

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, February 7, 2006

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Ms. Nolan, Mr. Schuster, Ms. Walser,
Mayor Reeves

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:18 p.m.

Also Present: Student School Committee Members James Conway and Spenser Skates.

Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to accept the Minutes of the following meeting and to Calendar the Minutes of the January 3, 2006 Special Informal Meeting pending correction:

- Special Meeting - January 10, 2006

Public Comment on School Committee Agenda

The following individuals were heard:

- Leslie Brunetta, Roberts Rd, re surplus
- Larry Adkins, Hayes St., re goals
- Elie Yarden, Pleasant St., re goals, surplus, marketing plan

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to suspend the Rules to allow Mr. Yarden more time to speak.

- Owen Andrews, Hamilton St., Co-Chair G&P Steering Committee, re space at Graham & Parks
- Kathy Reddick, President NAACP, read letter from Members and Friends of the NAACP re explanation of Benchmarks
- Marla Erlie, Greenough Ave., re process by which goals are achieved

The Chair closed public comment.

Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members

James Conway was heard in response to some of the public comment made earlier. He said there is a lot of fear going around the system voiced by parents, teachers, and administrators because of MCAS results. Mr. Conway said that people are fearful of the high school's being taken over by the State because basic standards are not being met. He suggested that elementary schools return to teaching the basics of reading, writing and math to correct the problems before they reach high school.

Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting: None

Unfinished Business

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to bring forward Calendar item **#06-01, Revised School Committee Reports**. Mr. Grassi read the following amendments to include on the list of School Committee Reports:

- September: Affirmative Action Report that includes categorized numbers from prior two years, issues, trends, goals and action plan - oral presentation
- October: Discipline Detail Report that includes categorized numbers from prior two years, issues, trends, goals and action plan - oral presentation
- December: Yearly update on success of intervention programs to include Bridge, High School Extension, high school and elementary summer schools and any other programs that the Superintendent deems appropriate - oral presentation
- March: Update on CRLS Senior Class - oral presentation.

Ms. Nolan asked if the yearly update on intervention programs could be received since December is past. The Superintendent said that a report is being prepared for presentation during the budget with the exception of the Bridge program because it is relatively new. Mayor Reeves raised a question on the NCLB watch list referenced during public comment. The Superintendent clarified that there is no NCLB watch list but rather a Tier Review done by the State and the NCLB Adequate Yearly Progress list which is separate from the State. On a voice vote, **#06-01, Revised School Committee Reports**, was adopted as amended.

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to bring forward Calendar item **#06-09, Joint motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Schuster** that the 2006-2007 Rules of the School Committee be amended as follows: Page 1, Chapter I, Section 3.2. Roundtables. Change "shall not be broadcast..." to "may or may not be broadcast...". Further, that wherever public "comment" is referenced it be changed to public "testimony". On a motion by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to divide the motion separating "Roundtables" from "Public Comment". The makers of the motion were heard in support of the motion. Mayor Reeves gave a brief history of City Council Roundtables. The Members discussed the pros and cons of televising roundtables and workshops. Mr. Fantini offered a friendly amendment to add after "shall not be broadcast", "unless a majority of Members vote to have it televised and it is noted in the call of the meeting". On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Harding, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt, as amended, **#06-09, Joint motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Schuster** that the 2006-2007 Rules of the School Committee be amended as follows: Page 1, Chapter I, Section 3.2. Roundtables. after "shall not be broadcast", insert "unless a majority of Members vote to have it televised and it is in the call of the meeting": Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi NAY, Mr. Harding YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt as divided **#06-09, Joint motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Schuster** that the 2006-2007 Rules of the School Committee be amended as follows: That wherever public "comment" is referenced it be changed to public "testimony": Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi NAY, Mr. Harding NAY, Mayor Reeves NAY.

Mr. Harding raised a question on the status of an Awaiting Report (**#C05-221**) regarding a viable "opt-in" policy that meets the guidelines of the No Child Left Behind Act. The Superintendent said it will be provided at the next School Committee meeting.

New Business

The Chair moved to Presentations. It was announced that the presentation to Skyy Anderson, the first CRLS Student to Capture All-American Honors in Girls Soccer, is postponed to a meeting in March.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to suspend the Rules to take up New Business prior to the SAT presentation.

Mr. Grassi moved, seconded by Ms. Nolan, for adoption of items #06-12 through #06-22. Mr. Grassi removed #06-12, #06-17, #06-19 and #06-20. Ms. Walser removed #06-15 and #06-18. Mr. Schuster removed #06-21. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, on the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

#06-13, Special Needs Contracts for Day Program Services not available from the Cambridge School Department: that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions on the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the general fund budget.

1 student	Community Therapeutic Day School, 187 Spring St., Lexington	\$ 53,080.18
3 students	Dr. Franklin Perkins School, 971 Main St., Lancaster	107,390.64
2 students	Lighthouse School, 25 Wellman Ave., N. Chelmsford	93,846.96
1 student	Italian Home for Children, Inc., 1125 Center St., Jamaica Plain	32,215.62
1 student	LABB Collaborative, 123 Cambridge St., Burlington	43,308.00
1 student	Deveraux Foundation, PO Box 219, 60 Miles Rd., Rutland	52,897.76
1 student	Edco Collaborative, 20 Kent St, Brookline	34,186.00
1 student	Brightside for Families & Children, 2112 Riverdale St., W. Springfield	36,712.76
1 student	Beacon High School, 74 Green St., Brookline	40,887.01
1 student	Harbor Schools, Inc., 26 Rolfes Ln., Newbury	26,311.19
1 student	Project Spoke, 64 W. Main St., PO Box Z, Norton	<u>49,952.50</u>
14 students		\$570,788.

#06-14, Special Needs Contracts for Residential Program Services not available from the Cambridge School Department: that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions on the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the general fund budget:

1 student	Justice Resource Institute, 545 Boylston, St., Boston	\$81,746.98
1 student	NE Center for Children, 33 Turnpike Rd., Southboro	<u>70,299.00</u>
2 students		\$152,045.98

#06-16, Grant Awards: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. Friends of the Cambridgeport School, for the period January 23, 2006 - June 30, 2006, in the amount of \$12,000.00, project/grant SC06817. These funds will help support Tech. Integrator Specialist, Building Substitute, Library Assistant.
2. Project FOCUS Academy High School, for the period January 30, 2006 - August 31, 2006, in the amount of \$17,200.00, project/grant SC06818. These funds will support and assist CRLS in developing school personnel, youth, family members, and adult service agency personnel to have the knowledge and skills to ensure that all youth reach high academic achievement, develop sound career goals, and obtain leadership and self-advocacy skills that will result in successful post-school outcome.

#06-22, Motion by Ms. Walser that the School Committee invite library project director Alan Burne to its Regular Meeting on March 21 to brief the Committee on the upcoming construction at the main library and efforts to coordinate with the high school during the project.

Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

Non-Consent Business

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adopt **#06-12, Approval of Home School Applications for School Year 2005-2006**, as follows: that the School Committee approve the home school application for the 2005-2006 school year as detailed in the document.

#06-15, Consultant Agreements. Ms. Walser asked in what subgroups are the 25 students in the Frene McGrath contract, and if the children in need of services are receiving them. The Superintendent was heard. Ms. Nolan raised a question on supplemental service providers. The Superintendent and Mr. Conry were heard. On a motion by Ms. Walser, on the following roll call, **#06-15, Consultant Agreements**, was adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve consultant agreements with the companies or individuals on the list, in the amounts set forth, funds to be provided as shown:

1. Cambridge Public Health, Cambridge, in the amount of \$46,421.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 852355, prog. 355.
2. Frene McGrath Ventures, LLC, Waltham, in the amount of \$40,000.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 859651, prog. 651, proj./grant SC05604.

Ms. Nolan PRESENT, Mr. Schuster ABSENT, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi PRESENT, Mr. Harding YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

Mr. Grassi asked the Superintendent to speak to Recommendation **#06-17, Request for Architectural Services**. The Superintendent and Mr. Maloney were heard. Members had a lengthy discussion about the high cost of this study, spending \$1.8 million for two classrooms, not knowing what the district's priorities are for other schools, and suggested waiting until the capital needs assessment is complete before moving forward with this project. Principal Boyle was asked to speak to enrollment and why this project is needed. Ms. Boyle and Mr. Maloney were heard.

Mr. Fantini in the Chair.

Members agreed that many schools in the district have similar issues. Mr. Grassi moved, seconded by Mr. Schuster, to Calendar Recommendation **#06-17, Request for Architectural Services**, as follows: that the School Committee authorize the Superintendent of Schools to request the City Manager to

contract with an architectural firm for the purpose of preparing design plans for the conversion of unused locker-room space into classroom and support space at the Graham & Parks School, the cost of such services to be covered by the School Department capital projects budget. The cost is estimated at \$120,000.00.

#06-18, Proposed Budget Adoption Calendar. Ms. Walser read the schedule for budget sub-committee meetings and gave an overview of the format for meetings. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adopt **#06-18, Proposed Budget Adoption Calendar**, as follows:

Public Forum:

Wednesday, February 15, 2006 @ 6:00 p.m.

Timeline:

Friday, March 3, 2006	Budget draft will be sent out to School Committee Members
Tuesday, March 7, 2006	Regular School Committee Meeting followed immediately by Budget Retreat with the Members
Tuesday, March 14, 2006	Special Meeting for Budget Presentation
Tuesday, March 21, 2006	Regular School Committee Meeting - Public Hearing on Budget
Tuesday, March 28, 2006	Back-up Date if Needed
Tuesday, April 4, 2006	Regular School Committee Meeting - Adoption of Budget

#06-19, Approval of Superintendent's Goals Statements 2005/2006: that the School Committee approve the recommendation for the Goals Statements 2005/2006 as detailed in the document. Mr. Grassi deferred to the Superintendent. The Superintendent spoke to the Goals Statements 2005-2006 and responded to some of the questions, comments and concerns raised by the Members. On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to adopt the foregoing Recommendation **#06-19, Approval of Superintendent's Goals Statements 2005/2006**, with Ms. Nolan voting PRESENT.

#06-20, Plan for Use of FY05-06 Surplus Funds: that the School Committee receive and approve the attached plan for the use of projected FY05-06 surplus available funds in the amount of \$3,444,770, and authorize the Superintendent to proceed with actions required to implement the plan. The Superintendent was asked to speak to the plan for surplus funds. The Superintendent, Mr. Maloney and Mr. Conry explained that these are operating funds that if not transferred would revert to the City. In response to how these funds became available, Mr. Conry said that some is special education tuition, circuit breaker funds, fewer Minuteman students, and openings in salary accounts. It was recommended that \$2.5 million of the \$3.4 million go into the debt stabilization fund and the remainder used for operating expenses. Ms. Nolan raised a question on and responded to some of the following questions/comments/concerns raised by Members:

- Look for ways to insure that we do not have a surplus in the future
- If better projections were made this money could be spent in classrooms
- Will hand-held polling devices be used for straw polls
- Will funds transferred from the operating budget by June 30 be lost
- How is the money gotten out of the surplus fund
- Is circuit breaker based on a set percentage of actual spending
- \$100,000 sounds like a lot of money for hand held devices
- Involve School Committee in market research

- Insure that security is built into the technology plan
- Need further discussion on the technology plan

Ms. Nolan asked that the School Committee be involved in formulating the market research RFP, choosing the consultant having the consultant report back to the School Committee. The Superintendent explained that the RFP would be a management task not a policy task and asked the Members to give him their ideas on what they would like to see go into the RFP. Mr. Maloney explained the process the RFP would have to follow. Ms. Nolan moved, seconded by Mr. Grassi, to divide the plan and vote separately for item **A. Non-Recurring Operating Items**, and item **C. Other Item Pending** and that **B. Capital Projects/Debt Stabilization** be withdrawn and referred back to the Superintendent for further recommendations. On the following roll call, it was voted to approve, subject to the development of wording for the market research and outreach project, all items under **A. Non-Recurring Operating Items**,

1. Market research and outreach

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| - Professional svcs for focus group facilitation, surveys, etc. | \$150,000 | |
| - Handheld polling/voting device for large mtgs. and conf. | <u>100,000</u> | |

Sub-total		\$250,000
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2. RSTA - One-time equipment purchases

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| - Replacement of computer equipment in four programs | \$70,000 | |
| - Purchase of mini-van for transportation of students and materials to off-site work/project locations | 30,000 | |
| - Equipment & furniture for a 2 nd IT (Information Tech.) lab | 80,000 | |
| - Tools, equipment & furniture for expanded Engineering Robotics lab | 18,000 | |
| - Large format printer for 2 nd Commercial Design lab | 10,000 | |
| - Furniture & furnishings for Culinary Arts restaurant on 2 nd floor | <u>5,000</u> | |

Sub-total		\$213,000
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3. Recommendations from Healthy Children's Task Force - Enhancements to dining environment at CRLS	\$25,000	\$ 25,000
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4. Purchase of servers, computers and operating software to enable use of Fasstmth software	97,770	97,770
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5. Upgrade of Custodial Cleaning Equipment in all schools	359,000	359,000
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Total		<u>\$944,770</u>
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Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding ABSENT YEA, Mayor Reeves ABSENT YEA.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Grassi, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt, pending a security plan satisfactory to the School Committee, **C. Other Item Pending**

1. System-wide Technology upgrade plan: this plan is being developed and will be presented to the School Committee before a requested vote. We estimate the plan will include approximately \$1,100,000 in equipment, network and	\$1,100,000	\$1,100,000
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software costs to be funded from FY05-06 end-of-year balances.

Grand Total

\$2,044,770

Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding
~~ABSENT~~ YEA, Mayor Reeves ~~ABSENT~~ YEA.

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to adopt **#06-21, Motion by Mr. Schuster** that, in the interest of promoting greater citizen involvement at meetings, the Superintendent explore the feasibility of making available to the public, on the School Committee website and in hard copy at the School Committee office, all documents to be presented or discussed at a meeting of the School Committee no less than twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting.

At this time, the Chair moved to the SAT Presentation. Maryann MacDonald, Executive Director of Student Achievement & Accountability and Lynn Williams, Director of Guidance, walked the Members through a presentation on "SAT Results 2004-2005", including:

- Participation Rates
- Participation by Race
- Mean Scores
- Participation Rate by Class Ranking
- Results by Class Ranking
- Next Steps

The Superintendent, Ms. MacDonald and Ms. Williams responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns Members raised:

- What is PSAT preparation
- Does taking the PSAT help scores later on
- Are there plans to expand PSAT classes to allow more students to enroll

Mayor Reeves in the Chair

- If we move to one single goal, it should be getting students to college
- Are RSTA students taking PSAT and SAT
- What is the percentage of RSTA students taking SAT
- Are test prep classes held during school
- Should there be concern that the participation rate dropped 5% from two years ago
- There should be concern that the bottom three 5ths are not achieving State average
- Breakdown by racial groups show Black and Hispanic students lag significantly behind white students
- Interested in comparison from other districts (Gaudet Index) to see where we are
- Uncomfortable with a goal being college for every student
- Scores show how difficult it can be to teach where you have students scoring well at the top and not so well at the bottom
- How many seniors at the Extension School take the SAT
- Insure GPA standards are high for athletes
- Would like to see sub-groups in the lower range move up as fast as possible
- Would like to see some breakouts for some of the populations who may not traditionally be interested in college
- Is there a value to making taking the SAT mandatory
- Insure that every child has the opportunity to apply to college
- How many students who graduate and go to college stay there
- We have a tradition of varsity athletes who do not go to college

- Encourage students to apply to schools in junior year

The Members thanked the Superintendent and his staff for the presentation.

Mr. Harding and Mayor Reeves requested and received unanimous consent to be recorded in the affirmative on the earlier roll call votes on which they were recorded as absent.

Late Orders

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter congratulating the CRLS girls 4x200 relay team on breaking the record in that event at the McIntyre Relays held at the Reggie Lewis Center January 28, 2006, with a note that the fashion statement is much appreciated by some Members.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adjourn (9:50 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee