

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Special Meeting

Tuesday, May 30, 2006

Called by Mayor Kenneth E. Reeves, in accordance with Chapter I, Section 3 of the Rules of the School Committee, for the purpose of a roundtable discussion on the CPSD enrollment decline.

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Ms. Nolan, Mr. Schuster, Ms. Walser, Mayor Reeves

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. and turned it over to the Superintendent. The Superintendent, gave a brief summary of data on "School Attending Children – Base Year 2001 Schools", and "January 1 School Attending Children Report 1995-2006". It was explained that the data on "Long Term Trends in Enrollment (1985-2005)" are from the Department of Education website. The Superintendent, Mr. Conry and Mr. Maloney responded to Members' questions, comments and concerns.

The Chair introduced Mr. Clifford Cook, Planning Information Manager for the City, who presented data from the Census, including:

- Cambridge Population Under 18: 1960-2000
- Cambridge Birth Data 1989-2004
- Massachusetts Trends in Births by Mothers Age Group 1980-2004
- 2000 Cambridge Age Distribution of Women of Childbearing Age
- 2000 Youths Under 18 in Cambridge & Other Massachusetts Towns
- 2000 Cambridge Household Types
- 2000 Cambridge Living Arrangements of Youths Under 18
- Cambridge School Enrollment as Reported by the U.S. Census
- 2000 Cambridge Public vs. Private School Enrollment
- Cambridge 2000 Census and 2006 Projected Youths 17 and Younger
- Cambridge Population Trend: 1950-2030
- Cambridge Population Age: 1960-2030

Mr. Cook said that there are three different scenarios on data going in different directions. Discussion took place around housing costs, the Leaver Survey, enrollment change in the District compared to nearby communities, achievement, behavior, and the District's choice plan. Since there is no public testimony at roundtable meetings, individuals in attendance were invited to submit written comments, as follows:

- Can you, in marketing survey, ask for income level, and whether they grew up in Cambridge themselves? (To get at socioeconomic profile of each respondent) Also whether they owned – single-family, multi-family, or condo – or rented.
- I feel that trust in the Cambridge Public School system has been steadily eroded. How can CPS work to actively engage a wide spectrum of difficult parents? Efforts to engender trust by developing stronger relationships with parents (i.e. not ..."Key Communicators") and families are critical. Please include questions about re-evaluating the "choice system" as part of a district-wide survey.
- If choice is removed and I have to move my child to what I consider to be an inferior school, why shouldn't I pull my child out of the system? Given the recent turmoil and bad feelings

over re-organization/consolidation, don't you think that another re-organization/shake-up (i.e., going to a middle school system) would only generate more dissatisfaction?

The Superintendent, Mr. Conry, Mr. Maloney and Mr. Toner responded to Members' questions, comments and concerns. The Chair thanked everybody for a productive session. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, the meeting adjourned (8:08).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee