

# SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## (Official Report)

### Special Meeting

Tuesday, June 19, 2007

Called by order of his Honor, Mayor Kenneth E. Reeves, acting in accordance with Chapter I, Section 3 of the Rules of the School Committee, for 4:00 p.m. for the purpose of an update on CRLS, a presentation on the results of the Human Rights Commission's Discrimination Survey, and any other business that may properly come before the Committee.

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 4:15 p.m.

The Chair welcomed Crew Head Coach Dale Wickenheiser and a crew member. Coach Wickenheiser thanked the School Committee for its support and presented first place trophies won at the State Championship, a dual meet with Boston Latin and the Harvard-Yale meet. Members congratulated Coach Wickenheiser and the crew team on a very successful season.

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent, Principal Saheed and Assistant Principal Tynes. Dr. Saheed said that the state of the high school is strong and getting stronger and provided an update on the following:

1. Colleges/Universities CRLS Students Plan to Attend in the Fall of 2007
2. Breakout of Post Graduate Plans by Number and Percent
3. MCAS & Course Credit Data as of June 1, 2007
4. MCAS & Course Credit Data Comparisons:
  - March/June 2004
  - March/June 2007
5. Percentage of CRLS Students Who Participated in an Extracurricular Activity During SY2006/07
6. Instructional Support Coach Responsibilities SY2007/08

Dr. Saheed also shared plans to:

- Increase rigor
- Measure learning expectations and reporting progress
- Provide an opportunity for an advisory period
- Move toward collaborative teaching
- Hire new music teacher, coaches, service learning intern
- Increase attendance rate
- Continue to improve school climate
- Allow students to have hats, iPods, cell phones
- Increase AVID to 129 students in grades 9-12 with four teachers in seven sections

Members raised the following questions, comments and concerns:

- What is the percentage of the 11 Juniors who need course credit
- Does student participation at the MIT picnic qualify as an extracurricular activity
- Is there any updated information on the class of '06

- How often does the National Clearing House get information and what kind of reports can we get from them
- Are instructional support coaches in the spirit of professional learning communities
- Are coaches full time – how do they evaluate
- How do we know the coaches are good and giving the right feedback
- Does part-time community service or work count as extracurricular activity
- Has there been any discussion around changing school start time
- How do we view the fact that there are 60 students in two-year colleges
- How is summer school evolving
- What is the rising program for 9<sup>th</sup> graders
- Is the Connect-Ed call being made by a CRLS person
- Will there be a freshman boot camp
- How is behavior, teacher quality, and teaching to the test being dealt with
- Will connections with 9<sup>th</sup> graders be made during the summer
- Are virtual high school courses going according to plan
- Will incomplete grades turn into failures and who grants the incomplete
- In what direction is the history department going in regard to MCAS
- Like the way students have been involved in decision-making at CRLS
- Are Learning Communities developing different identities
- Many good things have occurred during Chris Saheed's tenure as Principal
- What is the breakdown of who is in Clubs
- What is our involvement with the Broad Institute
- There is something the matter with the smallness of the choir – contact Calvin Hicks at the N.E. Conservatory
- How can we get hooked up with celebrities who visit Cambridge
- Are the Friends of CRLS interested in music
- What is the hat policy in colleges
- It is tragic that we did not send one student to MIT, Howard, Fisk, Morehouse, Spelman
- Was there a Black College Tour this year
- There is something about logistics that deter Blacks and poor students from enrolling in college
- How many positions have been reallocated – were they reallocated in the budget
- Insure that we think of ways to connect the 50 students who have not indicated what they will be doing after graduation with jobs, etc.
- Are there any strategies to connect transitioning students to CRLS
- What are goals for incoming students to participate in extracurricular activities – how will Advisory be part of the participation
- Will Advisory program take place in every home room
- Would like to see more depth in reports, i.e., more numbers in terms of AP classes, class cuts, MCAS data, improvements and challenges
- What is the process re hats, iPods, phones – is it policy or procedure
- There are many questions that come with wearing hats, using cell phones and iPods
- Does the Student Handbook come before the School Committee
- Are there issues of course sequencing
- What are some of the challenges with curriculum and the bridging with elementary schools
- Does the District look at elementary school trends
- Is the Office of Student Achievement and Accountability involved in the review of elementary schools
- What is the summer reading requirement
- There is a lot of thought behind what is being done at the high school
- Is coaching going to be seen as a collaboration between teacher and coach
- How will the goal of coaching be defined
- Has any thought been given to the format of the parent/teacher conferences
- Pleased with what is being heard about the high school
- How does the special education co-teaching model work

Mr. Fantini in the Chair

- Where are we regarding the safety/security issues at the high school
- Is staff in a position to focus on teaching and learning rather than on discipline
- What is the process for responding to questions and issues raised by students
- Are there particular issues that ELL students face and how will we support them
- Teachers being out of the classroom for professional development is an issue
- Will students be issued IDs
- Give some thought to having students graduate from RSTA

The Members and Chair thanked staff for the presentation and asked that the School Committee be kept informed of issues at CRLS.

The Chair declared a two-minute recess.

Mayor Reeves in the Chair.

The time for recess having expired, the Chair reconvened the meeting. Marla Erlen, Chair, Human Rights Commission, along with Bill Donovan, presented an overview of the CRLS student survey conducted by the Cambridge Human Rights Commission in June 2006, entitled "Students Speak Out About Discrimination in Cambridge". Discussion took place around the survey results and the subsequent forum that was held. Mr. Donovan asked the School Committee to hire a Diversity Coordinator, create a partnership with the Human Rights Commission in accordance with the City Ordinance By-Laws, and draft a report with recommendations to help the Commission enact programs. Members said they did not think this was the way to proceed and asked Attorney MacFarlane to look into the City Ordinance.

Members raised the following questions, comments and concerns:

- Forum provided a fruitful conversation
- If we are going to talk about diversity, all stakeholders should be at the table
- How do we make more opportunities for students to meet police officers
- How does this relate to Humanities curriculum
- This issue is bigger than what the School Committee can do – need to find the constituency to lead this
- Give this report to new Police Commissioner Haas
- Segregation in elementary schools is disturbing
- The Orfield report is very different from this survey
- We practice what we preach and do a good job at it
- We are working triple time to erase inequities

The Superintendent will share the survey results with the Principal group. The Chair thanked Ms. Erlen and Mr. Donovan for the presentation.

Mr. Fantini moved suspension of the Rules to bring in the following motion: that the position of Academic Internship be deleted from the CRLS FY07-08 budget. Ms. Walser moved to Calendar the motion. Mr. Fantini raised a question on whether the motion could be put on the Calendar since we are under suspension of the Rules. Attorney MacFarlane said that the meeting is still operating under Rules - suspension is only to take an item out of order. The motion is placed on the Calendar.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Schuster, it was voted to adjourn (10:05 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee