

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

January 19, 2016

Called for 6:00 PM in the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of discussing any and all business that may properly come before the Committee.

Members Present: Ms. Bowman, Ms. Dexter, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Nolan, and Mayor Simmons

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

Also present: Student School Committee Members Griffin Andres and Ben Austin

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

1. Public Comment:

There being no one signed up to speak, on a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to close public comment.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Mr. Andres reported that the CRLS boys' basketball team is doing extremely well and beat Cathedral High School 73-37. They will be playing in an invitational tournament against Bishop Hendricken of Rhode Island at TD Garden on Sunday, January 24th, at 2:30 p.m.

Mr. Austin reported that Modern Dance Company had their Danceworks performance. CRLS portrait art show did their annual art show working with residents at the Windsor House. There was a fashion exhibit last week and a Jazz drum line and big band concert as well. The Boston Globe recently had articles regarding a Y2Y shelter (youth to youth) being built in Harvard Square for youth homeless people ages 18-24. This shelter was founded by Sam Greenberg, a 2010 graduate of CRLS and presently a student at Harvard. Current CRLS students are volunteering at the Y2Y shelter.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to accept the Minutes of the following meetings as presented:

- Special Meeting – December 15, 2015
- Regular Meeting – December 15, 2015
- Organization Meeting – January 4, 2016
- Regular Meeting – January 5, 2016

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:

On a motion by Ms. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to remove item **#16-08** from the Calendar and place on file. **#16-08, Joint Motion by Mr. Fantini and Ms. Kelly**, that understanding the need and importance for all of us to have a community conversation about testing and assessment, we request that the Superintendent in consultation with the School Committee set a date in February for this conversation. (Fantini, 1/5/16)

6. **Awaiting Reports:** None

7. **Superintendent's Agenda:**

7a. **Presentations:**

2015 MCAS Report Teaching & Learning Team

Dr. Young welcomed the Teaching and Learning Team (TLT): Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Huizenga, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction; and Ms. MacDonald, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education. Dr. Young stated that he is proud of his staff and sees significant improvements in the MCAS results. It is a journey and there is still plenty of work to be done. Dr. Turk spoke of the work done and acknowledged Dr. Greer, and the principals who are here tonight to offer support: Chris Gerber, Principal of the Kennedy Longfellow School; Damon Smith, Principal of CRLS; and Pat Beggy, Principal of the Morse School. Dr. Turk shared that tonight's story is the achievement over time for CPS (5 year and 10 year overview). She stated that this is one conversation only and she would like to have ongoing conversations about the work going on across the district; the more conversations we have, the stronger we can become. It was also stated that the TLT has charted every sub-group at every grade level and has the information available to share.

The Teaching and Learning Team walked the Members through the 2015 MCAS Presentation to the School Committee:

MCAS Report 2015, Cambridge Public Schools (on file in the School Committee Office)

Agenda:

- Framing the Assessment Conversation
- Accountability Status
 - Significance
 - District Strategy
- CPS Overtime
- The Work Ahead
- Summary and Questions Raised

Dr. Young thanked the Teaching and Learning Team for providing us with the data and for this cohesive presentation.

Mr. Fantini asked that the Chair to recognize Mr. Smith, Principal of CRLS; Christine Gerber, Principal of the Kennedy-Longfellow School; and Ms. Pat Beggy, Principal of the Morse School. Each principal spoke about the highlights of his/her school's MCAS results in terms of growth and in areas of need and answered questions from the Members.

Dr. Turk, Dr. Huizenga and Ms. MacDonald responded to the Members questions, comments and concerns:

- How much actual conversation is going on around curriculum and instruction and learning from each other
- Are there any other structures that the school system needs to get us there
- Principals need to focus on social and emotional learning

- How can we be helpful regarding educators feeling overwhelmed with social and emotional issues
- We need a better understanding of what you need so that we can be more helpful
- What can we do to make sure schools don't slip back from level 1 to level 2; we need a model of continuous improvement
- Deep gaps between certain sub-groups are a concern
- Do you have systems in place to predict when there will be a decline in scores
- What bar do we want to reach; compare ourselves to the top 25 schools systems instead of the State
- Do we know how much this test actually tells us about student abilities and what they have learned
- Do you believe we are back on track to have all level 1 schools
- There is concern for large gap in African American students overall
- Is growth in math an area of focus overall
- Need to have a conversation of what it means to set goals attached to this data
- Grade 10 African American students have done much better than in the State
- Need to be careful when comparing cohorts over 5 years; they can be completely different students
- Growth scores for Cambridge are usually between 40 and 60%, same as they are in the State
- It is a black/white gap
- We are not accelerating the rate of African American students
- Where are all the resources; we've had reductions over the past years
- Target resources at the students who are struggling
- Maybe in the future have one meeting on the elementary program as a whole with MCAS as a piece of it; then have a meeting on upper schools and then the high school
- How are we thinking about high expectations for success for our students; what are the best practices that are working in the system; how are we evaluating Highly Effective Teacher (HET) program
- What is the action plan to address those students falling into the gap; have a meeting to discuss this
- Structural issues in the upper schools affect the scores, e.g. scheduling, time spent in core subjects
- Do we do specific training about stereotype threat
- What are some interventions we can put in place for the adults
- Students of color in this district are not doing well; we need to raise achievement of students of color; the students who are not doing well in our schools are disproportionately black or brown

Mr. Austin acknowledged CRLS math and physics teachers who volunteer and help students with their projects. He asked how the school system and the State will measure progress over time when MCAS is phased out. Dr. Huizenga responded that there is the Every Student Succeeds Act happening at the State right now. The State is working on the statistical measures and that we are in transition right now and won't know for another 2 years when the State has their metrics. Dr. Huizenga noted that the standards are the floor not the ceiling and that we need to set high expectations.

The Chair thanked Dr. Turk, Dr. Huizenga, Ms. MacDonald and the principals for being here tonight for this informative presentation. The Chair asked that the School Committee keep in mind that this is an ongoing conversation and that we should have periodic check-ins. She shared that maybe a roundtable format on this topic would be helpful. Mayor Simmons asked if the demographics of the children have changed. How are those scores in terms of gender? Dr. Turk indicated that yes the demographics over that last few years has changed. Mayor Simmons noted that some schools are doing well in educating children of color; what is happening in those schools. What are best practices? We should set the bar. We are still under serving the students we have always underserved.

Dr. Turk made final comments and shared that they have been making an intentional effort to work with teachers and our leaders to analyze data, own it and deal with it. This is about making improvements and talking about data together.

Dr. Young acknowledged his team for their talent, time and expertise and also for their courage.

The Chair returned to the regular order of business.

7b. Innovation Agenda:

7c. Consent Agenda:

Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Ms. Kelly, to bring forward the Superintendent's Consent Agenda for discussion. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Bowman, it was voted to move items **#16-09 and #16-10** for adoption.

#16-09, Approval of Revision to the School Committee Organizational Meeting Policy, that the School Committee approve the revision to the School Committee Organizational Policy as detailed in the document (second reading). On the following roll call, item **#16-09** was adopted: Mr. Fantini YEA; Mr. Harding YEA; Ms. Kelly YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Ms. Bowman YEA; Ms. Dexter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA.

#16-10, Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts, that the School Committee accept and approve the receipts as described.

An in-kind donation of a Canon Rebel XSi DSLR Camera and accessories made from an individual donor to the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School to be used by students to take photographs for assignments in Photography 1, 2 and 3 courses. On the following roll call, item **#16-10** was adopted: Mr. Fantini YEA; Mr. Harding YEA; Ms. Kelly YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Ms. Bowman YEA; Ms. Dexter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA.

Ms. Kelly and Mr. Harding, Budget Co-Chairs, informed the Chair that they would not be convening for a Budget Sub-Committee during this meeting and this item was passed over.

Ms. Kelly reminded everyone of the public hearing on the FY2017 budget being held on Saturday, January 23, 2016, at 11:00 a.m. at Cambridge City Hall. Ms. Dexter asked if there would be a provision for translators at the public hearing. Ms. Kelly answered that there would not be translators at the public hearing and that there hasn't been a need to use them in the past. She offered that there may be other ways to use outreach through our community engagement teams. Ms. Kelly also mentioned that having talked to MASC, that the school systems which typically offered translators at meetings have 2 language groups. We have many language groups in our district. She indicated that this could be discussed further at another time.

8. Non-Consent Agenda: None

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

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Dexter, it was voted to bring forward items **#16-11 through #16-15** for discussion and adoption.

#16-11, Joint Motion by Ms. Kelly and Mr. Fantini, that understanding the School Committee and District Leadership recognize the need and importance for a community conversation about state mandated and district-determined assessments for grades JK-8, a World Café style forum will be scheduled on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 with the location to be determined. Information about current CPS assessments will be provided. Feedback on assessment will be reported back and recorded for review by the School Committee and the District Leadership. A follow-up session based on this feedback will be held in April 2016.

Ms. Kelly and Mr. Fantini offered the following substitution/amendment to their joint motion **#16-11: Joint Motion by Ms. Kelly and Mr. Fantini**, that understanding the School Committee and District Leadership recognize the need and importance for a community conversation about state mandated and local CPS assessments for grades JK-8, a World Café style forum will be scheduled on Tuesday, February 23, 2016 with the location to be determined. Information about current CPS assessments will be provided. Feedback on assessment will be reported back and recorded for review by the School Committee and the District Leadership. A follow-up session based on this feedback will be held in May 2016.

Discussion followed on item **#16-11**. Ms. Nolan asked who will be the target audience; what will the roles of teachers, staff and the Cambridge Education Association (CEA) be in developing the World Café and what will the questions be. Ms. Kelly responded that the target audience would be aimed towards attendance by teachers, parents and other community members. Mr. Fantini and Ms. Kelly are meeting with CEA representatives tomorrow. Ms. Kelly indicated that discussion will be guided by facilitators at each of the tables and that participants would rotate through 3 tables over the course of the evening. The Superintendent would do framing and Dr. Huizenga would do a brief presentation on assessment. Ms. Nolan asked what the framing would be. The Chair urged the Members to allow the makers of the motion to follow up on this. She suggested that the Members, through the Executive Secretary, could indicate what they would like included in this World Café. Dr. Young's thought was that the purpose of this World Café would be to share information and increase everyone's awareness on assessments. Mr. Harding thanked the makers of the motion for going forward with his suggestion of the world café. He noted that the public should be aware of the expectations of this. Some folks have a different opinion and need to be able to share their thoughts. Ms. Dexter suggested that there be parents on the planning committee to help frame the questions. Ms. Bowman added that we need to look at who is present at the event. There has to be other ways to gauge the conversation and add the voice of those not in attendance to the conversation. Mayor Simmons stated that we need to start to quantify who comes to meetings and find out why some people aren't coming. We should reach out to schools, churches, after-school programs, etc. and keep this as broad as possible. On a voice vote, item **#16-11** was adopted as amended.

#16-12, Motion by Mr. Fantini, that the School Committee requests Legal Counsel to provide an update to the Committee on all pending legal matters and to set a time for an Executive Session for this purpose. Mr. Harding asked what the spirit of this motion was. Mr. Fantini offered an amendment to his motion to also include an update on contract negotiations. On a voice vote, **#16-12** was adopted as amended:

#16-12, Motion by Mr. Fantini, that the School Committee requests Legal Counsel to provide an update to the Committee on all pending legal matters and contract negotiations and to set a time for an Executive Session for this purpose.

#16-13, Joint Motion by Ms. Bowman and Mr. Fantini, that the Superintendent update the School Committee on plans for safe walking routes and the use of crossing guards (if necessary) for schools relocating during the 2015/2016 academic school year. These schools include King Open's move to the Longfellow building and the Martin Luther King Jr. and Putnam Avenue Upper Schools move to their new facility. Ms. Bowman informed the Committee that she has had conversations with parents and they expressed concerns regarding walking routes and busing routes. She wants to make sure parents are fully aware of the transportation implications. Mr. Fantini added that the parents were very willing to work with the administration on this and were flexible. Dr. Young suggested that this motion be amended to include Cambridge Street Upper School. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Bowman and on a voice vote, **#16-13** was adopted as amended: **#16-13, Joint Motion by Ms. Bowman and Mr. Fantini**, that the Superintendent update the School Committee on plans for safe walking routes and the use of crossing guards (if necessary) for schools relocating during the 2015/2016 academic school year. These schools include King Open's move to the Longfellow building, the Martin Luther King Jr. and Putnam Avenue Upper School's move to their new facility and the Cambridge Street Upper School's move to the Kennedy/Longfellow building.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to accept the following report as presented:

#16-14, December 17, 2015 Meeting of the Inauguration Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee Report

**Meeting of the Inauguration Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee
School Committee Conference room**

**Thursday, December 17, 2015
10:30 AM**

Called for the purpose of discussing plans for the January 4, 2016 School Committee Inauguration.

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Chair; Ms. Bowman, Member Elect, Ms. Dexter, Member Elect

Also present: Ms. Kelly, Ms. Nolan, Mr. Simpson, VPA Coordinator; Griffin Andres, Student Member

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present, Mr. Fantini called the meeting to order at 10:35 AM. He read the call of the meeting.

Mr. Fantini in the Chair.

Discussion took place around the following items related to the 2016 School Committee Inauguration:

- Music
 - The Peabody Early Bird Singers have been confirmed. They will be doing both musical selections on the program.
 - There will be chamber music as people enter.
 - Mr. Simpson has ordered the buses for transportation.
 - Ms. Martin asked Mr. Simpson for an update on selecting students to recite the pledge of allegiance in multiple languages. Mr. Simpson will look into it and respond to Ms. Martin.
- Masters of Ceremony
 - Ms. Martin spoke about prompts for the MCs
 - After the MC introduces the Member Elect, someone will accompany the person on stage.
 - Names need to be given to Ms. Martin asap.
 - Principal Robin Harris submitted a bio poem. It will be the introduction and read by a MC.
- Student Ushers
 - There will be no more than 8 students.
 - Griffin and Ben will come up with student names from the high school. Originally, it was suggested to use upper school students, but it was decided today to go with CRLS students to solve transportation issues.
- Catering
 - Purchasing did a formal bid process. The bid went to Trillfoods. They are working with purchasing for all details.
- Photographer
 - Bethany Versoy, the School Department photographer, will meet with Ms. Martin at 1:30 today. She will be taking photos at the inauguration.
- Organization Meeting, January 4, 2016
 - Ms. Martin will send a memo to the Members at the beginning of vacation week. Someone will have to make a motion to elect a vice chair, and someone will have to make a motion to adopt the rules of the School Committee. She will send the Rules with the memo.
- CRLS Cafeteria
 - The cafeteria planting grounds will be discussed with Ms. Honeywood
 - At one time City Sprouts planted herbs in it, however, presently nothing is growing.
- Invitations
 - Ms. Dexter gave a list of partnerships that are in the budget with official standing that she would like formally invited. She also suggested that each individual school could also

give School Committee a list of who they think should be invited. It was brought up that this event is an open meeting. Ms. Dexter offered to call all principals, but it was stated that all principals have already been invited along with their staff.

Ms. Martin showed the participant badges to all in attendance; they were very well received. It was stated by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Fantini, and everyone agreed, that Ms. Martin has done a great job and should be congratulated for all of her hard work in organizing this event.

It was moved by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Nolan to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Dosha Ellis Beard
Confidential Secretary
to the School Committee office

10. Resolutions:

It was voted to adopt the following:

#16-15, Joint Motion by Ms. Dexter, Mr. Fantini and Mr. Harding, that the Cambridge Public Schools recognize and honor February 1st-5th, 2016, as National School Counseling Week, and that on behalf of the School Committee, the National School Counseling Week Proclamation provided to the School Committee by the CRLS Guidance Department be circulated to all CPS principals for them to share with their school communities.

11. Announcements:

12. Late Orders:

It was voted to adopt the following:

Motion by Ms. Nolan, that the School Committee send a letter of thanks to Many Helping Hands 365 for organizing the Cambridge Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service on January 18, 2016.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Bowman, it was voted to adjourn (9:05 PM).

Judith T. Martin
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Distributed Back-up Documents (copies on file in the School Committee office):

- ✓ 2015 MCAS Presentation to the School Committee PowerPoint Slides
- ✓ 2015 MCAS Report