



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

October 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, Vice Chair Hunter, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Mayor Simmons

Others Present: Ms. Jennifer Amigone, Director of Data, Assessment & Accountability; Student Member Asraf; Dr. Karyn Grace, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services; Student Member Jama; Dr. Chad Leith, Chief Accountability Officer; David Murphy, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Damon Smith, Interim Chief Operation 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 of members present:; Member Hudson, PRESENT; Member Rachel, PRESENT; Member Rojas, PRESENT Member Weinstein, PRESENT; Vice Chair Hunter, PRESENT; Member Harding, ~~ABSENT~~; Mayor Simmons, PRESENT

Member Harding arrived at 6:10 p.m.

1. Public Comment

The following individuals were heard:

- Melissa Quest-Mercadante, 122 Cambridge, Street, Expressed support of **#25-269**.
- Duncan MacLaury 8 Meacham Road - expressed interest in MCAS presentation and shared his thoughts on **#25-259, #25-260, #25-269**
- Sam Musher - 37 Pinckney Street, Somerville MA, Expressed support of **#25-269**.
- Lilly Havstad - 32 Granville Road - expressed concern with 2 professional development contracts

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Rachel, public comment was closed on a voice vote.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Members Asraf and Jama shared the following highlights:

- Congratulations to newly appointed Superintendent Murphy.
- Students are developing a systemic reporting and survey process to gather data
- College & Career Fair was recently held for juniors and seniors.
- Yondr Pouch Policy recommendation of allowing teachers the ability to unlock devices so students have access for academic reasons – lab photos, field trips, etc. Mr. Murphy appreciated the students' feedback and acknowledged that policy does allow for instructional exceptions, but that in the early weeks of the policy they are still working through the operational details.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- September 16, 2025, Regular Meeting

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

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar: None

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7a. Superintendent's Update:

An update on pending matters and highlight various initiatives taking place across CPS school communities that have occurred since the last meeting of the school committee and/or are anticipated to be taking place in the coming weeks across the Cambridge Public Schools.

Superintendent Murphy shared the following update:

- A preview of the 2024-2025 MCAS results. He noted that in addition to the evening's meeting, he would be sharing a deeper dive into the MCAS data at the upcoming School Committee meetings on October 21 and November 18.
- Ceremonial opening of the Tobin/Darby Vassall School on Saturday, October 18. The event would include building tours, ribbon-cutting and community activities.
- Expressed gratitude to the Committee for their vote of confidence at the last night's meeting appointing him the permanent superintendent of CPSD.

7b. Presentation

The Interim Superintendent and members of the central administration will present on the student achievement, growth and accountability data recently released by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, including specific highlights and points of pride in specific CPS school communities.

Superintendent Murphy and Ms. Amigone presented the first of three planned data conversations with the Committee and community, focused on student achievement, growth, and accountability results released by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The presentation can be found on this [website](#).

Mr. Murphy noted that Cambridge was recognized by DESE for maintaining pre-COVID levels of achievement in mathematics for grades 3–8.

Ms. Amigone provided an overview of the state accountability system:

- It evaluates performance through two primary measures:
 - Normative: Accountability percentiles comparing schools serving similar grades statewide.
 - Criterion-Referenced: Progress toward targets based on each school's historical data.
- The system incorporates multi-year data:
 - Percentile measures use three years of data.
 - Progress toward targets uses two years (weighted 60% most recent, 40% prior year).
- Metrics include ELA, math, and science scores, student growth, chronic absenteeism, and English learner proficiency.
- Schools are classified into categories:
 - "Meeting/Exceeding Targets" (≥75%),
 - "Substantial Progress Toward Targets" (50–74%),
 - "Moderate Progress Toward Targets" (25–49%).

Cambridge Public Schools overall are in the “Substantial Progress” category.

Ms. Amigone and Superintendent Murphy highlighted strong performance in:

- Chronic absenteeism reduction in grades 1–8 and among high school high-needs students.
- English language proficiency gains across grades.
- Math growth for lowest-performing high school students.
- High school extended engagement rate (fifth-year students remaining enrolled).

ELA and Math Performance Trends:

- ELA:
 - The district’s performance margin above the state doubled since 2019 (from 8 to 16 points).
 - Elementary grades are slightly below 2019 levels, while upper grades have rebounded or exceeded pre-COVID performance.
- Math:
 - Cambridge was recognized as the largest district in Massachusetts to have fully returned to pre-COVID levels.
 - Math achievement margins above the state nearly quadrupled since 2019.
 - Middle school growth rates in grades 7–8 are particularly strong.

Ms. Amigone reviewed achievement and growth by student group:

- 92% of the lowest-performing students are “high needs” (students with an IEP, English learners/former ELs, or low income).
- Black/African American and Latino students have the highest overlap in multiple high-needs categories (over 50% in two or more).
- These groups have not yet fully recovered to 2019 achievement levels—11 points behind in ELA and 7 in math.
- Growth data show all student groups progressing, though gaps remain by income and race.

Committee members engaged in a robust discussion:

- Target Setting: **Member Rojas** asked how DESE determines targets. Ms. Amigone explained targets are based on each school’s historical performance using scaled score gains.
- IEP Identification & Equity: **Members Rojas** and **Mayor Simmons** raised concerns about disproportionality in special education identification and **Mayor Simmons** questioned why “low income” is used as a high-needs indicator.
 - Superintendent Murphy acknowledged the concern, citing over-identification and emphasized the need to strengthen family engagement and review IEP identification processes.
 - **Mayor Simmons** urged urgency, requesting analysis of when over-identification begins (e.g., by grade level) and comparison with other schools, such as Benjamin Banneker Charter School, which demonstrates stronger outcomes with similar demographics.

Superintendent Murphy concluded that Cambridge’s positive trends stem from:

- Aligned curricula in ELA and math,
- Expanded instructional time at K–8,
- High-impact tutoring (Excel program), and
- Universal preschool investments.

He noted that while the district has clear momentum, persistent gaps must be addressed with urgency and accountability.

7c. CPS District Plan: None

7d. Consent Agenda:

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Hudson, **#25-258, #25-260, #25-261, #25-262, #25-265, #25-266, and #25-267** were adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, ABSTAIN; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA, -Mayor Simmons, YEA

#25-258 Recommendation: Approval of Interdepartmental Agreement Between The Cambridge Public School Department & the Cambridge Public Health Commission

be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Interdepartmental Agreement Between The Cambridge Public School Department & the Cambridge Public Health Commission as detailed in the [attached document](#).

#25-260 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Rindge School of Technical Arts Program Recruitment, Admissions & Retention Policy Formerly Known as Rindge School of Technical A1is Program Admissions Policy (First Reading)

be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the approve the revisions to the Rindge School of Technical Arts Program Recruitment, Admissions and Retention Policy formerly known as Rindge School of Technical Arts Program Admissions Policy as detailed in the [attached document](#).

#25-261 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (Second Reading)

be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan as detailed in the [attached document](#).

#25-262 Recommendation: Contract Award: Breakthrough Greater Boston (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.

Breakthrough Greater Boston c/o CRLS, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, MA for the period of September 2, 2025 to June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$96,910.00.

#25-265 Recommendation: Contract Award: 1722 Behavior & Consulting (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.

1722 Behavior & Consulting, 7 Hazelwood Road, Worcester, MA for the period of July 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026 in the amount of \$75,000.00.

#25-266 Recommendation: Contract Award: Facility Management Corp. (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 308 of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Facility Management Corp., 100 Schoosett St. Bldg: 3, Pembroke, MA for the period of November 28, 2025 to March 20, 2028 in the amount of \$194,400.00.

#25-267 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 Circuit Breaker Allocation (SC26776)

be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:
FY26 Circuit Breaker Allocation (SC26776) – State - in the amount of \$9,060,569.00 for the period of September 25, 2025 to June 30, 2027.

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

#25-259 Recommendation: Approval of Cambridge Public Schools Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy (First Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the Cambridge Public Schools Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy as detailed in the [attached document](#).

A brief discussion followed **#25-259**.

Member Weinstein asked if the policy's alignment with new state regulations concerning career and technical education (Chapter 74) programs. He asked the Superintendent to clarify whether this represents any substantive shift in district practice. Superintendent Murphy noted that the new policy language aligns with updated DESE regulations for Chapter 74 programs. **Member Weinstein** appreciated the clarification and added that while the policy itself is procedural, there's ongoing work to enhance student awareness and participation in technical education opportunities. He expressed interest in future discussions about broadening access and offerings. **Member Harding** wanted to ensure that all 8th grade students are aware of the offerings and accessible to all students. Member Rojas asked about legal review of CPSD policies and Superintendent Murphy shared that Attorney MacFarlane was working as a consultant to ensure that all policy revisions comply with DESE regulations.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Harding **#25-259** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA, -Mayor Simmons, YEA

#25-263 Recommendation: Contract Award: Trustees of Boston College (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.

Trustees of Boston College, 140 Commonwealth Avenue, Chestnut Hill, MA for the period of September 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$ 40,000.00.

A discussion followed **#25-263**.

Members asked for additional details regarding the contract including how the four principal participants are chosen. In addition, they inquired about professional development opportunities for paraprofessionals as well as measurable outcomes related to professional development. Superintendent Murphy and Dr. Leith shared additional information. Dr. Leith highlighted the availability of a professional learning calendar/website.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Harding **#25-263** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Hudson, NAY; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA, -Mayor Simmons, YEA

#25-264 Recommendation: Contract Award: Mary Grace Kelemanik (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.

Mary Grace Kelemanik, 34 Fairview Avenue, Natick, MA for the period of October 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$42,000.00.

A brief discussion followed **#25-264**.

Member Weinstein asked for additional details regarding the contract. Dr. Grace shared that the initiative is a collaboration between OSS and the math department. The curriculum focuses on coaches and teachers, using a train-the-trainer model and emphasized research-based strategies.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Rojas **#25-264** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA, -Mayor Simmons, YEA

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

#25-268 Positive Youth Engagement with Law Enforcement – Mayor E. Denise Simmons

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee is committed to the safety, well-being, and informed civic participation of all students; and

WHEREAS: There is a recognized need for young people to receive age-appropriate, accessible education about their rights, responsibilities, and best practices when engaging with law enforcement; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools and City agencies share a responsibility to ensure that students are equipped with the knowledge and tools to de-escalate interactions with police and navigate those situations safely; and

WHEREAS: The Committee believes that providing proactive guidance in these areas—particularly through schools, afterschool programs, and workforce development initiatives—may help prevent minor incidents from escalating and may foster greater trust between youth and public safety personnel; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent be and hereby is requested to consult with the relevant School personnel to assess what programs, curricula, or messaging currently exist to educate students on how to engage with law enforcement in a safe and respectful manner; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Committee requests a report back identifying any such existing efforts within the Cambridge Public Schools or affiliated programs, and recommending what additional programming, partnerships, or best practices might be introduced if current efforts are insufficient; and be it further

RESOLVED: That this report include feedback from students, educators, youth workers, and public safety officials on how to most effectively deliver this messaging to young people, with the goal of reducing the risk of escalation and promoting positive community relations.

There was no discussion regarding **#25-268**.

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Hudson, **#25-268** was adopted on voice vote.

#25-269 Policy Protecting Gender Nonconforming and Transgender Staff at CPS (First Reading) – Member Rachel and Member Weinstein

Purpose

This policy should be interpreted consistently with the goals of becoming an antiracist and equitable district, and in accordance with the School Committee's Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity Policy, as well as the City of Cambridge's Sanctuary City Resolution to "take active steps to ensure that transgender and gender diverse individuals have access to healthcare, housing, education, and employment without fear of discrimination."

Definitions

These definitions are provided not for the purpose of labeling employees, but rather to assist in understanding this policy.

Information: Data accumulated in the normal course of business for the purpose of administering an individual's employment with the district and consistent with normal business practices of employee record keeping as contemplated by the G.L. c. 149 §52C.

Gender Identity: A person's particular gender or non-gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth. A person's innate, deeply felt sense of being male, female, both, or neither. A person's gender identity may or may not match the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender Expression: The way in which a person expresses gender through clothing, appearance, interests, and more.

Transgender: An umbrella term for a person whose gender identity is different than what they were assigned at birth.

Gender Nonconforming: An umbrella term for those who expand ideas of gender expression or gender identity.
Nonbinary: People who do not subscribe to the gender binary. They might exist between or beyond the man-woman binary. Some use the term exclusively, while others may use it as an umbrella term for identities like genderqueer, genderfluid, gender non-conforming, gender diverse, or gender expansive.

Scope

This policy pertains to the school district at large, both in the schools and also inclusive of the usage of electronic technology and electronic communication that occurs in the school as well as to the entire school system, including educators, school and district staff, students, caregivers, partner organizations and volunteers.

General Policy Statement

It is our policy to protect all employees from discrimination, including on the basis of gender identity and expression. In accordance with the School Committee's Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity Policy, information about an employee's transgender status, assigned birth name and sex, name change for gender identity purposes, gender transition, medical information related to gender identity or other information of a similar nature, if such information exists, shall be maintained in a separate, confidential file and shall be kept confidential in accordance with applicable federal, state and local privacy laws and regulations. The fact that a staff member chooses to disclose their transgender status to staff or students does not authorize school staff to disclose this information, or other information as detailed above, including without limitation, medical information, about the staff member to others. Information that may reveal a staff member's transgender status to others will not be disclosed to others unless the school is legally required to do so, or unless the disclosure has been authorized in writing by the staff member.

In accordance with the School Committee's Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity Policy, staff may access restrooms that correspond to the staff member's gender identity. All staff shall have access to all-gender/gender neutral, physically accessible restrooms at all times.

In accordance with the School Committee's Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Gender Identity Policy, every staff member has the right to be addressed by a name and pronouns that correspond to the staff member's gender identity. Regardless of whether a transgender or gender nonconforming staff member has legally changed their name or gender, the school system will allow such staff members to use a chosen name and gender pronouns that reflect their identity. The district will create and disseminate a protocol for name and gender changes, to be enacted within 10 business days of initiation by the staff member. It is expected that staff members will make reasonable efforts to consistently use colleagues' chosen names and pronouns. The employee's preferred name shall appear on all unofficial records (e.g. staff ID, classroom rosters, telephone directory, Student Information Systems, email and other electronic accounts and District-related applications). Official records, such as payroll and benefits, may require documentation demonstrating a legal name and gender change.

A discussion followed **#25-269**.

Member Rachel shared her reasons for putting forth the motion with **Member Weinstein**. He highlighted that the policy's goal is to protect transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming staff and that it aligns with the existing student policy. She thanked the superintendent and the City Solicitor for their review and advocacy of the policy. **Member Harding** asked for details regarding the impact of the policy and how it would change the existing practices. Mr. Murphy shared that the policy reaffirms the values and clarifies the policy and sets clear expectations. It was noted that according to the School Committee Rules, the policy requires a Second Reading, unless the Rules are suspended. (They were not.)

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein, **#25-269** (First Reading) was adopted on a voice vote.

11. Announcements:

Member Weinstein

- Announced an upcoming MBK Cambridge (My Brother's Keeper) event titled *"Breaking Down Barriers: Reimagining Latino Education in Massachusetts."*

Member Harding

- Expressed support for the MBK event, noting that author Melissa Colón is a Cambridge Rindge and Latin graduate.

- Highlighted collaboration between the Cambridge Public Health Department, Recreation Department, and Mr. Tynes for the Disability Day of Pride event.

Vice Chair Hunter

- Announced Caregiver Academy's upcoming presentation:
"Understanding the IEP (Individualized Education Program) for Parents and Caregivers."
- Highlighted CRLS's ongoing participation in educational trips to Montgomery, with teachers and students attending over the past three years.

Member Rojas

- Reminded families that mid-semester parent-teacher conferences are approaching and encouraged participation to learn how students are progressing.
- Announced that U.S. Orienteering Championships will take place Monday in Cambridge (North End).

Superintendent Murphy

- Reinforced the importance of caregiver participation in parent-teacher conferences.
- Encouraged educators to engage in reciprocal dialogue with caregivers as part of the district's ongoing family-engagement initiative.
- Mentioned continued communication about expectations for productive caregiver-educator collaboration.

Mayor Simmons

- Announced that the City is in its 12th cycle of Participatory Budgeting and encouraged residents to get involved.
- Reminded everyone that October 13 is Indigenous Peoples Day, urging the community to find ways to honor and support Indigenous populations.
- Mentioned the Oktoberfest and HONK! Parade taking place Sunday, from Somerville to Harvard Square, encouraging attendance or participation.
- Noted the upcoming CRLS Alumni Association Annual Event, which will recognize Linda Radzvilla (RSTA Program) and Ed Saracen, location TBD (Watertown or Arlington).
- Bob Moses Conference will take place this weekend, featuring Bryan Stevenson, founder of the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, AL.

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications and Reports from City Officers: None

Email Communications:

- ✓ Mary Ouelette
- ✓ Sarah Happel
- ✓ Joel T. Patterson
- ✓ Hillary Chute
- ✓ Timothy Bobrowski
- ✓ Abigail Blachly
- ✓ Catherine Rich

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Harding the meeting was adjourned on a voice vote.
(9: 05 p.m.)

Attest:



Katherine Christo
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Distributed Document:
Draft CPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan