

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

October 6, 2015

Called for 6:00 PM in the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of discussing any and all business that may properly come before the Committee.

Members Present: Ms. Cronin, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding (ABSENT), Ms. Kelly, Ms. Nolan, Mr. Osborne (ABSENT), Mayor Maher

Also Present: Student School Committee Members: Griffin Andres and Ben Austin

Mayor Maher in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:13 PM.

1. Public Comment:

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Ms. Nolan, to suspend the Rules to allow members of the public to speak on items not on the Agenda. It was voted to suspend the Rules to allow the following people to speak:

- Michael Zuercher, Chestnut St., Lynnfield, CRLS RSTA culinary arts teacher, understanding that this is a bargaining issue, he asked the Committee to consider allowing the children of non-resident teachers to enroll in the Cambridge Public Schools; he distributed a hand-out listing surrounding school districts which allow the children of non-resident teachers to attend their schools (on file in the SC Office)
- Ariel Maloney, Reed St., Cambridge, CRLS English teacher, she asked the Committee to consider allowing the children of non-resident teachers to enroll in the Cambridge Public Schools; she noted that even with two teachers' salaries, it would be unlikely that she and her husband could afford a house in Cambridge
- Dacia Antunes, Arlington St., Medford, CRLS RSTA media technology teacher, she asked the Committee to consider allowing the children of non-resident teachers to enroll in the Cambridge Public Schools; she also noted that she represents a larger body of colleagues who have the same desire for their children to attend Cambridge Public Schools
- Charlotte Rosenblum, Richdale Ave., Cambridge, 11th grader at CRLS, re dress code policy specifically for female students; she distributed her written statement (on file in the SC Office)

Mr. Harding joined the meeting (6:24 PM).

On a motion by Ms. Kelly, seconded by Ms. Cronin, it was voted to close public comment.

The Chair returned to the regular order of business.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Mr. Austin reported the following:

- During their last Student Government meeting, the following issues were discussed:

- How students would be elected to student government in the future; looking towards the possibility of using proportional representation
- Dress code
- Curriculum – one English grade 9 class being significantly more difficult than another
- Homecoming game is next Friday
- Homecoming dance is the day before Halloween
- College Fair is tomorrow
- At Senior class meeting today – they discussed Mr. Fantini's motion for CRLS graduation to be held outside in front of library

Mr. Andres reported the following:

- He noted that during their last Student Government meeting, they also talked about addressing the achievement gap at CRLS with the idea of opening up more freshman classes to the honors option
- Club day was last week and was very successful with 35 clubs coming forward

Dr. Young asked Mr. Austin to elaborate more on which group perceived it was unfair that their grade 9 English class had a different level of difficulty than another of the same level. Mr. Austin responded that both groups felt it was unfair. Dr. Young also asked if there are discrepancies about the work assigned or grades given? Mr. Austin responded that students do feel that is the case. Mr. Austin indicated that he has some survey information which he would send to the Superintendent.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval: None

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar: None

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7. Superintendent's Agenda:

7a. Presentations: None

7b. Innovation Agenda:

7c. Consent Agenda:

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Kelly, it was voted to bring forward items **#15-240 through #15-242** for discussion and adoption. Ms. Nolan removed **#15-240**. On the following roll call, items **#15-241 and #15-242** were adopted: Ms. Kelly YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Mr. Osborne ABSENT; Ms. Cronin YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mr. Harding YEA; Mayor Maher YEA

#15-241, Approval of Gifts to the Cambridge Public Schools, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the following gifts and receipts as described.

1. \$1,511.64 to the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School made from Friends of CRLS. Funds will support the school's Unsung Heroes Program recognizing student accomplishments in scholastic achievement, attendance, citizenship, athletics and/or leadership.
2. \$446.93 to the Kennedy-Longfellow School made from Recycle That, LLC, in return for items collected in the school's clothing/book collection box. Funds will be used for the general support of the school.

#15-242, Grant Award, that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY 16 Circuit Breaker Allocation, for the period September 29, 2015 to June 30, 2017, in the amount of \$3,949,668.00. Project/Grant SC16776.

Description: The state's Special Education Circuit Breaker program, managed as a grant, reimburses local school districts for a portion of their costs of educating high-needs special education students. The state aims to reimburse, subject to budget appropriation, 75% of district costs in excess of four times the state average foundation budget per pupil as calculated under state law. The Circuit Breaker budget in any given year reflects the district's reimbursement for prior year expenses. All Circuit Breaker funds are budgeted for tuition.

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

#15-240, Approval of Revisions to the Controlled Choice Policy,

1. That effective with the 2016-17 school year, the School Committee restore the +/-10% SES band for assigning students to grades K-8.
2. That effective with the 2016-17 school year, the School Committee restore the calculation of student socio economic status to capacity of a school's grade rather than the actual enrollment of the grade.
3. That effective with the 2016-17 school year Kindergarten Lottery, the School Committee raise the cap on the Kindergarten age students at a school to a number equal to no more than the number of seats in a school's first grade plus two.
4. That effective with the 2016-17 school Kindergarten Lottery, the School Committee restore the 3 year average SES of JK/K enrollment when calculating the SES ratio for Kindergarten Lotteries (second reading).

Ms. Nolan moved to amend #2 of the revisions to the Controlled Choice Policy to make it effective immediately or as soon as practical. Mr. Maloney was asked what the impact would be if we applied it this year. Mr. Maloney responded that he didn't think it would be difficult to make it effective now but as a rule, the general belief is to not make any changes mid-year noting that there is always the chance of unintended consequences. Ms. Nolan's motion to amend #2 of the revisions to the Controlled Choice Policy was not seconded.

9. School Committee Agenda (Policy Matters/Notifications/Requests for Information):

Ms. Nolan moved, seconded by Mr. Harding the adoption of **#15-243**, Report of the Meeting of the September 25, 2015 Ad Hoc Sub-Committee/Task Force on Norms and Goals. On a voice vote, the following Report was accepted as presented:

**AD HOC Sub-Committee/Task Force
on Norms and Goals
September 25, 2015
9:00-11:00 AM**

Called for the purpose of discussing the formation of a set of Norms for the School Committee and School Department.

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Chair; Ms. Kelly, Ms. Cronin

Also Present: Dr. Huizenga, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Ms. Likis, Chief Planning Officer; Ms. MacDonald, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education; and Ms. Mallon, Education Liaison for the Mayor

Mr. Fantini and Dr. Huizenga Co-Chairs

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

Dr. Huizenga thanked everyone for the work done on the draft norms so far and explained the agenda for today will be to identify Next Steps and a Timeline and working together as a group, finalize the norms from drafts to operating norms. The norm for the day is if you wonder it, ask it. Everyone looked over the

handout from Ms. Mallon's Statement of Intent. Mr. Fantini's resources were shared with the members regarding norms used in Taunton and the book Building Relationships, Yielding Results by Julie L. Hackett. Taunton has 5 or 6 norms for each category. In an effort to discern if Taunton's norms have anything useful that may be missing from Cambridge norms, the members read through all of Taunton's norms, section by section. It was also noted, in the book, there is a self assessment for each section. The members began with the section:

How we Communicate: The conversations covered the following points:

- Ms. Cronin thought Norm #1 was interesting and is not in our norms. The members acknowledged they talked about tone although nothing is in writing
- Dr. Huizenga raised the importance of maintaining confidentiality
- Ms. McDonald liked the section on the responsibility to set a positive tone
- Ms. Likis stated some of Taunton's norms are operational and not norms or beliefs
- It was agreed to add the first sentence of norm #2, putting the School Committee in front of Superintendent. *"The School Committee and the Superintendent recognize the importance of proactive communication and agree that there will be no surprises."* The members agreed to merge this sentence with what they already have
- Norms #3 and #4 were not useful
- The members decided to keep norm #5 since it closely resembled what they already have
- Ms. Kelly stated she feels norm #6 should be in governance rather than communication as it relates to sub-committee chair
- Ms. Mallon asked whether #6 (chain of command) worked under Dr. Fowler Finn, Ms. McDonald answered it was a good intent, however, Cabinet Members did not feel empowered to speak to School Committee Members. Dr. Huizenga mentioned a point of the leadership style under Mary Lou McGrath wherein Cabinet and School Committee were matched up with contact people – ensuring everyone always had someone to talk to. After more discussion it was agreed to include #6 in the norms, emphasizing the last sentence *"every member will have access to information"*
- Norm #7 was not understood and the consensus was that it was more operational than anything
- Norm #8 was liked by all
- Since Norm #1, #6 and #8 will be added it was agreed Taunton Public Schools need to be credited. Ms. Mallon summarized How we Communicate norm by going down Cambridge list and merging Taunton list together

The members looked at the section:

How we Govern: There was a discussion on the following issues, concerns and questions with an extensive conversation about sub-committees covering the following points:

- Norm #1 is already in our statement of intent
- Norm #2 should be added to what we already have. Ms. Mallon read the rewriting of #2, and the result was *"The School Committee as a whole is a policy making body and members are elected to represent the entire Cambridge Community. The powers of the School Committee are granted to the Committee of the Whole when a quorum exists, and not to individual members"*
- Norms #3, #4 and #5 were operational, although #5 (subcommittees) was liked by all
- It was agreed that there should be a sub-committee norm
- It was brought up that we need to further clarify the function of sub-committees
- Ms. Kelly stated it is a serious responsibility to be a member of a sub-committee
- Ms. Likis suggested "School Committee Members agree to treat their membership and participation in sub-committees with the same respect, gravity and weight as their participation in the Committee of the Whole", exact language will be nailed down later
- Mr. Fantini brought attention the first sentence of #4 *"We acknowledge the importance of sub-committees, and we agree to utilize them to focus on a specific topic in-depth and to prepare for presentation, deliberation, and possible action by the full School Committee as a Whole"*
- Ms. Mallon read the wording using Taunton and Cambridge combined: *"We acknowledge the importance of subcommittees, (then insert ours)"and we agree to treat membership and*

participation with the same gravity and weight as the Committee as a Whole. We agree to utilize sub-committees to focus on a specific topic in-depth and to prepare for presentation, deliberation and possible action by the full School Committee”

- A question was asked about fact finding in sub-committees
- Add something that says sub-committees will not usurp the authority of the whole
- Can a sub-committee create a motion to be brought to the Committee of the Whole for adoption or should it just be fact finding that leans toward a recommendation.
- Dr. Huizenga asked what is the difference between coming together in a sub-committee, having a deliberation to establish a motion, verses random three Members getting together on the phone and agreeing to a joint motion or recommendation
- It was mentioned this has been a great conversation on how to operationalize sub-committees instead of using them as a dumping ground
- Committee of the Whole chain of command or protocol
- It has been noted a quorum is 4 out of 7 for the Committee of the Whole and 2 out of 3 for Sub-Committees
- What is the purpose of the School Committee referring a subject to a Sub-Committee
- Joint leadership will help frame the work of the sub-committees better. Ms. Likis brought up some sub-committees are run just like a Regular Meeting wherein you cannot speak unless allowed to by the Sub-Committee Chair as public comment. They will look at the rules on that issue

The members looked at the section:

How we Improve: In the same manner as Communicate and Govern, Taunton’s norms on How we Improve were read. A discussion with questions and concerns covered the following points:

- Norm #1 from Taunton was examined and it was agreed that currently we use the time together for judgment and decision making, and we do not do professional growth and development
- Mr. Fantini suggested Cabinet members come to National School Board conventions
- Relational Growth vs. Professional Growth being merged together can be a good conversation
- Members agree to recognize joint relationship growth
- Relationships come from working together
- Norms #2 and # 3 are operational
- Ms. Cronin had a question about evaluations. Are there any norms on it
- It was agreed to include *“School Committee is committed to implementing an ongoing norm monitoring process and annual self assessment”*
- The annual Superintendent Evaluation is a responsibility of the School Committee of the Whole and shall represent the composite of all Members feedback
- Citing question: Taunton Public Schools and Julie Hackett. Do we do a generic citing indication
- Since our source was Taunton Public Schools Website, we will cite. *“With special thanks and appreciation to the Taunton Public Schools for granting permission.”* Ms. McDonald will contact Taunton and get their permission
- It was agreed norms #1 and #5 be included
- Norm #5 was mentioned as something that should be part of Cambridge norms. *“We recognize the importance of honoring our agreed-upon norms and beliefs, and we agree to take responsibility for reminding one another when we get off track”*

Since there is no time to go through Next Steps and Timeline, it was agreed that there will be another meeting. On part 2 of the agenda, under 3 questions to consider: Dr. Huizenga wants to add “What would it look like and sound like” to question #1.

Ms. Likis stated we will do individual outreach. Why? Feedback, recommendations or discussions?

Identifying Next Steps: The Ping Pong Protocol

Step 1: Pose the Question

Step 2: Write (5 minutes) about question 1, then 2 etc.

- Step 3: Share reflection (10 mins)
- Step 4: Ask probing questions
- Step 5: Synthesize reflections on chart
- Step 6: Full group share out & development of next steps

Groups

- Group 1: Ms. Kelly, Ms. Likis, Ms. Mallon
- Group 2: Mr. Fantini, Ms. Cronin and Ms. MacDonald

The question was raised on how to present the draft to the Members and Cabinet once it is completed. The following issues and concerns were raised:

- Will there be a Roundtable discussion to present the draft to the full board
- Will there be individual outreach to members to present the draft for feedback
- Will feedback lead to multiple revisions and edits
- Present the draft for discussion and submit as a recommendation to be voted on
- Present the norms at a 1 hour workshop for Cabinet and Members before a Regular Meeting
- Regroup if there are significant disagreements
- How to engage with the Superintendent
- How to deal with the Cabinet
- Mr. Fantini meet with the Mayor and the Superintendent to go over the draft norms for feedback, then all come together

The next Ad Hoc meeting will be scheduled after Mr. Fantini meets with the Mayor and the Superintendent.

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 AM.

Dosha Beard
Confidential Secretary.

Distributed Documents (on file in the School Committee office)

Agenda
Taunton Public School –Norms and Beliefs
TPS Norms and Beliefs Self – and Group - Assessment

10. Resolutions: None

11. Announcements:

Mayor Maher acknowledged Earl Wiman, NEA Executive Committee Member, who was in the audience tonight. He is in Cambridge to visit our high school and attend the School Committee candidate debate/forum tomorrow evening.

Ms. Nolan noted that the families of the King School and Putnam Ave. Upper School have been informed about the schedule for moving into the new building. She asked if the information could be announced for the public at this meeting.

Mr. Maloney responded and shared the following information:

Putnam Ave. Upper School Students

December 11th-13th, moving company will begin moving crates into the new building throughout the weekend.

- December 14th-16th, students will remain at 158 Spring St for regular classroom learning and special activities. Teachers will work on a rotating schedule to move between classroom setup at 100 Putnam Ave and teaching regular lessons at 158 Spring Street.
- December 17th, first day of school for middle school students at the new building at 100 Putnam Avenue.

M.L. King, Jr. School Students

- December 11th-13th, moving company will begin moving crates into the new building throughout that weekend.
- December 14th-18th, students will remain at 359 Broadway for regular classroom learning and special activities. Teachers will work on a rotating schedule to move between classroom setup at 100 Putnam Ave and teaching regular lessons at 359 Broadway.
- December 21st, first day of school for King School students at the new building at 100 Putnam Avenue.

Mr. Maloney noted that the same process would begin on February 5th to relocate the Cambridge Street Upper School students and the King Open School students.

Mr. Harding asked if a public open house could be scheduled for the neighborhood residents.

Mayor Maher added that a site visit would be scheduled for the School Committee to visit the building.

12. Late Orders:

Ms. Nolan moved that the Superintendent confer with the high school including principals, staff and students about possible changes to the dress codes based on concerns about gender and racial disparities. Mr. Fantini offered a point of information that this was already referred back to Principal Smith for this purpose at a previous meeting. Ms. Nolan asked for clarification on where the responsibility lies and when the high school staff may be able to report back to the Committee. She indicated that the CRLS students should be informed of this referral back to Principal Smith. Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent, responded that she will check with the high school staff and prepare an update in the Weekly.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Kelly, it was voted to adjourn (6:58 PM).

Judith T. Martin
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Distributed Back-up Documents (copies on file in the School Committee office):

- Hand-out from Mr. Zuercher referred to in public comment re non-resident children of teachers attending school in other districts
- Hand-out from Ms. Rosenblum, read during public comment re CRLS dress code policy