

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, March 2, 2004

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. Lummis, 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 6:05 p.m.

Also Present: Student Representatives: James Conway, Krishana House, Adrienne Leslie, Ruth
Thompson

Presentation of the Records

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Lummis, it was voted that the Minutes of the following meeting be accepted as presented:

- Regular Meeting - February 3, 2004

Public Comment on School Committee Agenda

At this time, the Chair entertained Public Comment.

The following individuals were heard:

- Patty Nolan, Huron Avenue, re general approach to budget decision
- Cheryl Kennedy, Lopez Street, re Project 10 East
- Kathy Reddick, Franklin Street, President, NAACP re student data report; alternative school proposal; Affirmative Action officer
- Paul Toner, CTA President, re CTA contracts
- Craig Kelly, Gerard Terrace, re budget

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to close public comment.

Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members

Adrienne Leslie was heard regarding the budget, closing the achievement gap, dealing with inequalities and the poor condition of the bathrooms at CRLS. Ms. Leslie extended an invitation to the CRLS Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration on March 4.

James Conway was heard regarding the budget and its focus on education.

Ruth Thompson was heard regarding rumors of funding for sports being taken away. The Superintendent responded that rumors should be followed up to get the facts and that there is no cut in funding for sports.

Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting: None

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to suspend the Rules to bring forward Recommendation #04-034, Approval of CTA Clerical Unit C Contract, 7/1/03-8/31/06 and Recommendation #04-035, Approval of CTA Units A & B Contract, 9/1/03-8/31/06. Mayor Sullivan announced that Michael Gardner, Director of Personnel and Labor Relations for the City of Cambridge, will be voting on behalf of the City Manager. Members thanked Mr. Toner, Ms. Walser, Mr. Lummis, the Superintendent, administration and the negotiating teams for the work done on the contracts. On the following roll call, on a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, #04-034, Approval of CTA Clerical Unit C Contract, July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2006, was adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve the Memorandum of Agreement for a collective bargaining agreement between the Cambridge Teachers Association Clerical Unit C, and the Cambridge School Committee for the period July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2006, such agreement having been previously ratified by the members of the bargaining unit.

The agreement was reached by the negotiating teams and has already been ratified by the union membership. The agreement includes the following:

- Length of Contract
Three Years (7/1/03 - 6/30/06)
- Salary schedule increases (not to other economic items)
 - Year 1 (FY2003-04) - 3% increase effective April 1, 2004
 - Year 2 (FY2004-05) - 3% increase effective October 1, 2004
 - Year 3 (FY2005-06) - 4¼ increase effective July 1, 2005
- Update recognition clause to include exempt positions.
- Language to provide one-half compensatory day when day before Christmas and day before New Years is lost due to holiday falling on a weekend.
- Elimination of sixth week of vacation after 22 years of service, for all new hires after 6/30/04.
- Section 125 Flexible Spending Plan - increase cap to \$5,000 (employee contributions).
- Improved evaluation instrument for clerical staff, beginning in FY2004-05.
- Other changes to effective dates and clarification of language.

The financial costs of this settlement are as follows:

<u>Salary Increases:</u>	<u>Budget Cost</u>
FY03-04 - 3% salary increase effective 4/1/04	\$ 21,306
FY04-05 - Carryover cost of full 12 months of 4/1/04	63,920
3% salary increase	
- 3% salary increase effective 10/1/04	<u>65,837</u>
Total	\$129,757
-FY05-06 - Carryover cost of full 12 months of 10/1/04	\$ 21,945
3% salary increase	
- 4¼% salary increase effective 7/1/05	<u>124,358</u>
Total	\$146,303

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

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, on the following roll call, #04-035, Approval of CTA Units A & B Contract, 9/1/03-8/31/06, was adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve

the Memorandum of Agreement for a collective bargaining agreement between the Cambridge Teachers Association Units A & B, and the Cambridge School Committee for the period September 1, 2003 to August 31, 2006, such agreement having been previously ratified by the members of the bargaining unit.

The agreement was reached by the negotiation teams and has already been ratified by the union membership. The agreement includes the following;

- Three year agreement: - 9/1/03 - 8/31/06
- Salary schedule increases (not to other economic items):
 - Year 1 (FY2003-04) - 3% increase effective April 1, 2004
 - Year 2 (FY2004-05) - 3% increase effective November 15, 2004
 - Year 3 (FY2005-06) - 4¼% increase effective September 1, 2005
 - In Year 3 (FY2005-06), add a Masters+60 column to the salary schedule with amount \$300 greater than the Masters+45 schedule
- Increase T-Pass reimbursement to 65% up to a maximum of \$40/month.
- Update the extracurricular activities list of positions to include current positions.
- Change notification date on teachers retiring/sick leave buyback provisions to February 15 instead of December 1.
- Add language to allow school department to implement a block schedule at the high school beginning in school year 2005-06, with teachers teaching 75% of instructional day, with revised limits on number of preparations.
- Add language to enable voluntary overrides of contractual class size limits at high school, up to five additional students.
- Section 125 Flexible Spending Plan - increase cap to \$5,000 (employee contributions).
- Improved evaluation instrument for teachers, beginning in SY2004-05.
- Other changes to effective dates and clarification of language.

The financial costs of this settlement are as follows:

<u>Salary Increases:</u>	<u>Budget Cost</u>
FY03-04 - 3% salary increase effective 4/1/04	\$ 411,520
FY04-05 - Carryover cost of full 12 months of 4/1/04 3% salary increase -3% salary increase effective 11/15/04	\$ 937,832
Total	<u>1,042,375</u> \$ 1,980,207
FY05-06 - Carryover cost of full 12 months of 11/15/04 3% salary increase - 4¼% salary increase effective 9/1/05 - Masters+60 column @\$300 increment	\$ 347,458
Total	1,968,929 <u>41,400</u> \$ 2,357,787

Other:

FY04-05 -T-Pass reimbursement increase to \$40/mo	\$ 3,000
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Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Gardner YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

Ms. Walser moved, seconded by Mr. Lummis, for suspension of the Rules for the purpose of moving reconsideration of the foregoing votes. The Rules having been suspended, a motion to reconsider the foregoing votes, hoping the same would not prevail, failed of adoption.

Unfinished Business

On a motion by Ms. Walser, it was voted to remove from the Table Recommendation **#04-021, Cambridge Public Schools Promotion/Retention Policy**. Ms. Walser asked the Superintendent to speak to alternatives to retention and whether there are enough resources in the budget to fund services in the policy. The Superintendent was heard. Mr. McGovern raised a question regarding specific supports in the policy. The Superintendent was heard. On the following roll call, **#04-021, Cambridge Public Schools Promotion/Retention Policy**, was adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve the Promotion/Retention Policy as detailed in the document. The information includes a revised district wide Promotion/Retention Policy. Key recommendations are as follows:

- The Cambridge School Committee recognizes that each child develops socially, emotionally, and intellectually at a rate unique to that child and that each child must be afforded the opportunity to progress continually through school community environments that meet their individual needs. A student who struggles to be successful in school may advance to the next grade when in the judgment of the principal, based upon input from school staff and parent/guardian, advancement is in the best interest of the student.
- Students are expected to progress through the grade levels. When a student struggles to meet grade-level standards, school staff, students, and parent/guardians will work together to customize support services to help the student succeed. Retention should be considered a last resort and will take place only after very careful consideration and implementation of a retention intervention plan. With the exception of kindergarten students who due to age may remain in the same grade for a second year a student may be retained no more than once prior to entering high school. Decisions made regarding students with IEP's must be consistent with the IEP team findings. The decision to retain a student shall be made by the Building Principal K-12, in consultation with appropriate staff members and parents/guardians. At the elementary level, should the parent/guardian disagree with the principal's decision, the principal will write a letter to be placed in the student's cumulative folder attesting to the recommendation of the principal while allowing the parent/guardian to have the final decision. At the secondary level, the accrual of appropriate credits determines the student's status of grade enrollment unless otherwise determined by the IEP team findings.
- No student who has completed a grade successfully shall be retained or allowed to repeat a grade in order to improve his/her ability or lengthen his/her eligibility to participate in extra-curricular athletic programs.
- The Superintendent shall establish administrative guidelines to implement this policy and establish administrative procedures that are to be followed by teachers when retention of the student is considered. Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding NAY, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

New Business

Mr. Grassi moved, seconded by Mr. McGovern, for adoption of items #04-031 through #04-042. Mr. Grassi removed #04-040 and #04-042. Mr. McGovern removed #04-038. Ms. Walser removed #04-031. Mr. Fantini removed #04-032. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

#04-033, Contract for Educational Services not available in the Cambridge Public Schools: Special Needs Contract for Residential Services Not Available from the Cambridge School Department, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the institution shown below, in the amount not to exceed the shown rate, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the general fund budget. Placement of students in Private Schools for implementation of educational plans in accordance with Chapter 766.

1 contract	League School, 300 Boston-Providence Turnpike	<u>\$119,345.28</u>
1 contract		\$119,345.28

#04-036, Approval of Home School Applications for School Year 2003-04: that the School Committee approve the home school applications for the 2003-2004 school year. Approval of the manner of instruction in home school application is required in order for each of the children to be exempt from the compulsory attendance requirements of state law.

#04-037, Grant Award, FY03-04: that the School Committee accept and approve the following grant award in the amount and for the period indicated:

1. Title V Innovative Programs, project/grant SC04608, for the period September 1, 2003 to August 31, 2004, in the amount of \$67,880.00. This is a federal entitlement grant that will fund professional development for: New Teacher Induction Program summer training, stipends for the in-district teacher licensure program, stipends for mentors/coaches for new administrators, Research for Better Teaching workshops for supervision evaluating training, and related activities.

#04-039, Letter from A. Hofnagle and N. Ivcevic dated February 12, 2004, regarding age requirements for kindergarten.

#04-041, Invoice for \$456.00 for renewal of American School Board Journal.

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

Non-Consent Business

Ms. Walser raised a question on the format and schedule for eighth grade graduations and asked the Superintendent to come back with a recommendation for a change in SY2005/2006. The Superintendent was heard. On a voice vote, **#04-031, Academic School Calendars** for SY2004/2005 and 2005/2006, were adopted.

Mr. Fantini raised a question on the deficit in the special needs tuition account. The Superintendent was heard and said that the deficit is because of the State's action on the circuit breaker, but as of right now there is an overall surplus in the budget. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, **#04-032, Contract for Educational Services** not available in the Cambridge Public Schools, was adopted as follows: that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions listed below 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. Placement of students in Private Schools for implementation of educational plans in accordance with Chapter 766.

1 contract	SHORE Educational Collaborative, 99 4 th Street, Chelsea, MA:	\$38,100.00
1 contract	Justice Resource Institute Meadow Ridge/Pelham Academy 380 Massachusetts Avenue, Acton, MA:	68,484.09

1 contract	May Institute, PO Box 847240, Boston, MA;	55,357.32
1 contract	LABB Collaborative, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, MA	38,263.00
1 contract	New England Center for Children, 33 Turnpike Road, Southboro, MA	32,891.60
1 contract	SEEM Collaborative, 55 Walkers Brook Drive, Suite 260, Reading, MA	<u>88,990.00</u>
<u>6 contracts</u>		\$322,086.01

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

#04-038, Joint motion by Mr. McGovern and Mr. Harding that the Superintendent report back to the School Committee as to the progress being made in hiring a Coordinator for Project 10 East at Cambridge Rindge and Latin. This report should include, but not be limited to, how many applications have been received, how many interviews have been held, what is being done to broaden the search for qualified candidates, and a timeline for hiring a new coordinator. In addition, this report should include an explanation as to why Project 10 East lost their "safe space" classroom at the high school, is their any intent to create a new "safe space", and what is being done to assist the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender (GLBT) student population at the high school. Mr. McGovern thanked the Superintendent for his memorandum, received earlier this evening, announcing the hiring of Dosha Beard and Michael Jenkins for the Project 10E Student Coordinator position. The Superintendent was heard. Mayor Sullivan offered a substitute motion "that the School Committee welcome the two new staff members and offer its support to them." Mayor Sullivan's substitute motion was accepted. Mr. Harding was heard in support of Project 10E and thanked Dr. Knight and the Superintendent for their support. The Superintendent was heard. On a voice vote, the substitute motion was adopted as follows: "that the School Committee welcome the two new Project 10 East staff members and offer its support to them."

Mr. Grassi asked the Superintendent to address the following two motions in the upcoming retreat: **#04-040, Motion by Ms. Walser** that the Superintendent conduct a workshop at the May 4 School Committee meeting on the proposed benchmarks for monitoring progress in the elementary schools and high school. Further, that these benchmarks be posted on the Cambridge Public School Department website as soon as possible and distributed at School Council meetings in April; and **#04-042, Motion by Mr. Grassi** that the Superintendent schedule a hearing on the 2003-2004 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) results. Further, that the presentation include a comparison to the 2002-2003 results and a comparison to results from surrounding cities and towns. On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adopt the foregoing motions and refer them to the Superintendent for the upcoming retreat.

Late Orders

On a motion by Mayor Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted that the Cambridge Rindge and Latin Newspaper, "*Register Forum*", be distributed to our local libraries.

On a motion by Mayor Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Lummis, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter congratulating the Drama Team on their advancement and on their individual awards received this past week.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Lummis, it was voted that the Superintendent make a recommendation on changing the schedule and format of eighth grade graduations for SY2005-2006.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to the school committees in surrounding cities and towns notifying them that the Board of Education approved the Cambridge Charter School for 300 students from Cambridge, not 450.

On a motion by Mr. Lummis, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to Ms. Ana Castillo expressing their condolence on the death of her son, Orlando. Mayor Sullivan requested that our school officials lend their assistance to the Castillo family through the Cambridge Health Alliance. A moment of silence was observed in memory of Orlando Castillo.

The Superintendent reported that MCAS results will not be available until May and this year's results in late fall.

At this time, the Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent for presentation of the FY04-05 budget. The Superintendent was heard and walked Members through his proposed budget document, "Achieving, Excelling, and Closing the Achievement Gap". Margarita Otero-Alvarez, Kennedy/Longfellow School Principal, was heard in support of "SpringBoard", the proposed middle school College Board program.

The Chair asked the pleasure of the Committee. There was discussion around the feasibility of hearing public comment since the document was just presented. Student Representatives Leslie, Thompson, House and Conway were all heard regarding the closing of School 4, in light of the changes, instability and lack of a vision at the high school. Mayor Sullivan and Mr. Harding were both heard regarding the presentation on March 11 speaking to the vision for CRLS.

The Members raised questions, comments, and concerns, including the following:

- Concern with alternative school
- Want to see funds for summer school laid out in the document
- Need summer school program for students failing three or more classes
- Need to see what restructuring of Affirmative Action office will be
- Policy changes should be addressed outside the budget process
- Financial stability has been brought in this budget
- Budget needs to support excited new teachers and teams
- Talk with the City Manager to do an actuarial study re future health care costs
- Develop a plan for school building assistance funds
- Happy to see capital improvement funds in budget
- Place vacant position in School Committee office on hold
- Affirmative Action position has been a concern
- Excited about the science initiative
- Happy that cuts are going back into schools
- Look at where we can make further cuts
- What do we offer that other communities don't
- Happy to see a budget that is dictated by policy

Mr. Harding in the Chair

- What do schools use \$200,000 for
- Consolidated schools look dramatically different than before consolidation
- Trust has been increased during this budget process
- Information on new initiatives will continue to develop trust
- Need to hear why cuts didn't go further

- Happy that budget supports our educational plan
- Happy to see reallocation in non-teaching positions, alternative school, summer program, etc.
- Need assurance that alternative school will be a spectacular program
- Need more cuts in non-teaching areas
- Need a strategic action plan for affirmative action
- Need strategies on how to reduce increases in health care, special education
- Excited by the potential of new initiatives in this budget
- Trade-offs are very clear when you look at the big picture
- Is our system still too top heavy
- Will administrative positions that weren't cut help with new initiatives
- How do Principals feel about budget
- Ask City Council to match school improvement funds
- Meet with City Council to discuss capital improvements during budget process

The Members thanked the Superintendent and his team for the work done on a helpful budget presentation.

Ms. Leslie was heard regarding the AVID program and the need for high expectations for students to help close the achievement gap.

Mr. Conway asked if the SpringBoard program will replace ISP. The Superintendent was heard in the negative.

At this time the Chair entertained public comment.

The following individuals were heard:

- Patty Nolan, Huron Ave. re cuts and need for further delineation
- Jim Monteverde, Co-chair, Parents Advisory Council for Special Education, re funding for strategic plan for special education students; funding for transition plans; funding for inclusion specialists in RSTA.

The Chair thanked the Superintendent and his staff for the presentation and entertained a motion to adjourn.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mayor Sullivan, it was voted to adjourn (9:05 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee