

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, March 20, 2007

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

Mr. Fantini, Vice Chair, in the Chair.

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

Ms. Walser moved to Calendar the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 6, 2007.

Public Testimony on School Committee Agenda

The following individual was heard:

- Craig Kelley, St. Gerard Terrace, re school budget

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Nolan, 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

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to remove from the Calendar and adopt the following: 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.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to remove from the Calendar a motion by Mr. Fantini 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. Discussion took place around a process for adding and assessing programs at RSTA. Mr. Fantini moved the following friendly amendment: that a framework be developed that takes into consideration implementation of programs, cost assessment, and review of demand. On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adopt the following motion as amended: 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. Further, that a framework be developed that takes into consideration implementation of programs, cost assessment, and review of demand.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to remove from the Calendar and adopt the Minutes of the following meetings:

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

New Business

A. Presentations:

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent for the Edline presentation. The Superintendent introduced Jeff LaPlante, Technology Director, who gave a brief update on “Initiatives and improvements and implementation with Edline. The Superintendent and staff responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns raised by Members:

- This is a great tool for making the classroom public
- Has there been discussion on how to address the issue of parents not having internet access at home
- How many pages would it take to print out a student’s portal to be sent home
- Need to look at security and any issues around liability the district might face
- Are there enough resources to make this a reality
- Has there been any resistance from teachers on using Edline
- Have conversations with teachers before this gets up and running
- This is a good way to make parents as partners
- Professional development will be key to this effort
- How can this system be utilized in youth centers
- Has there been conversation with other districts
- Will curriculum guides be put on this program
- How can this system be linked to families who have email
- Can schools who want to go beyond baseline report cards be part of this system
- Can IEPs be linked to this program
- Will school profiles be changed on our website
- Can this be customized to look like our website
- Get parent liaisons to quickly assess what parents will need help with
- What are the bumps that other districts have experienced and how are we preparing for them
- This goes a long way of addressing communication between schools and home
- Can this be fine tuned to include readily available information on guidance counselors, deans, etc.
- Will there be a help desk available

The Chair thanked the Superintendent and Mr. LaPlante for the presentation.

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

The Superintendent introduced Mr. Maloney, Chief Operating Officer, Ernie Paicopolos of Opinion Dynamics and Justin Martin, Public Information Officer. Mr. Paicopolos gave an update on the second phase of the Market Survey project. Mr. Maloney and Mr. Paicopolos responded to some of the Members questions, comments and concerns:

- Will we be able to make policy decisions from the answers on the survey
- Collapse some of the questions on controlled choice
- Ask questions regarding charter schools
- Include private school parents
- Will Opinion Dynamics tell us what answers are statistically valid and what are not
- Will surveys be done randomly

- What is the timeline between getting the survey out and reporting back to the SC
- What method is being used so that we are not leading people
- Strongly suggest that we keep the question on controlled choice
- In favor of incorporating Members' suggestions without slowing down the process
- Add questions re high expectations, classroom behavior, size of learning communities
- Why is there not a question on special education in this survey
- Tease out curriculum concerns
- Do the questions in the survey change from questions in focus groups
- We are in a position to recruit many families back to Cambridge
- Is there a way to identify bifurcated families
- Survey teachers and other stakeholders about our schools
- This is a very atypical way to do a survey

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to suspend the Rules to bring in a motion. The Rules having been suspended, on a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt the following: that the School Committee authorize Opinion Dynamics to consider the input from the School Committee, make changes that in their judgment are responsive, appropriate, and good survey techniques, and then proceed with the survey: Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

B. Action Items

Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Ms. Walser for adoption of items #07-50 through #07-56. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to remove #07-50 and refer it to the Subcommittee on the Budget. Mr. Grassi removed #07-51 and #07-55. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

#07-52, City Council Order #O-18: That the City Manager be and hereby is requested to confer with the Assistant City Manager for Human Services and the Superintendent of Schools with the view of Workforce Development and Rindge School of Technical Arts conducting a building trades apprenticeship awareness program.

#07-53, Grant Awards: that the School Committee accept and approve the Grant Awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. Safe Schools for Gay and Lesbian Students, for the period March 13, 2007 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$2,500, Project/Grant SC07823. This grant supports the activities of Project 10 East at CRLS to provide training and support for staff and students on issues confronting gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender youth (GLBT) and to provide counseling for GLBT youth and their families. The grant supports workshops, trainings, education and advocacy activities.

CPS Target Population: The staff and students of CRLS.

Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness: The outcome is improved school climate for GLBT youth as measured by school incident data, the Teen Health Survey results, as well as feedback from students and staff.

2. Community Partnership Transition, for the period July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$36,082, Project/Grant SC07830. This is a supplemental to the original School Committee Meeting October 3, 2006 Order #C06-222, in the amount of \$37,702.00 with the supplemental amount of \$36,082.00, grant amount totaling \$73,784.00. The Community Partnership for Children grant program provides comprehensive, high-quality

programs for pre-school-aged children and their families with the planning and oversight of a Community Partnerships for Children Council. Working together, agencies and families in a community build a network of programs that are responsive to the needs of working parents and that enhance children's healthy learning development.

CPS Target Population: Cambridge residents 3 and 4 year olds in day care centers in the City.

Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness: Cambridge child care centers will receive professional development and accreditation support which will increase the number of NAEYC accredited centers in the City.

#07-54, Contract Award Document Management Software for School Committee: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Document Management Software; funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

1. Intercom Network, 4210 Fairfax Corner West, Suite 215, Fairfax, VA, for the period January 31, 2007 to January 30, 2008 (with option for two one-year extensions at the same price), in the amount of \$11,820.00. This is a 1-year amount.

#07-56, Joint motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Harding that the School Committee invite the Human Rights Commission to present the results of the discrimination survey at an appropriate time.

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

Non-Consent Business

#07-51, City Council Order #O-6. Mr. Grassi asked the Superintendent to let the School Committee know what the policy is for snow removal. The Superintendent and Mr. Maloney were heard. On a voice vote, the following was adopted: **#07-51, City Council Order #O-6**, that the City Manager be and hereby is requested to work with the School Department to improve their snow and ice removal practices.

#07-55, Joint motion by Mr. Schuster and Ms. Walser that the Governance subcommittee explore models for Student School Committee member voting rights as a means of promoting deeper student involvement on the School Committee. Mr. Grassi moved a friendly amendment that "as a means" be replaced with "or other methods". Mr. Grassi's amendment was accepted. On a motion by Mr. Harding, on the following roll call it was voted to adopt as amended: **#07-55, Joint motion by Mr. Schuster and Ms. Walser** that the Governance subcommittee explore models for Student School Committee member voting rights or other methods of promoting deeper student involvement on the School Committee: Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

The Chair recessed to the Budget Subcommittee meeting.

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

The time for recess having expired, the Chair reconvened the meeting at 8:59 p.m.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt and refer to the City Council **#07-50, Fiscal Year 2007-2008 Recommended Budget:** that the School Committee receive and approve the FY2007-08 General Fund Budget of the Cambridge Public Schools in the following Statutory Categories:

Salaries, Wages & Fringe Benefits	\$ 95,804,010
Other Ordinary Maintenance	24,266,040
Travel & Training	1,851,950
Extraordinary Expenditures	<u>5,768,960</u>
Total	\$127,690,960

Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA. Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Ms. Walser, 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**.

Late Orders

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Grassi, on the following roll call, it was voted that the School Committee approve the allocation of an amount not to exceed \$7,900 to provide funds for eight (8) CRLS dance students and two (2) teacher-chaperones to represent CRLS and Massachusetts in performances at the National School Boards Association's Annual Meeting in San Francisco, CA, April 15-17, 2007. Further, that these funds come from projected end-of-year balances: Ms. Walser PRESENT, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter of congratulations to Coach Dottin and the members of the Athletic Department for making the finals of the Eastern Massachusetts boys basketball tournament.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, on the following roll call, it was voted that the Superintendent provide the School Committee with annual reports from the Guidance and Vocational Education Departments: Ms. Walser NAY, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster PRESENT, Mayor Reeves YEA.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adjourn (9:12 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee