

# SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## (Official Report)

**Special Informal Meeting**

**Tuesday, June 10, 2008**

Called by order of Her Honor, Mayor E. Denise Simmons, acting in accordance with Chapter I, Section 3.2, of the Rules of the School Committee, for the purpose of a roundtable discussion on data.

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

Mayor Simmons in the Chair

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. Discussion took place around the following Agenda:

- What data does the district currently report to the school committee?
- Creating a template for presentations for the school community
- How can we present data in an easy-to-read, accessible format for the public?
  - Review of samples of data reports and informational brochures from other districts
  - Report on district's plan with E-Scholar
- Next Steps

The following questions, comments and concerns were raised:

- What is the difference between data and statistics
- Data has no meaning until it is turned into information
- Central Administration struggles to insure reports are factual and that they do not compare schools
- What is data going to be used for
- Need data not only for School Committee but also for school Principals
- There needs to be data experts at every school
- Data should uncover areas that are weak
- The School Committee gets data after the fact
- Need to see what is happening at individual schools
- Worse position a School Committee can be in is to point fingers at the administration
- Want to see data for every classroom in every school and want to see what data we are not providing
- It is critical that data being received aligns with our goals
- Need data that will build credibility – one stop shopping for School Committee and public
- Data needs to correlate with what is being published by the State
- Important that data does inform teaching and learning
- Be clear about who we compare ourselves to
- Need to know what is working and what has worked
- We are setting ourselves up if we believe that the data will tell us what to do
- Do we want to continue to use the term “achievement gap”
- Format: strengths, weaknesses, action plan
- Get picture of student performance by school and monitor that performance
- Identify what schools are closing the achievement gap and replicate it at other schools
- If certain programs are not working, look at other models
- Look at how better to tell our story
- Lexington talks about its achievement gap with a Power Point presentation and a plan
- Need interim reports every six weeks to know if our programs are working
- Need to decide what data is wanted and how it should be presented
- Data needs to be efficient for everybody – insure there is enough time for teachers to teach
- Goal #1 is talking about two different things

- If we are going to close the achievement gap, the lower group needs to advance faster
- If top group ceilings out, the lower group will advance faster
- Maybe we only need quarterly reports
- Interpretation of data will always be different
- Differentiate between what is needed in the classroom and what the School Committee needs
- Would like the School Committee to work with Administration to identify weathervane information

Mr. McGovern in the Chair

- There is no data when it comes to discipline or report cards
- Reading Recovery is instructionally effective – is it cost effective
- Testing students weekly will not happen here

Mayor Simmons in the Chair

- Are we going to change the goals
- What is the difference between using CPI or proficient/advanced
- It would be helpful to compare ourselves to other schools
- Attitudes and beliefs are important – they should be reinforced
- Need to know what Superintendent is doing in lower performing schools
- Is the Benchmark report for the District or for the schools
- Template suggestions:
  - Introduction, Purpose, Summary, Future Steps, Major Points and Highlights, Trends, Longitudinal Data, Consistency, Demographics
  - How are we Doing, What are the Trends, Current Resources, Costs, Expectations and Goals, Recommendations, How School Committee Can Help
  - Strengths, Weaknesses, Action Steps/Goals
  - Power Point Presentation, Executive Summary
- Warehouse Data:
  - Important that whatever product we use is getting down into the classroom
  - Can Test Whiz be done by subgroups
  - Does Test Whiz dump into data warehouse
  - How long have we used E-Scholar
  - Do not add another program that is incompatible
- Next Steps:
  - Formalize Ad-hoc Committee work on suggested changes to schedule
  - Work on presentation template
  - Develop student data report that is different from Benchmarks focusing on achievement gap measures and comparison districts – insert version of information other districts use
  - Members write one-page comments for Ad-hoc Committee
  - Develop Individual Success Plan with plan for goals for next year

The Chair thanked Members and staff for their participation.

On a motion by Mr. Schuster, seconded by Mr. Fantini, the meeting adjourned (8:03 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee