

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, June 21, 2005**

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, 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 6:20 p.m.

### **Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings**

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

- Special Meeting - June 7, 2005 - 5:00 p.m.
- Regular Meeting - June 7, 2005

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

The following individuals were heard:

- David Quigley, Walden St., re: Report Cards
- Tim Groves, King Open Principal, re: Report Cards
- Owen Andrews, Graham & Parks, re: Report Cards
- Robin Morrison, Belmont St., re: Crew Program
- Ben Compaine, Ellery Sq., re: Crew Program
- Brian Conway, Chestnut St., re: Crew Program
- Victor Prestor, Harvey St., re: Crew Program

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to close public comment.

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

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

### **Unfinished Business**

Mr. Grassi took from the Calendar item **#05-087, Joint motion by Mr. Grassi and Mr. Harding** that the Superintendent develop a baseline system for report cards and progress reports for grades K-8. Further, that the Superintendent develop a consistent schedule for distribution throughout the school year. Mr. Grassi was heard in support of the motion, saying that it in no way means moving towards one report card for grades K-8 but rather to create a system that has consistency and that communicates with parents. Mr. Harding was heard in support of the motion saying that it is to insure consistency in scheduling and what goes out in progress reports and report cards. Ms. Walser offered the following substitute motion: "that the Superintendent do a survey of our current system for report cards and progress reports for grades K-8 that includes parent reaction and recommend whether a more consistent system is necessary." Mr. McGovern offered the following substitute motion: "that the Superintendent undertake a process to review how and when report cards and progress reports are distributed to parents and recommend whether or not the current reporting system is meeting the needs of parents and CPS."

The Members had a lengthy discussion regarding the words "develop a baseline system" and the intent of the motion. On a motion by Mayor Sullivan, it was voted to table item **#05-087**.

On a motion by Mayor Sullivan it was voted to remove from the Calendar the Letter from Haitian Parents to refer it to tonight's presentation.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, it was voted to place the following on file: Report on the progress of implementing middle school portfolios and adding them to the CPS Benchmarks (Walser) (C05-120).

Mr. McGovern raised a question on the status of the report on military recruitment (McGovern, Grassi) (C05-102). The Superintendent and Legal Counsel were heard.

Mr. Lummis raised a question on the status of the report on the teacher and guidance counselor evaluation systems. The Superintendent was heard.

### **New Business**

Mayor Sullivan moved the adoption of items #05-091 through #05-102. Mayor Sullivan removed #05-093. Mr. McGovern removed #05-094 and #05-098. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

**#05-091, Approval of Response to Level III Grievance filed by Cambridge Teachers Association Unit A:** that the School Committee approve the Superintendent's recommendation relative to the response to the Level III grievance filed by the Cambridge Teachers Association Unit A in accordance with WR05-86.

**#05-092, 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 on March 3, 2005 in accordance with WR05-84.

**#05-095, Approval of Non-Discrimination Policy and Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment:** that the School Committee approve the Non-Discrimination Policy and Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment for the Cambridge Public Schools as detailed in the document.

**#05-096, Approval of Home School Application for School Year 2005-2006:** that the School Committee approve the home school application for the 2005-2006 school year as detailed in the document.

**#05-097, Approval of Modifications to Section 18 of the Cambridge Public Schools Rights and Responsibilities Handbook,** be referred for a Second Reading.

**#05-099, Consultant Agreement:** that the School Committee approve the consultant agreement with the company on the list, in the amount set forth, funds to be provided as shown:

Cambridge Public Health Department, Cambridge, in the amount of \$40,000.00, account 53101, fund 25000, prog. 622, org. 849622, proj./grant SC05767

**#05-100, Grant Awards:** that the School Committee accept and approve the grant awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. Comprehensive School Reform, Project/Grant SC05804, in the amount of \$93,000.00, for the period March 30, 2005 to August 31, 2005. These funds will provide a weeklong math workshop over the summer for teachers in K-8. This training will be designed and provided by the district's math team,

which includes the math coordinator and three coaches. It will be organized on the basis of K-2, 3-5, and 6-8, with a focus on the geometry and measurement strands of the Standards and their development in the Investigations and CMP curriculum. The purpose of this activity is to strengthen the teachers' content knowledge in an area where the data indicates the need for improvement, and also improve their ability to fully implement the curriculum.

2. Summer Support, Project/Grant SC05805, in the amount of \$22,400.00, for the period July 1, 2005 to August 31, 2005. This will support a five week summer academic program for 36 Kennedy/Longfellow students in grades 3-6 to be held in conjunction with summer program at the Fletcher-Maynard Academy. It also will support a four week summer academic program for 20 Peabody School students in grades 3-5. Students will participate in academic skill development activities in the morning and attend afternoon enrichment programs at their respective schools.

**#05-101, Motion by Mayor Sullivan** that the Superintendent and the Building and Grounds staff look into the possibility of a short-term solution to the air conditioning concerns in our schools. Further, what would be the cost to install air conditioners in every classroom.

**#05-102, Motion by Mr. Lummis** that the Superintendent report back to the School Committee on current out-of-district placement of students, the cost associated with these placements, and what it would take to develop in-district programs to provide comparable or improved services to our students.

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

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

On a motion by Mayor Sullivan, it was voted to substitute **#05-093**. On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#05-093, Settlement of Matter Pending Before the American Arbitration Association**, as substituted: 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 WR05-87. Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

The Chair asked the Secretary to read Recommendation **#05-094, Administration Building, 159 Thorndike Street**: that the School Committee vote to relocate central administrative offices to a site to be determined. Further, it is recommended that the process used to determine the selection of the new site include collaboration with the City Manager and his staff, an analysis of the possible purchase of a non-City owned building, as well as available City buildings, and that the financing of relocation occur in such a manner that also allows for meeting school building needs. The process will ensure that the Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, the owner of 159 Thorndike Street, will also be kept informed of progress. The Members thanked the Superintendent and his staff for bringing in the recommendation. The Superintendent was heard and thanked Mr. Maloney and staff for the work done on the recommendation. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to adopt the above recommendation **#05-094, Administration Building, 159 Thorndike Street**.

Mr. McGovern yielded the floor to Mr. Harding. Mr. Harding asked the Superintendent to speak to **Recommendation #05-098, Approval of Revision to Rules of the Cambridge School Committee**. The Superintendent was heard. On a voice vote, **#05-098, Approval of Revision to Rules of the Cambridge School Committee**, is referred to a Second Reading.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to suspend the Rules for the purpose of bringing in new business. The Rules having been suspended, on a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted unanimously that the Superintendent review the matter of equipment needs of the crew program

and report his findings back to the School Committee. The Chair thanked the members of the crew team and their parents for coming tonight.

Mr. Grassi took from the Table **#05-087, Joint motion by Mr. Grassi and Mr. Harding** that the Superintendent develop a baseline system for report cards and progress reports for grades K-8. Further, that the Superintendent develop a consistent schedule for distribution throughout the school year. Mr. Grassi amended his motion to add: "that the Superintendent include the School Committee in discussions and present the Committee with a recommendation during the 2005-2006 school year." Mr. McGovern moved, seconded by Ms. Walser, the following substitute motion: "the School Committee requests that the Superintendent communicate with Principals, parents, teachers and administrators regarding the current K-8 report card and progress report system and report back to the School Committee in the 2005-2006 school year." On the following roll call, Mr. McGovern's substitute motion **failed of adoption**: Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini NAY, Mr. Grassi NAY, Mr. Harding NAY, Mayor Sullivan NAY. Members raised questions, comments and concerns regarding the main motion:

- The motion as it is written asks for a specific product
- I will be voting on the Superintendent's interpretation of the motion
- Is the Superintendent worried about developing a baseline
- We have enough consistency in the State - benchmarks, quarterlies, MCAS, etc.
- Worried about backlash from consistency
- Be respectful of Principals and staff - this is a set back for schools and Principals
- Insure that the Superintendent comes back with a consistent schedule so parents are informed
- School Committee could demand that the Superintendent come back with a developed baseline instead of a recommendation
- Conversations with Principals should not be limited - we come out with a far better product
- What is not reflected in report cards is what conversations happened before the report card went out

The Superintendent responded to some of the above questions, comments and concerns. On the following roll call, **#05-087, Joint motion by Mr. Grassi and Mr. Harding**, was adopted as amended: that the Superintendent develop a baseline system for report cards and progress reports for grades K-8. Further, that the Superintendent develop a consistent schedule for distribution throughout the school year. Further, that the Superintendent include the School Committee in discussions and present the Committee with a recommendation during the 2005-2006 school year. Mr. Lummis NAY, Mr. McGovern NAY, Ms. Walser NAY, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to suspend 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**.

The Chair turned the meeting over to Mr. Maloney who gave Members a report on the status of enrollment in the Graham & Parks school and ongoing work with staff and parents as it regards the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Program (May 17, 2005 Letter regarding the former Haitian Bilingual program at Graham & Parks). The Superintendent, Mr. Maloney, Dr. Cazabon, Director of Bilingual and English Language Acquisition, and Mr. Owen Andrews, G&P Steering Committee member, responded to some of the questions and comments raised by the Members:

- Can SEI students test out of the program any time during the year
- Is there any representation on the steering committee of families who have students in the SEI program
- Appreciate the work the school administration has done on this issue
- Was an offer made to Haitian families similar to the one made to Korean families
- Was part of the reason Korean families moved to Tobin because they thought there would be more room

- Insure that there is representation from diverse populations on school councils, non-representation is not representation
- What is the average length of time a student is in the SEI program
- Where did students go before the UNZ initiative

The Members thanked the Superintendent and staff for the presentation and the work that is being done.

#### **Late Orders**

Mr. Grassi thanked the Mayor and his office for putting together the June 14 celebration on the 230<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Army.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Lummis, it was voted to adjourn (8:37 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee