

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 16, 2007

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

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings: None

Public Testimony on School Committee Agenda

There being nobody signed up, the Chair closed public testimony.

The Chair introduced and welcomed Eric Fitch representing the 484 Phi Alpha Foundation that has been very generous to the education of under-privileged children of Cambridge, contributing nearly \$1,000,000 since 2002. Mr. Fitch gave a brief history of the Foundation and thanked Ginny Berkowitz, Jim Maloney and Fred Fantini for helping to further the work of the Foundation.

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

Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting: None

Unfinished Business

Members passed over all Unfinished Business.

New Business

Presentation

The Chair turned to the Healthy Children's Task Force Presentation. Ginny Chomitz, Institute for Community Health, introduced her team: Jose Wendel, Nutritionist; Bob McGowan, Phys Ed Coordinator; Susan Green, School Nurse; Marsha Lazar and Stacy King, Public Health Department; Don Alcott, Food Service; Maryann Cappello, Phys Ed; Kim DeAndrade, Health Program Leader; Susan Feinberg, Phys Ed. Ms. Chomitz walked the Members through a slide presentation "Pulling Together for Fitness and Academic Achievement: Success in the Cambridge Elementary Schools", including:

- Purpose of Presentation
- National Trends in Childhood Obesity
- Why Our Work is Relevant
- How Childhood Obesity is Addressed Elsewhere
- How Cambridge Addresses Healthy Weight
- Annual Health and Fitness Progress Report
- CPS Results: Body Mass Index
- 2002-2006 Distribution of Weight Status (Cambridge Public Elementary Schools, K-8th Grades)
- 2004-2006 Distribution of Overweight by Lunch (Socioeconomic) Status
- 2004-2006 Distribution of Overweight by Race/Ethnicity
- CPS Results: Fitness Scores

- 2002-2006 Fitness Test Results (Overall Score)
- How we achieved these results
 - Partnership and Collaboration
 - Funding and Resource Development
 - Programs and Policy
 - Fitness and PE
 - Healthy Eating
 - Family Outreach
 - Policy
 - Research and Evaluation
- Fitness and Academics
 - Math MCAS: %of Students Passed by Number of Fitness Tests Passed
 - English MCAS: %of Students Passed by Number of Fitness Tests Passed
- Healthy, Successful Kids: What it Takes
- Moving Forward Together
- Next Steps for Sustaining Programs and Services

The Superintendent, Dr. Chomitz and colleagues responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns raised by Members:

- What is the basis for the conclusion that physical activity drives MCAS scores
- What is the relationship between physical activity and test score improvement
- Keep focus on open space in the City so children have equal access to sports
- What can the School Committee do to be helpful in sustaining grants
- Is there anything new in the Wellness Policy
- The entire city needs to work together
- Is the drop in weight and students achieving higher significant
- Is Body Mass Index (BMI) based on norms
- Compare programs to what we were doing in each year that led to the decline
- Are other districts seeing similar declines
- Should time for recess be included in the Wellness Policy
- Where are they assessing weight at CRLS and what is the philosophy of sending report cards home
- What is the opinion of the lunches at CRLS
- We need to figure out how to get the 19% down
- Has health education taken a step back with the onset of MCAS
- It would be appropriate for School Committee to set policy regarding amount of recess during the day
- How is BMI weighing done
- Are we on the cutting edge of using the word “overweight” instead of “obesity”
- How do we provide opportunities for parents to understand the situation

Members thanked everybody for the good work they do and the Chair returned to the Agenda.

Mr. Grassi moved, seconded by Mr. Harding, to remove “Report on obesity rates of children attending Cambridge Public Schools...” (C06-194).

Action Items

Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Ms. Walser, for adoption of items #07-07 through #07-21. Ms. Walser removed #07-20 and #07-21. Mr. Harding removed #07-15. Mr. Schuster removed #07-07 and #07-10. Mr. Fantini removed #07-19. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Nolan, on the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

#07-08, FY07-08 Budget Schedule Revision: that the School Committee receive and approve the revision to the FY07-08 Budget Schedule and Process.

#07-09, Special Needs Contracts for Day Program Services not available from the Cambridge School Department: that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions on the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget:

3 students	EDCO Collaborative (45 Day), 30 Common St., Watertown	\$108,000.00
4 students	Gifford School, 177 Boston Post Rd., Weston	195,311.16
1 student	Holden School, 8 Pearl St., Charlestown	35,675.52
1 student	McLean Hospital (CNS Pathways Academy), 115 Mill St., Belmont	84,157.06
1 student	SHORE Collaborative, 100 Revere Beach Pkwy., Owen Center, Chelsea	25,686.23
2 students	SHORE Collaborative, (45 Day), 100 Revere Beach Pkwy, Owen Center, Chelsea	56,524.50
12 students		<hr/> \$505,354.47

#07-11, Grant Awards: that the School Committee accept and approve the Grant Awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. SPED 94-142 Allocation Supplemental, for the period September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007, in the amount of \$1,541,741.00, project/grant SC07605. This award is the remaining 65% of the entitlement amount of \$2,371,909.00 from the State DOE.
CPS Target Population: 1,115 students with Individual Education Plans
Outcomes & Measures of Effectiveness: Program will ensure provision of comprehensive, high quality educational services for all students with disabilities.
2. King School, for the period December 11, 2006 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$1,000.00, project/grant SC07799. These funds will be used for field trips for grades 7 and 8.
CPS Target Population: 7th and 8th grades at the King School.
Outcomes & Measures of Effectiveness: Students will benefit from enriching activities outside of the school building.
3. University of Chicago, for the period November 30, 2006 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$6,000.00, project/grant SC07801. These funds will support the Baldwin, Cambridgeport, and the ML King Schools in implementation of the Literacy Collaborative through providing training for Literacy Coordinators at Lesley University.
CPS Target Population: The Literacy Coordinator works with all K-2 teachers in the building to improve instructional skills so that teachers are able to effectively meet the needs of all students in the classroom.
Outcomes & Measures of Effectiveness: Continual improvement in the level of literacy achievement for all students in grades K-2 as measured by the District's early literacy assessments.
4. King School, The Shrug, for the period January 9, 2007 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$10,000.00, project/grant SC07807. 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.

CPS Target Population: The students and families at the ML King School in need of counseling services and linkages to social services in the community.

Outcomes & Measures of Effectiveness: Improved student performance as a result of the provision of necessary social support for their families.

#07-12, Report of the December 15, 2006 Meeting of the Policy and Procedures Sub-Committee.

Called for the purpose of reviewing and organizing School Committee policies.

Members Present: Mr. Grassi, Chair

Also Present: Marilyn Bradshaw, Executive Secretary
Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel

Mr. Grassi called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m.

Ms. Bradshaw presented the policy manual adopted June 6, 2001 (C01-197) along with policies adopted subsequently. Discussion took place around a process for keeping the manual current. Attorney MacFarlane will review policies for consistency. Mr. Grassi will talk with Jeff LaPlante and MASC Policy Services Field Director, Jim Hardy regarding the policy index being put on the School Department web site and on intranet.

Next meeting: Friday, January 19, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:00 a.m.

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

#07-13, Report of the December 19, 2006 Meeting of the School Committee and the Budget Sub-Committee (Committee of the Whole).

Called for the purpose of a retreat to discuss the evaluation tool for the Superintendent of Schools, and to discuss the proposed FY07-08 budget, and any other business that may properly come before the Committee.

Members Present: Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Budget Co-Chairs, Mr. Fantini, Ms. Nolan,
Mr. Schuster, Ms. Walser, Mayor Reeves

Also Present: Barbara Allen, Executive Director of Human Resources
John Clifford, Educational Liaison
Thomas Fowler-Finn, Superintendent
Diane Johnson, Purchasing Coordinator
Maryann MacDonald, Executive Director, Student Achievement & Curriculum
James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer
Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent
Barbara Van Sickle, Director, Student Achievement & Curriculum
Student School Committee Representatives Tsion Gium and Marilyn Paschal

Mr. Grassi in the Chair.

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:22 p.m. and distributed the following Agenda:

1. Superintendent/CPS Administration 30 minutes
 - Financial update
 - Budget goals
 - Budget vision
 - City Manager School Appropriations
2. Members' Concerns and Budget Vision 60 minutes
3. Scheduling, Other Concerns, Rap-up 30 minutes

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent who walked Members through the following:

- 2006-2007 Goals
- FY07-08 Budget Process and Schedule
- FY06-07 Revised Projections
- Debt Stabilization Fund Status
- Budget Factors in Discussions with City
- Five Year Financial Projections
- FY07-08 Estimated Expenditure Increases/Decreases
- Multi Year Budget Comparison
- Enrollment
- Staffing Report
- Literacy collaborative Implementation

The Superintendent and staff responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns raised by the Members:

- Is there money budgeted to follow up on the Market Study results
- Do these figures include pre-K
- Is enrollment predicated on building size
- Identify items that link to educational progress
- Do some elementary schools get more money than others
- Does the Position Control report include all grants
- Are there other school systems using coaches and what is the success
- Look at reallocating dollars from professional development funding
- Are coaches spending half time at one school and half time at another
- Do the district coaches supervise school-based coaches
- When will the Literacy Collaborative be fully implemented
- Would like to see an Executive Summary that reflects the vision of the Superintendent and the vision of the School Committee

Members' Concerns and Budget Vision

- A lot more is desired in choral, instrumental, etc. – there is a broader menu than what we have been serving - have Judith Contrucci prepare a "Blue Paper"
- Why are there 16 music teachers and not a teacher in every school
- We need to think how music can be delivered effectively
- Would like to find out more on delivering second languages consistently across schools

- Who decides what language is in what school
- Look at what other districts are doing and how we can offer it early on
- If we want to add new programs, we should look at cutting others
- If administration wants to trade off, how do we allow people to do it
- Does a foreign language help students catch up
- We should speak to Fletcher-Maynard and King Open Principals re adding language to extended day
- People are not looking for big new money items – we need to support the efforts we have going
- We need to assess Family Liaison model and use them to engage families to show them how they can support their children
- Would like to hear from Principals regarding the budget
- Are School Improvement Funds adding value to our getting to our goals
- How are programs evaluated that are in place
- Look at new and different ways to involve parents
- A City Councillor talking about closing schools is totally irresponsible
- Does each school need to have its own librarian
- Unsure if our elaborate hiring process is serving students' needs
- How does this budget move us toward better student achievement
- What are costs in each elementary school
- We need to challenge the status quo – define ourselves rather than have others define us
- Is there something we should be doing differently in middle schools
- Is there any extra effort in this budget to help poorly performing schools
- Are we revolving around school choice or best practices
- Is grade structure and curriculum the best way to proceed
- The current system is not working – we need to do something bold
- Choice is adding complexity to student achievement
- How does moving to middle schools create stability and drive achievement
- The population at the high school is very different from 10 years ago – is there data on who's there
- What are the plans to re-fund the Elmore project
- Will the Lesley project require more money
- Will computers be provided to 8th and 9th grade students
- Look at providing computers to Newtowne Court and Washington Elms
- If we give Summerbridge more money can they serve more students
- Insure that we have conversations with the athletic department re student support
- Is there anything else we can do with Project East or Summerbridge

Scheduling, Other Concerns, Rap-up

- Can choice letters be mailed by February 28
- Governance Sub-Committee should take the lead at the Joint Roundtable meeting and joint committees should report out

The Chair turned the meeting over to Mayor Reeves to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation instrument.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to suspend the Rules to extend the meeting past 10:00.

Discussion took place around the latest draft of the Superintendent's evaluation tool. It was agreed that the Superintendent will asterisk and send to Members those items that will be exempt from his June evaluation. It was also agreed that the ratings be changed from 5 to 7.

It was suggested that a retreat be scheduled to reflect on the contract process and the new working relationship.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adjourn (10:10 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

#07-14, Report of the January 2, 2007 Meeting of the Governance Sub-Committee.

Called for the purpose of discussing School Committee operations and the upcoming joint meeting with the City Council.

Members Present: Mr. Schuster, Chair, Mr. Fantini, Ms. Nolan

Also Present: James Conry, Chief Finance Officer
Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel
John Clifford, Mayor's Educational Liaison

Mr. Schuster in the Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:23 p.m. and suggested the following agenda items:

- What do we want this Committee to do
- Executive Secretary compensation for Sub-Committee meetings
- Joint City Council meeting
- Un-facilitated School Committee retreat

It was pointed out that contractual negotiations should not be a function of this Committee, but should be discussed with the full Committee in Executive Session.

Discussion took place around some roles of this committee including:

- Making meetings more inviting to the public
- Looking at evaluation instruments for the Executive Secretary, the Superintendent and the School Committee itself (Ms. Nolan will research evaluation tools)
- Members being more visible in the community
- Establishing a speakers' bureau
- Adding an item to the Agenda called "Discussion"

Ms. Nolan moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, that the Governance Sub-Committee recommend that the School Committee do a self-review of its process based on model evaluations provided by the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC).

Mr. Clifford joined the meeting at this time. It was pointed out that the Mayor wants to be the point person for the January 29 joint meeting. It was suggested that joint meetings be co-chaired and that the School Committee should have an opportunity to submit Agenda items. One item for the upcoming meeting might be how the School Committee and City Council can work better together.

It was suggested that an informal School Committee retreat be planned for March or April without a facilitator or Agenda.

Next meeting: Tuesday, February 13, at 4:30 p.m.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, the meeting adjourned (5:28 p.m.)

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

#07-16, Report of the January 3, 2007 Meeting of the Joint Committee with the City Council on Cable TV, Telecommunications.

Called for the purpose of discussing the Digital Divide.

Members Present: Mr. Schuster, Councillor Davis, Co-Chairs, Ms. Nolan

Also Present: Joanne Krepelka, K-12 Technology Director
Jeff LaPlante, Chief Technology Officer
James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer

Mr. Schuster in the Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 11:35 a.m. and suggested the following agenda items:

- Relationship between this committee and the City's joint committee
- Update on the City's wireless program
- Committee goal to provide computers to families
- Clarify School Department's initiatives

Councillor Davis announced that the City Manager has officially appointed a joint committee on the Digital Divide.

Questions, comments and concerns were raised around some of the issues of providing computers to students and families at home, including:

- Determining need
- Managing the program
- Cost
- Maintenance and support
- Eligibility
- Procuring hardware and software
- Education and training
- Can equipment be donated to families or just foundations
- Consider providing PDAs instead of laptops
- Consider providing the Negroonte computer
- Look at the Gateway regional program
- What is the "Digital Bridge"
- Convene a group of parents to provide technical support
- Recruit college students to provide technical support as community service or work study
- Designate a dedicated building for a 24/7 computer lab
- How does this concept fit into our goals and mission
- Where would this rank with Principals

It was suggested that this Committee not meet again until after the Digital Divide Joint Committee meets to determine whether there should be two committees or one. Mr. Schuster will call Ellen Semonoff, Chair of the Digital Divide Committee, to schedule a meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, the meeting adjourned (1:00 p.m.)

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

#07-17, Report of the January 5, 2007 Meeting of the Buildings and Grounds and Long Range Planning Sub-Committee.

Called for the purpose of establishing an agenda for the next year.

Members Present: Ms. Walser, Chair, Mr. Grassi, Ms. Nolan

Also Present: James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer
Dana Ham, Plant Maintenance Manager

Ms. Walser in the Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and distributed the following Agenda:

1. Overview of outstanding issues -- where do we stand?
 - a. Status of critical building needs
 - b. High School/War Memorial projects
 - c. Elementary facilities study
 - d. Central administration/vacant buildings
 - e. Next year's capital budget
 - f. Anything else?
2. Priorities and goals for the year - what's achievable?
3. Referred motion on green buildings

Mr. Maloney and Mr. Ham brought Members up to date on the status of critical building needs. The War Memorial will go out to bid in January or early February with construction slated to begin in June. A CRLS feasibility study on additional components to original scope was presented. An appropriation of \$90,000 is needed for a cost estimate.

The elementary facilities audit results need to be revisited. It was pointed out that data across buildings in the report is inconsistent.

It was agreed that there does not seem to be consensus around what to do with the Graham & Parks building from the City side. A space needs study for Central Administration was put on hold when the possibility of relocating to the old Police Station came up. Put vacant buildings issue on hold and begin conversation with the City Council in the joint committee around Central Administration and a community learning center. Also look at possibility of finding space for Central Administration out of the School Department budget as a back up plan.

\$900,000 will be available for work next year but will need funding for roofing, windows and fire alarms.

Mr. Grassi will coordinate a meeting with Dana Ham, Rich Rossi, Alan Burne, Jim Maloney and Chris Saheed to look at the layout of walkways and crosswalks at the high school.

Mr. Maloney will coordinate a meeting with Bobby Tynes and Chris Saheed to firm up logistics at Harvard for CRLS' graduation.

Discussion needs to be held re: CRLS' ADA compatibility.

Look at new programs and have someone bring us up to date on what the State is doing around high sustainability buildings.

Ms. Nolan moved, seconded by Mr. Grassi, to amend **#06-119**, Joint Motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Schuster, and refer it back to the School Committee as amended (***bold italic***):

That WHEREAS: The public schools have a primary mission of education, and one of the largest challenges that will face coming generations is the shift from a fossil fuel to a renewable and sustainable economy, in support of what will be required of these students, the district resolves to educate and model a vision for a sustainable future; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge as a city has made a commitment to environmental leadership, including adopting a Climate Protection Plan, which commits the city to high performing buildings and sustainability principles; and

WHEREAS: Many sustainability initiatives lead to healthier environments, higher productivity and long term financial benefits, and green building and construction is often cost effective with operating cost savings outweigh initial capital costs; and

WHEREAS: Other Cambridge educational institutions, including Harvard, MIT and Lesley University have all shown leadership in the area of environmental stewardship, energy efficiency and green building; now, therefore, be it

ORDERED: That all school projects involving construction, maintenance and repair, be required to consider and include, ***where feasible***, environmentally responsible materials, options, and processes; and BE IT FURTHER

ORDERED: That all School Committee related building and construction and repair projects be performed to high environmental standards and include considerations of natural healthy indoor environments as well as sustainability in design and use of materials; and BE IT FURTHER

ORDERED: That the energy efficiency of all buildings be assessed and a plan developed to improve the efficiency of operations; and BE IT FURTHER

~~ORDERED: That the Superintendent is directed to convene an Environmental Task Force, comprised of staff, community members, School Committee members and students, to establish, consider, oversee, and monitor environmental policies related to the operation of the Cambridge Public Schools. This group would work closely with CPS staff charged with managing any related programs.~~

ORDERED: That the Sub-Committee on Buildings and Grounds will regularly review progress made toward achieving the goals of high performance sustainable building practices.

Priorities for the Sub-Committee will be monitoring the library project to make sure traffic calming, landscaping and other issues that impact the high school are carried through by the City; focusing

on the upcoming high school project and beginning to lay the foundation for applying for State assistance to renovate elementary buildings that qualify.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Nolan, the meeting was adjourned (3:00 p.m.)

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

#07-18, Joint Motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Schuster, as amended (*bold italic*):

That WHEREAS: The public schools have a primary mission of education, and one of the largest challenges that will face coming generations is the shift from a fossil fuel to a renewable and sustainable economy, in support of what will be required of these students, the district resolves to educate and model a vision for a sustainable future; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge as a city has made a commitment to environmental leadership, including adopting a Climate Protection Plan, which commits the city to high performing buildings and sustainability principles; and

WHEREAS: Many sustainability initiatives lead to healthier environments, higher productivity and long term financial benefits, and green building and construction is often cost effective with operating cost savings outweigh initial capital costs; and

WHEREAS: Other Cambridge educational institutions, including Harvard, MIT and Lesley University have all shown leadership in the area of environmental stewardship, energy efficiency and green building; now, therefore, be it

ORDERED: That all school projects involving construction, maintenance and repair, be required to consider and include, *where feasible*, environmentally responsible materials, options, and processes; and BE IT FURTHER

ORDERED: That all School Committee related building and construction and repair projects be performed to high environmental standards and include considerations of natural healthy indoor environments as well as sustainability in design and use of materials; and BE IT FURTHER

ORDERED: That the energy efficiency of all buildings be assessed and a plan developed to improve the efficiency of operations; and BE IT FURTHER

~~ORDERED: That the Superintendent is directed to convene an Environmental Task Force, comprised of staff, community members, School Committee members and students, to establish, consider, oversee, and monitor environmental policies related to the operation of the Cambridge Public Schools. This group would work closely with CPS staff charged with managing any related programs.~~

ORDERED: that the Sub-Committee on Buildings and Grounds will regularly review progress made toward achieving the goals of high performance sustainable building practices.

Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

Non-Consent Business

Discussion took place around whether the School Committee should mandate a certain amount of time to recess. The Superintendent was heard. On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Ms. Walser, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#07-07, Approval of Cambridge Public Schools Wellness Policy**: that the School Committee approve the Wellness Policy for the Cambridge Public Schools as detailed in the document. This is the second reading of the Wellness Policy, as amended based upon further input from the Wellness Council.

Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

Mr. Schuster raised a question on whether Princeton Review materials are being used during the school day or after school. Members discussed the pros and cons of SAT prep courses. The Superintendent was heard. On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#07-10, Consultant Agreements**: that the School Committee approve Consultant Agreements with the companies or individuals on the list, in the amounts set forth, funds to be provided as shown:

1. Cambridge Public Health Department, Cambridge, in the amount of \$59,953.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 852355, program 355.
2. Princeton Review, Inc., New York, NY, in the amount of \$25,000.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 830250, program 250.

Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster NAY, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

Discussion took place around a School Committee self-evaluation. On a motion by Mr. Harding, it was voted, pending receipt of an instrument, to Table **#07-15, Motion by the Governance Sub-Committee** that the School Committee do a self-review of its process based on model evaluations provided by the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC).

Mayor Reeves raised a question on whether the Achievement Gap Committee has a Chair, since it predated the formation of sub-committees. It was pointed out that the Members voted unanimously to adopt this Committee with Ms. Walser as Chair. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to adopt **#07-19, Report of the January 3, 2007 Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Achievement Gap**.

Called for the purpose of planning a series of public forums on the definitions, contributing factors, and promising strategies for closing the achievement gap in Cambridge involving families, schools, and the entire community.

Members Present: Ms. Walser, Chair, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mayor Reeves

Also Present: Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent
Jack Haverty, CTA President
Wendell Bourne, History and Social Science Coordinator
John Clifford, Mayor's Education Liaison
Bindu Agrawal, Cambridgeport School Council Co-Chair
George "Chip" Greenidge, Jr., National Black College Alliance Director

Ms. Walser in the Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:43 p.m. and distributed the following agenda:

1. Introduction -- history, purpose of the subcommittee
2. Goal(s) of the forums/Questions to be answered. In other words, what do we hope to accomplish?
 - a. Feedback from Members, administration
 - b. Feedback from other attendees, e-mails
3. Format for the forums
4. Budget (?)
5. Dates
6. Other issues?
7. Next steps/Tasks

After introductions, Ms. Walser gave a brief history and purpose of the sub-committee.

Questions, comments and concerns were raised including:

- Topics for three forums (definition, contributing factors and potential solutions)
- Compare gap to a standard rather than to other groups
- Need clarity even if we can't reach total consensus around a definition
- Invite panelists who have seen success in closing the gap in school districts like Cambridge as opposed to those who have had success only in one school
- Who is the audience for each forum
- What are the ethnicity and cultural contributors
- Investigate cultural differences between ethnic groups who may be poor, but whose students are succeeding
- Look at student profiles of those who succeed rather than just focusing on deficits
- Parents need to be better informed of what the NCLB and DOE definitions mean
- We should use this opportunity to look at ourselves in depth
- We need to hear diversity of opinions
- What are some of the common themes in students who are not achieving
- Look at districts that have the same problem that we have
- Focus on speakers who can point to results
- KIPP has good results and they only have poor kids
- Frederick Douglas school in Harlem has a good program
- There should be a culminating event after the forums to talk about next steps
- Put effort into one Saturday event
- Get parents involved through raffles, lotteries, workshops, etc.
- Announce the event as a special series – model after the “Saturday School”
- Hold forums off campus? At the Harvard Kennedy School or School of Education
- A final report should be produced after the forums
- Outline definition in a small group and then explain to a larger group
- Ask Principals to say where the gaps are in preparation for the forums
- Plan some sessions in the Spring and some in the Fall
- Think of people to be invited to the first panel
- Think carefully about speakers making sure that they understand Cambridge's situation – experts sometimes are just focused on their own programs
- Put a lot of effort into outreach and advertising the forums
- We may have to do another event specifically tailored to parents

Some suggested resource people:

- Geoff Canada
- Ron Walker
- Rosa Smith, Schott Foundation

- Kathy Skinner

Next meeting tentatively scheduled for January 17.

The meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

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

Ms. Walser raised a question on the District's liability for lost deposits if a specific date were not met. The Superintendent, Mr. Maloney and Ms. MacFarlane were heard. Mr. Harding offered a friendly amendment to omit the word policy. The amendment was accepted by Ms. Nolan. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to adopt, as amended, **#07-20, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the School Committee establish a goal of sending first-round Kindergarten assignments by March 1 of each year. Further, that the Superintendent is directed to make every effort to meet this goal, starting with this year's Cycle I Kindergarten registration.

#07-21, Motion by Ms. Nolan that Whereas currently some specialists in the district serve two, four and five times as many students as others, and whereas there is a question on what constitutes equitable staffing across our schools, therefore the School Committee directs the Superintendent to report, at the next meeting, on current policies related to the allocation of all specialists in elementary schools. The report should include policies on all academic specialists: Art, Music, Library/Media, Technology, World Language, and Physical Education. Further, that the report also include policies for allocations of academic support specialist staff, notably school psychologists, social workers, and speech language specialists, including best practice thinking on providing services to a school population, both students in need of some help that fall short of a full IEP as well as students on IEPs or with 504 plans. Further, that the report include the policy on the allocation of Clerks and Family Liaisons. Ms. Walser offered a friendly amendment to strike "including best practice thinking on providing services to a school population, both students in need of some help that fall short of a full IEP as well as students on IEPs or with 504 plans." Ms. Walser's amendment was accepted by Ms. Nolan. The Superintendent was heard. Mr. Grassi offered a friendly amendment to the first sentence that "The School Committee directs the Superintendent to complete a report, prior to the January 30 Budget Sub-Committee meeting, on current policies related to the allocation of all specialists in elementary schools." The amendments were accepted by Ms. Nolan. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to accept as amended **#07-21, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the School Committee directs the Superintendent to complete a report, prior to the January 30 Budget Sub-Committee meeting, on current policies related to the allocation of all specialists in elementary schools. The report should include policies on all academic specialists: Art, Music, Library/Media, Technology, World Language, and Physical Education. Further, that the report also include policies for allocations of academic support specialist staff, notably school psychologists, social workers, and speech language specialists.

Late Orders

Budget Co-chair Grassi announced the following meetings on the FY2007-2008 budget:

- January 30, 6:00 p.m., School Committee Budget Sub-Committee meeting. Public input invited.
- March 6, 6:00 p.m., Superintendent's Presentation of the Proposed Budget to the School Committee at a public meeting.
- March 13, 6:00 p.m., Conduct legally required public hearing on the Budget, and hear public testimony.
- March 20, 6:00 p.m., School Committee budget decision meeting and Adoption of the Budget.
- Late March, transmittal of Adopted Budget to City Manager, with supporting documents.

- April or May, City Council Hearings on the City Manager's Proposed Budget, hearing on the School Budget.

The Chair congratulated Public Information Officer Justin Martin for a job well-done on the High School brochure.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adjourn (9:45 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee