

# **PAWTUCKET SCHOOL COMMITTEE WORK SESSION/ORIENTATION**

**Saturday, January 17, 2015**

**8:00 AM – 12:00 PM School Administration Building 2nd Floor  
Conference Room**

**286 Main Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860**

## **Minutes**

### **I. Meeting will come to order**

**The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, called the meeting to order at 8:15 AM.**

#### **a. Roll Call**

**Ms. Bonollo-here; Mr. Charbonneau-here; Ms. Dube-here; Ms. Grant-here; Mr. Knight-here; Ms. McQuade-here; Mr. Araujo—here**

**Also in attendance were Mrs. DiCenso, Superintendent of Schools; Mrs. Lee Rabbitt, Assistant Superintendent; Ms. Kathleen Suriani, Assistant Superintendent; Ms. Melissa Devine, Chief Financial Officer; Mr. Hersh Cristino, Chief Information and Innovation Officer; Ms. Jennifer Carney, Title II Coordinator and Legal Counsel, Mr. Jon Anderson.**

#### **b. Pledge of Allegiance**

**The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.**

### **II. Public Participation**

**Comments from the public are invited at this time. Citizens wishing to speak should sign in with the Committee Chair before speaking.**

**The Committee is precluded from discussing or acting on items raised by Public Comment which are not already on the agenda. Public comment will be included in the minutes of the meeting.**

**None**

### **III. Discussion Items**

**8:00 AM**

- Refreshments and Introduction to Chromebook**

**Mr. Cristino distributed Chromebooks to the Committee Members and informed them that an account had been created for them and each member was asked to sign in to the psdri.net site. Email had been disabled at this time. The Chromebook and email accounts were set up entirely for the purpose of use by the School Committee and for the School Committee. In the google drive, a shared document with the Superintendent was created. This will be used in lieu of paper.**

**Ms. Dube inquired about the battery life and Mr. Cristino informed the Members it has eight hours fully charged.**

**Mr. Cristino further commented that what is loaded on the Chromebook is a web browser. It's a solid state that uses little energy, therefore, it has a long battery life. The standard battery life is eight hours. The lower left corner where there is a question mark (?) will provide a lot of information.**

**The Members were encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Chromebook.**

**In order to create a file, you would click on the create button which will provide options. Crowd sourcing allows everyone to type and see what everyone else is typing. The Superintendent requested this feature be disabled.**

**Mr. Cristino commented that is unable to disable this feature.**

**Mr. Charbonneau commented that you run the risk of violating the Open Meetings Act (OMA) with a rolling quorum.**

**Mr. Araujo commented that other districts use this system so we will have to see what other mechanisms can be put in place.**

**Mr. Cristino further commented that document revision is under file and showed an example of how to erase. In order to control document sharing there are other things to note.**

**Ms. Dube: At the OMA summit they said you cold share documents, but you cannot disburse.**

**Mr. Araujo commented that maybe at their next meeting they could have a policy in place that they can share but not discuss on**

**Chromebook.**

**Mr. Cristino commented that the Superintendent has shared documents, but they are PDF's because they are not documents you're looking to change.**

**Ms. Dube commented that the other thing you can use this for is scheduling and within two hours everyone will know.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: I just see flags all over this even though I know other districts use it.**

**Ms. Bonollo: The City uses Clerk Based program.**

**Mr. Knight: Everything loaded is loaded to the Pawtucket School Department (PSD) no matter what we do, therefore, personal stuff should not be done.**

**Mr. Cristino: It's really Google.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: The documents we share are ours. If they use their own Gmail account, we won't see those.**

**Mr. Cristino: Correct, that's why I shut off email on these.**

**Mr. McKnight: If we use our own email and get infected and use this,**

**don't I affect the Department?**

**Mr. Cristino: This is Google and they will do a much better job than the School Department ever could. The type of files you are creating are word files.**

**Mr. Knight: If I use my Gmail account, I'm exposing that department.**

**Mr. Cristino: I think Mr. Anderson would be the better person to answer that.**

**Mr. McKnight: Would you support a separate account?**

**Mr. Cristino: Yes.**

**Ms. Bonollo: Are these staying or can we take them home?**

**Mrs. DiCenso: We've talked to Mr. Anderson about this. Mr. Cristino has talked to Mr. Anderson about this. We're fine with you taking them home, however, we want to make sure all the bugs are worked out. If you take them home, we will not be able to set them up for you.**

**Ms. Bonollo: Can I take my own notes and have another screen open at the same time?**

**Mr. Cristino: Again you have to protect yourselves.**

**Ms. Dube: Literally this is just hardware, it's all in a cloud. Regardless, everything in here is in the cloud. I just opened it up, you can easily keep meeting notes.**

**All my documents at home are in the cloud anyway. Google supports them.**

**Mr. Cristino: I am trying very deliberately to show you how to use the device and defer all legal questions to Mr. Anderson. As far as taking notes, it could be better answered by Mr. Anderson. We're viewing off the Chromebook.**

**Mr. Araujo: I'm concerned about who is going to transport these.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: We would take them from the cart at Jenks.**

**Mr. Araujo: We can talk about these at the next meeting.**

**Mr. Cristino: That account is up in the cloud.**

**Mr. Araujo: I can access this account from home?**

**Mr. Cristino: Yes.**

**You have to think what kind of documents are going up there. If you're creating files for yourself that would be something you would want to create in your own Gmail account. These are set up to access the files I set up for you.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: Do each one of these have their own identification or IP address?**

**Mr. Cristino: I did assign a number to them.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: Would we be able to track who put up a document?**

**Mr. Cristino: No.**

**Mr. Araujo: I emailed individuals not collectively.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: We wanted to go paperless and that is the reason for this.**

**Mr. Araujo: I think it's a good idea to keep them at the schools but keep them out of children's hands if they are going to contain confidential information.**

**Mr. Cristino: It doesn't matter which one you use because the information is in the cloud. Be sure to log off.**

**Ms. Dube: When you put information in a Google document, it automatically saves, you don't have to save.**

**8:30 AM – 9:15 AM**

- District Budget Process**

**Mrs. DiCenso: Our reality is depending on federal funds. When they cut three percent (3%) of federal funds that is a lot for us.**

**PowerPoint Presentation is displayed.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: Coz robotics are not part of it. With the state aid and funding formula we have to be mindful of it. We need to have conversations over why this is going to happen to us. We heavily rely on federal dollars. That's how we roll here.**

**Unrestricted fund:**

**We're lower than most districts but you can see that. The bulk of the budget is for salary and benefits. Most of ours is for the kindergarten and reading teachers and that's why we are limited to what we can use it for.**

**We can be balanced today but not tomorrow and they could put us in a deficit.**

**Ms. Dube:** Out of the district regular education is that our charter schools?

**Mrs. DiCenso:** Yes and vocational. If you look at that number, we have to compete with the charters and our staff is telling kids to go to Davies. We monitor the sasaid numbers which we never did before. We are closely monitoring this and our money.

**Mr. Charbonneau:** Has that been the trajectory? Each number steadily increases?

**Ms. Devine:** Yes.

**Mr. Araujo:** Blackstone Valley Prep was unable to accept Providence students but are able to now.

**Mr. Knight:** How much per student is going out to charter schools?

**Mrs. DiCenso:** \$11,000 and change.

**Ms. Devine:** The state schools have a funding formula. We're paying approximately \$2,700 per year per student.

**Mr. Knight:** If a student is going here, we would receive \$11,000 plus; but what about charters? A committee was formed at the house to

**change the whole thing again.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: I've already talked to people at the State House who are in leadership roles. I think Joe makes a really good point. When we look at that number it's a really big number. The International Charter School and the Board of Regents voted again to increase enrollment which is a huge impact to us.**

**Ms. Bonollo: How many do we have going out? We can't have a vocational school because we built Davies.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: I think they are leaving because we have a reputation that we're not good.**

**Ms. McQuade: The perception is at the middle school level; it's not good.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: The numbers drop at the high school level.**

**Ms. Dube: The 5% includes special education teachers, occupational therapists, speech pathologists, etc.**

**Ms. Devine: No, it includes services and supplies.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: If you look at the salaries and benefits, this is how we work most title funds. Everything we do is with what we have to**

**move around. We can't move salaries and benefits. We have to have certain programs.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: Building maintenance and transportation; is that how it is reported out?**

**Ms. Devine: It's separate in the individual budget even though it's typically grouped together.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: These programs i.e. Coz are solely grant driven. Programs can go away. Ms. Parella has rolling grants. It's restrictive and we can't move money around.**

**This is just a breakdown in Title funding.**

**Ms. Suriani: It's millions of dollars and next year we're looking to move \$1M more. We have to have 34 teachers.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: Kindergarten is a must have for your district.**

**Ms. Bonollo: Before all day kindergarten, it was originally in the regular budget.**

**Ms. Suriani: The half day mandate was in the federal budget. In three years we will be mandated to have all day kindergarten.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: We're fortunate to have Title money.**

**Mr. Knight: So it's \$1M extra or \$500,000.00 extra? Is it an additional \$1M or instead \$500,000.00 because we are paying that?**

**Ms. Devine: We're picking up 60% in the regular budget and 40% in Title. I don't know the total value.**

**Mr. Knight: Right now we're paying 60% of kindergarten. In the next few years we have to pick up another 40%? Is it a full million or \$400,000.00?**

**Ms. Devine: I don't know the value.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: Melissa, could you do a spreadsheet on this. Let's do a snap shot.**

**We were fortunate to pick up an additional \$221,000.00. We are using it on elementary math to provide professional development for them to deliver common core math.**

**We received it on December 23rd.**

**21st Century Grant is competitive. The School Improvement Grant (SIG), \$645,000.00 is in its final year. This is going away.**

**I eliminated two (2) assistant principals last year in preparation of this.**

**Read 180 at the high schools is not working. I'm working on re-purposing those funds. The Perkins Grant is a small amount. The bulk, \$175,000.00, goes to JMW. The rest goes to the high schools.**

- Overview of District Administrative Organization**

**Mrs. DiCenso: We have 977 Employees. Most of the capital in the Administration Building which is where it should be. We have eliminated several positions at the Administration Building and re-purposed and put those coordinators back in the schools where they should be. Student support equals guidance counselors, social workers, nursing staff and 56 support staff.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: The 175 non certified staff is custodians?**

**Mrs. DiCenso: Support is clerks at the schools and custodians.**

**Mr. Knight: Nurses are certified.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: Yes, so are the occupational therapists, speech pathologists, etc. We made ourselves compliant with the kids. We have such an increase in support needed for the kids.**

**Mr. Knight: Why are the nurses considered support staff when they are certified teachers?**

**Mrs. DiCenso: They do classes and so do guidance counselors.**

**Ms. Devine: These are all our certified teachers.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: I want you to see we're not overstaffed in support staff.**

**Ms. Bonollo: Once we get a list of employees, it will give the information to us.**

**Ms. Grant: The support staff; does that include special education teachers?**

**Mrs. DiCenso: They are included under certified teachers.**

**Ms. Parella has nine people in COZ, outside people running that program. We moved them because we needed the classroom space.**

**Mr. Araujo: This program is such an integral part of this district.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: I think it's important that we dial down deeper. The aides and custodians at 175 seemed high to me until you**

**explained it to me. It's really not a high number.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: Sometimes a student needs a teacher aide and we have students who require an aide due to the need of a student. We usually find this out when in a core meeting.**

**Mr. Araujo: Also some schools have more than one clerk.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: I think it's important that the public needs to know that you are working with such little support on such a small budget.**

**Ms. Bonollo: Include everybody on an excel spread sheet so we can sort how we want.**

**Ms. Devine: It's a picture in time. I've already prepared the list.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: One of the things we flagged is we were adding aides as substitutes. When you do this there is no monetary value assigned. They were coming out of line that didn't exist.**

**Ms. Devine: With a whole new administrative staff we had to deal with what was going on because it was not being reported to the business office staff. We are reaching out to staff.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: We're inspired on how to re-purpose money. We put in intervention for math. We're the only district to try a bilingual**

**program. We would not be adding staff but re-purposing staff. We're working with the International Charter School and they will be partnering with us and I'm hoping to get the bulk of money from the Rhode Island Foundation.**

**Ms. McQuade: In which school year?**

**Mrs. DiCenso: Toby Shepard would like us to get it in place for September, but it's contingent on funding.**

**We have a principal we have in mind who has worked in a dual language system in Canada. Children will be chosen by lottery and we will ask parents to enlist who are interested.**

**We would like to see at the second grade levels computers one-to-one with students. We are having Mr. Cristino costing it out right now. We are really hoping to make that happen. Right now we're preparing budget to adjust but right now we are looking for a reduction. The last three years we have had a three percent (3%) increase in this budget (transformation).**

**I'm concerned about overtime in the Maintenance Department and custodians. But we have one plumber for sixteen schools. The overtime could pay for another plumber. We have the raises that have to be rolled out for the teachers and administrators. We are preparing this budget for that year. Every day is a different day in the budget.**

**Ms. Devine:** We're trying to let you know and we're trying to be creative.

**Mrs. DiCenso:** We are not happy with Read 180 at the middle schools. It's not having the impact it should.

### **Organizational Chart**

People didn't understand their roles. The chart was explained and it was noted that we all interface with one another.

**Mr. Knight:** Are you going to show the human resource person?

**Mrs. DiCenso:** Yes, she will be added and directly reports to me and the Mayor.

**Mr. Araujo:** Usually members request information from the Superintendent. Who will gather the information?

**Mr. Knight:** Thank you for the influx of information. I called Terri because I know Dianna was busy.

**Mrs. DiCenso:** I'm new and had to look back to when Superintendent Cylke and Ms. Mercer were here. So we went back and looked in files and what I found was it was an idea.

**Mr. Knight:** I didn't mean for you to go on a search. What would be the best way to communicate?

**Mrs. DiCenso:** Contact Dianna.

**Mr. Araujo:** I would forward to Chair and they would farm it out.

**Mr. Knight:** Our people should be able to go to one person. Its information I think everyone should be entitled to.

**Mr. Charbonneau:** The fear is that we bog people down with tracking down information in the grand scheme of things. Does Dianna spend half her day tracking information that may not be germane? I think the last thing as a committee member is we shouldn't be bogging down people.

**Mr. Araujo:** I've seen some members ask questions and I've seen Dianna spend hours on projects of even half a week to find this.

**Mr. Charbonneau:** What is the answer for that?

**Mr. Anderson:** If someone asks for information it's a matter of public record. You have access. If you are asking to generate a report, as a body, you should be taking a vote. If Mr. Knight wants documents relative to St. Leo's that exist, he is entitled to them. But if he asks

**you to generate an engineering document, you don't have that right. If it already exists, you have that right.**

**Ms. Bonollo: Mr. Cristino is ours only 50%, but it is shared.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: Mr. Cristino's salary is in our budget but the technicians are in the City budget but work out of our building and he is responsible 100% to deliver on technology. He's doing a lot of upgrades and preparing for PARCC.**

**We will also be sharing the human resource person.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: Has a determination been made in her salary?**

**Mrs. DiCenso: It is 54%.**

**Mr. Araujo: We will have a human resource director.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: We are hoping to get this all pulled together.**

**9:15 AM – 10:00 AM**

**Legal Review**

**• Open Meeting Act and State Ethics**

**Mr. Anderson: I am here today to speak to you about the Open Meetings Act (OMA) and the State Ethics Code.**

**The OMA applies to School Committees:**

**Basically the common sense approach is the quorum of the committee would be four of seven and two of three. So be careful. It has to be posted on the Secretary of State (SOS) website and two (2) public buildings. The problem comes up when people inadvertently do it and where I see it the most is in emails. A rolling quorum is when one member sends another member an email and that member sends it to another and that member sends it to another.**

**When the Superintendent puts do not reply all, it is because she doesn't want to start a rolling quorum.**

**Mr. Knight: The Superintendent is a member of the School Committee?**

**Mr. Anderson: No, the Superintendent is not.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: Rolling, does it matter if it is the original email?**

**Mr. Anderson: It's subject driven. The Committee conducts business in public, that's why it's open. My concern is that you have created a lot of subcommittees and it's easier for you to get going on a subcommittee and that's against the law.**

**Ms. Dube: The subcommittee sends one email to all three members to see if they're available.**

**Mr. Anderson: You can send out an email for scheduling.**

**Ms. Dube: The other thing is information and/or research.**

**Mr. Anderson: The reason we are saying do not apply to all is that the Superintendent gets excited about it. She's doing it to keep you out of trouble.**

**Ms. Bonollo: Can we communicate through Google docs?**

**Mr. Anderson: No. A policy has been put up on Google docs and Ms. Bonollo wants to change the fifth paragraph. Mr. Araujo says I am going to change the fourth paragraph. The answer is no.**

**Ms. McQuade: If I say here is a great article and suggest reading it, is that okay?**

**Mr. Anderson: That's information and it is okay, just don't discuss it.**

**You cannot communicate remotely unless approved by the disability counsel.**

**It is the media who has said no.**

**Ms. Dube: If this was an individual's suggestion, could we sit as a subcommittee and share?**

**Mr. Anderson: If advertised properly, you can use Google docs to revise at meetings.**

**Mr. Knight: This Committee in the past has not done a good job. If we use email address, if our docs are being saved by the cloud, do we have to publish that?**

**Mr. Anderson: Under the Access to Public Records Act (APRA), no your documents are not protected under the APRA act.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: We're having them create private accounts on psdri.**

## **State Ethics Law**

**Mr. Anderson: I am not your personal lawyer. I represent the body of a whole. If you need personal ethics advice, the Ethics Board has a great advisory board. i.e. if your wife is a secretary and we are negotiating a non-certified contract, you cannot participate in negotiations.**

**Mr. Knight: My wife is a teacher. I cannot participate in negotiations**

of a teacher contract because I could benefit. When it comes time when there is a tentative agreement, I can vote. Don't use the same opinion all the time. Get your own opinion every time.

**Mr. Anderson:** Absolutely. Mr. Knight indicated he would benefit. Mr. Knight is responsible for himself and his family as well. His wife benefits. The fact that he could potentially get it is why he cannot participate in negotiations. A class exemption is we are going to increase the budget. Most of you have kids in the district but there are 9,000 other kids who are going to benefit too. Joe can't vote on negotiations. You have to think about your family, not just yourself.

When I was on the Committee, the law firm I work for has lots of clients so I would get the list of bidders and make sure they were not clients of the law firm. If they were, I would recuse.

**Mr. Knight:** Don't do it on the phone, do it in writing.

**Mr. Anderson:** Mr. Knight makes a good point.

**Mr. Knight:** Get your own opinion ahead of time. Don't wait until the day before.

**Mr. Anderson:** It's not a violation of the OMA to go to a gathering, but if you talk about business, then you violate the OMA.

**Ms. Dube:** You mentioned subcommittees. I am on the Special Education subcommittee, can I send an email to Ms. Grant asking a question about St. Leo's?

**Mr. Anderson:** Absolutely.

**Ms. Dube:** Just not special education?

**Mr. Anderson:** Correct. But if Ms. Grant then decides to send your email to Ms. Bonollo, she has communicated to two people.

**Ms. McQuade:** I have a Masters in Special Education and Ms. Grant's daughter is in special education and our kids have play dates.

**Mr. Anderson:** Unless you raise an issue on special education while your children are on play dates, you will run into a problem. Your role is a policy making role. You set policy that applies to all students.

**Mr. Knight:** Essentially you represent the School Committee. We hire counsel based on policy?

**Mr. Anderson:** The School Department is an inanimate object. They act through you. You set policy and the Superintendent carries it out.

Title 16 specifies certain obligations go to the School Committee and Superintendent, i.e. hiring. The Superintendent is in charge of the

hiring process until such time she recommends to the School Committee. Once it has been presented, it is up to you to ask a question if this person is best for this position. You don't get to counter the nomination and recommend someone else.

**Mr. Knight:** You're hired by the School Committee. We're allowed to hire by law. We have another situation coming up here where you have to hire someone else.

**Mr. Anderson:** In a discipline hearing I can't wear two hats. I cannot advise you when acting as the prosecutor. I can't be the same guy who advises the Superintendent to fire the person.

**Mr. Charbonneau:** What happens when you have a position that puts us in an adversarial position?

**Mr. Anderson:** When the Superintendent's contract came up, I worked with Mr. Araujo and Mr. Spooner and Mrs. DiCenso was advised to have her personal attorney look over the contract.

**Mr. Charbonneau:** How long do you keep minutes?

**Mr. Anderson:** Permanently.

**Ms. Bonollo:** Sealed minutes are sealed unless requested to be unsealed by the sitting members.

- **Expense Reimbursement Procedures**

**Mr. Anderson:** If the board want to send you to a conference, they should vote on it. All we are trying to do is make it a policy for everyone.

**10:00 AM – 11:00 AM**

**Chairman**

- **Review of Parliamentary Procedure-Sturgis**

**The Chairman distributed documents at this time.**

**One is a “cheat” sheet for the Parliamentary Procedure-Sturgis. Chairman Araujo commented that this was his biggest hurdle as well as a learning environment.**

**Ms. Dube:** I read the book and it said something about a motion then discussions are made before a vote.

**Mr. Anderson:** A good example is the Potter Burns Ceilings.

- **Board Members Requirements**

**Mr. Araujo:** There is a law that requires six (6) hours of professional development. I’m a big advocate of it. It builds you professionally.

**Ms. Bonollo:** If you have a professional development like this, you could ask for credit as well.

**Mr. Araujo:** I was not aware of that. I know you cannot bank them.

**Ms. Grant:** You meet so many different people when we went to the Attorney General's Summit. It was nice to meet so many people.

**Ms. Bonollo:** Most of the functions are on the Rhode Island Association of School Committee's (RIASC) website.

**Mr. Knight:** My suggestion would be anyone who wishes to be in a position to be trained should be able to say they gave professional development.

**Ms. McQuade:** Do you have to keep track?

**Mr. Araujo:** RIASC does it for you.

- **Standards of Professional Practice and Policy**

**Ms. Dube:** It says orientation will occur within two weeks. Two weeks of what?

**Mr. Araujo:** After taking office.

**Mr. Anderson: It doesn't matter, I would leave it vague.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: I think under reimbursement there should include without gifts. What if you receive a gift?**

**Mr. Anderson: That is included in the Ethics Law. You cannot accept a gift of more than \$25.00.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: It doesn't need to be added because it is already State law?**

**Mr. Knight: Should that also include services?**

**Mr. Anderson: If someone asks me to do their will, I am going to say no.**

**Ms. Grant: The Hassenfeld Institute allowed us to stay overnight. Would that count?**

**Mr. Anderson: Interesting question. You may want to list that in your report. It's \$25.00 per vendor, per calendar year. It's when an individual vendor goes over \$25.00.**

- **Annual calendar and upcoming events**

**Mr. Araujo:** The annual calendar has already been discussed and put up.

**Mr. Knight:** What about work sessions or public hearings?

**Mr. Araujo:** Work sessions are different. They are just for discussion.

- **Subcommittees/Work Sessions**

**Mr. Araujo:** Subcommittees—we have to post 48 hours before and it is up to the Chair to schedule a meeting. It is not necessary to meet every month. You can always reach out to me and Mrs. DiCenso.

If you have any questions, please reach out. They are generally held here.

**Ms. Dube:** Is it initiated by the Committee as a whole or would the subcommittee be the leaders?

**Mr. Araujo:** The subcommittee can bring to the full committee.

**Ms. Dube:** Or do they work autonomy?

**Mrs. DiCenso:** Mrs. Rabbitt and Mr. Wall will be assigned to the Special Education Committee. You can't refer complaint to the

**subcommittee.**

**Ms. Dube: I understand the St. Leo's subcommittee. What is the objective of the subcommittees? Is it to set policy or look at other issues?**

**Mr. Araujo: It's like the City Council. They will make a recommendation to the School Committee it's overseeing and reporting back.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: It's more of an event driven not a fishing expedition.**

**Mr. Araujo: Facilities for example. The heating system is really starting to fail, we have to bring that to the whole Committee.**

**Mr. Knight: Facilities, I agree when they meet we have to do this. The other thing is the finance committee.**

**Ms. Bonollo: I would suggest you meet and find out what the processes are. It would be nice to know what is going on. Wellness is function driven. Eating healthy on a budget. We're going to do getting healthy in Pawtucket.**

**Ms. Dube: I feel like we are running into management or micro management. It seems like the subcommittee is starting to command**

**events when they should be driven.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: I'm a little worried and confused about all these subcommittees.**

**Ms. Suriani: Wellness is necessary by law. We had an out of date wellness policy.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: They evolved by need. Facilities will be swallowed up by the bond. i.e. we over ruled not spending money on Winters and pulled the money out because we were raising the building but not for ten years, so we had to put that money back in. Finance is clear. Level of detail is clear. A subcommittee is a good place to start although special education gets confusing for me too.**

**Mr. Anderson: I think it is better if you're project driven so there are no surprises waiting.**

**The committee says property tax is not fair in the City of Pawtucket so we look at that.**

**Mr. Knight: I have concerns when committee has a function to do although given the task to make a recommendation they have to bring that back to the Committee.**

**Ms. Grant: Can they overlap? We have this bond project coming up.**

**There's hope there would be accessibility.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: That's a great example for a project.**

**Mr. Anderson: Every five years the State comes in and does a visit. They may talk about accessibility and record keeping.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: They're coming in April.**

**Mr. Anderson: Everyone on the Committee knows we've asked them to look at that particular report.**

**Ms. Dube: It seems to me it makes more sense before we start asking, we move that policy committee reviews policy to make sure it's up to date. I'd be more comfortable to know what we're doing. I work better under objectives.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: When they come in they report on how our students are serviced.**

**Ms. McQuade: Have a place for the subcommittee to report out on the monthly agenda.**

**Mr. Araujo: That's a great idea. That would be a great way of doing it. When you put together an agenda they are all vetted by legal counsel.**

**Mr. Anderson: If there is a quorum of the School Committee, you have to post it.**

**The City Council and School Department have to meet to discuss the budget 90 days in advance. Pawtucket is due on June 30th. You have to post if four members are talking about school department related matters.**

**If conducting a subcommittee meeting and one other member shows up, it's a violation of the OMA.**

**Mr. Charbonneau: There is a danger in having too many meetings.**

**Mr. Anderson: I represent one board that was always on the front page of the paper. They no longer have subcommittees.**

**Mr. Knight: It is the objective of the public elected officials to attend public meetings.**

**Mr. Anderson: I have to advise.**

**Mr. Araujo: We can dig into it deeper. I get what both are saying.**

**Mr. Knight: Mr. Anderson, quite frankly, that's your job to represent us.**

**Mr. Anderson:** I agree but I would rather not have to defend you on an OMA with the Attorney General's Office. I had to file a sworn affidavit for another district that they didn't engage in conversation with the other three.

**Mr. Araujo** commented on work sessions and distributed a document drafted by Ms. Dube.

**Ms. Dube:** It seems that there were a lot of special meetings called last year. This would provide that we are all available for a work session after our regular meeting.

**Mr. Charbonneau:** In theory I get it. I just wonder after the conversation we had this isn't another meeting we're adding on without objective to know what the subject is. I like the idea especially to rotate through the district. I'm not sure. I think we need time to formulate this stuff.

**Mr. Knight:** My idea is we have a great deal of executive sessions and we could operate with subcommittees with recommendations to the full committee. We need to get out to parents that we're doing work session, we may want to do a community meeting and listen to the public. I think that's the type of session that would get more public engagement.

**Ms. Dube:** I agree with that we were already doing this. All you have to get is a quorum and if we have a subcommittee meeting, the fourth Monday can be blocked off every month.

**Mr. Araujo:** The history last year is we had a lot of things that contributed to the special meetings.

**Ms. Bonollo:** Before a lot of things were handled behind closed doors and administrators. As the OMA evolved and transparency now it has to happen in public. We have to have two meetings a month.

**Ms. Grant:** I got elected to try to be at every meeting. If we could put something with a second meeting in place, it would be helpful.

**Mr. Araujo:** We put this on the topic such as finance and special education are new subcommittees.

**Mr. Anderson:** The School Committee in Chariho meets two times a month with the exception of June, July and December. Foster-Gloucester meets only once a month.

**Mrs. DiCenso:** You're asking for us to bring data to you and it's another layer. I don't think we should have a meeting just to have a meeting. The special meetings were because of things going on in the district. It's not that we work in re-active mode. We have special meetings because we are in triage.

**Mr. Araujo:** That's the history of last year.

**Mrs. DiCenso:** We had five teachers that were arrested on criminal charges.

**Ms. Dube:** I thought there were two meetings a month. I thought we were making policy. I was in a web session with someone who said we do it every month at a work session. The Hassenfeld conference also stated instead of reacting to appointments, be proactive.

I wanted to do something to be more proactive data driven and policy making.

**Mrs. DiCenso:** I researched minutes and meetings. They attach things and it becomes a regular meeting. My concern is we bog down the school department with gathering and analyzing data. I don't know what the angle is. I agree we have to have effective meetings. If we go to say we have nothing to report, that's ineffective. It needs to be significantly defined. I get concerned it strays our topic.

**Mr. Araujo:** The budget is different.

**Mr. Anderson:** The location of the meetings, I personally believe is a great idea. The push back came from media, teachers and union. People in the city don't know where other schools are located. Be

**prepared, people will push back.**

**Mr. Knight: The concern is Rhode Island Education now and its clear legislation. We are in charge of managing. We are delegating. RIDE tells us what to do, but not how to do it. The education professionals tell us how to do it and if we get off the covered trail, RIDE said, oh really?**

**I understand Mrs. DiCenso's policy and our policy. We have repairs to facilities and that's cut and dry. We have a St. Leo's Committee so you have the City and us doing it. I'm asking we realize we are going to have at least one subcommittee meeting a month and two meetings a month and major change needs to wait in some areas. We have five new members and we're going to learn things we never heard of. But having an extra meeting, I don't think we can have at this time. We would have to amend our meeting notice.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: We live in a world that you're coming in asking for work sessions in January. It's overwhelming to be coming out with this right now. I think the subcommittees would lead to work sessions. We create work sessions that evolve to the end of the school year. For me, we are going to have a lot of budget meetings based on what the legislature says. I understand your passion is coming at a time while we're preparing for the 2015-2016 school year. When I made decisions about re-purposing that affects people's positions.**

**Ms. Bonollo:** I like the idea of having two meetings. Work session on top of that RIASC Hassenfeld has two to three times a year, now subcommittees. What I don't want to see happen is everybody here has a family and it becomes a matter of being too bogged down and we become overwhelmed and cannot function. We cannot take up all their after school time.

**Mrs. DiCenso:** There will be nights we're meeting everyday but Friday. I think it should be an evolution. When I first got to Pawtucket, we had so many meetings and we never acted on it. We're working on transparency today and we're running late, but I'm here because I'm committed to you.

**Mr. Anderson** just walked us through the special education piece and after we put in that special education report it clicked ADA compliance with facilities piece. I don't want to have meetings just to have meetings. Where is the balance between planning and moving?

**Ms. McQuade:** Maybe we think about it as an additional thing and I believe from many of my customers' perspective is child care. Creating space is enormously helpful for me. I can't always get child care at the last minute. I think the second meeting after the March meeting will be the budget meeting and June is reserved for special education. April is wellness and then it is passed on there. We're working a little smarter giving a block of time.

**Ms. Dube:** This conversation has shown some great ideas. Now I see we are going to be bogged down, but we need to think of big ideas proactively. I looked at the meeting agenda for the last meeting. We had a meeting that lasted three hours and a work session lasting longer than four hours. We have to have visionary data driven to move forward.

**Mr. Araujo:** I already have four requests for the February meeting.

**Mr. Knight:** I wish to point out the OMA has been around since the eighties but changed in 2012. We have our areas on how what we want to see. It's Mrs. DiCenso's place to say to us this is what we want to do. We can't be telling her how to do it. I understand the goals we need to realize and maybe have another workshop on roles and responsibilities and bring in someone from the outside like Tim Duffy or Dave Abbott. I know we all have the same thing in our hearts.

Our kids can't get jobs and we have to rely on our educators to do this. We have to control what we can and that is the day to day operation. We can transform our schools by listening to our educators. I'm not discouraging but our roles have to be understood.

**Ms. Bonollo:** The reason we have the meetings here is because we

have to pay an electrician and custodian and that increases costs or are we better off having it here to better use our resources? That's in addition to the custodians already working.

**Mrs. DiCenso:** If this is important, we budget and we're looking for dollars. If this is a commitment, we put it in the budget. You have to be mindful now even if just \$1,000.00. Everything we do we have to go back to the budget. Think about how you are going to evolve this.

**Mr. Knight:** You've got a family member in from Florida.

**Mrs. DiCenso:** I am committed and this is my priority. This is my team. They are all here, lean and mean but they all stayed.

**Mr. Araujo:** I'm glad we had this discussion.

**Ms. Grant:** I think that we appreciate all of you and we need the direction of your knowledge and letting us know what you know.

**Mrs. DiCenso:** I will be here when you make that final decision. The reality of all these meetings will be disruptive to our daily work. Hopefully we can evolve to your vision.

**Ms. Grant:** I appreciate this because we don't know what you do in your jobs. I think we all appreciate what you share with us and I think we are fortunate to have your team.

**Mrs. DiCenso:** Having a lot of people here I get her sense of urgency. We worry about that all the time. Melissa is transitioning to a purchase order system that was traumatic to the staff. Spending money to fix the heat at Winters you can't cheat the kids.

**Ms. Devine:** What the Superintendent said is affecting everyone in the district, from principals to the Superintendent. We have to report everything twice because the City has a different system. It was a quick two day thing. We're trying to get it where we need to be.

**Mr. Araujo:** Hearing the Superintendent's feedback; it's a simple case of delegating the work which has allowed us to see results as well.

**Ms. Dube:** What I'm hearing is it is not good to make huge overhauls and perhaps instead having a work session in March, April, May and June. I'm expecting it to be a clear objective meeting that turns into a regular meeting.

**Mrs. DiCenso:** Thank you for letting me be honest.

**11:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Superintendent**

**• Key Academic Initiatives**

## **PowerPoint Presentation**

**Mrs. DiCenso: I have giving you an overview of this area that is least transparent.**

**We have created a vision statement at the Leadership Matters Institute, a team representing teachers, principals, administrators and community.**

**Children are compassionate in learning. This will be part of the end of the slide. This is what we're working from.**

**When I got here, I was specifically hired for the transformation role. We went and did a crosswalk of the Basic Education Plan (BEP). When you look at the ELL curriculum, we partnered with the Dana Center and everything in literacy is easier through support because we've been tagged as the lowest improving district in literacy. The curriculum mirrors the PARCC content model frameworks. Units are broken into instructional days pacing within the scope and district.**

**Curriculum is different from that of NECAPS. Teachers created lessons and assessments. Math is not as evolved so we focused on intervention. This huge concern that teachers are struggling to move to new model of PARCC and common core math.**

**Ms. Suriani: ELA; when we moved from grade level math is so heavily**

skilled based now you have students in grades two with grade three expectations with teachers. When we moved while in transition there was a crosswalk and students still taking NECAPS. We had to ask what do we have to start teaching in math area. What we decided to do is move information here in areas of success, common core math. In the process of developing a math curriculum, we wanted a basic core instructional essentially. What we thought was if we taught three lessons of core and the Math Coordinator and specialist integrated supplement within the curriculum.

It was meant as transitional budge to get us where we were going down the line.

Mrs. DiCenso: Millions of dollars were spent. Reading scores are strong because you spent millions of dollars on reading intervention.

We took those people working in this building and put them in the schools. RIDE now decided that we do need this certification and we're working on that.

In Science we received a \$24,000.00 grant to work with other districts.

Ms. Carney: Many of our ELA students' units require tests. Science content is supported by ELA content.

Mrs. Rabbitt: ELA and math are heavily funded through the Dana

**Center. Would it be more efficient to do statewide commitment? Our next path is to gather community curriculum to gather resources. Our resources are incredibly old. We are now mapping out models with curriculum and teachers are looking at resources, especially in grades four through eight.**

**Mrs. DiCenso: When the kits were adopted some schools took it out of their budget. But now we're finding we're going to register kids at a Central location so we know the teachers needs and kits. There should be equity throughout the schools.**

**One is teacher driven. Schools had a choice. They were allowed to have a program for intervention for kids or to ramp up. We had Dream Box and ISL aligned to common core.**

**Math is a work in progress, so is social studies.**

**The one thing we are working on is the focus in reading and math with intervention. We can now create our own five year plan whereas RIDE was telling us before.**

**Ms. Carney: We chose fifth grade because that is where we saw the most inconsistencies. "We the People" program was the text that encompassed with our needs. We tried to map out where the units would fall. Last year all the schools ordered "We the People."**

**Ms. Suriani:** We used Super Kids in grades K-2. We are part of a study with the Rowland Foundation in assessing this program and the parents and teachers all seem to like it very much. They do compare us to a similar district who does not use the program. It's reading and writing that addresses social studies.

**We spent a lot of money. We had a hefty legislative grant before I got here. We have to report to the feds and we have to follow that model and make sure we are talking about student achievement. We have to show where children are moving. That is the charge of the coordinator to show that.**

**We were measuring student progress but didn't connect the different models in all grade levels. By the time they got to high school the students were lost. We brought in Renaissance Learning to track students. We brought in Dibbles. We have grades three through twelve using Renaissance Learning and it gives feedback to see where students are not learning. The problem now is kindergarten through grade two still using Dibbles. This is the old model of paper and students in grades kindergarten through grade two are very much use to it. We will be looking at that.**

**Ms. Carney:** Pawtucket was using Dibbles up to grade six. Student are able to get both benchmarks and monitoring. The students can go on and do their own tests and see how they are progressing.

**Mrs. DiCenso: District wide writing path. You can drill it down to schools, to classrooms, to grade level. High schools are re-aligned to common core to make alignment happen to make student proficient in graduating.**

**These are all from BEP's. We have a Parent Coordinator who is very involved and out in the community working with the Library to get every student a library card.**

**We are looking at partnering to actually create job skills.**

**The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) has invited me to develop a community parenting school.**

**We also have data being collected right now on bullying.**

### **Next Steps**

**In 2010 there was a budget crisis. Many reading teacher positions were abolished and Read 180 was brought in.**

**We have good scores but the model is not identifying individual needs.**

**Ms. Carney: As a reading interventionist and reading specialist you are looking for growth. In pulling the reports only 62% made 75**

points which is what you expect in one year. This is not enough. The numbers are not showing this on a whole.

**Mr. Charbonneau:** Are we contractually obligated for this program?

**Mrs. DiCenso:** We're in the last year of it. The teachers hate it. High schools need to do direct intervention. In the elementary schools, teachers cannot get to kids who really need it. We are concerned about the Read 180 model.

We're hoping to move Star in kindergarten through grade twelve if we can afford it. The Star data is such a rich intervention and you can see results. Teachers love this so we are looking at this model for the high school. I want the PLC model. We know we're locked and loaded at the high schools. We are not in compliant with the health curriculum in elementary. We're updating that curriculum as we speak and will be up to date by the end of this year.

**Mr. Cristino** assigned someone to my twitter feed that will be updated on our website. We have great things happening as we saw.

**Mr. Charbonneau:** Can we utilize some of our students in the design of that?

**Mrs. DiCenso:** If we had someone full time, we could, but not at this time.

**I will need to make subcommittees of:**

- **Family and Community Engagement**
- **School Support**
- **Community Partnerships**
- **Mentoring**
- **Post-Secondary Support**
- **School Environment and Culture**
- **Two Way Immersion Program**
- **Achievement—Curriculum Instruction and Assessment**
- **Technology**

**It takes five years to turn a district but we don't want to go crazy. We will be the ones to let you know the reality of our budget.**

**They see us being honest on our budget and see how hard we're working when we work the five year plan. We are going to give you a number of what it is going to cost.**

**The work never ends, but it's rich and important.**

**We have a press release we worked on in a shared file. Other districts have shared progress.**

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

#### **IV. Adjournment**

**Ms. Dube moved to adjourn. Ms. Bonollo seconded.**

**Voice vote carries unanimously.**

**The Chairman, Mr. Araujo, adjourned the Pawtucket School Committee Work Session on Saturday, January 17, 2015 at 1:40 PM.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Clerk**

**Approved by School Committee 2/10/2015**