

EAST PROVIDENCE SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

East Providence City Hall

145 Taunton Avenue

East Providence, Rhode Island 02914

March 10, 2009

Open Session

Mr. Carcieri called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. School Committee members present: Luisa Abatecola, Shannon Barbosa, Robert Faria, Steven Santos, Anthony Carcieri. Also present: Mr. Edward Daft, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Lonnie Barham, Human Resources Director.

Mr. Carcieri requested a motion to convene in Executive Session for purposes of discussing:

Personnel: One individual – This individual has been notified in writing that the Committee intends to convene in executive session in order to discuss his/her job performance and he/she has declined to have this discussion take place in open session. R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5 (a) (1) Collective Bargaining: Teachers' Contract, Teacher Assistants' Contract, Custodians' Contract, Secretaries' Contract – R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5 (a) (2) Litigation: R.I. General Laws Section 42-46-5 (a) (2),

Motion by Mr. Faria, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

Open Session reconvened at 7:30PM. A motion was made by Mr. Faria to seal the minutes of the Executive Session, seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

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

Minutes of Previous Meetings – None

Student/Teacher Recognition – The following received certificates of recognition:

Student - Asia Turner, a student, recognized for R.I. Jr. Miss Teen Contest.

Teachers Deana Dufficy and Faith Paradise were recognized for outstanding work as special educators.

Chair's Report

Erin Butler, Student Liaison, presented a report.

School Committee Comments: Mr. Faria and Mrs. Barbosa commented on various school activities.

Sub-Committee Reports – Mr. Carcieri requested that the Superintendent research and make recommendations regarding sub-committees that would be helpful with preparing policy and supporting the Strategic Plan of the district. Mr. Carcieri made the following sub-Committee appointments:

Budget & Facilities Steve Santos and Anthony Carcieri

Personnel/Contract Robert Faria and Anthony Carcieri

Community/Policy Shannon Barbosa and Robert Faria

Health and Wellness Luisa Abatecola and Shannon Barbosa

Report of the Superintendent and Staff – Mr. Edward Daft, Assistant Superintendent advised that the Superintendent was absent due to illness. He requested that Mr. Barham review the personnel items.

Personnel Recommendations:

Appointments

Raymond Linneman Director of Transportation & Performance Audit

Joseph Tavares Facilities Manager

Raymond Francis Night Supervisor – Facilities

Nicholas Acquaviva 2/5 Math Teacher - EPHS

Kevin Monagle Math Department Head – EPHS

Mike Lefort Environmental Club Advisor – EPHS

Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mrs. Abatecola. Vote 5-0.

Discussion: Mr. Faria asked how the Facilities Manager position would be considered going forward as it relates to the consolidation process.

Mr. Barham explained that all are in agreement that even if custodians are contracted out, someone would still be needed to produce a budget, oversee maintenance, day-to-day work orders, and to coordinate with principals; the Superintendent recommended that the title change from Interim Director to (Mr. Tavares) Facilities Manager, which is a more appropriate title for those duties.

Retirements

Beverly Hassell (18.5 years) Pupil Personnel Services – ADM

Resignations

**Robert Traverse Head Coach-Freshman Boys' Basketball
EPHS**

Family Medical Leave

**Deana Dufficy Speech/Language Pathology – MMS-EPHS
(Effective Approx. 5/5/09 for remainder of
2008-09 school year)**

Mary Cabral MMS – Literacy Teacher

Beginning of 09-10 school year – up to 13 weeks

Parental Leave

Kristin Pallotta Physical Education Teacher – EPHS

(3/16/09 for remainder of 08-09 school year)

Personal Leave

Nancy Cullion SPED – Resource, M.J. Francis

Principal, Silver Spring 2009-2010 school year

(To Protect Position)

Financial Report/Budget Deficit – Mr. Barham reported that all have been working diligently to get salary and benefits numbers in line; benefits numbers are still high; cost reductions have been implemented; we still owe \$5.2 million in special education payments; some unexpected expenses such as replacing a freezer at high school, gas company expenses. Meetings are held weekly to review and discuss what bills should be paid based on immediate need and educational value; we are still looking at over a \$9 million deficit. Costs have been reduced for 2009, but will end with a \$6.2 deficit. Negotiations are taking place with bargaining units and the custodians' have made concessions; looking at consolidation with the city; health care reductions, negotiated a lower benefits administration rate; reducing rolls of who is getting benefits. Costs are being continually monitored.

Mr. Kinder advised that suit was filed against the city for a \$5.2 million deficit; the School Committee cannot incur debt and this is the

process by law which needs to be followed. Expenses have been cut as much as possible and there is only one alternative by law which is Caruolo action to ask for more money. Everyone on the city Council and School Committee recognize that Caruolo action is futile and wasteful; but debt was run up in the name of the taxpayers and there is a commitment by this School Committee and City Council to try to come to an agreement on this debt without Caruolo action. The pressure on school personnel is fierce; vendors have to wait; the debt is enormous. The School Committee is committed to no debt this year and discussion will continue on past debt.

Field Trip Requests - 7th Grade students - Martin Middle School – two day visit to Alton Jones Campus on May 14th and 15, 2009 and EPHS DECA Chapter students to attend and participate in International Career Development Conference in California from April 29th to May 2, 2009.

Motion by Mrs. Abatecola to approve, seconded by Mr. Faria. Vote 5-0.

School Calendar – Tabled for discussion with Superintendent at the next meeting.

Update on Restructuring Plan

Planning for specific outside placement students to return to East

Providence Schools, which will save money.

Various positions have been posted

Some titles have been converted for administrators who will be assuming additional new responsibilities.

Mr. Faria asked for more specifics regarding bringing students back to East Providence. Mr. Daft explained that various meetings have been held with state officials and information reviewed by the Superintendent. Informational meetings will be held when the plan is ready and parents will be informed.

Educational Program Report – Mr. Daft reported:

Professional Development Offerings:

Dana Center: The RI Department of Education has announced a partnership with the Dana Center (Educational Foundation associated with the University of Texas) to increase student achievement in Math and Science in RI public schools. Professional development will provide targeted support to schools working towards the alignment of curriculum and the completion of a gap analysis. An ISP intermediary service provider will be used to foster PD within districts and leverage resources to support alignment process.

Teaching American History Grant: The Rhode Island Historical Society is sponsoring 3 workshops beginning in March for teachers

in grades K-8. The focus of these workshops is to integrate trade books, literature based activities and drama with social studies content. The workshops are being held @ Kent Heights School from 3:00-4:30 pm.

Title I: On February 12, Title 1 sponsored a “Fun in the Tub” parent workshop, at Kent Heights School, for all Title I Kindergarten students and their families. The night was a huge success with 51 adults and 22 children attending. The interactive workshop is designed to help parents improve their child’s literacy skills at home and support what their child is learning in our Kindergarten classrooms. Each family that attended received a Fun in the Tub Literacy Kit.

Literacy: The Dunne Institute is sponsoring a professional development opportunity for teachers and administrators on March 26th entitled “Keys to the Literacy Workshop: Content Literacy Essentials-Comprehension and Vocabulary Strategies for the Content Classroom.” This workshop supports the literacy initiatives that we have started at the middle and high school.

Assessment: The Group Reading and Diagnostic Assessment (GRADE) was recently administered to all PLP students in Grades 6-8 and to high school English Literacy students in Grades 9 and 10. This assessment served as a mid-year progress monitoring tool for struggling readers. The Reading Staff analyzed results from the

GATES, NECAP and the GRADE assessments to determine student proficiency. Twenty-five (25) students have been moved to monitor status and should exit the PLP process by the end of the school year.

EP Ed Foundation mini grants are now available to teachers; a Duck Race will be held on June 6, 2009. Sportsmanship night is March 12th at East Providence High School.

Mr. Faria requested that a letter received from the High School SIT Team be read at the meeting.

Mr. Daft agreed to read the questions. A letter will be drafted as a response to the NEASC report. Meetings have been held with the high school administrative team and there will be a plan to address these issues.

**New Business – Policy I.E. School Committee Bylaws – Section 6.
Order of Business – Proposal to Amend – School Committee agreed to table.**

Payment of Bills

Federal Grants

Warrant #000890 2/24/09 \$ 40,243.08

General Fund

Warrant #000892 3/6/09 \$1,730,844.61

Motion: Mr. Faria/Second: Mrs. Barbosa. Vote 5-0.

Mr. Barham responded to a written request from Mr. Bob Enos with questions regarding the restructuring of the administration offices.

Patti Streit, a parent and member of the EP SIT Team explained that the Superintendent did attend one of the SIT Meeting; it is important to bring the high school issues to the public as it is a very big community issue; the building is very significant to the community. She asked for clarification regarding the May 1st deadline for submission

Val Lawson – Wood Hollow Lane – asked for clarification of the actual policy on reading of questions. There were numerous emails asking School Committee members to address it in this forum. She questioned information mentioned at a meeting as to who was recommended and not eligible and the cost to the city for that.

David Nelson – Seaward Drive watched programs being cut which would have benefited students and the city such as Talent Development and other programs; the School Committee is responsible for the integrity of programs; EP is under the sword. He read a letter regarding being placed in this predicament; he asked what the real priorities are?

Tom Riley – Pawtucket Avenue – concerned as a taxpayer about a situation at Whiteknact School; he was not satisfied with answers regarding students who were given more time to complete an exam

and some who received prompting; why was this allowed to happen and what has been done for this to not happen again –a report needs to be made to public; no severe action on part of School Committee.

Tony Gouveia – asked for clarification regarding public comment regarding questions at the end of the meeting, will questions be answered?

Mr. Kinder advised that anyone can ask any questions, but the School Committee does not have to answer them.

Mr. Gouveia wanted to know what the public can do or not do; this is not clear; he has been coming to meetings for years, but is not sure about this. At the next meeting, legal and School Committee need to look at the policy so the audience knows what it's about.

Mrs. Barbosa asked to speak as a parent; Mr. Kinder advised that if the matter is not on the agenda, it should not be discussed.

Roberta Brady – Read Street, asked questions regarding the comment policy and how residents, taxpayers should get answers to questions, when some are answered and some are not. She was horrified that residents and taxpayers cannot get up and ask questions; she has attended meetings for years, and the public has never been treated this way.

Priscilla Souza – taxpayer and teacher – Mr. Riley should make an appointment to observe teachers and kids.

Chris Barbosa – has three children in Whiteknact and his son was given extra time on the test two days after the test; his daughter had a perfect score except reading comprehension; he finds it odd that no one is saying that this was cheating;. He was not taking away from the teachers, but he does not know where his child is at when the test says perfect. What was done so far was OK, but this should never happen again; tests are to find out where a child stands.

Crystal Monteiro – Grade 3 teacher said it is possible to have a perfect score; it has happened with other students before.

Mary Texeira – Silver Spring teacher not place for comment on this; the issue was investigated; the School Department did take corrective actions. She was not sure why there would a limit on questions. The School Committee needs to consider changing that; the School Committee presents information and there is no opportunity for questions; the portion of the meeting for direct questions about something on the agenda is needed.

Dee Rodrigues – Warren Avenue –in Mass, they teach to the test because of the MCAS; as a teacher at Martin Middle School; they teach according to the curriculum and not to the test.

A motion was made by Mr. Faria to adjourn at 8:45PM seconded by Mr. Santos. Vote 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Iannelli, Administrative Assistant

Shannon Barbosa, Clerk of the Committee