

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, September 20, 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 5:00 p.m.

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

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

- Regular Meeting - September 6, 2005

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adopt item **#05-127, Approval to go into Executive Session**, as follows: that the School Committee go into Executive Session for the purpose of (i) conducting Level III grievance hearings as part of collective bargaining as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee; (ii) discussing litigation and collective bargaining strategy as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining and litigation positions of the School Committee; (iii) conducting strategy sessions in preparation for contract negotiations with non-union personnel; and (iv) conducting contract negotiations with non-union personnel. No votes will be taken during Executive Session. The Committee will reconvene in Open Session at 6:00 p.m. for its Regular Meeting. On the following roll call, it was voted to convene in Executive Session for the purposes stated: Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis ~~ABSENT~~ YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

Mr. Lummis requested and received unanimous consent to be recorded in the affirmative on the above roll call.

### **Executive Session**

Members present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. Lummis, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Walser,  
Mayor Sullivan

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

Also Present: Thomas Fowler-Finn, Superintendent  
Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent  
James Conry, Chief Financial Officer  
Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel  
James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer

The Members discussed with Legal Counsel and staff strategies for collective bargaining and responses to Level III grievances. The Superintendent, Mr. Conry, Mr. Maloney and Dr. Turk exited the meeting at this time. The Members discussed amendments to the Executive Secretary's contract. Members discussed with Legal Counsel strategy for collective bargaining with the Cambridge Teachers Association, and strategy for contract negotiations with non-union personnel.

The Chair concluded the Executive Session and the Committee reconvened in Open Session.

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

The Chair announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session and returned to the Agenda.

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

The following individual was heard:

- Patricia Nolan, Huron Avenue re: funds transfer to City

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**

**#05-104, Revision to Recommendation on Changes to the Rules of School Committee** (Second Reading) was substituted with the September 6, 2005 Draft of "Proposed Changes to Rules of School Committee". Ms. Walser requested that the matter remain on the Calendar.

**#05-117, Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC).** The Chair welcomed Lynne Hall, Project Leader of Early Childhood Connections, Sheli Wortis, Coordinator of Outreach and Resource Development, and Ellen Wolpert, Coordinator of the Cambridge Community Partnership, who gave a broad overview of the Cambridge Community Partnerships for Children. The presenters responded to Members' questions and concerns. The Members expressed their appreciation for the great work that is being done and thanked Ms. Hall, Ms. Wolpert and Ms. Wortis for the presentation. On the following roll call, **#05-117, Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC)**, was adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for support services under the Community Partnerships for Children Grant FY06, funds to be provided from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education Early Learning Services Division budget. This is a continuing contract under the grant: CEOC, 11 Inman Street, Cambridge, MA, for the period July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, in the amount of \$786,040.00. Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

Mr. McGovern raised a question on why his motion, regarding how many staff members in each school are trained in non-violent crisis intervention and restraint training and the cost of increasing this number, is not on the Agenda. The Secretary apologized for the oversight and said it will be on the next Agenda.

### **New Business**

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. McGovern, for the adoption of items #05-128 through #05-137. Mr. Harding removed #05-134 through #05-136. Mr. McGovern removed #05-137. Mr. Fantini removed #05-133 and #05-128. Mr. Grassi removed #05-132. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

**#05-129, Approval of Home School Applications for School Year 2005-2006:** that the School Committee approve the home school applications for the 2005-2006 school year as detailed in the documents.

**#05-130, The School Redesign:** Expanding Learning Time to Support Student Success--Planning and Early Implementation Grant: that the letter of support, subject to amendment by the School Committee,

be approved as part of the submission to the Massachusetts Department of Education for the District's application for a School Redesign Planning and Early Implementation Grant.

**#05-131, Grant Awards**, that the School Committee accept and approve the grant awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. Occ. Ed. Vocational Skills, Project/Grant SC06606, in the amount of \$35,289.00, for the period September 1, 2005 to August 31, 2006. These funds are to raise student achievement of academic, vocational, and technical competencies in careers and technical programs; to update and develop new career and technical programs in high-skill, high-wage occupations leading from secondary to post-secondary education; and to provide students with opportunities to earn industry certification or state and national licenses. This award is 34% of the entitlement of \$103,790.00, in accordance with the letter from the State DOE. The remaining amount is expected to be awarded in October.
2. Drug Free Schools-Distribution, Project/Grant SC06611, in the amount \$54,868.00, for the period September 1, 2005 to August 31, 2006. These funds will continue to support programs that prevent violence, illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs in and around schools. Training consultants, funds for substitute teachers to release teachers for training, and instructional materials are funded by this grant.
3. Harvard University, Project Grant SC06729, in the amount of \$56,648.00, for the period May 26, 2005 to June 30, 2006. The Cambridge Public Schools is currently a partner in an NSF Track 1 GK12 Program with Harvard University. The support of teacher liaison Maureen Havern through the subcontract under this grant has enabled her to devote much of her time to coordinating activities for the grant in the District.
4. Friends of the King Open School, Project/Grant SC06808, in the amount of \$1,911.42, for the period September 15, 2005 to August 31, 2006. These funds will support the purchase of instructional materials for the King Open School.

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

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, it was voted that the following be divided: **#05-128, Approval of Level III Responses to Cambridge Teachers Association Grievances Units A&B and Unit C C-04-05.**

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#05-128A**: that the School Committee approve the Superintendent's Recommendation relative to the Level III response to the Cambridge Teachers Association Units A&B grievance #8-04-05 in accordance with WR05-95(A). Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#05-128B**: that the School Committee approve the Superintendent's Recommendation relative to the Level III response to the Cambridge Teachers Association Unit C grievance #C-5-04-05 in accordance with WR05-95(A). Mr. Fantini NAY, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

Mr. Grassi raised a question on the Cambridge Community Foundation's grant in support of the Minority Student Achievement Network Conference and requested feedback from the Superintendent on the results of our participation. The Superintendent was heard. On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#05-132, Grant Award**: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award in the amount and for the period indicated:

1. Cambridge Community Foundation MSAN Conference, Project/Grant SC06809, in the amount of \$17,500.00, for the period September 1, 2005 to October 31, 2005. The Cambridge Community Foundation has agreed to be the funding channel for external fundraising we are doing to support the Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN) Conference being hosted by Cambridge and Brookline this fall. \$17,500.00 has been raised to date and additional donations and in-kind contributions are expected. Costs are being shared with Brookline.

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

**#05-133, Joint motion by Mr. Fantini and Mr. Grassi** that the Superintendent pursue, and report back to the School Committee, making the field house at Russell Field available for science exploration projects similar to those at the Maynard Ecology Center. As everyone is aware, 847 students visited the Maynard Ecology Center last year. Block scheduling at the high school will enable more high school science teachers to utilize the Alewife Reservation and Fresh Pond for study. Mr. Fantini was heard in support of the foregoing motion. On a voice vote, the motion was adopted.

**#05-134, Joint motion by Mr. Fantini and Mr. Grassi** that the Superintendent authorize use of school buses to transport high school athletes to Danehy Park for practice. Further, when sports teams are relocated to Russell Field that such practice be reevaluated. Mr. Harding raised a question on why reevaluate transportation to practices. The Members discussed the issues of children getting to practices and games at different fields in the City. Some Members raised questions on making this change mid-budget without knowing the cost. Mr. Fantini amended his motion to include home games immediately and asked the Superintendent to look into practices and report back. On the following roll call, the motion was adopted as amended, as follows: that the Superintendent authorize use of school buses to transport high school athletes to Danehy Park immediately for home games and report back to the School committee on the feasibility of transporting high school athletes to practices. Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

Members commended the Superintendent on taking the lead in increasing the percentage of minorities being hired and asked that the issue stay on the front burner. On a voice vote, the following was adopted: **#05-135, Joint motion by Mr. Fantini and Mr. Grassi** that the Superintendent report to the School Committee the number of recent employees hired and a breakdown of minority hiring. Further, if the percentage of minority hires is less than 15%, that a plan of action be provided on what practices need to change to improve our numbers.

**#05-136, Joint motion by Mr. Fantini and Mr. Grassi** that the Superintendent provide a written explanation to the School Committee and the public on the dollar amount returned to the City from year-end balances. Mr. Harding asked the Superintendent to speak to the motion and to the matter raised during public comment. The Superintendent was heard and clarified that the money was not surplus but rather "circuit breaker" funds applied to special education tuition and general funds to form a debt stabilization fund. Satisfied with the Superintendent's response, on a motion by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to place the item on file.

Mr. McGovern was heard in support of his motion. On a voice vote, the following was adopted: **#05-137, Motion by Mr. McGovern** that the School Committee requests the Superintendent to invite representatives from the Agenda For Children Literacy Project to present their program and accomplishments to the Cambridge School Committee.

#### Late Orders

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the letter received from a parent regarding the CPS voluntary transfer system be referred to the Superintendent to review the process and recommend any change he and his staff deem necessary.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the School Committee Vice-Chair meet with the Superintendent to establish an ad-hoc committee to develop a yearly schedule for workshop agenda items, presentations at School Committee meetings, as well as evaluations. The agenda items should correlate with the goals established by the School Committee. Further, that the School Committee Executive Secretary be consulted.

Mr. McGovern moved that the School Committee retain an accountant to review the Cambridge Public School accounting system which generates the reports of Budget and Actual used by the School Committee for their budget review. Further, that an allowance of \$30,000 be authorized for such a contract to be written as part of an RFP by the Budget Sub-Committee. Mayor Sullivan suggested that, as a first step, the City Auditor be contacted to conduct a review of the CPS accounting system. At the request of Mr. Fantini, the item is placed on the Calendar.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter commending the following for their contribution to the new Forms Booklet that was mailed to families prior to school opening: JoAnne Ackman, Judy Amendola, Hanoyka Barbosa, Lois Casassa, Sharon Fernandes, Mary Frawley, Theodora Guthrie, Shirley Harvey, Elena James, Tricia Keenan, Mark Kelsey, Kendall Press of East Cambridge, Clare Koen, Jeff LaPlante, Maureen MacFarlane, Jim Maloney, Jack Mingle, Phyllis Newton, Madhvi Patil, Josie Patterson, Suzanne Quinn, Lilian Rater, Denise Sullivan, Christine Szafran, Jose Wendel.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to Reverend Mark Bozzuti-Jones thanking him for his contributions to the City during his short time here.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter congratulating the Peabody School on being named one of the top 100 schools in the State.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adjourn (8:33 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee