

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

### (Official Report)

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, September 2, 2003**

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. Price, Ms. Turkel, 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**

On a motion by Ms. Turkel, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to accept the Minutes of the following meetings as presented:

- Special Informal Meeting - March 20, 2003
- Regular Meeting - April 1, 2003
- Special Meeting - April 1, 2003

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

The following individual was heard:

- Bruce Silverman, re: PASTE studies; and Parents Committee re Baldwin 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher

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

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

### **Superintendent's Consent Agenda**

On a motion by Mr. Price, seconded by Ms. Turkel, on the following roll call, Superintendent's Recommendations #03-102 through #03-104 were adopted as follows:

**#03-102, Response to Cambridge Teachers Association Level III Grievance:** that the School Committee approve the Superintendent's Recommendation relative to the Level III Grievance response to the Cambridge Teachers Association in accordance with CN03-049

**#03-103, Consultant Agreements:** that the School Committee approve consultant agreements with the companies or individuals in the amounts set forth, funds to be provided as shown.

1. Cambridge Affordable Housing Corporation, Cambridge, in the amount of \$24,574.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 869871, prog. 871, project/grant SC03761;
2. Maria Decataldo, Dorchester, in the amount of \$5,000.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 859651, 651, project/grant SC03604;
3. Family Center, Somerville, in the amount of \$13,000.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 852362, prog. 362, project/grant SC04699;
4. Guidance Center, Cambridge, in the amount of \$14,500.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 852362, prog. 362, project/grant SC04699;

5. Moon-Sook Kim, Cambridge, in the amount of \$15,082.20, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 858132, prog. 132;
6. Eunmi Lee, Wayland, in the amount of \$15,082.20, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 858132, prog. 132;
7. Catherine Park, Cambridge, in the amount of \$7,726.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 858626, prog. 626;
8. Phyllis Wilson, Waltham, in the amount of \$7,440.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 858626, prog. 626, project/grant SC04691.

**#03-104, Grant Awards, FY03-04:** that the School Committee accept and approve the grant awards named below in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. Sped 94-142, Project/Grant SC04605, in the amount of \$2,104,373.00 (Entitlement), for the period September 1, 2003 to August 31, 2004. Project Welcome Monitor provides team evaluation, special education and related services to children entering the school system at various interfaces. The activities funded by this project support our strategic goals of early intervention and inclusion.
2. Music Curriculum Development, Project/Grant SC04695, in the amount of \$40,000.00 (Competitive), for the period of July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004. The Popplestone Foundation has generously funded the reach piece of the Middle Grades Pilot Instrumental Music Program expansion.
3. Spell Program Project/Grant SC04762, in the amount of \$33,738.00 (Entitlement), for the period of July 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004. The Cambridge Summer Academy English Language Arts at MIT is a full day four-week summer program for 27 English Language Learners (ELLs) in grades 6-8 who will be taking the MCAS within the next two years. Targeted activities include the implementation of an Individualized Student Writing Profile that will result in the increased passing rate of participating LEP students on the English Language Arts MCAS. Students receive a minimum of 64 contract hours of English Language Arts focusing on the acquisition of critical writing skills such as accessing prior knowledge, drafting, revising, editing, publishing and evaluation.

Mr. Price YEA, Ms. Turkel YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding ~~ABSENT~~ YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA. On #03-103, item #5, Mr. Grassi requested and received unanimous consent to be recorded as PRESENT, not voting.

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

#### **Unfinished Business**

Awaiting Report, Ms. Turkel moved an amendment to her motion that a report be received "as soon as possible", in place of "by the end of September", with a recommendation for a process of evaluating and monitoring schools affected by the consolidation plan.

Recommendation #03-080 was erroneously placed on the Calendar; it was tabled at a prior meeting.

#### **School Committee Consent Agenda**

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Price, for adoption of items #1 through #6. Mr. Price removed #4. Ms. Turkel removed #5. On a voice vote, the remaining items were adopted as follows:

**#1, Report of the April 1, 2003 Meeting of the Subcommittee on the Budget** (Committee of the Whole).

Called for the purpose of a workshop on the proposed FY2003-2004 School Department Budget.

Members Present: Mr. Price, Ms. Turkel, Co-Chairs, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Ms. Walser, Mayor Sullivan

Ms. Turkel in the Chair.

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 8:30 p.m.

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Acting Superintendent. The Superintendent was heard. Mr. Conry walked Members through the "Superintendent's Proposed Fiscal Year 2003-2004 Budget" - one with a consolidation plan and one without.

Members raised questions and comments as follows:

- Why is central administration budget being treated so cautiously
- Are we opting out of the State Choice program
- What do we envision in terms of consultant costs
- How is the issue of necessary travel and unnecessary travel being handled
- There are serious concerns with cuts at the high school
- Stability for the high school is key
- Will the consolidation budget be revisited if a plan is voted
- What are plans to increase financial assistance to the middle school program
- If Principals want site-based help, why is the coach/mentor model still being funded
- Restore level funding to high school
- How will high school budget be evaluated in light of this presentation
- How do we budget for remedial action that might have to be taken
- Provide both budgets in an electronic spread sheet
- What is the real number of administrators and what can this district reasonably support
- What is the number of teachers in our system who are not teaching
- What is the plan and or vision to support students who are not achieving at grade level
- There is something structurally wrong when 200 students are suspended out of school
- Need to find funds to support students

On a motion by Mayor Sullivan, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to suspend the Rules to extend the meeting past 10:00 p.m.

- Keep as many non-professional status teachers as possible
- Need an alternative high school to deal with discipline, respect and behavior
- How does the Unz petition get reflected in this document
- Do not participate in State choice plan
- Need resources and support for a consolidation plan
- Where is the collaborative effort at RSTA
- What do people mean by "Central"
- How does the high school budget relate to the accreditation report
- Need report from high school re goals and how they are using resources to meet those goals
- Make it clear why closing a school yields so little in savings
- How do Title I funds and other large grants get distributed among schools
- Need budget policy re literacy
- Need professional development embedded in schools
- Have a budget review done by the Rappaport Foundation
- Would like teachers to enroll their children in our system rather than participating in State choice

The Chair announced that there will be a public hearing Thursday at 7:00 p.m. It was requested that the Superintendent ask the high school Principal to attend Thursday night's hearing.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mayor Sullivan, it was voted to adjourn (10:40 p.m.)

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

**#2, Report of the April 3, 2003 Meeting of the Subcommittee on the Budget** (Committee of the Whole).

Called for the purpose of a Public Hearing on the proposed FY2003-2004 School Department Budget.

Members Present: Mr. Price, Ms. Turkel, Co-Chairs, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding,  
Ms. Walser, Mayor Sullivan

Mr. Price in the Chair.

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

The Chair announced the process for the evening and entertained public comment.

The following individuals were heard:

- Dr. Sybil Knight, Principal
- Katherine Sullivan, Finance Committee and School Advisory
- Sarah Carleton, Finance Committee and School Advisory
- Larry Aaronson, Teacher CRLS, Finance Committee and School Advisory
- Caroline Hunter, Assistant Principal, re support for incoming freshmen

The Chair asked the pleasure of the Committee.

Dr. Knight and Ms. Hunter responded to some of the Members questions as follows:

- How are resources at the high school being used in general
- Make clear what decisions are budgetary, not curriculum
- Need to have another conversation re what is in the NEASC Report and what is needed
- Fire needs to be relit under high school restructuring
- Need a better feel for MCAS prep and the process for identifying children
- Need a report on a plan to address failing students

The Chair thanked Members and returned to public comment:

- Tim Groves, Principal, King Open
- Tim Plenk, Berkeley St., KO School Council
- Judy Housman, St. Paul Street, Parent
- Stavros Machrakis, KO Parent
- Melissa Ludtke, Buena Vista Pk, KO Parent
- Abram Klein, Sterns St., KO Parent
- Jim Iffland, Franklin St.
- Margaret Hallisey, Parent
- Karen Carmean, Cambridge St., Parent
- Jane Wolfson, Bates St. re Special Start
- Jim Monteverde, Oak St., Co-Chair PAC Special Education

- Shari Zimbel, Lake View Ave., KO Parent
- John Taquiri, Ellery St., KO Parent
- Mary Maling, Lexington Ave.
- Dennis Friedler, Cpl. McTernan St.
- Marla Erlien, Reno Ave., Parent re Amigos and Title I
- Steven Attlas, Dana St., KO Parent
- David Vogel, Beech St., CRLS Parent
- Serenella Sferza, Huron Ave., Peabody Parent
- Joan Sulis-Kramer, Avon St.
- Bonnie Ryan, Belmont St. re article "In Schools We Trust"
- Roger Michel, Prentiss St., Peabody Parent
- Cynthia Smith, Crescent St., Peabody Parent

At this time, the Chair ended public comment.

Members raised questions and comments as follows:

- How will homes for Special Start programs be found
- Need to see final configuration of ELL and self-contained classrooms
- How will hiring be done and who will participate if this plan is voted
- What will happen to Title I money and how many Title I schools will remain
- What is projected SES balance in year 1 and how many more balanced schools will there be district-wide
- What will happen with extended, etc. at the new merged schools
- What are the plans for 30 hours of professional development that were negotiated
- Are moving costs included in \$400,000 lump sum payment to schools
- Reduce cost of people who do not have direct contact with children
- Look at list developed in the library to generate more cuts
- Budget needs to be framed in context of accountability
- Set aside additional resources to move plan forward
- Treat tenured teachers as respectfully as possible
- Report to School Committee where discussions with CTA stand
- High School is going to need more money to deal with accreditation report
- Look at Central Administration instead of taking away school improvement funds

The Chair thanked the Members, the Superintendent and her team and asked his colleagues to make their amendments public prior to next Tuesday's meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Turkel, it was voted to adjourn (9:35 p.m.)

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

**#3, Report of the April 10, 2003 Meeting of the Subcommittee on Curriculum; Bilingual Education; Special Education; and Vocational Education.**

Called for 7:00 P.M., in the Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge & Latin School, 454 Broadway, for the purpose of an update on vocational education.

Members Present: Ms. Turkel, Chair, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding, Ms. Walser

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present the Chair called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and turned the meeting over to Interim Superintendent Turk. Dr. Turk gave an overview of where we were, where we are, and where we are going and introduced the RSTA transition team - Joe Ciccolo and Maria Ferri, Acting Directors. The Superintendent turned the meeting over to Steve Spofford, outgoing RSTA Executive Director. Mr. Spofford introduced his staff and gave an update on RSTA:

- Nine programs attained Chapter 74 certification, including Exploratory
- Created a communication plan including a course catalog
- Created a newsletter funded by East Cambridge Savings Bank
- Web page videos on access Channel 98
- Designed an assessment model for students and programs
- Designed a student report card
- Created a life work program
- Created a 35-member Advisory Council
- Established a partnership with Draper Laboratory
- Placed interns at Biogen
- Public Health students teaching homeless how to cook
- Explore to Soar Club for Women
- Achieved national accreditation from Rochester Institute of Technology for college credit
- Rewrote automotive curriculum
- Scheduled for NEASC certification in May
- Culinary Arts pursuing national certification
- Need to expand kitchen to accommodate another 60 students in Culinary
- Exploratory is a success with 156 students enrolled in program
- Strong professional development
- All teachers went through affirmative action and Chapter 74 training
- Plan to use space in body shop for video production, Municipal cable and educational access as a working television station
- Plan to build a corridor through School Committee office to accommodate Mass Media Program
- Move School Committee office to space at Thorndike St.
- Lack of space is an issue for the future
- Plan to reclaim space in Family Resource Center to start Cosmetology program
- Biggest challenge to moving to the next level is scheduling - change to block scheduling or semesters
- Need a K-8 initiative
- Need to get community involved in our programs
- Plan to offer night classes on a limited basis

The Superintendent, Mr. Spofford and staff responded to some of the Members' questions and comments:

- Is Exploratory a pre-requisite for another class
- What happens when 10<sup>th</sup> grader wants Exploratory and it is full
- If 10<sup>th</sup> grader cannot get in Exploratory can they go some place else
- Concerned with School Committee and School Department sharing space
- Is it possible to house School Committee office in temporary library space
- Why was Mass Media chosen instead of Cosmetology
- Is State allowing schools to create Cosmetology programs
- Why can't students go through program faster than three years

The Chair declared a five-minute recess.

Ms. Turkel in the Chair.

The time for recess having expired, the Chair reconvened the meeting.

The RSTA team gave an overview of the Shore Educational Collaborative and responded to Members questions and comments:

- Who are Members of the Collaborative
- What is the cost of sending students to a Collaborative School
- Will joining the Collaborative withstand the appeals process
- If we join the Collaborative, why start a Cosmetology Program
- Don't send students to uncertified programs
- How will transportation be dealt with
- What is the down side of not joining
- Why does the Collaborative want Cambridge Public Schools
- Why wasn't a recommendation brought before School Committee for a vote
- How often will students leave Cambridge to go to another school
- Does the Collaborative have the ability to set rates
- Has the Commissioner ruled on any appeals
- Should an exception be considered for siblings
- Does student who stays and student who goes get treated the same
- How competitive is recruiting
- Have the Deans agreed to accommodate students who need to cross schools
- Has Dr. Knight agreed to re block scheduling
- How many programs are needed to insure that students who want to major in a program can
- What percentage of the budget has been spent on the communication plan
- Insure that Dr. Codianne is aware of the Collaborative
- What is the timeline for hiring faculty
- Absent colleagues need to be made aware of Collaborative prior to Tuesday night's meeting
- Need to expand RSTA to make it the best vocational program in the country

Mr. Spofford thanked the Members and everyone for their support.

The Chair thanked the Superintendent and RSTA staff for the presentation.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Fantini, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

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

**#6, Motion by Mr. Grassi** that the School Committee request that the Superintendent review state laws on school bus idling and notify the School Committee on School Department compliance.

At this time, on behalf of the Members, the Chair presented a Resolution to Dr. Carolyn L. Turk in appreciation of her exemplary leadership as Interim Superintendent.

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent who reported that the opening day of school went very well. Mr. Maloney was heard re attendance this year v. last and pointed out that the figures do not include kindergarten that is scheduled to open on Thursday. The Members and the Superintendent thanked Mr. Maloney, Dr. Turk, principals, teachers, administrative staff, and custodians for a job well done in getting schools ready for today.

The Superintendent and Maryann MacDonald, Executive Director of Student Achievement and Accountability, reported that there was significant improvement in SAT scores and walked Members through the following preliminary SAT presentation:

- “CRLS Participation Rates”
- “Comparison of Cambridge, State and National Mean SAT Scores 5-Year Trend”
- “Comparison of 1999 and 2003 Mean SAT Scores by Gender”
- “SAT Support at CRLS”

Members raised some questions and comments including the following:

- What is the test date for this data
- What does rising percentage of those scoring over 600 mean
- Show years in between the five years
- Impressed by rate of participation
- What are strategies involved to further increase participation
- Are there any theories on why the big increase in scores
- Would like to see trend if minority students went up or down added to the report
- Try to correlate increase to things we did
- Compare CRLS scores to other urban schools
- Benchmark with overall increase in the State
- Get percentage of those who scored under 300
- Track which elementary school students attended
- Look at where students are not taking the test
- Basic correlation may be things we cannot control
- There is a policy that all schools teach algebra in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade

The Superintendent and Ms. MacDonald responded to some of the above questions and comments.

The Members thanked the Superintendent and Ms. MacDonald for the presentation and expressed their happiness with the increase in participation.

Mr. Harding requested and received unanimous consent to be recorded in the affirmative on all votes taken tonight.

#### **School Committee's Non-Consent Agenda**

- 4, Motion by Mr. Grassi** that the School Committee ask the City Council to conduct a full review of traffic calming measures and pedestrian crossings around the high school on Broadway and Cambridge Street between Felton and Ellery Streets. Further, that the City Council be requested to implement any improvements to traffic and pedestrian safety in this school zone. Further, that the School Committee Secretary forward all previous requests on CRLS traffic calming to the City Council (C99-062, C00-098, C00-324). Mr. Price raised a question whether there should be a thorough review of the above for all elementary schools as well. Mr. Grassi pointed out that the word school has not yet been stenciled on streets and asked for the Mayor's help in facilitating that. Ms. Walser raised a question on whether there is a traffic plan attached to the Library plan. The Mayor was heard in the affirmative. Ms. Turkel raised a question whether there was a reallocation of crossing guards with the consolidation plan. On a voice vote, the foregoing motion was adopted.
- 5, Motion by Mr. Grassi** that the School Committee request that the Superintendent confer with the Physical Education and Health Department and make a policy recommendation to the School Committee on student access and nutrition as it relates to vending machines located in school buildings. Ms. Turkel moved a friendly amendment that the Superintendent confer with the Healthy Children's Task Force, the Food Services Department and whoever is currently profiting from the

vending machines, to be sure they are aware of any policy changes. On a voice vote, the foregoing motion was adopted as amended.

#### **Late Orders**

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded unanimously, on a voice vote, the following was adopted: That the Superintendent, on behalf of the Members of the School Committee, send congratulations for a job well done to everyone who worked hard this summer to get our buildings ready for the first day of school.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Fantini, on a voice vote, the following was adopted: That the City Council have the word "school" stenciled on all streets on approaches to schools.

On behalf of the Members, Ms. Turkel welcomed new Superintendent Dr. Thomas Fowler-Finn.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Turkel, it was voted to adjourn (7:00 p.m.)

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee