

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, March 18, 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 Member Emma Shreefter

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings:

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted that the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 4, 2008, be accepted as presented.

Public Comment

The following individuals were heard:

- Ines Zalduenda re: crew team
- Nancy Walser, Huron Ave. re: EQA letter; Superintendent's contract

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Tauber, 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

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to bring forward Calendar items #08-56, #08-58 through #08-61, #08-64, #08-67, #08-71, #08-73 and #08-95. Mr. Grassi removed #08-59 and #08-73, Ms. Nolan removed #08-56, #08-58, #08-60, #08-61 and #08-67. On the following roll call, **#08-95** was adopted and the remaining items were referred to a second reading:

#08-64, Approval of Revisions to the Staff Complaints and Grievances Policy (First Reading).
(Simmons) (C08-077)

#08-71, Approval of Revisions to the Professional Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans Policy (First Reading). **(Simmons) (C08-084)**

#08-95, Motion by Mr. McGovern that the School Committee establish a School Climate Sub-Committee to discuss and recommend ways to improve school climate throughout the Cambridge Public Schools.

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

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to place on file **#08-56, Consultant Agreements, item #4**, Lexington Learning Center, Inc.

Ms. Nolan raised a question on giving. Ms. MacFarlane was heard. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to refer to a second reading **#08-58**, Approval of Revisions to the Gifts To and Solicitations by Staff Policy (First Reading).

#08-59, Approval of Revisions to the School Committee-Staff Communications Policy (First Reading). Mr. Grassi moved an amendment to strike the words in the last paragraph "inform the Superintendent of such visits and". Ms. Nolan moved an amendment to add a sentence "that School Committee Members will be encouraged to communicate with staff". On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to refer **#08-59** to the Governance Sub-Committee for review and amendment.

#08-60, Approval of Revisions to the Staff Involvement in Decision-Making Policy (First Reading). Ms. Nolan raised a question on why the reference to staff nominating committees was deleted. Ms. MacFarlane was heard. Discussion took place around staff being included in hiring decisions. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to refer **#08-60** to the Governance Sub-Committee.

#08-61, Approval of Revisions to the Relations with Family Organizations Policy (First Reading). Ms. Nolan raised a question on why the words "share in" were deleted. Ms. MacFarlane was heard. Ms. Tauber raised a question on the meaning of "maintenance of formal parent/teacher multicultural organizations". Mayor Simmons asked that reference to "parent" be changed to "family" or "parent/guardian". The Superintendent and Ms. MacFarlane were heard. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted that the word "parent" be changed to "family" or "parent/guardian" in all policies where feasible. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to refer **#08-61** to a second reading.

#08-67, Approval of Revisions to the Approval of Revisions to the Staff Health, Protection and Safety Policy (First Reading). On a motion by Ms. Tauber, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to change "his" to "his/her" in this and all policies and refer **#08-67** to a second reading.

#08-73, Approval of Revisions to the Employment of Principals Policy (First Reading). Mr. Grassi raised a question on whether Principal's contracts are provided to the School Committee. The Superintendent was heard. On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to refer **#08-73** to a second reading.

B. Tabled Matters

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to take from the Table **#08-93, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the School Committee refer all matters related to the district's Controlled Choice Policy to the Community Relations Sub-Committee; and further that the Sub-Committee commence the previously-voted review of the policy as soon as possible. Ms. Nolan was heard. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to adopt the foregoing motion.

C. Awaiting Report

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to pass over Awaiting Reports.

New Business

A. Presentations

B. Action Items

Mr. McGovern moved for adoption of items #08-96 through #08-109. Mr. McGovern removed #08-96 and #08-106. Mr. Schuster removed #08-97 and #08-98. Ms. Nolan removed #08-103. Ms. Tauber removed #08-101. Mr. Grassi removed #08-99, #08-104, #08-105 and #08-107. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

#08-100, 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:

1 student	Farr Academy, 71 Pearl St., Cambridge	\$30,401.90
2 students	Kennedy Day School, 30 Warren St., Brighton	85,409.28
<u>1</u> student	New England Academy, 500 Cumming Ctr., Suite 1100, Beverly	<u>30,669.42</u>
4 students		\$146,480.60

#08-102, Motion by Mayor Simmons that the School Committee retain the law firm of Mirick O'Connell as special counsel for a contract for an amount not to exceed twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000) and, in the event that additional expenditures are required, that the matter be brought back to the School Committee for a further vote.

#08-108, Motion by Ms. Nolan that the Superintendent communicate to the State DOE the progress of the King Open School, which made AYP in the aggregate and for all subgroups in the ELA and Math in 2007, and the Tobin School which is being converted into a Montessori School, in the context of upcoming decisions on Commonwealth Priority Schools, subject to additional State review. Further, that the School Committee send a letter to the State DOE summarizing both schools' work and urging the State to recognize the progress both schools have made addressing the concerns raised by past performance.

#08-109, Report of the January 15, 2008 Meeting of the Sub-Committee on the Budget (Committee of the Whole).

Called for the purpose of a Retreat to discuss the proposed FY2008-2009 Budget.

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

Mr. McGovern in the Chair.

Also Present: Superintendent Fowler-Finn
Barbara Allen, Executive Director, Human Resources
Diane Johnson, Coordinator, Financial Operations
Maryann MacDonald, Executive Director, Student Achievement & Accountability
Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel
James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer
Justin Martin, Public Information Officer
Aida Ramos, Executive Director, Special Education
Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent
Barbara Van Sickle, Deputy Director, Student Achievement & Accountability

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. The Chair welcomed new Mayor E. Denise Simmons and turned the meeting over to the Superintendent. The Superintendent gave a brief introduction and said that he is looking at creative cuts and that he is budgeting a plan, not planning a budget. Mr. Maloney walked

Members through a slide presentation "FY08-09 Budget – Updated Five-Year Financial Estimates", including:

- FY2008-09 Financial Summary
- FY08-09 Revenue Estimates
 - A. Current Year FY2007-08 Adopted Budget
 - B. Estimated FY2008-09 Revenue Increases
 - C. Total Estimated FY2008-09 Revenues Budget
 - D. Estimated FY2008-09 Cost Increases and Decreases
 - E. Total Estimated FY08-09 Expenditures
 - F. Difference: Estimated Revenues vs. Estimated Expenditures
- Revenue Estimates Through FY12-13

The Superintendent and staff responded to Members' questions, comments and concerns:

- How do pension costs work
- How many charter schools do we have
- It might be worthwhile to form a delegation to visit State Reps to discuss Charter School formula
- Wait to see what the Governor is proposing
- This is an opportunity for Members to tell the administration what they would like to see
- It might be helpful for this committee to come together more often to look at priorities
- Look at continuing to improve the budget document itself
- Would like to see greater support for teachers to better support goal of inclusion
- Will push for more social workers on staff
- Look at staffing levels for specialists, etc.
- Look at Brookline's budget process including directive to Superintendent outlining the School Committee's vision for the coming year – extending school day and foreign language program
- Outline how we are going to choose the cuts we make
- Co-Chairs and administration should meet to come up with a process
- Look at budget in terms of our goals
- Do we want to revert back to goals we have or set new ones
- Can one or two School Committee Members be empowered to move forward with the budget process
- Parameters are needed around a process for a subcommittee within a subcommittee
- Insure that budget directives are made public
- We need to look at the big picture in terms of goals
- What is the timeline for the Superintendent to hear from Members
- Would like to hear from staff members
- Where are some categories of position cuts other than classroom teachers
- SC Members need to be buffered from some of the difficult realities
- Need to keep our eyes on broad policies and goals
- There are still tough questions to be answered even if they're about goals
- How do we weigh requests from sports teams
- Principals have control over what percentage of their budget
- Can Principals increase class size and limit a teacher
- Do the Superintendent and leadership team feel this budget has tools in it that will take us to a higher level
- Not interested in a status quo budget – need budget that, even in these times, will get our students to a higher level
- Sensing that \$2.1 million can be reduced to a negligible deficit

- There are ways to make the budget process more creative
- We are on our way to being the educational leader we know we can be
- Some outside programs do add value and we should look at how we can support them and varsity sports
- There should not be a staff cut that changes programming
- Be careful of putting Principals in a position to have to rethink programming, particularly over the summer
- Look at where services can remain but costs can be reduced
- Look at how we can deliver same services in-house
- Look at moving to a paperless process to save money
- Look at inequitable funding across schools
- Look at staff cuts based on DOE comparisons
- We should be able to have second language starting in early grades
- Can the budget encourage schools to maintain their individuality
- To what degree can we support academic programs that are already doing the work
- Look at opportunities for cross-fertilization to save money
- Need to be better at looking at how effective what we are doing is
- Need answers re intervention programs and their goals
- Would like to support intervention programs if it is proven that they are successful – if they are not successful, we need to eliminate them
- Be creative when looking at creating new positions
- We cannot fund outside programs that ask for budget expansion
- What is the best model to support schools – need to look at size of classes and size of schools
- Whatever happened to the Springboard program
- Are we still funding an Earthwatch Expedition - how is it tied to academics

The Chair thanked the Superintendent and staff for the presentation.

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

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

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

Non-Consent Agenda

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to refer to the Budget Sub-Committee **#08-96, FY08-09 Budget – Proposed Revisions**: that the School Committee receive and consider the list of revisions to the Superintendent's Proposed FY08-09 Budget. These revisions are in response to the Committee Order C08-103 directing the Superintendent to identify \$260,000 in funding to allocate to schools according to the current school improvement plan funding formula.

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to bring forward together **#08-97, City Council Order #O-5 and #08-98, City Council Order #O-31**. Mr. Grassi moved to refer both items to the Governance Sub-Committee. Mr. Schuster moved to Calendar both items.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to adopt **#08-99, Revisions to the following Policies** (Second Reading):

- Visitors to the Schools Policy
- Personnel Policies Goals Policy

- Personnel Records Policy, General Personnel Policies Policy, and Teachers' Handbook Policy
- Staff Participation in Political Activities Policy
- Health Plan Options Policy, Continuation of Insurance Coverage by Spouse of Deceased Employees and Retirees Policy, Health Plans for Employees with Spouses Over Age 65 Policy, Medical Insurance Coverage Policy, Payment of Insurance by Retirees, Hospitalization and Insurance/Retirees Policy and Professional Staff Fringe Benefits Policy
- Tobacco Use on School Property by Staff Members Policy
- Professional Staff Positions Policy
- Course Credit Policy
- Professional Staff Vacations and Holidays Policy
- Professional Staff Assignments and Transfers Policy
- Professional Staff Time Schedules Policy
- Evaluation of Staff Policy
- Tutoring for Pay Policy
- Part Time Employees Benefits Policy
- Staff Travel Policy
- Professional Staff Training and Development Policy
- Retirement Policy
- Deletion of the Support Staff and Family Medical Leave Policy, Professional Staff Family and Medical Leave Policy, and Family and Medical Leave Policy
- Resignation of Professional Staff Members Policy
- Deletion of the Bilingual Department Expenses Policy
- Deletion of the Criminal Record Notice Policy
- Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest Policy
- Professional Staff Supplementary Pay Plans Policy
- Pay Plans Policy

Ms. Tauber raised a question regarding Camp Sargent and schools' participation. Dr. Turk was heard. On the following roll call, **#08-101, Consultant Agreements**, was adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve Consultant Agreements with the company on the list, in the amounts set forth, funds to be provided as shown:

Boston University, Hancock, NH, in the amount of \$15,000.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 830255, prog. 255; and Boston University, Hancock, NH, in the amount of \$10,000.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 849622, prog. 622.

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

#08-103, Motion by the Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee that the School Committee endorse the City Manager's decision to specify MA-CHPS Plus for the high school project and to convey its support for MA-CHPS Plus standard for this and future school projects. On behalf of the Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee, on a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to adopt the following substitute motion: that the School Committee go on record stating its appreciation to the City Manager for his support for LEED certification and MA-CHPS Plus for CRLS renovations. Further that the School Committee state its support for MA-CHPS Plus for CRLS renovations and future school projects.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to adopt **#08-104, Motion by the Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee** that the School Committee vacate the Henrietta S. Attles meeting room space and explore other options for meeting during the high school renovations.; and **#08-105, Motion by the Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee** that the School Committee authorize the B&G Sub-Committee to discuss with the City Council the possible use of the Sullivan Chamber for School Committee meetings during CRLS renovations and after.

Mr. Grassi requested and received unanimous consent to return to and to Table **#08-103**.

Mr. McGovern moved to Calendar **#08-106, Motion by Mr. Fantini** to discuss the March 7, 2008, letter from the Educational Management Audit Council.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to adopt **#08-107, Motion by Mr. Grassi** that the Budget Co-Chairs update the School Committee on discussions regarding the Budget and the Office of the School Committee.

Late Orders

Mr. Grassi moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini that the School Committee set up a meeting with the Superintendent and staff to develop a reporting system of data to assess student achievement in the Cambridge Public Schools in alignment with our goals. Ms. Nolan moved to Calendar the motion.

The Chair returned to **#08-103**. On behalf of the Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee, Ms. Nolan read the following substitute motion: that the School Committee go on record stating its appreciation to the City Manager for his support for LEED certification and MA-CHPS Plus for CRLS renovations. Further that the School Committee state its support for MA-CHPS Plus for CRLS renovations and future school projects. Discussion took place around subcommittee minutes and back-up information being available prior to motions being brought forward. On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to adopt **#08-103**, as amended.

The Chair entertained a motion to convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy for contract negotiations with non-union personnel. On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, it was voted to convene in Executive Session for the purpose stated: Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. McGovern 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: Lenora Jennings, Education Liaison

Members discussed strategy for contract negotiations and schedules for meetings with Special Counsel and the Superintendent and his attorney.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, it was voted to adjourn (9:00): Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Mayor Simmons YEA.

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee