

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, March 23, 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,
Mayor Maher

Mayor Maher in the Chair.

Also Present: Student Representative Josiah Bonsey

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m. and explained the order of the Regular Meeting and the Budget Sub-Committee.

Public Comment

The following individuals were heard:

- Leslie Kramer, Newborn Ave, re Haggerty School
- Rachel Cobb, Lexington Ave., re Haggerty School
- Anisha Nakagowa, Madison Ave., re Haggerty School
- Suzanne Russell, Brooks St., re Haggerty School
- Debbie Henry, Fenno St., re Haggerty School
- Michele Ferrari, Larch Rd., re Haggerty School
- Stefani Howg, Elm St., re Peabody School

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to suspend the 3 minute rule to allow Ms. Howg time to finish her statement.

The Chair recognized and welcomed City Councillor Cheung.

- Nick Gross, Walden St., re Peabody School
- Elissa Spelman, Beach St., re Breakthrough Cambridge
- Lissa Hodder, Fresh Pond Ln., re Breakthrough Cambridge
- Selena Sheaves, Amory St., re Haggerty School
- Susan Connelly, Newman St., re Peabody School
- Benjamin Greene, Tobin School, re Bullying (referred to the Superintendent)
- Nancy McGlowski, re Peabody School
- Nabia Meghelli, Prospect St., re Haggerty School
- Laura McGaffigan, May St., re Haggerty School
- Marlene Orellana, Otis St., re Haggerty School
- Johanna Schulman, Hadley St., re Peabody School

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Turkel, it was voted to close public comment.

Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members

Mr. Bonsey reported on the Superintendent's visit with the CRLS student body, mostly sophomores and some upper classmen. The experience was very positive. The student body extended an invitation to the School Committee and the Superintendent to visit any time.

Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to accept the Minutes of the following meetings:

- Special Informal Meeting – February 23, 2010
- Regular Meeting – March 2, 2010
- Special Meeting – March 9, 2010

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Turkel, it was voted to recess to the Budget Sub-Committee meeting.

The time for recess having expired, the Chair reconvened the meeting.

New Business

A. Presentation

The Chair turned the meeting over to Chris Colbath-Hess, President, Cambridge Teachers Association, who walked Members through the following presentation *Results from the CTA Restructuring Survey* (copy on file in the School Committee Office):

- The Who
- The Why
- The How
- What is your primary role?
- What grade(s) do you work with?
- What is your primary location?
- Survey Highlights
- A closer look
- You have sufficient opportunities to collaborate with teachers with whom you share content and/or curriculum
- You have sufficient opportunities to collaborate with teachers with whom you share current students
- Administration is able to focus on student needs at your grade level
- Students that you work with have sufficient opportunities in athletics, the arts and academic enrichment DURING REGULAR SCHOOL HOURS (athletics, drama, music, science clubs, etc.)
- CPS has a consistent curriculum/experience for all students across the district at the grade level you teach
- The population of students that you work with has a similar distribution of students to that of the district as a whole (free and reduced lunch)
- Other Questions
- Superintendent' Recommendation
- What We Learned

Ms. Colbath-Hess responded to the following questions and concerns:

- It's good to hear from the people who are actually doing the work
- Disappointed there were no questions on achievement
- Is there anything on achievement that was not presented

- Would like to hear from the Principals
- Was there any enthusiasm re teachers' support for the hybrid model
- What is the perspective of the high school staff
- Were there any suggestions and/or ideas from the teachers
- Survey is interesting and useful
- What is the percentage of respondents
- We need to collaborate with each other to benefit children
- Do we view this as a legitimate partnership in the education of every child in every school
- Perception issue is well captured in the survey
- There is enthusiasm for change – just get it done

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to suspend the Rules to extend the meeting to 10:30. Mr. Fantini is recorded as voting NAY.

- Does this report represent the whole survey
- Survey is excellent way to get feedback
- Good to see level of collaboration with the teachers
- We should not move forward without hearing from the teachers

The Members thanked Ms. Colbath-Hess for her presentation.

The Superintendent asked to be heard regarding the survey and the next steps. Dr. Young requested that the Committee not plan to vote the hybrid proposal on May 18. He wants to be sure that whatever solution/plan is brought forward that it is big enough, broad enough, sustainable enough, and integrated enough to make the right kind of difference for students. The following should be in place before a vote is taken:

1. The need to be sure that whatever plan we come up with is financially sustainable and that it will work and hold for at least 5 years into the future;
2. The need for facilities; there is a need for a building plan – think through how our building plan will advance our educational goals;
3. Controlled Choice: there needs to be deeper conversations re policy; how plan will affect it and how it will affect the plan;
4. Special Education: how are we going to manage those students; how does this connect to Middle Schools program

Dr. Young proposed that on April 6, he speak in more detail on a process, going forward, that will broaden and deepen the discussion and at the same time adjust the time-table so that the School Committee is not rushed into making a decision on May 18. The idea is to do it once and do it right. Also, he wants to be clear that the urgency expressed regarding student achievement is still real and palpable and in no way has faded or been reduced. He will come forth at the next meeting with a set of doable interventions that he plans to implement in September in schools that will address student achievement in middle grades. The Middle Schools issue is not off the table. He wants to go back to the community. His goal is to get to a place and time where the School Committee can vote 7-0 on what best serves student achievement. He will have a short/long-term plan.

The Members gave the Superintendent unanimous support for his proposal to change the time-line.

On a motion by Ms. Tauber, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to suspend the Rules to extend the meeting to 10:45. Mr. Fantini is recorded as voting NAY.

Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting: None

Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings

Members passed over Unfinished Business.

B. Action Items

Mr. Harding moved, seconded by Mr. McGovern, for adoption of items #10-39 through #10-45. Ms. Turkel removed #10-41, #10-43, #10-44 and #10-45. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted: Ms. Turkel YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Mayor Maher YEA.

#10-39, Graduation Dates 2010: that the Members of the School Committee approve the graduation dates that are being proposed for June 2010.

#10-40, 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	The Carroll School, 25 Baker Bridge Rd., Lincoln	\$32,747.72
1 student	Compass, 290-294 Bowdoin St., Dorchester	28,329.49
<u>1</u> student	The Greenwood School, 14 Greenwood Lane, Putney, VT	<u>61,838.00</u>
3 students		\$122,915.21

#10-42, Consultation Services: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Translation of CPS documents, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Catholic Charities, 275 W. Broadway, Boston, for the period March 23, 2010 through June 30, 2010, in the amount of \$71,000.00.

Non-Consent Agenda

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, the following items are placed on the Calendar:

#10-41, Approval of Revisions to Rights & Responsibilities Handbook: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Rights & Responsibilities Handbook as detailed in the document (first reading).

#10-43, Motion by Mr. Harding that the School Committee schedule a roundtable for a program overview and update on the High School Extension Program; further, that this roundtable include data on student achievement and enrollment.

#10-44, Motion by Mr. Harding that, given the School Committee's and Administration's commitment to academic excellence, a roundtable on K-12 Science be scheduled before the end of this school year, with a focus on best practice, trends in high level Science instruction, and how best to meet the academic needs of all students including those ready for advanced Science; further, that representatives from CRLS, as well as outside Science experts, be invited to participate.

#10-45, Contract for participation in the MASC "Policy21"® Program.

Late Orders/Announcements

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to send a letter of condolence to former City Councillor Larry Ward on the passing of his father.

The next Regular Meeting is April 6.

A City Council School Department Budget meeting is scheduled for May 19.

CRLS' Robotics team is competing at Boston University on March 26, 27.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Turkel, it was voted to adjourn (10:34 p.m.).

Respectfully Submitted
Patricia A. Berry
Confidential Secretary