

Important Votes 2006-2007 Cambridge School Committee

The Education Reform Act of 1993 limited the powers of the school committee to three major areas: 1. hire/fire the superintendent and collaborate with the superintendent on setting system-wide goals; 2. “review and approve” the superintendent’s annual budget recommendation (to reach the goals) and 3. set policy for the district. This act gives the superintendent and principals sole day-to-day authority over school operations including the hiring of all personnel with the exception of the district’s special education director and business manager.

Split votes cast during the last term highlight some important differences among school committee members on these issues. (A link to the school committee minutes pertaining to each vote is included in this analysis.) A PRESENT vote usually means a member can’t decide or doesn’t wish to be recorded in the affirmative. A motion requires a majority in the affirmative - or four YEAs -- to pass. Here are some of the most important split votes of the past term:

Goals: February 7, 2006 Meeting

Walser/Schuster motion on Approval of Superintendent’s Goals and Statements for 2005-06 Committee.

Fantini YEA
Grassi YEA
Harding YEA
Nolan **PRESENT**
Schuster YEA
Walser YEA
Reeves YEA

http://www.cpsd.us/Web/SComm/SC_regular_020706.pdf

Budget: March 7, 2006 Meeting

[Note: A debt stabilization fund was established in a prior term specifically to save unanticipated one-time surpluses from increases in state reimbursements and savings from lower-than expected special needs and vocational out-of-district tuitions. The purpose of the fund is to cover anticipated deficits beginning in Fiscal Year ‘08 and extending through FY ‘12 as well as to contribute to interest payments on much-needed school renovations like those at the high school and its facilities and other “green” projects. Votes to reallocate surplus money, to shift funds between the four statutory budget categories (Salaries, Wages & Fringe Benefits; Other Ordinary Maintenance; Travel & Training; and Extraordinary Expenditures) or to deal with a deficit can occur outside the regular budget cycle which begins in November and culminates in a final vote in April for the fiscal year beginning in July.]

Superintendent recommendation to transfer \$944,770 in surplus funds to the FY05/06 Debt Stabilization Account approved at the February 7, 2006 meeting.

Fantini YEA

Grassi YEA
Harding YEA
Nolan **PRESENT**
Schuster YEA
Walser YEA
Reeves YEA

Superintendent recommendation to use \$1.1 million of surplus funds to implement the technology upgrade plan for the entire school district.

Fantini YEA
Grassi YEA
Harding YEA
Nolan **NAY**
Schuster YEA
Walser YEA
Reeves YEA

http://www.cpsd.us/Web/SComm/SC_regular_030706.pdf

Policy: April 4, 2006 Meeting

Grassi/Nolan motion to open up the Amigos School for transfers from outside of Cambridge under the state's School Choice program. Motion stipulates that any non-resident children attending the Amigos under this program cannot transfer to other CPS schools out of Amigos, but it could have prevented transfers into Amigos in future years due to non-residents taking seats

Fantini **NAY**
Grassi **YEA**
Harding **PRESENT**
Nolan **YEA**
Schuster **YEA**
Walser **NAY**
Reeves **NAY**

Fantini/Grassi motion not to participate in state's School Choice program. [School Committees by law must vote not to participate every year.]

Fantini YEA
Grassi YEA
Harding **PRESENT**
Nolan **NAY**
Schuster **NAY**
Walser YEA
Reeves YEA

Grassi/Harding motion to require Superintendent to report on progress of baseline report cards/progress reports. [Note: In the prior 2005-06 term, the School Committee passed a motion by Grassi to mandate uniform report cards for all elementary schools, despite the superintendent's statement that there is no research linking standardized report cards to higher achievement.]

Fantini YEA
Grassi YEA
Harding YEA
Nolan YEA
Schuster YEA
Walser **NAY**
Reeves **PRESENT**

http://www.cpsd.us/Web/SComm/SC_regular_040406.pdf

Montessori Program at Tobin School: June 6, 2006 Meeting

Fantini motion to adopt #06-91, Montessori program at the Tobin School: that the School Committee approve the recommendation to establish a Montessori Program at the Tobin School

Fantini YEA
Grassi YEA
Harding YEA
Nolan **NAY**
Schuster YEA
Walser YEA
Reeves YEA

Goals: June 27, 2006 Meeting

Fantini/Walser motion to adopt School Committee's 2006-7 Goals and Statements.

Fantini YEA
Grassi YEA
Harding YEA
Nolan YEA
Schuster **NAY**
Walser YEA
Reeves YEA

http://www.cpsd.us/Web/SComm/SC_regular_062706.pdf

Superintendent's Contract: September 5, 2006 Meeting

Motion to authorize new contract with the superintendent containing a one-year extension to July 31, 2008 with January 31, 2008 as the deadline for notifying him of any further extension.

Fantini YEA
Grassi YEA
Harding **NAY**
Nolan **NAY**
Schuster YEA
Walser YEA
Reeves **NAY**

Budget: November 11, 2006 Meeting

Nolan/Schuster motion on increasing School Improvement monies to each school by \$50K, despite a request in writing from all the elementary principals asking that the School Committee allow the principals to continue with the budget-decision making process set up by the superintendent in collaboration with the principals.

Fantini NAY
Grassi NAY
Harding NAY
Nolan **YEA**
Schuster **YEA**
Walser NAY
Reeves NAY

http://www.cpsd.us/schcomm/Web/SComm/SC_regular_112106.pdf

Budget: December 5, 2007 Meeting

Nolan motion to charge tuition for families of children under age five who do not qualify for free/reduced lunch to attend the new Montessori program at the Tobin School:

Fantini **ABSENT**
Grassi NAY
Harding NAY
Nolan **YEA**
Schuster NAY
Walser NAY
Reeves **YEA**

http://www.cpsd.us/schcomm/Web/SComm/SC_regular_120506.pdf

Budget: February 13, 2007 Meeting

Nolan/Schuster motion to direct Superintendent to explore doubling School Improvement funds to all schools by cutting one or more of the following: the Cambridge Science Initiative, instructional materials, computer hardware, professional development, curriculum coordination, and/or \$1

million from central administration [The superintendent maintained SIP funds to the schools had already been sufficiently increased and administration had been reduced, and that the principals believed schools were receiving enough funds to execute their school improvement plans and to meet system wide goals.]

Fantini NAY
Grassi NAY
Harding NAY
Nolan **YEA**
Schuster **YEA**
Walser NAY
Reeves **PRESENT**

http://www.cpsd.us/web/SComm/SC_regular_021307.pdf

Policy: February 27, 2007 Meeting

Fantini/Walser motion to bring to 2nd reading and amend the controlled choice plan to change FRL/PL ratio to allow apportion a sufficient number of seats to reflect the change in economic status of in-coming Kindergarten registrants, as well as to add Ks to Haggerty and Tobin and to add English- speaking K students to Amigos.

Fantini YEA
Grassi YEA
Harding YEA
Nolan **ABSENT**
Schuster **ABSENT**
Walser YEA
Reeves YEA

http://www.cpsd.us/web/SComm/SC_special_022707.pdf

Special Education Director: May 1, 2007 Meeting

Hiring of new Sped Director Aida Ramos

Grassi **NAY**
Harding YEA
Nolan **NAY**
Schuster YEA
Walser YEA
Reeves YEA

http://www.cpsd.us/web/SComm/SC_regular_050107.pdf