

# **SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

## **(Official Report)**

### **Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 20, 2009**

Called for 6:00 p.m. in the Sullivan Chamber, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue.

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

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

Also Present: Student Representatives Arianne Berelowitch and Josiah Bonsey

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 Mr. McGovern, it was voted to accept the Minutes of the following meetings:

- Regular Meeting – October 6, 2009
- Special Informal Meeting – September 29, 2009
- Regular Meeting – September 22, 2009
- Special Informal Meeting – September 15, 2009

### **Public Comment**

There being no one signed up, on a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to close public comment.

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

Both Mr. Bonsey and Ms. Berelowitch spoke to the Middle School Report. They said that there is a lot of passion around the student body's being involved in the process before a final decision is made.

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

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

Members passed over Unfinished Business.

Mr. McGovern in the Chair

### **A. Presentations**

The Chair turned the meeting over to Maryann MacDonald, Student Achievement & Accountability Executive Director and Barbara Van Sickle, Student Achievement Director who walked Members through a presentation "MCAS and Adequate Yearly Progress Report (copy on file in the School Committee" office), including:

- MCAS Highlights

- MCAS Progress Over Time ELA
- MCAS Progress Over Time Math
- Percent Proficient/Advanced 2007-2009
- Achievement Gap Definition – “the difference between a student’s or subgroup’s performance and the goal of proficiency for all”
- Composite Performance Index (CPI) in ELA 2003-2014
- Composite Performance Index (CPI) in Math 2003-2014
- Percent Proficient/Advanced by Subgroups
  - African American/Black
  - Asian
  - Hispanic/Latino
  - White
  - Special Education
  - FLEP/LEP
  - Low Income
- Adequate Yearly Progress
  - District
  - CPS Schools
  - State Perspective
- Action Steps
  - Meeting the Needs of All Students

The Superintendent, Ms. MacDonald and Ms. Van Sickle responded to the following questions, comments and concerns:

- Why are 10<sup>th</sup> grade scores much higher than other grades
- What advice and recommendations should be given to families when they get their child’s report card
- What do we know is working and what is being done to insure that it is replicated
- What has CPSD’s experience been with the Minority Student Achievement Network - do we have any tangible strategies or success stories
- Is there anything we or other districts can do to gauge how middle school students are doing to help us be pro-active
- Are there demographic issues with students moving in and out of the district that prevent us from moving forward
- If we run data just on students who stay in Cambridge K-12, will the results be different
- Will we be introducing assessments at certain times that allow corrections to be made to instruction
- What are next steps to analyze the differences among schools
- Is MCAS measuring the right things and can we have a say in that conversation
- This is but one indication and it doesn’t represent everything that is going on in the classroom
- Is there a link between how well students do on MCAS and how well they do when they graduate
- What are we doing right now with students who are struggling
- What process will be used to prioritize work for subgroups that are most in need
- What are the strategies and next steps going forward on closing the achievement gap

Members thanked the Superintendent and staff for a well laid out and easy to read presentation.

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent and Mr. Grassi for the Middle Grades Project update.

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

Mr. Grassi reviewed the history of the Middle Grades Blue Ribbon Commission, gave an overview of the work done and its rationale for moving in a different direction.

Dr. Young said the work will be framed by the following five “Guiding Principles of Effective Middle Schools” identified by the Middle School Task Force, and that he is committed to developing a communication plan and connecting this work to the Commission on Middle School Education:

- Principles 1 & 2 - Rigorous and Engaging Curriculum; Research-based Instructional Practices
- Principle 3 – Staffing and Professional Development
- Principle 4 – Safe and Respectful School Culture
- Principle 5 – Strong Connections to Families and Community

Members raised the following questions and comments:

- The “Guiding Principles” should be K-12 goals
- Looking forward to moving forward and resolving the issues for this age group
- Provide a summary of meetings that were held
- This is one of the best pieces of work that has been done in a long time
- We should continually engage people and be as transparent as possible
- If this becomes K-8 versus middle school, it will become divisive
- How do we insure that the focus is on what we have here
- Hope the public will share what they see as best practice before a decision is made
- Stick to April as the goal for a thoughtful decision
- Do a random sampling of constituents (different from town hall meetings) to get public input
- Ask School Councils their feelings on middle schools
- What is the definition of “rigor”
- Define, develop and determine how we want to reach out to families who are not typically involved

The Members thanked Mr. Grassi and the Superintendent for the presentation.

The Chair entertained a motion to convene in Executive Session to discuss a Level III grievance and to discuss strategy for collective bargaining. On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Schuster, on the following roll call, it was voted to convene in Executive Session for the purposes stated:

Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mayor Simmons YEA. The Chair announced that the Committee will reconvene in Open Session.

### **Executive Session**

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

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

Also Present: Jeffrey Young, Superintendent  
Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent  
Barbara Allen, Executive Director, Human Resources  
James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer  
Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel  
Lenora Jennings, Education Liaison

The Chair turned the meeting over to Ms. MacFarlane who presented additional information regarding CTA grievance #14-08-09 heard on October 6. Members discussed the information with Legal Counsel. Mr. Schuster moved, seconded by Mr. McGovern, to adopt recommendation #WR09-285 to deny the grievance.

Ms. MacFarlane shared that she received a call from the CTA President regarding a tentative agreement with Unit E. Ms. MacFarlane suggested that the contract not be approved because there is a side letter that is still being worked out.

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Mr. Schuster, on the following roll call, it was voted to reconvene in Open Session: Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Nolan YEA, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Tauber YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mayor Simmons YEA.

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair reconvened the meeting and announced that votes taken in Executive Session will be adopted and ratified at the next Regular Meeting of the School Committee. The Chair returned to the Agenda.

## **New Business**

### **A. Action Items**

Ms. Nolan moved, seconded by Mr. McGovern, for adoption of #09-449 through #09-466. Mr. McGovern removed #09-457 and #09-463. Ms. Nolan removed #09-458. Ms. Tauber removed #09-462. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted or referred to a second reading:

**#09-449, Approval of the School Committee Policy Manual:** that the School Committee approve the School Committee Policy Manual as detailed in WR09-284(1) (first reading).

**#09-450, Approval of Revisions to the Cambridge Public Schools Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Policy:** that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Cambridge Public Schools Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Policy as detailed in the document (second reading).

**#09-451, Approval of Revisions to the Cambridge Public Schools Non-Discrimination Policy and Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment:** that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Cambridge Public Schools Non-Discrimination Policy and Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment as detailed in the document (second reading).

**#09-452, Approval of Revisions to the Cambridge Public Schools Equal Employment Opportunity Policy:** that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Cambridge Public Schools Equal Employment Opportunity Policy (second reading).

**#09-453, Approval of Revisions to the Cambridge Public Schools Rights and Responsibilities Handbook:** that the School Committee approve revisions to the Cambridge Public Schools Rights and Responsibilities Handbook as detailed in the document (second reading).

**#09-454, Approval of Revisions to the Patriotic Exercises Instruction Policy:** that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Patriotic Exercises Instruction Policy as detailed in the document (second reading).

**#09-455, Approval of Revisions to the School Ceremonies and Observances Policy:** that the School Committee approve the revisions to the School Ceremonies and Observances Policy as detailed in the document (second reading).

**#09-456, Approval of Revisions to the Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco and Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco/Family Life/Sex Education Policies:** that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco and Teaching About Drugs, Alcohol, and Tobacco/Family Life/Sex Education Policies as detailed in the document (second reading).

**#09-459, Contract Award:** that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Professional Development, funds to be provided from the Grant Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

1. Education Development Center, 55 Chapel St., Newton, for the period September 1, 2009 to August 30, 2010, in the amount of \$27,900.00.

**#09-460, Grant Award:** that the School Committee accept and approve the following grant award in the amount and for the period indicated:

1. Cambridge Rotary Club, for the period July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010, in the amount of \$200.00, project/grant SC10847.

**Description:** This grant will support the purchase of additional Alpha Smarts (voice technology) to support the acquisition of literacy skills for Special Education students in grades 5 and 6 at the Martin Luther King, Jr. School.

**CPS Target Population:** 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students with IEPs at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School.

**Outcomes and Measures of Effectiveness:** Through the use of such non-standard resources as Alpha Smarts, Special Education students are able to successfully complete classroom assignments and have additional means by which to access the general education curriculum.

**#09-461, Joint motion by Mr. Grassi and Mr. Schuster** that the School Committee schedule an informal roundtable meeting in a comfortable setting by November 10, 2009 to discuss alternate placement algorithm options with MIT Economics professor Parag Pathak.

**#09-464, Motion by Ms. Nolan** that the Cambridge School Committee nominate CitySprouts for a Magna 2010 award from the National School Boards Association.

**#09-465, October 6, 2009 letter from City Manager Robert W. Healy** forwarding City Council Order No. 23, dated October 5, 2009, requesting the City manager to direct the Assistant City Manager for Human Services to work with the Superintendent of Schools to develop an action plan action plan by December 14, 2009 for the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Middle School Youth Report.

**#09-466, Report of the October 8, 2009 meeting of the Data Sub-Committee:**

Called for the purpose of discussing a new version of the Student Data Report.

Members Present: Ms. Nolan

Also Present: Deputy Superintendent Carolyn L. Turk, Executive Director of Student Achievement & Curriculum Maryann MacDonald, Director of Student Achievement & Curriculum Barbara Van Sickle, Education Liaison Lenora Jennings, NAACP Representative Ruby Pierce

The meeting was not convened for lack of a quorum. Informal discussion took place around a confidential draft for a student data report.

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

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

### Non-Consent Agenda

Ms. Nolan asked why there are negative balances in items #09-457 and #09-458. The Superintendent and Ms. Spinner, Chief Financial Officer, were heard. Ms. Spinner reported that there was a reduction in circuit breaker funds and we are trying to close the overall budget gap by applying for IDEA and ARRA grants to offset this reduction. On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Fantini, on the following roll call it was voted to adopt **#09-457, Contracts for Day Program Services not Available from the Cambridge Public Schools**: 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	Bay Cove Human Services, 66 Canal St., Boston	\$62,998.06
1 student	Beacon High School, 917 Belmont St., Watertown	44,629.78
3 students	Boston College Campus, Campion Hall, Room 197, Chestnut Hill	206,605.05
4 students	The Carroll School, 25 Baker Bridge Rd., Lincoln	130,990.88
1 student	EDCO Collaborative, 281 Winter St., Waltham	149,040.00
1 student	The Education Cooperative, PO Box 186, 1112 High St., Dedham	36,363.00
1 student	Easter Seal Society of NH, 555 Auburn St., Manchester, NH	99,196.05
2 students	Farr Academy, 71 Pearl St., Cambridge	118,052.98
1 student	Germaine Lawrence, Inc., 18 Claremont Ave., Arlington	81,690.65
1 student	Home for Little Wanderers, 271 Huntington Ave., Boston	67,813.35
2 students	The Italian Home for Children, 1125 Center St., Jamaica Plain	107,952.38
1 student	Justice Resource Institute, 545 Boylston St., Boston	87,261.48
1 student	Learning Center for the Deaf, 848 Central St., Framingham	40,184.43
1 student	CNS Pathways Academy (McLean Hospital), 115 Mill St., Belmont	88,883.17
1 student	League School, 300 Boston Providence Turnpike, Walpole	58,336.50
1 student	Merrimack Educational Collaborative, 101 Mill Rd., Chelmsford	43,738.20
1 student	New England Center for Children, 33 Turnpike Rd., Southboro	92,290.88
2 students	New England Academy, 500 Cumming Center, Suite 1100, Beverly	109,166.90

1 student	New England Pediatric Nursing Home, 78 Boston Rd., North Billerica	52,695.71
1 student	SEEM Collaborative, 92 Montvale Ave., Suite 3500, Stoneham	38,734.44
<u>28 students</u>		<u>\$1,716,623.89</u>

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

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to suspend the Rules to grant Mr. Grassi unanimous consent to be recorded in the affirmative on votes previously taken.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to suspend the Rules to grant Mr. Fantini unanimous consent to be recorded in the affirmative on votes previously taken.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Schuster, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#09-458, 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	Amego, Inc., 115 Plymouth St., Mansfield	\$203,348.28
<u>1 student</u> 2 students	Chapel Haven, Inc., 1040 Whalley Ave., Westville, CT	<u>52,305.00</u> \$255,653.28

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

**#09-462 Joint motion by Mr. Grassi and Mayor Simmons** that the School Committee consider raising its policy goal for the composition of minority teachers and administrators from 25% to 30%. Ms. Tauber moved to refer the motion to the Superintendent for information on how this change will impact work. Mr. Grassi moved an amendment to be removed as a co-sponsor of the motion. Mayor Simmons was heard in support of the motion. Discussion took place around the motion and the Affirmative Action Settlement Agreement. The Superintendent was heard. Mr. Grassi moved to Calendar the motion.

Mr. McGovern and Ms. Nolan, Budget Co-Chairs, were heard and the "Guiding Principles" draft will be sent to Members within the next few days. The Superintendent was heard. On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to adopt **#09-463, Joint motion by Mr. McGovern and Ms. Nolan** that the School Committee approve the timeline for the development of the FY2010-2011 budget.

#### Late Orders

On a motion by Mr. McGovern, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to cancel the November 3, 2009 Regular Meeting due to Election Day.

Mr. Fantini moved that policies regarding fund-raising be referred to the Superintendent. Dr. Turk said that the Principals voiced concern over the fund-raising policies. Mayor Simmons moved a friendly amendment that "the Superintendent take the necessary steps to update and inform Principals of the current and proper practices under the fund-raising policies recently adopted; and further, submit

revisions, as necessary, to the School Committee". On a voice vote, Mr. Fantini's motion was accepted as amended.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to suspend the Rules to hear announcements and other relevant information.

Ms. Nolan announced that there is a public event for Geoffrey Canada at 6:00 in Memorial Chapel at Harvard. There is also a private event and Members who are interested in attending should let the Secretary know.

Mayor Simmons announced that the City Council is piloting a "Baby College" in two schools. Discussion took place around which schools will "Baby College" be piloted and whether the School Department will be involved. The Superintendent was heard. Mayor Simmons will invite Councillor Reeves to give a presentation regarding the pilot program.

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Grassi, for adjournment. On a motion by Mayor Simmons, on the following roll call, the motion to adjourn **failed of adoption**: Mr. McGovern NAY, Ms. Nolan NAY, Mr. Schuster YEA, Ms. Tauber NAY, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mayor Simmons NAY.

Mayor Simmons announced the opening of the new library and encouraged everyone to attend.

Mayor Simmons announced that the City Council passed a motion appointing staff to look at the Haggerty School playground. She asked the Superintendent to direct a staff member to be actively involved in the process and report back to the School Committee on the progress.

On a motion by Ms. Tauber, seconded by Mr. McGovern, it was voted to adjourn (9:00 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee