

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, April 4, 2006

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding (joined in progress), Ms. Nolan, Mr. Schuster, Ms. Walser, Mayor Reeves

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

Also Present: Student Representatives James Conway and Spenser Skates

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

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to suspend the Rules to clarify some meeting dates. The Chair announced that tonight's meeting will be followed by a retreat. May 16 will be a special meeting regarding goals and objectives. May 23 will be a Special Meeting regarding goals and objectives, if necessary. June 20 will be a Public Hearing on the Superintendent's evaluation and contract renewal. June 27 will be a Regular Meeting, changed from June 20. Also scheduled is a roundtable on April 25, as well as Regular Meetings on May 2 and 16. Members discussed several topics for the roundtable meeting on April 25, including Ms. Brunetta's enrollment study, Literacy Collaborative, professional development, curriculum and inviting someone from the City versed in trends. It was suggested that any enrollment presentation be postponed until the marketing study is completed.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to bring forward Calendar item **#06-39, 2006-07 State School Choice Program Recommendation for Non-Participation**, to hear public testimony.

The following individuals were heard regarding School Choice:

- Heather Hoffman, Hurley Street, and HVAC repair
- Clay Reid, Garden Street
- Carole Landisman, Garden Street
- Peter Cohen, Donnell Street
- Arie Yaacobi, Park Street, Medford
- Malka Marcela Yaacobi, Park Street, Medford

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to suspend the Rules to open public testimony to other topics. Having no individuals wanting to speak, Mr. Harding withdrew his motion. Ms. Nolan moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, for adoption of **#06-39, 2006-07 State School Choice Program Recommendation for Non-Participation**. Ms. Nolan moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, the following recommendation for State School Choice: That the Cambridge Public Schools participate in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts State School Choice program, only for the Amigos School, with limitations. The limitations are: a maximum of three students in each grade, and only in grades 3 through 7. Thus, the total maximum number of students district-wide would be 15. Further, that the Superintendent be directed to delegate to the Amigos School Council the task of coordinating outreach and recruitment efforts with the Family Resource Center to ensure that all involved parties understand the program. Ms. Nolan explained that the committee established by the Superintendent split on whether to support the Amigos' School Choice request for participation. All three parents (none of whom are Amigos parents) voted in favor and all three administrators voted against. The Amigos School Council unanimously requested participation, both last year (denied) and this year (pending). Note that a vote for participation this year is binding only for students who apply for enrollment next year. An annual vote

would determine whether to continue participation beyond the first year, and could contain specific number and grade limits.

Ms. Nolan was heard in support of her motion. The Members discussed the pros and cons of allowing non-Cambridge residents into the system. The Superintendent asked Mr. Maloney to speak to the work of the committee. Mr. Maloney reported that the committee, including Family Resource Center Director Christine Fisher, Morse School Principal Patricia Beggy, CRLS and Haggerty School parent Jim Monteverde, Cambridgeport parent Renee Pittman Williams, and CRLS parent Catherine Sullivan, could not come to grips with how to navigate non-resident students through the system in light of the No Child Left Behind Act regarding Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Mr. Fantini raised a point of information whether there is a substitution on the floor. Ms. Nolan moved, seconded by Mr. Grassi, the above substitute motion. Ms. Walser moved a friendly amendment that any Cambridge resident would come before any non-resident for any open seat at Amigos and any other school; further, that no student who enters Amigos will transfer into another school. Ms. Walser's amendment was accepted by Ms. Nolan. The Superintendent asked Legal Counsel to speak to the State statute. Attorney MacFarlane was heard regarding the State statute on inter-district school choice. Ms. Nolan amended her motion from a maximum of 15 students to a maximum of 10. The Chair recognized the student representatives. Mr. Conway was heard regarding risks people will take to transfer into a district. Mr. Skates was heard in support of Ms. Nolan's motion. Mr. Schuster offered a friendly amendment that Legal Counsel be instructed to further explore the possibility of limiting transfers. Mr. Schuster's amendment was not accepted by the maker of the motion. The Superintendent and staff responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns raised by Members:

- If adopted, would the student go to the high school also
- Is it true there would be no cost to the district
- Can we control who comes into the District
- Are there other districts that have adopted this and if so, are there many
- Does not think voters will like a student coming from another district paying \$5000 when we spend \$23,000
- How will transportation work for students from other districts

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Nolan, on the following roll call, the following substitute motion, as amended, **failed of adoption**: That the Cambridge Public Schools participate in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts School Choice program, only for the Amigos School, with limitations. The limitations are: a maximum of two students in each grade, and only in grades 3 through 7. Thus, the total maximum number of students district-wide would be 10. Any Cambridge resident would come before any non-resident for any open seat at Amigos and any other school; further, that no student who enters Amigos will transfer into another school; and further, that the Superintendent be directed to delegate to the Amigos School Council the task of coordinating outreach and recruitment efforts with the Family Resource Center to ensure that all involved parties understand the program. Ms. Walser NAY, Mr. Fantini NAY, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding PRESENT, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Mayor Reeves NAY.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt Superintendent's Recommendation **#06-39, 2006-07 State School Choice Program Recommendation for Non-Participation**: that the School Committee vote not to participate in the Statewide School Choice Program for school year 2006-07, for the following reasons:

1. the need to maintain the quality and integrity of the Cambridge Program of Controlled Choice and,
2. the need to maintain flexibility for appropriately sized classrooms in the public schools.

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

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to recess to the Budget Subcommittee meeting.

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

The time for recess having expired, the Chair reconvened the meeting and entertained a motion to adopt the budget. Ms. Walser moved, seconded by Ms. Nolan, for adoption of the FY2006-2007 budget. Members raised comments, questions and concerns:

- Have concerns over how we arrived at this budget – will be voting in good faith
- Would like some answers to be a part of the budget process
- Does not like the way SC Members were pitted against Principals
- Budget process is one dimensional
- Taking a leap of faith regarding Montessori
- We are in a better place even though we can do a better job overall
- It does look like money has been shifted into classrooms
- Hope budget process can be started earlier
- Motion to increase funds was not to advocate for a specific school
- Excited about some of the initiatives but we need to do a better job of achievement for all students
- Budget is lacking any big zigzags
- New people keep government fresh – it's good to challenge
- Process needs a lot more input from School Committee
- Need to look at improving achievement for everybody
- Tobin and Peabody got treatment but other schools also need treatment
- Would like to see money to bring in a program called "Teen Empowerment" that could speak to a different student population
- Appoint a person to insure Broad Institute proposal works

The Superintendent responded to some of the above questions, comments and concerns and agreed that the budget process should begin earlier. He asked the Members to tell him what the major issues are and what it will take to solve them.

The Members thanked the Superintendent and his staff for their hard work on the budget. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded unanimously, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#06-50, Fiscal Year 2006-2007 Recommended Budget Revised Statutory Categories**: that the School Committee receive and approve FY2006-2007 General Fund Budget of the Cambridge Public Schools in the following Statutory Categories:

Salaries, Wages & Fringe Benefits	\$92,565,965.00
Other Ordinary Maintenance	25,199,350.00
Travel and Training	1,614,715.00
Extraordinary Expenditures	<u>5,982,175.00</u>
Total	\$125,362,205.00

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

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Harding, for suspension of the Rules for the purpose of moving reconsideration of the foregoing vote. The Rules having been suspended, a motion to reconsider the foregoing vote, hoping the same would not prevail, **failed of adoption**.

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Ms. Walser, for adoption of items #06-44 through #06-53. Mr. Fantini removed #06-44 and #06-50 that was adopted earlier. Ms. Nolan removed #06-49. Mr. Schuster removed #06-48. Ms. Walser removed #06-53. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, the remaining items were placed on the Calendar.

Non-Consent Business

#06-49, Recommendation to Proceed on King/Amigos Piping/HVAC Repair Project. Ms. Nolan spoke to the recommendation and asked that whatever work is done is done to the standards of the Green Building. The Superintendent was heard and withdrew his recommendation to proceed saying he could not meet all of the qualifications suggested by Ms. Nolan. Mr. Maloney was asked to speak to the recommendation. Mr. Maloney was heard and said that the Kennedy-Longfellow has had HVAC and boiler work done in the past few years and that the King/Amigos building has deteriorated to the point where it needs emergency repairs on the HVAC and boiler room. The Superintendent was asked not to withdraw the recommendation to proceed since these repairs are way overdue. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#06-49, Recommendation to Proceed on King/Amigos Piping/HVAC Repair Project:** that the School Committee authorize the Superintendent to proceed with preparation for bidding and awarding a contract for repair of piping and HVAC systems at the King/Amigos school facility, estimated to cost approximately \$1.6 million. Once bids have been received, a recommendation for statutory transfer of funds will be made to the School Committee, as necessary to fund the project. Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#06-44, Special Needs Contracts for Day Program Services not available from the Cambridge School Department:** that the School Committee award a contract to the institution on the list in an amount 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 Kennedy Day School, 30 Warren St., Brighton, MA 02135 \$40,089.66; and

#06-45, Grant Award: that the School Committee accept and approve the Grant Award in the amount and for the period indicated:

1. University of Chicago, Project/Grant SC06801, University of Chicago, for the period March 1, 2006 thru June 30, 2006, in the amount of \$2,000.00. These funds will support the Cambridgeport School for implementation of the Literacy Collaborative.

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

Mr. Schuster moved to Calendar #06-048, Cambridge Public Schools Recruiter Policy (Second Reading).

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#06-53, Joint motion by Mr. Grassi and Mr. Harding,** that the Superintendent of Schools update the Committee at the next School Committee Meeting with progress and plans on creating a baseline system of report cards, progress reports and a consistent schedule for distribution for grades K-8. Further, that the Superintendent present any plans to develop a grade-by-grade curriculum guide for parents.

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

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to adjourn (8:25 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee