



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

January 7, 2025

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 (REMOTE), Vice Chair Hunter, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Mayor Simmons

Others Present: Student Member Barua; David Murphy, Interim Superintendent; Student Member Shimelis; Ivy Washington, Chief Financial Officer

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 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 Hudson, PRESENT; Member Rachel, ~~ABSENT~~; Member Rojas, PRESENT; Member Weinstein, PRESENT; Vice Chair Hunter, PRESENT; Member Harding, PRESENT; Mayor Simmons, PRESENT

Member Rachel arrived at 6:05 p.m.

1. Public Comment:

The following individuals were heard:

- Dan Monahan, Lexington Ave., spoke regarding the budget presentation
- Roger O'Sullivan, Massachusetts Avenue, spoke regarding **#25-006**
- Ranjitsinh Disale, Garden Street, spoke regarding **#24-059** and **#25-002**

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Harding on the following roll call vote, public comment was closed: Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA. (7-0)

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Members Barua and Shimelis shared the following highlights:

- Close of first semester
- CRLS STEM Fair
- CRLS Incoming Freshmen Night
- CRLS Student Budget Event is being planned – tentative date is January 16

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- December 10, 2024, Special Meeting
- December 17, 2024, Regular Meeting
- December 19, 2024, Special Meeting

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rachel on the following roll call vote, the records were accepted as presented: Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA. (7-0)

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:

#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...”

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Rachel on the following roll call vote, **#24-259** remained on Unfinished Business/Calendar: Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA. (7-0)

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7. 7a. Superintendent’s Update:

An update on pending matters and highlight various initiatives taking place across CPS school communities to advance the district strategic priorities for the 2024 -2025 school year.

Mr. Murphy highlighted the following:

- Professional Development day on January 2.

- Ongoing outreach to the Kennedy-Longfellow community
- Joint City Council & School Committee Roundtable focused on the preschool program – January 13
- School Councils Ad Hoc Subcommittee Meeting – January 14
- Congratulations to newly elected CEA President, Christopher Montero
- COO Smith memo regarding Longfellow/Broadway roof repair

7b. Presentations:

A summary of the Cambridge Public Schools FY 26 Operating Budget development process as well as the annual summary of CPS enrollment data and projections information. The presentation will include an analysis of the district's annual and anticipated budgetary expenditures.

David Murphy, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Ivy Washington, Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Murphy and Ms. Washington gave the following presentation which can be found on this [website](#).

The presentation covered the following topics related to the FY26 Budget

- Budget Process
 - Strategic Priorities
 - Timeline
 - Community Engagement
- Enrollment Projections
- Expenditure & Revenue Projections
- Federal Funding

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

- Distribution of resources as it relates to the number of paraprofessionals in the district.
- DESE's role in releasing the per pupil expenditure data.
- Funding sources for early college credit programs.
- Potential budgetary impact of the Benjamin Banneker Charter School's new building/campus.

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

7d. **Consent Agenda:**

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein the items **#25-001**, **#25-002**, and **#25-004** were adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA. (7-0)

#25-001 Recommendation: Contract Award: 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	\$102,756.34
Residential Program Contracts:		
45 Day Program Contracts:	1	\$25,738.65
Total	3	\$128,494.99

#25-002 Recommendation: Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the following donations as described:

DONATION - \$431.00 from Geskus Studios and Yearbook Publishing for the Morse School. Funds will be used to support an awards event at the school.

DONATION - \$500.00 from A Plus Insurance Agency to the Morse School. Funds will be used to support an awards event at the school.

#25-004 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY25 Broad Institute Coding Clubs (SC25153) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY25 Broad Institute Coding Clubs (SC25153) Private in the amount of \$750.00 for the period of December 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

8. Non-Consent Agenda

#25-003 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY25 Multilingual Newcomer & Homeless Support Grant (SC25863) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY25 Multilingual Newcomer and Homeless Support Grant (SC25863) through State - Targeted in the amount of \$75,000.00 for the period of October 23, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

A brief discussion followed **#25-003**.

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, the items **#25-003** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA. (7-0)

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

#25-005 January 7, 2025, School Councils Ad Hoc Subcommittee Report

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rachel, **#25-005** was accepted as presented: Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA. (7-0)

10. Resolutions (letters of congratulations, letters of condolences):

#25-006 Dr. Robert S. Peterkin Condolence – Mayor E. Denise Simmons & Vice Chair Caroline Hunter

WHEREAS: The School Committee was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Robert S. Peterkin—a distinguished and visionary educator who leaves a profound legacy of advocacy for children’s rights, dedication to educational innovation, and an enduring impact on countless lives—on December 23, 2024; and
WHEREAS: Dr. Peterkin’s extraordinary 50-year career began in Albany, New York, where he taught emotionally disturbed children and founded an alternative school for high school dropouts, demonstrating his commitment to addressing the needs of vulnerable students; and
WHEREAS: As Boston’s first Black public school Headmaster, Dr. Peterkin guided The English High School during the busing era, transforming it into an integrated Magnet School for the Arts, and he later served as Deputy Superintendent in Boston and Superintendent of Schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he introduced initiatives such as school-level decision-making, bilingual education, and specialized programs for African American boys; and
WHEREAS: In 1991, Dr. Peterkin joined Harvard University as Director of the Urban Superintendents Program, preparing a diverse cadre of urban school leaders, particularly women and persons of color, while serving as an indispensable mentor and advocate for educational equity; and
WHEREAS: Beyond his professional accomplishments, Dr. Peterkin contributed as an educational consultant, court-appointed expert, and board member for organizations including the B.E.L.L. Foundation, National Urban Alliance, TERC, and Boston Youth Theater, further amplifying his impact on education and young people’s well-being; and
WHEREAS: Dr. Peterkin was a devoted husband to the late Louise Bauer, to whom he was married for 56 years, and a beloved community figure whose passions for jazz, the New York Yankees, and education reflected his vibrant character; and
WHEREAS: Dr. Peterkin’s warmth, wisdom, and unwavering belief in individuals’ potential inspired colleagues and students to rise to challenges and achieve their fullest potential, leaving an indelible imprint on the hearts and minds of those fortunate to know him; now therefore be it
RESOLVED: That the School Committee formally go on record in extending its deepest condolences to the family of Dr. Robert S. Peterkin for their tremendous 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 the family of Dr. Robert S. Peterkin on behalf of the entire School Committee.

Mayor Simmons read the resolution and shared sentiments of Dr. Peterkin’s accomplishments. **Vice Chair Hunter**, Dr. Turk and others shared stories of Dr. Peterkin’s impactful work. **Mayor Simmons** asked that the resolution remain on the table until the next meeting so that the Committee could gather additional highlights to include in the resolution.

On the following roll call vote, the motion remained on the table: Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA. (7-0)

11. Announcements:

- **Member Rachel** noted the new improvements to the School Committee’s Zoom accounts allowing for live captions and translations for School Committee meetings.
- **Member Weinstein** highlighted the work of HGSE Redesign Lab and upcoming CRLS events – Travelling Chorus and the Jazz Ensemble.
- **Member Harding** noted the book launch of *The White Peril* by Omo Moses.
- **Mayor Simmons** underscored the service events related to Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications from City Officers: None

Email communications: None

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein, the meeting was adjourned on the following roll call vote: Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, ABSENT; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA. (6-1-0)
(8:07 pm.)

Attest:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Katherine Christo".

Katherine Christo
Executive Secretary to the School Committee