

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, July 26, 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 6:00 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 14, 2005
- Regular Meeting - June 21, 2005

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

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Fantini, 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. McGovern raised a question on the status of the military recruitment report (McGovern, Grassi) (C05-102). The Superintendent was heard.

Members raised questions on the new teacher, principal, guidance counselor evaluation systems. The Superintendent and Dr. Turk were heard. Members thanked the Superintendent for submitting the report.

At the request of the Chair, it was voted to suspend the Rules to hear from Paul Toner. Mr. Toner was heard in support of the new evaluation systems.

### **New Business**

Mr. McGovern moved, seconded by Mr. Lummis, for the adoption of items #05-103 through #05-109. Mayor Sullivan removed #05-108. Mr. Harding removed #05-104. Mr. Fantini removed #05-105 and #05-106. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

**#05-103, Approval of Modifications to Section 18 of the Cambridge Public Schools Rights and Responsibilities Handbook:** that the School Committee approve the revisions to Section 18 of the Cambridge Public Schools Rights and Responsibilities Handbook as detailed in the document.

**#05-107, Grant Awards:** that the School Committee accept and approve the grant awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. Summer Support, Project/Grant SC05784, for the period May 31, 2005 to August 31, 2005, in the amount of \$8,000.00. This grant will support the improvement of teaching quality to impact the success rate, activities, services and educational experiences for both ELL and mainstreamed LEP students, mainly at four separate school sites where Sheltered English Immersion programs currently exist (Tobin, Graham & Parks, King and CRLS), and at other schools where mainstreamed Limited English Proficient students are served. This grant also provides training to CRLS and Elementary Bilingual/Language Acquisition staff, workshops and supplies, materials.
2. Jump Up & Go, Project/Grant SC05806, for the period May 20, 2005 to August 31, 2005, in the amount of \$30,000.00. This grant will support six elementary schools (Baldwin, Cambridgeport, Morse, King Open, Haggerty, and Peabody Schools) with the efforts to expand opportunities to improve the health of students and the nutrition and physical activity.
3. Community Partnership for Children, Project/Grant SC06602, for the period July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, in the amount of \$1,111,792.00. The Community Partnership for Children grant program provides comprehensive, high-quality programs for preschool-aged children and their families with the planning and oversight of a Community Partnerships for Children Council. Working together, agencies and families in a community build a network of programs and services that increases the availability, affordability, and quality of programs that are responsive to the needs of working parents and that enhance children's healthy learning development.
4. Bilingual Comprehensive School, Project/Grant SC06691, for the period July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, in the amount of \$300,000.00. This is a continuation grant funding the Cambridge Amistad International Project that provides support for middle school and high school dual language and bilingual programs. A sub-contract with Cambridge Community Services funds the City Links career exploration and community service programs. A program coordinator, after school teacher stipends, part time family liaison positions for major language groups, training consultants, and instructional materials are also funded.
5. Popplestone Foundation, Project/Code SC06695, for the period May 20, 2005 to June 30, 2006, in the amount of \$83,317.00. This is a foundation grant that is intended to support music instruments (\$20,000.00) and a four-day music Teacher salary (\$42,000.00) to continue teaching grades K-2. Peabody School anticipates that a third grade classroom will be added by the opening of school in the fall. And, we will be able to expand grade 3 (two classes) from two to three times per week and include grade 4 (2 classes) three times per week.
6. Svrluga Foundation, Project/Code SC06807, for the period July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, in the amount of \$10,000.00. The King School has recently been awarded a grant for \$10,000.00 from the Svrluga Foundation. These funds will support the continuation of the Outreach Counselor position at the King School.

**#05-109, Invoice for \$3,350.00** for National School Boards Annual Membership Fee.

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

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

**#05-104, Revision to Recommendation on Changes to the Rules of School Committee** (Second Reading). Mr. Harding asked the Superintendent to speak to the intent of the recommendation. The Superintendent was heard. The Members discussed whether or not the Rules should be revised and/or aligned with the Communications section of the City Council Agenda. On a motion by Mr. Harding,

seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to table **#05-104, Revision to Recommendation on Changes to the Rules of School Committee**, pending a meeting of Mayor Sullivan, Vice Chair Harding, Legal Counsel and the School Committee Secretary to look at adding a sub-section to the Agenda.

Mr. Fantini asked the Superintendent to speak to **Recommendation #05-105, Challenge Prep Program**: that the Cambridge Public Schools contract with the Cambridge Housing Authority to provide a program of educational and counseling services to students expelled from or suspended for more than five (5) school days from CRLS. The Superintendent was heard. Mr. Maloney gave a brief overview of the proposal. Dr. Knight was heard in support of the recommendation.

The Superintendent, Dr. Turk, Mr. Maloney, Dr. Knight, and Mr. Steve Swanger, CHA Director of Tenant Services and Founder of Workforce Program, and Mr. John Lindamood, Workforce Program Director, responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns raised by Members:

- Why weren't Requests For Proposals sought and evaluated from different vendors
- What is expected from the organization offering the program
- Will students who are not suspended or expelled be referred to the program
- How does the CHA envision their role
- How will staffing affect the number of students admitted to the program
- Why isn't the CHA doing the elementary program
- Will there be a relationship with CTA teachers
- What is the cost of this program versus Challenge Prep
- What will be the support behaviorally and clinically for these students
- Are many of the students who are expelled on IEPs
- How will students in this program be transitioned into the Workforce Program
- Contract does not include the specifics of the program
- Insure that transition is seamless for students
- How will student records be tracked
- Will grades be monitored separately by program or reflected in each small school
- Establish criteria for evaluating each program
- Happy that we are moving in this direction - this is a big step forward

The Members thanked the Superintendent, Dr. Knight, the CHA, and all involved for moving this forward. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. McGovern, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **Recommendation #05-105, Challenge Prep Program**: that the Cambridge Public Schools contract with the Cambridge Housing Authority to provide a program of educational and counseling services to students expelled from or suspended for more than five (5) school days from CRLS: Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

Mr. Fantini raised a question on the accuracy of some of the language in the attachment to the Consultant Agreement. The Superintendent was heard. On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#05-106, 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 Affordable Housing, Cambridge, in the amount of \$29,000.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 869415, prog. 415.

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

Mayor Sullivan thanked everyone in the School Department for gaining CRLS' accreditation and urged that we get the news out to the public. On a voice vote, **#05-108, Motion by Mayor Sullivan**, was adopted as follows: that the School Committee send a letter congratulating Principal Sybil Knight and

everybody involved in gaining full accreditation of CRLS from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

At this time, the Chair moved to the presentation on Options and Specifications for Automation of School Committee Business.

Mr. Fantini in the Chair.

Marilyn Bradshaw, Executive Secretary, and Trish Keenan, Web Administrator, walked the Members through a slide presentation on "School Committee Document Management Software", including:

- Advantages
- Organization and Access
- Increased Transparency
- Time and Cost Savings
- Progress Report
- Next Steps
- Conclusion

Ms. Bradshaw, Ms. Keenan and the Superintendent responded to questions and comments raised by the Members. Ms. Walser and Ms. Bradshaw were heard in support of moving forward with the issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP). On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted that a Request for Proposal be developed and issued for a new "paperless" School Committee document management software.

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

#### **Late Orders**

Mr. McGovern presented a motion to have the Committee go on record in support of House Bill 1457. It was voted to waive the reading of the motion. On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adopt the following: **Joint Motion by Mr. McGovern and Mayor Sullivan** that:

WHEREAS: according to the Massachusetts Public Health Association, 25% of high school students are obese or overweight; and

WHEREAS: overweight children are at higher risk of developing diabetes, asthma, heart disease, depression and low self-esteem; and

WHEREAS: the Act to Promote Proper School Nutrition (H. 1457) is currently in the Massachusetts Legislature; and

WHEREAS: this Act would substitute soda currently in machines with healthier drinks, such as water, low and non-fat milk and juice; and

WHEREAS: this Act would set healthy standards for fat and sugar in snacks; and

WHEREAS: this Act would make fresh fruits and vegetables available in cafeterias; and

WHEREAS: schools should provide healthy environments for their students; and

WHEREAS: this Act would establish a special commission to conduct an analysis of childhood obesity, nutrition, physical activity and education, and wellness in the Commonwealth and report back to both the House and the Senate; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

ORDERED: that the Cambridge School Committee goes on record in support of House Bill 1457; and BE IT FURTHER

ORDERED: that a letter be written and sent on behalf of the Cambridge School Committee to Cambridge's House of Representatives and to State Representative, Peter Koutoujian, Chair of the Public Health Committee and sponsor of this Bill.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted that the following be included in the letter: Cambridge Public Schools' policies on vending machine choices, no fees for extracurricular activities, physical education as a requirement for students K-12, and having a cutting edge program that tracks students' body mass index (BMI). Further, that we indicate CPSDs nationally recognized programs in nutrition and obesity and offer our support in helping the Legislators design a program that we have experienced and done.

Ms. Walser raised a question on the 10 proposed crossing guard cuts and asked the Superintendent to seek clarification from the City Manager regarding the cuts.

Mr. Harding requested support from Members for the following motion he plans to bring in in September: that the Superintendent of Schools meet with the Police Commissioner to develop a plan to disseminate information to Principals on the whereabouts and addresses of Level III sex offenders who live in close proximity to school buildings. Mayor Sullivan offered a friendly amendment that the Superintendent contact the Criminal History Board for any information that pertains to Level III sex offenders living in Cambridge.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adjourn (8:15 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee