

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, February 13, 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 6:22 p.m.

Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings

Ms. Walser moved that the Minutes of the Following meetings be placed on the Calendar:

- Regular Meeting – December 5, 2006
- Regular Meeting – November 21, 2006
- Special Meeting – November 14, 2006
- Regular Meeting – October 17, 2006

Public Testimony on School Committee Agenda

The following individuals were heard regarding the Proposed FY2007-2008 Budget:

- Leslie Brunetta, Roberts Road
- Tim Plenk, Berkeley Street

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

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 the meeting over to Dr. Turk who gave an update on report cards and curriculum guides. The Superintendent and Dr. Turk responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns raised by Members:

- Are quarterlies being reported on the report card
- It would be helpful to see how quarterlies align with the report card and progress report
- Will school be able to add to the report card template
- There needs to be a page for teacher comments
- Are technology conversations coinciding with report card conversations
- Will schools have a choice of report card formats
- What districts have terrific curriculum guides

- Were any private schools included when looking at curriculum guides
- How was the charge in the motion articulated
- Need to look at a happy medium between having a few report cards and 64
- Insure that there is substantial room for written comments
- Students and student government should have input on the report card draft
- Fear is that the new design will not be reflective of what is going on in the classroom
- Fear is that there will be less information going home
- Let multi-graded classrooms create their own report card
- Is it possible to move forward more expeditiously with the curriculum guides
- Since school improvement plans were standardized other areas should be also
- This is part of an overall communications system with parents
- Will this connect to our data warehouse
- Involve technology director in a major way
- Creating a new grading category using language of MCAS in addition to a letter grade will be too confusing to parents
- There could be related reasons to make more standardization good yet it poses many questions
- Students in multi-graded classrooms and bilingual schools need to have a different format

The Chair thanked Dr. Turk for the report.

Action Items

Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Ms. Nolan, for adoption of items #07-22 through #07-38. Mr. Harding removed #07-23, #07-26 and #07-38. Ms. Walser removed #07-37. Mr. Schuster removed #07-34. Ms. Nolan removed #07-32. Mayor Reeves removed #07-33. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

#07-22, Special Needs Contracts for Day Program Services not available from the Cambridge Public Schools: 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:

1 student	Educational Consultants of New England, 460 Totten Pond Rd., Suite 300, Waltham	\$43,843.43
<u>2</u> student	Lighthouse School, 25 Wellman Ave., N. Chelmsford	<u>80,825.82</u>
3 students		\$124,669.25

#07-24, FY06-07 General Fund Budget Statutory Transfers: that the School Committee approve the statutory transfers of appropriation within the General Fund Budget for FY2006-07:

	<u>Statutory Coding</u>	<u>Increase Amount</u>	<u>Decrease Amount</u>
51000	Salaries, Wages & Benefits	\$351,892	0
52000/55000	Other Ordinary Maintenance	0	(401,192)
57000	Travel & Training	95,368	0
58000/59000	Extraordinary Expenditures	<u>0</u>	<u>(46,068)</u>
	Total	\$447,260	(\$447,260)

#07-25, Approval of Home Education Applications for School Year 2006-2007: that the Cambridge School Committee approve the home education applications for School Year 2006-2007 as detailed in the documents.

#07-27, 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. Elizabeth City, Belmont, in the amount of \$34,000.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 891660, prog. 660.
2. Richard Elmore, Brookline, in the amount of \$60,000.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 891660, prog. 660.
3. Sarah Fiarman, Cambridge, in the amount of \$8,500.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 891660, prog. 660.

#07-28, Grants: that the School Committee accept and approve the Grant Awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. SPED Childhood Allocation, for the period July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$57,743.00, project/grant SC07607. The SPED Early Childhood Allocation Grant funds paraprofessional services in inclusionary classrooms, plus contracted specialist services and instructional materials. This award is for the full amount of the entitlement.
CPS Target Population: Special Education Students in Pre-School Classrooms.
Outcomes & Measures of Effectiveness: The Office of Special Education will provide paraprofessional support to Office of Special Education students as outlined in student's IEP.
2. SPED Program Improvement, for the period January 18, 2007 to August 31, 2007, in the amount of \$50,486.00, project/grant SC07674. The Office of Special Education will contract with a consultant to conduct a series of trainings for Special Education Staff Members focusing on the recent changes in both Federal and State Special Education regulations. Trainings are necessary to ensure that new regulations are implemented across the district. Staff will be divided into training groups according to their disciplines, i.e., Psychologists/Chairpersons, Special Education teachers and Related Services Providers.
CPS Target Population: Office of Special Education Staff, all disciplines, who are in their 1st to 5th year of teaching. Funds will also support staff who serve as mentors or trainers for the identified staff population.
Outcomes & Measures of Effectiveness: The Office of Special Education will provide a variety of opportunities for training and support to new staff members. This training and support will allow staff to become familiar with Special Education law, process and current practice.

#07-29, Report of the January 17, 2007 Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Achievement Gap:

Called for the purpose of continuing to plan a series of public forums on the achievement gap in Cambridge, with a focus on the initial forum on definitions.

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

Also Present: Carolyn Turk, Trina Abbott, Lynne Hall, Lei-Anne Ellis, Sheli Wortis, Rob Ramsdell

Ms. Walser in the Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. Ms. Walser gave a recap of the first sub-committee meeting and distributed the following agenda:

1. Feedback from School Councils – their definitions of achievement gap
2. Other information needed before planning first “definitions” forum
3. Other topics
4. Regular meeting time for planning

Questions, comments and concerns were raised including:

- What was administration’s response to School Council definitions
- Find out where everybody is and get definitions ahead of time
- What should be the format for the definitions forum
- What are the common threads within schools
- Does the district already have a definition
- The district should come up with a definition outside of lay people
- Do not lose another year and another class
- What measurement is the gap based on
- Having many definitions could be too confusing
- Why are we looking for a Cambridge definition when there is a commonly held definition
- Need to survey Principals
- Discuss school factors and non-school factors
- Create a one-pager on where the achievement gap is in Cambridge
- Race and socioeconomic seem to be the most controversial
- What is going on when 74% of a certain profile are “not getting it”
- Who are the forums for
- What are hoped for outcomes
- Need to come up with a definition and explain to lay people and parents who do not attend meetings how we got there
- Cambridge should be outraged over the achievement gap
- Have first forum be multimedia driven showing definition, problem that we see, areas where we are lacking; second forum for groups of parents and third forum on solutions
- What is or isn’t working for children 0-4 that would allow children equally born to be at a different place
- If babies are born equal why do they enter school unequally
- What is the end goal and what will it do for the district
- To get a different result, we need to do things differently
- Do teachers need to be trained to recognize deficits in children – they may not have the knowledge or ways to remediate
- Cambridge is opportunity rich with over 140 non-profits in the City – there needs to be a link between the School Committee and agencies
- Link pre-school to kindergarten
- How immigrant is our population and how many do not have English speakers at home
- There are additional things we could be doing at home, in the community, as well as in school
- Some challenges will be insuring that the forums are well-publicized and documented in a useful way.

It was suggested that interested individuals, as well as Principals and Superintendent’s staff work on their definitions with as much or as little specificity as needed.

The January 3 letter from Cambridge 0-8 Council will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

It was suggested that this Committee meet every Wednesday at 12:00 noon until further notice.

Next meeting: January 24, 2007, 12 Noon.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

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

#07-30, Motion by Mr. Harding that the School Committee send a letter of congratulations and thanks to former CRLS baseball Coach William (Bill) Fulginito on being inducted into the Massachusetts Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

#07-31, Report of the January 19, 2007 Meeting of the Subcommittee on Policy and Procedures:

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

Members Present: Mr. Grassi, Chair

Also Present: Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel
James Hardy, MASC Policy Services Field Director

Mr. Grassi called the meeting to order at 9:13 a.m.

Ms. Bradshaw presented the policy manual adopted June 6, 2001 (C01-197) along with policies adopted subsequently. Mr. Hardy explained that the EQA uses a digitized system for policies. MASC updates policies electronically for \$3500 initially and maintains them for \$850/year. He said that presently 11 districts are digitized. Mr. Hardy will send a proposal for digitizing our policy manual along with a disc to merge policies in Word format.

Mr. Hardy confirmed that our process for policy revision is in place and he would not recommend that we do anything differently.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 10:08 a.m.

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

#07-35, Joint motion by Mr. Grassi and Ms. Nolan that the Superintendent of Schools work with the City Manager to establish a formal partnership between Cambridge School Volunteers and employees of the City of Cambridge.

#07-36, Motion by Mr. Grassi that the Superintendent provide the School Committee with a report on current teachers without certification. This report should also include teachers teaching full or part-time outside their certification, broken down by school and/or curriculum area. Further, that the Superintendent provide the Committee with personnel policies, procedures and practices for allowing non-certified personnel to interview for job openings.

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

Non-Consent Business

#07-23, CRLS Capital Project – Additional Architectural/Engineering Services. Mr. Harding asked Mr. Maloney to speak to the recommendation and the City Manager’s reference to “extraordinary” renovations. Mr. Maloney was heard. Discussion took place around what additional improvements could be made to the high school. On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Nolan, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#07-23, CRLS Capital Project – Additional Architectural/Engineering Services:** that the School Committee authorize the use of \$45,650.00 for a feasibility study. If any other monies are needed for additional scope of services that the amount is not to exceed \$60,000. Further, that the School Committee authorize a statutory transfer from School Department projected end-of-year unexpended balances in the following amounts:

<u>Statutory Category</u>	<u>Increase Amount</u>	<u>Decrease Amount</u>
Other Ordinary Maintenance (OOM)	0	(\$60,000)
Extraordinary Expense (EE)	\$60,000	0

Further, that the issue of cogeneration be referred to the Buildings and Grounds sub-committee.

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

Mr. Harding asked what is the “Safe Routes to School” program referenced in the Council Order. Mr. Maloney and Ms. Nolan were heard. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adopt **#07-26, City Council Order:** Pursuant to the School Committee Rules, Order #O-5, January 22, 2007, is being placed on the Agenda.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adopt **#07-32, Request by the Haggerty School Council,** that the Haggerty School Library be renamed for retiring Principal, Joseph Petner.

Mayor Reeves and Ms. Walser spoke to the work being done on planning achievement gap forums. On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adopt **#07-33, Report of the January 24, 2007 Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Achievement Gap:**

Called for the purpose of continuing to plan a series of public forums on the achievement gap in Cambridge, with a focus on the initial forum on definitions.

Members Present: Ms. Walser, Chair.

Also Present: Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Sheli Wortis, Early Childhood Connections and Cambridge 0-8 Council.

Ms. Walser in the Chair.

In the absence of a quorum, the meeting was not convened.

Next meeting: January 31, 2007, 12 Noon.

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

Mr. Schuster was heard in support of his motion. Mr. Grassi moved to Calendar **#07-34, Motion by Mr. Schuster** that the Cambridge School Committee join with over 100 organizations nationwide, including the Children's Defense Fund, the National School Boards Association, the NAACP, and FairTest, in signing the Joint Organizational Statement on the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Further, that a copy of the Statement, with the School Committee's endorsement, be sent to Senators Kennedy and Kerry and Representative Capuano.

Ms. Walser asked Ms. Bradshaw to speak to the motion. Ms. Bradshaw was heard. On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to adopt **#07-37, Joint motion by Mr. Grassi and Mr. Schuster** that the School Committee Meeting Minutes be submitted for approval no later than the following School Committee Meeting. Further, that the approved Minutes be posted on the School Department web site within 48 hours.

Mr. Fantini in the Chair.

Extensive discussion took place around **#07-38, Joint motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Schuster**.

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, on the following roll call, **#07-38, Joint motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Schuster**, that the School Committee recommend that the Superintendent explore doubling School Improvement Funds for all schools, **failed of adoption**: Mr. Harding NAY, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser NAY, Mr. Fantini NAY, Mr. Grassi NAY, Mayor Reeves PRESENT.

Late Orders

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Grassi, that the Superintendent provide a market data analysis of current programs at RSTA to see what the job prospects are in the programs we currently have. Further, that the same be done for heating, ventilation, air conditioning, plumbing, electrical and/or any other emerging vocational fields. Ms. Nolan moved to Calendar the motion.

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Grassi, that the School Department work cooperatively with Summerbridge and have discussions with them regarding space issues.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adjourn (9:48 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee