



## CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

**Special Meeting**

**May 6, 2021**

Called for 6:00 p.m. broadcast from the Media Arts Studio, 454 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of considering the appointment of the Interim Superintendent of Schools.

Members Present: Vice Chair Bowman, Member Fantini, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson, Mayor Siddiqui

Also Present: Ms. Richardson, Chief Talent Officer of Human Resources  
Ms. Daley, Confidential Secretary to the School Committee

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 read the call of the meeting and explained that this meeting is being televised, votes will be taken and there will be public comment.

The meeting proceeded to the first order of business with the following roll call for the purposes of a sound check: Member Wilson PRESENT; Vice Chair Bowman PRESENT; Member Fantini PRESENT; Member Rojas PRESENT; Member Rachel PRESENT; Member Weinstein PRESENT Mayor Siddiqui PRESENT.

There being no members of the public present to speak on public comment, on a motion by Vice Chair Bowman, seconded by Member Rojas, on the following roll call the Chair declared a five-minute recess: Member Wilson YEA; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

The time for recess having expired, the meeting resumed at 6:05 p.m. with the regular order of business. The Chair opened the floor for public comment. The following individuals were heard:

- Richard Harding, Windsor Street, spoke to the recommendation for the appointment of Dr. Victoria Greer for Interim Superintendent
- Kenneth Reeves, Harvard Street, President of the Cambridge Branch of the NAACP, spoke to the recommendation for the appointment of Dr. Victoria Greer for Interim Superintendent

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

Mayor Siddiqui turned to the School Committee Members for their comments as follows:

Member Rachel stated she appreciated getting to know both finalists and is grateful for having worked with the Members of the Ad-hoc Sub-Committee: Member Rojas, Mayor Siddiqui, along with Ms. Richardson and Ms. Daley throughout this process. Member Rachel is especially grateful for the various members of the community that devoted dozens of hours to this important task. She found Dr. Metcalf to be very warm, personable, and friendly, and they are committed to driving inequity and anti-racism, she

hopes to cross paths with them again in the future. Her hesitancy for choosing Dr. Metcalf is they don't have the discretionary time required to understand Cambridge deeply enough to lead the district. She will be supporting Dr. Greer for Interim Superintendent. She believes that Dr. Greer has grown in recent years as a leader and is the most qualified candidate for this assignment at this moment. She is a visionary, very smart and was always visible and present at community events and in Sharon Public Schools. Cambridge SE-PAC has given very good references; People in Sharon have given good references also. She always centers the needs of students, and can move the needle for our children, she expects her to work incredibly hard.

Member Rojas thanked everyone for the inclusive process. In agreement with public comment by Mr. Harding, hiring someone for Superintendent is one of the most important decisions that the School Committee has to make. Both Dr. Metcalf and Dr. Greer bring insight, strengths and weaknesses to the role of Interim Superintendent, they both care about the same issues that Cambridge cares about. Dr. Greer brings prior knowledge of Cambridge; has worked in CPSD, particularly with those with special needs, and in the role of Superintendent of Schools in Sharon Public Schools. Member Rojas has reservations about her management and communication approaches. Dr. Greer has less experience than Dr. Metcalf in leading districts. Dr. Metcalf brings experience in bridging cultures, a long track record in helping at risk students with academic challenges, and in leading large, complicated urban districts as evidenced in Chicago. Dr. Metcalf has shown over reliance in standardized testing. Dr. Greer's non-negotiable main concern is with school climate. Dr. Metcalf's non-negotiable main concern is with student achievement; he noted that they are both important focuses, however he indicated that coming out of Covid-19, the main concern should be on student achievement. In summary he will support the appointment of the candidate with the most votes to ensure a smooth transition to the next Superintendent. Member Rojas is supporting Dr. Metcalf for this role.

Member Fantini shared that in his experience of having been through past superintendent searches, there has always been a smooth transition using the in-house internal leadership team; he indicated that an internal interim superintendent creates a smooth transition without distractions during the search for a permanent superintendent. Both candidates presented themselves well. He is on board to support whoever gets the votes. Member Fantini indicated that he will be voting present.

Member Weinstein thanked the Ad-hoc Superintendent Search Sub-Committee, Confidential Secretary Allison Daley and Chief Talent Officer Lisa Richardson. He believes it was the right decision to focus on an interim position at this time. Both finalists have areas of strength and areas of growth; they both are very strong candidates for this position. Once the decision is made, our next responsibility will be to support our new superintendent's growth. He believes Dr. Greer is the right leader for Cambridge. Member Weinstein was very impressed by Dr. Metcalf's focus on student engagement, their achievement and dedication, and they emphasized the importance of high achievement for all students. He was impressed by their work in Chicago Public Schools. Dr. Greer understands educational systems very well, both in Tennessee and in Sharon, MA. He was impressed with her commitment to multiple pathways of communication, understanding a variety of needs and ways for success, and the importance of relationships. She demonstrated a vision for leadership for Cambridge. Member Weinstein supports Dr. Greer for this role.

Member Wilson thanked the candidates for taking a chance on being a leader in education. Member Wilson thanked Ms. Richardson and Ms Daley for their hard work, all of the stakeholders and the Ad-hoc Superintendent Search Sub-Committee. This is an extremely important role and she does not take this process lightly. She sees this as a long term opportunity and as a commitment not a placeholder. Both candidates bring their strengths and challenges. The position comes with challenges; she indicated that she will go on record as supporting the appointment of Dr. Greer.

Member Vera-DeGraff thanked everyone that worked on this interim superintendent search. It has been an honor to be part of the student section of this search. Both candidates demonstrated strong commitments to equity and knowing that he cannot vote, he voiced his support for Dr. Greer based on her

outstanding emphasis on transparency, communication, and with her experience in Sharon. Member Vera-DeGraff found Dr. Greer to be very open to feedback and has an extremely bold vision for positive change in Cambridge Public Schools.

Vice Chair Bowman thanked the Ad-hoc Committee and stated that she takes great pride in putting this group of dynamic Members together. She voiced kudos to Ms. Richardson and Ms. Daley and to the student Members. Vice Chair Bowman is voting for Dr. Greer. The core function of the Superintendent is to manage a system and Dr. Greer has highlighted how she would manage a system. She emphasized a snapshot approach to each students' progress and learning loss using data and referencing. She is a visionary leader in public education. Dr. Greer believes that students should be the center of education, and can explain how students should learn vs curriculum. Dr. Greer shared her phone number with students, which shows her commitment to this position. Her references showed a strong leadership role in her ability to manage a budget which will be beneficial with the Tobin/Vassal Lane School project. Her decisions were centered on what is best for kids, which can be an uncomfortable position to be in. Vice Chair Bowman found Dr. Metcalf to be a dynamic leader, however, she found Dr. Greer in a better position to move this district forward. Dr. Greer comes to us in the midst of a legal situation of discrimination; she wants to go on the record to say it is not an influence on Dr. Greer's leadership role. Vice Chair Bowman is grateful for both candidates.

Mayor Siddiqui stated that the hard part of going last is trying not to repeat what has already been covered. There was a lot of learning and work put into the process. She acknowledged Member Rachel in particular for her reference checks along with her partnership and time commitments. She also thanked B. Kimmerman and Ms. Daley. She appreciated Dr. Metcalf's passion. She felt from the beginning she wanted someone with experience with this district and with our scholars. Dr. Greer is a candidate with experience with this district and with a commitment to equity. The learning needs for students JK-12 is a plus, she has a strong ability to connect with students using a holistic approach. There are also concerns about descriptions of Dr. Greer that were at odds with the public. Dr. Greer's ESSR answer was very strong and she was able to speak to her experiences acknowledging that it will be a group effort to work together and heal from this pandemic.

Member Wilson moved, seconded by Member Rachel, to select Dr. Victoria Greer as the Interim Superintendent of the Cambridge Public Schools. Mayor Siddiqui stated that this appointment is conditioned on the ability of the School Committee and the stated candidate to reach a negotiated agreement. On the following roll call vote, it was voted to appoint Dr. Victoria Greer as Interim Superintendent of Schools with the appointment conditioned on the ability of the School Committee and the stated candidate to reach a negotiated agreement: Member Wilson YEA; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini PRESENT; Member Rojas NAY; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

Member Fantini moved, without objection, seconded by Member Wilson, to make the vote unanimous. Member Rojas indicated that he objects. The motion was withdrawn and did not carry forward to a vote.

Mayor Siddiqui announced that she intends to call an executive session within the next ten days to discuss strategy for contract negotiations with the interim superintendent and to vote on the retention of an attorney to begin contract negotiations.

Vice Chair Bowman stated that Dr. Greer first came to this district under the leadership of Superintendent Young with his drive to build a pipeline for superintendents across the country, and it is not lost on her that Dr. Young's leadership has been cultivated and Dr. Greer returns as the Superintendent to lead this district.

Member Fantini stated he is very open to a two year contract for stability.

Special Meeting  
May 6, 2021  
pg. 4

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Member Rachel, on the following roll call vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.: Member Wilson YEA; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

Attest: *Dosha E. Beard*

Dosha Beard  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee