



Special Committee on Education Regular Meeting

~ Agenda ~

Monday, July 17, 2017

5:30 PM

Committee "B" (City Hall 3rd Floor)

1. Resolution Calling for an Independent Investigation of Molestation Charges at Harry Kizirian Elementary School.

PER ORDER THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Councilman Bryan Principe, Chairman

The foregoing Committee may seek to enter into Executive Session.

Offices and City Council Chambers are accessible to individuals with disabilities. If you are in need of interpreter services for the hearing impaired, please contact the Office of Neighborhood Services at 421-7768 not less than 48 hours in advance of the hearing date.

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No.

WHEREAS, On June 29th, James Duffy, a 53-year-old teacher at Harry Kizirian Elementary School, was arraigned in District Court on five counts of child molestation on three 11-year-old victims, all of whom were students at Kizirian Elementary; and

WHEREAS, According to multiple new reports, Duffy was placed on leave on May 9th after children accused him of touching them inappropriately, but school officials failed to contact Providence police or the R.I. Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) about these allegations; and

WHEREAS, Under Rhode Island General Laws § 40-11-3.3, “Any person who has reasonable cause to know or suspect that any child has been the victim of sexual abuse by an employee, agent, contractor, or volunteer of an educational program [...] shall, within twenty-four (24) hours, transfer that information to the department of children, youth and families”; and

WHEREAS, Despite this law, school officials did not contact DCYF in the seven weeks between when the school became aware of the accusations against Duffy and his arraignment; and

WHEREAS, It is a fundamental requirement of every adult in every school to ensure absolute safety for every child; and

WHEREAS, Providence’s families deserve to know what happened when school officials learned of these horrific, disturbing allegations; and

WHEREAS, The gravity of this situation demands the transparency of an independent investigation; and

WHEREAS, As the elected representatives of the people of Providence, the Providence City Council has a moral obligation to ensure the safety of its schoolchildren and to prevent situations like this from happening again.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Providence does hereby call for an independent investigation into how officials at Harry Kizirian Elementary School handled the allegations of sexual misconduct against James Duffy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to Superintendent of the Providence Public Schools, the members of the Providence School Board, the principal of Harry Kizirian Elementary School, and the Mayor.