

# **Pawtucket School Committee Governance Work Session**

**Friday, March 16, 2012**

**5:00 PM – 8:00 PM School Administration Building, 2nd Floor  
Conference Room**

**286 Main Street, Pawtucket RI 02860**

**I Meeting will come to order**

**The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 5:40 PM.**

**a. Roll call**

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

**Ms. Bonollo and Mr. Spooner arrived at 5:40 PM.**

**Mr. Araujo and Ms. Nordquist were absent.**

**Also in attendance were Mrs. Deborah Cylke, Superintendent of  
Schools and Mr. Skip Jenkins, Center for Reform of School Systems.**

**b. Pledge of Allegiance**

**The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Chairman, Mr. Tenreiro.**

**II Public Participation**

**None**

**III Discussion Items**

**1. Core Beliefs and Commitments**

**2. Vision**

**3. Theory of Action**

**Note: This is a work session. Votes on any work will be taken at a  
further regular or special meeting.**

**Mr. Jenkins: Some of the things that we have accomplished:**

**The school board has three things to effect change:**

**1) Hiring the Superintendent is critical**

**2) Enacting Policy**

**3) Handle a \$100M budget**

**Ethics—how you treat each other, the public and the Superintendent.**

**What our children would learn; those beliefs of who we are.**

**Mrs. Cylke mentioned her mentor who is a 70 year old retired superintendent who has always told her if you are going to be anything at all times you have to be three things; be professional, be professional and be professional.**

**Sample commitments:**

**Reallocating resources—you walk in with your core beliefs and theory of action to every negotiation.**

**Mr. Jenkins: This is what we believe about kids and this is what we are going to carry out.**

**Mr. Tenreiro: The data shows certain sense of urgency. Ted Geiser, he was almost yelling at people. 2,000 people that were functionally illiterate, 1,000 had diplomas.**

**Mr. Cylke: Dr. Fuller and Dr. Friedman are saying we have been such a great country “thinking small and carrying such a great ego.”**

**Mr. Jenkins: Core Beliefs are separate from commitments**

**Mr. Noonan: “We will allocate resources in an equitable manner such that each student will reach his/her full potential.”**

**Mrs. Cylke: When you have a core belief or a mission statement we will improve educational outcomes in every school.**

**Mr. Tenreiro: Skip said each member is part of a board with a community group.**

**Mr. Spooner:** Why are we losing so many kids in secondary education? In 2nd grade I would go to the library every Wednesday and on this table we had to pick a book. But I remember there was a separate table for the advanced kids and we had to read the book and write a paper and turn it in the next week.

**Mr. Jenkins:** Teachers set expectations for kids. Kids are not expected to perform and it still happens.

### **3. Theory of Action**

**Mr. Jenkins:** It's not uncommon for boards to come to a consensus of a reform process until things come together.

**What will you do and learn?**

- **Learn what a Theory of Action is and why districts need a Theory of Action policy**
- **Assess your current district design to determine if you have an implicit Theory of Action**
- **Examine Theory of Action exemplars**
- **Reach consensus regarding a Theory of Action in your district**
- **Develop an action plan to draft your Theory of Action policy**

**What is a Theory of Action and why do you need one?**

**A theory of action is an overarching strategy designed to motivate people and bring about change.**

**Mr. Noonan:** I wouldn't know what to ask about a curricula.

**Mr. Jenkins:** Everything we do is based on this governance role model.

**Framework:**

**Who is taking the effort to make specific effort to make the change?**

**Mission is what you do set by the state government. All kids you are here to educate. What do we see in the future in the community?**

- **Benchmarks**
- **Vision**
- **Theory of Action**
- **Build your Strategic Plan**
- **Delegate to the Superintendent**
- **Annual Goal Objectives**

**Theory of Action in the business world**

**i.e., American Airlines took the turnaround time from one hour to 15 minutes. American Airlines changed the model of airline transformation.**

**Dell Computer:**

**Concept was we're going to build you a suit over the phone. We're not going to have an inventory and they had no retail sales. You call us and we will build your computer.**

**Mr. Jenkins: What kind of Theory of Action have we been using in this country? The One Best System developed in the 1920's.**

- **Industrial workers**
- **Skilled and unskilled workers**
- **One size fits all concept**
- **Kids grouped by age**
- **Only needed 8th grade education**
- **Those that didn't get it were weeded out in how far they got in public education in 20's, 30's, 40's and 50's**
- **Highly industrialized and manufacturing system**

**Do we need the same kind of student we needed then?**

**Do they need to make the same kind of living as their grandfather?**

**Back then you put kids in rows and teachers in the front and educated them.**

**Mr. Tenreiro: The weight of that is heavy. The historical tendency of school is heavy. Some of us went through it and in ways some of us are behind. (i.e., going to science class “work = force x distance.”) You still didn’t know what that meant until you had to. Teachers don’t want to explain death by PowerPoint.**

**Mrs. Cylke: A parent and kid moves into the district and the kid is behind and gets further behind and gets discouraged but we keep promoting even though he/she doesn’t understand. We have a lot of good kids that are falling through the cracks in math.**

**Mr. Jenkins: How do you go to work? In public education that skill set where knowledge is available is more critical and is all available. Kids don’t have the ability to know what is relevant. With NCLB the purpose of this system, our system was not created to take every student into this system.**

**We can’t compete in this world if 50% of our kids can’t succeed.**

**You’ve identified obstacles. How should we identify the school system?**

**Ms. Bonollo: We went from 6th grade with recess and engaging with friends to 7th grade and seven periods where we sat at a desk. We are no longer kids and there is no longer fun time in education.**

**Mr. Noonan: Kids demand to be active. They demand to see television.**

**Mr. Spooner:** I remember going to Cottage St. School. My teacher was Miss Lockwood. She broke us up into two groups and we played the “eraser game.” Whichever group won didn’t get any homework.

**Mr. Tenreiro:** We do have some good teachers.

**Mr. Noonan:** Is it hard teaching now with the attention span and more difficult to teach that student now?

**Mrs. Cylke:** I don’t think so. Doctors have to change. Dentists have to change. Technology has changed so much. We the humans have changed so much.

**At Brockton** the students are taught to sit, greet, shake hands and look you in the eye. The kids have to come out competent.

I think jobs today skills are taken away. Tech labs—kids are busy, they are doing work.

**Mr. Tenreiro:** Richard Elmore believes

- Quality of what we’re teaching (change the content)
- Quality of people teaching them (increase the knowledge and skill of the teachers)
- Engagement (alter the relationship of the student to the teacher and the content)

**Mrs. Cylke:** It reminds me of “17 reasons why football is better than high school.”

**Mr. Jenkins:**

**The Big Question:**

Are you satisfied with incremental improvements in the status quo of profoundly dissatisfied with the status quo and determined to change it as quickly as possible?

**Mr. Tenreiro: As an urban dissatisfied?**

**Mr. Jenkins: I come from a suburban community at best and this is great, but still not teaching 21st century skills they're just jazzed up. You are at advantage point. In five years you can have a different district.**

**Mrs. Cylke: It is my hope as a governance team we have a sense of urgency. I don't see anything in this plan to address math and science.**

**Mr. Noonan: I go home and this stuff is unacceptable to me. The graduation rate and test scores—it has to stop. We have to do something.**

**Mr. Jenkins: How do you think the public and respond to you if you speak with that much passion?**

**Mr. Tenreiro: The way it was going on in the past is not the way it is going on in your classroom. Why? It's about opening up your practice.**

**Mr. Coughlin: Let's talk about community. I thought we would have to call the police and no one showed up after it was announced about the Shea and Tolman intervention.**

**Mr. Spooner: We're a senior driven community. You never hear about the good things, only the bad things.**

**Mrs. Cylke: We went to Tucson. It was a bad area. Their Theory of Action was this; if we treat our parents as we engage them, they are often afraid and embarrassed to come forward because they are uneducated. They have a "parent academy" where the kids can earn computers so the teachers can communicate with them.**

**Mr. Noonan: Are we going to agree on a Theory of Action before you leave tomorrow?**

**Mr. Jenkins: Yes. There are plenty of reform ideas; smaller class size, summer school and charter schools. Those are individual small applications, but are not systematic.**

### **Comprehensive Theories of Action**

- Managed Instruction**
- Performance-based Empowerment**
- Managed Performance/Empowerment**
- Charter District**
- Diverse Provider District**

**All Broads Scholars have used this and are able to close the gap and improve student achievement. The Center for Reform School Systems (CRSS) was started with a Broad Scholar.**

### **The Big Question**

#### **Incremental Improvement**

- More resources—Salaries/Facilities/Technology and Programs**
- Effective Management—Outside Expertise/Command and Control**

#### **Fundamental Change**

- Managed Instruction (Division)—Managed Performance/Empowerment**
- Performance/Empowerment (Franchise)—Managed Performance/Empowerment/Charter District/Diverse Providers Subsidiary**

**Mrs. Cylke: The Pawtucket School Department is a “command and control.”**

**Mr. Jenkins:** When you are with the Fundamental Change, you are allowing the teachers to accept responsibility. But it's the board and the superintendent to accept responsibility to get them where they want to be.

**Mrs. Cylke:** Every teacher in this district is being told there is accountability. If our scores are poor in math and writing what resources are we providing to help them?

**Mr. Noonan:** I want to come out of this with a Theory of Change and this board to say that Debbie you can tell these teachers that this board wants to give you everything you need.

**Mrs. Cylke:** Who more than we can guide this?

**Mr. Tenreiro:** This becomes the backing of our sense of urgency.

**Mr. Jenkins:** All of this is critical, being able to provide cover for the Superintendent. It's your job to challenge the Superintendent in appropriate way when necessary.

**Case for Managed Instruction:**

- High student mobility, high teacher turnover, and low preparedness of education school graduates mean that districts must take control over the technical core of our business: academics.
- Curriculum, lesson plans, professional development, and assessments must be lightly controlled by headquarters.
- Principals can and should be instructional leaders.
- Central office needs to have more regular data about student performance in order to intervene with low performers and help transfer best practices.

**Mr. Jenkins:** Historically didn't mess around with what happened in

**classrooms. It was very tightly controlled hiring process and budget. Managing is controlled.**

**This works very well with high mobility.**

**Mrs. Cylke: Let's equate this to a franchise. (i.e., Seven Eleven on the west coast.)**

**Mr. Jenkins: The idea of managed instruction are all controlled and aligned with learning strategies.**

**Mrs. Cylke: Our data system is not good. Alan uses a NEWA and it has MAP (measure of academic progress). We do have the Dibel test for grades kindergarten through grades three. We have NECAP and Read 180.**

**We don't have a policy that says you have to attend summer school. Let's have a fun summer program.**

### **Core Elements of Managed Instruction**

- District-wide content and performance standards**
- District-wide curriculum for every grade, subject, and course**
- Coherent, aligned, and detailed curriculum down to individual lesson plans, teaching materials and sample assessments**
- Professional development for district curriculum**
- Continuous evaluation of classroom performance**
- Frequent formative assessments**
- Comprehensive student information management systems**

**Mr. Jenkins: One thing that changed my mind is we started seeing ourselves as not the most important. The most important is the magic of learning in the classroom. Facilitate learning in the classroom if there was a problem. It changed the way we talked.**

**Mrs. Cylke: My theory of action is this school is on a short leash with little decision making. This school, wow, level of empowerment given a little direction emerges focused on those who need the most help. The fact that you need to be more managed, you have to earn your freedom.**

**You can't give freedom to people who don't know what they are doing.**

#### **IV Adjournment**

**Mr. Coughlin moved to adjourn. Mr. Noonan seconded.**

**Voice vote carried all in favor.**

**The Chairman adjourned the Pawtucket School Committee work session of Friday, March 16, 2012 at 8:10 PM.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Clerk**

**APPROVED 5/15/12**