

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

### Roundtable Meeting

June 9, 2015

Called for 5:30 PM in the Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of discussing the findings of the Affirmative Action Officer's Report of January 21, 2015 which outlined a strategic plan for the improved recruitment and retention of CPS teachers of color to support the district's stated goal of 30% diversity among the teaching staff.

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

Also Present: Dr. Jeff Young, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent  
Dr. Victoria Greer, Asst. Supt. for Student Services  
Ms. Maryann MacDonald, Asst. Superintendent of Elementary Education  
Mr. James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer  
Ms. Barbara Allen, Executive Director of Human Services  
Dr. Kahris McLaughlin, Affirmative Action Officer  
Ms. Claire Spinner, Chief Financial Officer  
Ms. Alanna Mallon, Education Liaison for Mayor's Office  
Mr. Ed Byrne, Diversity Coordinator  
Ms. Terry Gist, CEA President  
Ms. Elissa Spelman, Executive Director of Breakthrough

Mayor Maher in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM. The Mayor turned the meeting over to Ms. Allen and Dr. McLaughlin. Ms. Allen began explaining that 50-100 teachers are hired, on the recommendation of principals, during the peak cycle of February through June every year. She stated that Cambridge has a liberal, progressive reputation and is known for its long standing commitment of embracing diversity. Ms. Allen also stated that we need to look at new and different ways, such as social media and other resources to help CPS attract teachers from other districts. Under a legal settlement agreement, there was goal set to have 30% diversity among teaching staff. Our current teaching staff ranges somewhere between 19 and 22%. We are #2 in the state with 22% of our teaching staff being people of color. We are not where we need to be, but we're not in a bad position overall. Ms Allen named numerous past and present social and cultural events, initiatives and programs that were used and then dwindled without financial support, and the changes involved for the opening of the upper schools.

The meeting was turned over to Dr. McLaughlin. Dr. McLaughlin stated she is not meeting many teachers of color at MERC, the biggest job fair of the state, which is particularly discouraging. There were about 30 total applicants of color. The Commissioner of Education has a goal of 10% people of color. Dr. McLaughlin stated that there are not enough people of color passing the MTEL test. CPS will hire provisionally and then if the new teachers don't pass, eventually they lose their job. Boston has some attractive programs that we don't have, like the Boston Residency Teachers program where teachers can work toward getting their Master's. They also hire about 400 teachers annually. They have groups of teachers waiting in a pool for a job and as jobs appear, they are sent out for interviews. Cambridge is still the most attractive district to recruit for, we are well resourced, we are a safe urban district and the curriculum is in place. How do we get teachers in a timely manner? She stated it is difficult to reach the 30% teaching goal with 66% students of color.

A discussion followed around the following issues, questions and concerns:

- How do the teachers feel about being supported once they are in the system
- The teachers feel they are not receiving help in proficiency training early on. They are not being prepared to face the challenges of some students.
- How does it pose a barrier for what teachers of color want to accomplish
- Advocate for an exemption from the state for the way hiring is done
- Have we changed our hiring practices? The answer is no
- Parents want to have a say in who is teaching their children and without community buy in, there is a lot of unrest for the teacher
- Conflict with passive vs. aggressive vision for diversity
- Would a Cambridge Residency program help? They would train as subs, be seen by the community and be prepared to move into an open position when one comes up
- Hiring process is not mandated by the state; except, it is state law that Principals hire teachers
- Hire first, place later
- School based committees pick the teacher, which may be a problem
- We should also think about what we can control by having a full time AAO
- Dr. Young is the only person who hires principals. Principals have full control over administrative hiring of teachers, paraprofessionals etc., final decision is by the principal
- Principal hiring committee becomes very political
- Concern about dissidence
- Diversity is not a high priority, not a community value
- There are numerous emails about everything other than diversity
- Restructure our hiring process, quickly hire exceptional candidates
- Vet the process to HR, let HR send applicants to the schools
- City Council members want to know why we are not meeting the 30% teachers of color goal
- What is the accountability
- Look hard at the recruitment process
- Match ambition with practice
- 50% of the teachers in training in the Breakthrough feeder system are people of color, they are not being hired. Why?
- What happened to our Mentorship program
- Principals to justify hiring choices
- Revamp the hiring system
- FMA and Amigos have always met the 30% criteria
- Set benchmarks and make sure it climbs every year
- Mock interviews for new hires as preparation for working in Cambridge
- Survey existing teachers of color

Mr. Fantini complemented HR and AAO for being at #2. He also stated that we need to champion the staff in our system right now. It was also stated we need to make sure the principals change who they hire. It was requested that we refer to the motion stating why we are meeting this evening, and explain the strategic plan. Ms. Allen answered that recruitment is hard work. She is going to increase the recruitment staff and process. Dr. McLaughlin mentioned applicants of color apply; do not hear from CPS in a timely manner, and apply elsewhere. She added 2 more networks to the list, one in Florida and Spellman College in Atlanta, GA. A demonstration is being worked on in order for the candidates to get an interview and then get the job. The question was asked if we are losing qualified candidates because our candidates are not the best or because we are not hiring them in the first place. The answer is a little of both. There was a question as to whether or not referral fees are legal? Ms. Allen stated no, because it becomes discriminatory.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Nolan, the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 PM

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

Strategic Plan for the Improved Recruitment and Retention of CPS Teachers, January 21, 2015