



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

March 18, 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, Vice Chair Hunter, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein (REMOTE), Mayor Simmons

Others Present: Student Member Barua; Dr. Karyn Grace, Assistant Superintendent, OSS; Maureen MacFarlane, General Counsel; David Murphy, Interim Superintendent; Student Member Shimelis; Dr. Carolyn Turk, Education Policy Advisor, Mayor's Office; Ivy Washington, Chief Financial Officer; Andrea Zuniga, Director JK-12, Visual and Performing Arts

Vice Chair Hunter in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 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:

Vice Chair Hunter, PRESENT; Member Weinstein, PRESENT; Member Harding, PRESENT; Member Hudson, PRESENT; Member Rachel, PRESENT; Member Rojas, PRESENT; Mayor Simmons, ~~ABSENT~~

Mayor Simmons arrived at 6:50 p.m.

1. Public Hearing on the FY26 Budget

The following individuals were heard:

Dan Monahan, Lexington Ave
Ann Coburn, Otis Street
Michelle Curreri, Franklin Street
Karen Engels, Wendell Street
Amber Fisher, Griswold Street
Jess Goetz, Pemberton Street
Nora Grodzins, Parker Street
Arjun Jaikumar, Richards Avenue
Carrie Jung, Standish Street
Andrew King, Chilton Street
Rebecca Lester, William Street
Tina Lieu, Huron Avenue
Missy Page, Gore Street

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Hudson, the budget hearing was closed on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, ABSENT (6-1-0)

1 b. Public Comment

There were no registrants for public comment.

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Rachel, the public comment was closed on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, ABSENT (6-1-0)

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Members Barua and Shimelis shared an update on the following:

- 10th grade students will take the English MCAS on March 25 and 26. The exam is no longer a graduation requirement but remains important for scholarships.
- CRLS Science Team placed 7th out of 67 schools in the State Science Olympiad.
- "Generation Anxiety" event on March 20 from 6-8 PM.
- Student Participation in Budgeting process.
- "What's on Your Mind" form collected student feedback which included concerns over CLRS elevators and access for disabled and injured students.

Following the School Committee report the group discussed the importance of repairing the CRLS elevators. Mr. Murphy agreed that it was a priority.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- March 4, 2025, Regular Meeting

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, the records were accepted as presented on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, 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: None.

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7. 7a. Superintendent's Update:

An update on pending matters and highlight various initiatives taking place across CPS school communities.

Mr. Murphy shared highlights on the following topics:

- Human Resources Staff Diversification Grant - Awarded \$87,000 from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Funds must be spent by June 30, 2025.
- Final district-wide Professional Development Day scheduled for March 19.
- Kennedy Longfellow School Closure Negotiations – expected updates soon.
- Extended Learning Time Programs at FMA and MLK schools
- Bus Vendor Contract - Memo provided with background on the vendor selection.

Following Mr. Murphy's remarks, he asked the Chair if Ms. Andrea Zuniga could speak before the Committee to share details regarding Recommendation **#25-055**.

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

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rachel, **#25-055** was brought forth on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0)

#25-055 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY25 Special Support Earmark (SC25208) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY25 Special Support Earmark (SC25208) State-Targeted in the amount of \$50,000 for the period of January 16, 2025 to June 30, 2025.

Ms. Zuniga shared details regarding the grant and how procuring the portable sound system would help ensure that students across the district had an equitable visual and performing arts experience. She thanked Member Weinstein and State Senator Sal DiDomenico for their advocacy.

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Rojas, **#25-055** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0)

7b. Presentation

An update on the pending proposed FY 26 Cambridge Public Schools operating budget

David Murphy, Interim Superintendent
Ivy Washington, Chief Financial Officer

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

The following topics were discussed:

- FY26 budget focusses on educator effectiveness, accountability, facilities planning, family engagement, and early childhood programming.
- 83% of the district's \$300 million budget is allocated to personnel, highlighting the importance of staffing decisions.
- Mr. Murphy stressed the need to analyze how existing staff are deployed before adding new positions.
- The FY26 budget preserves all paraprofessional FTEs from Kennedy-Longfellow and redistributes them to other schools based on student need, particularly to King Open and the King School.

- Some committee members and public commenters advocated for one paraprofessional per elementary classroom, but concerns were raised about financial feasibility and sustainability. Mr. Murphy highlighted the importance of ensuring an effective staffing strategy.
- The district will conduct a comprehensive analysis of how paraprofessionals are being utilized to ensure they are effectively supporting student learning.
- \$300,000 is being allocated for educator evaluation, including training for administrators to improve consistency in teacher assessments.
- The district is undergoing a long-term facilities condition assessment to align capital planning with educational needs.
- Family engagement is a top community priority.
- There was discussion on making school improvement plans (SIPs) more transparent, including better timelines and clearer guidance for school leaders.
- The district is continuing with Year 2 of its Universal Preschool initiative.
- Collaboration with the Department of Human Services Programs (DHSP) is ongoing to optimize shared resources and space for early childhood education.
- Advanced mathematics programming (Algebra in 8th grade) and ensuring equal access to algebra is scheduled to be discussed at the Budget Workshop on March 26.

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

7d. **Consent Agenda:**

On a motion by Member Haring seconded by Member Rachel the items **#25-042, #25-043, #25-044, #25-048, #25-052, #25-054, #25-055 and #25-056** were adopted on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0)

#25-042 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Civil Rights Grievance Procedures Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Civil Rights Grievance Procedures Policy as detailed in the [attached document](#). (Second Reading)

#25-043 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Non-Discrimination on Basis of Sex Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Non-Discrimination on Basis of Sex Policy as detailed in the [attached document](#) (Second Reading).

#25-044 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to School Department's Non-Discrimination Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the School Department's Non-Discrimination Policy as detailed in the [attached document](#) (Second Reading).

#25-048 Recommendation: Day & Residential Program Service 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: | 1 | \$58,910.39 |
| Residential Program Tuition Contracts | 1 | \$85,593.90 |
| 45 Day Program Contracts: | 1 | \$25,738.65 |
| Total | 3 | \$170,242.94 |

#25-052 Recommendation: Contract Award: Insight Public Sector: Computer Software (FY26 Contract) 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.

Insight Public Sector, 2701 E. Insight Way, Chandler, AZ for the period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$74,662.54.

#25-054 Recommendation: Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the following donations as described:

DONATION: Donation of \$766.76 from Vision, Inc. dba O'Connor Studios to Cambridgeport School for the general support of the school.

IN-KIND: A community member donated 5 cameras and various lenses to VPA for use by CRLS photography classes.

#25-055 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY25 Special Support Earmark (SC25208) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY25 Special Support Earmark (SC25208) State-Targeted in the amount of \$50,000 for the period of January 16, 2025 to June 30, 2025.

#25-056 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY25 Influence 100 (SC25167) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY25 Influence 100 (SC25167) State in the amount of \$1,000 for the period of December 17, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Hudson, **#25-045, #25-046** and **#24-047** were brought forth together for discussion on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, NAY; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, NAY; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, NAY (4-3).

#25-045 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Free & Reduced Price Food Services Policy (First Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the School Department's Free & Reduced Price Food Services Policy as detailed in the [attached policy](#) (First Reading).

#25-046 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Tutoring for Pay Policy (First Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the School Department's Tutoring for Pay Policy as detailed in the [attached policy](#) (First Reading).

#25-047 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Rights & Responsibilities Handbook (First Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the School Department's Rights & Responsibilities Handbook as detailed in the [attached policy](#) (First Reading).

A brief discussion followed **#25-045**. Member Rachel asked why the policy is being reviewed. Attorney MacFarlane shared that in working with the Food Service Department, the team noticed some inconsistencies in the policies with the universal meals program that we have in place and wanted to clarify that language with regard to referencing the universal language. The equity and discrimination language in the policy was also discussed.

A brief discussion followed **#25-046. Vice Chair Hunter** expressed her concern that families should be able to have a consistent tutor for their student (both inside and outside of school). Attorney MacFarlane shared that the update in the policy addressed the conflict of interest law. She agreed that the Second Reading to include more flexible language to address Vice Chair Hunter's feedback.

A brief discussion followed **#25-047**. At the urging of **Member Harding**, it was agreed that the cell phone policy would be included in the Second Reading.

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Rojas, **#25-045, #25-046 and #24-047** were adopted on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0).

#25-049 Recommendation: Contract Award: Eastern Bus Company: School Transportation 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.

Eastern Bus Company, PO Box 514, Somerville, MA for the period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2030 in the amount \$47,093,500.00

A robust discussion followed **#25-049**. The group discussed the high cost of the contract and the lack of competition for the contract. (The vendor was the sole bidder.) Mr. Murphy shared that the vendor has historically been very responsive to his concerns. The conversation evolved into GPS tracking, transportation challenges facing the district and electrifying the bus fleet.

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, **#24-049** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, NAY; Member Hudson, NAY; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (5-2).

#25-050 Recommendation: Contract Award: Young People's Project: Professional Development 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.

Young People's Project, 99 Bishop Allen Drive, #7, Cambridge, MA for the period of March 1, 2025 to June 30, 2025 in the amount of \$50,000.00.

A brief discussion followed **#25-050. Member Hudson** inquired if the work could be accomplished within the district. Dr. Turk and **Vice Chair Hunter** provided background on the vendor and its ties to the Algebra Project.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rachel, **#25-050** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0).

#25-051 Recommendation: Contract Award: Parts Authority, LLC: Automotive Parts & Fluids 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.

Parts Authority, LLC, 3 Dakota Drive, Suite 10, Lake Success, NY for the period of March 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$100,000.00.

A brief discussion followed **#25-051** regarding the funding model of the contract.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rojas **#25-051** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0).

#25-053 Recommendation: Contract Award: Mary Grace Kelemanik: Professional Development 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.

Mary Grace Kelemanik, 34 Fairview Avenue, Natick, MA for the period of March 11, 2025 to June 30, 2025 in the amount of \$36,000.00.

A brief discussion followed **#25-053** regarding the services provided by the vendor associated with the Illustrative Math curriculum and supporting strategies that are designed for scholars who are supported by OSS.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hudson, seconded by Member Rojas **#25-053** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, 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):

#25-057 Disaggregating Data – Member Rachel, Member Rojas and Member Harding

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge Public Schools will continue to maintain, collect, and disaggregate data to ensure that all student groups are experiencing the educational environments and academic demands to which they are entitled.

A discussion followed **#25-057**. **Member Rachel** shared her motivation behind the motion. She shared that the federal government is no longer disaggregating the data the importance of CPSD reaffirming its commitment in doing so. **Vice Chair Hunter** questioned the necessity of the district's need to respond to the decisions of the federal government given the changing political landscape.

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Rojas **#25-057** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, PRESENT; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, PRESENT; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (5-0-2).

The meeting time having reached 10:00 p.m., the meeting was extended to 10:10 p.m. on a motion by Member Hudson, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, 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):

#25-058 Adrian Davis Resolution – Member Rojas, Member Rachel and Vice Chair Hunter

Whereas the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) is the only national, non-profit professional organization dedicated to representing and advocating for bilingual/multilingual students and bilingual and dual language education professionals.

Amigos School 6th-grade student, Adrian Davis submitted his essay *Mi superpoder, mi bilingüismo* (*My superpower, my bilingualism*) to NABE's 2025 Bilingual Student Essay Competition, joining students in grades 6-8 from across the nation that submitted essays aligned with this year's theme of "The Importance of Being Bilingual."

Adrian read his essay at the NABE conference in Atlanta that highlighted his personal reflection on how bilingualism allows him to connect to his community and opens doors for genuine connections.

Therefore be it resolved that the School Committee hereby goes on record in expressing its congratulations to Adrian Davis for winning the Middle School First Place Award in the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) 2025 Bilingual Student Essay Competition, and that the Executive Secretary be and hereby is requested to forward a suitable letter of congratulations on behalf of the entire School Committee.

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Considerando que la Asociación Nacional para la Educación Bilingüe (NABE por sus siglas en inglés) es la única organización profesional nacional sin fines de lucro dedicada a representar y defender a los estudiantes bilingües/multilingües y a los profesionales de la educación bilingüe y en dos idiomas.

Adrian Davis, estudiante de sexto grado de la Escuela Amigos, presentó su ensayo "Mi superpoder, mi bilingüismo" al Concurso de Ensayos para Estudiantes Bilingües 2025 de la NABE, uniéndose a estudiantes de sexto a octavo grado de todo el país que presentaron ensayos alineados con el tema de este año: "La importancia de ser bilingüe".

Adrian leyó su ensayo en la conferencia de la NABE en Atlanta, donde destacó su reflexión personal sobre cómo el bilingüismo le permite conectar con su comunidad y abre las puertas a conexiones genuinas.

Por lo tanto, se resuelve que el Comité Escolar por la presente deja constancia de sus felicitaciones a Adrian Davis por ganar el Premio al Primer Lugar de la Escuela Intermedia en el Concurso de Ensayos para Estudiantes Bilingües de 2025 de la Asociación Nacional para la Educación Bilingüe (NABE), y que por la presente se solicita a la Secretaria Ejecutiva que envíe una carta de felicitación correspondiente en nombre de todo el Comité Escolar.

On a motion by Vice Chair Harding, seconded by Member Hudson **#25-058** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0).

11. Announcements:

- **Member Weinstein** highlighted Cambridge Community Iftar, hosted by Councilor Siddiqui with over 600 people in attendance.
- **Vice Chair Hunter** shared that CRLS DECA Store achieved gold-level recognition and will be recognized at DECA's International Career Development Conference (April 26-29, Orlando, FL)
- **Mayor Simmons** highlighted two events including *Her Story: Voices of Leadership and Inspiration* to be held on March 25 at City Hall, and *In Our Midst, The Grace of the Black Church* to be held on March 23 at St. Augustine's Church.

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications from City Officers: None

Email communications:

- ✓ Clara Hendricks
- ✓ Rose Levine
- ✓ Dan Monahan
- ✓ Missy Page
- ✓ Annie Sarmaroy

On a motion by Member Hudson, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, the meeting was adjourned on the following roll call vote: Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0) (10:10 p.m.)

Attest:



Katherine Christo
Executive Secretary to the School Committee