

**School Committee - Regular Meeting**

**June 18, 2013**

**A G E N D A (REVISED 6/17/13 Supplemental added)**

- 1. Public Comment (3 Minutes):**
- 2. Student School Committee Report:**
- 3. Presentation of the records for approval:**
  - Regular Meeting – May 21, 2013
- 4. Reconsiderations:** None
- 5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:**

**#13-90, Joint motion by Mayor Davis and Ms. Turkel** that whereas, State standards include making water available to all students during the day without charge and Federal regulations require it be available in the cafeteria at lunch or easily accessible nearby, that water be made easily available to students in all school cafeterias. And, further, that at schools, without the plumbing necessary to easily fill cups or bottles, water dispensers such as those that have been successfully piloted at two schools this year be used to meet this need. 6/4/13

**#13-91, Motion by Ms. Nolan that**, whereas the District has a commitment to family engagement; and whereas, the School Committee policy changes led to a District-wide effort to distribute family contact books; and whereas, the policy can be strengthened; now therefore, the Superintendent is directed to ensure that family contact forms be included in the summer required form packet sent to all students. Further, that the CSAG and the School Committee review the forms and book format by the July meeting, in time for feedback before printing, to ensure a more family-friendly format be used and that every effort be made to finish the books by October 15, for distribution at the district expense, families by November 1. 6/4/13  
**(C13-140)**

**#13-92, Joint motion (as amended) by Ms. Turkel and Mr. Fantini** that Cambridge Public Schools' Controlled Choice Plan be revised to support the district's core values of academic excellence and social justice for all students, by providing equal access to an array of highly attractive, excellent quality schools, which offer students the benefits of learning alongside and engaged with a diverse group of fellow students. And further that the following recommendations put forward in the document Controlled Choice in Cambridge a Comprehensive Review and Recommendations be adopted: 6/4/13

1. Strengthen the Rules Governing Balance
2. Increase Access to Attractive Choices
3. Strengthen the Rules that Govern Access
4. Improve and Clarify Controlled Choice Practices
5. A Coherent Controlled Choice Policy will be Drafted by the Superintendent

Below is a description of the five recommendations above. Further information on each recommendation is on pages 8 – 23 of *Controlled Choice in Cambridge, A Comprehensive Review and Recommendations*, these pages follow this recommendation.

**1. Strengthen the Rules Governing Balance**

1a. The  $\pm 10\%$  band will no longer be used for assignment purposes. For only the school year 2014/15 a  $\pm 5\%$  band will be used as 'at least one strand will be opened for September 2014' (see 2b). Starting for the school year 2014/15 no band will be used as 2a is implemented.

After reviewing the composition of the January applicants for kindergarten, the Superintendent will have the flexibility to propose to the School Committee a +/- percentage point band sufficient to allow the assignment of all applicants. This +/- percentage point band will require approval by the School Committee and will be used for that one year only.

And further the  $\pm 10\%$  band will continue to be used as a measurement and reporting standard for indicating the range of acceptable SES balance.

**1b.** Balance will be calculated separately for the lower schools and for the upper schools to best capture the most current enrollment trends and to better support the implementation of the Innovation Agenda (IA). And the remaining JK-8 school will also calculate balance separately for its upper school students.

**1c.** Assignments will be allocated by enrollment starting for the first grade to maximize the beneficial effects of balanced grade level cohorts. Capacity will continue to be used for JK/K assignments.

## **2. Increase Access to Attractive Choices**

2a. The Superintendent will work with administrators, teachers and school councils of schools and programs throughout the district, that are under chosen by either or both SES categories, to develop a comprehensive plan, which may include programmatic change or other changes, designed to achieve socio-economic balance in those schools and programs. The process for addressing this issue will be presented to the School Committee by October 2013, and the plan for changes designed to achieve socio-economic balance will be proposed by May 2014 and will include a timetable for implementation. The timetable will include at least one initiative ready to enroll students for the 2015/16 school year.

~~Schools that have been consistently under chosen by either SES category will become new attractive choices through dramatic programmatic change. The Superintendent will identify which schools will participate and will create a process that includes the input of all stakeholders.~~

~~The first whole school programmatic change will be ready for students in September 2014. The program chosen should have a proven record of success with urban populations, be attractive to families in both SES categories, and have an independent set of standards, such as but not limited to the Montessori or the International Baccalaureate. The Superintendent will make the first whole school programmatic change recommendation to the School Committee by no later than the Regular Meeting preceding the November school break of 2013. This will allow materials to be written describing this new choice in time for the January 2014 lottery and will allow time for appropriate professional development and other necessary preparation. This timetable is necessary, so that a new attractive option is available to families as policies to better balance schools are introduced.~~

**2b.** Additional strands will be added to existent schools West of Harvard Square. And further, at least one strand will be opened for September 2014, so that additional seats in a highly chosen school are available to families as policies to better balance schools are introduced. More strands will be added in future years as space allows, including potential additional space as buildings are renovated.

**2c.** District seat capacity will be closely monitored and maintained in alignment with enrollment trends.

## **3. Strengthen the Rules that Govern Access**

3a. The current policy of Proximity Preference Points will be maintained at this time.

~~3a. Options maintaining the current proximity practice compared to reducing Proximity Preference Points will be presented at the June 18, 2013 Regular meeting of the School Committee. These options will show the range of probable results of reducing the Proximity Preference Points. Differing Proximity Preference Point numbers will open the possibility of a seat at every school choice for every family, while retaining differing degrees of extra benefit to families living near a particular school.~~

~~Proximity Preference Points will be reduced giving more weight to the random lottery number and thereby opening the possibility of a seat at every school choice for every family, while retaining some extra benefit to families living near a particular school.~~

**3b. Retain and Clarify Sibling Preference**

**3c.** All children who turn four on or before August 31<sup>st</sup> will be eligible to enter a lottery for a limited number of JK seats. For the fall of 2014 the Superintendent will determine the number of JK seats that will be available, this number will expand as space allows with the goal of access to JK for all four year olds. These seats will be available through separate lottery held after the January kindergarten lottery. in the fall lottery (see 4b.), giving parents more time to plan alternative placements for their children. Children not receiving a placement will be on waitlists, which terminate at the end of the December of their JK year. These families must reapply for the Kindergarten Lottery. Families accepting a JK placement may not reapply for the Kindergarten Lottery.

**3d.** Junior kindergarten and kindergarten will each be balanced for SES separately by grade level.

**3e.** It is recommended that when a Special Education or English Language Learner child is placed in a substantially separate classroom, and is likely to fully mainstream, that their name is automatically placed at the top of the waitlist to be mainstreamed. If the child is ready and a seat at their grade level becomes available and the Controlled Choice requirements are met, the child is mainstreamed. Otherwise, the child remains on the waitlist in the same position. Note This is not intended to replace a parent's/guardian's ability to place their child's name on up to three waitlists of their own school choices.

**3f.** The group of children applying in the first round for junior kindergarten or kindergarten will be placed at the top of appropriate waitlists for the schools they chose on their applications. And further, children on waitlists to transfer between schools will be placed behind the new 1<sup>st</sup> round applicants.

**4. Improve and Clarify Controlled Choice Practices**

**4a.** Lottery application will remain in January for JK/K.

**4b.** It is recommended that in addition to the January Lottery there be one more lottery for the students that register between February 1<sup>st</sup> and the assignment of January applicants. Following that second lottery, students will be assigned to a school their family chooses on a first come first served model. Each family will be informed about the seats available and be allowed to choose any seat available following SES balance criteria. Families can then, if they wish, place their child on up to three waitlists.

**4c.** It is recommended that a separate registration period for the programs available to students under the age of K eligibility be held by the FRC each fall.

**4d.** It is recommended that in-district transfers be accommodated until the December school vacation.

**4e. Hardships:**

- are only granted for the physical or emotional safety of the student
- must be for the direct benefit of the student
- are not granted for parent/guardian convenience
- cannot be used to simply override the Controlled Choice Policy
- shall not be used to gain admission to a specific school
- may be used if siblings, upon entry, cannot be admitted to the same school

**Hardship Appeal Process for a Change of School Assignment**

The Superintendent will develop guidelines to be used to determine under what conditions a Hardship Appeal will be granted. These guidelines will include specific information about what types of documentation may be presented at a hardship hearing. The guidelines will be available in print and online.

Requests for a Hardship Appeal Hearing will be made to the Family Resource Center using a Hardship Appeal Form. When the Hardship Appeal Process is appropriate a hearing will be held within six weeks of the date it is requested. If a Hardship Appeal Hearing is not appropriate the family will receive in writing a response explaining why and whenever possible

a recommendation of other routes to meet their child's needs.

Three Hearing Officers that are designees of the Superintendent will hold hardship hearings and all decisions will be based on the guidelines. Families will receive written notification of the decision made by the Hearing Officers. When a hardship is granted the Superintendent's designee will work with the family to find an appropriate safe school for the student involved. The timing of a hardship transfer will be chosen to maximize benefit for the student.

If the response is not to grant the family's request then a brief explanation and whenever possible a recommendation of other routes to meeting their child's needs will be included in the letter.

Families that wish to appeal the decision of the Hardship Officers may appeal to the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Records will be kept of all requests for appeals and of all appeals heard. The records shall include but not be limited to: the child's grade level, ethnicity and SES status, the school they attend when applying, the reason for the hardship and the family's requested outcome, the Hearing Officers' response and the action taken. Once a year the School Committee will receive a report compiling this data in a way that maintains the privacy of families and students.

**5a.** A coherent Controlled Choice Policy will be drafted by the Superintendent for adoption by the School Committee by the 1st meeting in October 2013.  
**(C13-131)**

**#13-93, Motion by Ms. Turkel** that an Upper Schools Course Description Booklet be created for distribution to families by October 15, for distribution at the District's expense to all families by November 1.  
**(C13-142)**

**#13-94, Motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Fantini** that whereas, the School Committee has passed policy that all families leaving the District will have exit interviews to gather information and improve community outreach and satisfaction, that the Superintendent report to the School Committee at the summer meeting all information from students withdrawing over the last two years, including Kindergarten registrants, and if no information is currently available, a recommendation on how to improve data collection moving forward.  
**(C13-143)**

6/4/13

**#13-82, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that whereas, the District has been invited to join the national collaborative initiative which has formed a national consortium of programs focused on Chinese and Portuguese language programs, and whereas, the consortium requires no financial commitment and offers free resources and opportunities to participating districts including study abroad opportunities, curriculum support and assessment tools, and whereas, Cambridge has been a leader in bilingual education including Chinese and Portuguese, that the District accept the offer to join the consortium, per the invitation letter.  
**(C13-123)**

5/7/13

**#13-60,** Approval of Cyrus Dallin Art Museum's Request to Make Mold of Praying Knight Statue and to Exhibit Statue.  
**(Turkel)(C13-099)**

5/7/13

**#13-44, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the School Committee Rules reinstate the section Awaiting Reports on the Agenda. Further, that all motions requesting reports from the last two years be reviewed and any still in process be added to the Agenda. (second reading)  
**(Nolan)(C13-080)**

4/2/13

**#13-14, Retention of the law firm of Edwards Wildman** and referral of letters from the Freedom from Religion Foundation: that the School Committee authorize the retention of the law firm of Edwards Wildman and to refer the attached letters from the Freedom from Religion Foundation to the Office of Legal Counsel and the law firm of Edwards Wildman to address in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools.

2/5/13

**(Mr. Fantini)(C13-022)**

**6. Superintendent's Report/Presentations/Consent Agenda:**

**6a. Innovation Agenda:**

**6b. Consent Agenda:**

**#13-95** Recommendation: Contract Award: AmSan: Custodial Supplies

**#13-96** Recommendation: Contract Award: MD Stetson: Custodial Supplies

**#13-97** Recommendation: Contract Award: Casey EMI: Custodial Supplies

**#13-98** Recommendation: Contract Award: Integration Partners: Wireless Network Equipment

**#13-99** Recommendation: Contract Award: Apple, Inc.: iMacs with AppleCare Protection for Teachers in Grades 3-5

**#13-100** Recommendation: Contract Award: Whalley Computer Associates Inc., Laptop/Netbook Carts for Student & Classroom Devices In Grades 3-5

**#13-101** Recommendation: Contract Award: HiQ Computers: Student & Classroom Devices for Grades 305

**#13-102** Recommendation: Grand Award (1)

**SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATION:**

**#13-107** Recommendation: That the School Committee approve the Superintendent's recommendation for the Martin Luther King, Jr. School program as detailed in the document

**7. School Committee Agenda (Policy Matters/Notifications/Requests for Information):**

**#13-103** Report of the May 14, 2013 Sub-Committee on Controlled Choice

**#13-104** Report of the May 15, 2013 Sub-Committee Meeting on Community Engagement

**#13-105** Report of the May 28, 2013 Sub-Committee on Controlled Choice

**8. Non-Consent Agenda:**

**9. Resolutions (letters of congratulations, letters of condolence):**

**#13-106** Motion by Mr. Harding that the School Committee sends a letter of condolence to the family of Verina Crowley, former 26 year employee of CPSD, who recently passed away.

**10. Announcements:**

**11. Late Orders:**