

## **Special Meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee**

**Tuesday, March 20, 2012, 5:30 PM**

**Jenks/JMW Complex for the Performing and Visual Arts Media Center**

**350 Division Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860**

**I Meeting will come to order**

**The Chairman, Mr. Tenreiro, called the meeting to order at 5:38 PM.**

**a. Roll call**

**Mr. Araujo-here; Ms. Bonollo-here; Mr. Coughlin-here; Mr. Noonan-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr. Spooner-here; Mr. Tenreiro-here**

**Also in attendance were Mrs. Deborah Cylke, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Kimberly Mercer, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum Instruction and Assessment; Ms. Patti DiCenso, Secondary School Performance Officer and Ms. Margaret Baker, Assistant Business Administrator.**

**b. Pledge of Allegiance**

**The Chairman led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**II Public Participation**

**Mr. Joseph Knight: Good evening Chairman Tenreiro, Members of the Committee, Superintendent Cylke and ladies and gentlemen. Please pardon my back. I'm here to talk about this committee's apparent disregard for the Open Meetings Act. In the past 15 months, there have been several OMA complaints filed as a result of their disregard with the OMA. At the last regular meeting, the committee moved into executive session to discuss and I quote, "Pawtucket Teachers Alliance Insurance Policy Coverage Change." As there had**

been no re-opening of the teachers' contract, the discussion was not contractual negotiation. The move to negotiation was clearly a move to avoid a public open discussion of the insurance coverage. At the end of the executive session, which was moved by the Chair to the end of the meeting, the only members of the public that remained were told that the committee voted six to one against the policy change. Those members who voted against the measure were not identified, nor were those members who voted for the measure identified. The public was denied both the chance to hear the discussion and the ability to know where our elected officials voted on the matter. Clearly a lack of governmental transparency. On Saturday, March 17, 2012, I overheard a discussion about this meeting and as the only member of the public I asked about the boundaries of the OMA. I was told that the notice was sufficient. I then researched the published requirements regarding the guides to open meetings from the Attorney General's Office and I found that there was a court decision that addressed what was considered proper notice for a meeting of governmental agencies. We sent copies of the OMA guides as well as copies of the language of *Graziano vs. Lottery Court Decision* which was available on the internet. Clearly stated was the position of the court that the commission chair in the *Graziano* matter had disregard for that public policy in the spirit or intent of the act. My question's clear. When will this committee start to act in a manner that is transparent and open to the public? Thank you.

Dr. David Morton: I would like to briefly address transformation and

our school department. I'm here because I love children. I for thirty something years have been waiting for an opportunity to see a plan or an opportunity for us to make some substantial changes in public education so that we can have an all child agenda. As painful as some of this change is for everybody concerned and we have lost, I think, two excellent principals due to the rules of the plan. I too believe that in some ways transformation is a blessing for the Pawtucket School Department. It is a real opportunity for us to review, plan and make some substantial changes to the way we operate to bring our faculty to a point of being excellent in the classroom and to give our children an education that they deserve. I would say in closing that I have been around for awhile. I've seen many school departments. I in all honestly believe that the Pawtucket Schools can become world class schools. We have the people, we have the desire and I think we have the expertise and leadership to do that. I salute you for taking on this responsibility and I have great hopes that it will turn out to be a tremendous opportunity for all of us.

Thank you.

### **III Discussion Item**

#### **a. Presentation of High School Transformation Plan**

**Mrs. Cylke:** I want to thank you for being here on short notice. It's important that we share this plan with the teachers and have the school committee know what our thoughts and plans are. We will go to Shea and the Tolman teachers will be there and we will share it with them. Then tomorrow from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM we will be at the Rhode Island Department of Education. Written documents will be in

**your homes before we submit it to RIDE.**

**Ron Beaupre added that he needs to bring a vote to his leadership per his legal counsel.**

**It doesn't have a direct impact on the non certified union.**

**I've asked RIDE for a 72 hour reprieve.**

**I spoke to Dr. Lusi in Providence who has several schools going through this process.**

**Tonight we want to go through an overview. The plan itself is very prescriptive. If the plan gets rejected, we don't get the SIG Grant.**

**We have costed it out and I want to thank Ms. Baker who helped.**

**Central Falls received \$1.2M when they applied. We're asking for \$1.7M in this plan, but if it is divided equally, we'll receive \$225,000.**

**PowerPoint:**

**-The Challenge in Context**

**The top line shows the top increase in state and local revenue. The bottom line shows Woonsocket at \$300. Pawtucket has gone from \$2,795 to \$3,100. The local revenue per student in 15 years has increased a total of \$400. Woonsocket is in worse shape.**

**Yes its \$400 more, but the real disparity is \$2,000. \$2,000 x 8,000 students is \$16M and we know what we can do with that.**

**-Components of the Plan**

**-Overview—we are required to get information from our stakeholders group; model school design; core requirements of protocols; the needs of the Shea students; the needs of the Tolman students.**

**We have a high poverty rate. The ELL students are a challenge. The special education population is a challenge. Most of our students live**

**in single parent households. There is chronic absenteeism.**

### **-Strategic Goals**

**Improve graduation rates; proficiency and school climate and culture.**

### **-Benchmarks for Success**

**These are what I call stretch goals. Create momentum and goals that can be reached.**

**Ms. DiCenso: There is a four year goal for improvement in small stretches in the plan but intervention for students at all schools.**

**Last year's numbers put us in transformation.**

**Mrs. Cylke: If the No Child Left Behind waivers are accepted we may be able to be taken off the list.**

### **-Governance**

**We got a Systems Manager idea from a recent visit to an Arizona school district. This person will be responsible to monitor attendance and student's failure and intervention.**

**Ms. Nordquist: Are you talking about hiring someone new and then putting it into the local budget?**

**Mrs. Cylke: Yes.**

**Ms. Nordquist: I noticed that the Deputy Superintendent is not in this. Does that mean she's not included?**

**Mrs. Cylke: No, she's in charge of curriculum.**

**There will be more engagement with parents. There will be home visits and we will address discipline and there will be a greater umbrella of support at the Alternative Learning Program to better meet their needs.**

### **-Freshman Facilitator**

**When a freshman meets five or six credits, we know we have a graduate. We want to get away from discipline and keeping the student out of the classroom.**

**-Teacher Leadership**

**Kim is rolling out the common core ELA standards.**

**-Advisory Facilitator**

**Technology Specialist this would be a teacher leader who is interested in technology. We are budgeting for every high school teacher to have a computer and a LCD projector and screen. They currently use Elmo's and smart boards just in math.**

**We'd like to have an ESL Facilitator at Shea. At Shea 22% are ESL; over 5% at the state average.**

**We'd like to hire a Student Support Facilitator; a Systems Manager and Freshmen Team Leaders. These leaders would be in charge of groups of 75 students broken down in English, math, science and reading and writing.**

**Ms. Nordquist: Will you still have department chairs? How will you break it up?**

**Mrs. Cylke: They are freshmen and needs a lot of structure. There will be parent nights.**

**Mrs. Nordquist: The Team Leaders will coordinate this?**

**Mrs. Cylke: It helps to stay focused and work with the facilitator. When in Sunnyside, Arizona they had successful graduation rates. Students had to meet the 4 A's; they had to have 95% attendance; a positive attitude; they had to be ready to learn and evidence that they were in a school activity. You have a higher chance of graduating on**

time. If you met the 4 A's, you get a computer. When computers went home, now you are engaged with the families. Dan Sullivan went with us so now we can reach out to the business community.

**-Targets in Math, Reading and Writing**

**-Culture and Climate**

**Survey Works**

**Staffing and Support Agreements**

We scaled this on Brockton. Their district is very similar to ours. We sent some of our staff there to see what they did and every teacher there has made commitment to teacher on ELA common core standards.

The schedule change will eliminate early release on Wednesday and will gain 36 hours of instructional time.

**Ms. Nordquist: What is the length of advisory time?**

**Ms. DiCenso: 70 minutes every three days.**

**-Family and Community Outreach**

**-Performance Management**

**- I3 innovation. Teacher evaluation tool meets the protocols for interventions guidelines. The RIDE Administrative evaluation tool meets the protocols for interventions guidelines. We were able to change Lynn Cristino's job description and federally fund it. She is the teacher of this professional development and we can have her come back at another time to explain it in more detail.**

**-Strategic Budgeting**

**There is the Transformation Officer to lead the transformation process**

**Kim has informed me there has been a constant change in scheduling. We cut 13 positions last year but we want to add those back. We need extra people to implement the plan.**

**-Strategic Budget**

**The budget is simply ELA materials, algebra I supplemental books, College Learning Culture and SAT tests.**

**Ms. Nordquist: If you qualify for free or reduced lunch, you can get the PSAT's and SAT's at a reduced rate.**

**Mrs. Cylke: Read 180 has been in the system for 12 years.**

**So that's an overview and as I stated earlier, Patti and I will be at RIDE tomorrow 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. There won't be any surprises, just more detail.**

**Ms. Nordquist: I'm surprised we didn't see anything about the principals going to training in New York City.**

**Mrs. Cylke: One thing in transformation is there is money in Race to the Top for leadership. RIDE has teamed up with the New York Leadership Academy and we have to identify two administrators and it's to grow our own. \$600,000 is to be used for that.**

**Ms. Nordquist: Will there be an increase in the salaries from the local budget? What is the exact number? What is the range?**

**Mrs. Cylke: I met with the Pawtucket Administrator's Association and it's about \$10,000 a year more. We shared this information with Dr. Ash and we don't want Pawtucket principals paid less. We want to attract good, competitive people and offer a good reasonable salary. We want to be competitive in Pawtucket.**

**Ms. Nordquist: The items in this plan you are hoping to get from this**

grant. In this last strategic budget in, are you saying you want to take whatever you can from the local budget?

**Mrs. Cylke:** This is the voice of the stakeholders, central office, teachers of what it is going to take to meet the needs of to get the schools out of transformation. Do I believe we are going to get millions? No. But my hope is this. Providence is in their second year, so I am hopeful we can get more or at least \$400,000. If we have to make some cuts, I'm hopeful they will be informed ones.

**Ms. DiCenso:** We are making a plan that will be negotiated. They expect us to go beyond the status quo to change these two schools. Why would we put this in the plan? These are very prescriptive. They are already decided. It's clearly decided already in the model. We will allow to work within the model. This is very serious and we have specific guidelines and goals to be met to move forward with the grant.

**Mr. Araujo:** Whatever grant monies are given, will that stabilize over the next year?

**Mrs. Cylke:** No. It's over the next three years.

Ultimately this is about results. It's about our reading and math scores going up. I look forward to meeting with the teachers.

I think as a committee we need to put stability at the top of the priority list. There are tough decisions that will have to be made. The equity formula has to be addressed.

The middle schools have to be addressed to move our kids forward.

There is a \$9M debt in the City of Pawtucket.

**Mr. Tenreiro:** I believe the committee in the governance workshops

feels the sense of urgency to reach gaps and certainly going to put policy together to get this together. Our community is stressed already. ELA curriculum materials are things other communities already have. I want to thank Patti DiCenso, Ron Beaupre, Frank Flynn and Debbie. Providence actually hired people to write these grants. Hopefully, we'll find stability with this.

We'll do a budget hearing before the regular meeting in April.

Mrs. Cylke: I want to thank everyone for coming out tonight.

#### **IV Adjournment**

Mr. Noonan moved to adjourn. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Voice vote carried all in favor.

The Chairman adjourned the special meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee on Tuesday, March 20, 2012 at 6:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk

**APPROVED April 10, 2012**