

# SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## (Official Report)

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, June 1, 2004**

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, 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 6:15 p.m.

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

### **Presentation of the Records**

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

- Regular Meeting - May 18, 2004

### **Public Comment on School Committee Agenda**

The following individual was heard:

- Paul Toner, CTA President, re CTA Memorandum of Agreement on High School Extension Program

The Chair closed public comment.

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

On behalf of the Members, Mayor Sullivan thanked the Student Members for their service and presented a plaque to each of them.

James Conway thanked the Members and raised a question on a letter he received regarding the alternative high school. The Superintendent was heard.

Ruth Thompson thanked the City of Cambridge and other donors for scholarships she received.

Krishana House thanked the Members and reported that the girls track team is number one in the state in the 4x100 relay. Ms. House was one of eight high school students attending a leadership workshop sponsored by the federal government and attended by representatives from Mayors' associations, school districts, and state leadership. The Superintendent congratulated Ms. House on being very well-spoken, insightful and doing us proud at the workshop.

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

### **Unfinished Business**

Mr. Harding asked the Superintendent for an update on the feasibility of a graduation night party for all CRLS graduates (C04-090). The Superintendent said that it was too late to make a recommendation this year because the graduates already made plans.

### **New Business**

Mr. McGovern moved, seconded by Mr. Lummis, for adoption of items #04-074 through #04-080. Mr. McGovern removed #04-076. Mr. Harding removed #04-077. Mr. Fantini removed #04-078. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted, as follows:

**#04-074, 2004-2005 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 2004-2005, for the following reasons:

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

**#04-075, Grant Award:** that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award in the amount and for the period indicated: FY04-05 Music Curriculum Development, project/grant SC05695, for the period May 20, 2004 to June 30, 2005, in the amount of \$62,000.00. This is a foundation grant that is intended to support music instruments (\$20,000) and a three-day music Teacher salary (\$42,000) to support the pilot lab program at the Peabody School. Separately, the foundation is also continuing to support another year of research on the relationship between the Peabody Lab School pilot music program and the academic progress of its students.

**#04-079, Report of the May 12, 2004 Joint Meeting of the School Committee Sub-Committee on the Budget and the City Council Finance Committee.**

Called for 6:00 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber, City Hall, Cambridge, for the purpose of discussing the FY04-05 School Department Budget.

City Councillors present: Councillor Davis, Vice Mayor Decker, Councillor Galluccio, Councillor Maher, Councillor Murphy, Councillor Reeves, Mayor Sullivan, Councillor Toomey

School Committee Members present: Mr. Fantini, Ms. Walser Co-Chairs, Budget Sub-Committee, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. Lummis, Mr. McGovern, Mayor Sullivan

Brian Murphy, Chairman, Finance Committee, in the Chair.

A quorum of the Finance Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order.

The Chair entertained public comment.

The following individuals were heard:

- Paul Toner, CTA President, re CTA in overall support of the budget, including the alternative high school
- Catherine Sullivan, Notre Dame Avenue re alternative high school and Richard Milburn
- Marla Erlie, Greenough Avenue re in support of Ms. Sullivan's comments; article re University Park Campus School in Worcester
- Kathy Reddick, NAACP President re expectations of alternative high school

The Chairman concluded public comment and turned the meeting over to the Budget Co-Chairs.

Co-Chairs Fantini and Walser gave an overview of the budget. Superintendent Fowler-Finn walked the Councillors through the following initiatives:

- Quarterlies
- Benchmarks
- Evaluations
- Certification
- RSTA
- Culture change in the school system
- Schedule change
- Professional development
- Curriculum
- Honors programs
- MCAS support
- School climate survey
- Administrative cuts
- Second-chance high school
- AVID
- SAT prep during the day
- Technology assistance
- College Board Program
- Summer school
- Crimson Harvard Summer Academy
- Biogen summer offerings
- K-12 science initiatives
- Capital improvements

The Budget Co-Chairs and the Superintendent responded to questions and comments raised by the Councillors.

With several questions regarding the alternative high school pending, Vice Mayor Decker moved that the budget be kept in Committee. The Chair declared a 5-minute recess.

The time for recess having expired, the Chair reconvened the meeting. Mayor Sullivan offered a friendly amendment to Vice Mayor's motion that the Finance Budget Committee hold an additional meeting on Tuesday, May 18 at 7:00 p.m. at CRLS after the School Committee meeting to discuss outstanding issues.

On a voice vote, Vice Mayor Decker's motion was adopted as amended.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

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

**#04-080, Report of the May 18, 2004 Joint Meeting of the School Committee Sub-Committee on the Budget and the City Council Finance Committee.**

Called for 7:00 p.m. in the Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, Cambridge, for the purpose of continuing discussion on the FY04-05 School Department Budget.

City Councillors present: Councillor Davis, Vice Mayor Decker, Councillor Galluccio, Councillor Maher, Councillor Murphy, Councillor Reeves, Councillor Simmons, Mayor Sullivan, Councillor Toomey

Brian Murphy, Chairman, Finance Committee, in the Chair.

A quorum of the Finance Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order.

School Committee Members present: Mr. Fantini, Ms. Walser Co-Chairs, Budget Sub-Committee,  
Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. Lummis, Mr. McGovern, Mayor Sullivan

The Chair entertained public comment.

The following individuals were heard:

- Stuart Gedal, Parent, in support of the Superintendent and School Committee Members
- Lewis Adkins, Hayes St. re: Alternative School
- Paul Toner, CTA President, re: CTA in support of the budget and alternative high school

The Chairman concluded public comment and announced that this is a follow-up to the May 12 Finance Committee meeting to discuss:

- RSTA
- Alternative high school
- CRLS
- Classroom aides
- Family Resource Center
- Guidance
- Effective Battery Survey

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Budget Co-Chairs. Mr. Fantini was heard and read the following:

This Budget:

- Makes significant cuts in administrative, supervisory and support positions (over \$2 million and 27 positions)
- Reallocates \$3.7 million to educational programs focused on closing the achievement gap, and other priorities,
- Shifts over \$500,000 into teacher training at the high school, middle school and elementary levels
- Funds "data warehouse" on student performance - essential to moving our system forward
- Supports classroom staffing that is equitable across all schools
- Provides \$500,000 in funding for much-needed school capital projects, leveraged with \$400,000 in City capital funds
- Initiates new Summer School programs for students K-8.
- Provides \$250,000 in "seed money" to initiate a K-12 Science Initiative, to partner with universities and businesses on a world-class science program
- Maintains support for school-based initiatives through School Improvement Funds and Professional Development Funds.

This Budget Does Not:

- Make teacher reductions without an equivalent loss of students.
- Favor one school or group over another
- Add unnecessary administrative positions or spending

Ms. Walser was heard and read the following "quick facts" on the proposed alternative high school:

The Alternative High School:

- Will provide non-traditional educational services for students not meeting with success
- Will complement the educational program at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School
- Will only admit students who choose to attend and are accepted by the school
- Will enroll between 60 and 100 students per year
- Will be based upon a performance contract
- Will be in compliance with all educational requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, including MCAS.

The Alternative High School will not:

- Become a dumping ground for students
- Be a school out of the control of the Cambridge Public School District
- Will not force any student from the high school to attend the new school
- Be significantly different from the rest of the District in the race/ethnicity and gender of its enrollees
- Be in conflict with the laws of the Commonwealth regarding the staffing and leadership of a public school
- Compete with CRLS
- Prevent or discourage students from returning to CRLS.

School Committee Members, Superintendent and staff responded to questions and comments raised by the Councillors.

Councillor Simmons moved to reduce the School Department Budget by \$900,000. On the following roll call, Ms. Simmons' motion failed of adoption: Councillor Davis, NAY, Vice Mayor Decker YEA, Councillor Galluccio NAY, Councillor Maher NAY, Councillor Reeves YEA, Mayor Sullivan NAY, Councillor Simmons YEA, Councillor Toomey NAY, Councillor Murphy NAY.

On a motion by Councillor Maher, on the following roll call, it was voted to forward the School Department Budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation: Councillor Davis, YEA, Vice Mayor Decker NAY, Councillor Galluccio YEA, Councillor Maher YEA, Councillor Reeves NAY, Mayor Sullivan YEA, Councillor Simmons NAY, Councillor Toomey YEA, Councillor Murphy YEA.

On a motion by Councillor Maher, it was voted to adjourn (11:15 p.m.).

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

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

### Non-Consent Business

Mr. McGovern asked to be excused and recorded as present, not voting, on the following item because of a conflict of interest. On the following roll call, **#04-076, Special Needs Contracts for Day Program Services not available from the Cambridge School Department**, was adopted as follows: that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions named 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:

1 contract	Gifford School, 177 Boston Post Road, Weston, MA 02193	\$19,854.45
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1 contract	Holden School, 8 Pearl Street, Charlestown, MA 02129	9,690.24
1 contract	St. Ann's Home, Inc., 100A Haverhill Street, Methuen, MA 01844	9,709.28
1 contract	Bay Cove Human Services, Inc., 66 Canal Street, Boston, MA 02114	8,363.16
1 contract	Judge Baker Children's Center, 3 Blackfan Circle, Boston, MA 02115	12,590.05
<u>5 contracts</u>		<u>\$60,207.18</u>

Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern PRESENT, not voting, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

**#04-077, Approval of Agreement between the Cambridge School Committee and the Cambridge Teachers Association for the High School Extension Program.** Mr. Harding raised a question on what the public is supposed to believe in the RFP process since Richard Milburn ran an ad in the Boston Sunday Globe advertising for a "School Director" for a Cambridge charter school for at-risk students. The Superintendent was heard.

The Superintendent responded to some of the following Members' questions/comments/concerns regarding the above:

- What is the agreement regarding regular employees
- How will the agreement impact the original budget
- Will 20 hours or more be subject to retirement benefits, etc
- This is a well-written document
- Appreciate that the CTA is willing to work with us
- Concerned with the Richard Milburn article in the Globe
- Insure that whoever is chosen has their pulse on our community

On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#04-077, Approval of Agreement between the Cambridge School Committee and the Cambridge Teachers Association for the High School Extension Program**, as follows: that the School Committee approve the Superintendent's recommendation relative to the agreement with the Cambridge Teachers Association for The High School Extension Program as detailed. Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding NAY, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

Mr. Harding in the Chair.

**#04-078, FY2003-2004 End-of-Year Transfers.** Mr. Fantini applauded our financial people for having an excess in the budget. The Superintendent was heard and reported that our finances are in good shape and he will be sending a report from Peat, Marwick. Members discussed the need to meet with the City Council regarding capital improvements and the amount we will receive back from the State. The Superintendent was heard and will plan a meeting soon. On a motion by Mr. Lummis, seconded by Ms. Walser, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#04-078, FY2003-2004 End-of-Year Transfers**: that the School Committee approve the following:

- A. Transfer of appropriation amounts within the General Fund budget for FY2003-04 to balance various statutory appropriation categories:

<u>Statutory Category</u>	<u>Projected EOY Balance</u>	<u>Transfer Amount</u>	<u>Projected Remaining Balance</u>
51000 Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$252,107	(93,172)	\$158,935
52000/55000 Supplies, Services & Materials	23,848	(23,848)	0
57000 Travel & Training	(87,078)	87,078	0
58000/59000 Debt Service and Equipment	<u>(29,942)</u>	<u>29,942</u>	<u>0</u>
Total General Fund	\$158,935	0	\$158,935

- B. A request to the City Manager and City Council to transfer the amount of \$158,935 from School General Fund statutory category Salaries, Wages & Benefits to the School Capital Fund statutory category Extraordinary Expenditures to support funding for school capital projects.

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

At this time, the Chair recognized Adrienne Leslie, and presented her with a plaque thanking her for serving as a student representative. Ms. Leslie thanked the Members for the award and the experience that encouraged her to pursue a future in politics. Ms. Leslie thanked her mother and Ms. Pierce for helping her to receive a full scholarship to Boston College.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mayor Sullivan, it was voted that the Superintendent urge the State to give credits to student school committee members for attending meetings and to petition the Governor to create a 3-credit course and curriculum for Student School Committee Members.

#### **Late Orders**

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter of congratulations to Emma Guthrie for her incredible rendition of the National Anthem at the Memorial Day celebration.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to Rebecca Slatin congratulating her for doing a great job reading the Governor's Proclamation at the Memorial Day celebration.

At this time, the Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent and Maryann MacDonald for a presentation on the Student Data Report (SDR).

The Superintendent commented on the changes in the SDR from prior years and the way in which it will be implemented in the future. Ms. MacDonald pointed out that there were not significant differences in the data from previous years, except in the area of writing in first and second grades, and walked Members through a slide presentation summarizing the data.

The Superintendent and Ms. MacDonald responded to some of the Members' questions, comments, and concerns:

- Put retention data in benchmarks
- How long did the model take that was used to improve writing and will it be used in other subjects
- How dependent is this model on math specialists
- How will benchmarks be balanced with the SDR
- How will information be seen in the benchmarks document
- Will benchmarks be more rigorous than what we have now

- What are biggest concerns in the 02-03 report
- Where does the biggest improvement need to be seen
- Will there be a comparison of CPS to the State
- If the SDR is going to be a report card it needs to include several more pieces of information, including MCAS
- Will MCAS scores be included in the SDR in the fall
- Need to see an update on MCAS and the number of students who are graduating
- Need section on classroom attendance
- Need to see areas of improvement across the board
- Expect to see results off the charts next year
- What are some of the strategies used this year to reduce the number of students not graduating
- Need to insure that course credits are in place to fulfill our graduating requirements
- Who are the students not graduating, where are they from, what do they look like, was there an attendance pattern
- How can the numbers be cut down to single digits next year
- Bring in a recommendation re allowing students to “walk” without receiving a diploma
- 91% of students who have been with CPS have passed MCAS
- What is the 12% increase in scores attributed to
- Will benchmarks:
  - include white in the race category
  - compare schools
  - include NCLB report cards
  - include the drop out report
  - be altered for the alternative high school
- Are there any indicators to gauge parent involvement in schools
- We have the ultimate responsibility to insure students meet our graduation requirements
- Pleased that MCAS support classes are being offered during the day
- What happens with the 98 students who will not graduate
- CRLS Principal needs to be supported in developing a blueprint for supporting students
- Let elementary school principals know they are sending children who are not prepared
- Higher expectations are needed - it's time to have a world class high school
- Guidance counselors should insure that students not graduate for failing one course
- Will students who are not graduating be invited to attend alternative high school
- Expectations for progress need to be realistic
- Make graduation a five-year process for certain students

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

The Chair congratulated the two juniors who will be graduating this year.

At this time, the Chair moved to the Consolidation update. The Superintendent was heard regarding the School Committee's vote on a consolidation evaluation plan and asked Deputy Superintendent Turk to reacquaint the Members with that plan. Dr. Turk pointed out some key areas of the “Consolidation Evaluation Plan Overview, a Process of Evaluating and Monitoring Schools Affected by the Consolidation Plan” that was given in September 2003, including:

## **INTRODUCTION**

Academic achievement is shaped by multiple factors relating to: (a) the school, (b) the teaching process, (c) students' social and family background, and (d) community involvement. The reports generated by the requested evaluation and monitoring process will link these noted sources of data as a means to document student academic outcomes over time and to document the impact, if any, of variables present in the consolidated schools on student academic outcomes.

## **PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION AND MONITORING PROCESS**

The purpose of the evaluation and monitoring process is to chart, examine, and document the levels of academic achievement for students currently enrolled (SY03-04) in the six schools whose students share a school with students from another school (Fitzgerald, Harrington, Longfellow, Kennedy, King-Open, and Peabody). Specifically, this evaluation and monitoring process will address the following questions:

1. What is the pre and post school profile for each of the consolidated schools?
2. What is the pre and post student profile for each student/student subgroup enrolled in one of the consolidated schools during SY02-03, who is in grades 2, 3, 4, or 5 and who has been enrolled in their school for three or more years?
3. What is the rate of academic achievement progress made by each student/student subgroup identified in question #2 after being enrolled in a consolidated school for a period of three years?
4. Is there a relationship between enrollment in a consolidated school and academic outcome as measured by MCAS and AYP?

## **POPULATION AND SAMPLE (REPORT #1 - FALL 2003)**

The population for report #1 of this evaluation and monitoring process is all students, grades K through 8, currently enrolled (SY03-04) in the six schools whose students share a school with students from another school (Fitzgerald, Harrington, Longfellow, Kennedy, King-Open, and Peabody). The sample of the schools to be used in report #1 of the evaluation and monitoring process will be those students that: were in the second, third, fourth, and fifth grades during the 2002-2003 school year and who had attended their respective schools for three or more years.

## **POPULATION AND SAMPLE (REPORT #2 - SPRING 2006)**

The population for report #2 of this evaluation and monitoring process will be all students, grades K through 8, enrolled in the three consolidated schools (Longfellow/Kennedy, King- Open at the Harrington Building, and Peabody at the Fitzgerald Building). The sample of the schools to be used in report #2 of the evaluation and monitoring process will be those students that: (a) are enrolled in the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades during the 2005-2006 school year and who have attended their respective "consolidated" schools for three or more years, and (b) were enrolled in one of the six schools identified in report #1 during the 2002-2003 school year.

## **REPORTING DESIGN**

A descriptive reporting design will be used for this evaluation and monitoring process. Descriptive exploration is appropriate for this evaluation and monitoring process because all data will be examined and recorded, as they exist without school/district control. Specifically, the reporting design will include the following factors relating to (a) school background data, (b) student background data, and (c) academic achievement outcomes:

1. School Size
2. Class Size
3. Teacher Qualifications
4. Library Resources
5. Technology Resources
6. Use of Consolidated Schools Financial Resources
7. Attendance
8. Socio-Economic Status
9. Ethnic Background

10. Special Education Status
11. English Language Learner Status
12. MCAS Scores
13. Average Yearly Progress (AYP) Status

Dr. Turk also pointed out that a list of school-based activities is a compilation of information from the Principals at the three consolidated schools.

The Superintendent and Dr. Turk responded to some of the Members' questions/comments/concerns:

- Will anything be added to the reporting design
- Are we waiting until 05-06 to report
- A list of what was done in schools is not enough - Concerned with the quality of endeavors
- How are children's needs being met
- What do schools feel are their challenges and what are they doing about them
- How are schools feeling ten months into the process
- Parent/student/teacher input needs to be included in the evaluation
- If Principals feel they don't need parent input we need to know why
- In addition to the school climate survey, Principals need to report what they are doing and what they found out
- When will the effective battery survey be administered, results back, and in what grades
- In classrooms that have changed significantly during the past year, are teachers getting information and training about the differences in their classroom
- What parents/families are Principals talking and listening to
- How are parents who have not been heard from in the past be included
- What are the results of the activities that were done over the past year
- Need to get input from people in terms of their experience
- Invite Principals to a School Committee meeting to let Members know how things are going

The Chair thanked the Superintendent and Dr. Turk for the presentation.

Mr. Grassi moved for adjournment. At the request of the Chair, Mr. Grassi withdrew his motion to allow a late order and a member of the public to speak to tonight's presentations.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted that the School Committee send letters of congratulations to all the awardees at tonight's CRLS Sports Award Night.

The Chair recognized Marla Erlie who was heard re: involuntary transfers; higher expectations; heterogeneous classes; assessment of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders; lack of community involvement.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adjourn (9:10 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee