



**C A M B R I D G E  
S C H O O L C O M M I T T E E**

**(Official Minutes)**

**Regular Meeting**

**January 3, 2023**

Called for 6:00 p.m. in the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of discussing any and all business that may properly come before the Committee.

Members Present: Vice-Chair Rachel, Member Fantini, Member Hunter, Member Rojas (ABSENT), Member Weinstein, Member Wilson (REMOTE), Mayor Siddiqui (ABSENT)

Also Present: Dr. Brown, Chief Strategy Officer, Ms. Spinner, Chief Financial Officer, Dr. Greer, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent

**Vice Chair Rachel** in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

The Chair provided a statement to the public regarding Governor Charlie Baker's Executive Order on guidelines for remote participation and then read the call of the meeting.

The meeting proceeded to the first order of business with a roll call vote for the purpose of a soundcheck: Member Fantini PRESENT; Member Hunter PRESENT; Vice-Chair Rachel PRESENT; Member Rojas ABSENT; Member Weinstein PRESENT; Member Wilson PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

**1. Public Comment:**

The following individuals were heard during public comment:

- Dan Monahan, Lexington Ave spoke regarding the Superintendent's budget presentation, **#23-002**, and **#22-003**

**On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Weinstein** on the following roll call vote, public comment was closed: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas ABSENT; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

**2. Student School Committee Report:**

**Student Member Clemente** and **Student Member Escamilla-Salomon** provided updates on the recent happenings which included the upcoming student talent showcase and dance work performances on January 12<sup>th</sup> and January 13<sup>th</sup>. There will be a budget workshop for the students focused on the FY24 budget that will take place on January 31<sup>st</sup>. **Member Wilson** asked about the ongoing outreach efforts and if there was a targeted student participation goal. Both **Student Member Clemente** and **Student Member Escamilla-Salomon** shared that there is a target goal of thirty-five students. Member Wilson offered her assistance in the outreach efforts.

**3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:**

- December 13, 2022, Roundtable Meeting

- December 20, 2022, Regular Meeting
- December 22, 2022, Roundtable Meeting

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Hunter on the following roll call vote, the records were approved as written: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas ABSENT; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

**4. Reconsiderations:** None

**5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:** None

**6. Awaiting Reports:**

**C22-311 Joint Motion by Member Weinstein and Mayor Siddiqui**

WHEREAS: The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is reviewing and revising bus service schedules; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge Public School District (CPSD) students and their families rely on public bus service to attend school and to participate in out-of-school time opportunities including extracurricular activities, sports, jobs, and internships; and

WHEREAS: CPSD does not provide school bus transportation to students in grades 9 to 12; and

WHEREAS: Proposed changes to MBTA bus routes serving the City of Cambridge include reductions and changes in routes and/or schedules that would greatly impact the ability of CPSD students to access school and other activities; and

WHEREAS: Many issues with the proposed route modifications and recommendations have been brought forward by the community, including:

- **Route 68** Harvard - Kendall / MIT (travels down Broadway between Kendall Sq. and Harvard Sq.). MBTA proposes reducing service to weekdays only 6:00 am- 9:00 am and 4:00 pm-7:00 pm every 30 minutes. Afterschool activities and sports need evening rush hour frequency service extended to 3:00 pm-8:00 pm;
- **Route 69** Harvard - Lechmere (travels down Cambridge St. between Lechmere and Harvard). MBTA proposes a reduction from every 15 mins to every 30 mins;
- **Route 83** (Rindge Ave to Central Sq. via Porter Sq.). MBTA proposes a reduction to every 30 minutes from the current 20 minutes. Current frequency should be maintained, or increased to every 15 minutes to make the bus usable between 3:00 pm and 8:00 pm;
- **Routes 69 and Route 83** are being cut drastically; the frequencies of both routes should be increased to account for the needs of students;
- **Route 78** (78 Arlmont Village - Harvard via Garden St., Concord Ave to Cambridge Highlands). MBTA proposes a reduction from every 25 minutes to every 60-90 minutes (6:00 am-1:00 am). Students on this line need more frequent service to access school and afterschool activities and sports need evening rush hour frequency service extended to 3:00 pm-8:00 pm. Cuts to Route 78 also reduce access to Neighborhood Nine, Cambridge Highlands, Concord Ave between Huron and Blanchard Rd, including assisted care and medical facilities; it is also the only connector between West Cambridge and Arlington;

- **Route 75** (The dedicated CRLS route on school mornings) provides essential transportation services for high school students to get to school on time and should be reinstated and additional dedicated CRLS routes considered for other areas of the City;
- **Routes throughout the City** need to be assessed in light of new and planned housing units including affordable housing and the potential future needs of students living in that housing; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent and Mayor Siddiqui send a letter and forward this policy order along with emails from the community to representatives at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and the Cambridge state delegation on behalf of the entire School Committee, and be it further

RESOLVED: That this letter will detail the MBTA bus routes and schedules that are critical for the needs of CPSD students, with particular attention to those students and families who rely the most on MBTA busses; and be it further

RESOLVED: That CPSD will review student needs and the most recent MBTA proposals before submitting the letter and will add to or modify the list noted above if needed, and be it further

RESOLVED: The Cambridge School Committee goes on record in support of changes that improve access and in support of further changes to address the concerns of residents as summarized above, and be it further

RESOLVED: That this letter will be delivered to the MBTA, the state delegation, and the Governor-Elect Maura Healy as soon as possible with a request for a response.

Dr. Greer provided a very brief update on the awaiting report and announced that this item will remain an Awaiting Report until a response is received from the MBTA.

## 7. Superintendent's Agenda:

### 7a. Superintendent's Update:

### 7b. Presentations:

**Vice Chair Rachel** passed the floor to the administration for a presentation on the FY2024 Budget. The full presentation can be found on the [website](#).

After the presentation, **Vice Chair Rachel** opened up the floor for discussion. The discussion was based on the following three discussion prompts:

- Clarifying questions
- Sharing warm (positive) feedback regarding the overall budget process, ESSER planning & proposed focused initiatives.
- Sharing cool (constructive) feedback regarding the overall budget process, ESSER planning, and proposed focus initiatives.

**Member Fantini** asked if the community meetings would be classified as public meetings and/or School Committee meetings. Ms. Spinner clarified that they would not be posted as public meetings but would be well advertised to the community. **Vice Chair Rachel** highlighted that they cannot be classified as School Committee meetings as a quorum would be necessary. In addition, breakout rooms cannot be recorded

which prevents them from being public meetings. Dr. Greer shared that the administration is taking a similar approach to last year's community meetings similar and members are welcome to attend the meetings that work for them. Dr. Brown highlighted that the administration's goals are continued transparency and raw meeting notes will be shared and the meetings' themes were developed from community feedback.

**Member Wilson** expressed her appreciation to the administration regarding the budget and asked the administration if there is anything the district has learned or has discovered to better serve the student community regarding transportation and the possibility of increased student needs. Dr. Greer responded that the current transportation contract is good until the end of FY25. There are stipulations in that contract that allow the increase in buses. The transportation company is facing challenges in staffing – primarily with drivers, notably with door-to-door transportation. Dr. Greer confirmed that the district would be able to accommodate any increase in ridership and transportation needs. **Member Wilson** also inquired about the disciplinary work that is currently in the pre-work stage. Dr. Greer announced that some of that work (policy, legislative changes), has already been done and the district is building out MTSS and SEL practices, and discovering skill-based needs for students within SEL practices. This ongoing work will continue until next week when each school will be reviewed and evaluated on their disciplinary data.

**Member Fantini** thanked the administration for their work in the budgeting process and inquired about accelerated learning. He asked for clarity in the focus of accelerated learning (i.e. students who need accelerated learning due to the pandemic, low-growth students, students at risk for chronic absenteeism, etc.) Dr. Brown clarified the district's focus on accelerated learning includes students who are not yet at grade level, have low growth, or are at risk of chronic absenteeism and are behind.

**Member Fantini** inquired about acquired staffing and ESSER funds, notably that the positions would no longer be available once ESSER funds were depleted. Ms. Spinner responded that the district began to spend ESSER III funds in this current budget year. She provided clarity on the types of positions the district hired with the ESSER funding. One of the larger investments made with ESSER funds was the staff at the elementary schools – paraprofessionals and interventionists. These positions were originally intended to be one-year positions, but the district has extended these positions to better support the elementary schools with Covid recovery. Dr. Greer clarified that the positions were posted as term-limited positions and candidates were made aware of this provision. **Member Fantini** also inquired about the new budget system that the district is working on. Ms. Spinner shared that the FY23 budget portal is live. The portal serves as an informational tool for the community. He also asked if the software provided communication abilities between the community and the finance department. The software does not provide direct communication services.

**Member Hunter** thanked the administration for the presentation. She asked about the pre-work the district has done regarding multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). Dr. Greer responded that the pre-work is underway and the director is visiting schools to get an analysis on the types of support systems that are being used to currently support students (how are schools implementing student support teams,). At the moment, there are inconsistencies because the district lacks a uniform district framework for MTSS. **Member Hunter** also inquired about the Teen Health Survey and how it is used to determine the systems of support. Dr. Greer shared that the district uses the Teen Health Survey in a multitude of ways

which include: the interventions of students, designing health and behavioral health curriculum, and strategizing for students who have school avoidance. Dr. Brown provided clarity on the Teen Health data timelines. The Teen Health Survey (for both the middle and high school levels) is currently done every other year. The district will begin rolling out School Climate surveys again for all grade levels. **Member Hunter** asked if the district still provides a peer mediation course. Dr. Greer responded that there are peer mediators at all four of the upper schools and CRLS.

**Vice Chair Rachel** shared her appreciation for the time and energy devoted to the budget process. She highlighted her struggle in determining the best way to engage and communicate with the community, noting that making significant changes to the budget often requires years of planning and foresight.

**7c. CPS District Plan: None**

**7d. Consent Agenda:**

Member Hunter pulled **#23-001**. Member Wilson pulled **#23-002** and **#23-003**. Member Weinstein pulled **#23-005**

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Weinstein, on the following roll call vote, items **#23-004**, **#23-006**, **#23-007**, and **#23-008** were adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas ABSENT; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

**#23-004 Contract Award: Star Dance School LLC: Dance Program be adopted as follows:** that the School Committee approve a contract to the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference below. Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Star Dance School LLC, 323 Washington Street, Brighton, MA 02135 for the period of January 3, 2023, to June 30, 2023, in the amount of \$30,600.00.

**#23-006 Contract Award: Apple, Inc.: Computer Hardware be adopted as follows:** that the School Committee approve a contract to the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference below. Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Apple Inc., 5409 Stevens Creek Blvd, Cupertino, CA 95014 for the period of January 3, 2023, to December 31, 2023, in the amount of \$750,000.00

**#23-007 Day & Residential Program Services not Available From the Cambridge School Department be adopted as follows:** that the School Committee contracts to the institutions as detailed in the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, funds to be provided from the General Fund and/or Grant Fund Budget, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Program	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts	1	\$28,227.00

Residential Program Tuition Contracts		
45-Day Program	1	\$27,607.50
	2	\$55,834.50
Total		

**#23-008 Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts be adopted as follows:** that the School Committee accept and approve the following donations as described:

1. A gift of 1,099.27 to the Cambridgeport School made from O'Connor Portraiture, Inc., as a commission for student portraits. Funds will be used for the general support of the School.
2. A gift of 426.79 to the Kennedy Longfellow School made from O'Connor Portraiture, Inc., as a commission for student portraits. Funds will be used for the general support of the School.

**8. Non-Consent Agenda:**

**#23-001 Approval of Global Revisions to Policies in the School Committee Policy Manual (First Reading) be adopted as follows:** That the School Committee approve the global revisions to the School Committee Policy Manual in order to ensure clarity and accuracy thought all of the policy documents

A brief discussion followed on **#23-001**.

**Member Hunter** inquired about another reading of the policy to have more time to review the policy. **Vice Chair Rachel** clarified that this recommendation is to vote for a first meeting, and Member Hunter can use her charter right during the vote of the second reading if she would like to request more time to review the recommendation.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Hunter, on the following roll call vote, **#23-001** was adopted for a second reading: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas ABSENT; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

**#23-002 Approval of Revisions to the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (First Reading) be adopted as follows:** That the School Committee refer the revisions to the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook as detailed in the attached document back to the Superintendent.

A discussion followed on **#23-002**.

**Member Wilson** pulled this recommendation based on the public comment testimony on the recommendation and wanted to discuss proposed edits and modifications. **Vice Chair Rachel** also shared some questions surrounding clarity on the global revisions and clarified that the motion brought by Member Weinstein at the meeting in December surrounding gender-neutral language has not been implemented yet. Dr. Greer also shared that the district is open to any suggestions and modifications by the Committee and she will consult with the district's legal counsel on some questions she has about the policy as well including the implementation of gender-neutral language. **Member Wilson** asked Dr. Greer about the timeline of the modifications from the district and if March is sufficient. Dr. Greer commented that a March timeline works. **Member Fantini** suggested that the recommendation be referred back to the Superintendent to provide more edits, etc. in the policy change. **Member Wilson** also asked if the Office

of Equity and Inclusion and Belonging (OEIB) will be included in the work to assist in the revision on **#23-002**. Dr. Greer shared that the OEIB office will be involved in the revisions.

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Wilson, on the following roll call vote, **#23-002** was referred back to the Superintendent: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas ABSENT; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

**#23-003 Approval of Family and Medical Leave, Parental Leave, And Small Necessities Leave Policy (First Reading) be adopted as follows:** That the School Committee approve the revisions of the Family and Medical Leave, Parental Leave, and Small Necessities Leave Policy.

A discussion followed on **#23-003**.

**Member Wilson** shared her enthusiasm for the revisions of the Family and Medical Leave, Parental Leave And Small Necessities Leave Policy and inquired about what a delayed parental leave would look like for district employees. **Vice Chair Rachel** also inquired about modifying the policy to reflect gender-neutral language in the second reading.

On a motion by Member Hunter, seconded by Member Wilson, on the following roll call vote, **#23-003** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas ABSENT; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

**#23-005 Contract Award: DJT Transportation: Student Transportation be adopted as follows:** that the School Committee approve a contract to the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference below. Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

DJT Transportation, 121 Hazelton Street, Mattapan, MA 02126 for the period of January 3, 2023, to June 30, 2023, in the amount of \$33,800.00.

A discussion followed on **#23-005**.

**Member Weinstein** asked for clarity on the motion and if there was anything the district can do to bring down the cost of the transportation. Ms. Spinner provided clarity on the contract and confirmed that the contract up for discussion was for transportation for one student for six months and costs over \$300/day. Ms. Spinner shared that the average cost of transportation for students is about \$60,000 a student and finding transportation can be difficult. This contract is for the cost of a vehicle to provide transportation to a student in an out-of-district school. The district has already provided transportation for this one student to provide transportation for one student for an out-of-district school. **Member Weinstein** also inquired if there are ways the district can work with other communities to provide transportation to students in out-of-district schools.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Wilson, on the following roll call vote, **#23-005** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas ABSENT; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

**9. School Committee Agenda (Policy Matters/Notifications/Requests for Information):**

**#23-009 Joint Motion by Vice Chair Rachel and Member Rojas**

That the School Committee adopt the Guiding Principles for the development of the FY24 budget.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-009**.

**Member Wilson** inquired about the questions that are shown in the guiding principles document and the possibility of simplifying the questions to better assist the community. **Vice Chair Rachel** and Dr. Greer clarified that the questions in the guiding principles are questions used/proposed by the Committee and to the administration during the budget adoption process.

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Hunter, on the following roll call vote **#23-009** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas ABSENT; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Student Member Clemente (Non-binding) YEA; Student Member Escamilla-Salomon (Non-Binding) YEA; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

**#23-010** Report of the December 15, 2022 Communications and Community Relations Sub-Committee

A discussion followed on **#23-010**.

The Communications and Community Relations Sub-Committee Co-Chairs Member Weinstein and Member Fantini provided a summary of the December 15, 2022, Subcommittee Meeting.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Vice Chair Rachel, on the following roll call vote **#23-010** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas ABSENT; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

**10. Resolutions:** None

**11. Announcements:**

**Member Wilson** announced that the CRLS scholarship workshops are happening soon. The in-person workshops will begin on Thursday, January 12, and run through February 16<sup>th</sup> and the scholarship portal will be open from January 17<sup>th</sup> through February 17<sup>th</sup>

**Member Weinstein** announced that there are several CRLS students eligible to apply for the Harvard Extension School Lowell Scholarship and the deadline to apply for the scholarship is midnight on January 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**12. Late Orders:** None

**13. Communications from City Officers:** None



On a motion by Member Hunter, seconded by Member Wilson, on the following roll call vote, the meeting was adjourned. (7:40 p.m.): Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas ABSENT; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

Attest:

*Ariel B. Kennebrew*

Ariel B. Kennebrew  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee