



## CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

February 7, 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, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson, Mayor Siddiqui

Also Present: Dr. Greer, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent;

Mayor Siddiqui in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 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 Weinstein PRESENT; Member Wilson ABSENT; Member Fantini PRESENT; Member Hunter PRESENT; Vice-Chair Rachel PRESENT; Member Rojas PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui PRESENT.

### 1. Public Comment:

The following individuals were heard:

- Dan Monahan, Lexington Avenue spoke regarding #23-229 and the presentation for the Office of Special Education and Student Supports
- Roger O'Sullivan, Massachusetts Ave spoke in support in #23-229
- Nina Mitchell, Hillard Place, spoke about the current bus app for those families in the district utilize for accessibility and urged for improvement of the app by the district. Given that the topic was not an agenda item, Member Fantini motioned to suspend the rules to allow Nina Mitchell to speak, seconded by Member Weinstein, the rules were suspended.
- Stephanie Fletcher, Belmont St, Somerville spoke regarding the presentation for the Office of Special Education and Student Supports and shared her experience as a member of the Special Education team.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Fantini on a voice vote, public comment was closed.

Member Fantini motioned to suspend the rules to bring forward **#23-029** for discussion and adoption. Seconded by Vice Chair Rachel, the rules were suspended.

**#23-029 Motion by Member Fantini**

WHEREAS: Susan Noonan-Forster was a teacher at the Thorndike and Kennedy Schools in East Cambridge; and

WHEREAS: Susan was a CTA/CEA local president and an organizer for the Michigan Education Association and the Massachusetts Teachers Association described as “a champion for children and a fierce negotiator for teachers”, a political activist, brilliant, generous to a fault, tempestuous, with a strong will that allowed her to do much good in the schools and her community; and

RESOLVED: That the Executive Secretary for the School Committee confer with the Superintendent to consider the request to honor Susan Noonan-Forster with an appropriate plaque or other remembrance at the Kennedy School building and/or grounds.

A discussion followed on **#23-029**.

**Member Fantini** gave background on the resolution and echoed Mr. Monahan’s comments that were made in public comment about Ms. Susan Noonan-Foster. Ms. Noonan-Foster served almost 40 years as the district’s Union President and was a pioneer in aiding the teachers including the implementation of sick time for teachers. Given that Ms. Noonan-Foster spend much time at the Kennedy Longfellow, he would like to express a token of appreciation from the Committee with a plaque honoring Ms. Noonan-Forster

**Member Hunter** spoke on her support of the resolution and her experience working with Ms. Noonan-Forster on a special initiative for high school dropouts. She also asked for the resolution to be made on behalf of the whole School Committee.

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Hunter, on a voice vote, **#23-029** was adopted unanimously.

**2. Student School Committee Report:**

**Student Member Clemente** and **Student Member Escamilla-Salomon** provided updates on the recent happenings and updates which included a recap of the Student Budgeting Workshop that occurred on January 31. The workshop was a success and there were over sixty students who attended the workshops. They also shared student perspectives on the district budgeting process and shared some survey results of a survey they distributed to students before the workshop. The CRLS scholarship workshop is still ongoing and the workshop is on February 17<sup>th</sup>. There will be a job fair by the Youth Employment Center for CRLS students on February 16<sup>th</sup>. Several Committee members including **Vice Chair Rachel**, **Member Rojas**, **Member Hunter**, and **Member Fantini** praised the student members for their efforts in the success of the Student Budget Workshop.

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

- January 17, 2023, Regular Meeting
- January 24, 2023, Special Meeting

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein on a voice vote, the records were approved as written and placed on file.

**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.

There was no response and no update on the awaiting report, so this item will remain an awaiting report

## 7. Superintendent's Agenda:

**7a. Superintendent's Update:** Dr. Greer provided an update on two items – the first is for SC Order #22-293 - Vassal Lane Upper School Renaming. The Committee requested that the Superintendent work alongside the Vassal Lane Upper School Principal Coplan-Newfield to begin a community engagement process to begin the renaming of the Vassal Lane Upper School.

**Vice Chair Rachel** asked for clarity on the community members who will be involved in the project to rename the school and proposed to have a first and second hearing of the proposed school name to allow the public time to view and give their opinions on the name change. Dr. Greer shared the following anticipated timeline for the school renaming:

- February 2023: all students and staff at VLUS do some collective learning about our current name, which includes some history of the Vassal family.
- March 2023: all students and staff at VLUS would explore the history of naming buildings, schools, and other municipal structures for people.
- April 2023: a smaller group of students and staff would begin to brainstorm names of people who match the characteristics generated above and would then share back out to the school community a "short list" of possible names.
- May 2023: all students and staff at VLUS would review the "short list" of names and the reasons for their inclusion.
- June 2023: a select group of students and staff would then present this process and the list of possible names to the School Committee at the June 6, 2023 meeting.
- Spring 2023: a parallel process involving VLUS families would take place during the spring and could be done in 1-2 meetings rather than spread out over multiple months.
- By the end of June 2023, the VLUS community will have presented to the School Committee a completed process during which we have done some teaching and learning about both the history of Vassal Lane, the purposes and opportunities in naming a public school, and will have developed some possible alternatives to our current name.

**Member Weinstein** asked about how the district and committee can collaborate with the city on a process for renaming streets associated with schools. He also wants to ensure there is clarity for all of

those involved in the decision-making process when a name is finalized. Dr. Greer clarified that the School Committee is the decision-maker when it comes to renaming schools.

**7b. Presentations:**

Dr. Greer passed the floor to the administration for a presentation on the Office of Special Education and Student Support. The full presentation can be found on the [website](#).

After the presentation, Mayor Siddiqui opened up the floor for questions and discussion:

**Member Hunter** shared her excitement about Dr. Alves' entry plan and the upcoming audit. She inquired about current i-Ready data, and the solutions and plans to improve the performance data for students at the middle school level

**Vice Chair Rachel** appreciated the asset-based framework. She inquired about who was participating in the OSS audit and what roles were covered. Dr. Mullen clarified the professionals who will be part of the audit are certificated staff -- school psychologists, adjustment counselors, special education teachers, and those in a self-contained classroom. The audit results will come with recommendations.

**Member Fantini** expressed his excitement about the great staff in the OSS office and the wonderful parents in the district. He inquired about the last audit, the review of current 504 plans, and the possibility of a dashboard with this data that includes a comparison of our data with comparable school districts.

**Member Rojas** inquired about the audit timeline, specifically about the time study that will be done after educator interviews. Dr. Mullen gave more clarification on the audit timeline, saying that the auditor wanted to ensure and capture trust with those being involved in the process.

**Member Weinstein** shared his excitement about the clear focus on the opportunity to continue the improvement of the OSS office. He also highlighted the great resources we have in the city and shared the importance of greater understanding for students with disabilities and how we can move forward to better support these students. Member Weinstein also expressed the significance of the OSS office collaborating with the Special Education and Student Supports Subcommittee to better explore providing advocacy for families seeking Special Education support services. This way parents can know about the process, what to say, how to navigate. Dr. Alves discussed that when having discussions with parents of students with ASD, parents have had some altercations with staff members who did not know how to support their child's disability and the OSS is ready to collaborate with the Subcommittee to get the needed work done.

**Mayor Siddiqui** echoed the comments from the other Committee members and expressed her appreciation to Dr. Alves and the Office of Student Supports. She would like to see data on students with disabilities who are targeted to graduate in June.

**Student Member Clemente** expressed her excitement about the Paraprofessionals Pathway program and inquired about solutions to get special education support services for students who may have hesitant or objective parents/caregivers. Dr. Alves clarified that both students and teachers can make recommendations but that parents do have to give parental consent for testing.

**Mayor Siddiqui** closed the discussion by encouraging the Committee to reach out to the Superintendent with any lingering questions regarding the presentation.

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

**7d. Consent Agenda:**

**Member Rojas** pulled **#23-023**.

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Weinstein, on the following roll call vote, items **#23-022, #23-024, and #23-026** were adopted: Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson ABSENT; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA

**#23-022 Contract Award: Ascentis Corporation: Time & Attendance System be adopted as follows:** that the School Committee approve a contract to the following vendor for the software and maintenance of the NOVAtime employee time and attendance system. 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:

Ascentis Corporation, 9680 Haven Avenue #200, Rancho Cucamonga, CA for the period of January 25, 2023, to January 24, 2024, in the amount of \$55,200.00.

**#23-024 Gifts & Miscellaneous Receipts be adopted as follows:** that the School Committee accept and approve the following donations as described:

1. \$10,000 from Harvard University to support the Emerging Leaders Program (ELP), a youth membership initiative focused on gender and leadership that pairs students with Harvard University undergraduate mentors.
2. \$500.00 donation from an individual donor to CRLS.
3. \$845.55 to the Morse School made from Shutterfly as a commission for student portraits. Funds will be used for the general support of the school.

**#23-025 Grant Award: FY23 Broad Institute of MIT & Harvard (SC23153) Increase be adopted as follows:** that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

<u>Amount:</u>	INCREASE of \$3,000.00	<u>Period:</u>	9/01/22 to 5/31/23
<u>Source:</u>	Private	<u>Administrator:</u>	Sarah Bartels-Marrero, Christen Sohn, & Phanenca Babio

Expense Category	FY23 Budget Original	FY23 FTE	FY23 Budget Amended	FY23 FTE
Permanent Salaries & Benefits	-	-	-	-

Temporary Salaries	\$1,500.00	-	\$4,500.00
Other Expenses	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,500.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>\$4,500.00</b>

**Description:** In addition to the Amigos School, The Broad Institute will partner with two additional Upper schools (the Cambridge St. Upper School and the Putnam Ave Upper School) to host an after-school coding club for upper school students. This grant will provide an additional \$3,000 to cover the \$1,500 stipend for the upper school teacher at each school who will co-host the club in conjunction with a staff member from the Broad Institute.

**8. Non-Consent Agenda:**

**#23-023 Contract Award: Leadership Academy: Professional Development be adopted as follows:** that the School Committee approve a contract to the following vendor for the professional development of the Cambridge School Committee and Executive Leadership Team. See attached [supplemental information](#) for additional details. 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:

The Leadership Academy, 10-27 46<sup>th</sup> Avenue, New York, NY for the period of January 10, 2023, to June 30, 2023, in the amount of \$34,500.00.

A brief discussion followed on **#22-023**.

**Member Rojas** asked for clarification on the recommendation and if the equity and education work mentioned in the recommendation included anti-racism training. Dr. Greer confirmed that the recommendation does include anti-racism training.

**Member Hunter** inquired about the number of Executive Leadership Team members who will be participating in the training and the specific dates of the training. Dr. Greer confirmed that the entire Executive Leadership Team and School Committee will be participating and dates have not been set.

**Member Fantini** inquired if there would be four different sessions and if some of the sessions can be done during the day as we have many night meetings. Dr. Greer noted that day sessions can be accommodated based on availability.

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

**#23-026** Report of the January 19, 2023 Curriculum and Achievement Subcommittee

A brief discussion followed on **#23-026**

**Member Weinstein** gave a brief overview of the Curriculum and Achievement Subcommittee Meeting that took place on January 19, 2023.

**#23-027** Report of the January 23, 2023, Special Education and Student Supports Subcommittee

A brief discussion followed on **#23-027**.

**Member Weinstein** gave a brief overview of the Special Education and Student Supports Subcommittee that took place on January 23, 2023, on behalf of Member Wilson.

**#23-028** Report of the January 26, 2023 Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee

A brief discussion followed on **#23-028**.

**Member Rojas** gave a brief overview of the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee Meeting that took place on January 25, 2023.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein, **#23-026**, **#23-027** & **#23-028** were adopted via a voice vote.

#### **10. Resolutions:**

##### **#23-030 Joint Motion by Member Wilson, Member Weinstein, and Vice Chair Rachel**

WHEREAS: Forty students (see: [Appendix A](#)) from Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS) participated in the 2023 Harvard High School Model United Nations (HMUN) Conference from January 26 through January 29, 2023; and

WHEREAS: This was HMUN's largest conference since COVID with 3,758 delegates participating representing 43 different countries; and

WHEREAS: The CRLS Model UN club is the largest it has ever been; and

WHEREAS: Students Jeanne Alailima and Kiri-Anna Kingsbury Lee were recognized with diplomatic commendations (see: [Appendix B](#)); and

WHEREAS: These students deserve recognition for their hard work and dedication to the CRLS MUN team; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee goes on record honoring and congratulating these scholars on their hard work and dedication; and be it further

RESOLVED: That a formal copy of this resolution be prepared by the Executive Secretary to the School Committee and forwarded to the students listed in the appendix.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-030**.

##### **#23-031 Joint Motion by Mayor Siddiqui, Member Wilson, and Member Hunter**

WHEREAS: Black History Month is an annual celebration every February to celebrate the achievements of African Americans and their recognition of American History; and

WHEREAS: In 1915, Harvard-trained historian Carter G. Woodson and minister Jesse E. Moorland founded the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH), an organization dedicated towards promoting the achievement of Black Americans and other people of African descent; and

WHEREAS: The ASALH established a week in 1926 to celebrate African American history and chose the second week of February to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass; and

WHEREAS: Many cities across the country began issuing yearly proclamations recognizing the week, causing the movement to evolve from a week to a month in the late 1960s; and

WHEREAS: President Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, calling upon the public to seize the opportunity to honor the accomplishments of Black Americans; and



WHEREAS: In Cambridge Public Schools, Black history is taught throughout the year focusing on stories of oppression, agency, and joy through the lives of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Bayard Rustin, Ida B. Wells, Mary Church Terrell, Daisy Bates, and Fannie Lou Hamer; and

WHEREAS: Students at the King Open School have been listening to parts of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech during their morning announcements; and

WHEREAS: At the Cambridge Public Library, there is currently an exhibit dedicated to local Black Trailblazers produced by the Cambridge Black History Project, which introduced and distributed Bookmarks dedicated to and detailing the contributions of 15 Black Trailblazers born in Cambridge, now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge Public Schools goes on record recognizing Black History Month.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-031**.

**#23-032 Joint Motion by Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Chair Rachel, and Member Fantini**

WHEREAS: The School Committee was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of former Cambridge School Committee Member, City Councilor, Mayor, and State Representative Alice K. Wolf, at the age of 89 on January 26th, 2023; and

WHEREAS: Alice Wolf believed in creating a world that is accepting of all, a value instilled in her at an early age, when her family escaped Austria in 1938 from Nazi rule, leading them to seek asylum in the United States; and

WHEREAS: Alice Wolf's family settled in Brighton, MA, and attended Boston Girls' Latin School, earned a bachelor's degree from Simmons College, and a master's in public administration from Harvard Kennedy School; and

WHEREAS: Alice Wolf was first elected as Cambridge School Committee Member in 1973, launching a nearly 35-year career as an elected official that would take her to the City Council for five terms beginning in 1984, serving as Mayor from 1990-1991, and the MA House of Representatives in 1996, where she served for 16 years; and

WHEREAS: Alice Wolf lead many charges to advance social justice, including the effort to establish Cambridge as a Sanctuary City in 1986, an example of her commitment to humane and fair immigration policies; and

WHEREAS: Alice Wolf was an effective ally of LGBTQ+ communities, for example hosting the City's first Gay Pride breakfast, and championing a 1992 policy that allowed LGBTQ+ couples to receive healthcare benefits if one person was a city employee; and

WHEREAS: Alice Wolf made meaningful changes in Cambridge and the broader Commonwealth regarding education, environmental matters, reproductive health, affordable housing, elder services, and many more progressive causes; and

WHEREAS: Alice Wolf spent her life working to bridge divides, build consensus, to promote tolerance and respect for all; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee go on record in expressing its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and the community of Alice K. Wolf for their loss; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Executive Secretary be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Alice Wolf's husband Bob and their two sons, Eric and Adam, on behalf of the entire School Committee

A brief discussion followed on **#23-032**.

**#23-033 Joint Motion by Mayor Siddiqui, Member Weinstein, and Member Rojas**

WHEREAS: Cambridge is now the first public school district in New England to offer students and staff a space to observe space for meditation, reflection, and spirituality; and

WHEREAS: Sacred Spaces at CPSD schools are open for all students regardless of religious background; and

WHEREAS: The Sacred Spaces will allow staff and students to practice any form of self-reflection; and

WHEREAS: Chief Equity Officer Manuel Fernandez; Zakkiyya Witherspoon, the co-founder of the Muslim Community of Cambridge Public Schools (MCCPS); and the CPS Employee Resource Group worked collaboratively to create sacred spaces; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge Public Schools goes on record recognizing the individuals involved with advocating for and establishing Sacred Spaces and acknowledges their commitment to equity.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-033**.

On a motion, by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Weinstein **#23-030**, **#23-031**, **#23-032**, and **#23-033** were adopted unanimously via voice vote.

**11. Announcements:**

**Vice Chair Rachel** announced that she along with Member Fantini and Mayor Siddiqui attended the Lesley University graduation for paraprofessionals that occurred over the weekend.

**Mayor Siddiqui** announced that the Mayor's Office is sponsoring and hosting a Hot Chocolate and Skating Event on February 25<sup>th</sup>. She also announced that the Cambridge Public Library is offering free passes to local museums for community partners.

**12. Late Orders:** None

**13. Communications from City Officers:**

- [Vice Chair Rachel: Memorandum on Subcommittee Organization](#)

**Vice Chair Rachel** provided a background of her memorandum on the subcommittee organization – which include that the Mayor, the Superintendent, and herself take responsibility for overseeing the Governance Subcommittee and will take responsibility for drafting governance proposals, should the need arise in the remainder of this calendar year and possibility Subcommittee reorganization at the next School Committee retreat.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel seconded by Member Rojas, the communications report was placed on file via a voice vote.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel seconded by Member Rojas on a voice vote, the meeting was adjourned. (8:55 p.m.).

Email Communications:

- ✓ Dan Monahan
- ✓ Nina Mitchell

Attest:

*Ariel B. Kennebrew*

Ariel B. Kennebrew  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee