

February 5, 2003

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rossetti called a Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting of the School Committee to order in the Auditorium at the East Somerville Community School, at 6:45 p.m., to discuss the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) final report.

II. ROLL CALL

Present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Harris, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Murray and Ms. Rossetti.

Mayor Gay and Alderman O'Donovan were absent.

Also present were Dr. Albert F. Argenziano, Superintendent of Schools, Ms. Marie B. Ferrari, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration, and fifty members of the audience.

III. New England School Development Council (NESDEC) – Pre-K-8 Long Range School Facilities Planning Report.

Chairman Rossetti welcomed the community to this evening's meeting. She informed the audience tonight's meeting was for the community and the school committee members to discuss the final report provided by New England School Development Council (NESDEC). Ms. Rossetti then invited Dr. Argenziano to address the audience. The Superintendent of Schools briefly went over the FY2004 budget reduction options that were discussed at the Finance and Facilities Committee meeting this past Monday. For discussion and review tonight, he provided a twelve-page summary outlining the five alternative solutions offered by the New England School Development Council, in English and in Spanish. The options discussed are as follows:

Option 1

- Construction of new Brown School
- ADA modifications and other renovations at Cummings School
- Unidos at Powder House/until new Lincoln Park School is completed (2005?)
- "Choice" remains at Healey
- Create "inquiry-based" instructional option – school to be determined
- Edgerly used as swing space

Option 2

- ADA modifications and other renovations at both Brown and Cummings Schools
- Locate Unidos at Edgerly (short term) and at Lincoln Park – long term
- "Choice" program remains at Healey with a K-5 strand
- Choice strand at Powder House for grades 6-8

Option 3

- Make ADA modifications at Cummings School
- Locate Unidos at Powder House
- Close Edgerly
- "Choice" remains at Healey

III. Pre-K-8 Long Range School Facilities Planning Report (cont.)

Option 4

- Continue Brown and Cummings until enrollment declines
- Unidos at Powder House until Lincoln Park construction complete; then move to Lincoln Park
- Space at Powder House then will be available to close Brown and/or Cummings
- "Choice" at Healey
- Close (old) Edgerly

Option 5

- Move Brown K-6 program to Powder House
- Reassign Brown building for other use
- Move Cummings K-8 program to Lincoln Park
- Reassign Cummings building for other use
- Keep "Choice" Program at Healey
- Locate "Unidos" at (old) Edgerly until Lincoln Park is replaced

When Dr. Argenziano finished addressing the community, Ms. Rossetti welcomed questions and comments from audience and school committee members. Seven members of the community addressed Dr. Argenziano and the school committee. Lengthy discussion followed. Ms. Rossetti explained that because of budget constraints, and information received on a daily basis from the Mayor's office with new and different figures on budget cuts, the committee is not able at this time, to make any decisions.

The Superintendent briefly spoke about the budget and how the figures went from \$52 million last August, to \$50.2 million, and now, depending on further cuts, possibly \$45 million. That is \$7 million in a twelve month period. He also mentioned the state grants that have been cut; the Bay State Readers Grant that provides money to the Lincoln Park Community School; the Family Network Grant was eliminated and the universal breakfast program was reduced by 15%.

Ms. Rossetti informed the community that the school committee will be meeting over the next two weeks with the Board of Alderman to discuss further the financial situation and the disposition of school and city buildings and properties. Hopefully, by the next regularly scheduled meeting on February 24th, not all, but some decisions will be made and voted on by the school committee members so they will have more concrete information to report back to the community.

Ms. Murray addressed the concerns of the audience regarding the Brown School and Cummings School being closed, and where the Unidos and Choice Program will be housed. She stated that for the year 2003-04, the closing of schools is not a consideration. The Brown and Cummings School will remain open. Concerning Unidos, a decision will be made after more input is received from community meetings, and for the Choice Program, whether or not it will stay at the Healey School, Ms. Murray said the committee could not make that decision tonight. Hopefully, as Ms. Rossetti mentioned earlier, answers to those questions will be made at the February 24th meeting.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:48 p.m. by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary