

City of Cambridge

The Finance Committee of the City Council and the Finance Committee of the School Committee held a joint public meeting on March 18, 1998, beginning at 7:30 PM in the Sullivan Chamber for the purpose of having a preliminary discussion of the FY 99 School Department budget.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Chair of the Committee, Councillor Kathleen L. Born, Councillor Henrietta Davis, Mayor Francis H. Duehay, Vice Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio, Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr., and City Clerk D. Margaret D. Drury. Present for the School Committee were Joseph Grassi and Robin Harris, Co-Chairs of the Budget Committee, David Maher, Denise Simmons and Alice Turkel and Secretary to the School Committee Claire Rodley. Also present were City Manager Robert W. Healy, Assistant City Manager for Finance James Maloney, Superintendent of Schools Bobbie D'Allesandro, Deputy Superintendent Dr. Patrick Murphy, Dr. Gwen Nordmoe, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, James Conry, Executive Director of Management Services and David Kale, Manager of Financial Operations.

Mayor Duehay convened the meeting and explained the purpose. He stated that Councillor Sullivan had a special meeting and is expected momentarily. He stated that this is an opportunity for the members of the City Council to ask questions and express concerns. He stated that Councillor Russell was unable to attend due to a prior commitment. He then turned the meeting over to Joe Grassi and Robin Harris, Co-Chairs of the Budget Committee.

Mr. Grassi thanked the City Council for the opportunity for this discussion and stated that the budget process has been very productive and characterized by consensus this year. Much of the decision making has been school based.

Ms. Harris encouraged members of the City Council to feel free to ask questions. She then introduced Superintendent Bobbie D'Allesandro.

— Ms. D'Allesandro stated that this has been a new process. She has talked to the City Manager about one more year of funding for high school restructuring and for some assistance with the impact of charter schools. Ms. D'Allesandro distributed the Cambridge Public School Mission Statement and Goals. Attached.

She described the budget process. Principals were asked to look at the priorities system wide. She has established a Budget Advisory Committee of parents, community persons, students, who will be in place all year long.

With regard to the issue of teachers on assignment, there are now three involuntary transfers. All will be in budgeted classroom placements. She will implement the minimum student class size, for example, no classes at the high school will have classes smaller than fifteen students except in very special situations like an advanced language class. The goal regarding school size is to have schools with a minimum enrollment of three hundred, and a maximum of six hundred and sixty. She stated that the proposed budget will contain \$1.6 million in reductions and \$4 million in enhancements.

Councillor Born asked the difference between revenue driven and expenditure driven budgets.

The City Manager stated that the budget process this year has been very interesting. Councillor Sullivan, the Mayor, the Superintendent have met several times with him to make the process as smooth as possible. The "revenue driven" process is based on a starting assumption that the budget will match the 2 ½ % growth in taxes allowed in revenue. This year the School Department has been treated just like all other city departments, and has produced a goal-driven budget. He has had some concerns. There is a 5% reduction in attendance which means four-hundred and twenty-five fewer students. Some of these areas of concern are being addressed now; some are planned for future years. This budget reflects multi-year planning.

Councillor Toomey stated that every time the School Department tries to make cuts, there are many parents who come to this City Council. He wants to hear from everyone that they will stand firm in support of what they say that they will support. Otherwise it is not fair to the School Committee.

Ms. D'Allesandro stated that she absolutely agrees with the importance of this. The process has really involved schools and parents. She provided an example from the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School budget experience. She stated that she did not tell any school how to make cuts.

Councillor Sullivan explained that this is a different climate from the past three years. He agreed with Councillor Toomey that the past way of Schools budgeting has been problematic.

Mayor Duehay stated that the Superintendent has actually made progress in dealing with some problems about which all have been frustrated for several years, for example, unassigned teachers and the teacher-pupil ratio. All cannot be done in one year. She wants under enrolled schools to have a real opportunity to develop their program.

Councillor Toomey suggested looking into whether there are any possibilities of deploying some Cambridge Rindge and Latin School security to the elementary schools, where there have been some recent safety concerns.

Ms. D'Allesandro agreed that this whole issue is worth a much more in-depth review; another issue is that Cambridge now sends one hundred special education students out of the district.

Ms. Simmons stated that in the past Cambridge has tried to be supportive of new progress and ideas regardless of whether they related to other programs and goals. The Superintendent has really forced a focus on the importance of being sure that new ideas for new programs further the mission and goals.

Councillor Davis stated that issues that she sees as very important are the evaluation of teachers and staff development which will result in all Cambridge teachers being good teachers. Another is that the average age of teachers is high, which could be both an opportunity and a challenge.

Ms. D'Allesandro stated that some of the seasoned teachers are excellent, but she is also very excited by the quality of the new teachers that she sees.

Councillor Davis asked if the budget reflects the ten percent reduction in energy costs that the utilities are required to make. Jim Conry described the energy savings being accomplished.

Ms. Turkel noted that there is some multi-year planning which brings improvements over time in a equitable allocation, but it will take time to earn the public's confidence in the ability to implement over years what has been planned to happen over years. She agreed that parents will have problems with cuts and stated that it is important to acknowledge this. She applauded Ms. D'Allesandro's hard work at making the budget understandable.

Mr. Grassi invited City Council questions.

Councillor Born expressed her concern with what she can say to a constituent who finds out that a teacher at the school is being cut. Councillor Triantafillou gave the example of the redistribution of aids at the Tobin Follow Through program last year.

Councillor Sullivan stated that the City Council will need to stand together in support of a budget and a goal setting process that makes sense and sets out understandable goals and objectives with clear plans to make budgeting decisions based on these goals.

Ms. Simmons encouraged members of the City Council to direct parents to the Superintendent's office. She is committed to really addressing the issues and talking with parents as much as is necessary.

Councillor Sullivan stated that this is an aggressive budget cycle which may help keep it on track. David Maher stated that the School Committee can live with this budget. It is a very different feeling from two weeks ago when it looked like cuts of \$3.4 million would be required. Mr. Maher noted the progress on the issue of unassigned teachers.

Councillor Davis asked about average teacher salary, and Mr. Conry responded that the average salary is between \$53,000 and \$54,000. Two-thirds of the teachers are at their maximum steps and a surprising number have their doctorates.

Ms. Turkel said that private school enrollment in Cambridge is going up while enrollment in public schools in Cambridge declines. We need to have quality programs.

Ms. D'Allesandro said that it is important to do exit interviews to find out why students are leaving.

Vice Mayor Galluccio stated that this is a great idea and that it would be good to also ask "how can we keep you here." Ms. D'Allesandro said it is important to market ourselves, and introduced the new acting public information officer, Eileen Sullivan.

Councillor Sullivan thanked all those present for their attendance. The meeting was adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

For the Committee,



Councillor Michael A. Sullivan
Chair

Outline of Information Provided by Superintendent of Schools Bobbie D'Alessandro
for the March 18, 1998 Informal Meeting of the
City Council Committee on Finance & School Committee Budget Sub-Committee

I. Overview Information

- A. Financial Parameters and Guidelines
- B. Process Used to Arrive at Decisions for FY1998-99 Proposed Budget
- C. Cambridge Public Schools Mission Statement & Goals

II. Budget Policies:

- 1. Elementary Teacher Staffing Policy
- 2. Elementary Mathematics Curriculum & Algebra Instruction
- 3. Middle School Program Development
- 4. Early Childhood Specialist Services
- 5. Elementary Suspension Program
- 6. Elem. Instructional Aides - update
- 7. CRLS Restructuring and Secondary Staffing
- 8. Special Ed. Tuition Students - in-house options
- 9. Curriculum Frameworks Budget.
- 10. Professional Development Center
- 11. Management Services Division Restructuring
Facilities, Transportation & Food Services
- 12. Administrative Savings - Central Administration

III. Elements of School Department Three-Year Financial Plan

- Staffing based on systemwide allocation policies for elementary & secondary, taking into account enrollment changes, class size parameters, etc.
- Eliminating the financial impact of unbudgeted involuntary transfer teachers.
- Ongoing analysis of central and school administrative positions to determine where consolidations/reductions/restructuring is feasible, & implement changes.
- Examining elementary school program structures to become more efficient while still meeting the requirements of parent choice/ demand, & implement changes.
- Complete this phase of the CRLS Restructuring Plan for implementation by 9/99
- Maximize utilization of energy conservation incentives to fund capital improvements.
- Maximize state medicare reimbursements to reduce tax levy impact.
- Each year, select five key areas to study program delivery options, policies, cost-effectiveness/benefit, etc. to improve services & reduce costs (e.g. SPED tuitions.) & implement changes.

IV. Other Information - Enrollments, Staffing, Sample Goals/Initiatives

Draft 3/18/98

Summary of FY 1998-99 Budget Reductions & New/Expanded Requests

A. Reductions

1.	Teacher position reductions through implementation of policies and attrition. Total of 16.4 positions	(\$ 844,295)
2.	Reduction of 5 unbudgeted carryover Involuntary Transfer teacher positions (3 remaining)	(265,000)
3.	Reduction of 7.0 part time aide positions, one full-time aide position, and a support position	(102,368)
4.	Reduction of 3 administrative positions, 1 teacher-on-assignment position, and restructuring of Management Service and Central Office positions	(288,337)
5.	Telephone cost reductions through FCC E-Rate program	(30,000)
6.	Eliminate grade 7-8 transportation under 1 1/2 miles (state guidelines) except for siblings	<u>(70,000)</u>
	Subtotal - Reductions:	(\$1,600,000)

B. New/Expanded Requests

1.	Professional Devel Ctr. Exec. Director (Sal & fringe ben.)	\$ 92,000
2.	Extended Day Programs	40,000
3.	ECRS/Reading. Rec. Positions to Support Policy Rec. (1.5 positions)	79,500
4.	N/E Allocation to CRLS/RSTA for Priority Areas	75,000
5.	Technology Support - Help Desk Support Position (Plus: State Grant -\$115,000 for Technology Staff Development)	36,000
6.	Middle Schools project - Summer Program for Incoming Ninth graders (Expand to 100 students)	20,000
7.	Establishment of Equitable Salary Schedule for Elem. Principals (elimination of separate longevity sched. & build into base salary)	23,977
8.	Public Information - Systemwide Newsletters	15,000
9.	Elementary School Furniture Replacement (Begin Repl. Plan)	14,523
10.	Student Registration Center - Summer Coverage	<u>4,000</u>
	Sub-total	\$400,000

Total: (\$1,200,000)

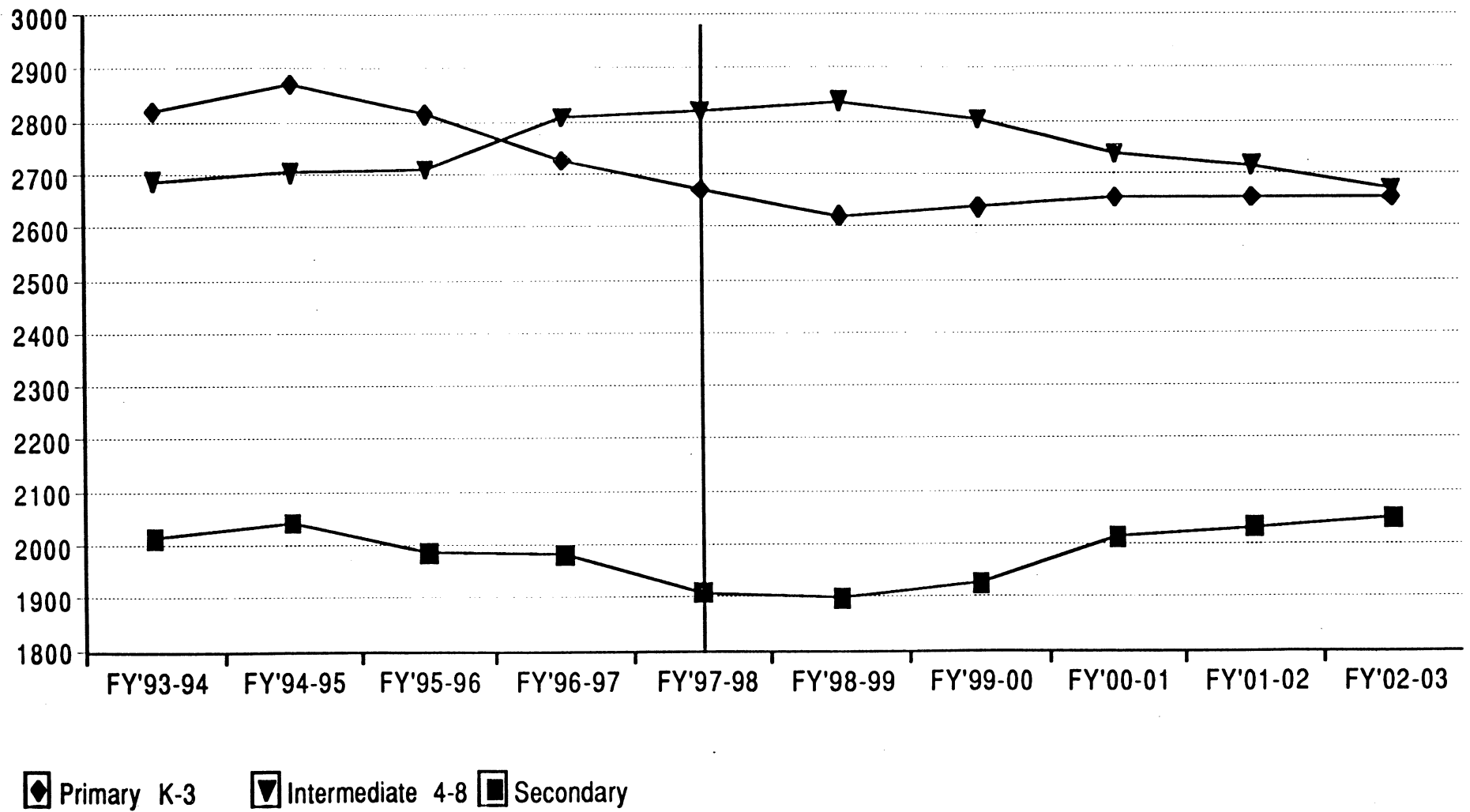
ENROLLMENT HISTORY AND PROJECTIONS 1993/94 THROUGH 2002/03

HISTORY

PROJECTIONS

Level	Actual FY'93-94	Actual FY'94-95	Actual FY'95-96	Actual FY'96-97	Actual FY'97-98	Proj. FY'98-99	Proj. FY'99-00	Proj. FY'00-01	Proj. FY'01-02	Proj. FY'02-03
Primary K-3	2825	2871	2818	2727	2674	2623	2638	2654	2654	2654
Intermediate 4-8	2688	2703	2710	2812	2823	2839	2792	2739	2719	2673
Elem. Sub Total	5513	5574	5528	5539	5497	5462	5430	5393	5373	5327
% Change		1.1%	-0.8%	0.2%	-0.8%	-0.6%	-0.6%	-0.7%	-0.4%	-0.9%
Secondary	2018	2047	1989	1983	1910	1899	1938	2018	2033	2048
% Change		1.4%	-2.8%	-0.3%	-3.7%	-0.6%	2.1%	4.1%	0.7%	0.7%
Ungraded	646	670	651	531	459	459	459	459	459	459
% Change		3.7%	-2.8%	-18.4%	-13.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	8177	8291	8168	8053	7866	7820	7827	7870	7865	7834
Total % Change		1.4%	-1.5%	-1.4%	-2.3%	-0.6%	0.1%	0.5%	-0.1%	-0.4%

Actual And Projected Enrollments 1993/94 - 2002/03



FY'1998-99 Proposed Budget - Staffing Changes (Draft)

	<u>FY'95</u>	<u>FY'96</u>	<u>FY'97</u>	<u>FY'98</u>	<u>Proposed Inc. (Dec)</u>	<u>FY'99 Total</u>
Administrators	76.0	73.4	69.9	72.4	(2.0)	70.4
Teachers	757.3	757.7	754.6	768.1	(20.9)	747.2
Custodial/Maintenance	80.0	85.0	83.0	83.5	-	83.5
Clerical	83.8	84.5	83.5	85.0	-	85.0
Instructional Aides (F/T)	160.5	161.4	163.5	167.5	(1.0)	166.5
Full-Time Other	55.6	60.6	64.1	62.4	2.5	64.9
Part-Time Aides	<u>147.0</u>	<u>166.0</u>	<u>187.0</u>	<u>194.8</u>	<u>(7.0)</u>	<u>187.8</u>
Total	1360.2	1388.6	1405.6	1433.7	(28.4)	1405.3

Communciation received from
D. Margaret Drury, transmitting
a report from Councillor Michael
Sullivan, Chair of the Finance
Committee, for a meeting held on
March 18, 1998 for the purpose
of having a preliminary discussion
of the FY '99 School Department
budget.

In City Council April 13, 1998

Report Accepted

PLACED ON FILE