

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

### **(Official Report)**

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, September 19, 2006**

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 6:18 p.m. and observed a moment of silence for former Mayor Dan Hayes.

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

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted that the Minutes of the following meetings be accepted as presented:

- Special Meeting – August 30, 2006
- Special Meeting – August 24, 2006
- Special Meeting – August 17, 2006
- Special Meeting – July 25, 2006

#### **Public Testimony on School Committee Agenda**

The following individuals were heard:

- Cheyenne McCarter, Elm Street, re Special Ed. Services
- Audrey Schulman, Acorn Street, re Energy Efficiency
- Eileen Span, Gray Street, re Special Ed. Services
- Anne Strong, Cottage Street, re Special Ed. Services
- Eli Yarden, Pleasant Street, re #06-119; #06-149; and Affirmative Action report language
- Maureen Manning, Arlington Street, Co-Chair, Parent Advisory Council for Special Education (PAC), re prepared statement from PAC

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to suspend the Rules to allow Ms. Manning to read the PAC letter in its entirety.

- Jennifer Nahas, Waterman Rd., re Special Ed.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, it was voted to suspend the Rules to allow Ms. Nahas additional time to complete her testimony.

- C. Streeter, Lakeview Ave., re Special Ed. Staff support and work loads
- Heather Hoffman, Hurley Street, in support of motions on green buildings
- Roy Bercaw, Prescott Street, re Special Ed. and lack of categories in the Affirmative Action report for persons with disabilities

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to close public testimony.

The Chair recognized and welcomed Robin Harris, Fletcher/Maynard Principal, Pat Beggy, Morse Principal, Mary Wong, Kids Council, and Bernard Hicks, Mayor's Scheduler.

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

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

**Unfinished Business**

**A. Calendar**

Mr. Grassi moved, seconded by Mr. Harding, to remove item **#06-119, Joint motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Schuster**, and refer it to the Buildings and Grounds Sub-Committee when it is formed. Members discussed the motion and it was suggested that a roundtable be scheduled. Mr. Grassi withdrew his motion to remove the item and it will remain on the Calendar.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to remove and place on file: **Motion by Ms. Nolan** that whereas the School Committee recognizes the potential for new school models to further strengthen our district and starting a new school model involves a substantial commitment of time, energy and resources, and selecting a school model will best be served by a thorough, in-depth investigation of several options and choosing the most suited to the community.

Therefore, Be It Ordered that the School Committee directs the Superintendent to start by laying out the most critical areas the district needs to address, e.g. middle school preparation, early childhood, math expectations. Based on that in-depth review, the Superintendent will explore, research, consider and present at least three options for a new school model. The new school model could be located at the Tobin or another school, based on district need and clear criteria. **(C06-130)(6/6/06)**

Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Mr. Grassi, for adoption of **#06-123, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the School Committee go on record expressing concern over the increased gap in achievement as outlined in the recent Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) draft report. Mr. Harding withdrew his motion to adopt and it was voted to refer **#06-123** to the roundtable meeting on the achievement gap.

The Chair recognized and welcomed Dr. Joe Petner, Haggerty School Principal.

**New Business**

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to suspend the Rules to move to B. Action Items and return to Presentations later.

Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, for adoption of items #06-144 through #06-149. Mr. Schuster removed #06-148. Ms. Walser removed #06-147 and #06-149. Mr. Grassi removed #06-145. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

**#06-144, Special Needs Contract for Residential Program Services not available from the Cambridge School Department:** that the School Committee award a contract to the institution named, in the amount not to exceed the shown rate, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget:

1 student      Cardinal Cushing Centers, Inc., 405 Washington St., Hanover      \$112,653.42

**#06-146, Grant Awards:**

1. Title I Distribution, project/grant SC07604, for the period September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007, in the amount of \$1,787,583.00. These funds will provide academic instructional and support services for eligible students, professional development activities for staff, support for parent involvement activities, and also includes the

purchase of supplies and materials. Grant also serves eligible students in Cambridge Private Schools.

**CPS Target Population:** Grant funds 15 FTE staff at 8 Title I schools.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** At 7 School-wide Title I schools, program will raise the literacy achievement of all students; at the 1 Targeted Assistance school (King Open), a select group of approximately 42 students deemed most at risk will receive services to enable them to meet State standards.

2. SPED 94-142 Allocation, project/grant SC07605, for the period September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007, in the amount of \$830,168.00. The purpose of this Federal Entitlement Grant Program is to provide funds to ensure that eligible students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education that includes special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs. This award is 35% of the entitlement amount of \$2,374,909.00, in accordance with the letter from the State DOE. The remaining amount is expected to be awarded in October.

**CPS Target Population:** 1,115 students with Individual Education Plans.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** Program will ensure provision of comprehensive, high quality educational services for all students with disabilities.

3. Title V, project/grant SC07608, for the period September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007. This Federal Entitlement Grant will fund professional development for teachers in the Cambridge Licensure In-District Program (CLIP) and provide the support staff necessary for the Cambridge Mentoring program. Services proportionate to enrollment will also be provided to participating private schools.

**CPS Target Population:** 30 teachers, approximately 600 students.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** Teachers will improve their ability to design appropriate curriculum, manage classrooms, and support student learning through implementing effective strategies for different learning styles.

4. Drug Free Schools, project/grant SC07611, for the period September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007, in the amount of \$50,505.00. These funds will continue to support programs that prevent violence, illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and drugs in and around schools through training consultants and instructional materials. Services proportionate to enrollment are provided to participating private schools in the district.

**CPS Target Population:** all CPS students.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** Program will continue to reduce risk behaviors by significant amounts as measured in the 2007 Middle Grades Health Survey.

5. Teacher Quality, project/grant SC07731, for the period September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007, in the amount of \$477,571.00. This grant program is to increase student achievement through a comprehensive district initiative that focuses on the preparation, training, recruitment, and retention of highly qualified educators, to help meet NCLB goals. Funds provide for 3 FTE district-wide coaches (2 in math; 1 in ELA) and the lead teacher for Professional Development. Participating private schools are served in proportion to their enrollment.

**CPS Target Population:** The Literacy coaches (2 @ .5FTE) provide professional development for all teachers of grades 3-5 and 6-8; the 2 math coaches serve all teachers of grades K-3 and 7-12. The lead teacher for PD serves all teachers.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** Teachers will continuously improve instruction, deepen their content knowledge, and become able to implement more comprehensively the ELA and math curricula.

6. LEP Support, project/grant SC07737, for the period September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007, in the amount of \$112,914. This grant will provide funds to improve the

educational performance of limited English proficient students in grades K-12 by assisting these students to learn English and meet State academic content standards.

**CPS Target Population:** All 436 Limited English Proficient students enrolled in the district.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** In Sheltered English Immersion classes, both during the school year and the summer, students will receive intensive instruction which will accelerate their English Language acquisition and improve their academic outcomes as measured by performance on the pre- and post-tests in Summer School, and the MEPA, MELA-O, and MCAS.

7. Enhanced Education Through Technology, project/grant SC07741, for the period September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007 in the amount of \$19,323.00. This grant is an entitlement grant that will be used to expand and partially support two technology specialist positions at two schools (Haggerty and Cambridgeport) to provide training and support for the integration of technology into the curriculum.

**CPS Target Population:** This grant will serve the 539 students in the two schools.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** Teachers in these two schools will be able to effectively integrate various forms of technology into their curricula to enhance instruction and improve student engagement and achievement.

8. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning, project/grant SC07743, for the period September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007, in the amount of \$241,312.00. This grant for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) Program is to enhance the community learning centers that operate during out-of-school hours by helping them provide students with academic enrichment opportunities along with other activities designed to complement the students' regular academic program.

**CPS Target Population:** 290 students in grades K-8.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** Improved communication and coordination of services between the schools and after-school programs, and the provision of high quality professional development for Out-of-School Time (OST) staff, will result in increased student initiative, engagement, and academic progress as measured by the DOE evaluation instrument called the SAYO survey.

9. Collaborative Success Plan, project/grant SC07819, for the period September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2007, in the amount of \$30,000.00. The district has received a second year of funding for this competitive State grant to continue to develop the Collaborative Success Plan in order to increase the number of students entering high school who will exit having met the competency determination and graduation requirements. This project will also increase the number of post 12th grade students who are aware of the post-secondary educational and/or employment/workforce training opportunities available until passing the MCAS retest. Through the collaborative efforts of the guidance department and community agencies, communication and support tools will be developed and implemented to provide an outline of educational choices, consequences, and options for secondary and post-secondary students.

**CPS Target Population:** All current students and families attending high school in the district.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** Increased rates of student success will be achieved through the institution of a comprehensive system of communication with high school students and their families, to be carried out in collaboration with several community agencies who work with many of the low income and immigrant families in the city.

**Non-Consent Business**

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#06-145, 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:

4 students	Beacon High School, 74 Green St., Brookline	\$169,026.88
1 student	Bay Cove Human Services, 66 Canal St., Boston	51,701.27
3 students	Holden School, 8 Pearl St., Charlestown	141,654.87
2 students	Learning Prep School, PO Box 650205, W. Newton	52,233.30
3 students	The May Institute, PO Box 847240, Boston	222,830.31
1 student	Bi-County Collaborative (BICO), 397 E. Central St., Franklin	35,317.00
1 student	EDCO Collaborative, 281 Winter St., Waltham	35,895.00
8 students	Lighthouse School, 25 Wellman Ave., N. Chelmsford	387,963.36
<u>2</u> students	Community Therapeutic Day School, 187 Spring St., Lexington	<u>128,248.88</u>
25 students		\$1,224,870.87

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

**#06-147, Lease Extension for 159 Thorndike Street Offices.** Ms. Walser was heard and said she will not be supporting the recommendation. It was suggested that administrative office space be a topic for the next School Committee/City Council meeting. Mr. Maloney was heard and said extending the lease will not tie our hands but it will satisfy the legal requirements of the lease. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#06-147, Lease Extension for 159 Thorndike Street Offices**: that the School Committee award a contract for a three-year extension of the Lease for Administrative Office space at 159 Thorndike Street, Cambridge, MA, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

1. Archdiocese of Boston, 2121 Commonwealth Avenue, Brighton, for the period October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2009, in the amounts of:
  - Year 1 \$124,373.00
  - Year 2 \$137,703.20
  - Year 3 \$145,033.20

Ms. Walser NAY, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA. Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Harding, for suspension of the Rules for the purpose of moving reconsideration of the foregoing vote. The Rules having been suspended, a motion to reconsider the foregoing vote, hoping the same would not prevail, **failed of adoption**.

Mr. Schuster asked that the following motion be postponed until the formation of sub-committees. It was pointed out that, since the Vice Chair appoints committees, the motion was brought in as a courtesy and the appointments stand. Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Mr. Grassi, for adoption of **#06-148, Motion by Mr. Fantini** that Richard Harding and Joseph Grassi be named Co-Chairs of the 2007-2008 Budget Sub-Committee (Committee of the Whole). Ms. Nolan moved to Calendar the motion.

**#06-149, Joint motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Fantini.** Ms. Walser asked whether passing this motion will put our State funding in jeopardy. The Superintendent and Mr. Maloney were heard. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adopt **#06-149, Joint motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Fantini:** that WHEREAS: CRLS and the War Memorial are the largest municipal energy users in the City of Cambridge and are in the process of being renovated; and

WHEREAS: Harvard University has saved more than half a million dollars at a cogeneration facility for their main swimming pool, with over 20 years of documented experience with the system, and MIT has experience with cogeneration, and;

WHEREAS: staff and students will benefit from high performance school buildings with increased teacher satisfaction, less absenteeism, higher environmental awareness and decreased building operating costs; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

ORDERED: that the Superintendent immediately engage in a review of the War Memorial and CRLS projects to study the options for long-term cost savings and/or environmental savings, following up on the recommendations in the September 2003 report "Feasibility Study of Energy Options and Green School Upgrades" especially the cogeneration option. The review may also incorporate cost-saving and greenhouse emissions-reducing technologies not previously studied.

The Chair returned to the presentation on the Special Education (SPED) Parent Survey, Strategic Plan and Annual Report, and turned the meeting over to the Superintendent who introduced Edward McCormack, Special Education Director. Mr. McCormack introduced Dr. David Riley, Executive Director, and Dr. Elizabeth Fideler, Senior Research Associate, Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, who gave a summary of the Report on the Cambridge Public Schools Office of Special Education Parent Satisfaction Survey. Members raised the following questions, comments and concerns:

- How many surveys were sent out
- How many calls were made
- Why are original comments not included in the report
- It would be helpful to have a summary included in the report
- If people were promised anonymity why does the Executive Director have the originals
- How does this response rate compare to other surveys that have been done
- Has EDC done this kind of survey for other school districts
- Why wasn't there a section in the survey re getting parents to satisfaction
- Has not heard this level of satisfaction ever from parents with students who learn differently
- Would like to see school by school the number of parents who responded
- Is there some additional process to increase responses
- Why don't we try harder to talk to people we don't typically hear from – we need a response from the whole group
- If we paid more, could they do more
- Where is the issue of regression addressed
- Was there any way to capture how respondents were feeling when they were at odds with the administration
- What is the plan to use the information from this survey to inform what we do in the district
- Would like to know if staff are leaving because they are over-worked
- Happy to hear that Superintendent and SPED Director met with the Parent Advisory Council

- Need a mechanism where parents can meet with Superintendent directly
- Superintendent and SPED Director should have provision for conference calls
- If every child has an IEP why are we not doing better
- We need to do much more than Special Start
- Communicate as much as possible with our parents
- There has to be more questions asked about the administration and the Office of Special Education
- Incorporate suggestions and recommendations made tonight into the next survey
- Give survey to the Office of Special Education staff – do not want to hear that staff is afraid to speak
- Change date of survey to a better time of year

The Superintendent, Dr. Fideler and Dr. Riley responded to some of the above questions, comments and concerns. Members thanked the Superintendent, Dr. Fideler and Dr. Riley for the presentation.

The Superintendent introduced Dr. Thomas Hehir, former U.S. Director of Special Education, and asked for his observations. Dr. Hehir was heard and pointed out that the EDC Survey is a source of information but not a completely valid picture of how parents view the system because of the 28% response rate. Dr. Hehir said that this would not have been the response seven or eight years ago and congratulated the District on its progress. He shared some observations and opinions and responded to the following questions, comments and issues raised by Members:

- How much are parents' concerns with the IEP process inevitable and how much are more of a problem in Cambridge
- Where is Cambridge compared to other districts
- What is the view on the disproportionate placement of black males, and the possible over-diagnosis of ADD and ADHD

The Chair recognized Robin Harris who mentioned Alfred Tatum's latest book that addresses the reading needs of African American males.

- Is the recommendation that we redo the Strategic Plan
- Explain the Response to Intervention Process
- What kind of reorganization does the Response to Intervention Process require of a district
- Is there a trend towards more specialized services
- Is there support for a pull-out system
- Does being more inclusive mean having a one-on-one aid
- Goal should be to identify less

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to suspend the Rules to extend the meeting to 10:15 p.m.

- Would like to see the next strategic plan come from within the system
- Does the model - inclusion, pull-out or after-school depend on the child
- Do we have state-of-the art information

The Members thanked Dr. Hehir for his expertise.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the balance of the presentation be postponed to a future meeting.

#### **Late Orders**

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to the authors of "The Freshman Guide", Zoë Guastella and Catherine Doran, thanking them and

their parents for their great initiative in putting it together. Further, that the Superintendent keep the tradition alive.

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to adjourn (10:02 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee