

JOHN R. MOOT
44 Coolidge Hill Road
Cambridge, MA 02138

COPY

January 25, 1995

Mr. Robert W. Healy, City Manager
CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Bob:

I had called to get an appointment with you to discuss the school budget, but later I realized that there was no need for me to impose upon your time to that extent.

As you are more than aware, Cambridge school expenditures are among the highest in the Commonwealth, and the results based upon statewide testing are disappointing. The Alliance for Cambridge documented these facts well in its report on the schools.

The citizens of Cambridge are upset. They do not understand why our expenditures are above average and our performances below average.

There is a widespread feeling that there is more administrative staff than necessary. But none of us have the time or competence to determine the facts.

The City Council must vote on the School budget in a few months. They should have some basis for evaluating the budget. There are two factors involved: (1) The curriculum and teaching skills; and (2) The organization and administration.

For now, I propose that the Council should address the second factor in its consideration of the budget. But they cannot do so without professional assistance.

Therefore, I suggest that you engage the services of a consulting firm to study the organization and administration of the schools and report back by June 1st so that you and the Council have adequate information upon which to act. This idea, I believe, is not new, and, in fact, I believe that you have considered it before. So I write simply to encourage you to act now. If the consultants find excessive administrative costs, or if they do not, you and the Council could act with greater confidence. The concerns of the citizens would have been answered.

Without such a study, all of the taxpayers will remain uneasy, and many will continue to believe that there is too much money being spent on administration. Thank you for giving my thoughts your consideration.

Sincerely,

John R. Moot

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ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

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1995 FEB -2 AM 10:05

BRIDGE MA.

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February 2, 1995

To: Mayor Reeves, Vice Mayor Russell, Councillors Born, Triantafillou,
Sullivan, Toomey, Myers, Duehay, Galluccio.

From: John Moot, 44 Coolidge Hill Rd. Cambridge

Subject: The School Budget.

In July 1993, the Cambridge Alliance published the "White Paper: The Cambridge Public Schools". In the Summary, the Report stated:

Cambridge is spending more money on its school system" (on a per student basis) "than almost any other community in the state, but when it comes to the quality of education, generous funding alone doesn't guarantee academic success.

"Despite high per pupil spending, student scores on standard achievement tests have declined steadily over the past five years, in reverse of the national trend."

As you know, the decision on how much is spent on the Schools is made by you, the Council, not the School Committee. And you must vote on that budget for FY'96 in June.

The taxpayers are upset. Many believe that there is too much money spent on administration. Are they right, or wrong? How are you to know?

No doubt you have reviewed the budget numbers in detail as have many of us. But I suspect that you feel as we do, that the numbers do not tell us whether or not there is too much spent on administration. We need a more thorough investigation of the facts by someone knowledgeable in the field of educational administration.

To get the answer, I should like to suggest that the City Manager engage the services of a capable consulting firm. Whatever the results of the study, you and the public will be relieved of the present uncertainty. Either the budget for administration can or cannot be cut. To deal with the school budget without that information is unfair to the students, teachers and citizens of Cambridge.

I have written to the City Manager on this issue. A copy of my letter follows. Thank you for your attention to this suggestion.

Sincerely


John R. Moot

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Consent Communication #5

A communication was received from John Moot regarding ther School Budget.

In City Council February 6, 1995

Referred to the City
Manager & Supr of
Schools

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