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**Leading the Change:  
A Proposal to the School Committee Majority, and Other Members Ready to Join  
Them, Regarding the Strategic Approach to  
Implementing the Resolution of December 17, 2002**

The School Committee Resolution of December 17th, initiated by Richard Harding, was expanded by the Mayor to specifically include reduction in the number of programs being run by the system. It was supported in the initial procedural vote by the working majority of Richard Harding, Mayor Michael Sullivan, Joe Grassi, Alan Price, and Fred Fantini. It gives us some time (about 17 weeks) to affirm our destination, investigate and create some pathways, build a vehicle, and drive it to our destination on time. This is a proposal addressed to the members of that working majority, and others who are now ready to join them. This proposal specifically describes a process that you can use to achieve this. The process begins with a series of motions made and votes taken on Tuesday January 7<sup>th</sup> and ends with final selection among proposed plans by Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>.

<b>A. Introduction</b>	<b>pp. 2-3</b>
<b>B. The Proposed Plan</b>	<b>pp. 4-9</b>
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**REVISED DRAFT—JANUARY 4, 2003**

## A. INTRODUCTION

What is the problem we are trying to solve since December 17th?

The problem you are trying to solve since December 17th is a slightly different one than the one the Superintendent and her team were trying to address up to that date. I would pose the problem as a brief statement and a brief question in these words:

Statement: *We have agreed that we are not able to continue all the Cambridge Public Schools or School Programs in their current forms or at their current sites. We have agreed that we must reduce the differences in outcomes, for both personal growth and educational achievement, among children and among programs.*

Question: *How can we preserve and enhance existing successful programs to address the immediate fiscal crisis, better prioritize our resources in the future, and improve all Cambridge school children's outcomes in both personal growth and educational achievement?*

I propose that we agree on this problem statement as the "anchor" for our decisions between now and May.

Why is the problem we face today different from the one we faced before?

The hearing process we all experienced is part of our changed reality. Policy and political lines have been crossed, re-crossed, and redesigned, in the minds of current K-8 parents, potential K-8 parents, of many of your fellow elected city officials, and the public at large.

At the same time, the teaching staff, through their staff meetings at their respective schools, have had to look, all along, at the issues at hand, from the point of view of implementing any changes that were developed. As we go along, they remain a rich source of ideas to solve "the problem" however we may reframe, re-state, or re-define it. They must speak in their own voices and tell us if they can make any proposed solution work.

The testimony given during your hearing process in the fall, whether for or against the various "plans of the moment", indicated that **every** staff person (from principal to teacher to classroom aide), **every** parent (whether from schools that were traditional or those that were alternative education-based), and **every child** who testified, agreed that healthy programs should not be tampered with but should be preserved.

**This point of agreement**, taken from the people's own words, provides you with a starting point for healing, and a basis to define this as a construction process, rather than one that destroys schools or programs that are functioning well. I intentionally use the word "program" so that *no school feels under attack because it is in a building that is the wrong size, and no program feels immune because it feels it can function in any building.*

The process of considering consolidations and closures was initiated a year ago because of declining enrollment and cuts in traditional sources of funding for our school programs. But

we are all highly motivated **here and now** to quickly define what our future programming will be in order to bring higher quality education to more students, and provide hopeful, inspiring settings for administrators and teachers.

What are some elements of successful change processes in large systems?

Successful change processes in large organizations share some common elements or steps.

Contrary to our experience of the last year, change processes initiated by the leadership of large organizations **usually work** because people want to preserve the organizations and systems which employ them or from which they, as clients or customers, receive goods or services.

Here are three things that we are likely to need to get achieve the same result for our organizations and programs, and system:

- (1) A working majority of the decision-makers who can agree on the steps they need to take
- (2) For this working majority of decision-makers to stick to the steps they have chosen.
- (3) The presence of a "champion"--a senior leader who has the authority, credibility, and respect to announce that change is coming and to be heard. **Right now, you, the working majority of December 17<sup>th</sup>, are as a group--the champion!** Other Committee members, who opposed the majority that night, either through procedural motions or on the final vote, may now be ready to join you in that role.

In fact, it is possible that this plan will **only** work, and others will only join you, if you, the voting majority on the procedural motion prior to the final vote on 12/17—Richard Harding, Mayor Sullivan, Joe Grassi, Alan Price, and Fred Fantini--**agree to start this work together as a de facto steering committee** to champion this process through to the "new beginning" that it will create for the public schools.

What are some types of organizational or systems change processes that we can use as reference points?

The three elements or "steps" above are typical of change processes, whether the change process is one of program or organizational improvement, expansion of the number of clients/customers served by the organization or program, or, as in our case, "cutback management".

Cutback management is not unique to schools or government agencies. It is a type of change management that takes place regularly in every organization or system, public or private, non-profit or for-profit, if that system is healthy.

Beyond the 2004/2005 School Year, change of all the types named above will continue to happen in our system at different times. The question always will be: **will change be managed well so that our organization or system, along with clients/customers, can reap some benefits, or at the very least, minimize damage?**

## B. THE PROPOSED PLAN

**This specific plan is being proposed for the Cambridge School Committee, the School Department, and the School Councils. It is driven from the school or program level up. Primarily it relies on the School Councils and their constituent parts to find partners, reduce the total number of classrooms in the system, and therefore save costs to the system.**

Based on other change processes, which I have seen and which have worked, I am proposing a plan that consists of change management elements that would be found in any organizational change process.

I have adapted these as specific "steps" for the Cambridge School Committee, the Senior Managers of the system (the Superintendent, the COO, and the Assistant Superintendents), the principals and the teachers, the School Councils, the parents and active, older children who want to participate, and for other stakeholder organizations already engaged with Cambridge school children.

The plan is designed so that each group, or any organization that falls into one of these groups, can take these steps on their own, or together with any others.

### Open Up Roles for Non-School Department Programs with Public School Children and Public School Children's Families

The process is also designed so that Principals, Faculty, School Councils or programs can extend their "conversations" for change to include any organization in Cambridge that serves school age youth enrolled in the schools, if an organization with whom they want to work can contribute space, staffing, expert technical advice, funding, or other resources.

When we look at "pockets" of student needs, it may be, (for example only) that organizations such as Just-A-Start, the Department of Human Services Youth Programs (for example, the Community Learning Center adult education program serving many immigrant school parents with children impacted by Unz, After Schools, Recreation Programs), or staff of the Courts, can expand current roles or develop new ones that especially may benefit older youths in K-8 classes. The number of school children or school parents who are served by these agencies may be small from a citywide perspective, but the services they might receive may prove crucial to making a specific plan for change work at the school or program level.

### Who will get things started?

The Cambridge School Committee is a representative, governmental group that operates by parliamentary procedure. The voting School Committee majority of 12/17 needs to kick the process off **by voting on the following set of principles in a formal motion:**

- Issue a charter or mission statement for the process, signed by the voting School Majority of 12/17 and others on the Committee who agree to it, and by those managers responsible

for facilitating the process. Order that the charter be reproduced in large size, including signatures, and prominently displayed in each school or meeting place so that it can be used as a point of reference at each large or small group meeting related to the process.

**Use the problem statement at the beginning of this proposal, with whatever friendly amendments you have, as our charter. I restate it here:**

*Charter*

*We have agreed that we are not able to continue all existing Cambridge Public Schools or School Programs in their current forms or at their current sites. We have also agreed that we must reduce the differences in outcomes, for both personal growth and educational achievement, among children and among programs.*

*We are committed to a process that will preserve and enhance existing successful programs in order to address the immediate fiscal crisis, better prioritize our resources in the future, and improve all Cambridge school children's outcomes in both personal growth and educational achievement.*

- Vote Agreement that no issue is off the table
- Vote Agreement to request that decision-makers, including members of the voting majority of 12/17 of the School Committee, other School Committee members who are now ready to join them, the City Manager, a majority of the City Councilors, the Superintendent of Schools, the Chief Operating Officer of the Cambridge Public Schools, the Cambridge Teachers' Association, the Principals' convened as a K-8 Management Team, and each School Council, honestly and succinctly identify in writing what their "deal-breaker" issues are so that these issues can be honestly and constructively considered and addressed. The "deal-breaker" list would need to be submitted to the School Committee and made part of the public record **by the close of business Thursday, January 12th.**
- Vote Agreement that any K-8 school or K-8 school program not submitting a "deal-breaker" list by the established date will be "Put On Notice". "Notice" will be that if it does not subsequently submit a "deal-breaker" list and a "Declaration of Intent" (developed according to the guidelines below) by February 1<sup>st</sup>, that the school or program will be **assigned** to a discussion with another school or program under the "Declaration of Intent" process. This assignment will be by a simple majority vote of the School Committee after consultation with the School Councils of potential partner schools or programs for the "Noticed" school or program. The assignment by the School Committee must be accepted or rejected by the School Council of the assignee school or program by a formal vote within six days of the assignment vote by the School Committee.
- Vote Agreement to **require a "Declaration of Intent"** by February 1st, by any stakeholder group which has authority over the design of K-8 school programs (especially including **every** School Council of **every** school or school program, and **every** faculty body at **each** school or school program), and request such **Declarations** or participation in **Declarations** developed by schools or school programs by the Cambridge Teachers

Association as an organization, any local community colleges or four year colleges, businesses that source labor through those who leave or complete the high school, local agencies such as public or private social service agencies or city departments such as human services or law enforcement which are involved with school-age youth, etc.

- Vote Agreement on simple guidelines for electronic formatting of the **Declarations of Intent** so they can be easily provided electronically, as well as in hard copy, in the form of one compiled document at various stages of the process specified below. A guideline, for example, might be that documents will be in black and white, primarily in 10, 11, or 12-point font, in Microsoft Word, and submitted in hard copy on plain white paper, on diskette, and as e-mail attachments to the Secretary of the School Committee.
- The **Declarations of Intent** should be as brief and clear as possible, but be as complete as possible. A *Declaration* should quickly tell the reader details of how those making the *Declaration* have done the following:
  - How they have begun intensive discussions on how to create more space in successful programs for more students who may be coming from closed programs, and with whom they are having these discussions. "With whom" can be with other School Councils or with any relevant city, county, state, or federal departments or programs that operate locally or close by; "with whom" can also be with colleges, universities, businesses, or private agencies, offering space, staffing, specific expert technical advice, funding, or other resources
  - How they have begun to plan to restructure their own administrative and instructional or counseling staff to make that expansion work. In the case of *Declarations* that include a school or program partnering with a non-School Department agency, this would apply only to the parts of the partnering organization that will deal with K-8 school children
  - How they have identified the physical space they will need to use to conduct the program and where that space is; what expenses, current and new, should be anticipated to run the program in that space, and how that compares to current costs for current programs in their current space
  - How they are producing a draft plan that describes how they will address the issue of finding appropriate placements for any children who will no longer be included in a dissolved program and when the plan will be completed
  - What their overall **expense reduction or increase targets will be**, how they will be achieved, how or why the plan meets the target, and why the size of the proposed reduction or increase is justified. A clear, accurate statement of per pupil costs in an Intended reduced, same-sized, or expanded program must be made

- Any specific, short-term resource needs they have: for access to data, for expert help in program design, for assistance in communication with parents who have not been active in the change process so far, for transportation services for parents, or administrative help. This should include a specific proposal naming the help they want to get, when and where it is needed, the person or persons they'd like to have provide it, and the cost if that person or service is not provided by a city or state employee or through a city or state agency.
- How they will identify the critical elements of the program they are trying to expand so that it will be clear what will make the expanded program they offer successful with the particular students and the new number of students who will be part of the a reduced, expanded, or new program.
- How staff will be designated for reassignment, or how staff will be hired, for reduced, expanded, or new programs, particularly where School Councils have developed specific hiring or assignment processes that are to remain in place.
- Critical additional criteria or information that the School Committee, at its discretion, and by majority vote that is recorded, wishes to add to this requirement.

**If it is possible to wait, I propose Monday, February 3rd, at 5PM as the date certain for the submission of *Declarations*** if, by giving School Councils an extra, non-holiday, working weekend, we will create more time for collaborations to develop and clearer, more succinct plans to be written.

- Vote Agreement that *Declarations of Intent* will be compiled and available to the public electronically, and at cost in hard copy, by Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Vote Agreement that *Declarations of Intent* be reviewed at Special School Committee meetings to be held on Tuesday February 24<sup>th</sup> and February 28<sup>th</sup> that will run from 6PM to no later than 10PM, with time for discussion of each *Declaration* apportioned according to the total number of students and teachers impacted (the larger the number impacted, the more time out of the total time of four hours dedicated for discussion).
- Vote Agreement for this process, no continuation of the above meetings or other hearings or meetings similarly prescribed by this plan, is to be allowed beyond 10PM, except in extreme emergency as declared by a 2/3 vote of all the voting members School Committee (not just those present at that moment). This will contribute to the overall orderliness, respect for the other obligations of the School Committee, and participating staff, parents, and children, as well as the thoughtfulness of the process.
- Vote Agreement that all *Declarations of Intent* will at that time be returned to their submitting schools and stakeholders by the School Committee,

acting with the Superintendent, the Chief Operating Officer, the Assistant Superintendents, and other Senior Management staff, for further development in response to School Committee and other discussion.

- Vote Agreement that School Committee members, the Superintendent and other Senior Management staff will each be available, upon request and as practical, to consult on site to at least one *Declaration of Intent* partnership, and in such a manner that each partnership shall have access to adequate consultation from School Committee members or Senior Management Staff, during the *Revision of Declarations Process*.
- Vote Agreement that **Revised Declarations of Intent**, in prescribed electronic format and in hard copy, are due back to the School Committee on **Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 5PM**
- Vote Agreement that all *Revised Declarations of Intent* will be compiled into a single document and made available electronically on a specific, separate page of the City of Cambridge Public Schools web site established for this purpose, and that \_\_\_ hundred hard copies will also be made available to the public at true cost per copy, **beginning Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup>**
- Vote Agreement that *Revised Declarations of Intent* will be reviewed at a Special School Committee meeting to be held **on Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> from 6PM to 10PM**, with time for discussion apportioned by the same method as that proposed for the meetings of February 24<sup>th</sup> and February 26<sup>th</sup>. Extension of the time of the meeting beyond 10PM will only be by the declaration of extreme emergency according to the process described earlier in this Plan for February 24<sup>th</sup> and February 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Vote Agreement that on **Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>**, the School Committee will hold a public hearing on the question of which of the *Revised Declarations of Intent* it ought to accept, and which it ought to oppose, and for members of the public to come forth with any alternative proposals. **The hearing will be held from 6PM to 10PM**, and time will be extended only by declaration of extreme emergency according to the process described earlier in this Plan for February 24<sup>th</sup> and February 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Vote Agreement that on **Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**, the School Committee will hold a special meeting to discuss or respond to recommendations made by the stakeholders or other members of the public at the Tuesday hearing. This meeting, too, shall be held from 6PM to 10PM.
- Note: By this time, the School Committee Majority of 12/17, and others who have joined it, may reach consensus on which of the *Revised Declarations of Intent* it wishes to move forward for adoption by the Committee, and which others should be denied. In this case, motions may be brought to accept certain *Revised Declarations of Intent* as policy for the

opening of Schools in September 2004, and/or to deny others, **removing them from further discussion**. Therefore, on January 7<sup>th</sup>, :

- The Schools will be closed the week of April 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> for Patriots Week and School Vacation
- Vote Agreement that at a meeting on **Tuesday April 25<sup>th</sup>**, all remaining *Revised Declarations of Intent* will be voted up or down by the full School Committee by simple majority vote, recorded in each case.
- Vote Agreement that the process for voting at this meeting will be as follows:
  - All *Revised Declarations of Intent* intended to be put up for a vote at this meeting must be identified and organized into a list format identifying the partner school and/or school program and/or agencies involved. This can be done at the actual meeting if necessary, but must be done before a vote is taken on any one of the *Revised Declarations*.
  - The School Committee may decide, by simple majority vote, that it can amend a *Revised Declaration* by simple majority vote, provided that, if it does vote to give itself the right to amend, any amendment that shall be offered to any *Revised Declaration* shall have been discussed by and approved by vote of the School Council representing the school or school program who submitted the *Revised Declaration*. This vote must have taken place prior to the meeting of the School Committee during which the amended *Revised Declaration* is vote.
  - All motions will be stated in the affirmative (“Move to accept the *Revised Declaration of Intent* of the \_\_\_\_ School and the \_\_\_\_ School and \_\_\_\_\_ College”) so that proposals are all voted simply up or down. Voting will be on entire *Revised Declarations*, as amended if the above process for amendment is invoked.
  - All votes on all *Revised Declarations* will be taken in succession according to the order of the list described above, and with votes for and votes against of each member recorded.
- Vote Agreement that those *Revised Declarations of Intent* which are voted down will be removed from further discussion as part of this process. Those voted forward will be implemented, and will be compiled into a single document that will serve as the ***Core Plan for Operation of the K-8 Schools and Programs of the Cambridge Public Schools*** for the 2004/2005 school year.

## APPENDIX

### What are the assumptions behind this proposal?

#### THE PROCESS

- The process approaches the problem as identifying programs for expansion and programs that should be reduced or dissolved and allows programs to relate size, cost, program design, and space issues to each other
- The process approaches the solution from the point of view of at minimum trying to preserve good programs, taking this as the lynchpin of our strategy for cutback management. Because of our system's poor match of available facilities, available teachers with appropriate skill sets, and up to now, the assertion of "deal-breaker" issues, we have not been able to create a simple or obvious solution by making room for all children in existing successful programs, whether at the sites where they are currently located or at different sites. This process requires that each school identify how it can both expand and be well-sited.
- The time allotted for us to accomplish this task is very short, but not too short. We must agree that we can do this and will do this on schedule
- The working majority of the School Committee must stay together as a working majority to see the process through. The majority must function as a de facto steering committee. My personal assumption is that this will benefit not only the process and the schools, but also those individual School Committee members who take the lead in collaboration and sticking to the process. It is realistic and important that the five of you expect and feel that this will be the case. The public will respond positively to those who take the lead in making this sustained problem-solving process understandable, humane, thoughtful, and consistent
- More importantly, by committing in advance to see the process through, you will get the best performance from the public and the Superintendent and her staff. The "Steering Committee" model will guarantee to the Senior School Management (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, and Program Directors), the Principals and Assistant Principals, the teaching staff, parents, and active, older schoolchildren, that something will come of all this effort. Contributing, especially by finding things about which to be flexible, will seem well worth the effort at every level—the home, the school, the middle and upper management teams, and on the School Committee itself.
- The School Department is just like any other large city department in Cambridge facing a change process. The School Department is not the only department that experiences the mismatch of facilities and program activities or capacities, the mismatch of the level of resources that will be available with the level perceived to be required for

- excellent performance, or the mismatch of workforce skills sets with the staffing needs of the clients/customers.
- At this specific moment, the School Department is **only one of a number of City departments** facing drastic loss of supporting revenue because of cuts in state aid, the restructuring of federal programs, or increased needs in other areas. This means that it is not constructive for the Schools to see themselves as "special victims" of anyone's "budget axe".

#### SMALL INNOVATIONS AND INSIDE MONEY

- The School Department, like other large non-profit systems based in Greater Boston (both governmental and private) should have, as a goal, yearly budgets that plan for a 2-3% surplus of available revenue over expenses. This surplus should be used to invest in significant, long-range improvements. If we can provide a 1% surplus for two years running, and grow it to 2-3% *or more* in subsequent years, we will be laying the groundwork for the management of crises to overcome our reliance on management by crisis.

#### DEFINING OUR SERVICE LINES, BIG INNOVATIONS, AND OUTSIDE MONEY

- Early in the process that was initiated last year, the Superintendent defined three or four categories of schools (traditional, alternative, magnet). This is a good start towards a consistent development process for the system. This specific process is usually a useful one in for-profit and non-profit organizations alike. It is referred to as "defining your service lines". In large organizations, every few years, leaders and senior management meet to discuss their "service lines and product lines."
- The list of service lines that was developed on the superintendent's "first cut" is not yet accurate, in part because what was being attempted was to group programs so as to "line them up" for potential funding. It includes a service we simply do not provide: by any definition, in the educational literature, we do not have a single true magnet school in our system. We cannot simply "create them" by re-naming current programs, especially programs which have notable weaknesses or do not have district-wide appeal. While political astuteness about forthcoming grants is important, it can confuse us about what is real and what is not about what services we really provide, and those services at which we excel and which are likely to attract outside interest.
- Tempting as it may be, it is not a good change process practice to make up a "service line" out of thin air because short term revenues, such as the potential federal funding for "magnet" schools, may become available. The \$1-2 million dollars in magnet money that we might get through such a ruse will be spread over 5 years (representing less than .05% of our budget each year). The planning for this proposal, which would involve all our federal and state political contacts, will consume key senior administrators, principals, and potential outside partners from the college and business communities when their energies are needed elsewhere.

- Further, such an effort will pull us off course into an area where our track record is dubious. We should rely on our strengths, not our weaknesses, when we are in a period of crisis. We are good at creating and filling alternative programs, or helping transform traditional schools that have strong faculty and parental commitment into better traditional schools. We have failed to create a single meaningful magnet school based on a content theme such as "The Computer School" or "The Science Magnet". There is little evidence today that we know how to create "Arts" or other magnets, or that there is really a demand for them, or a match with unserved needs of large groups of students or potential students. A planning grant to analyze one kind of "magnet" program that we need, that we can fill with students, and that we can run successfully (and that guides us in how to do those things) might be an interesting way to develop a relationship with a funding source interested in this issue.
  
- The amount of money available for operating a new "magnet" program under federal funding pales in significance to other, larger pots of money that we can eventually access to build on our strengths if we get our house in order and have a real plan. A stronger, more enduring idea than re-naming existing schools as magnets, and an idea likely to attract more outside funding over time, is likely to emerge only after a combination of a process like the one in the Plan proposed above and a grant-funded planning process undertaken with an outside, partnering organization.
  
- We need to define less rhetorically and more specifically, then, the types of programs we can run well for the clients/customers we have before we can successfully go after significant amounts of outside funding. We need to make sure that we have restructured ourselves so that we can run them well with existing sources of funds. Then, we must build or shrink the capacity of each program as needed, while developing new, innovative sources of funds. Our system has been entirely neglectful of the opportunities for multi-year, multi-million dollar initiatives from public or private sources that take years to cultivate and win, and which generally go to those who have the kind of strong program focus that we will have at the end of this process.
  
- Unfortunately, we compete geographically with a larger and, historically, even needier school system in Boston, for the attention of large national foundations. But strong ideas that have relevance to other systems, throughout the country or throughout the world, drive and attract partnerships--whether with federal agencies or large, national foundations. These strong program ideas attract large sources of "outside" funding that will, in turn, catch the attention of other potentially strong partners. We should put our own house in order, find out what our best "wares" are and put them on display, and then, perhaps, look for regional collaborations with other urban school districts to go after larger pots of money.

**Leading the Change:**  
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**Them, Regarding the Strategic Approach to**  
**Implementing the Resolution of December 17, 2002**

The School Committee Resolution of December 17th, initiated by Richard Harding, was expanded by the Mayor to specifically include reduction in the number of programs being run by the system. It was supported in the initial procedural vote by the working majority of Richard Harding, Mayor Michael Sullivan, Joe Grassi, Alan Price, and Fred Fantini. It gives us some time (about 17 weeks) to affirm our destination, investigate and create some pathways, build a vehicle, and drive it to our destination on time. This is a proposal addressed to the members of that working majority, and others who are now ready to join them. This proposal specifically describes a process that you can use to achieve this. The process begins with a series of motions made and votes taken on Tuesday January 7<sup>th</sup> and ends with final selection among proposed plans by Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup>.

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### What is the problem we are trying to solve since December 17th?

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Question: *How can we preserve and enhance existing successful programs to address the immediate fiscal crisis, better prioritize our resources in the future, and improve all Cambridge school children's outcomes in both personal growth and educational achievement?*

I propose that we agree on this problem statement as the "anchor" for our decisions between now and May.

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The hearing process we all experienced is part of our changed reality. Policy and political lines have been crossed, re-crossed, and redesigned, in the minds of current K-8 parents, potential K-8 parents, of many of your fellow elected city officials, and the public at large.

At the same time, the teaching staff, through their staff meetings at their respective schools, have had to look, all along, at the issues at hand, from the point of view of implementing any changes that were developed. As we go along, they remain a rich source of ideas to solve "the problem" however we may reframe, re-state, or re-define it. They must speak in their own voices and tell us if they can make any proposed solution work.

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- (2) For this working majority of decision-makers to stick to the steps they have chosen.
- (3) The presence of a "champion"--a senior leader who has the authority, credibility, and respect to announce that change is coming and to be heard. **Right now, you, the working majority of December 17<sup>th</sup>, are as a group--the champion!** Other Committee members, who opposed the majority that night, either through procedural motions or on the final vote, may now be ready to join you in that role.

In fact, it is possible that this plan will **only** work, and others will only join you, if you, the voting majority on the procedural motion prior to the final vote on 12/17—Richard Harding, Mayor Sullivan, Joe Grassi, Alan Price, and Fred Fantini--**agree to start this work together as a de facto steering committee** to champion this process through to the "new beginning" that it will create for the public schools.

What are some types of organizational or systems change processes that we can use as reference points?

The three elements or "steps" above are typical of change processes, whether the change process is one of program or organizational improvement, expansion of the number of clients/customers served by the organization or program, or, as in our case, "cutback management".

Cutback management is not unique to schools or government agencies. It is a type of change management that takes place regularly in every organization or system, public or private, non-profit or for-profit, if that system is healthy.

Beyond the 2004/2005 School Year, change of all the types named above will continue to happen in our system at different times. The question always will be: **will change be managed well so that our organization or system, along with clients/customers, can reap some benefits, or at the very least, minimize damage?**

## B. THE PROPOSED PLAN

**This specific plan is being proposed for the Cambridge School Committee, the School Department, and the School Councils. It is driven from the school or program level up. Primarily it relies on the School Councils and their constituent parts to find partners, reduce the total number of classrooms in the system, and therefore save costs to the system.**

Based on other change processes, which I have seen and which have worked, I am proposing a plan that consists of change management elements that would be found in any organizational change process.

I have adapted these as specific "steps" for the Cambridge School Committee, the Senior Managers of the system (the Superintendent, the COO, and the Assistant Superintendents), the principals and the teachers, the School Councils, the parents and active, older children who want to participate, and for other stakeholder organizations already engaged with Cambridge school children.

The plan is designed so that each group, or any organization that falls into one of these groups, can take these steps on their own, or together with any others.

### Open Up Roles for Non-School Department Programs with Public School Children and Public School Children's Families

The process is also designed so that Principals, Faculty, School Councils or programs can extend their "conversations" for change to include any organization in Cambridge that serves school age youth enrolled in the schools, if an organization with whom they want to work can contribute space, staffing, expert technical advice, funding, or other resources.

When we look at "pockets" of student needs, it may be, (for example only) that organizations such as Just-A-Start, the Department of Human Services Youth Programs (for example, the Community Learning Center adult education program serving many immigrant school parents with children impacted by Unz, After Schools, Recreation Programs), or staff of the Courts, can expand current roles or develop new ones that especially may benefit older youths in K-8 classes. The number of school children or school parents who are served by these agencies may be small from a citywide perspective, but the services they might receive may prove crucial to making a specific plan for change work at the school or program level.

### Who will get things started?

The Cambridge School Committee is a representative, governmental group that operates by parliamentary procedure. The voting School Committee majority of 12/17 needs to kick the process off **by voting on the following set of principles in a formal motion:**

- Issue a charter or mission statement for the process, signed by the voting School Majority of 12/17 and others on the Committee who agree to it, and by those managers responsible

for facilitating the process. Order that the charter be reproduced in large size, including signatures, and prominently displayed in each school or meeting place so that it can be used as a point of reference at each large or small group meeting related to the process.

**Use the problem statement at the beginning of this proposal, with whatever friendly amendments you have, as our charter. I restate it here:**

*Charter*

*We have agreed that we are not able to continue all existing Cambridge Public Schools or School Programs in their current forms or at their current sites. We have also agreed that we must reduce the differences in outcomes, for both personal growth and educational achievement, among children and among programs.*

*We are committed to a process that will preserve and enhance existing successful programs in order to address the immediate fiscal crisis, better prioritize our resources in the future, and improve all Cambridge school children's outcomes in both personal growth and educational achievement.*

- Vote Agreement that no issue is off the table
- Vote Agreement to request that decision-makers, including members of the voting majority of 12/17 of the School Committee, other School Committee members who are now ready to join them, the City Manager, a majority of the City Councilors, the Superintendent of Schools, the Chief Operating Officer of the Cambridge Public Schools, the Cambridge Teachers' Association, the Principals' convened as a K-8 Management Team, and each School Council, honestly and succinctly identify in writing what their "deal-breaker" issues are so that these issues can be honestly and constructively considered and addressed. The "deal-breaker" list would need to be submitted to the School Committee and made part of the public record **by the close of business Thursday, January 12th.**
- Vote Agreement that any K-8 school or K-8 school program not submitting a "deal-breaker" list by the established date will be "Put On Notice". "Notice" will be that if it does not subsequently submit a "deal-breaker" list and a "Declaration of Intent" (developed according to the guidelines below) by February 1<sup>st</sup>, that the school or program will be **assigned** to a discussion with another school or program under the "Declaration of Intent" process. This assignment will be by a simple majority vote of the School Committee after consultation with the School Councils of potential partner schools or programs for the "Noticed" school or program. The assignment by the School Committee must be accepted or rejected by the School Council of the assignee school or program by a formal vote within six days of the assignment vote by the School Committee.
- Vote Agreement to **require a "Declaration of Intent"** by February 1st, by any stakeholder group which has authority over the design of K-8 school programs (especially including **every** School Council of **every** school or school program, and **every** faculty body at **each** school or school program), and request such **Declarations** or participation in **Declarations** developed by schools or school programs by the Cambridge Teachers

Association as an organization, any local community colleges or four year colleges, businesses that source labor through those who leave or complete the high school, local agencies such as public or private social service agencies or city departments such as human services or law enforcement which are involved with school-age youth, etc.

- Vote Agreement on simple guidelines for electronic formatting of the **Declarations of Intent** so they can be easily provided electronically, as well as in hard copy, in the form of one compiled document at various stages of the process specified below. A guideline, for example, might be that documents will be in black and white, primarily in 10, 11, or 12-point font, in Microsoft Word, and submitted in hard copy on plain white paper, on diskette, and as e-mail attachments to the Secretary of the School Committee.
- The **Declarations of Intent** should be as brief and clear as possible, but be as complete as possible. A *Declaration* should quickly tell the reader details of how those making the *Declaration* have done the following:
  - How they have begun intensive discussions on how to create more space in successful programs for more students who may be coming from closed programs, and with whom they are having these discussions. "With whom" can be with other School Councils or with any relevant city, county, state, or federal departments or programs that operate locally or close by; "with whom" can also be with colleges, universities, businesses, or private agencies, offering space, staffing, specific expert technical advice, funding, or other resources
  - How they have begun to plan to restructure their own administrative and instructional or counseling staff to make that expansion work. In the case of *Declarations* that include a school or program partnering with a non-School Department agency, this would apply only to the parts of the partnering organization that will deal with K-8 school children
  - How they have identified the physical space they will need to use to conduct the program and where that space is; what expenses, current and new, should be anticipated to run the program in that space, and how that compares to current costs for current programs in their current space
  - How they are producing a draft plan that describes how they will address the issue of finding appropriate placements for any children who will no longer be included in a dissolved program and when the plan will be completed
  - What their overall **expense reduction or increase targets will be**, how they will be achieved, how or why the plan meets the target, and why the size of the proposed reduction or increase is justified. A clear, accurate statement of per pupil costs in an Intended reduced, same-sized, or expanded program must be made

- Any specific, short-term resource needs they have: for access to data, for expert help in program design, for assistance in communication with parents who have not been active in the change process so far, for transportation services for parents, or administrative help. This should include a specific proposal naming the help they want to get, when and where it is needed, the person or persons they'd like to have provide it, and the cost if that person or service is not provided by a city or state employee or through a city or state agency.
- How they will identify the critical elements of the program they are trying to expand so that it will be clear what will make the expanded program they offer successful with the particular students and the new number of students who will be part of the a reduced, expanded, or new program.
- How staff will be designated for reassignment, or how staff will be hired, for reduced, expanded, or new programs, particularly where School Councils have developed specific hiring or assignment processes that are to remain in place.
- Critical additional criteria or information that the School Committee, at its discretion, and by majority vote that is recorded, wishes to add to this requirement.

**If it is possible to wait, I propose Monday, February 3rd, at 5PM as the date certain for the submission of *Declarations*** if, by giving School Councils an extra, non-holiday, working weekend, we will create more time for collaborations to develop and clearer, more succinct plans to be written.

- Vote Agreement that *Declarations of Intent* will be compiled and available to the public electronically, and at cost in hard copy, by Monday, February 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Vote Agreement that *Declarations of Intent* be reviewed at Special School Committee meetings to be held on Tuesday February 24<sup>th</sup> and February 28<sup>th</sup> that will run from 6PM to **no later than 10PM**, with time for discussion of each *Declaration* apportioned according to the total number of students and teachers impacted (the larger the number impacted, the more time out of the total time of four hours dedicated for discussion).
- Vote Agreement for this process, no continuation of the above meetings or other hearings or meetings similarly prescribed by this plan, is to be allowed beyond 10PM, except in extreme emergency as declared by a 2/3 vote of all the voting members School Committee (not just those present at that moment). This will contribute to the overall orderliness, respect for the other obligations of the School Committee, and participating staff, parents, and children, as well as the thoughtfulness of the process.
- Vote Agreement that all *Declarations of Intent* will at that time be returned to their submitting schools and stakeholders by the School Committee,

acting with the Superintendent, the Chief Operating Officer, the Assistant Superintendents, and other Senior Management staff, for further development in response to School Committee and other discussion.

- Vote Agreement that School Committee members, the Superintendent and other Senior Management staff will each be available, upon request and as practical, to consult on site to at least one *Declaration of Intent* partnership, and in such a manner that each partnership shall have access to adequate consultation from School Committee members or Senior Management Staff, during the *Revision of Declarations Process*.
- Vote Agreement that **Revised Declarations of Intent**, in prescribed electronic format and in hard copy, are due back to the School Committee on **Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at 5PM**
- Vote Agreement that all *Revised Declarations of Intent* will be compiled into a single document and made available electronically on a specific, separate page of the City of Cambridge Public Schools web site established for this purpose, and that \_\_\_ hundred hard copies will also be made available to the public at true cost per copy, **beginning Friday, March 21<sup>st</sup>**
- Vote Agreement that *Revised Declarations of Intent* will be reviewed at a Special School Committee meeting to be held on **Tuesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> from 6PM to 10PM**, with time for discussion apportioned by the same method as that proposed for the meetings of February 24<sup>th</sup> and February 26<sup>th</sup>. Extension of the time of the meeting beyond 10PM will only be by the declaration of extreme emergency according to the process described earlier in this Plan for February 24<sup>th</sup> and February 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Vote Agreement that on **Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>**, the School Committee will hold a public hearing on the question of which of the *Revised Declarations of Intent* it ought to accept, and which it ought to oppose, and for members of the public to come forth with any alternative proposals. **The hearing will be held from 6PM to 10PM**, and time will be extended only by declaration of extreme emergency according to the process described earlier in this Plan for February 24<sup>th</sup> and February 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Vote Agreement that on **Thursday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**, the School Committee will hold a special meeting to discuss or respond to recommendations made by the stakeholders or other members of the public at the Tuesday hearing. This meeting, too, shall be held from 6PM to 10PM.
- Note: By this time, the School Committee Majority of 12/17, and others who have joined it, may reach consensus on which of the *Revised Declarations of Intent* it wishes to move forward for adoption by the Committee, and which others should be denied. In this case, motions may be brought to accept certain *Revised Declarations of Intent* as policy for the

opening of Schools in September 2004, and/or to deny others, **removing them from further discussion**. Therefore, on January 7<sup>th</sup>, :

- The Schools will be closed the week of April 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> for Patriots Week and School Vacation
- Vote Agreement that at a meeting on **Tuesday April 25<sup>th</sup>**, all remaining *Revised Declarations of Intent* will be voted up or down by the full School Committee by simple majority vote, recorded in each case.
- Vote Agreement that the process for voting at this meeting will be as follows:
  - All *Revised Declarations of Intent* intended to be put up for a vote at this meeting must be identified and organized into a list format identifying the partner school and/or school program and/or agencies involved. This can be done at the actual meeting if necessary, but must be done before a vote is taken on any one of the *Revised Declarations*.
  - The School Committee may decide, by simple majority vote, that it can amend a *Revised Declaration* by simple majority vote, provided that, if it does vote to give itself the right to amend, any amendment that shall be offered to any *Revised Declaration* shall have been discussed by and approved by vote of the School Council representing the school or school program who submitted the *Revised Declaration*. This vote must have taken place prior to the meeting of the School Committee during which the amended *Revised Declaration* is vote.
  - All motions will be stated in the affirmative (“Move to accept the *Revised Declaration of Intent* of the \_\_\_\_ School and the \_\_\_\_ School and \_\_\_\_\_ College”) so that proposals are all voted simply up or down. Voting will be on entire *Revised Declarations*, as amended if the above process for amendment is invoked.
  - All votes on all *Revised Declarations* will be taken in succession according to the order of the list described above, and with votes for and votes against of each member recorded.
- Vote Agreement that those *Revised Declarations of Intent* which are voted down will be removed from further discussion as part of this process. Those voted forward will be implemented, and will be compiled into a single document that will serve as the ***Core Plan for Operation of the K-8 Schools and Programs of the Cambridge Public Schools*** for the 2004/2005 school year.

## APPENDIX

### What are the assumptions behind this proposal?

#### THE PROCESS

- The process approaches the problem as identifying programs for expansion and programs that should be reduced or dissolved and allows programs to relate size, cost, program design, and space issues to each other
- The process approaches the solution from the point of view of at minimum trying to preserve good programs, taking this as the lynchpin of our strategy for cutback management. Because of our system's poor match of available facilities, available teachers with appropriate skill sets, and up to now, the assertion of "deal-breaker" issues, we have not been able to create a simple or obvious solution by making room for all children in existing successful programs, whether at the sites where they are currently located or at different sites. This process requires that each school identify how it can both expand and be well-sited.
- The time allotted for us to accomplish this task is very short, but not too short. We must agree that we can do this and will do this on schedule
- The working majority of the School Committee must stay together as a working majority to see the process through. The majority must function as a de facto steering committee. My personal assumption is that this will benefit not only the process and the schools, but also those individual School Committee members who take the lead in collaboration and sticking to the process. It is realistic and important that the five of you expect and feel that this will be the case. The public will respond positively to those who take the lead in making this sustained problem-solving process understandable, humane, thoughtful, and consistent
- More importantly, by committing in advance to see the process through, you will get the best performance from the public and the Superintendent and her staff. The "Steering Committee" model will guarantee to the Senior School Management (Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents, and Program Directors), the Principals and Assistant Principals, the teaching staff, parents, and active, older schoolchildren, that something will come of all this effort. Contributing, especially by finding things about which to be flexible, will seem well worth the effort at every level—the home, the school, the middle and upper management teams, and on the School Committee itself.
- The School Department is just like any other large city department in Cambridge facing a change process. The School Department is not the only department that experiences the mismatch of facilities and program activities or capacities, the mismatch of the level of resources that will be available with the level perceived to be required for

- excellent performance, or the mismatch of workforce skills sets with the staffing needs of the clients/customers.
- At this specific moment, the School Department is **only one of a number of City departments** facing drastic loss of supporting revenue because of cuts in state aid, the restructuring of federal programs, or increased needs in other areas. This means that it is not constructive for the Schools to see themselves as "special victims" of anyone's "budget axe".

#### SMALL INNOVATIONS AND INSIDE MONEY

- The School Department, like other large non-profit systems based in Greater Boston (both governmental and private) should have, as a goal, yearly budgets that plan for a 2-3% surplus of available revenue over expenses. This surplus should be used to invest in significant, long-range improvements. If we can provide a 1% surplus for two years running, and grow it to 2-3% *or more* in subsequent years, we will be laying the groundwork for the management of crises to overcome our reliance on management by crisis.

#### DEFINING OUR SERVICE LINES, BIG INNOVATIONS, AND OUTSIDE MONEY

- Early in the process that was initiated last year, the Superintendent defined three or four categories of schools (traditional, alternative, magnet). This is a good start towards a consistent development process for the system. This specific process is usually a useful one in for-profit and non-profit organizations alike. It is referred to as "defining your service lines". In large organizations, every few years, leaders and senior management meet to discuss their "service lines and product lines."
- The list of service lines that was developed on the superintendent's "first cut" is not yet accurate, in part because what was being attempted was to group programs so as to "line them up" for potential funding. It includes a service we simply do not provide: by any definition, in the educational literature, we do not have a single true magnet school in our system. We cannot simply "create them" by re-naming current programs, especially programs which have notable weaknesses or do not have district-wide appeal. While political astuteness about forthcoming grants is important, it can confuse us about what is real and what is not about what services we really provide, and those services at which we excel and which are likely to attract outside interest.
- Tempting as it may be, it is not a good change process practice to make up a "service line" out of thin air because short term revenues, such as the potential federal funding for "magnet" schools, may become available. The \$1-2 million dollars in magnet money that we might get through such a ruse will be spread over 5 years (representing less than .05% of our budget each year). The planning for this proposal, which would involve all our federal and state political contacts, will consume key senior administrators, principals, and potential outside partners from the college and business communities when their energies are needed elsewhere.

- Further, such an effort will pull us off course into an area where our track record is dubious. We should rely on our strengths, not our weaknesses, when we are in a period of crisis. We are good at creating and filling alternative programs, or helping transform traditional schools that have strong faculty and parental commitment into better traditional schools. We have failed to create a single meaningful magnet school based on a content theme such as "The Computer School" or "The Science Magnet". There is little evidence today that we know how to create "Arts" or other magnets, or that there is really a demand for them, or a match with unserved needs of large groups of students or potential students. A planning grant to analyze one kind of "magnet" program that we need, that we can fill with students, and that we can run successfully (and that guides us in how to do those things) might be an interesting way to develop a relationship with a funding source interested in this issue.
- The amount of money available for operating a new "magnet" program under federal funding pales in significance to other, larger pots of money that we can eventually access to build on our strengths if we get our house in order and have a real plan. A stronger, more enduring idea than re-naming existing schools as magnets, and an idea likely to attract more outside funding over time, is likely to emerge only after a combination of a process like the one in the Plan proposed above and a grant-funded planning process undertaken with an outside, partnering organization.
- We need to define less rhetorically and more specifically, then, the types of programs we can run well for the clients/customers we have before we can successfully go after significant amounts of outside funding. We need to make sure that we have restructured ourselves so that we can run them well with existing sources of funds. Then, we must build or shrink the capacity of each program as needed, while developing new, innovative sources of funds. Our system has been entirely neglectful of the opportunities for multi-year, multi-million dollar initiatives from public or private sources that take years to cultivate and win, and which generally go to those who have the kind of strong program focus that we will have at the end of this process.
- Unfortunately, we compete geographically with a larger and, historically, even needier school system in Boston, for the attention of large national foundations. But strong ideas that have relevance to other systems, throughout the country or throughout the world, drive and attract partnerships--whether with federal agencies or large, national foundations. These strong program ideas attract large sources of "outside" funding that will, in turn, catch the attention of other potentially strong partners. We should put our own house in order, find out what our best "wares" are and put them on display, and then, perhaps, look for regional collaborations with other urban school districts to go after larger pots of money.

4

*72 Montgomery Street • Cambridge, MA 02140*

Margaret Drury, Clerk  
City Council  
City of Cambridge-City Hall  
795 Massachusetts Avenue  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Margaret,

I would very much appreciate it if you could make the enclosed document, the proposal entitled "Leading the Change", a part of the communications packet for the next City Council meeting.

This is a detailed proposal written in direct response to the Mayor's request, in his role as Chair of the School Committee, for assistance from school parents. He sought this assistance in connection with planning for the voted upon reduction in the number of classrooms to be offered by the Cambridge Public Schools in K-8 programs, beginning with the September 2004 school year.

As the motion of the School Committee, to which this responds, has set a deadline of 5 months for this planning process, it is of some urgency that the plan be widely circulated to public officials, including the City Councilors who played an active role in the School Committee's proceedings.

Thank you very much. If you wish to contact me at any time, I can be reached at 617-543-6792, or at my home, 617-492-1620.

Sincerely,

*Stuart Gedal*  
Stuart Gedal

S-17

**Consent Communication #4**

A communication was received from Stuart Gedal, regarding planning for a reduction in the number of classrooms provided by the Cambridge Public Schools, K-8.

**In City Council January 13, 2003**

**PLACED ON FILE.**