

# SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, May 16, 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 6:11 p.m.

Also Present: Student Representatives:

**Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings: None**

**Public Testimony on School Committee Agenda**

There being no one signed up, the Chair closed public testimony.

**Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members:**

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to suspend the Rules to hear presentations out of order.

The Chair moved to the presentation on RSTA. The Superintendent introduced Dr. Michael Ananis, RSTA Executive Director, and Ms. Diane Paradis, Vocational Coordinator. Dr. Ananis gave Members an update on current programs, enrollments, highlights and special achievements. The Superintendent and RSTA staff responded to the Members questions, comments and concerns:

- How are college-bound students identified in 9<sup>th</sup> grade
- What is an articulation agreement
- Does an articulation agreement guarantee acceptance into those colleges
- Have colleges come to RSTA to interview students and accept them on site
- Can our students go to college and take classes while in high school
- What is the college acceptance and matriculation rate for RSTA students
- What is the union apprenticeship and what is the natural progression from RSTA to a trade
- Is there any connection to what is going on in the classroom and what is going on with the union
- What kind of career options are we giving students to be successful
- How does guidance help with giving students options
- What is the latest update on media technology
- Is there a plan for every student to have a home computer
- We should not have a goal for all students to go to college
- There are billions of dollars of construction going on in Cambridge and there are no Cambridge students working there
- 1/3 of Cambridge children should be participating in RSTA
- Would like to open a night school for adults
- Look at the best programs for the next five years and make ours better
- We need to compare this years numbers with next years
- What are the goals and strategies for moving students from Exploratory to Levels 1 and 2
- What is the outreach to middle schools
- How many students are at Minuteman and what fields are they in
- How many students are enrolled with the SHORE Collaborative
- Are there any plans for changes to or expansion of RSTA programs

- What is the vision for RSTA
- Do seniors enrolled in a Level 3 program go through an internship
- Do outside students take courses at RSTA
- Are students asked why they don't go from Level I to Level II
- Does not think RSTA should be held to any strict benchmarks
- The number of large scholarships that go to RSTA students is impressive
- Need to check the NESDEC report that 1/3 of RSTA students are in Level 3
- School Committee should see any program additions, demands and educational rationale as part of next year's budget
- What is Commercial Design
- There is one Grade 12 student enrolled in Automotive – is there one-on-one teaching
- What is taught in Media Technology
- Is there a RSTA diploma
- How many concentrators are RSTA enrollees

The Members thanked the Superintendent and Dr. Ananis for the presentation.

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent for the Montessori School presentation. The Superintendent introduced Dr. Connie Murphy, Consultant, and former Montessori School Principal and President of the American Montessori Society. Dr. Murphy gave a brief history of Montessori and the training needed.

The Superintendent and Dr. Murphy responded to some of the Members questions, comments and concerns:

- What is Montessori
- How many people are in the classroom
- What happens in the six hours when a student is "set free"
- How does this style of learning fit in a public school setting with all of the challenges and laws
- How have these programs worked for someone who has not gone through all the sequences
- What is the professional development needed
- Has Dr. Murphy worked with public schools in Massachusetts or anywhere
- What are some of the challenges as they relate to State frameworks and curriculum
- How usual is it for districts to have a 24:1 ratio
- Quality of teacher training is attractive
- Is it a new phenomenon for public schools to become Montessori
- What are parents told why they should consider Montessori for their child
- Do the numbers in Montessori drop
- What is the plan for a second set of cohorts
- If certification is required, does this get bargained
- How much does private Montessori School cost
- Would like to hear more about free and reduced students success
- Have lower economic parents embraced Montessori
- Montessori pedagogy flies in the face of mapping, etc.
- What do the public schools who are not Montessori feel about Montessori
- Are there any grant funds for Montessori

The Superintendent was asked what are the perceived next steps. The Superintendent said he will bring in a recommendation at the June 6 meeting.

The Chair thanked the Superintendent and Dr. Murphy for the presentation and returned to the Agenda.

**Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting:** None

## Unfinished Business

### Calendar

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#06-48, Recommendation: Cambridge Public Schools - Recruiter Policy** (Second Reading), as detailed in the document: Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to remove and place on file item **#06-34, Motion by Mr. Grassi** that the Superintendent direct the Executive Director of RSTA to create a guide listing information on gaining entrance to area trade unions. This information should include union local, address, contact information, entrance requirements and procedures. This information should be updated on a yearly basis and multiple copies for distribution be made available to CRLS Guidance Counselors and Cambridge Youth Centers.

### New Business

Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Ms. Walser, for adoption of items #06-62 through #06-79. Mr. Harding removed #06-70 and #06-75. Mr. Fantini removed #06-68. Mr. Grassi removed #06-69, #06-76 and #06-77. Ms. Walser removed #06-62 and #06-78. Ms. Nolan removed #06-63 and #06-67. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

**#06-64, Grant Awards:** that the School Committee accept and approve the grant awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. Content Institute/Instructional Technology, Project/Grant SC06821, for the period May 1, 2006, to August 31, 2006, in the amount of \$94,962.00. The purpose of this MA DOE Content Institute grant is to support the implementation of four 2-week summer courses in the following areas: Integrating Math and Science in Middle School with Tufts University; Worlds of Water with the New England Aquarium; New Technologies in the visual arts with Bridgewater State University; and Kodaly Music Institute with the New England Conservatory. Follow-up sessions will be held in the fall, and credit will be made available from the institutes of higher learning.
2. Content Institute/Instructional Technology, Project/Grant SC07821, for the period September 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006, in the amount of \$16,788.00. The purpose of this MA DOE Content Institute grant is to support the implementation of four 2-week summer courses in the following areas: Integrating Math and Science in Middle School with Tufts University; Worlds of Water with the New England Aquarium; New Technologies in the visual arts with Bridgewater State University; and Kodaly Music Institute with the New England Conservatory. Follow-up sessions will be held in the fall, and credit will be available from the institutes of higher learning. This is a fall continuation that ends December 31, 2006.
3. The Harvard Fund-Media Arts program, Project/Grant SC07822, for the period July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$14,200.00. The Integrated Media Art Specialist is a proposed service contract position for school and extended day media art and production instruction. The program will include a 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> grade in-class media literacy and production component, a citywide 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade after-school production program and the ongoing high school Sports Media program. This newly developed Media Production Program will provide an articulation from middle school to the high school, and a cohesive effort that allows for media making skill development over a period of years.

4. Safe Schools for Gay and Lesbian Students, Project/Grant SC06823, for the period May 1, 2006 to June 30, 2006, in the amount of \$2,050.00. The purpose of this grant program is to assist schools in developing violence prevention programs to enhance school safety for gay and lesbian students consistent with the Education Reform Act and the Board of Education's 1993 Recommendations on the Support and Safety of Gay and Lesbian Students.
5. Harvard University-Media Arts Program, Project/Grant SC06824, for the period May 8, 2006 to July 30, 2006, in the amount of \$2,800.00. These funds will provide funds for a workshop that is designed to explore social, political, and artistic dimensions and interactions of the media arts. Workshop gives participants a chance to think critically about media, especially television. Sessions focus on the history of television, its inherent economics, stereotyping, violence, effects of advertising, and how editing may be used to manipulate reality. Participants examine their daily viewing habits, and their feelings and thoughts about the media arts.

**#06-65, Custodial Cleaning Equipment:** that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Custodial Cleaning Equipment, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with: M. D. Stetson Company, Inc., 92 York Avenue, Randolph, MA, for the period May 2, 2006 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$336,145.00. This contract is for Custodial Cleaning Equipment for the School Department. This contractor was chosen from State Contract GRO16.

**#06-66, Computer Equipment for RSTA:** that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Computer Equipment for RSTA, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with: HiQ Computers, 25 Dry Dock Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA, for the period May 11, 2006 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$121,390.00. This contract is for computer equipment for the School Department. This contractor was chosen from State Contract ITC16.

**#06-71, FY05-06 General Fund Budget Statutory Transfers,** be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve the following statutory transfers of appropriation within the General Fund Budget for FY2005-2006:

	<u>Statutory Coding</u>	<u>Increase Amount</u>	<u>Decrease Amount</u>
51000	Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$	(\$48,840)
52000/55000	Other Ordinary Maintenance	60,546	
57000	Travel & Training		( 14,828)
58000/59000	Extraordinary Expenditures	<u>3,122</u>	<u>0</u>
	Total	\$63,668	(\$63,668)

**#06-72, Statutory Transfer of Funds to Debt Stabilization Fund:** that the School Committee approve a transfer of funds in the amount of \$3,700,000.00 from the General Fund Budget to the Debt Stabilization Fund in the Statutory Categories specified. This amount represents the projected FY05-06 end-of-year balance in the School Department General Fund Budget, after accounting for necessary statutory transfers to balance individual accounts. This transfer to the Debt Stabilization Fund will help fund future capital projects and help offset future un-reimbursed debt service costs:

<u>A. General Fund</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
Salaries & Fringe Benefits		(\$1,450,000)
Other Ordinary Expenditures		( <u>2,250,000</u> )
Total		(\$3,700,000)
 <u>B. Debt Stabilization Fund</u>		
Extraordinary Expenditures	\$3,700,000	

**#06-73, Recommendation to Request the City Manager to Award a Contract for Selected System Repairs at the King/Amigos School:** that the School Committee request the City Manager to award a contract for the King/Amigos Selected System Repairs in the amount of \$2,282,000.00 to the following vendor: J. F. White Contracting Company, 10 Burr Street, Framingham, MA. This project is a critical need for the district because of deterioration of the piping and univent systems at the King/Amigos facility. The pipes are leaking due to corrosion, and the HVAC univents and other equipment are original equipment from when the school was built (1971). Work would be completed over two summers, beginning this summer.

**#06-74, Joint motion by Mr. Schuster and Ms. Walser** that representatives from the City of Cambridge's WiFi Task Force be invited to make a brief presentation at the School Committee's Tuesday, June 6, 2006 meeting, in order to initiate a discussion on the digital divide and explore how to make sure all students at CRLS have access to a computer at home.

**#06-79, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the School Committee approve the contract of the Executive Secretary, for three years, effective May 1, 2006, with the terms as negotiated and accepted by the Members and the Secretary. Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

#### **Non-Consent Business**

The Superintendent responded to some questions raised by Members. On the following roll call, on a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adopt **#06-62, FASST™ Math Educational Software:** that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Educational Software, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with: Tom Snyder Productions, 80 Coolidge Hill Road, Watertown, MA, for the period May 5, 2006 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$38,445.00. This contract is for Educational Software for the School Department. Tom Snyder Productions is the sole source provider of this commodity: Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

Ms. Nolan raised a question on the cost of purchasing versus leasing. The Superintendent was heard and withdrew the Recommendation for a response at the next meeting: **#06-63, Two 2006 Ford E-250 Vans, One 2006 Ford F-250 Truck Lease to Own Agreement:** that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for two vans, one truck, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with: Ford Motor Credit Company, PO Box 1739, Dearborn, MI, for the period April 14, 2006 to April 30, 2008, in the amount of \$63,343.61 (3-year amount). This contract is for two vans and one truck for Plant Maintenance for the School Department to replace equipment that is ten to thirteen years old. This contractor was chosen from State Contract VEH73.

Ms. Nolan asked what percentage of existing computers this contract represents and whether some of the replacements can go to students. The Superintendent was heard. On the following roll call, on a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to adopt **#06-67, Computer Equipment for Schools**: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Computer Equipment for elementary schools and the high school, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with: Apple Computers, 12545 Riata Vista Circle, Austin, TX, for the period May 12, 2006 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$874,397.79. This contract is for Computer Equipment for schools. This contractor was chosen from State Contract ITC16. Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

Mr. Fantini asked whether this company can help us in our wi-fi program by returning computers to students. The Superintendent was heard. On the following roll call, on a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adopt **#06-68, Contract Award, Computer Equipment for Schools**: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Computer Equipment for Schools, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with: HiQ Computers, 25 Dry Dock Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA, for the period May 11, 2006 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$88,431.00. This contractor was chosen from State Contract ITC16. Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#06-69, Approval of Settlement of Petition Pending Before American Arbitration Association**: that the School Committee approve the Superintendent's recommendation relative to the settlement of a pending matter before the American Arbitration Association in accordance with WR06-127(CN-A): Mr. Grassi NAY, Mr. Harding NAY, Ms. Nolan PRESENT, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini ~~NAY~~ YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA. Mr. Fantini requested and received unanimous consent to be recorded in the affirmative.

