

# RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 85

Approved March 12, 1976

RESOLVED, that the Committee on Public Welfare is requested to investigate the complaint of the Providence Teacher's Union, American Federation of Teacher's --- Local 598, relative to problems involving heating, ventilation, and respective control systems and other general conditions, within certain Providence Public Schools, all in accordance with accompanying communication of the Providence Teacher's Union Local 598, dated January 20, 1976, a copy of which is hereto attached.

IN CITY COUNCIL

MAR 4 1976  
READ AND PASSED

*Ralph Lyman* PRES.  
*Erinunt Desjardis* CLERK

APPROVED  
*Donald A. Cianci*  
MAYOR

MAR 12 1976



# PROVIDENCE TEACHERS UNION

American Federation of Teachers — Local 958

199 Academy Avenue

Providence • Rhode Island 02908

(COPY)

January 20, 1976

Telephone  
421-4014

Dr. Robert Ricci  
Acting Superintendent

Mr. Charles S. Matoian  
Acting Deputy Superintendent  
Providence School Department  
150 Washington Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Dr. Ricci and Mr. Matoian:

RE: Heating, Ventilation and Respective  
Control Systems in the Providence  
Public Schools

If the experience in our schools this school year to date is going to be indicative of what will be the extent and magnitude of the problems involving the heating, ventilation, and respective control systems, then it is obvious from simple observation of said experiences that a large number of students and school personnel will have to endure unnecessary and prolonged hardships due to the chilled and frigid conditions and/or excessive heat in various schools throughout the school system, particularly on days following weekends, school recesses and days following holidays, and on those days when the outside temperature is extremely cold and the functioning boilers are pushed to capacity, thereby making them vulnerable to breakdown at the weakest point in the heating, ventilation and respective control systems.

A few examples will suffice (high schools, middle schools, elementary schools):

1. Teachers at Central High School have reported:

There is considerable variation from very hot to exceedingly cold. Teachers report that said extreme temperatures have a detrimental effect on the educational process. When it is extremely hot, students have a tendency to become groggy, and in some cases, fall asleep through no fault of their own, and windows are opened when possible to let out the excess heat.

In those parts of the building where the temperature is extremely cold, students are unable to write because of the cumbersome clothing that must be worn to warm themselves.

Obviously, there is also an incalculable adverse effect on the health of the students and school personnel as a result of the extreme temperatures, not only within the different sections of the school, but also between the inside and outside temperatures.

2. Teachers at Classical High School have reported:

On Friday, December 5, 1975, temperatures in the rooms on the third floor of the main building averaged between 85 and 93 degrees with the outside temperature 43 degrees. The problem was so acute that all the windows had to be opened and portable fans turned on to circulate cold air. The second floor was more of the same causing teachers and students to have headaches, thereby contributing to whatever colds or discomforts they were already feeling. Other places affected in a similar manner were the library and the teachers' cafeteria.

Affiliated with

Classical High School (cont'd.)

On Monday, December 8, 1975, the same conditions existed with many teachers unable to teach and finding it necessary to change rooms at great inconvenience to the students, thereby making it a situation not conducive to the educational process. Also, the lack of proper ventilation and the presence of faulty heating controls have caused a situation where students and teachers are subjected to extreme variations in temperatures when traveling throughout the school day.

Teachers also report that temperatures in late spring or June are excessively high, and on frequent occasions some of the sections of the school are like sauna baths due to the fact that there are few windows, if any, in most, if not all of the rooms.

3. Teachers at Roger Williams have reported:

On Monday, January 5, 1976, the temperatures in the school were between 42 and 60 degrees. On Thursday, January 8, 1976, the temperatures were also low.

At approximately 12:00 on Monday, January 19, 1976, the third floor temperatures ranged between 56 and 58 degrees. The second floor temperatures were slightly higher. The teachers' room was approximately 52 degrees, and it should be noted that the cooks were wearing coats even though the ovens were on, and the remaining part of the building was in the low 60's.

Also, whenever the outside weather becomes cold or frigid, the general temperature inside the school is too cold for teachers and students to function effectively. Also, some outside windows had to be nailed shut so that the wind would not gush in.

On October 30, 1975, there was a fire in the building, and firefighters had to strip the nails that held the windows shut in order to let the smoke out. Since then, the windows cannot be completely closed, and therefore many of the rooms are subjected to drafts, thereby further chilling the rooms.

4. Teachers at Academy Avenue School have reported:

On Monday, January 19, 1976, the temperatures were in the 30's and low 40's. It was so cold that students and school personnel had to be moved to West for the remainder of the day due to the frigid temperatures in the building.

5. Teachers at Edmund W. Flynn School have reported:

On Monday, January 5, 1976, the temperatures were in the 50's and low 60's. On Friday, January 16, 1976, the temperatures were also in the 50's and 60's, and on Monday, January 19, extreme temperatures ranged from 50 to 90 degrees with one room, Room 3, as low as 30 degrees.

6. Teachers at Nathanael Greene have reported:

Some teachers have reported this year that their rooms are frequently in the 50's and low 60's, particularly on Mondays when they arrive at school, and that this has been a frequent problem in some rooms.

Dr. Robert Ricci  
Mr. Charles S. Matoian  
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Obviously, it goes without saying that you could probably add a number of other situations comparable to those mentioned hereinabove based upon complaints you have received and/or you have observed.

During recent years there has been a tremendous amount of rhetoric from school department administrators with respect to developing and maintaining an on-going management systems oriented educational process with a great deal of emphasis placed on short range and long range planning with specific emphasis on management-by-objectives.

It is rather difficult to understand and comprehend how so little of the rhetoric pertaining to the management systems approach to education has been translated into developing and maintaining a physical environment in our schools that is conducive to an effective educational process.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to calculate the tremendous waste of energy and cost in human resources resulting from the faulty physical environment of our schools due to the inadequate preventive-replacement maintenance program, not to mention the loss in the quality and effectiveness of performance of students and school personnel and the cost resulting from teacher and student absenteeism.

It is requested that the horrendous conditions existing in our schools concerning the troublesome heating, ventilation and respective control systems be corrected by developing and implementing an adequate maintenance and reporting system.

Over the last two years, I have recommended to the administration of the Providence School Department that a strict and formal procedure be followed with respect to checking the school environment early each morning, particularly during the winter time. On excessively cold days during the winter time, or on days following a weekend, school holiday or school recess, a strict procedure should be followed whereby each school plant will be checked in order to determine whether or not each school will be ready for occupancy at the prescribed opening time, and if not, a strict reporting procedure to the Superintendent will be adhered to in order that the Superintendent may give proper notice through the news media announcing a delayed opening in those schools which will not be ready for occupancy at the regularly prescribed opening time. In this way, an estimate can be made with respect to each school plant as to approximately how much time will be needed to ready each school so that when the students and teachers arrive the school will be ready for occupancy.

In those cases where the problem is such that the school cannot be occupied for the entire day, alternate arrangements can be made to have the faculty and/or student body transferred to an alternate site. In this way, the common practice of allowing students and school personnel to occupy chilled and frigid and/or extremely warm schools will be avoided.

It is my sincere hope that this recommendation will be implemented, thereby reducing to a minimum the number of occasions on which students and school personnel will have to endure unnecessary hardships which represent a hazard to their physical well being, as well as impeding the educational process.

Your cooperation and your reply concerning this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed)

Joseph A. Grande  
Executive Secretary

JAG/cs

cc: Marcia B. Reback  
Members, Providence School Committee



## EDMUND W. FLYNN SCHOOL PROBLEMS

### 1. Lack of Heat:

This school is presently functioning on one boiler, the second boiler is inoperative and has been in that state despite school department assurances that it would be repaired. The one operating boiler is subject to frequent breakdowns.

#### Result:

During the winter months the school is constantly cold, (classrooms range between 48 degrees and 60 degrees) corridors below 30 degrees, high absenteeism due to illness is a frequent occurrence among teachers and students. Lack of heat has plagued this school for the past six years!!!!.

### 2. Roof Leaks

Rooms 2 and 12 on the first floor, all classrooms on the second floor with skylights.

Room 2--due to water leaks, the floor is buckled and warped, floor tiles are loose and missing from their proper place causing children to fall, there is also a stench of rotted wood in this room.

Corridors on the first and second floors have exposed wiring where lighting fixtures were removed.

Stockroom-Second Floor--roof leaks, water collects in this room containing extensive electrical fixtures, wiring, fuse boxes, etc.--possibly a fire hazard?

### 3. Bathrooms

They can best be described as filthy, doors are off, radiators have corroded. The school nurse has questioned whether they would pass Health Department inspection.

Fountains for washing hands are broken, towels and soap are nonexistent.

Teachers' Bathroom, second floor--no ventilation, no heat.

#### 4. Closet Doors

Many doors have fallen off. Room doors lack window glass and door knobs. Due to a lack of door knobs, two teachers recently had their coats stolen from classrooms that they were unable to lock.

Doors in corridors and fire doors are not properly hung on their hinges, in a case of fire, many of these doors would not open and the children would be trapped by them.

#### 5. Summary:

General Condition of the building:

The entire school building is filthy dirty, floors, walls, windows, blinds, bathrooms, etc., general maintenance is nonexistent.

The situation is deteriorating further with each passing day.

The overall conditions at our school present numerous health, safety and fire hazards to our general population of approximately 600 individuals, students and teachers alike. As you can well imagine the overall conditions of our school building are not at all conducive to promoting a sound educational environment.