

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, April 5, 2005

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

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

Also Present: Student Representatives James Conway, Spenser Skates

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m. The Chair announced the process for the evening as follows: he will entertain a motion to go into Executive Session, reconvene in Open Session, hear public comment and reports from the Student School Committee Members, recess the School Committee Meeting, convene in Sub-Committee, adjourn Sub-Committee meeting and reconvene in Open Session to make a budget recommendation to the full Committee.

Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted that the Minutes of the following meetings be accepted as presented:

- Regular Meeting - March 1, 2005
- Regular Meeting - February 15, 2005
- Special Meeting - February 9, 2005 (Corrected)
- Special Informal Meeting - February 9, 2005

Mayor Sullivan moved, seconded by Ms. Walser, for suspension of the Rules to bring forward #05-043. The Rules having been suspended, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt item **#05-043**: that the School Committee go into executive session for the purpose of discussing strategy for collective bargaining and strategy for litigation as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining and litigation positions of the School Committee: Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA. The Chair announced that no votes will be taken and the Committee will reconvene in Open Session:

Executive Session

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

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

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

Members discussed strategies for collective bargaining and strategy for litigation with Legal Counsel.

The Chair adjourned Executive Session and the Committee returned to Open Session.

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

The Chair reconvened the meeting at 6:23 and announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to suspend the Rules to allow comment on the Special Start Program.

Public Comment on School Committee Agenda

The following individuals were heard:

- Ruth Allen, Fenno Street, re Special Start
- Holly Donaldson, Montgomery Street, re Special Start
- Jane Wolfson, Bates Street, re Special Start
- Rachel Wyon, Sidney Street, re Introduced Sister City Delegation
- Patty Nolan, Huron Ave., re Budget
- Elie Yarden, Pleasant Street, re Budget
- Paul Toner, CTA, re Budget, Special Start
- Carolyn Hoffman, Reed Street, re Special Start

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to close public comment.

Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting: None

Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members

James Conway reported that a visit with some of his colleagues to Attleboro High School provided some valuable information on how block scheduling is working there. Mr. Conway said a video of the visit will be produced, edited and made available to the public.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. McGovern it was voted to recess until after the Budget Sub-Committee Meeting.

The time for recess having expired, the Chair reconvened the meeting.

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

Unfinished Business

Members passed over Unfinished Business.

New Business

Items #05-044 through #05-056. Mayor Sullivan removed items #05-044 and #05-052. Mr. Harding removed #05-056. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

#05-045, 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	Lighthouse School, 25 Wellman Ave., Chelmsford, MA	\$17,521.17
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1 student	The Dublin School, 18 Lehmann Way, PO Box 522, Dublin, NH	28,400.00
1 student	Beacon High School, 1968 Central Ave., Needham, MA	12,929.00
<u>1</u> 4	St. Ann's Home, 100A Haverhill St., Methuen, MA	<u>14,417.55</u>
		\$73,267.72

#05-046, 2005-06 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 2005-06, 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.

#05-047, Approval of Settlement of Pending Level III Grievance of AFSCME: that the School Committee approve the Superintendent's recommendation relative to the settlement of a pending Level III grievance of AFSCME in accordance with WR05-76.

#05-048, Approval of Home School Applications for School Year 2004-2005: that the School Committee approve the home school applications for the 2004-2005 school year as detailed in the document.

#05-049, Consultant Agreement: that the School Committee approve the consultant agreement with the following company, in the amount set forth, funds to be provided as shown:

Wheelock College, Boston, in the amount of \$30,000.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 852375, prog. 375, proj./grant SC05605

#05-050, Report of the February 9, 2005, Meeting of the Sub-Committee on the Budget (Committee of the Whole):

Called for the purpose of a Public Hearing on the proposed FY2005-2006 School Department Budget.

Members Present: Mr. Grassi, Mr. McGovern, Co-Chairs, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding, Mr. Lummis, Ms. Walser, Mayor Sullivan

Mr. Grassi in the Chair.

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

The Chair announced the process for the evening and turned the meeting over to Superintendent Fowler-Finn. The Superintendent said that the comments presented this evening are being made prior to the full development of the budget to get public input prior to the budget presentation on March 1. There will be a public hearing on the budget March 15 with adoption on April 5. The Superintendent walked Members through the following "FY2005-06 Budget Comments":

FINANCIAL ASPECTS

- FY05-06 budget increase - 1.6% - \$1,990,000
- Charter school impact - net loss of \$471,000
- Health insurance & utilities

- Review of support staff to identify savings for re-allocation

BUDGET THEMES

- Support for School Improvement planning and improved student performance through proposed budget formula increases:
Per pupil entitlements - increase from \$117/pupil to \$142/pupil - \$151,000 School improvement plan increased funding - \$250,000
- Continued support for low class sizes, limited use of multi-graded classes, and preservation of middle school units based on highly qualified teachers
- RSTA increased instruction time and new media technology program
- Closing the achievement gap and improving student performance through Literacy Collaborative, Avid Program, science education, and professional development
- Special professional development efforts to include a leadership institute for principals with Richard Elmore, establishment of administrative internships, continued support for CRLS teacher in-service, and AYP in-service identification and implementation.

At this time, the Chair entertained Public Comment.

The following individuals were heard regarding the budget:

- Elie Yarden, Pleasant Street
- Judy Perlman, Hamilton Street
- Dennis Friedler, McTernan
- Kate Ginnis, Hamilton Street
- Bruce Silverman, Larch Road
- Allison Crump, Pleasant Street

Mr. McGovern in the Chair.

- Leslie Brunetta, Roberts Road

Mr. Grassi in the Chair.

- Carolyn Shipley, Laurel Street
- Patty Nolan, Huron Avenue
- Elaine Schear, Amory Street, proposed changes, cuts in staffing & structure at schools
- Eileen Span, Gray Street
- David Quigley, Walden Street

Public comment was closed and the Chair entertained questions from the Members.

The Superintendent and staff responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns raised by Members:

- When is the MMA Consultant report due on administrative staffing - it may have a significant budget impact
- Take into consideration concerns re multi-grading
- Is there a strategic plan for capital expenditures forthcoming
- Would like to see a written narrative on how facilities needs were determined
- How does the city handle restoring existing buildings
- Concerned with safety at 159 Thorndike and would like building inspector to walk through it
- What rules of thumb will be used re multi-grading

- Need to increase professional development to help increase scores
- Would like to see a marketing plan in the budget
- Need to get creative around how we look at schools' populations
- Concerned that there is not more stability after consolidation
- Need a clear educational rationale for why certain positions are being cut
- What level of input have Principals had regarding cuts
- Can this committee change the formula re family liaisons
- Hope to see an increased effort in marketing and public relations
- Insure that we publicize things that we are doing differently from other districts
- What percentage of budget is being spent in classrooms
- Where is CPS spending money where other districts are not
- Insure that everyone who works for CPS is making a difference for children and teachers
- Think through how to make stability in schools

Mr. McGovern in the Chair.

- We are making progress in creating a transparent budget
- Bond system for repairing schools is exciting and creative
- We are on a framework of continuous improvement
- The structural deficit in our five-year plan needs to be addressed
- Look at redefining some of our schools using the Horace Mann model
- Chart some of the increases in MCAS scores and look at what initiatives were put in place to help improve those scores

Mr. Grassi in the Chair.

- How will questions and concerns Members have be addressed in this process
- Multi-grading and classroom reconfiguration is a large issue that needs input from School Committee members, principals, staff and community members for a long-term solution

The Chair announced the upcoming budget schedule: March 1, Superintendent's presentation of the budget; March 15, a public hearing; and April 5, budget adoption.

On a motion by Mr. Lummis, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adjourn (8:30 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

#05-051, Report of the March 15, 2005, Meeting of the Sub-Committee on the Budget (Committee of the Whole) be accepted as presented:

Called for the purpose of a Public Hearing on the proposed FY2005-2006 School Department Budget.

Members Present: Mr. Grassi, Mr. McGovern, Co-Chairs, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding, Mr. Lummis, Ms. Walser, Mayor Sullivan

Mr. Grassi in the Chair.

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 8:45 p.m.

The Chair announced that there will be another public hearing on the budget March 24 at 6:00 p.m. with adoption on April 5.

The Chair asked the pleasure of the Committee.

Members raised the following questions, comments, and concerns:

- Where will the administrative interns come from
- What are we doing in the area of math
- New initiatives are great
- We need to control the information we put out - need to make sure what we publish is correct
- Does Brookline, Somerville and Newton do professional development
- What is our student/teacher ratio compared to Brookline and Newton
- What is the definition of "day programs"
- Does Brookline do things that we don't do that would offset some items
- Where did the 83 administrative cuts come from over the last three years
- Parents set a positive tone tonight - we are caught between two opposing lobbying groups
- Cuts do not mean we are not improving services to students - this is a very positive budget for students
- Do not cut benefits package
- Do not apply the Governor's thinking to this community
- Do not cut for cutting's sake
- This Committee has put more money back into classrooms than Committees have in the last decade
- Do not compare us to other communities - this community provides services that no other community does
- Do not play groups against each other
- There is something to celebrate in what we do - need to focus on progress we have made
- Appreciate the significant cuts the Superintendent has made over the past few years
- Combine more effective processes with additional cuts in the future
- Do not backtrack from Superintendent's recommendation
- One of our goals should be to improve the quality of people in jobs
- What will the \$3 million surplus be used for
- Focus needs to be on academic achievement - the Superintendent was not hired to be an auditor
- Downsize through attrition
- Cannot support shifting a person from Payroll to Special Education
- What has happened to citywide parent group
- Who will actually do the work of Clerks
- Agree with downsizing and being more efficient
- How do we plan for future cuts and enrollment
- How will we protect elementary schools from cuts, meet budget needs, escalated charter school payments, and only rely on attrition and retirements to balance the budget
- Science initiative is visionary - the information needs to be publicized
- Positions and staffing are not as important as how well students are achieving

The Chair recognized Student Representative Conway. Mr. Conway said that budget cuts hurt student services and asked if other options are being considered.

The Chair announced that there will be another Public Hearing at 6:00 p.m. on March 24 and budget adoption on April 5.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adjourn (9:55 p.m.).

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

#05-053, Motion by Mr. Grassi that the Superintendent provide the School Committee with an updated report on dropouts for the school years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004. Further that this information include the clarifications of differences and discrepancies between state regulations and all students who have dropped out of school or any additional programs run by or contracted by the CPS. Further that the report include any recommendations from the Superintendent of Schools.

#05-054, Motion by Mr. Grassi that the School Committee discuss the Superintendent's report on report cards and progress reports at the next School Committee Meeting.

#05-055, Motion by Mr. Grassi that the School Committee schedule a roundtable discussion on vacant school buildings and other facility-related issues.

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

Non-Consent Business

#05-044, FY05-06 Budget - Recommended Revisions: On a motion by Ms. Walser, it was voted to divide the question to remove the recommendation to restore five full-time clerical positions. On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#C05-059, Motion by Mr. Fantini** that the Superintendent reinstate up to five clerical positions if efforts to create available opportunity for provisional clerks are not successful. Further, that the Superintendent be provided flexibility in finding resources to do the above and be encouraged to look at the following sources of funding: administrative positions, outage accounts, reserve funds and other salary fund accounts. Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis NAY, Mr. McGovern NAY, Ms. Walser NAY, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Lummis, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#05-044, FY05-06 Budget - Recommended Revisions:** that the School Committee approve the recommended revisions to the Proposed FY05-06 Budget based upon the Budget Sub-Committee actions at its meeting on March 24, 2005. These revisions restore five full-time clerical positions from the previously proposed reductions. The placement of these positions will be determined by the Superintendent. The offsetting decreases leave the budget in balance. The revised Statutory Category totals are as follows:

Salaries, Wages & Fringe Benefits	\$ 89,952,060
Other Ordinary Maintenance	25,912,125
Travel & Training	1,766,450
Extraordinary Expenditures	6,413,765
Total	<u>\$124,044,400</u>

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

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

#05-052, Joint Motion by Mr. Fantini and Mr. Grassi that the School Committee waive all user fees for the use of School Department facilities for all Cambridge-based youth sports organizations. Further that

these organizations be reimbursed for any charges that they incurred after the facility fund was depleted. This policy is in effect until the Superintendent brings forth a long-term policy on facility use to be adopted by the School Committee. Members discussed the motion and pointed out that it favors one group over another. Mr. Grassi moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, an amendment to strike the word "sports". On a voice vote, the amendment was adopted. On a motion by Mayor Sullivan, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to refer the motion as amended to the Superintendent for review with Legal Counsel.

#05-056, Motion by Mr. Harding that the Superintendent give a brief update to the School Committee at the next roundtable meeting on the status and participation of minority students in advanced placement courses. Further, that the Superintendent include information about strategies and support for students to pass AP courses. Mayor Sullivan pointed out that the topic for the next roundtable meeting is facilities and that Mr. Harding's request may be presented at the second roundtable meeting. Mr. Harding was heard in support of his motion and is looking forward to hearing Members' thoughts. On a motion by Mr. Lummis, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adopt the foregoing motion.

The Chair moved to the presentation by the MMA Consulting Group.

Mr. Harding in the Chair

The Superintendent and Mr. Maloney introduced Mr. Mark Morse, President of MMA Consulting Group. Mr. Morse summarized some of the issues and challenges in doing the study, using normative data in comparing Cambridge to Brookline, Newton and Somerville. The Superintendent and Mr. Morse responded to Members' questions, comments and concerns:

- What would be the recommendation on how actual data is reported
- Has MMA done studies like this before
- Are making recommendations and offering advice typically part of a report
- Are there other things CPS can do differently other than clerical pooling
- Is there an opinion on where we should be on staffing
- Why did we compare ourselves to other districts if we knew we were different - why not look at organization alone and get guidance on what we should be doing
- Why weren't recommendations made in the final report as requested in the RFP
- Report was key in helping us understand how we are structured
- Parents deserve credit for prodding us
- Are there any recommendations on automating systems
- Was anything seen that was out of the ordinary
- The School Committee, public and press need to move past what is wrong and focus on the positives
- Looking forward to the day when the Superintendent says this is what I need to achieve academic excellence
- Is the proposed budget what the Superintendent needs
- There is no policy on reducing staff through attrition
- Attrition alone will not solve projected deficit
- Superintendent's leadership and expertise is needed to help Members make best decisions to help students learn at high levels
- Look at creative ways to use funds to support on-going successful programs as well as new initiatives

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent and Mr. Maloney for a report on First Cycle Kindergarten Registration.

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair

Mr. Maloney introduced Christine Szafran, Family Resource Center. He reported that the first cycle registration is up 5% over last year primarily as a result of extensive outreach, but may not mean an

overall increase in enrollment; however, there is an increase in mandatory assignments and many mandatory assignments do not stay in the system; and there is a net decrease of 40 seats this year.

The Superintendent and staff responded to Members' questions, comments and concerns. Some Members reported hearing nothing but good news about the Family Resource Center and the registration process.

Mayor Sullivan and the Members thanked the Superintendent and staff for the presentation.

The Chair recognized Maryann MacDonald, Acting Executive Director of Student Achievement and Accountability, who walked Members through a summary of the results of the Family School Climate Survey:

- Background
- Format of Survey
- Summary of Results
- Indicators by Race/Ethnicity
- Indicators by Income Status
- Elementary vs. Middle Grades
- Range of Results
- School Comparisons
 - Family Involvement Indicator by School
 - Teacher Relationship Indicator by School
 - Curriculum Indicator by School
 - Social Development Indicator by School
 - Safety & Environment Indicator by School
- Next Steps

The Superintendent responded to Members' questions, comments and concerns.

The Chair thanked the Superintendent and Ms. MacDonald for the presentation.

Late Orders

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to the girls' 4 x 200 track team congratulating them on setting a record in that event.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Lummis, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to the boys' basketball team congratulating them on their success in being named Greater Boston League All-Stars.

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted that the Superintendent is requested to speak with the City Manager regarding the feasibility of including School Committee and Cambridge Public School information on the City's new E-Line service. Mayor Sullivan thanked the MIS Department for their work in creating the new E-Line service.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted that the Superintendent publicize and inform parents of the Peabody and Cambridgeport Schools' accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC).

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Lummis, it was voted to adjourn (9:00 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee