

A Public Hearing on School Choice was held on Tuesday, May 20, 2008, at seven o'clock in the George M. Romm Little Theatre at Brockton High School.

Present: Mayor Harrington, Chair; Mrs. Joyce, Vice-Chair; Mrs. Beyer; Mr. Daley; Mr. Dobrowski; Mr. Foley; Mr. Minichiello (late); Mr. Nembirkow, Secretary

Absent: Mr. Bath

NOTE: These minutes contain a summary of the meeting and list items that were under discussion.

Mayor Harrington called the hearing to order at 7:05 p.m. He indicated that Chapter 76, Section 12B of the General Laws, as amended by the Education Reform Act of 1993 and subsequent legislation, require each school committee in the state to admit students from other districts under the School Choice Program unless there is a vote to withdraw from the program by June 1st of each year. Prior to such a vote, there must be a Public Hearing on the issue of whether or not to participate in the program. A vote to withdraw from the program will be effective for the following year only. In addition, the resolution to withdraw must contain the reasons for the withdrawal and must be filed with the Commissioner of Education.

Hearing of Visitors

Mr. Timothy Sullivan, BEA President, stated the following: now is not the time to further tax an already fragile system and jeopardize the education of Brockton students; we are facing a Mayor's budget which is almost \$5 million less than the School Committee's request; and one hundred sixty school employees, including more than eighty teachers, have received pink slips. Choice should not be implemented at the expense of quality for all. Not long ago, the Brockton schools took a big hit when the Avon School System opened its doors to students from other communities. We are now considering continuing the same thing that hurt our school system. He urged the School Committee to vote to opt out of School Choice for the 2008-2009 school year.

Closing - Hearing of Visitors

There being no further speakers, Mayor Harrington closed the Hearing of Visitors at 7:08 p.m.

Mayor Harrington opened up discussion on the School Choice Program. Vice-Chair Joyce suggested reviewing what they have now which is: up to 50 seats available at Brockton High School only, with no more than 10 accepted into grade 9 and the remaining 40 distributed across grades 10-12. Mr. Suziedelis was present to update the Committee on the current program. There are approximately 3 students who opted into Brockton High School, and there are approximately 200 students who opted out. (120 to Avon, 50 to Bridgewater, and the rest to other communities.) The amount per student is \$5,000.

Superintendent Nembirkow mentioned keeping it the way it is. Once the opening of the two new schools, budget, transportation, etc., is in place, we will have a better handle on the number of available slots. Vice-Chair Joyce agreed with the Superintendent to keep what is in place now.

BEA President Sullivan questioned the siblings of students who opt into BHS attending other schools, elementary and junior high, in Brockton. Mr. Suziedelis stated that they checked with the Department of Education and that is not the case. He will ask for this interpretation in writing and send it to Mr. Sullivan.

Adjournment

The hearing adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Basan Nembirkow
Secretary

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