

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

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

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

Also Present: Student Representatives Tsion Girum, Daneiris Heredia-Perez, Marilyn Paschal

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to suspend the Rules to hear from Ms. Walser. Ms. Walser announced that she will not be a candidate for re-election this November.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to reschedule the CRLS presentation to the summer meeting. Mr. Schuster is recorded as voting NAY.

At this time, the Chair recognized graduating Student School Committee representatives Daneiris and Marilyn, presented them with a plaque and thanked them for their service during the past year.

Public Testimony

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to suspend the Rules to allow students from the Boston-Area Youth Organization Project to speak to an item not on the Agenda.

Members of the Boston-Area Youth Organization presented "Cambridge Survey Results" and "CRLS 2007 Classroom Temperature Control Contract". The following individuals were heard in support of the survey and responded to Members' questions and concerns:

- Louisa Irele
- Mahlet Jimma
- Mohamed Washim, CRLS Chapter Councilor
- Marilyn Paschal

Members thanked the students for conducting the survey and for bringing their concerns forward.

Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members

Ms. Paschal reported that Student Government elections will be held June 7 and 8 and each class is having year-end activities.

Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to accept the Minutes of the following meetings:

- Special Meeting – May 29, 2007
- Regular Meeting – May 15, 2007
- Regular Meeting – March 6, 2007 (Corrected)

Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting: None

Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings

A. Calendar

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to remove the Minutes of the March 6, 2007, Regular Meeting (**C07-061**) and replace them as corrected.

B. Tabled Matters

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to adopt the Minutes of the May 1, 2007, Regular Meeting (**C07-117**).

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Harding, for adoption of items **#07-91, #07-93** and **#07-94**. Questions were raised on whether items #07-93 and #07-94 fit within CPS' nutrition guidelines and why one cannot be filled by a Cambridge vendor. Mr. Maloney was heard. On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#07-93, Contract Award, Hot Pizza (C07-121)**: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Hot Pizza, funds to be provided from the Food Service revolving funds, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Mama Gina's, 19 Union Sq., Somerville, for the period July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, with 2 one-year options to renew, in the amount of \$30,600.00; and

#07-94, Fresh Chilled Pizza (C07-122): that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Fresh Chilled Pizza, funds to be provided from the Food Service Revolving Funds, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Sal's Pizza, 29 N. Broadway, Salem, NH, for the period of July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, with 2 one-year options to renew, in the amount of \$60,445.00.

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

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to refer **#07-91, Approval of Family and Medical Leave and Small Necessities Policy (C07-119)**, to a second reading.

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to withdraw and place on file **#07-99, Motion by Mr. Schuster** to discuss the search process for hiring Principals (**C07-127**).

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adopt **#07-100, Motion by Mr. Grassi** that the Superintendent provide the School Committee with an update on discussions and plans for academic requirements for participation in elementary school athletics (**C07-128**).

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to refer back to the Governance Sub-committee for a recommendation early next fall **#07-101, Motion by Mr. Schuster** that: WHEREAS: the Cambridge School Committee requires meaningful and regular input from its student members in order to make the best informed decisions; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED: that the Rules of the School Committee be amended in order to give student members an "opinion vote" whenever a vote is taken by the full Committee. This vote will be recorded in the official minutes but will not be counted towards a quorum and will not count towards the outcome of the actual vote; and BE IT FURTHER ORDERED: that student members are invited to participate fully throughout School Committee meetings; and BE IT FURTHER ORDERED: that student members will have the option of receiving an elective social studies credit with participation and academic work expectations to be outlined by the CRLS Principal; and BE IT FURTHER ORDERED: that student members have the

right to introduce motions for the full Committee's consideration; and BE IT FURTHER ORDERED: that student members have the right to participate in subcommittees with "opinion voting" rights.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adopt the following items:

#07-102, Report of the February 28, 2007 Meeting of the Achievement Gap Ad-Hoc Committee (C07-130):

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. Fantini

Also Present: Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Christopher Saheed, CRLS Principal; Bobby Tynes, CRLS Assistant Principal; Sheli Wortis, Early Childhood Connections; John Clifford, Mayor's Education Liaison; Jack Haverty, CTA President; Deborah Lerme Goodman, Community Learning Center; Lei-Anne Ellis, Agenda for Children; Rob Ramsdell, Fresh Pond Education

Ms. Walser in the Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. Discussion took place around the following:

- Set dates to talk about the high school forum
- Merge surveying of students and the idea of having a student forum
- Convene Minority Student Achievement Network (MSAN) students to discuss achievement gap
- Have breakfast forums in the Media Cafe
- Serve pizza after the forum to have informal conversations
- Arrange for babysitters and translators
- Have lower grade students look at Dr. Ferguson's tape for homework
- Have CRLS students view tape during extended block
- What is the goal of the student forum
- Have students generate a position paper
- How do we get teachers involved
- Panel should emphasize some strengths and resources and how we use them

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 7, 12:00 Noon

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

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

#07-103, Report of the March 21, 2007 Meeting of the Achievement Gap Ad-Hoc Committee (C07-131):

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: John Clifford, Mayor's Education Liaison; Lei-Anne Ellis, Agenda for Children; Jack Haverty, CTA President; Justin Martin, Public Information Officer; Khari Milner, CPS & Afterschool Partnership; James Parker, Mayor's Office; Councillor Simmons; Theresa Tirella; Bobby Tynes, Assistant Principal

Ms. Walser in the Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:10 p.m. Discussion took place around the following agenda items:

1. Final dates: April 28 ("Definitions"); May 12 (Student Forum with Ron Ferguson); September 15 (Parent); October 13 ("Solutions"). All forums in CRLS auditorium from 9 to 11:30 a.m.
2. Finalize poster
3. Remaining logistics/jobs:

Invite/work with panelists for April 28 – Chair
Press release
Outreach
Food
Childcare
Other (translators, volunteers, caterers for lunch, not breakfast)

Next meeting: Wednesday, April 4, 12:00 Noon

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 p.m.

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

#07-104, Report of the April 3, 2007 Meeting of the Governance Sub-Committee (C07-132):

Called to discuss School ways to engage Student School Committee Members and to clarify our process for requesting reports.

Members Present: Mr. Schuster, Chair, Mr. Fantini

Also Present: Student Members: Tsion Girum, Marilyn Paschal

Mr. Schuster in the Chair.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Students responded to some of the following questions regarding involvement on the Committee:

- Is it boring
- Is it hard
- Is there conflict
- What is it like at a meeting

The Chair introduced the following synopsis of options for better involving student SC members:

- Full voting membership for one elected student member – likely a junior or senior (Note: a memorandum from Attorney MacFarlane pointed out that State law provides that the Student School Committee member be a non-voting member of the School Committee)
- Partial voting rights for one elected student member – excluded from voting on some combination of: budget, boundary lines, collective bargaining, student and teacher discipline, personnel matters, appeals and closed session matters

- “Opinion voting” or “preferential voting” for one or more student members
- Student member commentary and participation throughout whole agenda, not just at the beginning after public testimony
- Elective social studies credit for one or more student members, with an attendance/participation expectation
- Student member(s) accorded same opportunity to introduce resolutions and/or motions, without voting power
- Full membership and voting power on subcommittees only

It was suggested that the Governance Subcommittee call a meeting with the Student Advisory Committee in accordance with MGL Chapter 71, Section 38M.

It was agreed to postpone the discussion on reports in the absence of Ms. Nolan.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, the meeting adjourned (5:40 p.m.)

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

C. Awaiting Reports

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to remove the following items and place them on file:

- Report on the % of Office of Special Education (OSE) out-of-district placements in CPSD, as a % of enrollment and % of OSE students compared to other districts in Massachusetts. **(Nolan) (C07-052)**
- Market data analysis of current programs at RSTA to see what the job prospects are in the programs we currently have. **(Fantini) (C07-063)**
- Annual reports from the Guidance and Vocational Education Departments. **(Fantini) (C07-075)**

New Business

A. Presentations

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent who introduced Jim Maloney and Ernest Paicopolos for the Marketing Survey Report.

Mr. Fantini in the Chair.

Mr. Paicopolos walked Members through “Cambridge Public Schools Parent Attitudes Study”:

- Methodology
- Parents of Potential Kindergartners
- Parents of Current and Withdrawn Students
- Parents of Current Students
- Parents of Withdrawn Students
- Conclusions and Recommendations

- Appendix: Topline Results

Mayor Reeves in the Chair

The Superintendent, Mr. Maloney and Mr. Paicopolos responded to some of the questions, comments and concerns raised by members:

- Looking forward to reviewing this over the next few months to help inform policy decisions
- Document needs page numbers and should be double-sided to be environmentally responsible
- Are analysis gaps significant
- Need in-depth summary of focus groups
- Need to hear from independent/private school parents
- How many Cambridge children are in the three charter schools
- What is the definition of independent schools
- Do we know how many children are in independent schools
- Why weren't independent parents included in qualitative sampling
- What was the language in the original RFP
- How can we get to people who are not self-selected
- Concerned with the percentage of people concerned with bullying
- Concerned with the percentage of parents regarding teaching to the test
- Concerned that 48% of parents are thinking of leaving
- Happy to see how people appreciate attributes of our system
- We should move forward with the controlled choice sub-committee
- We should address inter-related issues as a package – behavior/safety, teaching to the test, academic quality
- What else can be done to emphasize quality teaching
- What policy decisions will the School Committee make based on survey findings
- Feel recommendations are right on
- How might recommendations fit with some of the things the school department is doing or planning to do
- Our main job is to educate the students we have at a high level
- Why does Opinion Dynamics see 33% satisfaction as a benchmark
- When the word programs is used are we talking about schools or programs in schools
- We need to look at where we are going in terms of controlled choice
- Need to develop some internal interventions to deal with families deciding whether to stay or go
- It is interesting that some of the schools with low enrollment decided to move to extended day
- Need to have serious conversations with Principals who are not attracting families
- Do families in our system use tours across the board
- Do we know how many people withdraw because they did not get their first choice
- Look at how we allocate budget resources from some of the information in this survey
- We need to focus on improving the system for families in our system
- There are more concerns than interest in extended day programs
- Create an action plan to move in a different direction re qualification of teachers
- Have a plan that gets Principals into classrooms to insure quality teaching
- Need to look at accuracy of information being reported by schools in the discipline detail report
- Establish a handbook for reporting and a plan for solutions

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to suspend the Rules to continue the meeting past 10:00.

- We need to do whatever we need to do to resolve behavior issues
- Focus needs to be on core values
- We need more parent involvement and volunteers in schools
- Was the question on extended day asked only of incoming parents

- Extended day has a high correlation with race and class
- It is important to see if we can talk to all parents of incoming kindergartners
- Are all families visiting five schools
- Superintendent has not been definitive on middle schools
- What is the true definition of bullying
- How is there choice at the middle school level – diversity changes
- There is too large a cohort to leave out charter schools
- Look at private school numbers and compare them to the past

Members thanked Mr. Maloney and Mr. Paicopolos for the report and asked that the next presentation include an Executive Summary on focus groups, larger fonts, page numbering and late registrants.

B. Action Items

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Harding, for adoption of items #07-105 through #07-116. Mr. Harding removed #07-112. Mr. Grassi removed #07-114. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

#07-105, Proposed Date for the School Committee Summer Meeting: that the School Committee establish the summer meeting to be held on Tuesday, July 24, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. at CRLS in the Media Café.

#07-106, 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 Home for Little Wanderers, 271 Huntington Ave., Boston	\$40,459.30
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#07-107, Approval of Amendment to Agreement between the Cambridge School Committee and the Cambridge Teachers Association for Expanded Learning Time Programs at the King School and Fletcher-Maynard Academy: that the School Committee approve the Superintendent's recommendation relative to an amendment to the June 27, 2006 agreement with the Cambridge Teachers Association for Expanded Learning Time Programs at the King School and the Fletcher-Maynard Academy, as detailed in the document.

#07-108, Chemical Interactions for Science Instruction Educational Kits and Materials: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for science instruction educational kits and materials, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

1. Delta Education, Inc., PO Box 3000, Nashua, NH, for the period May 14 – June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$33,957.00.

#07-109, Science Instructional Materials: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for science instructional materials, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

1. Carolina Biological, PO Box 60232, Charlotte, NC, for the period June 1 – June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$38,204.65.

#07-110, K-5 TERC Math Investigations Materials: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for math instructional materials, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

1. Pearson Scott Foresman, PO Box 11074, Des Moines, IA, for the period June 1 – June 30, 2007, in the amount of \$249,794.38.

#07-111, Motion by Mr. Grassi that the School Committee send a Resolution to Kahliah Bradshaw congratulating her on her graduation as a United States Marine.

#07-113, Motion by Mr. Grassi that the School Committee approve an Agreement for participation in the MASC "Policy21"[®] Program.

#07-115, Motion by Mr. Grassi that the School Committee send a letter of condolence to the family of John Pasquarello.

#07-116, Motion by Mr. Grassi that the School Committee send a letter thanking the faculty, students and volunteers involved in the successful Poetry Slam at the Kennedy-Longfellow School.

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

Non-Consent Business

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to refer the following to the Policy Sub-Committee: **#07-112, Motion by Mr. Harding** that the Superintendent invite all CRLS varsity head coaches to a roundtable meeting to discuss the impact of the new academic eligibility requirements for high school athletes. Further, that this meeting take place before the beginning of the 2007-08 athletic season, if possible.

Mr. Grassi asked that the renovated facility be welcoming to everybody. On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to adopt **#07-114, Joint motion by Mr. Grassi, Mr. Fantini and Mr. Harding** that the Superintendent review plans for the War Memorial to insure proper dedicated space and equipment for weight training and physical fitness equipment. Further, that the report to the School Committee also include a staffing plan for proper supervision of this space and equipment.

Late Orders

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the CRLS update and the results of the Human Rights Commission's discrimination survey be presented on June 19, 2007 at 4:00 P.M. Further, that the Regular Meeting be canceled.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to John Durand and the staff of the MIT Museum thanking them for spearheading the Cambridge Science Festival.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adjourn (11:22 p.m.).

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee