



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

October 15, 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: Member Harding, Member Hudson, Vice Chair Hunter, Member Rachel, Member Rojas
Member Weinstein (ABSENT), Mayor Simmons

Others Present: Jennifer Amigone, Director of Research, Assessment and Evaluation; Emily Bryan, Director of English Language Arts, Deena DePamphilis, Director of Science, Allan Gately Gehant, Interim Principal, CRLS; Tanya Milner, Interim Assistant Principal, CRLS; Siobahn Mulligan, Director of Mathematics; Chad Leith, Chief Accountability Officer; David Murphy, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Ashley Pierre, Executive Director of Human Resources

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:01 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, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, PRESENT; Madame Mayor, PRESENT

On a motion by Member Hunter, seconded by Member Hudson on the following roll call vote, the rules were suspended to allow for agenda item 7a, Superintendent's Update: Member Harding, YEA, Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madame Mayor, YEA.

Mr. Murphy announced the following appointees to CPSD positions:

Mr. Allan Gately Gehant, Interim Principal of CRLS
Ms. Tanya Milner, Interim Assistant Principal of CRLS
Ms. Ashely Pierre, Executive Director of Human Resources

Mr. Gehant, Ms. Milner and Ms. Pierre introduced themselves and shared their professional highlights. All have strong ties (current and former) to CPSD and expressed their enthusiasm for their new positions and for the district. Committee members offered their support and welcomed them to their new roles.

Mr. Murphy acknowledged the contributions of Dr. Lendozia Edwards, Chief Academic Officer, and Ms. Sujata Wycoff, Director of Communications, both of whom were leaving the district to pursue other opportunities.

1. Public Comment:

The following individuals were heard:

- Dan Monahan, Lexington Ave., spoke regarding **#24-241, #24-245, and #24-258**
- Prabal Chakrabarti, 117 Appleton Street, spoke regarding **#24-259**
- Laura Clawson, Richdale Ave, spoke regarding **#24-241, #24-245, and #24-258**
- Brook Hopkins, Cottage Park Avenue, **#24-241 and #24-245**
- Andrew King, Chilton Street, spoke regarding **#24-241 and #24-258**
- Becca Lester, William Street, spoke regarding **#24-241, #24-243 and #24-244**
- Carolyn Magid, Reed Street, spoke regarding **#24-241, #24-245, and #24-258**
- Nina Mitchell, Hilliard Place, spoke regarding **#24-259**
- Piotr Mitros, Michael Way, spoke regarding **#24-241 and #24-245**
- Sushama, Gore Street, spoke regarding **#24-259**
- Jennifer Woodfin, Brookford Street, spoke regarding **#24-259**

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter , seconded by Member Rojas on the following roll call vote, public comment was closed: Member Harding, YEA, Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madame Mayor, YEA.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Member Barua and Student Member Shimelis shared the following highlights:

- Parent Teacher Conferences
- Annual Career Fair last week with over 40 colleges represented
- Athletic Senior Nights
- Seniors applying college
- PSAT for Juniors on October 28
- Financial Aid conferences
- CRLS Homecoming on October 25

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- September 27, 2024, Special Meeting
- October 1, 2024, Regular Meeting

On a motion Member Rachel seconded by Member Hudson on the following roll call vote, the records were accepted as presented: Member Harding, YEA, Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madame Mayor, YEA.

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:

Late Order 2024 Superintendent Search Timeline
Joint Motion by Member Rojas and Member Rachel
June 17, 2024

REVISED September 17, 2024

#24-227 Joint Motion by Member Rojas, Member Rachel and Member David

That the School Committee discuss the following and other timeline options for the Superintendent Search

CPSD Superintendent Search 2024-2025

Timeline - By when to target making a job offer	Pros	Cons
By Dec 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In line with Mass Association of School Committees (MASC) recommendation - Take advantage of larger pool of candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less time for community input and development of job description
By April 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow focus on starting school year well - Provide more time for community input and development of job description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Challenge of having a smaller pool of candidates
By Dec 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modified MASC recommendation - Take advantage of larger pool of candidates - Provide more time for community input and development of job description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Longer period for interim superintendent OR - Need for 2nd interim superintendent - Possible delays in hiring other leadership positions

Attachments:

- Model Timeline from Mass Association of School Committee’s “A Vacancy in the Superintendency, Key Decisions for School Committees Planning for a Transition”
- Timeline for Dr. Salim’s hire
- Timeline for Dr. Young’s hire
- Mayor’s Communication re: Plan of Work for Superintendent Search, September 10, 2024

Model Timeline from Mass Association of School Committee’s “A Vacancy in the Superintendency, Key Decisions for School Committees Planning for a Transition”

DRAFT SEARCH TIMELINE SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH - Model Timeline

This timeline can take from 2-5 months depending the level of “process” and the size of the search committee. It is important to be flexible, allowing sufficient time to make up for unanticipated delays. The most likely delays would be on the search committee end because of the number of potential member schedule conflicts. A, earlier start date, such as over the summer, allows more time to plan, recruit, and interview. A late start will still work well if the school committee expedites the process. A very late start (March/April) would require expediting the process and imposing sharp deadlines.

October 1 – 15, 2023	School Committee receives preliminary documents, approves draft timeline, sets focus group meetings, makes decisions about recruiting search committee, etc. Search Committee Appointed and Orientation (Set Fixed Date) Focus surveys planned and on-line survey developed; materials development completed and ready for distribution
October 15	Advertisements/E-Mail and General Mail distribution of materials. Also, distribution of search information to recruitment networks. Materials mailed and distributed. Candidate recruitment is ongoing.
By November 19	Focus Groups will take place Search Committee will organize to prepare for screening of candidates, scheduling of interviews, and preparation of questions.
November 30, 2023	Deadline Set for Filing Applications (3:00 p.m. EST via mail, e-mail, fax or personal delivery to search coordinator)
Immediately After Deadline	Applications are compiled and prepared for the Search Committee to review during school vacation. Review begins immediately. Search Committee begins initial screening, selection and initial interviews. Process culminates with recommendations to the School Committee.
Week of December 10	School Committee receives report and recommended finalists. Interviews candidates, conducts site visits, and other due diligence steps are scheduled.
December 12-19, 2023	School Committee interviews finalists are completed. Site visits take place.
Mid-January, 2024	School Committee makes hiring decision.
July 1, 2024 or Sooner	Superintendent takes office <u>or before if so needed and negotiated.</u>

Timeline for Dr. Salim’s Hire

Superintendent Search 2015-2016: Dr. Kenneth Salim	
DATE	MEETING/ACTION ITEM/ANNOUNCEMENT
April 7, 2015	SC selects Executive Director of HR (Barbara Allen) official Superintendent Search Liaison Designee (Order C15-091)
April 7, 2015	Supt. Search Ad Hoc Subcommittee be comprised of the Committee of the Whole (Order C15-090)
April 7, 2015	Draft Supt. Search Timeline (Order C15-089)
April 7, 2015	SC Special Meeting Minutes: Discuss Supt. Search Timeline
April 28, 2015	SC Special Meeting Minutes: Review & Approval of RFP for Search Firm
May 21, 2015	Request for RFPs Supt. Search Firm
June 9, 2015	SC Special Meeting/Exec. Session Minutes: Evaluate Search Firm Proposals
June 16, 2015	SC establish Special Meeting schedule with Exec. Search Firm (Order C15-196)
June 16, 2015	Executive Search Contract Awarded to Hazard, Young, Attea Associated (HYA) (Order C15-165)
July 1, 2015	Planning Meeting with HYA (HYA Binder located in SC Office)
July 1, 2015	SC Special Meeting Minutes: Meeting with Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) Search Firm
July 14, 2015	Framework with Updated Search Timeline (Order C15-207)
July 14, 2015	SC Special Meeting Minutes: Discuss Supt. Search Interview Committee Make Up
July 28, 2015	Amended Composition of Supt. Search Interview Committee to included 3 SC members (Order C15-208)er C15-208)
August 20, 2015	Supt. Search Community Survey from Barbara Allen
August 26, 2015	HYA Leadership Profile Meeting Schedule
August 26, 2015	Supt. Search Focus Group & Community Forum Schedule
September 9, 2015	Public-facing Schedule of Community Meetings from Barbara Allen
September 16, 2015	Leadership Profile Report from HYA
September 16, 2015	SC Special Meeting Minutes: Meet with HYA to discuss Leadership Profile Report
October 1, 2015	Supt. Search Interview Committee Listing
October 13, 2015	Press Release of Supt. Finalists
October 14, 2015	Final Candidates Itinerary
October 15, 2015	SC Special Meeting Minutes: Community Forum/Town Hall to meet the Supt. Final Candidates
October 16, 2015	Draft Interview Questions for Finalists
October 16, 2015	SC Special Meeting Minutes: SC Interviews with Final Candidates
October 22, 2015	Supt. Site Visit Protocols
October 27, 2015	SC appoints Dr. Salim as Supt. contingent on reaching negotiated agreement (Order C15-329)
October 27, 2015	SC Special Meeting: Consider Appointment of Supt. (Vote taken to appoint Dr. Salim.)
December 15, 2015	Executive Session Meeting Minutes - Negotiating Contract and Vote
December 15, 2015	Regular Meeting Minutes - Vote to Approve Contract
December 15, 2015	Consider Adoption of Dr. Kenneth Salim Contract (Order C15-290)
January 5, 2016	Dr. Salim contract ratified (Order C16-009)
January 12, 2016	Ad Hoc Subcommittee Transition Planning Meeting: Dr. Salim's Learning-based Entry Plan
March 24, 2016	Ad Hoc Subcommittee Transition Planning Meeting: Discuss Transition Planning for Dr. Salim
June 13, 2016	Ad Hoc Subcommittee Transition Planning Meeting: Review & Monitor Dr. Salim's Onboarding Plan
July 1, 2016	Dr. Salim begins at CPSD
September 22, 2016	Ad Hoc Subcommittee Transition Planning Meeting: Prioritize Short-Term Issues for Dr. Salim
January 12, 2017	Ad Hoc Subcommittee Transition Planning Meeting: Review Findings from Supt. Listening/Observing Tours

Timeline for Dr. Young’s hire

Superintendent Search 2008-2009: Dr. Jeffrey Young	
DATE	MEETING/ACTION ITEM/ANNOUNCEMENT
July 15, 2008	SC Meeting Minutes: Glenn Koocher (MASC) Presentation re: Search Process
July 31, 2008	Special Meeting Minutes: Discuss Process of Supt. Search
July 31, 2008	SC authorize School Dept. to draft RFP for Search Firm (Order C08-291)
August 12, 2008	Ad Hoc Subcomm Supt. Search Minutes: Establish Calendar for Supt. Search
September 8, 2008	Memo from City Manager: Procurement Process for Search Firm
September 9, 2008	Ad Hoc Subcomm Supt. Search Minutes: Supt. Search Timeline
September 16, 2008	Draft Supt. Search Timeline by Barbara Allen
November 8, 2008	Search Process and Timeline by Ray & Associates (search firm)
November 18, 2008	Search Firm Contract Awarded to Ray & Associates (Order C08-438)
November 18, 2008	Consultant’s Contacts: HR Director Allen and SC members Mayor Simmons & Schuster (Order C08-485)
December 1, 2008	Supt. Search Advertising Opportunities (undated)
December 1, 2008	Supt. Search Advertising Flyer (undated)
December 1, 2008	Suggested Interview Questions (undated)
December 1, 2008	Evaluation Process of Candidates by Ray & Associates (undated)
December 11, 2008	Supt Search Update Memo from Barbara Allen
January 9, 2009	Supt. Job Description
February 10, 2009	Ad Hoc Subcomm Supt Search Minutes: Update on Supt. Search
March 11, 2009	Ad Hoc Subcomm Supt Search Minutes: Preliminary Screening of Candidates
March 19, 2009	Ad Hoc Subcomm Supt Search Minutes: Preliminary Screening of Candidates
March 20, 2009	Ad Hoc Subcomm Supt Search Minutes: Preliminary Screening of Candidates
March 30, 2009	Special Meeting Minutes: Town Hall to Meet Supt. Finalists
March 31, 2009	Special Meeting Minutes: Interviewing Finalists
April 7, 2009	SC Offer Supt. Position to Dr. Jeffrey Young (C09-097)
April 23, 2009	Ad-hoc Committee Created to Assist with Supt. Transition Plan (C09-123)

Mayor’s Communication re: Plan of Work for Superintendent Search, September 10, 2024

September 10, 2024

Re: School Committee Plan of Work for Superintendent Search

Dear Members of the School Committee,

As we move forward with the search for our next permanent School Superintendent, I want to outline a clear process to ensure a thorough, collaborative, and focused effort. Our commitment to selecting the right leader for Cambridge Public Schools is critical, and this Plan of Work is designed to guide us in that effort. Below, please see my proposed plan that includes the following key steps:

School Committee Visioning Session

The School Committee shall engage in a visioning session to align our goals for the Superintendent role. This will take place at a retreat on September 26th at a location to be determined in order to dive deeper into discussions about the leadership qualities and priorities we wish to emphasize moving forward.

Guidance on the Search Process

In October, we shall meet with Glenn Koocher for an in-depth session on best practices for conducting an effective Superintendent search. This session will provide valuable insights on the search process structure and help us refine our approach.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Focus

DEI training for the School Committee will be essential to ensure that equity and inclusivity are at the forefront of our search. This will reinforce our commitment to finding a leader who can uphold these principles in Cambridge Public Schools.

Implementation of the Superintendent Search

Following these preparatory steps, we will then move into the implementation phase, ensuring that all key considerations, including our district's needs and the leadership qualities we have identified, remain central to the search process.

I believe that this plan shall help guide us toward selecting the best candidate for the role, and I look forward to discussing this with you during the School Committee meeting on September 10. I thank you for your ongoing dedication to this critical work.

Mayor Simmons requested that **#24-227** remain on the table.

#24-241 Six Minutes Public Comment CEA President – Member Weinstein and Member Rojas

WHEREAS: The public comment portion of regular Cambridge School Committee meetings is an important opportunity for speakers to share their views with the School Committee in a format that is accessible to the public; and

WHEREAS: Each speaker is allotted three minutes to speak during public comment, and past practice of the Cambridge School Committee has been to allot six minutes of speaking time to the president of the Cambridge Education Association (CEA); and

WHEREAS: This practice of allotting six minutes to the president of the CEA has not been formally established in the School Committees rules or procedures; and

WHEREAS: The president of the CEA, when speaking in their capacity in that role, is representing 1,500 Cambridge Public Schools educators and is elected to serve as their representative; and

WHEREAS: Hearing the perspectives, priorities, concerns, recommendations and feedback of those educators is valuable to the work of the School Committee; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the president of the CEA is allotted either six minutes of speaking time to deliver public comment at regular Cambridge School Committee meetings when the regular time limit is three minutes or they are allotted four minutes when the time limit is reduced to two minutes by the Chair based on the number of individuals signed up to speak; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the president or similar designated representative of any bargaining unit that has a contract with the Cambridge Public School District also be allotted the same minutes of speaking time as the president of the CEA to deliver public comment at regular Cambridge School Committee meetings.

Member Rojas requested that **#24-241** remain on the table given that his fellow motion-maker, Member Weinstein, was absent.

#24-243 Superintendent Search Process – Member Hudson, Member Weinstein and Member Rachel

WHEREAS: The hiring of a Superintendent is the most consequential decision the School Committee will make; and

WHEREAS: Many timelines for the search have been proposed, but none yet adopted; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee will commit to a search timeline no later than October 15, 2024; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the timeline will explicitly include interim dates by which the following milestones will have taken place: 1) Hiring of a Search Firm; 2) Stakeholder Meetings Ahead of Job Posting; 3) Job Posting Approved; 4) Job Posting Publicly Released and Advertised; 5) Application Deadline; 6) Search Firm Review of Applicants, and Proposal of Shortlist; 7) Shortlisted Candidate Interviews; 8) Offer Made; and be it further

RESOLVED That the School Committee will make clear, in writing, who will be responsible for drafting a timeline for the Committee to consider, who will be responsible for organizing the Stakeholder meetings, and who will serve as the Hiring Committee.

Per the request of **Mayor Simmons, #24-243** remained on the table.

#24-245 Public Speaking Time – Member Hudson

WHEREAS: All residents are welcome to speak during Public Comment – but some residents have been elected by large groups of residents, to speak on their behalf; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That any elected representative of a group with a membership larger than 500 individuals (living or working within the District) and all union leaders be entitled to twice the time allocated to an individual at a given meeting, not to exceed 6 minutes.

Per the request of **Mayor Simmons, #24-245** remained on the table.

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7. Superintendent's Agenda

7b. Presentations:

CPS district administrators will brief the school committee on results of MCAS achievement data produced by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This report will focus on both broad themes elucidated by the achievement data as well as specific points of interest with respect to key findings in the data and how they relate to developing and ongoing work streams to ensure students a continuously improving learning environment.

David Murphy, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Jennifer Amigone, Director of Assessment & Accountability
Siobahn Mulligan, Director of Mathematics
Emily Bryan, Director of English Language Arts
Deena DePamphilis, Director of Science

The group gave the following presentation which can be found on this [website](#).

Following the presentation, the Committee and the presenters discussed the following topics:

- The necessity of a strong civics curriculum.
- The concerning statistic that roughly half of students are not meeting expectations.
- Both high-needs and non-high-needs Black and brown students are underperforming.
- The importance of involving caregivers in their students' academic lives.
- Specific strategies needed to improve outcomes for underperforming racial groups.
- The urgent need to reverse deeply entrenched trends.
- The importance of providing scaffolding when needed and removing it when it is no longer necessary.

- Adopting curriculum with fidelity, exemplified by the success at Putnam Ave. Upper School.
- The district’s commitment to alignment and consistent grade-level standards across schools.
- The importance of focusing on scholars who are most in need.
- Recognizing unintentional racial bias and ensuring high expectations for all students.
- The farther students progress from kindergarten, the more difficult it becomes to address academic gaps.
- Aligning the curriculum is a crucial first step.
- As a resource-rich district, the importance of deploying resources to ensure maximum impact for scholars.

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

7d. **Consent Agenda:**

On a motion by Member Rachel seconded by Vice Chair Hunter the items **#24-246, #24-247, #24-248, #24-249, #24-250, #24-252, #24-253, #24-254, #24-255, #24-256, and #24-257** were adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA, Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madame Mayor, YEA.

#24-246 Recommendation: Day & Residential Program Services not Available from The Cambridge School Department 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: SY24-25 Placement of students in private schools for implementation of educational plans in accordance with Chapter 766.

	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts:	2	\$101,997.15
Residential Program Contracts:		
45 Day Program Contracts:	1	<u>\$25,605.90</u>
Total	3	\$127,603.05

#24-247 Recommendation: Contract Award: Fire Equipment Inc.: Fire Alarm 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.

Fire Equipment, 20 Hall Street, Medford, MA for the period of October 15, 2024 to October 14, 2025 in the amount of \$50,000.00.

#24-248 Recommendation: Contract Award: Amergis Educational Staffing: Special Education Temporary Staffing 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.

Amergis Educational Staffing, 110 2nd Ave, Needham, MA for the period of November 1, 2024 to July 31, 2025 in the amount of \$75,000.00.

#24-249 Recommendation: Contract Award: New England Home Health: Special Education Nursing 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.

New England Home Health Services, Inc. 594 Marrett Road, Suite 11, Lexington, MA for the period of November 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 in the amount of \$100,000.00.

#24-250 Recommendation: Contract Award: VWR International, LLC: Instructional Materials For the Biotechnology Program 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.

VWR International, LLC, 100 Matsonford Road, Building 1, Suite 100, Radnor, PA for the period of September 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 in the amount of \$41,464.27.

#24-252 Recommendation: Contract Award: CCS Presentation Systems: Interactive Display Hardware 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.

CCS Presentation Systems, 132 Northeastern Blvd, Nashua, NH for the period of November 7, 2024 to November 6, 2025 in the amount of \$500,000.00.

#24-253 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY25 Title I Part A Distribution-Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local School Districts (SC25604) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY25 Title I, Part A Distribution – Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local School Districts (SC25604) Federal through State in the amount of \$1,450,924.00 for the period of September 9, 2024 to September 30, 2026.

#24-254 Recommendation: Grant Award: Fy25 Title II Part A Distribution-Building Systems Support for Excellent Teaching & Leading (SC25731) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY25 Title II, Part A Distribution – Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Leading (SC25731) Federal through State in the amount of \$197,047.00 for the period of September 9, 2024 to September 30, 2026.

#24-255 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY25 Title III Distribution-English Language Acquisition & Academic Achievement Program for English Learners & Immigrant Children & Youth (SC25737) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY25 Title III, Part A Distribution – English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement Program for English Learners and Immigrant children and Youth (SC25737) Federal through State in the amount of \$118,745.00 for the period of September 9, 2024 to September 30, 2026.

#24-256 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY25 Title IV Part A Distribution-Student Support & Academic Enrichment Grant (SC25732) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY25 Title IV, Part A Distribution – Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant (SC25732) Federal through State in the amount of \$106,369.00 for the period of September 9, 2024 to September 30, 2026.

#24-257 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY25 Circuit Breaker Allocation (SC25776) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY25 Circuit Breaker Allocation (SC25776) through State in the amount of \$7,687,789.00 for the period of October 3, 2024 to June 30, 2026.

8. Non-Consent Agenda

#24-251 Recommendation: Contract Award: Constance Henry: Professional Learning 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.

Constance Henry, 33 Buick Street, Watertown, MA for the period of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 in the amount of \$28,080.00.

A brief discussion followed **#24-251**.

Ms. Mulligan provided additional background regarding the vendor and noted that the vendor's work aligns with the Illustrative Math Curriculum. **Member Rojas** shared her concern that UPP providers outside of the district would not have access to these materials. Mr. Murphy agreed to follow-up with Member Rojas with more details.

On a motion Member Harding seconded by Member Rojas on the following roll call vote, **#24-251** was approved on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA, Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madame Mayor, YEA.

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

#24-258 Ballot Question Number 2 – Member Rojas and Member Weinstein

WHEREAS: Ballot Question 2, "Repeal the requirement that students must achieve a certain competency level on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exam to graduate high school" is on the ballot this coming November 2024

WHEREAS: Ballot Question 2 would maintain MCAS assessments and related reporting and accountability requirements to the extent mandated by federal law; and

WHEREAS: Ballot Question 2 leaves the current academic learning standards in place that determine what students are required to learn; and

WHEREAS: The use of MCAS scores as a graduation requirement has not catalyzed the closing of opportunity gaps in Massachusetts and the test can be a barrier to graduation for students who do not perform well on standardized tests despite their understanding of a subject; and

WHEREAS: The Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees recently voted unanimously to urge voters to vote "yes" on Question 2; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee passed policy order [#23-078](#) on April 4, 2023 to support the passage of the Thrive Act that would have also ended the use of MCAS as a graduation requirement; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools are committed to providing the best possible educational experience to all our students; and

WHEREAS: Ballot Question 2 would establish a modified graduation requirement based on coursework rather than standardized testing; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee supports Ballot Question 2, which would remove the MCAS as a graduation requirement, and will send a copy of this motion to the Cambridge state delegation and to Governor Healey.

An amended version of **#24-245** was brought forth by **Member Rojas** at the meeting:

WHEREAS: Ballot Question 2, "Repeal the requirement that students must achieve a certain competency level on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exam to graduate high school" is on the ballot this coming November, 2024; and

WHEREAS: Ballot Question 2 would maintain MCAS assessments and related reporting and accountability requirements to the extent mandated by federal law; and

WHEREAS: Ballot Question 2 leaves the current academic learning standards in place that determine what students are required to learn; and

WHEREAS: The Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees recently voted unanimously to urge voters to vote "yes" on Question 2; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee passed policy order #23-078 on April 4, 2023 to support the passage of the Thrive Act that would have also ended the use of MCAS as a graduation requirement; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public School District (CPSD) already has other graduation requirements in addition to MCAS; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That if Ballot Question 2 is approved, the School Committee will undertake a review of high school graduation requirements to make sure CPSD is well-positioned to establish modified requirements, if needed, to ensure all CPSD students graduate ready for post-secondary careers and education.

On a motion by Member Rojas seconded by Member Rachel on the following roll call vote, the amendment by substitution of **#24-258** was brought forth for the Committee's consideration: Member Harding, YEA, Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madame Mayor, YEA.

Member Rojas provided background on the amended motion and hoped that the updated version was more agreeable to Committee members. He shared that if Question 2 is approved on November 5, and passing the MCAS is no longer a graduation requirement, the district should review the graduation requirements and ensure that the CPSD's assessments are up to standards. **Member Rachel** and **Vice Chair Hunter** appreciated the amended language. **Member Hudson** questioned if the intent of the motion was redundant as graduation requirements were already being reviewed and assessed. Mr. Murphy shared that should Question 2 pass, that there would be significant change across the state and reflection would be warranted. He noted that if participation in the MCAS declines, CPSD will have less reliable data to review. **Vice Chair Hunter** questioned the last sentence of the amended motion and shared that she was not ready to vote favorably. **Member Harding** highlighted the late submission of the amendment and that the public did not have an opportunity to review it. He underscored that the original motion mentioned in **#24-258** in which the Committee supported the Thrive Act, was passed by the prior Committee with different members. **Mayor Simmons** shared her belief that the Committee should not be weighing in on ballot questions. Given the feedback, **Member Rojas** offered to delete the section referring the Thrive Act as well as the last phrase of the motion.

On a motion by Member Rojas seconded by Member Harding on the following roll call vote, the amendments were accepted: Member Harding, YEA, Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madame Mayor, YEA.

Member Rojas asked that the amended motion **#24-258** be referred to the Curriculum & Achievement Subcommittee.

On a motion by Member Rojas seconded by Member Rachel on the following roll call vote, the amended **#24-258** was referred to the Curriculum & Achievement Subcommittee: Member Harding, YEA, Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madame Mayor, YEA.

#24-259 Tobin Montessori Preliminary Report – Member Hudson and Member Harding

WHEREAS: The Tobin Montessori School was recently recognized by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and by the Cambridge Public Schools Superintendent for its high student achievement;

WHEREAS: The Tobin Montessori School is leading the way within the Cambridge Public School District, delivering clear, measurable progress in narrowing gaps in achievement between students with different backgrounds – an issue that the District has long stated is its most important; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee went on record a year ago supporting the expansion of the and directed the Superintendent to “...provide a report and recommendation to the committee a plan of action for the possible next steps...”; and

WHEREAS: No report nor recommendation was ever made; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee request that the Superintendent provide a preliminary report on the feasibility of making this change, and a recommendation from the Superintendent as to whether next steps are warranted and what those next steps would be, no later than December 31, 2024 (with the definition of preliminary to be determined by the Superintendent). Tobin Montessori program (specifically, “...to explore the recommendation of the American Montessori Association Accreditation team to extend the Tobin Montessori Upper Elementary Program to three years...”) and referred the matter to the Superintendent “...for further review of the recommendations from the Accreditation team to explore implications of such a change including but not limited to the budget impact, upper school enrollment, and feeder patterns...”

Member Hudson spoke to the **#24-259** noting that the Committee went on record last year supporting that the Superintendent would provide a report and recommendation on a plan of action and next steps. She would like Mr. Murphy to provide a framework. **Member Harding** noted that he would like Mr. Murphy to provide guidance highlighting that changing the framework of the Tobin School would impact the district. Vice Chair Hunter questioned the deadline outlined in the motion and mentioned that the full Facilities Report has not been shared. In addition, she underscored that the motion is tied to the Controlled Choice Policy. **Member Rojas** asked for Mr. Murphy’s input. Mr. Murphy shared that he had no objection to **#24-259** as it was being offered. He noted that changing the configuration of the Tobin School would have a significant impact. He is sympathetic to the Tobin parents who are seeking additional follow-up and he believes that further communications are warranted. **Member Hudson** offered to amend the language and bring it back to the Committee.

By request of **Member Harding**, **#24-259** was tabled.

#24-260 Controlled Choice Policy – Member Hudson and Member Harding

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools Controlled Choice Policy is designed to create “diverse, academically rigorous schools;” and

WHEREAS: We can learn a lot about the (perceived) quality of our programs by looking at how families “vote with their feet,” in labeling schools as their first, second and third choices, to educate their kids; and

WHEREAS: It’s been more than a decade since the School Committee formally reviewed the Control Choice Policy – including not only the schools for which families ask, but also comparing these data to actual school performance (overall achievement and ability to narrow achievement gaps), and looking at what types of families tend NOT to get their first, second, or third choice; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee request an updated but streamlined review of the current Controlled Choice Policy from the Superintendent, to include the following items: Which schools are the most frequently chosen, which schools the most oversubscribed (number of families who list a school as the first, second or third choice, but do not receive a seat); how those most frequently chosen schools perform (on the MCAS and any relevant internal assessments) relative to the least frequently chosen schools (in overall level of achievement and in narrowing of achievement gaps); any relevant patterns in school choice by family demographic (e.g., high vs. low income); and a list of the schools that are the most frequently chosen by BOTH high and low income families; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent also provide a recommendation, based on the School Department’s experience running this Program, as to changes in the Controlled Choice Policy that he would recommend (if any).

Member Hudson shared the background for **#24-260**. She shared that her goal was to review the controlled choice data as it has not been reviewed since 2013. **Member Rachel, Member Rojas** and **Vice Chair Hunter** offered amendments to the motion. Suggested amendments included a socio-economic breakdown of the data, as well as omitting language that would include having the Superintendent recommend next steps following a data review. The group agreed that a gathering and reviewing the data should proceed leadership recommendations and community involvement. The motion was amended on the floor.

On a motion by Member Harding seconded by Member Hudson on the following roll call vote, **#24-260** was accepted as amended: Member Harding, YEA, Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madame Mayor, YEA.

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

11. Announcements:

Member Harding

- Expressed condolences to the families of Julia Perez and William Meegan, Sr. both of whom recently passed away

Mayor Simmons

- Acknowledged Member Harding's birthday
- Shared that she was working with the City Manager to arrange for a Joint Roundtable to discuss the City's budget

Member Rojas

- Noted the upcoming MASC Conference in Hyannis on November 6-8

Vice Chair Hunter

- Shared that she would be travelling to Huntersville, Alabama with CRLS teachers.

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications from City Officers: None

Email communications:

- Amber Bifolck-Fisher
- Mannikka Bowman
- Lilly Havstad
- Caleb Hurst-Hiller
- Dan Monahan
- Sheli Wortis

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter seconded by Member Hudson on the following roll call vote, the meeting was adjourned: Member Harding, YEA, Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madame Mayor, YEA. (10:00 p.m.)

Attest:



Katherine Christo

Executive Secretary to the School Committee

