there are concerns that warrant their assistance or advice.

Mr. Santos asked if the team is qualified. Dr. Forbes said the management plan is in place and the Department of Health can be called if any problems. There is no certification for indoor air quality. Discussion regarding legislation pending at the General Assembly for some kind of testing, if needed, House 5259, regarding school air quality. Mr. Santos wants to be sure we have a good, safe environment for students and staff.

City Council Resolution – Mr. Santos attended a hearing on March 29th at which time an amendment was made to the City Charter (passed at last election) whereby the City Council unanimously supported the amendment which granted power to City Council to approve all contracts in the city related to Collective Bargaining agreements. Mr. Santos agreed to put this on the agenda to ask how

**the School Committee members feel about the legislation. Mrs. Lovett asked for more clarification about the legislation. Mr. Santos asked that the School Committee support the charter change, which 73% of the voters and the City Council supported, which basically grants power to the City Council to negotiate contracts. Mrs. Lovett had a problem with who negotiates and who ratifies and asked for more clarification of the issue.**

**Mr. Faria repeated that 73% of the people voted for this and he feels the responsibility to negotiate the best contract on behalf of the City, as that is his role; whether ratified by the City or anyone, it forces negotiators to communicate regarding financial issues, as we also need to understand what those parameters are, which has been lacking in the past. The fact that people want it, it doesn't matter what the legislators say. We need to negotiate in the best interest of the School Department and the City and we need to be more concerned about the School Committee's role than ratification. Mr. Medeiros felt this should be a City Council Charter Amendment Resolution and not an ordinance.**

**Mrs. Morris said the community was misled and thought they were voting for co-pay rather than contract review and if the City is to ratify, they should spend time negotiating.**

**Mr. Medeiros asked to add the item to the next agenda correctly and vote on April 25th. Mr. Faria said the people voted for it; there is no**

**debate, and it is not for the School Committee to decide. Legislators should vote on it and others should not interpret what people thought about when they voted.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Faria to forward a resolution to legislators and City Council in support of the amendment to the Home Rule Charter, seconded by Mr. Santos. Roll call vote: Mr. Faria, aye; Mrs. Lovett, nay; Mr. Medeiros, aye; Mr. Santos, aye; Mrs. Morris, nay. Vote 3-2 to approve.**

**East Bay Collaborative Report – Mr. Daft presented a report on East Bay Collaborative’s East Bay Academy. The agreement we have with them is a rate @ \$21,000, while the state average is \$24 to \$25 thousand. We are fortunate to have this program as an alternative for kids. Mrs. Sharon Waterman, Director of Special Services, said this is a positive option for our students and explained that the program is used for students with significant learning and behavioral challenges. Mrs. Waterman strongly recommended this program.**

**Dr. Forbes and Mr. Daft met and received an independent audit of their programs, which was forwarded to the School Committee. Dr. Forbes received an evaluation of students who have gone through the program and intends to continue collaboration with the program for our special students.**

**Payment of Bills**

### **Local Operating Bill List:**

**Warrant #000725 3/27/07 \$1,863,495.10**

### **Federal Bill List:**

**Warrant #000723 3/20/07 \$ 390,831.84**

**Motion: Faria/Second: Santos. Vote 5-0.**

### **Question & Answer Period**

**Kathy Blackmar, 127 Palmer Avenue asked about the asbestos abatement at the High School and how it would affect the students.**

**(No students will be in school when this work is being done)**

**Heather Vine, 200 Riverside Drive, apologized for the behavior of some of the audience at last night's meeting and the disrespect to parents and students in the audience. She asked that all think about the PowerPoint presentation showing the city funding at 3.5% this year. She asked about Plan A & B and that Riverside Middle School would be empty and if any thought had been given to Chartwells Food Service, which provide lunches for all Riverside schools. She was concerned about additional costs for lunch program. She also asked if Oldham would lose Title I status. She asked about any regulations for bathrooms for Kindergarten or smaller kids if they are moved to another school without those facilities. Also egress for**

**doors on Option C which could negate savings. Full Day K would be beneficial.**

**Dr. Forbes advised that cost avoidance of surplus teachers would be reassigned; last year School Committee voted for full day Kindergarten, which could be implemented in fall 2007. Ms. Vine thanked Mr. Medeiros for not closing schools.**

**Bob DiCataldo, 102 Fenner Avenue, stated that in all proposals, there is a \$948,000 savings (Dr. Forbes no single proposal will erase deficit). He asked if the City Council takes the ability to ratify contracts, how can both be on the same page; this would make the negotiations process even slower. (Mr. Faria – said a financial impact statement is needed, as it forces two groups to work together) Mr. DiCataldo thinks one more step is necessary; it might be better to have someone from the City Council on the negotiating team, if they have the final say.**

**Mr. Santos stated that legislation in the General Assembly requires a financial impact statement prior to ratification to know what the life of the contract will cost.**

**Mrs. Morris stated that if the resolution is finalized, the City Council should participate in the negotiations process.**

**Charles Melo, 596 Willett Avenue, sees a division and divisiveness in**

that we have two middle schools opposing each other, but he heard the word Caruolo Act. Mr. Faria explained that when schools are in deficit and cannot operate, the School Committee sues the City for money to continue to run. Mr. Melo asked if any of the five proposals cover the deficit. Dr. Forbes said multiple proposals are necessary to cover the deficit. He commended Dr. Forbes for the five proposals.

Dr. Forbes advised there is an impending \$2.9 million deficit and depends on the governor's budget, but all accounts are accurate to the best of our ability in making projections.

Mr. Melo has problem with closing schools and falling under Caruolo Act anyway.

Mr. Faria said he is hopeful through negotiations, legislation, etc. that Caruolo will not be a viable action, which he feels would divide the city.

Mr. Melo feels that certain people on the School Committee are saying it's the council's problem, but it is everyone's problem; citizens can't get enough money out of their pockets to pay for our schools. He has been watching the deviseness in the community and is concerned that any and all options will not cover the deficit.

Mr. Gouveia wanted to clarify the 3 ½% as maximum; the city can give us whatever they want, the 3 ½ is only the max the city can raise

property taxes, but the city can decide any amount of allocation or decrease. He feels we have to know where we are at before we know where we are going and inquired about the status of the audit report, which would provide that direction. (Dr. Forbes received information that it is still in process, but nearly complete). Mr. Gouveia asked about the surplus in 05-06; deficit should be under \$1 million; the audit is the starting place. He had questions about the amount being inaccurate. He needs the audit to go public with this.

Jonathan Pangborn – Gardner Drive – He attended Silver Spring school and now his son attends school there. He does not believe anyone should be apologetic because the parents were blindsided. He questioned the amount of \$500 a day to Mr. Vinhateiro and asked if Mr. Vinhateiro is affiliated with Bradley at all. He asked about Mr. Elmasian working at the High School again and he asked about people coming around to measure buildings

Dr. Forbes advised that Mr. Vinhateiro is working part-time, and salary issue would be deferred to legal first. Mr. Elmasian is working at a reduced rate to fill a need and he is owed a debt of gratitude for helping to fill in when needed.

Mr. Pangborn said Bradley is not welcome in the Silver Spring neighborhood; everyone is signing petitions for security reasons as there is no way to separate the students from Bradley kids. (Dr. Forbes said Bradley is a good neighbor.) Mr. Pangborn said this is

**not going to work in the middle of the neighborhood.**

**Tracy McCaughey, Bay View Avenue, received late notice about the meeting last night, but felt that everyone can do better to teach kids about being passionate; she needed information ahead of time to ask questions and process the information. She asked about Silver Spring School which is a great community school and she would not want to see this lost. She is vehemently opposed to closing elementary schools, because the end does not justify the means. She asked how Silver Spring School was chosen for closing.**

**(Dr. Forbes related that Silver Spring is the smallest school in the center of the city and students can be absorbed by other schools.)  
Discussion regarding the accuracy of the census numbers.**

**Tracy asked that we give significant consideration to which school we close; Silver Spring is in a neighborhood with a park, field, etc. and provides a wonderful environment for kids. She is against closing the school and asked if there are any other proposals to address the deficit that can be voted on April 25th, as there must be another way to curtail expenses. She asked if the cost of busing students had been reviewed.**

**Speaker: Thanked the School Committee for the meeting last night and if there was any possibility that the administration could move to the Watters building.**

**She talked about Middle Schools being combined, which is not a good idea, as East Providence needs two strong middle schools for the welfare of students. She asked if there was any plan to bring in planning and traffic studies for Brown and Brightbridge Avenues and if there was any progress in discussion about consolidating services between the School Department and City to save money.**

**Speaker: Hoped for ongoing communication and cooperation with City and that someone in the community will come up with other plans.**

**Bill Murphy, 27 Wetmore Avenue, spoke about the air quality issue and the fact that there are no state or federal regulations. He suggested that although there may be actions in policy and school based teams, but he asked if there is a systematic plan and documentation for cleaning ventilation and heating systems. Also, the hygiene of mops, cloths, and buckets is another issue. He questioned benefits/personnel items put on the table to be looked at to save money, such as co-pay, buyback, and a new administrator for the health plan.**

**Dr. Forbes reported that negotiations are in progress and cannot be publicly discussed; however, option one is seeking relief in negotiations with unions. Andrew Thomas, School Department Attorney, advised there are collective bargaining ground rules and**

**negotiations are ongoing; he also had issues with Caruolo.**

**Kathy Blackmar does not want to see any schools closed; she asked why all the schools being considered for closure are located in Riverside. She is worried about property values, as real estate sells because of schools. She would like to see it spread out, because kids will be on buses too long. She hopes no school will be closed, especially not in Riverside**

**Tom Riley, Pawtucket Avenue, congratulated Mr. Medeiros and Mr. Santos on the charter vote; he said the Board should reconsider their chair; he asked why did the Chair and two members agree and then renege on the buyback issue. Mrs. Lovett said she was advised by legal not to answer.**

**Mrs. Morris said cost decided her vote on the buyback issue; she voted not to go to court because this is a contractual issue and going to court would have cost more money and there were too many legal costs already.**

**Mr. Riley asked the School Committee to reconsider the buyback issue.**

**Leanne Towne asked what would be happening at the meeting on April 25th. The Superintendent advised that she will recommend and the School Committee will vote; the agenda will be posted. She**

**asked what happens if everything is voted down.**

**A motion was made by Mr. Medeiros to adjourn at 10:50 PM,  
seconded by Mrs. Lovett.**

**Vote 5-0.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant**

**Eileen Lovett, Clerk of the Committee**