

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Special Informal Meeting

Friday, September 7, 2007

Called in accordance with Chapter I, Section 3, of the Rules of the School Committee for the purpose of a roundtable to discuss the Controlled Choice Plan and the workings of the law and school practices.

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

Also Present: Barbara Allen, Executive Director Human Resources; John Clifford, Educational Liaison; James Conry, Chief Financial Officer; Christine Fisher, Director, Family Resource Center; Thomas Fowler-Finn, Superintendent; Maryann MacDonald, Executive Director, Student Achievement & Accountability; Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel; James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer; Justin Martin, Director, Public Information; Aida Ramos, Executive Director, Office of Special Education; Maree Sneed, Esq.; Barbara Van Sickle, Deputy Director, Student Achievement & Curriculum.

The Superintendent introduced Attorney Maree Sneed who gave an overview of the Supreme Court's decision on race-based school assignments. She said that we can keep doing what we are doing in terms of the big picture, and responded to some of the following questions, comments and concerns:

- Is there any movement to address the issue by merging districts
- Will the decision impact the METCO Program
- How do we deal with SES when there is still racial diversity
- At what point should we be concerned
- Do lower income families choose neighborhood schools in greater proportion
- Should we draw attendance lines
- What is the possibility of guaranteeing residency seats
- What is the impact on the system of open seats
- Holding seats has not contributed to diversity
- What have other districts done at the middle school level
- Where do we go from here
- Is +/- based on who is in our schools or who wants to get into our schools
- How are other districts basing +/-
- We need to talk about what happens in the middle grades

The Members and the Superintendent thanked Attorney Sneed for her guidance.

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee