

Lawrence Public Schools Superintendent James F. Scully Collection

Repository: Lawrence History Center

Accession Number: 2012.174

Creator: James F. Scully

Dates: 1988-1998

Quantity: 7 boxes of records, 2 boxes of VHS tapes

Processed by: Isabella Rozzi

Access: Open for research

Provenance:

This collection was created by James F. Scully and donated to the Lawrence History Center July 3rd, 2012.

Biographical Note:

James F. Scully worked in education for 48 years. He first became a teacher in the early 1970's. Scully began his education career teaching middle school students first in Lawrence, MA before going to teach in Newbury, Rowley and Salisbury, MA. Scully returned to teaching in his hometown of Lawrence later into his career.

In 1987, James F. Scully became Superintendent of Lawrence Public Schools and held the position for roughly ten years, leaving the position in 1997. Scully was removed by the city from the position of Superintendent in 1997 after battling several issues in Lawrence schools that persisted for years. Scully was accused of wasting public funding for the schools on computers and bagpipes, meanwhile Lawrence schools had finally lost accreditation in 1997 after fighting over control of the schools with the state for many years.

After his work as Superintendent in Lawrence, Scully spent about four years working in private sectors of education before starting work again in Haverhill, MA as a principal at Consentino Middle School in 2002. Scully worked as a principal at Consentino for 6 years before retiring. In 2010, Scully took over as interim Superintendent in Haverhill while the city searched for a permanent employee. Scully was given the position of Haverhill Public Schools Superintendent and worked in the position until 2018, when he decided to retire again.

Scope and Content Note:

The bulk of the collection is comprised of photocopied newspaper clippings over the 10 years of Scully as Superintendent in Lawrence. There are 6 boxes total, as well as 10 blue book binders containing newspapers from 1996 for each month, except June and December, and a collection of video recordings on VHS.

Each box follows certain years of Scully's employment and details education and the events of Lawrence Public Schools from 1987 to 1997, with special focus on the fight over accreditation in the school system. There are several other items in some of the boxes like curriculum binders, school council meeting notes, Massachusetts Education Presentations, letters to/and from Scully, New England School Rosters, etc.

Arrangement:

This collection is arranged into eight series:

- I. James F. Scully 1988-1992
- II. James F. Scully 1993- 1995
- III. James F. Scully June 1996-April 1997
- IV. James F. Scully May 1997 to July 1997
- V. James F. Scully 1997
- VI. James F. Scully Other
- VII. Newspaper Clippings 1996
- VIII. School Committee meetings VHS tapes

Series I. James F. Scully 1988-1992

Box 1

This series comprises 36 books. The books are newspaper clippings divided into month intervals. The blue books span for the first of the month to the last day from 1988 to 1992. The books follow a general 12 month pattern but there are some exceptions. 1992 is complete with all twelve months, 1991 has two books for July but is missing one for June 1988 is missing six months from January through June, and then has the first six months of 1889. There are articles for each day of the week. The articles are all concerning Lawrence education. There are articles of sporting events from the schools, information about learning centers, and school closures, and other general school news. There are some original newspapers inside of the booklets. Later in the booklets is the beginning of conversations of Scully as superintendent and school accreditation.

Series II. James F. Scully 1993-1995

Box 2

This series consists of books filled with newspaper clippings divided into one month intervals. The books have monthly books for the period between January 1993 and December 1995. These newspaper clippings are all from The Eagle Tribune series.

Series III. James F. Scully June 1996- April 1997

Box 3

This series consists of two binders holding newspaper clippings from the time between June 1996 and April 1997. The first binder is specifically from June 21st, 1996, and goes until February 18th, 1997, and the second goes from February 19th, 1997, to April 30th, 1997. There is an excerpt from the newspaper from every day between these dates, occasionally there will be multiple full-page articles from the same day or multiple, small newspaper clippings photocopied onto the same sheet. Most of the articles are taken from The Eagle Tribune. The newspaper clippings most often are related to education in Lawrence and are following the immediate time before Lawrence Public Schools lost their accreditation and the state takeover of the Lawrence High School. In 1996, six Lawrence elementary schools made it into the list of only 200 New England schools to have accreditation. There are multiple articles celebrating that accomplishment as well. There are articles concerning any activities and events held by Lawrence Public Schools, as well as any renovations, like the new roof Lawrence High School was set to receive in 1996. The binders also include a few non-disclosed discourses, like letters from Scully to the Lawrence Public School Principals William R. Carey, and Richard Parthum, or the New England Association of Schools and College, Inc. Both binders include several bookmarks left in by the creator marking different important events, but mostly articles concerning Scully's removal from the position of Superintendent. Other articles include general Lawrence events or issues, and other educational information surrounding Massachusetts or a larger population.

Series IV. James F. Scully May 1997 to July 1997

Box 4

This series contains the next two years of Scully's employment as Superintendent. This series has two binders, the first from May 1st, 1997, to May 31st, 1997, and the second from June 1st, 1997, to July 31st, 1997, and have newspaper clippings for each day of the time period. These binders also center on Lawrence's education struggles, but in the present time. 1997 is when Lawrence High School lost accreditation, and Scully was removed from being superintendent and many of the articles in this series are covering those events, instead of other school events in the past series.

Series V. James F. Scully 1997

Box 5

This series has one binder full of newspaper clippings, and one school committee book. This binder also has newspaper clippings every day from August 1st, 1997, to September 18th, 1997.

The binder is labeled with the dates, except being marked until “present.” There are several pages marked with yellow sticky notes, some are marked on violence in Lawrence, other on test scores in Lawrence and surrounding towns, and several articles on Governor Paul Celluci. The booklet is titled “A Factual Response to the Commissioner” from December 1996. There are nine sections about school topics such as class size, test results, computers, course offerings, and building maintenance. At the beginning of the book is a letter from the commissioner of education, Anthony Antonucci asking for a response to questions the Board of Education had about funds and actions after the Education Reform Act.

Series VI. James F. Scully Other

Box 6

This series is made up of other items relating to Superintendent James F. Scully’s time in Lawrence. In this series there is a class photo from a first grade class in 1983, four copies of a picture of Scully with other school officials from 1994 celebrating the South Lawrence East school, a binder full of written copies of Scully’s speeches dating from 1887 to 1997, a booklet with the Lawrence School Committees organization initiatives which highlights Financials, Staffing and Enrollment, Community Involvement and “Other Relevant Issues” as sections, a City of Lawrence Management Commentary Report for the Fiscal Year End published on June 30th, 1995, and two binders holding the minutes and records of Lawrence School Committee meetings from 1995 to 1997.

Series VII. Newspaper Clipping 1996

This series contains ten individual booklets for newspaper clippings during 1996. This collection is missing June and December newspapers, but otherwise has newspaper articles from every day of the year. These articles are from multiple sources, mostly the Eagle Tribune and the Boston Globe. These articles surround education in Massachusetts, covering Lawrence, Methuen, Boston, and other Massachusetts cities.

Series VIII. VHS Tapes

This series consists of School Committee meeting tapes, records, and videos 1987 - 1997. There are two boxes full of VHS with the recordings of these meetings. The tapes have not been digitized.