



SPRINGFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2014 WORKING SESSION

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: 6:10PM

LOCATIONS: 1550 MAIN STREET – BOARD ROOM

PRESENT: Dr. Calvin McFadden, Mr. Christopher Collins, Ms. Barbara Gresham, Attorney Peter Murphy, Ms. Rosa Perez, Ms. Denise Hurst and Mayor Domenic Sarno

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Daniel J. Warwick, Superintendent

ITEMS REQUIRING A VOTE

On a motion made by Mr. Collins and seconded by Dr. McFadden it was voted to approve Putnam students going to Marlborough, MA on November 23-November 25, 2014 to attend the SkillsUSA Leadership Academy.

ROLL CALL

Dr. McFadden	Yes
Mr. Collins	Yes
Ms. Gresham	Yes
Atty. Murphy	Yes
Ms. Perez	Yes
Ms. Hurst	Yes
Mayor Sarno	Yes

Item IIB was delayed

There was extensive discussion on the application for the UP Academy Horace Mann Charter School. Mr. Scott Given attended the meeting and explained that the deadline for filing the application was November 15, 2014. Although the school would not begin until 2016/17, he wanted to file early to allow a few years to get the school ready.

Mr. Warwick told the committee that the work being done on the Empowerment Zone is going well. They have reached a tentative agreement with the SEA and he believes that an Empowerment Zone agreement would be a great contract for our teachers and kids. It gives us the flexibilities we need for the eight middle schools. Mr. Warwick indicated he was recommending tonight that the school committee approve the application for the Horace Mann Charter School and for one of the middle schools. He said that down the road once the

Empowerment Zone Partnership was established, its board would vote to approve UP Academy as a Horace Mann Charter school. He indicated he has seen their schools in Lawrence and Boston and they are great schools and their academic achievement is the best in the Commonwealth of Mass.

Mr. Given indicated that he would work within the existing system and with the same students in the school that is chosen. He gave some statistics around the restarted John Marshall Elementary School in Dorchester. In English before he took over the scores was 14% and after the restart, the scores in English went to 40%. In Math, before the start, the score was 13% and after the score was 60% and in Science before the restart the score was 4% and after the restart the score was 57%. When asked by a committee member if the school had the same students, he did indicate that that particular school had a high rate of mobility, but 80% of the students that attended the school in 2012/13 finished the 2013/14 school year. UP currently operates 5 schools in Massachusetts and for the third year in a row, UP Academy Boston ranked #1 among all schools serving middle school students for academic growth.

Mr. Given also told the committee that if the Empowerment Zone does come into effect and should it believe that having this school be an in-district charter is not the best idea, and that a traditional school would be better, he would support that decision. Approval for the in-district charter is important tonight because the Empowerment Zone is not a sure thing at this time. The vote tonight would allow UP to submit the application to the State and start the planning stages.

Two parents from Stand for Children spoke encouraging the committee to vote in favor of UP.

Ms. Gresham asked Mr. Given if he would be bringing his own teachers. He indicated he was not overly enthusiastic about convincing people to move to Springfield. They try to keep the teachers that are already at the school but they do have to reapply. He said not a lot of those teachers reapply and of those that do, more than 50% are hired. Ms. Hurst asked about teachers that don't get hired. Mr. Warwick explained that if the teachers have permanent teacher status, they would be absorbed into other schools. He assured her that teachers would not be left without jobs. We do have the ability to do that due to attrition at that level. Ms. Rosa asked Mr. Given what the percentage of our teachers does UP usually keep and he said it was low about 15% in their most recent school. He did say that they keep an open mind and Springfield has some tremendous teachers.

Atty. Murphy said the UP Academy results are shocking and this would be a great opportunity for Springfield.

Dr. McFadden asked if the application was approved tonight and later the committee developed uneasiness regarding UP, what are options. Mr. Given indicated that if approved tonight, the deadline to be submitted to the State was 11/14/14. Until the charter is finalized in February, 2015, the school committee could vote to withdraw the application.

The president of the teacher's union indicated that nowhere in the tentative agreement for the Empowerment Zone was there any mention of teachers having to reapply for their jobs. If the school chooses a restart model, teachers would have to reapply for their positions. None of the 8 schools have selected the restart model. The teams recommended the transformation model. Mr. Given indicated that his team would sit down with the teacher's union to come to an agreement regarding job flexibility. He also stated that every 5 years the charter needs to be renewed and it needs to be signed off by the teacher's union.

Dr. McFadden indicated he wants to do what is in the best interest of the children but also make sure we operate in good faith for our teachers. He said as long as we have some flexibility with UP to come back at a later date, he felt comfortable moving forward.

Ms. Hurst said we could vote tonight and if they choose to rescind they have until late February, 2015 to vote to rescind its approval.

Ms. Rosa asked if all the kids at the school would remain or would they need to apply. The Empowerment Zone would determine the school. UP visits every family in the homes and has them sign a form if they want their children to stay in the school. In the past, 100% of the families signed the form.

Mayor Sarno said that the UP application is a bold and innovative initiative. We don't have any level 5 schools and we want to do more for our kids. This will give us some of the flexibilities we need to reach our children.

Mr. Warwick said this is a bold initiative and there is more work to be done on the Empowerment Zone. We are looking at dramatic results at our middle schools and he is supporting this endeavor.

On a motion made by Ms. Hurst and seconded by Mr. Collins it was voted to approve the UP Academy Charter School of Springfield application for a Horace Mann Charter School on the condition that prior to November 1, 2015 the Springfield Empowerment Zone Partnership, Inc. Board of Directors votes to approve UP Academy Charter School of Springfield as a Horace Mann charter school.

ROLL CALL

Dr. McFadden	Yes
Mr. Collins	Yes
Ms. Gresham	No
Atty. Murphy	Yes
Ms. Perez	Yes
Ms. Hurst	Yes
Mayor Sarno	Yes

On a motion made by Mr. Collins and seconded by Ms. Hurst it was voted to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15PM

Respectfully submitted by

Patricia J. Walsh
Secretary to the School Committee

Approved by the School Committee
12/04/2014