

September 30, 2002

I. CALL TO ORDER

Rules Management Committee Co-Chairperson, Teresa Cardoso, called a Rules Management Committee of the Whole Meeting of the School Committee to order in the conference room at 181 Washington Street at 7:06 p.m., to discuss Controlled Choice Plan/Pre-School-8; No Child Left Behind Act; Kindergarten Age Start-Up; and School Committee Vote on Budget (family members employed by school department).

II. ROLL CALL

Present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Murray, Ms. Bauer, Ms. Harris, Ms. Taylor (arrived 7:22 p.m.), Ms. Rossetti and Mr. Sullivan.

Mayor Gay and Alderman White were absent.

Also present were Dr. Albert F. Argenziano, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Steven F. Jenkins, District Administrator for Student Services, Mr. Robert A. Snow, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Ms. Pamela G. Holmes, Supervisor of Early Childhood Education/Title I, Ms. Regina Bertholdo, Family Network Director, Ms. Eleanor Blute, Ms. Natalie Vieira, Ms. Maria Madrid, and Ms. Kate McCarthy.

III. Controlled Choice Plan/Pre-School-8

The Controlled Choice Plan/Pre-School through Grade 8 student assignment plans was discussed. The discussion centered on why preschool assignments were not the same as the K8 school assignments, as outlined in the Somerville Long Range Student Assignment Plan, approved by the Somerville School Committee in April of 1994. Ms. Bauer mentioned her concern was to find a way to be fair to all the students in the city and to make things equitable. She referred to the controlled choice student assignment plan and asked if it was possible that some principles used in assigning K8 students could possibly be applied to preschool assignments. Also brought up during the discussion was why, in some cases, a child cannot be placed with his or her sibling in the same school. Dr. Jenkins distributed early childhood/pre-school information giving details of the work that has taken place since March 2002. Ms. Pamela Holmes gave a summary of how the lottery system works as it pertains to the pre-school assignments and she explained the process that is followed relative to oversubscribed sections/sites. She advised members that every effort is made to assign all children to their first choice location unless the site is oversubscribed. Dr. Jenkins and Ms. Holmes answered questions asked by school committee members. Discussion followed and no action was taken. Ms. Bauer thanked members present, Ms. Holmes, and Dr. Jenkins for their time to further explain and clarify items brought up this evening.

IV. No Child Left Behind Act

The Superintendent advised members that by July 2, 2002, Ms. Bertholdo, Family Network Director, and her staff sent a letter, in every language, to every parent in the four schools listed as under-performing notifying parents they could chose a performing school for their child. Only one response was received and Dr. Argenziano explained that, presently, every one is in their school because most parents understand that with the 1998 MCAS scores improving each year the schools are no longer listed as an under-performing school.

IV. No Child Left Behind Act (cont.)

Ms. Bauer mentioned there might be some confusion because we have the Controlled Choice Plan and then we have the No Child Left Behind Act stating we have to use different priorities. She believes it is clear enough to everyone that the No Child Left Behind Act comes first and then beyond that we go to our own student assignment plan. No further discussion took place, as the No Child Left Behind Act was discussed at a previous Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting (September 16, 2002).

V. Kindergarten Age Start-Up

Dr. Jenkins provided information regarding *Kindergarten Age Requirements by District*. The material included a comparison by town listing of fifty (50) communities with the date a child had to be age five by in order to start Kindergarten. Ms. Holmes also provided an information summary regarding kindergarten eligibility. Discussion followed. Ms. Murray mentioned she thought it would be a good idea to have this information, or a similar summary sheet, available at the Family Network for parents to see. Ms. Murray thanked Ms. Holmes and Dr. Jenkins for the information made available this evening.

VI. School Committee Vote on Budget (family members employed by school department)

This item was discussed at the September 25, 2002 Executive Session meeting. Ms. Cardoso asked that Ms. Taylor report to the public, at the October 7, 2002 School Committee meeting, the process of how school committee members vote on the budget when it directly affects a family member. No further discussion took place this evening.

Before adjourning, it was requested that two items be discussed at a future Rules Subcommittee meeting.

- 1) Requested by Mr. Sullivan – Attendance Policy (how a student is marked, absent or excused absence, when out of school because of religious reasons.
- 2) Requested by Ms. Bauer – Make-up Policy (possible inconsistency of the make-up procedure, grades 9-12).

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m., by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary