

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, May 2, 2006

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

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:28 p.m.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Schuster, on the following roll call, it was voted to convene in Executive Session, Recommendation #06-54, **Approval to go into Executive Session**, for the purpose of conducting a Level III grievance hearing and to conduct contract negotiations with non-union personnel: Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mayor Reeves 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, Ms. Nolan, Mr. Schuster, Ms. Walser,
Mayor Reeves

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

Also Present: Thomas Fowler-Finn, Superintendent
Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent
James Conry, Chief Financial Officer
James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer
Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel
Barbara Allen, Executive Director, Human Resources
Dana Ham, Manager, Plant Maintenance
Steve Edmonds, President, AFSCME, Local 1611
Kenneth Jackson, Grievant

Mr. Edmonds presented a grievance on behalf of Mr. Jackson. Mr. Jackson was heard in support of his grievance. Mr. Edmonds and Mr. Jackson exited the meeting. The Members discussed the grievance with Legal Counsel and staff. The Members discussed contract terms with the Executive Secretary and Legal Counsel. Ms. Bradshaw was asked to give Members a copy of the job description prior to the next session and also to find an evaluation tool.

The Chair adjourned the Executive Session, returned to Open Session and declared a 10-minute recess.

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

The time for recess having expired, the Chair reconvened the meeting and announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

Public Testimony on Agenda

The following individuals were heard:

- Paul Toner, CTA President, thanked everybody who worked on the CTA contract

- Michael Gardner, representing the City Manager for purposes of collective bargaining

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to suspend the Rules to bring forward **#06-59, Approval of CTA Unit C. Contract, Clerical Unit**. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Nolan, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#06-59, Approval of CTA Unit C. Contract, Clerical Unit**: that the School Committee approve the Memorandum of Agreement for a collective bargaining agreement between the Cambridge Teachers Association Unit C Clerical Unit and the Cambridge School Committee for the period July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2009. Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Gardner for Mr. Healey 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**.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to close Public Testimony.

Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to accept the Minutes of the following meetings:

- Special Meeting – January 24, 2006
- Special Informal Meeting – January 24, 2006

Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members: None

Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings

Calendar

Ms. Nolan removed #06-36, #06-37 and #06-47. Ms. Walser removed #06-46, #06-51 and #06-52. Mr. Schuster removed #06-48.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to suspend the Rules for the purpose of taking presentations out of order.

The Chair asked the Superintendent to present the Montessori Marketing Study. The Superintendent introduced Aaron Reid, Research Head, who gave a brief background on the RKM Research and Communications firm and walked Members through a slide presentation, "Montessori Interest Survey", including:

- Research Design:
 - Systematic telephone survey of 404 parents of enrolled Kindergarten students or current Kindergarten applicants.
- Purpose:
 - Measure awareness and understanding of a "Montessori School".
 - Identify advantages and disadvantages that parents associate with a "Montessori School".
 - Determine whether parents would or would not enroll their child (children) in a Cambridge Public Schools "Montessori School".
 - Understand under what conditions parents would enroll their child (children) in a Cambridge Public Schools "Montessori school".

- Survey Administration:
 - CATI telephone administration
 - March, 2006

- How many children do you have that will be enrolled in school next fall?
- Have you heard the term “Montessori school”?
- Do you feel that you have a good understanding of what a “Montessori school” is?
- From your perspective, are there any advantages/disadvantages to a “Montessori school”?
- Would you enroll your child (children) in a CPS “Montessori school” if given the choice?
- Would you enroll...if the “Montessori school” was (sic) located within the Tobin school building?
- Would you enroll...if CPS were to offer a “Montessori school” at no cost?

Members raised the following questions, comments and concerns:

- How can you reality test if people have heard of a Montessori school
- Were people who are not currently affiliated with CPS called
- Concerned with saying that the validity of the results is so terrific because the leading question was so positive
- Would the results be the same if it were named something else
- Since the top 3 advantages and the top disadvantage are most like Graham & Parks, this could be a way of doing Graham & Parks 2
- Were all the phone calls made in one day and how long did the survey take
- Is this proposal going to be two programs in one building
- In support of fewer programs in the system
- Was anyone not attending public school interviewed
- Did the survey separate pre-K from those already enrolled
- Do we know the demographics of the respondents
- Would the percentages be different if the respondents were told their child could start at 3
- Families who have children not yet school age should be part of our market
- We should try to find out everything we can about our consumers
- Does RKM have the capacity to determine all of the households who have school-aged children and a way to reach them
- How might we follow up on the survey
- Was the survey done prior to the recommendation to the School Committee

The Superintendent, Mr. Maloney and Mr. Reid responded to some of the above questions, comments and concerns. The Superintendent said he plans to bring in a former public school Montessori Principal at the May 16 meeting. The Chair thanked Mr. Reid for the presentation.

The Chair moved to the presentation on Professional Development. The Superintendent introduced Deputy Superintendent Turk who gave the Members an “Overview of Professional Development Activities for SY05-06” and the purpose, planning, implementation and record-keeping associated with professional development.

Mr. Fantini in the Chair.

Members raised the following questions, comments and concerns:

- What can be done creatively to continue professional development without taking classroom time away from teachers and students
- What is the experience on the use of early release days to do professional development
- We need to have all options available
- Teachers are feeling the pain of not being in the classroom
- Make provisions to track professional development activities electronically

- Communicate to parents what is happening with professional development re new initiatives
- How is the effectiveness of the range of professional development measured
- Literacy Collaborative and Montessori trainings have contributed to out-of-class time for professional development
- Explore options other than early release days to offer professional development
- Professional development can be a much needed change of pace for teachers
- Professional development budget is extraordinary
- What is the number of people involved in professional development
- Is our professional development plan aligned with the district's goals
- Does not see an over-abundance of reading in some of the professional development activities
- Are other districts' professional development different from ours
- Who is in charge of professional development
- Are there ways we can be creative in using universities to support our professional development
- Have we maximized our relationships with universities
- If we are paying Dr. Elmore, what is the university giving us

The Superintendent and Dr. Turk responded to some of the above questions, comments and concerns. The Chair thanked the Superintendent and Dr. Turk for the presentation.

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

The Chair moved to the presentation on Report Cards.

Dr. Turk reported that the Elementary Report Card Task Force had its first meeting on April 11 with representatives from each elementary school. The meeting focused on timing issues related to achievement results of local and state assessments and appropriate corresponding times for home-school communications. School representatives will be sharing this information with their respective School Councils and will share feedback with the full Task Force at its next meeting on May 3. It is the intention of the Task Force to submit a recommendation to the Superintendent during the first week in June.

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

- Insure that there are some priorities that move forward
- It would be great if all of our schools did portfolios
- What is being proposed as a timeline – would like to see this sooner rather than later
- There are models in place that we can draw from
- What are some of the challenges that lie ahead
- This is a step backwards
- Newton does not give an opportunity to see how students did on a major writing project
- Insure parents across the district that their children are learning
- Look at three different areas – report cards, portfolios and conferences

The Members thanked Dr. Turk for the presentation and returned to the Agenda.

Ms. Nolan brought forward **#06-36, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that all quarterly budget reports, which include the projected end of year balances compared to originally approved budget, include a variance analysis. That the variance analysis include the amount and percent of the variance by budget category. Further, for all categories for which the variance is either greater than \$100,000 or the variance is more than 50%, that an explanation be provided for the variance. The explanation should summarize why the amount was less than expected if less and on what the money was spent if greater than expected. Further, to get the process started, the Superintendent should provide to the School Committee an explanation for all variances fitting this criteria from last year, per attached list. Ms. Nolan moved an amendment to strike the word "either", the phrase "or the variance is more than 50%", and the last sentence. Mr. Conry was

heard and asked that the working budget, not the approved budget, be the one to look at for variances. Ms. Nolan amended the motion to change "approved" to "working". On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Harding, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt, as amended, **#06-36, Motion by Ms. Nolan**: that all quarterly budget reports, which include the projected end of year balances compared to the working budget, include a variance analysis. That the variance analysis include the amount and percent of the variance by budget category. Further, for all categories for which the variance is greater than \$100,000 that an explanation be provided for the variance. The explanation should include a summary of why the amount was less than expected if less and on what the money was spent if greater than expected: Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to suspend the Rules to allow Ms. Nolan to re-Calendar **#06-37, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the School Committee requests the Superintendent to present a district-wide technology strategic plan. Prior to any future spending, including the proposed \$1.1 million in technology spending, and approval of next year's budget, this 5-year strategic plan for district technology spending will be presented to the School Committee. Further, this strategic plan should include an assessment of the current status of technology at all schools and at central administration, and future plans by program area. The plan should include a priority spending plan which is used to determine future projects based on availability of funding.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to bring forward **#06-46, Cambridge Public Schools' School Nutrition Guidelines (Second Reading)**. Discussion took place around nutrition and selling bottled water in schools. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to adopt **#06-46, Cambridge Public Schools' School Nutrition Guidelines (Second Reading)**, as detailed in the document.

#06-47, Cambridge Public Schools Controlled Choice Plan Issue Report. Members had a lengthy discussion with the Superintendent and staff. The Superintendent was asked to come back to the Committee with a report on whether major changes need to be made on how entering students are considered. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adopt **#06-47, Cambridge Public Schools Controlled Choice Plan Issue Report** as follows: that the School Committee approve the following changes in the Cambridge Public Schools Controlled Choice Plan:

A. **Transfer Policy on Twins/Qualifying Siblings**

That an extended time period of ten days be allowed for the parents/guardians of twins/qualifying siblings to deny or accept a transfer when only one of the twins/qualifying siblings is offered a transfer opportunity. Qualifying siblings are defined in the report of the Controlled Choice Committee. This recommendation follows the recommendation of the Controlled Choice Committee.

B. **Assignment Policy on Gender Balance**

For grades one through eight gender will be considered in the assignment process when enrollment exceeds 18 per section. Assignments would be restricted to the under-represented gender if balance exceeds 65%. This recommendation follows the recommendation of the Controlled Choice Committee.

Mr. Schuster was heard and offered some amendments to **#06-048, Cambridge Public Schools Recruiter Policy** (Second Reading). On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to suspend the Rules to allow **#06-048, Cambridge Public Schools Recruiter Policy** (Second Reading), to be put back on the Calendar pending written amendments by Mr. Schuster.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to suspend the Rules to extend the meeting to 10:30.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adopt **#06-51, E-mail from Toby Caplin** requesting a brief presentation of the Graham & Parks Math Olympiad participants at the June 6, 2006 School Committee meeting.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adopt **#06-52, Motion by Ms. Walser** that the School Committee accept the offer from the City's MIS department to provide access to archived videos of School Committee meetings through the City's web page and/or cpsd.us.

Awaiting Reports

Members voted to pass over the awaiting report.

New Business

Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Ms. Walser, for adoption of items #06-55 through #06-61 (with the exception of #06-59 that was adopted earlier in the meeting. Ms. Nolan removed #06-57. On the following roll call, the following items were adopted:

#06-55, 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	The Carroll School, 25 Baker Bridge Rd., Lincoln	\$30,638.78
<u>1</u> student	Schools for Children, 20 Academy St., Arlington	<u>30,532.32</u>
2 students		\$61,171.10

#06-56, Grant Awards: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. Friends of the King School, for the period October 7, 2005 to September 30, 2006, in the amount of \$95.01, Project/Grant SC05792. Supplemental to original School Committee Meeting November 15, 2005, Order #C05-218. These funds are various donations and will be used for the school beautification and special events.
2. SPED 94-142 Allocation, for the period September 1, 2005 to August 31, 2006, in the amount of \$1,251,827.00, Project/Grant SC06605. This award is the remaining 52% of the entitlement amount of \$2,407,359.00 from the State DOE.
3. Occ. Ed.-Vocational Skills, for the period September 1, 2005 to August 31, 2006, in the amount of \$68,501.00, Project/Grant SC06606. This award is the remaining 66% of the entitlement amount of \$103,790.00 from the State DOE.
4. Teacher Quality, for the period September 1, 2005 to August 31, 2006, in the amount of \$244,506.00, Project/Grant SC06731. This award is the remaining 51% of the entitlement amount of \$479,423.00 from the State DOE.
5. Reading First Program, for the period September 1, 2005 to August 31, 2006, in the amount of \$23,113.00, Project/Grant SC06764. This award is the remaining 20% of the entitlement amount of \$115,563.00 from the State DOE.
6. Friends of the Amigos School, for the period March 1, 2006 to July 15, 2006, in the amount of \$25,000.00, Project/Grant SC06787. This grant is an anonymous donation in the amount of \$25,000.00. \$12,500.00 is allocated toward reimbursing 25 teachers and

specialists in the Amigos School for discretionary expenditures made by the teachers in order to enhance the educational opportunities of students in their respective classrooms. The remaining \$12,500.00 will support the inception of City Sprouts in the King and Amigos Schools through the purchase of garden items for the courtyard for the design submitted to the staff of both schools; purchase of materials for the King/Amigos library and replacement of items in the teachers' workroom; and materials and resources for the Literacy Collaborative model classroom serving grades 3-5.

7. University of Chicago, for the period March 1, 2006 to June 30, 2006, in the amount of \$4,000.00, Project/Grant SC06801. Supplemental to original School Committee Meeting November 15, 2005 Order #C05-218. These funds are various donations and will be used for the school beautification and special events.
8. Early Intervention Literacy, October 26, 2005 to June 30, 2006, in the amount of \$12,500.00, Project/Grant SC06820. Correction to original School Committee Order #C05-218 November 15, 2005. Additional funds received to support .25 Reading Recovery Teacher stipend.

#06-57, CPS Leadership Development Program – Dr. Richard Elmore: that the School Committee award the contract with Dr. Richard Elmore of Harvard University for providing training and professional development services for the Cambridge Public Schools Leadership Development Program, for the period July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006 in the amount of \$102,500, and to be provided from the general fund budget as indicated. Funding for this was previously approved by the Committee in the adopted FY05-06 Budget in the Program Initiatives and Improvements section.

#06-58, FY05-06 General Fund Budget Statutory Transfers: that the School Committee approve the following statutory transfers of appropriation within the General Fund budget for FY2005-06:

Decrease		Increase	
	<u>Statutory Coding</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Amount</u>
51000	Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$ 57,095	\$ 0
52000/55000	Other Ordinary Maintenance	0	(\$183,648)
57000	Travel & Training	100,247	0
58000/59000	Extraordinary Expenditures	<u>26,306</u>	<u>0</u>
	Total	\$183,648	(\$183,648)

Mr. Grassi requested and received unanimous consent to be recorded as **PRESENT**, not voting, on **#06-55, Special Needs Contracts for Day Program Services**, pages 32-35. Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

Non-Consent Business

Ms. Nolan raised a question on the cost of **#06-57, CPS Leadership Development Program**. The Chair and the Superintendent were heard. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#06-57, CPS Leadership Development Program – Dr. Richard Elmore**, as follows: that the School Committee award the contract with Dr. Richard Elmore of Harvard University for providing training and professional development services for the Cambridge Public Schools Leadership Development Program, for the period July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006 in the amount of \$102,500, and to be provided from the general fund budget as indicated. Funding for this

was previously approved by the Committee in the adopted FY05-06 Budget in the Program Initiatives and Improvements section. Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

Late Orders

On a motion by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to Charles Donnelly congratulating him on being accepted into the Firefighting Academy.

On a motion by Mr. Schuster seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to adjourn (10:15 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee