

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Special Meeting

March 22, 2011

Called for 6:00 PM in the Sullivan Chamber, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue.

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Nolan, Ms. Tauber, Ms. Turkel,
Mayor Maher

Mayor Maher in the Chair.

Also Present: Dr. Jeff Young, Superintendent; Dr. Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Jim Maloney, Chief Operating Officer; Dr. Aida Ramos, Executive Director of Special Education; MaryAnn MacDonald, Executive Director Student Achievement and Curriculum; Barbara Allen, Executive Director of Human Resources; Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel; Lori Likis, Chief of Staff; Claire Spinner, Chief Financial Officer; Richard Whitehead, Manager, OSE; and Kristin Reedy and Nancy Hurley, WestEd Representatives

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:08 PM. Mayor Maher explained that the meeting was two-fold: A public hearing on the FY11-12 Budget and a Special Education presentation.

The following individuals were heard re the budget:

- Jane Hirschi, Rindge Avenue
- Charles Marquant
- Mark Gardner, Walden Street

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to close public comment.

Ms. Turkel and Mr. Fantini, Budget Co-Chairs were heard in support of left over funds going to partners, such as City Sprouts. They also addressed the issue of the enormous difference in expenditure per pupil between Newton and Cambridge and said this will be presented next year not only as numbers but with a narrative.

The Chair turned the meeting over to Dr. Ramos for the SPED presentation. Dr. Ramos introduced Kristin Reedy and Nancy Hurley of WestEd, the company that conducted the program evaluation for CPSD. Dr. Ramos, Ms. Reedy and Ms. Hurley walked Members through the following:

- Percentage of Special Education Students by School
- OSE Staff by School servicing Students in General Education Classes
- Female Special Education Statistics by Ethnicity
- Male Special Education Statistics by Ethnicity
- Special Education Gender Statistics
- District Referral Trend by Grade
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funding
- WestEd Special Education Program Review Process
- The purpose of the program review
- WestEd Report
- Areas of Review/System Components
- What we did: Evaluation Activities
- Findings

- Strengths
- Findings/Conclusions
- Continuum of Services/Inclusion
- Student Outcomes
- Current Service Delivery
- Special Education FY11 Adopted Budget
- Parent Engagement
- Recommendations
- Cambridge District Goal
- Suggested long range goal
- Next Steps
- Next Steps: Parent Involvement
- Next Steps: Staff Involvement

A copy of the SPED report is on file in the School Committee Office.

Dr. Ramos acknowledged and thanked everyone responsible for the tremendous amount of work put into preparing the report. She welcomed the Members for questions and comments. The Members were heard:

- Very impressive report
- Would like a report on how we intend to take action
- Every student on out of district placement should be on a pathway to in-district placement
- If we follow the recommendations of the report, it will be very different from what we now do
- Keep special education in mind when hiring new principals
- Concerned about parents who attend IEP meetings unaware of the laws
- Will following recommendations get better than average results
- Are we meeting the goals of the IEPs
- What is the strategic plan going to look like
- What is representation of focus groups, such as income
- Concerned about communicating with non-English speaking parents
- How do our inconsistencies compare to other districts
- Is this an independent report
- Have you had much communication with the Superintendent
- What is your exit status
- Explain over representation of minorities in special education
- How do SPED services work re the high school

The Chair thanked Dr. Ramos and the WestEd representatives for an outstanding report. The Mayor announced that Bridget Rodriguez, Education Liaison, has accepted a position with the Massachusetts Secretary of Education.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Tauber, it was voted to adjourn (9:15).

Adjourned
Patricia A. Berry
Acting Executive Secretary to the School Committee