

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

March 5, 2024

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 Hunter, Member Harding, Member Hudson, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Mayor Simmons

Also Present: Dr. Greer, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Edwards, Chief of Academics and Schools; Emily Bryan, Director of K-12 ELA/Literacy; Dr. Gittens, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools; Dr. Grace, Superintendent of Student Services; Attorney Maureen MacFarlane, General Counsel; David Murphy, Chief Operations Officer; Ivy Washington; Interim Chief Financial Officer

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and 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 Harding PRESENT; Member Hudson PRESENT; Member Rachel PRESENT; Member Rojas PRESENT; Member Weinstein PRESENT; Vice Chair Hunter PRESENT; Mayor Simmons PRESENT.

1. Public Comment:

The following individuals were heard:

- Dan Monahan, Lexington Ave, spoke regarding the ELA Literacy presentation and the addendum to the Rules of the 2024-2025 School Committee.
- Imogen Wu, Waterman Road, spoke regarding **#24-031**.
- Michael O'Connell, Old Dee Road, spoke regarding **#24-031**.

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Weinstein, on a voice vote, public comment was closed.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Member Alailima and **Student Member Anjaria** gave a student update on happenings at CRLS including an absenteeism report and discussion on the implementation of the CRLS community garden.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- February 6, 2024, Regular Meeting
- February 6, 2024, Special Meeting

- February 16, 2024, Special Meeting
- February 28, 2024, Special Meeting

On a motion by motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Weinstein on a voice vote, the records were approved.

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar: None

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7. Superintendent's Agenda

7a. Superintendent's Update:

Mayor Simmons passed the floor to Emily Bryan (Director of K-12 ELA/Literacy) and Dr. Edwards (Chief of Academics and Schools) who gave a presentation on the district's ELA and Literacy. The presentation can be found on this [website](#).

After the presentation, Mayor Simmons opened the floor for questions and discussions.

Member Hudson asked the presenters if there were any additional resources that they anticipate they will need to reach objectives and attain goals. She also inquired about the plan to extend to the younger students. Emily Bryan shared that the primary factor is necessary funding along with the engagement of families in the process.

Member Weinstein commented that it seems as if the work that has been done for the targeted grades has been successful so far. He also asked if there would be additional support and programs for the other dual-language programs in the districts. Emily Bryan shared that looking into programs for Portuguese and Mandarin dual-language programs was difficult to find but that avenue was explored. The schools that have dual-language programs have implemented the ELA and literacy programs, just not on a dual-language level.

Vice Chair Hunter expressed her engagement in families and asked for the plans regarding the rollout and would love to see a "very enthusiastic" rollout. **Vice Chair Hunter** also expressed interest in the rollout timeline for the curriculum and family engagement component. Emily Bryan shared that she is exploring engagement through site councils.

Student Member Alailima asked for clarity surrounding the adaptability of the curriculum and the teacher survey. Emily Bryan clarified that the teacher survey was for the 6-8 grade curriculum and the challenge is that the curriculum entails lots and lots of preplanning.

Member Rachel asked how much of the curriculum needs to be modified to be culturally responsive. Emily Bryan shared that the major concern is that the DEI curriculum is usually looked upon as too liberal. The curriculum company has created supplemental units to address more windows and mirrors to allow opportunities surrounding social justice issues, etc. **Member Rachel** also inquired about the types of instructional novels in the curriculum which seem to address hardships more than celebrating and recognition.

Member Rojas asked what the district anticipates could be a hardship for the implementation of the curriculum. Emily Bryan shared that the hardship could be that this curriculum changes the entire elementary school curriculum and can pose a challenge to educators. **Member Rojas** also asked how the district can leverage resources coming from the state. Dr. Greer shared that the current work that has been done regarding the ELA/Literacy curriculum has surpassed where the state is but the district will utilize any cost-effective resources from the state when able/needed. She shared that she believed that the district could be a model for the state.

Member Harding shared the downsides of having curriculum autonomy. He also asked for clarity on the number/percentage of students that the curriculum has not worked for. **Member Harding** inquired about the evaluation of the curriculum and how will it be assessed yearly. Emily Bryan shared details and clarity on the curriculum and how it will be evaluated annually. **Member Harding** recommends the district and the literacy department should implement a thorough family engagement plan to better assist parents and the community regarding the rollout.

Mayor Simmons shared her concerns about the curriculum implementation and one of her biggest concerns is compliance amongst teachers and educators. What happens when there is pushback and a lack of compliance? **Mayor Simmons** also asked if the budget line item for the curriculum includes the full implementation. Some of the principals have transferred some of their student improvement monies to fund this curriculum. The district is also seeking the possibility of using the last bit of ESSER funding. The cost in the budget will be a one-time cost.

Mayor Simmons also inquired about the curriculum implementation for special needs students. Emily Bryan shared that this curriculum is designed to be available in all classrooms, so the implementation is equitable to all students in the district. The goal is for the curriculum to be implemented for students at the start of the 2024/2025 school year.

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

7d. Consent Agenda:

Member Hudson pulled **#24-031** and **#24-032**. Member Rachel pulled **#24-036**. Vice Chair Hunter pulled **#24-037**. Member Weinstein pulled **#24-039**. On the following roll call vote, items **#24-33 through #24-035** and **#24-038** were adopted: Member Harding YEA; Member Hudson YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA.

#24-033 Day & Residential Services not Available by the Cambridge Public Schools be adopted as follows: That Superintendent's Recommendation #24-033, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions as detailed in the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts funds to be provided from the General Fund and/or Grant Fund Budget.

Description: SY23-24 Placement of students in private schools for implementation of educational plans in accordance with Chapter 766.

Program	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts	1	\$37,136.58
Residential Program Tuition Contracts 45-Day Program	1	\$139,428.90
	—	
Total	2	\$176,565.48

#24-034 Contract Award: DLAJ Consulting: Professional Development be adopted as follows: That Superintendent's Recommendation #23-034, Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference listed below. Procurement procedures for this purchase have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

DLAJ Consulting, 4201 Fireside Drive, Liverpool, NY, from February 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024, in the amount of \$25,200.00.

#24-035 Contract Award: Easter Seals: Special Education Staffing Services be adopted as follows: That Superintendent's Recommendation #23-035, Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference listed below. Procurement procedures for this purchase have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Easter Seals, 18 Chestnut Street, Suite 200, Worcester, MA, from January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024, in the amount of \$50,000.00.

#24-038 Contract Award: B & H Photo Video, Inc.: Audio Visual Equipment be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference listed below. Procurement procedures for this purchase have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

B&H Photo Video, Inc., 420 9th Avenue, New York, NY, from March 1, 2024, to February 28, 2025, in the amount of \$30,000.00.

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

#24-031 Approval of Revisions to the High School Health Graduation Requirements (Second Reading) be adopted as amended That the Superintendent's Recommendation #24-031 (Second Reading) be adopted as amended: That the School Committee approve the revisions to Policy IKF- High School Health Graduation Requirement as a result of the February 1, 2022 Order #22-026.

Description:

This revision would allow us to maintain the fifteen (15) health credit requirement while supporting student course enrollment choices by:

1. The Health II course will be optional for the Class of 2026 and 2007.
2. The Health II course will be mandatory beginning with the Class of 2028. Students can take the class in either grade 10, 11 & 12.
3. The Class of 2028 will be made aware of these changes in the requirement in Spring 2024 and Fall 2025.

A brief discussion followed on **#24-031**.

Member Hudson inquired about the timeline of the implementation of the graduation requirements for the students.

Vice Chair Hunter asked for the urgency in revising the policies and whether is it due to the athletic waivers. CRLS Principal Damon Smith provided clarity on the athletic waiver. There is course titled P.E. Athletics. Grade 9 students are not eligible for the P.E. Athletic course. If the Health course becomes a higher credit course then it will impact the P.E. Athletic waiver. The current structure of the course that was designed by educators and students is a ten-credit course which impacts the P.E. Athletic waiver.

Vice Chair Hunter shared that for a graduation requirement to take place, it should be at least four years out. She also shared that it can be a problem once it is implemented given the influx of students who will

be required to take the course. Principal Smith shared that the implications of the requirement changes were effectively implemented.

A robust discussion continued on the policy's implications for the class of 2026 and 2027 along with the policy implementation.

Member Rachel shared that the committee has to dispose of the recommendation given that students are currently creating their schedules for the upcoming school year.

Member Rojas suggested the course being a 5-credit course instead of a ten-credit course and motioned to amend the recommendation to the following:

- The Health II course will be optional for the Class of 2026 and 2027
- The Health II course will be mandatory beginning with the Class of 2028. Students can take the class in either grade 10, 11 & 12.

Member Rachel motioned to modify the recommendation to include that the class of 2028 is communicated about the changes this spring and next year.

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, the motion was amended: Member Harding NAY; Member Hudson YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA. (6-1)

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Rojas, on the following roll call vote **#24-031** was adopted as amended: Member Harding NAY; Member Hudson YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA. (6-1)

#24-032 Approval of Policy & Procedures for the Administration of Prescription Medication & for the Management of Life-Threatening Food Allergies in the School Setting (First Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the Policy and Procedures for the Administration of Prescription Medication and for the Management of Life-Threatening Food Allergies in the School Setting as detailed in the attached document. This is the same Policy and Procedures for the Administration of Prescription Medication and for the Management of Life-Threatening Food Allergies in School Settings that is currently in place but in accordance with state regulations the Policy and Procedures need to be periodically reviewed in conjunction with the Public Health Department. The Medical Director, School Health and Public Health Programs of the Cambridge Public Health Department, the Associate Chief of Clinical Services of the Cambridge Public Health Department, and the Public Health Nutritionist of the Cambridge Public Health Department have reviewed the Policy and Procedures for the Administration of Prescription Medication and for the Management of Life-Threatening Food Allergies in the School Setting

and are not recommending any changes to the document at this time.

A brief discussion followed on **#24-032**.

Member Hudson inquired about the policy of having Narcan on school grounds and asked if this policy is related to having Narcan on school grounds. Dr. Greer clarified that this policy does not include the retaining and administration of Narcan. **Member Hudson** shared that she would like to see the correlation reflected in the policy,

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Harding, on the following roll call vote **#24-032** was adopted: Member Harding PRESENT; Member Hudson PRESENT; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA.

#24-036 Contract Award: Lesley University: Instructional Services be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference listed below. Procurement procedures for this purchase have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Lesley University, 29 Everett Street, Cambridge, MA, from September 5, 2023, to June 28, 2024, in the amount of \$77,469.00.

A brief discussion followed on **#24-036**.

Member Rachel asked about the number of students being served through the recommendation and if that number will increase due to the budget reallocations. Dr. Greer shared that there are about thirty students enrolled and it is currently a decrease. Dr. Gittens also provided additional context on the decrease and the anticipated support the district is making to increase the number in the upcoming years.

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein, on the following roll call vote **#24-036** was adopted: Member Harding YEA; Member Hudson YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA.

#24-037 Contract Award: NCS Pearson, Inc.: Assessment Materials & Software – Amended be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor, funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference listed below. Procurement procedures for this purchase have complied with Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

NCS Pearson, Inc., PO Box 599700, San Antonio, TX, from January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024, in the amended amount of \$30,069.70.

Description:

This contract is for software and student assessment materials for the Office of Student Services.

A brief discussion followed on **#24-037**.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rojas on the following roll call vote **#24-037** was adopted: Member Harding YEA; Member Hudson YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA.

#24-039 Recommendation: Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the following donations as described:

1. DONATION - CPS received a \$390,000 donation to the CRLS boys and girls rowing teams from the Estate of Marie L. Hagelstein. This is the first of multiple donations from the estate which are restricted for the exclusive use of the CRIS boys and girls rowing teams. Funds will be placed into a Trust with the City of Cambridge and will be available solely for the operations of the Boys and Girls rowing teams, including equipment purchases. CPS is authorized to use both the principal and the interest of the trust funds.
2. DONATION - Kennedy Longfellow School received a donation from Vision Incorporated as a commission for student portraits. The funds will be used for the general support of the school.
3. IN-KIND DONATION —The Visual & Performing Arts department received a donation of used clothing from an individual donor to the theater program for use as costumes.
4. IN-KIND DONATION —Library Media Services received a donation of books from the Chinese American Association of Cambridge to support the continued expansion of our AAPI (Asian, Asian American, and Pacific Islander) collections in all JK - 12 libraries, as well as a visit from author Kelly Yang (grades 4 & 5).

A brief discussion followed on **#24-039**. Vice Chair Hunter confirmed with the Executive Secretary that donors received a written acknowledgement for their gifts to CPSD.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Hudson on the following roll call vote **#24-039** was adopted: Member Harding YEA; Member Hudson YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA.

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

#24-040 Joint Motion by Member Rachel, Mayor Simmons, and Member Harding

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools has a historical commitment to teaching all students fundamental skills; and

WHEREAS: Being an informed, effective community member in the 21st century requires critical thinking as well as the ability to discern reliable information sources from misinformation and disinformation; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee updated the policy [IHA, Basic Instructional Program](#), to add accessing, analyzing, and evaluating information in written and digital media to the list of fundamental skills.

A brief discussion followed on **#24-040**.

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Harding, on the following roll call vote, **#24-040** was adopted: Member Harding YEA; Member Hudson YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA.

10. Resolutions (letters of congratulations, letters of condolences): None

11. Announcements:

- **Member Weinstein** recognized the CRLS Boys' Basketball for their playoff run and the CRLS Drama Club for making it to the state competition. He also congratulated the CRLS RSTA Culinary team for winning 1st place in a recent competition and the CRLS Debate Club for making it to the final four in the national debate.
- **Member Harding** congratulated **Vice Chair Hunter** for being a recipient of the NAACP Drum Major for Education Award during the annual NAACP MLK Brunch on February 24th.
- **Mayor Simmons** acknowledged Member Harding for his work and advocacy as a member of the Cambridge NAACP. **Mayor Simmons** also announced there will be an unveiling of the new Ackermann room at City Hall on March 6th.
- **Vice Hunter** announced that there will be a sixteen-hour Read-a-thon at CRLS on Friday, March 8th.

12. Communications from City Officer:

- Vice Chair Hunter: Addendum to the 2024/2025 Rules of the School Committee

Vice Chair Hunter provided an addendum to the current rules to the school committee which adds additional language regarding Committee members' visibility in schools.

A brief discussion followed on the addendum including additional changes to the 2024-2025 Rules of the Schools. **Mayor Simmons** recommends that the Vice Chair table the addendum until she and the Mayor can thoroughly review the current rules to make additional modifications and bring them to the Committee as a whole all at once at a future meeting.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rachel, on the following roll call vote, it was voted to accept the addendum to the 2024-2025 Rules of the School Committee: Member Harding YEA; Member Hudson YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rachel, on the following roll call vote, it was voted to withdraw the addendum to the 2024-2025 Rules to a later date, pending additional revision and modifications from the Mayor and Vice Chair (Governance Subcommittee): Member Harding YEA; Member Hudson YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA.

Email communications:

- Dan Monahan

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Rojas, on the following roll call vote, it was voted to adjourn the open meeting: Member Harding YEA; Member Hudson YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons YEA. (9:33 p.m.)

Attest:

Ariel B. Kennebrew

Ariel B. Kennebrew
Executive Secretary to the School Committee