

**CRANSTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 22, 2026
CRANSTON HIGH SCHOOL EAST ~ AUDITORIUM
899 PARK AVENUE
CRANSTON, RI 02910
EXECUTIVE SESSION - 6:00 PM
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY PUBLIC MEETING
IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED PUBLIC BUDGET WORK SESSION**

Minutes

The Cranston School Committee Executive Session and Public Work Session Meeting were held on the evening of January 22, 2026 in the Cranston East Auditorium, 899 Park Avenue, Cranston, RI. A motion was made at 6:02pm by Mr. Melillo and seconded by Mrs. Crowley to call the executive session meeting to order. Roll was called. Mr. Catone-present, Mrs. Medeiros-present, Ms. Marchetti-present, Mrs. Nadeau-present, Mrs. Crowley-present, Mr. Melillo-present, Mr. Fusco -present. Mr. Fusco stated that a quorum was present. Attorney A. Cascione was present at the meeting.

RIGL 42-46-5(a)(1) Personnel

- a. Discussion of Non-Certified Employee "A" Job Performance

RIGL 42-46-5 (a)(8) Student Matters

- a. 1st Semester Bullying Summary

A motion was made by Mr. Catone and seconded by Mr. Melillo to adjourn the executive session meeting. Roll was called. Mr. Catone- yes, Mrs. Medeiros-yes, Ms. Marchetti-yes, Mrs. Nadeau-yes, Mrs. Crowley-yes, Mr. Melillo-yes, Mr. Fusco -yes.

A motion was made by Mrs. Crowley and Mrs. Nadeau called the public work session meeting to order. Roll was called. Mr. Catone- yes, Mrs. Medeiros-yes, Ms. Marchetti-yes, Mrs. Nadeau-yes, Mrs. Crowley-yes, Mr. Melillo-yes, Mr. Fusco -yes.

A motion was made by Mrs. Crowley and seconded by Mr. Melillo to seal the minutes of the executive session. Roll was called. Mr. Catone- yes, Mrs. Medeiros-yes, Ms. Marchetti-yes, Mrs. Nadeau-yes, Mrs. Crowley-yes, Mr. Melillo-yes, Mr. Fusco -yes. Chairman Fusco stated that no votes were taken in the executive session.

A motion was made by Mrs. Nadeau and seconded by Mrs. Medeiros to approve the minutes to the November 10, 2025 school committee meeting. Roll was called. Mr. Catone- yes, Mrs. Medeiros-yes, Ms. Marchetti-yes, Mrs. Nadeau-yes, Mrs. Crowley-yes, Mr. Melillo-yes, Mr. Fusco -yes.

Committee Reports -

School Buildings Committee- Anthony Melillo and Keith Catone-Gladstone is on track to be completed in the spring of 26 and students in September of 26. Eden Park is also on schedule and on budget, which is encouraging.

Recreation Committee- Recreation update- Kathy Crowley- Nothing to report

Cranston Educational Advisory Board (CEAB)- Andrea Nadeau- Zach and I conducted a meeting last Wednesday at East. We discussed building safety and what our superintendent has been doing. We reviewed safety protocols and the camera placements since the unfortunate incident at Brown and we just prepared another agenda for the next meeting which will be Wednesday, May 6th.

Cranston Special Education Advisory Council- Melanie Marchetti-Nothing to report
Rhode Island Association of School Committees-Domenic Fusco-Nothing to report
Wellness Committee- Anna Medeiros - Nothing to report
Legislative Liaison- Kathy Crowley- Nothing to report

Superintendent's Communication- Superintendent Nota-Masse--I have very good news tonight. The first one is that our attendance officer, Mr. Turchetta, brought to my attention on Tuesday morning that Oaklawn Elementary had the best attendance in the state for that week. I think celebration is in order for Mrs. Cardarelli and the staff at Oaklawn. Congrats to them for their positive attendance, especially during this time of year, which is nearly impossible to get everyone in school when they're not sick. The second very positive piece of news is last night's Governor State addresses one of our very own teachers here at Cranston High School East, Mr. Chris Richard, who is our instructor in the CTE program, was invited as the governor's guest. He and his wife were there in the front row. Chris was highlighted as well as the program that is here at Cranston High School East. He has done a tremendous job along with the administration of Cranston High School East and Mr. Farrell, our CTE director, to develop and grow a program that is one of the best in the state. We are partners with Electric Boat and seeing Chris there representing us was a very proud moment for me. So congrats to all of them for their hard work. Thank you

Chairperson's Communication - Thank you for coming to the meeting tonight, City Council President Dan Wall, Councilmembers Michael Traficante, Frank Ritz, Deputy Chief of Staff Christopher Paplauskas and Director of Communications & Governmental Affairs Nicole Renzulli. We appreciate all of you that came tonight to support the Superintendent's Budget for 2026-2027. The superintendent will be presenting her budget for the 26-27th school year. This budget will take effect on July 1st. It must be presented to the school committee tonight so that we may vote on it and get it over to the mayor by March 1st for our city. Personally, at this point I do not know everything that's in this budget but I'm going to ask everyone to pay attention to this presentation. Years of underfunding, unfunded mandates, lack of state help with things like statewide transportation, and for those of you who may have forgotten, the legislative commission was formed last year and made serious recommendations to help district districts throughout the state with the statewide transportation costs. However, it died in the Senate before even getting a chance to be heard by committee. That was very disappointing. The school committee in the past has made huge efforts to keep the proper educational programs in place despite the lack of funding. We said it last year, we can no longer kick the can down the road. I greatly appreciate the mayor's increase of our funding last year. And while it greatly helped, the damage was already done. It'll take years to recover from this underfunding.

I also want to also recognize the students of Stone Hill Elementary School for performing "God Bless America" at a recent Providence Bruins game, they did an excellent job.

School Committee Communication -

Mr. Melillo — we haven't seen the budget yet, but this is now my third budget season, and there's something I want to emphasize. First, it's great to see members of the city government here tonight, along with several members of the City Council. That kind of attendance matters, and I appreciate it. What I'd really like to see is all of us working together to address what's broken at the state and national levels, rather than focusing on things like how many times we've been level-funded or other issues like that. There are larger problems that

impact our schools, and the only way we're going to solve them is by working together. For years, Cranston Public Schools have been underfunded. We're dealing with aging infrastructure, buildings that need serious attention, and a reserve fund that's essentially nonexistent to address those problems. We also have to continue talking about things like unfunded mandates and how they impact our district. So I'm encouraged to see city and state officials here tonight. Hopefully this leads to more conversations and meetings with our state representatives so we can work together on these issues. As Chairman Fusco said, tonight this is the superintendent's proposed budget. Once we ratify it, it becomes the School Committee's budget, and then we take it next door. At that point, it's about working together to make sure what we're asking for is ultimately fulfilled.

Mrs. Crowley- My focus this year is really going to be on our school buildings. We have some very serious issues, and as Mr. Melillo mentioned earlier, we simply do not have a sufficient reserve fund. I say that with a lot of concern, because I truly worry about whether we have the resources needed to address the health and safety needs of our students. We have a wonderful educational system here, and we need to make sure our facilities match the quality of the education we're providing. Our buildings need to be safe, healthy places for children to learn. In many cases, we're trying to operate in modern times with facilities that simply weren't built to support today's technology. You can't move forward into the next century when classrooms don't even have enough electrical outlets to support the technology students and teachers rely on every day. I've personally visited many of our buildings, and the needs are very real. We have to start taking these issues very seriously. The City Council also needs to recognize the importance of providing the funding necessary for us to begin planning for a Stage One application for the 2028 election. And that process takes money. Right now, we simply don't have the funds to fully support that work. I do want to acknowledge that the mayor was kind enough to provide \$100,000 to help us begin looking at hiring an OPM someone with significant construction experience to guide us through the process. But in reality, that amount is only a small step toward what's needed. To move forward, we'll also need to hire an architect and develop a complete design before submitting a Stage One application. That preparation is absolutely critical. I also want to say that I believe this administration has done an excellent job managing the funds that have been available to them, and I want to acknowledge that.

Resolution No. 26-01-01 BE IT RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Memorandum of Agreement between the Cranston Teachers' Alliance and the Cranston School Committee be approved.

Resolution No. 26-01-02 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Cranston School Committee accept the Superintendent's recommendation to reject Zum's transportation bid.

Resolution No. 26-01-03 BE IT RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following Conferences/Field Trips of Long Duration be authorized:

Cheri Sacco, Principal of Orchard Farms Elementary, NAESP National School Leaders Advocacy Conference held in Washington, DC, February 8 – February 11, 2026. There is no cost to the district for this visit.

Resolution No. 26-01-04 BE IT RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following Conferences/Field Trips of Long Duration be authorized:

Ashlee Burns, English Teacher at CHSE, to attend the Decennial Accreditation visiting team for Warwick Vets Middle School, March 16 – March 18, 2026. There is no cost to the district for this visit.

Resolution No. 26-01-05 BE IT RESOLVED, that at the recommendation of the Superintendent, the following Conferences/Field Trips of Long Duration be authorized:

Michele Simpson, Executive Director of Pupil Personnel Services, to travel to Atlanta, GA, from April 21 - April 23, 2026, to attend the CASE 3rd Annual Academy of Law and Leaders. The costs will be grant-funded.

A motion was made by Mrs. Crowley and seconded by Mr. Catone to approve the following Resolutions, No.25-01-01, No. 25-01-02, No. 25-01-03, No. 25-01-04 and No. 25-01-05 . Roll was called. Mr. Catone-yes, Mrs. Medeiros-yes, Ms. Marchetti-yes, Mrs. Nadeau-yes, Mrs. Crowley-yes, Mr. Melillo-yes, Mr. Fusco -yes.

A motion was made by Mr. Melillo and seconded by Mrs. Crowley to adjourn the public work session meeting. Roll was called. Mr. Catone- yes, Mrs. Medeiros-yes, Ms. Marchetti-yes, Mrs. Nadeau-yes, Mrs. Crowley-yes, Mr. Melillo-yes, Mr. Fusco -yes.

Call to Order - Public Budget Work Session

Roll Call-Quorum

Budget Presentation 2026-2027

A motion was made by Mr. Catone and seconded by Mr. Melillo to call the public budget work session meeting to order. Roll was called. Mr. Catone- yes, Mrs. Medeiros-yes, Ms. Marchetti-yes, Mrs. Nadeau-yes, Mrs. Crowley-yes, Mr. Melillo-yes, Mr. Fusco -yes

Superintendent Nota-Masse presented the 2026-2027 Cranston Public Schools Budget. The superintendent began her presentation by explaining the budget process and time frame involved. Once completed she then presented a slideshow of the 2026-2027 Cranston Public Schools Budget. There were hard copies of the budget available for all participants.

Superintendent Jeannine Nota-Masse said the administration built it as a zero-based budget,” evaluating all programs and costs based on current needs. Level funding is when schools receive the same dollar amount as in the previous year, and that really is considered underfunding, because as costs escalate and the money doesn’t come to us either locally or through the state, we are forced to do more with less.

The Cranston Public Schools budget for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. This proposal requests a total of \$195,777,310, reflecting a 3.38% increase in our operating budget. Specifically, we are requesting a local appropriation increase of \$4,076,636, representing an approximately 4.0% increase in local support.

Chairman Fusco thanked Superintendent Nota-Masse for the presentation and thanked everyone that was present at the meeting for supporting the Superintendent budget. He informed the committee that this budget is now ours. He explained to the committee that the next meeting will be the time to ask their questions and also they can email any of their questions to Jeannine and Joe and they will have the answers for them at the meeting too.

Announcement of Future Meetings - Announcement of Future Meetings - Tuesday, January 27, 2026,
Public Budget Meeting, East; Tuesday, February 3, 2026, Budget Adoption, East

A motion was made by Mr. Melillo and seconded by Mrs. Nadeau to adjourn the Public Meeting. Roll was called. All were in favor. The meeting adjourned at 7:52 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Anthony Melillo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Below the signature, there is a faint, yellowish rectangular stamp or watermark.

Vice Chairman