

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, February 5, 2008

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Nolan, Mr. Schuster, Ms. Tauber,
Mayor Simmons

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

Also Present: Student School Committee Representatives Praise Agu and Emma Shreefter

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings:

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

- Special Meeting – January 16, 2008
- Special Meeting – January 11, 2008
- Regular Meeting – January 8, 2008
- Regular Meeting – December 4, 2007

Public Comment

There being no one signed up, it was voted to close public comment.

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

Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting: None

Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings

A. Calendar

B. Tabled Matters

C. Awaiting Report

Ms. Nolan raised a question on the status of reports on the number and status of all computer equipment disposed of in the last year and no longer in use by the district (**C07-268**); and on programs and curriculum enhancements in support of academically advanced students in elementary school (**C07-339**). The Superintendent was heard.

New Business

A. Presentations

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent. Ms. MacDonald walked Members through a presentation on "CPS Graduation Rate - Student Data 2007", including:

- Background

- How are Graduation Rates Calculated?
- Additional Graduation Rates
- Cambridge Results
- Analysis by Race/Ethnicity
- Additional CRLS/HSEP Results
- CRLS/HSEP Results – Class of 2006
- Graduating Class of 2006 - % graduating in 4 years, 5 years

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

- If limited English proficient students were removed from the Hispanic population would the results be the same as for African American students
- How does Cambridge compare over the last 10 years
- Would like to see documentation of graduation rates over the last 10 years – does not recall its being as low as 78%
- How does the district know if a student transfers out
- If a student leaves CRLS and goes to the Community Learning Center or gets a GED is that a transfer or a drop out
- Do the Department of Ed numbers include special ed outplacements
- Insure that we compare apples to apples
- Why do our graduation rates compare favorable to the State's graduation rates as opposed to the State's standardized tests
- What is the rationale behind the change in the State's reporting system
- 78% graduation rate included those students not meeting our own graduation requirements
- What are some of the trends in who is not graduating and what will we do to insure they will graduate
- Where is the district in terms of researching trends
- Progress has been remarkable
- Look at trends to see what interventions those students who are not graduating receive
- Happy to hear of improvements that were made to prevent students from falling through the cracks
- Do we know the number of students who didn't get promoted to 12th grade
- Has the percentage of graduates increased because we kept students back
- What number will we be promoting and reporting
- Show six-year rates of children who earned GEDs
- Graduation rates should start to correlate with MCAS data
- Graduation rate is only half the story – what happens to students after graduation
- How many students are represented in the 87% 4-year graduation rate
- Use consistency in reporting numbers
- Does not want this district to be accused of low aim
- Is there a way to count students who are ours from 9th to 12th grade
- What are we doing for students who transfer in to help them graduate
- Some systems hold students back in 8th grade to improve graduation rates
- Could a student go from 8th to 9th grade with special status
- What about children who are with us until they are 22
- Has our district had an increase in retention rate
- What are the expectations of students while they are in middle school

The Chair thanked the Superintendent and staff for a very thorough and informative discussion.

B. Action Items

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. McGovern, for adoption of items #08-41 through #08-50.

Mr. Schuster removed #08-44 and #08-50. Mr. Fantini removed #08-45 through #08-47. Mr. Grassi removed #08-49. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

#08-41, Contract Award: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for school bus repairs and maintenance, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

1. Automotive Trucking Center, 22 Sunnyside Ave., Arlington, for the period January 2 to June 30, 2008, in the amount of \$85,000.00

#08-42, Contract Award: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Agricultural High School tuition, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

1. Norfolk County Agricultural High School, 400 Main Street, Walpole, for the period August 15, 2007 to June 30, 2008, in the amount of \$41,458.80.

#08-43, 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 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget:

| | | |
|------------------|---|------------------|
| 1 student | Bay Cove Human Services, 66 Canal St., Boston | \$31,018.95 |
| 1 student | Deveraux, 60 Miles Rd., Rutland | 33,030.90 |
| 1 student | Germaine Lawrence, Inc., 18 Claremont Ave., Arlington | 76,808.76 |
| 1 student | Justice Resource Institute, 545 Boylston St., Boston | 47,595.24 |
| 1 student | Merrimack Educational Collaborative, 101 Mill Rd., Chelmsford | 22,938.27 |
| 2 students | Schools for Children, 20 Academy St., Arlington | 82,638.48 |
| <u>1 student</u> | <u>Schools for Children (Seaport Campus), 20 Academy St., Arlington</u> | <u>32,118.30</u> |
| 8 students | | \$326,148.90 |

#08-48, Motion by Mayor Simmons that the School Committee go on record as supporting White Ribbon Day, February 14, 2008. Further, that CRLS provide opportunities for students to recognize White Ribbon Day including, but not limited to, signing a poster-size petition pledging never to commit, condone, nor remain silent about violence against women, sexual assault, and domestic violence.

Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Mayor Simmons YEA.

Non-Consent Agenda

Mr. Schuster raised a question on the Consultant agreement with Origins. Discussion took place around whether this work could be done in-house. The Superintendent, Dr. Turk and Mr. Maloney were heard. On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#08-44, 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. Origins, Minneapolis, MN, in the amount of \$37,000.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 849622, prog. 622, proj./grant SC07767.
2. Summerbridge – Cambridge, Cambridge, in the amount of \$37,244.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 893410, prog. 410.

Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Mayor Simmons YEA.

#08-45, Motion by Mr. Schuster that Marc McGovern be named Vice Chair for the 2008-2009 term of the Cambridge School Committee. Mr. Fantini moved a friendly amendment that Mr. Grassi be named Vice Chair. Mr. Schuster did not accept the friendly amendment. Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Ms. Tauber, a substitute motion that Mr. Grassi be named Vice Chair. On the following roll call, Mr. Fantini's substitute motion **failed of adoption**: Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Ms. Nolan NAY, Mr. McGovern NAY, Mr. Schuster NAY, Ms. Tauber YEA, Mayor Simmons NAY. On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#08-45, Motion by Mr. Schuster** that Marc McGovern be named Vice Chair for the 2008-2009 term of the Cambridge School Committee: Mr. Fantini ~~NAY~~ YEA, Mr. Grassi ~~NAY~~ YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Tauber ~~NAY~~ YEA, Mayor Simmons YEA. Mr. Grassi, Mr. Fantini and Ms. Tauber requested and received unanimous consent to be recorded in the affirmative to unanimously name Marc McGovern Vice Chair for the 2008-2009 term of the School Committee. Mr. McGovern was heard and thanked his colleagues for their support.

#08-46, Motion by Ms. Nolan that Whereas Cambridge is seeking to further strengthen our district and Whereas one option explored by some Cambridge educators, generating interest includes the International Baccalaureate, which is comprised of three programs: a Primary Years, a Middle Years and a Diploma Program; and Whereas IB is one of the fastest-growing and most challenging programs being implemented in the country; and Whereas both New York City and many affluent districts have successfully started IB programs in a range of schools including ones serving immigrant, low income communities and suburban communities, and neighboring Boston is in the process of exploring the IB; now, therefore, the School Committee will have a roundtable discussion in March on the International Baccalaureate programs. Mr. Fantini was heard and he will not be supporting the motion. Ms. Nolan was heard in support of the motion. Discussion took place around new programs and different program models in connection with the Committee's goals. Ms. Tauber moved an amendment that the School Committee schedule a roundtable discussion in March or April, 2008 specifically on the International Baccalaureate and other programs to enhance and support learning opportunities in the Cambridge Public Schools. On a voice vote, Mr. Fantini being recorded as voting NAY, **#08-46**, was adopted as amended, as follows: **Motion by Ms. Nolan** that: WHEREAS: Cambridge is seeking to further strengthen our district; and WHEREAS: one option explored by some Cambridge educators, generating interest includes the International Baccalaureate, which is comprised of three programs: a Primary Years, a Middle Years and a Diploma Program; and WHEREAS: IB is one of the fastest-growing and most challenging programs being implemented in the country; and WHEREAS: both New York City and many affluent districts have successfully started IB programs in a range of schools including ones serving immigrant, low-income communities and suburban communities, and neighboring Boston is in the process of exploring the IB; NOW, THEREFORE: that the School Committee schedule a roundtable discussion in March or April, 2008, specifically on the International Baccalaureate Programs to enhance and support learning opportunities in the Cambridge Public Schools.

Mr. McGovern in the Chair.

Members discussed the process for the City's building certifications and working together as a team. Ms. Nolan was heard in support of the motion. Mr. Maloney was heard. On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to refer to the Buildings & Grounds Sub-Committee **#08-47, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that WHEREAS: the City has established LEED standards for buildings; and WHEREAS: there are Massachusetts environmental leadership standards set up specifically for schools, MA-CHPS, which include financial incentives at no additional cost; and WHEREAS pursuing LEED certification costs money yet yields a similar result of increased environmental leadership as pursuing MA-CHPS

certification; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED: that the School Department requests the City Council and City Manager to save the cost of LEED certification by using only the MA-CHPS standards for all school projects, specifically the CRLS renovation project instead of the LEED standards. The resulting building will be environmentally responsible, but for less cost.

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

Mr. Grassi was heard. The Superintendent was heard. On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to adopt **#08-49, Motion by Mr. Grassi** that the Superintendent update the School Committee on new initiatives and/or procedures between the Cambridge Public Schools and Cambridge Police.

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adopt **#08-50, Joint motion by Mr. McGovern and Ms. Tauber** that given the on-going concern of bullying in public schools, the Superintendent report back to the School Committee as to all anti-bullying programs being implemented in the Cambridge Public Schools, including CRLS; said report should include how these interventions are being implemented and if the Principals in each school find these interventions to be effective.

Late Orders

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to Posse Scholars and the CRLS Principal congratulating them for their endeavors. Praise Agu was heard. The Members congratulated Praise on being selected as a Posse Scholar.

The Chair entertained a motion to convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy for contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. On the following roll call, it was voted to convene in Executive Session for the purpose stated: Mr. Fantini ABSENT, Mr. Grassi YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Mayor Simmons YEA. The Chair announced that the Committee will not reconvene in Open Session.

Executive Session

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Nolan, Mr. Schuster, Ms. Tauber,
Mayor Simmons

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

Also Present: Demitrios Moschos, Special Counsel

Members discussed with Attorney Moschos issues related to the School Committee website and language to be included in a letter regarding the website. Members also discussed identifying a vision and mission over the next 30-45 days prior to negotiating a contract in April. It was suggested that a special subcommittee comprised of Ms. Tauber and Mr. Schuster meet with the Secretary to arrange meetings and a timetable by March 1. It was also suggested that the Chair, Vice Chair and Attorney Moschos meet in 2-3 weeks in a separate Executive Session regarding contract negotiations. A Special Executive Session meeting will be called for next Tuesday after the Budget Subcommittee meeting.

On the following roll call, it was voted to adjourn (9:20 p.m.): Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Mayor Simmons YEA.

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee