

# SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## (Official Report)

**Special Informal Meeting**

**Friday, March 12, 2004**

Called by Mayor Michael A. Sullivan in accordance with the Rules of the School Committee for 5:00 P.M., in Sidney's Board Room, Hotel at MIT, 20 Sidney Street, Cambridge, for the purpose of a retreat with the Superintendent of Schools.

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

Also Present: Thomas Fowler-Finn, Superintendent  
James Conry, Chief Financial Officer  
Maryann MacDonald, Executive Director, Student Achievement & Accountability  
Maureen MacFarlane, In-House Attorney  
James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer  
Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent  
Paul McGowan, Facilitator

Mayor Sullivan called the meeting to order and introduced Paul McGowan who proposed the following Agenda:

- Welcome, Overview and Goals
- Goals:
  - Increase the School Committee Members' and Superintendent's awareness, understanding and appreciation of one another
  - Enhance the working relationship between the School Committee and the Superintendent in order to achieve the Vision and Goals of the CPS
- Introductions
- Vision and Goals
- What are the major events, forces and trends that are impacting your ability to achieve this Vision and Goals?
- CPS needs to be successful from Superintendent/School Committee
- Feedback from Interviews
- Force Field Analysis
- Key Questions

The Superintendent handed out a folder with the following "List of Materials for Discussion":

- Memo: Administrator Positions in School Department
- Charts: Consolidation Distribution  
Withdrawals from CPS 6/03-9/03  
Cambridge Students Attending Private & Parochial Schools

- List of Items, Requests, Awaiting Reports that need to be Addressed
- MCAS Retest Results
- Principals' Budget Discretion

As an ice breaker, the Facilitator asked participants to "Please reflect on the following questions and be prepared to share your responses":

1. What are the three core values/beliefs that guide your involvement in the CPS that should be apparent to anyone that works with you?
2. What is the most difficult experience that you have been through in your life and what lessons did it teach you?
3. What is one of the things that you believe you need to learn to do better to become a more effective School Committee member or Superintendent?
4. What is one of your favorite things to do on a beautiful warm summer evening?

Members selected a partner and introduced him/her according to his/her responses to the questions.

Mr. McGowan pointed out that Trust, Respect and Empathy are central to an effective working relationship amongst the Committee and with the Superintendent.

After a dinner break, Members and staff responded to the following:

1. What is the general sense of how the School Committee and Superintendent are working together
2. What do you feel are current strengths of the School Committee
3. What does the School Committee need to learn to do better
4. What are the strengths of the Superintendent in his work with the School Committee
5. What do you feel the Superintendent needs to learn to do better
6. What do you feel is important to focus on in this retreat
7. What would you like to be different by the end of the retreat
8. Any other comments

Members thanked Mr. McGowan and look forward to continuing tomorrow.

Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, for adjournment.

No votes were taken. The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

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