The following item is withdrawn by the Superintendent: **#06-70, Approval of Response to Level III Grievance filed by AFSCME, Local 1611, Council 93**: that the School Committee approve the Superintendent's recommendation relative to the response to the Level III grievance filed by AFSCME, Local 1611, Council 93 in accordance with WR 06-126(CA-4).

Mr. Fantini moved a friendly amendment that all Members be added to the motion. Mr. Fantini's amendment was accepted. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to adopt, as amended, **#06-75, Joint motion by Mr. Schuster and Mayor Reeves** that the School Committee adopt the following Resolution: That: WHEREAS: ANDREA N. HARVEY was a student in the Cambridge Public Schools and a 1994 graduate of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School; and WHEREAS: ANDREA N. HARVEY was a lifelong learner having received an undergraduate degree from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, a Master's Degree from Simmons College and at the time of her sudden death was pursuing a Master's Degree in the teaching of math at the Harvard University's Extension School; and WHEREAS: ANDREA N. HARVEY was an outstanding math educator and role model for her students as a tutor for the Algebra Project and teacher at East Boston High School; and WHEREAS: ANDREA N. HARVEY was a lover and performer of music at all levels, a gifted musician, having been an early member of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School Jazz Band, Chamber Ensemble and Orchestra, a member of a contingent of musicians from CRLS to represent the City of Cambridge and the School Department on a trip to England with pride and distinction; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the Cambridge School Committee order that the music room at CRLS, formerly called A-001, be named the "Andrea N. Harvey" Music Room in honor and in memory of this talented and inspirational young woman; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Executive Secretary to the School Committee to the Harvey family.

A lengthy discussion took place on the enrollment decline. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#06-76, Joint motion by Mr. Schuster and Ms. Nolan** that the School Committee conduct a roundtable discussion on the causes of the enrollment decline on Tuesday, May 30, 2006. A relevant representative of the City will be invited to present data on the demographics and changes over time of Cambridge's school age population. Additional members of the community, including City Councillors, may be invited to participate in the roundtable at the School Committee's discretion. This roundtable is designed to better prepare the School Department and the School Committee to direct the coming market study of the enrollment decline: Mr. Grassi NAY, Mr. Harding NAY, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser NAY, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

**#06-77, Motion by Mr. Grassi** that the School Committee create a joint sub-committee with the City Council to discuss City and School Department space needs as well as the use of vacant school buildings. After discussion on the motion, Ms. Walser offered a friendly amendment that the School Committee explore the possibility of creating a joint sub-committee with Councillor Murphy to discuss City and School Department needs as well as the use of vacant school buildings. On a motion by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adopt the following as amended: **Motion by Mr. Grassi** that the School Committee explore the possibility of creating a joint sub-committee with Councillor Murphy to discuss City and School Department needs as well as the use of vacant school buildings.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to suspend the Rules to extend the meeting to 10:15.

Ms. Walser moved to Calendar **#06-78, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that: WHEREAS: the School Committee recognizes the potential for new school models to further strengthen our district and starting a new school model involves a substantial commitment of time, energy and resources, and selecting a school model will best be served by a thorough, in-depth investigation of several options for choosing the one most suited to the community; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED: that prior to recommending a new school model, the School Committee directs the Superintendent to explore, research, consider and present at least four options. The new school model could be located at the Tobin or another school, and that the options include a Montessori program, an International Baccalaureate and the possibility of replicating an existing district school.

#### **Late Orders**

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to Paul Toner congratulating him on his election as Vice President of the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to adjourn (9:58 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee