

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

### **(Official Report)**

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, May 20, 2008**

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

Mayor Simmons 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:**

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

- Special Meeting - May 14, 2008
- Regular Meeting - May 6, 2008
- Regular Meeting - Executive Session - April 15, 2008
- Special Meeting - Executive Session - April 8, 2008
- Regular Meeting - Executive Session - April 1, 2008
- Special Meeting - Executive Session - March 25, 2008
- Special Meeting - Executive Session - February 12, 2008

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to suspend the Rules for a special presentation. The Superintendent was heard and introduced Rebecca Vyduna, New Baldwin School Principal. Ms. Vyduna was heard. On behalf of the Members, the Chair welcomed Ms. Vyduna and returned to the Agenda.

#### **Public Comment**

The following individuals were heard in support of the Amigos School's participation in the Statewide School Choice Program:

- Peter Cohen, Donnell Street, Parent

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to suspend the Rules to allow Mr. Cohen an additional minute to speak.

- Byron Cohen, Donnell Street, Amigos student
- Lilian Rater, 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Amigos parent and parent liaison

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to suspend the Rules to allow Ms. Rater an additional minute to speak.

- Jack Haverty, Ellsworth Avenue, CRLS Teacher and CTA President

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to close public comment.

### Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to suspend the Rules for a special presentation. The Chair presented Ms. Shreefter with a plaque and thanked her for her work and participation on the Committee. The Members were heard.

**Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting:** None

### Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings

#### A. Calendar

Ms. Nolan removed #08-166, and #08-176 through #08-180. Mr. McGovern removed #08-175. Mr. Fantini removed #08-118, #08-122, #08-124, #08-125, #08-129, #08-133 and #08-136. Ms. Tauber removed #08-134. On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to suspend the Rules to take out of order items #08-166, #08-176 and #08-175.

**#08-176, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that whereas, the Amigos School has requested participation in the Commonwealth's School Choice program, and whereas there are advantages to the district in supporting schools' initiatives, and whereas the district would receive payment expected to be in excess of any costs, and whereas the Amigos School has many empty seats in each requested grade; that Therefore, the Cambridge Public Schools participate next year in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts School Choice program, limited to the Amigos School. Further that a maximum of three students be allowed to enroll in grades 2 through 7, for a maximum of 15 students. Further, that in all communications with applicants, it be made clear that only those specified seats at Amigos School are available through the Statewide School Choice program.

Further, that the outreach and recruitment efforts for the program clearly state the requirements that applicants meet the Amigos School linguistic requirements, and that only the Amigos School is participating in School Choice. Ms. Nolan moved an amendment "that a maximum of *two* students be allowed to enroll in grades 3 through 7, for a maximum of *10* students". Extensive discussion took place around Statewide School Choice in general and the Amigos School in particular. The Superintendent was heard. Ms. Tauber moved a substitute motion "that the School Committee vote not to participate in the Statewide School Choice Program for School Year 2008-09; further that the issue of Statewide School Choice be referred to the Community Relations Subcommittee".

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to suspend the Rules to reopen Public Comment. The following individual was heard:

- Malka Yaacobi, Richard Avenue, in support of Amigos proposal.

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

The Chair returned to Unfinished Business.

**#08-166, 2008-2009 State School Choice Program – Recommendation for Non-Participation:** that the School Committee vote not to participate in the Statewide School Choice Program for School Year 2008-09, for the following reasons:

1. the need to maintain the quality and integrity of Cambridge Program of Controlled Choice; and
2. the need to maintain flexibility for appropriately-sized classrooms in the public schools.

On a motion by Ms. Tauber, seconded by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call, it was voted that the School Committee vote not to participate in the Statewide School Choice Program for School Year 2008-09; further that the issue of Statewide School Choice be referred to the Community Relations

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

**#08-175, Motion by Mr. Fantini** that the School Committee go on record as supporting the motion of the CRLS School Council that reads as follows:

“We respectfully request that the Cambridge School Committee not pursue the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at CRLS for the following reasons:

1. The IB program will reintroduce to the High School the troublesome issue of ‘choice’.
2. CRLS has undergone so many program changes in the last few years that yet another change is undesirable.
3. CRLS is working on multiple programs that will encourage high achievement for all students at CRLS.

“CRLS School Council members and Administrators thank the School Committee for consideration of this request and will be available to discuss any of the above topics. This motion passed unanimously.”

Mr. McGovern moved a friendly amendment to **#08-175** that the School Committee go on record acknowledging and respecting the CRLS School Council’s motion regarding IB, and states that the School Committee has no plans to implement IB at the high school in the current term, but reserves the right to continue conversation regarding this program. Mr. Fantini accepted the friendly amendment. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adopt the motion as amended. Ms. Shreefter pointed out that there should be more work done to reduce the achievement gap before another accelerated program is introduced.

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to suspend the Rules for a special presentation. The Chair presented Ms. Agu with a plaque and thanked her for her work and participation on the Committee. The Members and Superintendent also thanked Ms. Agu.

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to suspend the Rules to take the RSTA presentation out of order.

## **New Business**

### **A. Presentation**

The Chair turned the meeting over to Superintendent Fowler-Finn. The Superintendent was heard. Dr. Ananis, RSTA Executive Director, introduced Diane Paradis, Vocational Coordinator and Sue Walsh, RSTA General Advisory Committee Chair, who shared her views about RSTA. Dr. Ananis presented the “Annual Report on the Achievement of RSTA Goals”, including:

- Goal 1, Improve Program Quality
- Goal 2, Improve Quality of Instruction
- Goal 3, Improve Physical Facilities
- Goal 4, Sustain Appropriate Enrollment
- Goal 5, Improve Student Learning Outcomes
- RSTA Course Enrollment for School Year 2006-2007 (Last Year)
- RSTA Course Enrollment for Current School Year 2007-2008 (as of 5/12/08)
- RSTA Course Enrollment PROJECTIONS for School Year 2008-2009

The Superintendent, Dr. Ananis et al responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns raised by Members:

- Are last year's Level 2 students this year's Level 3 students
- Why is there a drop off in biotech
- Can a RSTA biotech student satisfy a science requirement
- Insure that we are doing everything we can to support RSTA staff and students

Mr. McGovern in the Chair

- How did the computer refurbishing program work and how might it work in the future
- How will the CRLS design enhance RSTA
- Would like to see an increase in Level 3 enrollment
- What are some strategies for sustaining students
- What is the recruitment plan to get elementary students in Exploratory

Ms. Shreefter was heard and shared that she was advised not to take Exploratory because her elementary school grades were too high. She said she believes every student should have the same opportunity in education.

- Are there articulation agreements with industry besides Local 40
- Would like some backup information on apprenticeships
- What are formal arrangements for Level 3
- What employers are we using
- Are newer programs being evaluated to determine if they can be sustained
- What are students taking at Norfolk that we do not offer at RSTA
- Do we have other students involved in other Collaboratives
- Has there been any conversation about where RSTA will be going in the next five years regarding future renovation
- Would like to get copies of recruitment materials
- Are there enough seats for the Exploratory program
- Is freshman year the only opportunity for Exploratory
- How do students do in Level 1 if they don't take Exploratory
- How do RSTA and CRLS collaborate
- Will more programs be added to the Levels
- Is there any feedback regarding Edline
- How are enrollment goals set
- What do similar districts see in terms of enrollment
- What is the degree to which RSTA has increased green jobs or are in collaboration with other districts
- How will respect and rigor be measured
- In carpentry and engineering are students being trained to do energy audits
- Have there been discussions with green businesses
- Do we know what is needed in industry so that we can train our students appropriately
- Follow graduates to see if they go and stay in college
- Would like to see the data disaggregated by race and gender
- Would like a list of every business and contact information that we have articulation agreements with
- Does someone from RSTA visit every eighth grade
- RSTA needs a strategic plan on enrollment
- Would like to get carpentry program to a higher level - building houses
- Tell the School Committee if RSTA needs to be a separate school
- RSTA needs to be the best vocational program in the country
- Would like to get police and firefighter Civil Service exams for students
- Would like to have night courses for adults
- Would like to have an update in six months
- Personal finance course is a great addition

The Chair thanked the Superintendent and Dr. Ananis, et al for the presentation.

Mayor Simmons in the Chair

The Chair returned to Unfinished Business.

**Motion by Mr. Grassi** 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 (**C08-134**). Ms. Tauber raised a question on a date for the data meeting. Mr. Grassi and Ms. Bradshaw were heard. On a motion by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to adopt the foregoing motion.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to bring forward Calendar items **#08-118, #08-122, #08-124, #08-125, #08-129, #08-133** and **#08-136**.

Mr. Grassi raised a question on the CPS Attendance Policy and asked Attorney MacFarlane to revisit the language in **#08-118, #08-129**, and one that is not on the Calendar and bring back a compressed policy. On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to refer back to Attorney MacFarlane **#08-118, Approval of Revisions to the Student Attendance Policy** (First Reading); and **#08-129, Approval of Revisions to the Student Absences and Excuses Policy** (First Reading).

Ms. Nolan raised a question on hats and clothing being included in the following policy. Ms. MacFarlane was heard. On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to refer to a second reading **#08-122, Approval of the Revisions to the Student Dress Code Policy**: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Student Dress Code Policy as detailed in the document (First Reading).

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to refer to a second reading **#08-124, Approval of Revisions to the Student Publications Policy**: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Student Publications Policy as detailed in the document (First Reading).

Ms. Nolan raised a question on the following policy. Ms. MacFarlane was heard. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to refer to a second reading **#08-125, Approval of Revisions to the Tobacco Use by Students Policy**: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Tobacco Use by Students Policy as detailed in the document (First Reading).

Mr. Fantini asked that administrators be made aware of the following policy. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to refer to a second reading **#08-133, Approval of Revisions to the Right to Hearing to Redress Deprivation of Rights Policy**: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Approval of Revisions to the Right to Hearing to Redress Deprivation of Rights Policy as detailed in the document (First Reading).

Ms. Tauber raised a question on the April 1 date in the following policy. The Superintendent was heard. On a motion by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to adopt **#08-136, Approval of Revisions to the Employment of Principals Policy**: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Employment of Principals Policy, as detailed in the document (Second Reading).

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to suspend the rules to bring forward **#08-177, #08-178** and **#08-179**. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to refer to the meeting on data **#08-177, Motion by Ms. Nolan**: that whereas graduation rates are important measures of interest to the community, and Whereas the State only started requiring graduation rates reporting in a consistent manner two years ago, that the Superintendent report to the School Committee on the best surrogate for graduation rates, the drop-out rate, for CPS students for each of the last 10 years, including a breakdown by subgroups. Further, that these drop-out rates by subgroups be compared to the State; and **#08-178, Motion by Ms. Nolan**: that whereas, post high school education is

critical to success in an increasing number of jobs; and Whereas, the district has subscribed to the National Collegiate Clearinghouse, which covers most of the secondary institutions CRLS graduates attend, that the Superintendent report, by the first meeting in June of 2008, to the School Committee on the verified percent of students in post-high school educational institutions, by using Clearinghouse data and individual follow up to the handful of schools not in the Clearinghouse database; and **#08-179, Motion by Mayor Simmons**: that the School Committee direct the Superintendent to report on the CRLS ranking in the School to College Report recently released by the Department of Education. Further, that the report include information on more recent graduates and finally, that the report include a plan to respond to the number of students required to take remedial courses in State colleges.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to adopt **#08-180, Motion by Mayor Simmons** that the School Committee direct the Superintendent to work with Principals to encourage students to apply for the Governor's Statewide Youth Council.

### B. Action Items

Ms. Grassi moved, seconded by Ms. Nolan, for adoption of items #08-186 through #08-191. Mr. Grassi removed #08-191. Mr. Fantini removed #08-190. Mr. McGovern removed #08-188. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

**#08-186, Special Needs Contracts for Day Program Services not available from the Cambridge School Department**: that the School Committee award a contract to the institution on the list in an amount not to exceed the shown rate, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget:

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1. EDCO Collaborative, 281 Winter Street, Waltham | \$38,049.00 |
|---|-------------|

**#08-187, Special Needs Contracts for Residential 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        | Dr. Franklin Perkins School, 971 Main St., Lancaster | \$47,376.45      |
| <u>1</u> student | Evergreen Center, 345 Fortune Blvd., Milford         | <u>25,592.32</u> |
| 2 students       |  | \$72,968.77      |

**#08-189 Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the School Committee accept and place on file the report on the Achievement Gap Forums.

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

### Non-Consent Agenda

Mr. McGovern moved an amendment to the following motion to add "all other retirees". On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to adopt, as amended, **#08-188, Joint Motion by Mr. Fantini and Mr. McGovern** that the School Committee's Executive Secretary send a letter of appreciation from the entire School Committee thanking the following Cambridge Public School teachers, principals and administrators who have devoted so much of themselves and their time to the children of Cambridge and who are now retiring:

Christopher Affleck (Tobin), Frances Bonacci (Tobin), Barbara Clemons (CRLS), Serafim DaCunha (CRLS), Brian Downes (CRLS), Annette Eng (King Open), Linda Ferullo (Tobin),

Barbara Fox (Tobin), Linda Fuccillo (Morse), Mary Gavin (CRLS), Wadie Geraigery (CRLS), Patricia Goffredo (Amigos), Karen Griffith (RSTA), Eva Jablonsky (Peabody), Kathryn Judd (Baldwin), Robin Litwin (CRLS), Joanne Lowre (Morse), Elsie Murphy (Peabody), Kenneth O'Brien (RSTA), Janet Palladino (Tobin), Ruby Pierce (RSTA), Teri Riggs (CRLS), Harvey Schuster (Graham and Parks), Maria Soares (CRLS), Tad Sudnick (Tobin), Ellen Valade (Home-Based Program), Mary Cazabon (Bilingual Education), Candace Dunlap (CRLS), Mary Eirich (Baldwin Principal) and Paulette Jones (Tobin Principal); and all other retirees.

**#08-190, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the Superintendent provide to the School Committee by the Summer Meeting a summary report on all training and professional development opportunities provided to staff and teachers, which cost the District money above and beyond the contracted amount. Further, that the report include the cost of such training per participant and any requirement or expectation for remaining in the District after such training. Mr. Fantini asked the Superintendent to speak to the motion. The Superintendent and Mr. Maloney were heard. Mr. Grassi moved a friendly amendment to remove "by the summer meeting". Ms. Nolan accepted the amendment. On a motion by Ms. Schuster, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to adopt, as amended, **#08-190, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the Superintendent provide to the School Committee a summary report on all training and professional development opportunities provided to staff and teachers, which cost the District money above and beyond the contracted amount. Further, that the report include the cost of such training per participant and any requirement or expectation for remaining in the District after such training.

Mr. Grassi raised a question on the following motion. Mayor Simmons was heard and asked that suggestions for the joint City Council meeting be sent to her office. Ms. Nolan withdrew **#08-191**: that the School Committee refer to the joint meeting with the City Council a request for plans with timelines for elevated crosswalks near the entrance of all schools in the City. Further, that the School Committee go on record as supporting having elevated crosswalks at the entrances to all schools.

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to suspend the Rules to extend the meeting past 10:00 p.m. to convene in Executive Session to discuss votes taken in Executive Session. On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Tauber, on the following roll call, it was voted to convene in Executive Session for the purpose stated: Mr. Schuster NAY, Ms. Tauber YEA, Mr. Fantini NAY, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mayor Simmons YEA. The Chair announced that the Committee will not reconvene in Open Session.

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee