

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

OFFICIAL REPORT

School Committee - Regular Meeting

March 18, 2014

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 ABSENT, Mr. Harding, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Nolan, Mr. Osborne, and Mayor Maher

Also Present: Student School Committee Members Lucy Sternbach and Emily Gray

Mayor Maher in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan moved, seconded by Mr. Osborne, it was voted to suspend the Rules to bring forward Superintendent's recommendation **#14-32** for adoption. The Rules having been suspended for the stated purpose, on the following roll call, it was voted to adopt **#14-31, Approval of Education Association Units A&B Collective Bargaining Agreement**: That the School Committee approve the agreement between the Cambridge School Committee and the Cambridge Education Association Units A&B for a collective bargaining agreement to succeed the one which expired on August 31, 2012. As a result of such negotiations, the parties have reached agreement for an additional increase for Fiscal Year 2013 and increases and other changes covering the period September 1, 2013 through August 31, 2016, which was ratified by members of the Cambridge Education Association Units A&B: Mr. Osborne YEA; Ms. Cronin YEA; Mr. Fantini ABSENT; Mr. Harding YEA; Ms. Kelly YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Mayor Maher YEA; Mr. Gardner (for the City Manager) YEA. Ms. Nolan moved, seconded by Mr. Osborne, reconsideration of the foregoing vote, hoping the same would not prevail. The motion failed of adoption.

The Chair returned to the regular order of business.

1. Public Comment (3 Minutes):

The following individuals were heard:

- Sarita Spiller, CEA, re math curriculum
- Elsa Head, CEA, re math curriculum

1a. Public Hearing on the FY 15 School Committee Budget (3 minutes)

The Chair announced that there will be another opportunity for the public to speak on the budget at a Special Meeting on Tuesday, March 25 at 6:00 PM.

The following individuals were heard re the FY15 School Committee Budget:

- Barbara Weaver, St. John's Rd.
- Chris Colbath-Hess, CEA

- Terry Gist, CEA
- Berhan Duncan, CEA
- Jennifer Fries, Cedar St.
- Lisa VanVleck, Shady Hill Sq.
- Erica Pastor, Lexington Ave.
- Chris Nemitz, CRLS/OSS
- Michael Jordan, CRLS/OSS
- Hanh Bui, Allston St.
- Carin Nuernberg, Cambridge St.
- Doug Tuttle, Clark St.
- Sue Cusack, Lesley University
- Jon Baring-Gould, CRLS
- Jaime Dalmeida, Hamilton St.
- Charron Alves, Lawn St.
- Sabrina Alves, Lawn St.
- Katie Charner-Laird, CPSD K-5 Principals
- Sally Peterson, Bellevue Ave.
- Joel Patterson, Seven Pines Ave.
- Karen Dobak, Allston St.
- Pia Murella Cisterno

On a motion by Ms. Kelly, seconded by Ms. Cronin, it was voted to close Public Comment and the Public Hearing on the FY 15 School Committee Budget.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Ms. Gray and Ms Sternbach reported the following:

- Pennies for Patients drive is going very well; \$200.00 were collected last week
- Auditions for the upcoming spring plays are Thursday (3/20); they are senior-directed plays
- A gap-year panel will be at CRLS on 3/27 at 7:00 PM. There will be an opportunity to hear from alumni who took a gap-year
- Three more students have been accepted to MIT
- We support the teachers and staff on the FY 15 School Committee Budget
- Morale drops when staff Members leave

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to accept the following Minutes as presented:

- Regular Meeting - December 3, 2013
- Regular Meeting - March 4, 2014

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Awaiting Reports:

- ✓ Report by spring 2013 on high school resource room, as recommended by WestEd review of special education services. (C12-061) (April 3, 2012)

The committee accepted the report as presented by the Superintendent.

- ✓ Report by fall 2013 on AP program at CRLS (C13-133) (June 4, 2013)
Dr. Young reported that the report on the AP program should be delivered on Friday.

6. Unfinished Business/Calendar:

Members passed over all Unfinished Business:

#14-06, Joint Motion by Mr. Harding and Mr. Osborne, that the Superintendent consult with the high school principal and staff around making a change to college preparatory designation for all classes at CRLS. Further, that any potential change of the course name be implemented by the 2014/15 school year.

#13-213, Motion by Ms. Nolan that whereas research suggests that taking a college level course helps prepare students for college, and whereas the District allows students to take classes at local colleges when appropriate, that the policy on students who take college courses be clarified and written into the course catalog: that four classes is a full course load and that at most one of the four classes each semester may be at a local college/university/community college, including Harvard Extension. Students, who want to take more than four classes, counting any outside college class including Harvard Extension, need to petition their guidance counselor since a balanced student workload is encouraged. Students taking a college class outside the regular school day will work with their guidance counselors on assignment during that period, if not at the beginning or end of the day.

#13-122, Motion by Mr. Fantini and Mr. Harding, that each of the elementary and middle schools be provided with feedback in the form of a written report, provided by an expert consultant retained under the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, as to the progress each school is making towards meeting the data-driven, high-quality improvement strategies as noted in the School Improvement Plans, other guiding documents and other indicators as designated by the Superintendent, including parent satisfaction. Further, that the Superintendent shall provide copies of each report to the School Committee as part of its annual review of the School Improvement Plan as required by law. Further, the Superintendent shall provide analysis of the progress or lack thereof of student achievement.

7. Superintendent's Agenda:

7a. Presentations:

7b. Innovation Agenda:

7c. Consent Agenda:

On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt Superintendent's recommendation **#14-28, Approval of Proposed Revisions to the Upper School Academic Challenge Policy**: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Upper School Academic Policy as detailed in the document (second reading): Mr. Osborne YEA; Ms. Cronin YEA; Mr. Fantini ABSENT; Mr. Harding YEA; Ms. Kelly YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Mayor Maher YEA.

On the following roll call, it was voted to adopt Superintendent's recommendation **#14-29, Contract Award: Ecologic Entomology, LLC: Pest Management**: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for pest management services, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Ecologic Entomology, LLC, for the period March 1, 2014 to June 30, 2014, in the amount of \$50,000.00.

Mr. Osborne YEA; Ms. Cronin YEA; Mr. Fantini ABSENT; Mr. Harding YEA; Ms. Kelly YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Mayor Maher YEA.

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

The following was referred to the Superintendent with the flexibility for him to consult with Committee Members: **#14-30, Joint motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Fantini** that whereas many schools rely on

fundraising to allow students to participate in trips and to raise money which benefits students in many ways, that the policy regarding fundraising be clarified and that schools with events that do raise money and follow guidelines be expressly permitted.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Ms. Kelly, it was voted to accept the following report as presented:

#14-31, Report of the February 27, 2014 meeting of the Sub-Committee on School Climate

**Meeting of the Sub-Committee on School Climate
February 27, 2014
6:00 PM**

Called for the purpose of defining the work of the Sub-Committee for the coming year and proposing a change in the Sub-Committee's name

Members Present: Ms. Kelly, Chair; Mr. Osborne, Mr. Harding ABSENT

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present, Ms. Kelly called the meeting to order at 6:20 PM.

Ms. Kelly in the Chair

Handouts presented: Agenda (on file in School Committee Office)

After reading the call of the meeting, Ms. Kelly noted that she made the decision not to propose a change in the Sub-Committee's name related to school climate.

Ms. Kelly mentioned that she has had a conversation with Melody Brazo who works for Welcoming Schools Cambridge about doing a PowerPoint presentation to each school council which covers all the different areas pertaining to school climate. She noted that Chandra Banks, CPSD Conflict Mediator and Kim De Andrade, Program Leader for Health Education, would also be good resources in this area.

Discussion took place around the following topics, questions, comments and concerns:

- ✓ Work more globally around professional development for teachers and family engagement
- ✓ Morale not officially addressed anywhere
- ✓ Tone and morale deserve to be looked at separate of academic achievement
- ✓ Set a date for presentations/conversations
- ✓ Go out and talk to individual school councils
- ✓ It makes sense to define school climate
- ✓ Look at impact school climate has on the learning environment
- ✓ Look at school climate as it relates to kids and as it relates to the professional environment
- ✓ Need to feel safe in order to take risks while learning
- ✓ Certain things need to be level in order for someone to engage
- ✓ Every school has its own individual school culture
- ✓ Strength of school climate comes from having effective partnerships, supportive parents, staff and teachers; all contribute to school climate
- ✓ Cambridge compiled teacher opinions in the recent TELL survey
- ✓ People can develop survey fatigue
- ✓ There are self-study tools focusing on school climate which involve meeting with every constituent in the school; could these tools work for Cambridge or should we develop our own approach
- ✓ Take "temperature" to see how everyone feels, e.g. are they overworked or under supported
- ✓ Need to be transparent

Next steps:

- ✓ Meet with School Councils, and possibly high school and upper school student council members; ask Student School Committee member(s) to be involved
- ✓ Get a working definition of school climate from Ms. Brazo, Ms. DeAndrade and Ms. Banks
- ✓ Develop a timeline and a calendar
- ✓ Develop a tool which could be used so that the questions are consistent
- ✓ Determine the subtopics that fall under school climate, e.g. school morale

Adjourned (6:46 pm)

Adjourned
Judith T. Martin
Confidential Secretary to the School Committee

9. Non-Consent Agenda:

10. Resolutions (letters of congratulations, letters of condolence):

On a motion by Ms. Kelly, seconded by the entire Committee, it was voted to send a letter of condolence to the family of Steven-Brion-Meisel, former CPS teacher, who recently passed away.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by the whole committee, it was voted to send a letter of congratulations to Mark Brathwaite, CRLS class of '86 for being named Massachusetts Jr. College Women's Coach of the Year.

On a motion by Mr. Osborne, seconded by the whole committee it was voted to send a letter of congratulations to CRLS teacher, Joel Patterson and students Elija Gunther and Joshua Nolan for their incredible performance at the American Math Competition.

11. Announcements: None

12. Late Orders: None

FY 15 Budget:

The Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent for a discussion on the FY 15 Budget. The following answered questions and concerns raised by the School Committee Members:

- ❖ Maryann MacDonald, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education
- ❖ Dr. Jessica Huizenga, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
- ❖ Dr. Victoria Greer, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services
- ❖ Claire Spinner, Chief Financial Officer
- ❖ Damon Smith, Principal, CRLS
- ❖ Steve Smith, Chief Information Officer
- ❖ Mark Healy, Curriculum Coordinator, Math

Discussion took place around the following:

- ✓ There is anxiety around class size at high school; how can we rectify the problem
- ✓ What are we aiming for in class size
- ✓ What is your take on the proposed restructure at the high school
- ✓ What are the assumptions going into planning for scheduling
- ✓ What is the optimal teacher load desired
- ✓ At some point a decision has to be made on the cap on class size
- ✓ What we are hearing is that you are making every effort to address the problem of class size
- ✓ How will Aspen alleviate the scheduling problem
- ✓ Aspen is a tremendous step forward; will it be a tool for families also

- ✓ Will schedule changes allow better student support time
- ✓ Clarify the nature of the cuts in clerical positions
- ✓ What is the net in FTE's
- ✓ How is the clerk in the College Career Center different
- ✓ I am concerned about the level 3 schools
- ✓ The teachers' statement about world language is very significant
- ✓ There is magic for kids in being able to communicate between cultures
- ✓ I cannot understand the severity of our level 3 schools without thinking of the consequences of their slipping
- ✓ If they slip, confidence will diminish
- ✓ I would like to hear more about our goals and how they tie into our budget
- ✓ Re the 40 students in the summer program; how does that divide out in accelerated programming and grade level

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, it was voted to extend the meeting to 10:10 PM.

- ✓ Help me understand the process by which you arrived at the need for reorganizing

The Chair and the Superintendent encouraged Members to submit questions to Ms. Spinner and Dr. Young before the meeting on March 25.

On a motion by Ms. Cronin, seconded by Ms. Kelly, it was voted to adjourn (10:10 PM).

Patricia A. Berry
Executive Secretary to the School Committee