

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 2, 2007**

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

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

### **Presentation of the Records of Previous Meetings**

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adopt the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 18, 2007.

### **Public Testimony**

The Chair entertained public testimony.

The following individual was heard:

- James Gray, Kirkland St., re Staffing at Kennedy-Longfellow

The Chair closed public testimony.

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

The students had no comment at this time.

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

### **Unfinished Business from Previous Meetings**

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to remove from the Calendar **#07-199, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the Superintendent report by the first meeting in March on the number and status of all computer equipment disposed of in the last year and no longer in use by the district. Further, that in light of the need to bridge the digital divide, the report should include progress towards donating computers to a non-profit for distribution in the community. Further, that in light of the toxic nature of E-waste, that the report include the policy and practice of current means of disposal to ensure responsible handling. Discussion took place around binding the next Committee to a report. Mr. Schuster moved a friendly amendment to remove "by the first meeting in March". Ms. Nolan accepted the amendment. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to adopt, as amended, **#07-199, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the Superintendent report on the number and status of all computer equipment disposed of in the last year and no longer in use by the district. Further, that in light of the need to bridge the digital divide, the report should include progress towards donating computers to a non-profit for distribution in the community. Further, that in light of the toxic nature of E-waste, that the report include the policy and practice of current means of disposal to ensure responsible handling.

## New Business

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to suspend the Rules to bring forward item **#07-205, Motion by Mayor Reeves** that the School Committee hereby sets a policy authorizing the superintendent of schools to maintain school staffing as passed in the budget regardless of low enrollments, unless financial constraints prevent such action. Further, that any school facing cuts in middle school staff over the summer due to low enrollment be encouraged to take a year to plan for any programmatic changes that might be considered for the future. Further, that any school facing cuts in elementary staff over the summer be assured that no change in grade structure will be assumed. That is, a school with single grade structure will not be assumed to multi-grade, and vice-versa. The Superintendent was asked to speak to the motion with respect to the program change at Kennedy-Longfellow and the lack of communication regarding the change. The Superintendent was heard and responded to questions, comments and concerns raised by Members. Mr. Fantini moved an amendment to delete "hereby sets a policy" and insert "reaffirms its support of". On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to adopt, as amended, **#07-205, Motion by Mayor Reeves** that the School Committee reaffirms its support of authorizing the Superintendent of schools to maintain school staffing as passed in the budget regardless of low enrollments, unless financial constraints prevent such action. Further, that any school facing cuts in middle school staff over the summer due to low enrollment be encouraged to take a year to plan for any programmatic changes that might be considered for the future. Further, that any school facing cuts in elementary staff over the summer be assured that no change in grade structure will be assumed. That is, a school with single grade structure will not be assumed to multi-grade, and vice-versa. Ms. Walser is recorded as voting NAY.

The Chair turned the meeting over to Superintendent Fowler-Finn who gave a summary of the security review. Mr. Maloney introduced Laurie and Ian Thompson, Vice Presidents of Standing Stone Consultants, Inc. who walked Members through their presentation: "CPS District-Wide Opportunities for Improvement":

Maximize existing assets ~ Bring in new resources ~ Limit vulnerabilities to threats

- Item #1 - Physical review of buildings with recommendations for policies and practices.
  - Neighborhoods
  - Perimeter
  - Grounds
  - Sign Strategy
  - Building Exteriors
  - Building Interiors
  - Technology
- Item #2 - Review existing policies and practices for student, staff and visitor admissions to buildings and provide recommendations.
- Item #3 - Review existing policies and practices and make recommendations regarding building use by outside parties including youth groups, neighborhood groups, church groups and other non-profit and for-profit entities.
- Item #4 - Review discipline infraction reporting and data collection systems utilized by schools and the Safety and Security Department and make recommendations including incidents that may or do require police notification.
- Item #5 - Review and recommend standards and training for all employees regarding safety and security practices, including opportunities for employee and student involvement.

- Item #6 - Review Emergency Management Plan Manual and make recommendations as needed.
- Item #7 - Review of Cambridge Public Schools Safety and Security Department as well as its relationship to the Cambridge Police Department, police officers assigned to the schools and the Cambridge Public Schools position of Conflict Mediator.

The Superintendent, Mr. Maloney, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns Members raised:

- Is there a sense of how this should be prioritized
- A big issue in terms of security is computers leaving buildings
- What are potential next steps
- Has high school security been built into the renovation project
- What are model practices that we are doing
- What are top vulnerabilities compared to other districts
- How do you get people to buy into the process
- How do we make sure buildings are secure
- What is the policy and practice of staff wearing ID badges
- We need to figure out how to deal with incidents within five minutes
- What are the pros and cons of having an open campus
- Where is there room for change in reporting incidents
- We shouldn't have to negotiate ID badges
- Mandating ID badges could interfere with identifying other issues
- Uniforms for students and teachers would be a battle in this district
- Parents unable to escort their children into classrooms will not work in this district
- Why is it suggested to restrict playground use
- Is the next step to go out to bid
- Are recommendations prioritized
- Is signage, etc. a brand for each school
- When should businesses be invited into schools
- Are parent rooms encouraged
- How do you control incidents from taking place in bathrooms
- Is using wireless cameras and sound recommended
- Should phones be answered by a person or a recording
- Does CCTV mean closed circuit television
- What is the purpose of using colored doors
- Was the contract to look at keeping computers in the building or keeping threats out

The Chair thanked the consultants for the report and turned the meeting over to the Superintendent.

Mr. Fantini in the Chair.

Maryann MacDonald, Executive Director and Barbara Van Sickle, Director, Student Achievement & Curriculum, walked Members through a PowerPoint presentation, "CPS District Improvement Plan", and responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns:

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

- Will longitudinal assessment allow us to use a growth model
- Does the visual and performing arts plan exist

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to suspend the Rules to extend the meeting to 10:20. Mr. Fantini is recorded as voting NAY.

- What is the process for informing parents regarding "Responsive Design"
- Have a competition for teachers to present curriculum ideas
- Do not find this data useful because tests are so poorly designed
- Broaden assessments of how we look at student work
- How frequently do Principals meet on Cambridge Leadership Network
- Where are we in terms of getting longitudinal data and what will it show us
- What does support of schools with AYP designations entail
- What is the Complementary Learning Task Force

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to suspend the Rules to extend the meeting 10 more minutes.

- What is meant by strengthening partnerships
- The Elmore project is a great foundation
- Our ability to fill slots at the Broad is non-existent
- Have not seen any progress in science partnerships or in middle schools

The Members thanked the Superintendent and staff for the presentation and congratulated the entire system on its achievement.

The Chair returned to the Agenda.

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

**#07-201, Consultant Agreements:** that the School Committee approve Consultant Agreements with the companies or individuals on the list, in the amounts set forth, funds to be provided as shown:

1. City Sprouts, Cambridge, in the amount of \$28,000.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 862148, prog. 148.
2. Princeton Review, New York, NY, in the amount of \$25,000.00, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 830250, prog. 250.

**#07-202, Grant Award:** that the School Committee accept and approve the Grant Award in the amount and for the period indicated:

Massachusetts Cultural Council, for the period July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008, in the amount of \$20,800.00, Project/Grant SC08789. This grant is the second year of a two-year grant. "Page-to-Stage" project in which students in grades 4-6 at two schools will learn the craft of playwriting through intensive workshops. Professional development in this model of enhancing literacy through drama will be available to teachers district-wide.

**CPS Target Population:** Approximately 200 students in grades 4-6 at the Baldwin and Haggerty School.

**Outcomes and Measurers of Effectiveness:** Participating students will improve their reading and writing skills and meet the State standards in drama in the ELA Frameworks.

**#07-203, Contract 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:

2 students	Bay Cove Human Services, 66 Canal St., Boston	\$122,959.04
1 student	Compass, Inc., 26 Sunnyside St., Jamaica Plain	48,667.89

1 student	Cotting School, 435 Concord Ave., Lexington	51,872.85
1 student	Gifford School, 177 Boston Post Rd., Weston	45,955.54
8 students	LABBB Collaborative, 281 Winter St., Suite 100, Waltham	387,436.00
4 students	Learning Prep School, PO Box 650205, Newton	107,673.72
5 students	The May Institute, PO Box 847240, Boston	404,889.93
2 students	SEEM Collaborative, 92 Montvale Ave., Suite 3500, Stoneham	161,574.94
2 students	Shore Collaborative (45 day program), 100 Revere Beach Pkwy., Chelsea	56,524.50
4 students	Shore Collaborative, 100 Revere Beach Pkwy., Chelsea	160,885.80
<u>1</u> student	St. Ann's Home, 100 Haverhill St., Methuen	<u>39,304.74</u>
31		\$1,587,744.95

**#07-204, Contract for Residential Program Services Not Available from the Cambridge School Department:** that the School Committee award contracts 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 by the General Fund Budget:

1 student	Boston Higashi School, 800 N. Main St., Randolph	\$141,467.25
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Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mayor Reeves YEA.

Ms. Nolan requested and received unanimous consent to withdraw **#07-209, Joint Motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Schuster** that the Superintendent report to the School Committee on the progress towards recycling in the school cafeterias, in terms of food and containers and trays. Further, that short and long-term goals for cafeteria recycling and the use of recyclable and environmentally friendly materials be developed and communicated.

Mr. Schuster requested and received unanimous consent to withdraw **#07-210, Motion by Mr. Schuster** that the Cambridge School Committee go on record in condemning the actions of the La Salle Parish School Board for expelling the Jena 6 and for encouraging District Attorney Reed Walters to overcharge them with attempted murder. Walters is the same attorney who represented the school during a January 26, 2007 school board meeting to reconsider unsuccessfully the district's decision to expel the 6 black students for participating in a schoolyard fight that was in response to a racial hate crime. The disciplinary investigation undertaken by the school and the criminal investigation of the incident have been virtually indistinguishable. The results of both investigations have reflected deep racial prejudices both within the La Salle School Board and the Louisiana criminal justice system. Public schools should be teaching young people to fight racism, not to perpetuate it.

Ms. Walser moved to place the remaining items on the Calendar:

**#07-200, City Council Order #O-50**, dated September 10, 2007.

**#07-206, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the Superintendent confer with the City Manager on the feasibility of establishing a grace period on street cleaning days for parking near schools for a period of 20 minutes prior to start time to 10 minutes after start time.

**#07-207, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the Superintendent report to the School Committee on programs and curriculum enhancements in support of academically advanced students in elementary school. Further, that the report include support provided to teachers in meeting the needs of students capable of above-grade-level work. Further, that whereas the No Child Left Behind performance measures effectively exclude advanced students from calculation of AYP, that the report include the district's goals for advanced students to ensure their educational needs are met.

**#07-208, Joint Motion by Mayor Reeves and Ms. Nolan** that Peabody Music Teacher Wendy Silverberg be invited to present the workshop she is giving at the NSBA meeting, "Music Instruction that Tips the Scales in Favor of Student Achievement", to the community of Cambridge, at a forum open to the public, sponsored by the Cambridge School Committee anytime after the NSBA Conference. This program of targeted instruction in music appears to have led to improvements in achievement for all students, and especially for low income and minority students.

**#07-211**, Report of the September 5, 2007, Achievement Gap Ad-Hoc Committee Meeting.

**#07-212**, Report of the September 6, 2007, Buildings and Grounds Sub-Committee Meeting.

#### **Late Orders**

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to send a letter to the City Manager thanking him for the work of his team on the high school renovation project.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adjourn (10:29 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee