

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

### (Official Report)

#### Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 5, 2010

Called for 6:00 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue.

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Nolan, Ms. Tauber, Ms. Turkel,  
Councillor Reeves

Councillor Reeves, Acting Chair, in the Chair.

Also Present: Student Representative Ariane Berelowitch

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

#### Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings:

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to accept the Minutes of the following meeting:

- Regular Meeting – December 15, 2009

#### Public Comment

The following individuals were heard:

- Marla Erlie, Greenough Ave. Human Rights Commission, re Muslim holiday
- Humbi Song, Trowbridge St., '09 CRLS graduate re Muslim holiday

The Chair closed public comment.

#### Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members:

Ms. Berelowitch spoke about her experience with after-school programs and having a positive experience with Summerbridge. She suggested engaging younger students in programs that can carry them through their older grades.

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

#### Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings

##### A. Calendar

Mr. McGovern removed **#09-390**, Academic and School Committee Calendar for SY 2010-2011; and **#C09-574** Motion by Mr. McGovern that the School Committee give a 2.5% salary increase to the Executive Secretary to the School Committee, effective January 1, 2010. Further, that the School Committee give a \$2000 annual stipend (for sub-committee work) to the Confidential Secretary.

**#09-390** Mr. McGovern moved a substitute motion that the School Committee direct the Superintendent to immediately begin discussions with all collective bargaining units regarding the addition of one of the Eid holidays to the 2010 calendar and beyond, in recognition of our growing Muslim student and staff populations. Further, that the School Committee adopt the proposed 2010-

2011 school calendar which does not include Eid, with the understanding that this calendar may be amended to include Eid pending collective bargaining negotiations. Further, that the Eid holidays be immediately added to the School District's list of Important Dates/Holidays. Ms. Nolan moved a friendly amendment, seconded by Ms. Turkel, that the Governance Sub-Committee of the School Committee and Superintendent convene to develop policy and administrative guidelines for making future adjustments to the annual school calendar. Ms. Nolan's friendly amendment was not accepted. Mr. Fantini asked the Superintendent to report back to the Committee on the cost of salary for one holiday, what are day care issues that will impact parents, and what is the cost to the City regarding this motion. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#09-390** Mr. McGovern moved a substitute motion that the School Committee direct the Superintendent to immediately begin discussions with all collective bargaining units regarding the addition of one of the Eid holidays to the 2010 calendar and beyond, in recognition of our growing Muslim student and staff populations. Further, that the School Committee adopt the proposed 2010-2011 school calendar which does not include Eid, with the understanding that this calendar may be amended to include Eid pending collective bargaining negotiations. Further, that the Eid holidays be immediately added to the School District's list of Important Dates/Holidays: Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Ms. Turkel YEA, Councillor Reeves YEA.

Mr. McGovern moved, seconded by Ms. Tauber, for adoption of **#C09-574**, Motion by Mr. McGovern that the School Committee give a 2.5% salary increase to the Executive Secretary to the School Committee, effective January 1, 2010. Further, that the School Committee give a \$2000 annual stipend (for sub-committee work) to the Confidential Secretary. Discussion took place around the motion and the appropriateness of discussing it publicly since it was adopted in Executive Session and is brought forward to be affirmed and ratified by the new Committee. On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt the foregoing motion: Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Nolan NAY, Ms. Tauber YEA, Ms. Turkel YEA, Councillor Reeves YEA. Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. McGovern 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**.

## **New Business**

### **A. Presentations**

Discussion took place around the Committee's two question rule on presentations. The Chair pointed out that this is a new Committee, there is no Vice Chair, and feelings are not necessarily the same as those of the old Committee.

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent who introduced Susan Richards, Director, Agenda for Children Out-of-School-Time Initiative and Khari Milner, Program Manager, CPS Complementary Learning Partnerships. Ms. Richards and Mr. Milner presented the "Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Middle School Youth Strategic Plan Update: January 2010" (copy on file in the School Committee Office), including:

- Why did we have a Blue Ribbon Commission on Middle School Youth?
- Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Middle School Youth: Who Participated? What was the Shared Goal?
- *Shared Youth, Shared Strategies*: System-Level Strategies for Improving the Quality and Enrollment of Middle School OST Programs and Opportunities
- Community Awareness and Outreach Highlights – Strategies to improve information about OST programs for youth, families, and schools
- Service Delivery and Coordination – Strategies to track enrollment, target services, and improve access

- Quality Improvement – Supporting OST programs in offering rich, developmentally appropriate and challenging learning and social experiences
- City of Cambridge Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Middle School Youth – NEXT STEPS:
  - Coordinate with Superintendent and School Committee to support middle grades education program.
  - Implement plan's strategic goals in coordination with City Council, Cambridge Kids' Council, key city agencies, as well as with school and OST program leaders.
  - Continue to develop specific next steps within each of the three system-level strategic areas; thus far much of the emphasis has been on Quality Improvement, and moving forward there will need to be additional cross-system support and focus in the Awareness/Outreach and Service Delivery/Coordination areas.
  - Pursue funding and grant opportunities that will support implementation of the plan UPDATE, 12/30/09: we just received notification from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation that they have **awarded the Agenda for Children with a \$117,000 one-year grant\*, to support the implementation of *Shared Youth, Shared Strategies!* \*CPS will be the fiscal agent for the grant.**

Superintendent Young, Human Services Director Ellen Semonoff, Ms. Richards and Mr. Milner responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns:

- Is there a plan to pull all services together in a listserv or directory
- Are there any lessons to date from our Extended Day programs or private schools on how to achieve some of the goals
- How does this information fit with Dr. Young's recommendation on middle grades
- What can we as elected officials and policy makers do to help continue this work
- What happens if a student goes to one of the three pilot programs
- There needs to be communication on what these programs are
- Middle grade students need to learn to navigate the city
- Why does only 30% of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders use out of school time programs - what happens with the other 70%
- Why does staff need more training than in other programs
- Do we know where families send their children after school
- Are our centers balanced
- What opportunities are there for students in the summer
- Are the needs of individual schools taken into consideration in designing programs
- Can after-school teachers have access to students MCAS scores
- Has OST coordinators talked to 9<sup>th</sup> grade teachers regarding their needs
- Would like to see one of our youth centers turned into a dance/gymnastics center

On behalf of the Members, the Chair thanked the presenters.

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent who gave a brief summary of the financial forecast. Claire Spinner, Chief financial Officer, walked Members through the presentation, "Five Year Financial Forecast – Fiscal Years 2011-2015" (copy on file in the School Committee office), including:

- Purpose of Five Year Financial Forecast
- FY 2011 Financial Forecast Summary (in Millions)
- FY 2011 Revenue Assumptions
- FY 2011 Revenue Projections

- FY 2011 Expenditures Assumptions
- Summary of FY 2011 Expenditure Increases
- FY 2011 Estimated Expenditures
- Projections for FY 2012-2015
- Assumptions for FY 2012-2015
- FY 2011-2015 Expenditure and Revenue Gap
- Student Enrollment
- FY 2010 Enrollment
- FY 2011-15 Enrollment Projections

The Superintendent and Ms. Spinner responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns:

- What is the amount of the circuit breaker reduction
- Will this financial information become more concrete
- What is our financial health for the next five years
- Is the charter school increase because the formula changed or because more children are going to charter schools
- What is ARRA and COLA
- When we get the new budget, where are the safety nets
- What was working in Newton and why did it cost less
- What can be done to address the increase in out of district placement
- How much of the \$10.9 million is transportation and how much is energy
- Have a campaign to recruit students back from charter schools
- We should use this opportunity to prioritize and not pit schools against schools
- Keep schools updated on any changes so they can communicate with their school communities
- Be honest with the public about why changes have to happen
- Where is the grant funding that the district receives
- Would money be saved if high school enrollment decreased by 200 students
- Is there a rainy day fund in education budgeting

The Members thanked the Superintendent and Ms. Spinner for the presentation.

## **B. Action Items**

Mr. McGovern moved, seconded by Ms. Nolan, for adoption of items #10-01 through #10-10. Ms. Turkel removed #10-01, #10-02, #10-05, #10-08 and #10-09. In response to a question, Ms. Allen, Human Resource Director, explained that CTA Unit C are Clerks, Unit E are Paraprofessionals and Unit D are Substitute Teachers. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

**#10-03, Massachusetts' Memorandum of Understanding for Race to the Top:** that the School Committee vote to approve the Memorandum of Understanding for Cambridge Public Schools' participation in the Massachusetts Race to the Top Grant Application.

**#10-04, Medicaid Billing and Collection Services:** that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Professional Services, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

1. Public Consulting Group, 148 State Street, Boston, for the period January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010, in the amount of \$80,000.00.

**#10-06, FY2011 Budget Schedule:** that the School Committee receive and approve the document for the FY2011 Budget Schedule and Process.

**#10-07, Grant Award:** that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award in the amount and for the period indicated:

1. Friends of the Amigos School, for the period December 17, 2009 through June 30, 2010, in the amount of \$45,000.00, SC10787.

**Description:** This grant is an anonymous donation for the Amigos and M.L. King Schools. Twenty-five thousand dollars will support the acquisition of math, science and literacy materials, \$3,000.00 will go towards supporting the costs of the middle school dances held three times per year by the joint student councils as well as the joint luncheon for 8<sup>th</sup> grade end of the year trip for student council and parents to attend. Four thousand dollars will support the Amigos Parent Support Specialist. Five thousand dollars will support tutors before, during, and after school as well as the after-school math club. Two thousand dollars will go towards Children Discovering Justice and \$6,000.00 for Playworks, a non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the health and well being of children by increasing opportunities for physical activity and safe, meaningful play.

**CPS Target Population:** Amigos School and M.L. King School grades K-8 students.

**Outcomes & Measures of Effectiveness:** End-of-year report to grantor detailing project achievements and progress.

**#10-10, 2010/2011 Academic School Calendar and School Committee Calendar:** that the School Committee indicate its support for adding one Eid holiday to the school calendar; further, that the School Committee adopt the 2010/2011 Academic School Calendar and School Committee Calendar as proposed; further, that both Eid holidays be added immediately to the Cambridge Public Schools' list of Holidays/Important Dates; and further, that the Governance Sub-Committee of the School Committee and Superintendent convene to develop policy and administrative guidelines for making future adjustments to the annual school calendar.

Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Ms. Turkel YEA, Councillor Reeves YEA.

#### **Non-Consent Agenda**

Ms. Turkel asked whether there are any highlights or changes in the CTA Agreements that are important to know and understand. Mr. Maloney was heard. On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#10-01, Ratification and Confirmation between Cambridge School Committee and the CTA, Unit C Agreement Approval of November 17, 2009:** that the School Committee ratify and confirm the November 17, 2009 School Committee vote approving the agreement between the Cambridge School Committee and the Cambridge Teachers Association Unit C for a successor collective bargaining agreement for the period July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2012 as detailed in the document; and

**#10-02, Ratification and Confirmation between Cambridge School Committee and the CTA, Unit E Agreement Approval of November 17, 2009:** that the School Committee ratify and confirm the November 17, 2009 School Committee vote approving the agreement between the Cambridge School Committee and the Cambridge Teachers Association Unit E for a successor collective bargaining agreement for the period September 1, 2009 through August 31, 2012 as detailed in the document; and

**#10-05, Approval of Cambridge Teachers Association, Unit D Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period of September 1, 2009 through August 31, 2012:** that the School Committee approve the agreement between the Cambridge School Committee and the Cambridge Teachers Association Unit D for a collective bargaining agreement for the period of September 1, 2009 through August 31, 2012, which was ratified by the members of the bargaining unit.

Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Ms. Turkel YEA, Councillor Reeves YEA.

Ms. Turkel asked the Superintendent to confirm that no changes will be made to the January enrollment. The Superintendent was heard. On a motion by Ms. Turkel, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to adopt **#10-08, Joint motion by Mr. McGovern and Ms. Turkel** that, prior to the final vote regarding a new algorithm for the District's Controlled Choice policy, a public forum be held where this change is presented to the community and where the community will be allowed to ask questions regarding this change, followed by a public hearing on the proposed new algorithm. Further, that notice of these meetings be communicated to parents via a notice home and a ConnectEd correspondence including a brief description of the proposed change. The notice of these meetings, including a brief description of the proposed change, will also be distributed to preschools and daycares in Cambridge and posted in places parents of preschoolers frequent such as libraries, parks and health clinics.

Ms. Turkel raised a question on the Budget Guidelines and the need for new Members to have time to weigh in on them. Discussion took place around the Guidelines and whether they should be revisited and reaffirmed by the new Committee. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Ms. Turkel, it was voted (Mr. Harding is recorded as voting NAY) to adopt **#10-09, Report of the December 15, 2009 Meeting of the Budget Sub-Committee (Committee of the Whole):**

Called for the purpose of a discussion on the FY2010-2011 Budget and adoption of the Budget Guidelines.

Members Present: Mr. McGovern, Ms. Nolan, Co-Chairs, Mr. Grassi, Ms. Tauber, Mayor Simmons

Mr. McGovern in the Chair.

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 7:55 p.m.

Mr. McGovern thanked Members for their feedback on the budget guidelines that will be used in developing the budget for FY2010-2011, and read them as follows:

#### **I. STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

Ensure that excellence in instruction is the primary goal of our district so that achievement gaps are closed, bringing all children, regardless of race, class, gender or learning style to our ultimate goal of proficiency. In addition, ensure that curriculum and instruction educates the whole child, including 21<sup>st</sup> century skills in areas such as critical thinking, problem solving, and global awareness, and that our instruction goes beyond MCAS and standardized tests, and additionally focuses on areas not readily tested, such as art, theater, music, foreign language and physical and mental health.

The methods to ensure that student achievement is high include using data to assess strengths and weaknesses, examine equity of services and staffing, and challenging all students at all levels.

#### **II. SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Ensure that special education programs and staffing meet the needs of our special education students, and that every effort is made to improve our inclusion philosophy, minimize transitions for our students in self-contained classrooms, that our special education strategic plan is

completed and that we improve communication and support to families of our special needs students.

Ensuring special education needs are better met include external review, RTI as a priority and reviewing the placement of substantially separate classrooms to respect the needs of families.

### **III. MIDDLE GRADES**

Continue to improve our middle grades across the district with particular attention paid to schools with small middle grades to ensure we meet the academic and social needs of our students and to continue working with City Departments on out of school time experiences for middle graders. In addition, consideration should be given to any potential funding needs that may incur following the April 2010 vote of the School Committee regarding middle grade structure.

### **IV. SCHOOL CLIMATE and HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Support and enhance programs and curriculum that produce students who are physically, mentally, emotionally and socially healthy. Support and enhance programs and curriculum that improve school climate and that work to create schools that are free of race, class and gender bias. Support changes that make schools, schoolyards, and school buses environmentally healthy.

Key to enhancing school climate and health and safety are enhancing family involvement initiatives and mental health supports.

### **V. PROGRAM & CURRICULUM EVALUATION**

In an effort to ensure that funded programs are meeting expectations and achieving their goals, begin to evaluate programs in a systematic way that considers both program effectiveness and funding options. In the upcoming year the review should be started, with several high priority programs evaluated, determined through collaborative dialog.

Further, curriculum should be systematically reviewed, with a start in the next year and a schedule developed for ongoing review and evaluation.

### **VI. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

Continue to develop technology that will improve use of data in decision making, improve the delivery of services, improve district operations and improve communication and support for families. This area includes both electronic communication for school/home as well as data-driven decision-making support for the district leaders. In addition, administrative technology requires a comprehensive review.

### **VII. OPERATIONS**

A review of operations should include an assessment of the entire district's organization and operation. Included in such a review should be a best-practices review of other school district systems (as identified by state leaders) as well as the city of Cambridge's systems.

On an ongoing basis, the year budget should ensure funding for continued capital projects so that our schools are safe for students, staff and families, continued monitoring of CRLS renovations and a charge to identify cost-savings through energy efficiency and sustainability in all school buildings.

Ms. Nolan explained the process in the development of the Guidelines and thanked everyone involved. The Superintendent was heard and thanked the Members and his staff for the development of the Guidelines.

On a motion by Ms. Tauber, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to refer the Budget Guidelines to the full Committee.

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to adjourn (8:08 p.m.).

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

#### **Late Orders/Announcements**

Mr. Harding thanked the Executive Secretary and her staff for arranging a very nice Inauguration. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted that the Executive Secretary send a thank you letter to everyone who participated in the inauguration ceremony.

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted that the Executive Secretary forward to each Member a copy of the last Unfinished Business for the 2008-2009 term, and that each Member notify the Secretary by Friday, January 15, 2010 of any items he/she wishes placed back on Unfinished Business.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Turkel, it was voted to adjourn (9:54 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee