

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Special Informal Meeting

Tuesday, November 14, 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 district-wide perspective on academic performance.

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

Also Present: Student Representatives Tsion Girum, Marilyn Paschal

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:18 p.m. and turned it over to the Superintendent. The Superintendent presented the following Agenda:

- Overview: Goals for Session
 - Plans for schools by curriculum area, in Corrective Action and Restructuring, as well as low performing schools to improve achievement for all and to close the achievement gap
- ELA, Math and Science
 - District MCAS Results: Strengths and Weaknesses
 - District support in each curriculum area
 - Individual school support in each curriculum area with a focus on schools in Corrective Action and Restructuring
 - Support for identified subgroups to close the achievement gap
- Questions

The Superintendent introduced Principals Robin Harris, Tim Groves, Chris Saheed, Kate Conway, Barbara Boyle; Assistant Principal Patricia Beggy, Student Achievement & Accountability Executive Director Maryann MacDonald, Student Achievement & Accountability Deputy Director Barbara Van Sickle, Science Coordinator Melanie Barron, ELA Coordinator Larry Blondin, K-12 Curriculum Coordinator Nancy McLaughlin, Affirmative Action Officer Kahris McLaughlin, and Science Mentor Teacher Peg LeGendre.

Ms. MacDonald walked Members through a slide presentation, "Summary of MCAS Data, English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science, 2005-2006". The Superintendent, Principals, Coordinators and staff responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns:

- When districts are mixed does that make the State more like us
- Do we know why the % moved up and what do we do with that information
- How do Coordinators make us understand what scores matter
- Are organizational tools in place to take us to the next level
- Look at State averages as a benchmark – do not compare us
- Would like to see increases in the 6th, 7th and 8th grade scores
- What is happening with 7th grade ELA scores
- Is there a pro-active model in place prior to the implementation team

- Has the block schedule added value
- What is the difference between an English class and an ELA MCAS prep class

Mr. Fantini in the Chair

- Is there a correlation between students who are having difficulty in regular English classes and students in MCAS prep class
- Start MCAS prep classes in elementary school
- Are we still allowing different curriculum in our elementary schools
- What is the time block for math
- Are periodic assessments useful – do teachers think they are useful
- How do we reconcile if one class teaches math 60 minutes and another does not
- How do you create minimum standards in a school where students are “not getting it”
- How is Fasstmath being integrated with other math programs
- How much professional development is being done in the classroom
- Put focus on quality teaching
- What happens when a teacher does not improve

The Chair thanked everyone for a great presentation.

The meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee