

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, February 1, 2005

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Walser, Mayor Sullivan

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

Also Present: Student Representatives Littane Bien-Aimie, Krishana House

On a motion by Ms. Walser, it was voted to suspend the Rules to bring forward Superintendent's Recommendation #05-012, Approval to go into Executive Session. On the following roll it was voted to go into Executive Session for the purpose of conducting strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee: Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Lummis ABSENT, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

The Chair announced that no votes will be taken in Executive Session and the Committee will reconvene in Open Session.

Executive Session

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Walser, Mayor Sullivan

Also Present: Thomas Fowler-Finn, Superintendent
Barbara Allen, Executive Director, Human Resources
James Conry, Chief Financial Officer
Maureen MacFarlane, In House Counsel
James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer
Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent
Paul Toner, President, CTA
Jack Haverty, Vice President, CTA and Chair of the Grievance Committee

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

Mr. Haverty presented a grievance on behalf of Units A & B. He and Mr. Toner exited the meeting. The Members discussed strategies for negotiations with Legal Counsel.

It was voted to reconvene in Open Session.

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

A quorum being present, the Chair reconvened the meeting and announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings: None

Public Comment on School Committee Agenda

There being no one signed up, on a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to close Public Comment.

On behalf of his colleagues, Mayor Sullivan presented Mary Grassi, Title I Director, with a Resolution proclaiming "February 1, 2005, Mary Grassi Day in Cambridge". The Superintendent presented Ms. Grassi with the National Association of Special Education Program Administrator State Leadership Award. The Members and the Superintendent congratulated Ms. Grassi on her award.

The Chair introduced Richard Rossi, Deputy City Manager, and Alan Burne, Library Project Manager, who presented the library construction mitigation plan and design. Mr. Burne said that the project is 95% complete and the plan is to get the contractor on site the second week in July. Mr. Rossi and Mr. Burne responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns raised by Members:

- Can this project be used as a science and engineering component in the classroom
- Why Jersey barriers in some places and not others
- Will there be security in the evening during construction
- Where will trucks be staged
- What is the plan to remove asbestos
- Meet with Dr. Knight to relocate students during summer school
- Need further suggestions regarding ramp gate and proximity to high school
- Need student representatives to get information from other students
- Look at locating summer school in other buildings in the city during demolition
- Work on issues of traffic calming on campus and pedestrian crossings
- Who is responsible for making students cross responsibly
- What will happen to the space when the old building is demolished
- Survey and involve students in the design of grassy knolls
- What is the significance of the wall
- It would be helpful to have a working 3-D model

The Members thanked Mr. Rossi and Mr. Burne for the presentation.

Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members

Krishana House said that CRLS raised \$7,476 in Tsunami relief funds; home room discussions around block scheduling went well; the Drama Department presented a successful play "Honk"; and the girls' track and field team broke a 23 year old record at the Reggie Lewis Center last Sunday and they now have three records.

Mr. Grassi asked that students be recognized for the great job they have done on the Tsunami Relief fund. Mayor Sullivan said he will speak to Ms. Hunter.

Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting: None

Unfinished Business

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to refer to the Superintendent **Calendar item #1**, Memorandum from D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk, enclosing an order adopted by the City Council at its meeting of December 6, 2004.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to refer **Calendar item #2**, Motion by Mr. Grassi that the School Committee waive all racial balance guidelines for the High School Extension Program to allow access for

all students on the waiting list, to Superintendent's Recommendation #05-014, Approval of High School Extension Program Assignment Process.

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to refer to the City Manager **Calendar item #3**, Motion by Mr. McGovern that the School Committee requests the City Council to work with the City Manager and the appropriate City Department to place "pedestrian crossing" signage at each crosswalk surrounding school buildings.

Mr. Harding asked when the report on alternative programs will be presented. The Superintendent said within two weeks.

New Business

Ms. Walser moved for adoption of items #05-013 through #05-018. Ms. Walser removed # 05-013, #05-017 and #05-018. Mr. Fantini removed #05-014. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

#05-015, Consultant Agreements: that the School Committee approve consultant agreements with the companies or individuals listed below, in the amounts set forth, funds to be provided as shown:

1. Behavioral Education and Assessment Consortium, in the amount of \$61,875.00, account 53201, fund 15000, org. 852372, prog. 372.
2. Cambridge Public Health, in the amount of \$105,000.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 849622, prog. 622, proj./grant SC05767.
3. Institute for Community Health, in the amount of \$42,300.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org 849622, prog. 622, proj./grant SC05767.

#05-016, Grant Awards: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. Title I Distribution, Project/Grant SC05604, for the period September 1, 2004 to August 31, 2005, in the amount of \$1,203,735.00. Correction to this grant fund which went to School Committee incorrectly on December 14, 2004 order #C04-253. The correct amount is \$1,203,735.00 instead of \$796,265.00.
2. High School Partnerships, Project/Grant SC05798, for the period December 22, 2004 to June 30, 2005, in the amount of \$28,000.00. To run school year program to provide intensive instruction in English Language Arts and mathematics for students in the classes of 2005/2006 who have yet to meet the competency determination for high school graduation. This grant will fund an ESL specialist who will work collaboratively with the teachers in the MCAS center to support the large number of LEP and mainstreamed ELL students who have yet to pass the MCAS. Funds will also support the services of an evaluator who will help strengthen the academic support programs.

Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Lummis ABSENT, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

Non-Consent Business

The Chair said he will entertain a motion to go into Executive Session as it relates to **#05-013**, that the School Committee approve and appoint Edward M. McCormack to the position of Executive Director, Office of Special Education, pending the satisfactory interview by the School Committee.

#05-014, Approval of High School Extension Program Assignment Process. The Superintendent responded to some questions, comments and concerns raised by Members. On a motion by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to amend **#05-014**, as follows: On page 39, change "assignment" to "admissions"; on page 40, refer paragraphs 1 and 2 back to the Superintendent for revisions; and in paragraph 3, after "distribution", insert "of sub-groups". On a voice vote, **#05-014, Approval of High School Extension Program Assignment Process**, was adopted as amended as follows: That the goal for each school year is for the High School Extension Program to be within a range of plus or minus 15 percentage points of the overall high school distribution of sub-groups (plus or minus an additional 5% percentage points) as of the most recent October 1st official enrollment report for school year 2004-2005 and the most recent October 1st official enrollment report preceding the start of each school year thereafter.

At Ms. Walser's request, the following is placed on the Calendar: **#05-017, Joint Motion by Mr. Fantini and Mr. McGovern** that the Superintendent is requested to implement an elementary school, district-wide bullying program that will ensure that all elementary schools are providing the same language, training, support and programs regarding bullying. Further, that schools are then encouraged to add instruction tailored to their particular school setting.

At Ms. Walser's request, the following is placed on the Calendar: **#05-018, Motion by Mr. McGovern** that the School Committee instruct the Superintendent to supply any and all documentation requested by one or more members of the Committee. The information requested is at the discretion of the School Committee members and requests, to be made in writing, shall not be refused by the Superintendent unless legally unable to fulfill the obligation. Further, that this information will be forwarded to all members within a week of the request.

The Chair moved to the budget presentation. The Superintendent and Mr. Conry walked Members through the proposed improvements in school budget formulas. Kennedy/Longfellow Principal Margarita Otero-Alvarez and King-Open Principal Tim Groves said that Principals are in support of alternative #3, no increase to base amount with equal allocation of new dollars to per pupil and free/reduced.

Members thanked the Principals for coming.

Mr. Conry presented the 10-year Capital Budget Plan and reported that three of the projects will require bonds.

Mr. Harding in the Chair.

The Superintendent reported that he and the Budget Co-chairs had a productive meeting with the City Manager who is willing to work with us. Dr. Fowler-Finn said that a facilities strategic plan is needed. The Superintendent and Mr. Conry responded to Members' questions and concerns.

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

The Chair thanked the Superintendent and his staff for the presentation and returned to **#05-013, Approval of New Executive Director of Special Education**. On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Grassi, on the following roll call, it was voted to convene in Executive Session for the purpose of conducting strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee: Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Lummis ABSENT, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

The Chair announced that no votes will be taken in Executive Session and the Committee will reconvene in Open Session.

Executive Session

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Walser, Mayor Sullivan

Also Present: Thomas Fowler-Finn, Superintendent
Barbara Allen, Executive Director, Human Resources
James Conry, Chief Financial Officer
Maureen MacFarlane, In House Counsel
James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer
Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

The Members discussed with Legal Counsel strategy for contract negotiations with non-union personnel.

It was voted to reconvene in Open Session.

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

A quorum being present, the Chair reconvened the meeting and announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

Recommendation #05-013, Approval of New Executive Director of Special Education, is placed on the Calendar.

Late Orders

The Chair hearing none, on a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to adjourn (9:00 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee