

Jeffery Young

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1. Are you/were you previously a Cambridge city resident? If yes, for how long?

No

2. What is your current (former) role / relationship to City government:

Superintendent of Schools 2009 - 2016

Had over 20 years of superintendent experience prior to being hired in Cambridge. Superintendent in Cambridge from 2009 - 2016. Came from 11 years as superintendent in Newton. And Lexington and Lynnfield prior to that.

3. What else do you want us to know?

School Committee

- Surprised about the way school committee members ran every two years but were all at-large. His prior experience with Newton had a much different composition. Newton has 8 wards; there was 1 school committee member from each ward. All members were elected city wide but only ran against others from their same ward.
 - Charter Text: “Eight of these members, who shall be known as school committee members, shall be nominated and elected by the voters at large, 1 school committee member to be elected from each of the 8 wards of the city”
- His perception of the way Newton’s school committee was structured was once the committee was seated, the incentive was to collaborate because you’d never be running against the other members on the committee.
- Members running against each other in Cambridge created a different culture on the school committee.
- The pay difference was significant between Newton (\$7,750) / Cambridge (\$38,000)
 - Cultural difference - believed the idea was to diversify the economic standing of those running and on the Cambridge School Committee. His general sense was that most of the members were middle class.
 - One observation was that if they were making \$30k/\$40k, a possible effect is that you want to keep that income stream. If that meant competing against other members on the board which lend itself to less than pure intentions/dynamics.
 - Some members had other jobs and others didn’t - for both groups the income was still important, but for those that didn't have another job, the school committee became their job. And that's a really different environment from most school committees in MA. If this is my job I should do a lot and be really involved. In other communities, school committees tended to focus more on high-level policy rather than getting involved in the day-to-day functions.

School Committee Budget

Fall/ Early Winter

- He would work with CFO Claire Spinner, COO Jim Maloney, principals, staff, union and curriculum staff, to figure out what was needed in the budget. Around January would present the proposed budget (based on internal discussion, public meetings and meeting with city).
- The superintendent's budget was always balanced
 - because would meet with the manager and finance director they would say we have x money and need is x. And over weeks would figure out how to come to an agreement. The City would make an effort to increase if needed and as superintendent, I would make edits internally if needed.

Superintendent proposed budget → school committees approved budget → city council (meeting) → pretty much they just approved what the school was doing. I can't recall a specific time when they refuted a specific item.

- Before we even began the budget process, would meet publicly with SC. you give us guidelines/goals and his job was to build a budget that reflected those guidelines.

Who was it that you were talking to / oversight from when building a budget? Did you have the support you ended to do it well?

- Hearing from school principals, curriculum leaders and teachers, and public hearings. It was always about all of those inputs.
- I felt like the systems that were in place, I was in schools all the time, and feedback from people who were in the schools all the time, public hearings, parents/families/caregivers, and I had enough to put together.

Distinct structural differences between Cambridge / Other places?

- Strong city manager form vs newton's strong mayor - it was the personal relationships that superseded any structural impediments.
 - presumably, the managers would have been more in a professional position with training/ other professional development around running a city. Able to talk to those managers in an almost shorthand because of their professional experience.
 - Mayor system/ newton: relied on his legislative background, and I think because we built a relationship the trust was there. Even though that mayor wasn't exactly trained in finance/ professional management
- Trust relationships with School Committee?
 - Some were very positive relationships and some are not so positive.
 - When I was first appointed it was originally a 5-2 vote (against - fred, denise) after the 1st vote fred said let's have a show of support, and changed his vote, denise didn't, final vote 6-1.
 - And again a few years later another vote, so that always creates a dynamic for relationships because some people don't vote for you.

Constraints on your ability to hire who you wanted to hire?

1993 reform act

- Took SC out of personal decisions
- SC power hire/fire superintendent who has the power for all other personal

- The school committee never messed with any personnel appointments nor the manager.

Structural things to be done differently to address race issues?

- Desegregation
 - Control choice policy, like most policies in US is about desegregating.
 - A technical/ mechanical of school assignments
- Integration
 - What happens within those schools once those kids are there is “integration” whether it happens or not. Curriculum, family engagement, teachers, etc.
- 6/7/8 - Kto5 was ok and high school was pretty good, and 6/7/8 was the dead zone.
 - One of the biggest ones was those teachers in 6/7/8 weren’t licensed/ in the subject areas that they were teaching
 - Comparing graduations in 8th grade, 50 at king open or 10 at the FMA school.
 - Those kids in the smaller graduating class struggled because they had teachers that were teaching across grades and subjects that they weren’t experts in
- Lack of curriculum was also a significant impact
 - What is the school committee's role in maybe a struggling curriculum or teachers, etc?
 - Maybe wouldn’t want to have SC leading those changes because they don’t necessarily have an educational background.

Minding the Gap - <https://www.bostonmagazine.com/2010/04/21/minding-the-gap/>