

# SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

**Regular Meeting**

**June 4, 2013**

Called for 6:00 PM in the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge.

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Nolan, Mr. Osborne, Ms. Turkel,  
Mayor Davis

Mayor Davis in the Chair.

Also Present: Student School Committee Members Lucy Sternbach and Grant Baker

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM.

## **1. Public Comment:**

The following individuals were heard:

- Adam Mitchell, Sterns Street, SEI Mainstreaming
- Anna Bouchard, Linnaean Street, Controlled Choice
- Chris Colbath-Hess, CEA, Controlled Choice
- Viscenza Givens, Columbia Street, Youth Involvement Sub-Committee
- Griffen Andres, Reid Street, Youth Involvement Sub-Committee
- Jivahir Sundai, Perkins Street, Youth Involvement Sub-Committee
- Mohammed Sayed , Youth Involvement Sub-Committee

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to suspend the Rules for the purpose of a brief discussion with the students from the Youth Involvement Sub-Committee. The students responded to Members questions.

The Chair returned to the regular order of business.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to close public comment.

## **2. Student School Committee Report:**

Ms. Sternbach reported that the freshmen are taking the MCAS over the next two days. All sports have ended for the year; and for the first time in CRLS' history the girls' La Crosse team has made it to State finals. Mr. Baker reported that classes have ended for the seniors. Graduation is Thursday, June 6 at 6:00 PM. Tickets are required for admission. Mayor Davis presented Ms. Sternbach and Mr. Baker with plaques in appreciation for their dedication and commitment during the school year. Ms. Sternbach will be returning next year as Student School Committee Representative and Mr. Baker will graduate from CRLS on Thursday and attend college next year.

## **3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:**

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Turkel, it was voted to accept the minutes of the May 7, 2012 Regular Meeting.

**4. Reconsiderations:** None

**5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:**

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to take up Unfinished Business after the Superintendent's presentations.

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

**Presentations:**

**I. Update on King Building Construction:**

The Superintendent introduced Deputy Manager Richard Rossi. Mr. Rossi turned the presentation over to the Perkins Eastman Architects for an update on the King building construction. Members were walked through the following presentation:

*Martin Luther King, Jr. School:* School Committee Briefing (copy on file in the School Committee office.)

Agenda:

Program & Organizational Principals  
Integrated Process & Net Zero Energy  
Design Concepts  
    Interior Design  
    Exterior Design  
Schedule

Cambridge's Vision

1. Innovation Agenda
2. Net Zero Energy

Program Summary:

Program  
Statistics

Organizational Principles:

Principle

The Integrated Process

Design Concept

Site Plan

- Design Development Floor Plan – Ground Level
- Design Development Floor Plan – Level 1
- Design Development Floor Plan – Level 2
- Design Development Floor Plan – Level 3
- Design Development Floor Plan – Roof Photovoltaics

MLK – Integrated Design Workshops

MLK Daylighting Workshop: Zoned for Hours of Use

Daylight Section – Classrooms

Daylight Section – King Street & Auditorium

MLK Daylighting Workshop: Solar Access Studies

MLK Daylighting Workshop: Solar Access Studies

Extended Learning Environments, Circulation & Borrowed Light

L-Shaped Classroom: Zoned for Natural Light

MLK Equipment Workshop – Plug Loads in the Classroom

MLK Equipment Work- Centralizing Plug Loads

Learning Through the Seasons

- Design Concept
- Learning Through the Seasons
- Upper School Academic Neighborhood: Autumn
- Lower School Academic Neighborhood: Summer
- King Street: Winter to Spring
- Learning Commons: Winter to Spring
- Learning Commons: Winter to Spring
- Learning Commons: Upper School
- Learning Commons: Lower School
- Cafeteria: Upper School
- Cafeteria: Lower School
- Renderings
- Entry Court at Putnam Avenue
- Schedule

Energy Benchmarking – EUI  
Setting the Energy Budget: MLK, Jr. School  
NZE Scale & Energy Intensity

Mr. Rossi and his team answered Members' questions and concerns. The Chair thanked Mr. Rossi for an informative presentation.

## **II. Math Curriculum Update:**

Following opening remarks by Dr. Turk, Members were introduced to Mark Healy, Math Curriculum Coordinator. Mr. Healy and his team\* walked the Committee through the following PowerPoint presentation (copy on file in the School Committee office):

**Cambridge Public Schools Mathematics Update** (copy on file in the School Committee office.):

- Discussion Points
- Math Curriculum Review
- Mission Statement – New
- 2012-2013 School Year
- Advisory Committee Report (\*Karen Dobak, Parent)
- Math Update
- Common Core Implementation
- Grade 6 Co-Teaching (\*Mary Elizabeth Cranton and Tracey Pratt, CSUS co-teachers)
- Differentiation in Grade 6 (Katelyn Fournier, Rindge Ave. Upper School)
- Grade 8 Algebra (\*Michelle Calioro, Putnam Ave. Upper School)
- Algebra 1 in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade
- 6-12 Pathway Focus (\*Emily Samek and Dionne Harden, CRLS)
- Next Steps
- Mission Statement

Mr. Healy and his team answered questions from the Members. The Chair thanked everyone for the presentation and complimented them for valued information.

On a motion by Ms. Turkel, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to extend the meeting to 10:15 PM.

### **6a. Innovation Agenda:**

### **6b. Consent Agenda:**

On a motion by Ms. Turkel, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to bring forward for adoption the Superintendent's Consent Agenda:

**#13-86**, that the School Committee approve an increase in school lunch prices:

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
Elementary Lunch	\$2.50	\$2.75
Elementary Lunch Adult	\$3.50	\$3.75
High School Lunch	\$2.75	\$3.00
High School Adult Lunch Adult	\$3.75	\$4.00
Ala Carte Milk	\$0.35	\$0.50

**#13-87, Grant Awards:** that the School Committee accept and approve the grant awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. Popplestone Foundation, for the period May 16, 2013 to June 30, 2014, in the amount of \$234,448.00. Project/Grant SC14695.

**Description:** This foundation grant will continue to support the salary of two full time music teachers to continue teaching grades K-2 at the Peabody and Fletcher-Maynard Academy. In addition, beginning in SY14, the Popplestone Foundation grant will support two .4 positions at the Morse and Tobin schools. Funds will also be used to purchase musical instruments and instructional materials.

**CPS Target Population:** Students in Grades K-2 at the Peabody School, Fletcher-Maynard Academy, Morse and Tobin schools.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** Development of music literacy and ability in students in the early grades will lead to continue interest in pursuing music and increase students' engagement in their school. Part of the project involves following the progress of students through Grade 4 and beyond to examine the relationship between Kodaly music program and the academic progress of its students.

2. Draper Laboratory, for the period May 22, 2013 to July 30, 2013, in the amount of \$2,000.00. Project/Grant SC14106.

**Description:** This private grant will support the purchase of 15 Cordless LED Student Compound Microscopes with C&F Focus and Digital Camera, one for each of the 15 middle grade science classrooms across the district. With these new microscopes, teachers will be able to digitally project images from a compound microscope. When specimens are examined under an individual microscope, the images are often fleeting and observable by only one student at a time. With projection of images to the entire class, all students become engaged as a group in observation, discussion and analysis.

**CPS Target Population:** Middle school science students and teachers.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** Increased engagement and understanding through hands-on activities will contribute to improved student achievement as measured by State and local assessments.

**#13-88, Approval of the Gift of a 2000 Toyota Camry, Model LE for Use by the CRLS Driver**

**Education Program:** that the School Committee approve the gift of a 2000 Toyota Camry model LE for use by the CRLS Driver Education Program.

**#13-89, Change in Vacation Benefits for Non-Union 12 Month Employees:** that the School Committee approve a change to the vacation benefits for non-union 12 month employees as per the document provided. On the following roll call the above items were adopted: Ms. Turkel YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mr. Harding YEA; Mr. McGovern YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Mr. Osborne YEA; Mayor Davis YEA.

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

The following items were placed on the 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, that water dispensers such as those that have been successfully piloted at two schools this year be used to meet this need.

**#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, to all families by November 1.

On the following roll call, it was voted to place the following on the Calendar for a second reading:

**#13-92, Joint Motion 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:

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. Ms. Turkel YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mr. Harding YEA; Mr. McGovern YEA; Ms. Nolan NAY; Mr. Osborne YEA; Mayor Davis YEA.

The following items were placed on the Calendar:

**#13-93, Motion by Ms. Turkel**, that an Upper School Course Description Booklet be created for distribution to families by October 15, for distribution at the Districts' expense to all families by November 1.

**#13-94, Joint 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.

The Chair returned to the regular order of business.

**Unfinished Business/Calendar:**

**#13-80, Controlled Choice Plan** was removed from the Calendar and replaced by **#13-192**, as amended.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. McGovern it was voted that **#13-81, Joint motion by Ms. Turkel and Mr. Fantini** that the Superintendent develops a plan which allows students in the SEI classroom to fully mainstream without switching be removed from the Calendar and adopted.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to remove from the Calendar and adopt **#13-83, Joint Motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Harding** that whereas in the past School Committee has discussed several items related to AP classes and tests, including rates of participation by ethnicity, socio-economic status and gender, whether to require all students in AP classes to take the tests, whether to further subsidize test costs, whether to de-emphasize AP courses and how to support all students enrolled in AP course, now therefore the School Committee requests that a report on the AP program at CRLS covering all these topics be delivered in the fall, with any recommendations to improve the program.

On the following roll call, it was voted to remove from the Calendar and adopt as amended **#13-59, Approval of Revisions to Graduation Requirements Policy**: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the graduation requirements policy as detailed in the document (second reading): Ms. Turkel YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mr. Harding YEA; Mr. McGovern YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Mr. Osborne YEA; Mayor Davis YEA.

Members passed over all other Unfinished Business.

**4. Non-Consent Agenda:**

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

**6. Announcements:**

**7. Late Orders:**

On a motion by Ms. Turkel, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adjourn (10:10 PM).

Patricia A. Berry  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee