



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Special Meeting

October 6, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

Held in and broadcast from the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge & Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of appointing a new superintendent from the finalists. At the conclusion of the appointment, the Committee may convene in Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy for contract negotiations for with non-union personnel (Superintendent), as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the strategy and negotiation position of the School Committee.

Members Present: Member Harding, Member Hudson, Vice Chair Hunter, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Mayor Simmons

Others Present: Dr. Carolyn Turk, Director of Education Policy, Mayor's Office

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, **Mayor Simmons** called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. **Mayor Simmons** read the call of the meeting and explained that the meeting was being televised and recorded.

The meeting proceeded to the first order of business with a roll call of members present: Member Harding, **ABSENT**, Member Hudson, **PRESENT**, Member Rachel, **PRESENT**; Member Rojas, **PRESENT**; Member Weinstein, **PRESENT**; Vice Chair Hunter, **PRESENT**; Mayor Simmons, **PRESENT**.

Member Harding arrived at 5:04 p.m.

1. Public Comment:

The following individuals were heard:

- Jess Goetz, 97 Pemberton Street, expressed her displeasure in the search and asked for a halt.
- Anne Coburn, 11A Otis Street, shared positive feedback on Mr. Murphy.
- Luisa De Paula Santos, 51 Walker Street, spoke regarding the Superintendent Vote,
- Emily Pollock, 10 James Way, spoke in support of Mr. Murphy.
- Duncan MacLaury, 8 Meacham Road, spoke regarding the Superintendent Vote and expressed concern regarding the search process and noted that the CEA asked to halt the search.
- Lilly Havstad - 32 Granville Road, #2, spoke regarding the Superintendent Vote and expressed concern of the search process.
- Anna Shin, 240 Sidney Street, spoke regarding the Superintendent Vote and expressed disinterest in current Interim Superintendent, Mr. Murphy.

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Hudson, it was voted to close public comment on a voice vote.

Mayor Simmons expressed gratitude to School Committee members, district staff, stakeholders, students, and community members for their engagement and contributions throughout the superintendent search process, which began last fall. She highlighted the Committee's commitment to equity, inclusion, and student-centered leadership while thanking Ms. Christo, Ms. Galloway, and Dr. Turk for their dedication and support in facilitating the process with precision.

Mayor Simmons turned to the Committee members for their comments:

Member Rojas reflected on the weight of the decisions faced by the School Committee this term, including Dr. Greer's departure and the Kennedy Longfellow School closure, noting that the superintendent selection is another decision that will shape the district's future for years to come. He emphasized that throughout their tenure, the School Committee's focus has remained on the well-being and success of all students, and while some community members raised

concerns about the Superintendent search process, they affirmed that best practices were followed and acknowledged opportunities for clearer communication. Member Rojas highlighted the strengths of all candidates, recognizing Dr. Garcia's international experience, Dr. Sanchez's focus on family engagement and closing opportunity gaps, and ultimately endorsed Mr. Murphy for his systematic yet personable leadership, ability to bring people together to solve challenges, humility, and commitment to fostering a collaborative, supportive, and high-expectation culture across the district. **Member Rojas** concluded by expressing support of Mr. Murphy and his confidence that he would drive the necessary changes to ensure high-quality instruction for every student and expressed eagerness to cast their vote to move the district forward.

Member Weinstein expressed appreciation for the strong pool of candidates and acknowledged the quality and accomplishments of each finalist. He stated that while all three candidates are exceptional educational leaders, he believes Mr. Murphy is the right choice for Cambridge at this time. He highlighted Mr. Murphy's child-centered leadership, deep understanding of school systems, and commitment to Cambridge's mission, noting that he has built trust and respect across the district, even with those who may not always agree with him. He praised his proactive yet measured approach, responsiveness, and focus on improving how the district serves students rather than maintaining the current state of operations. **Member Weinstein** emphasized that his support for Mr. Murphy is a vote of confidence in his leadership and vision, not a vote against the other candidates, and expressed optimism about continued collaboration and learning within the broader educational community.

Member Rachel addressed common community questions about the superintendent search, she affirmed that it was a genuine process with a strong pool of candidates, though she wished the Committee had started the process earlier. She acknowledged some frustrations, including the CEA's opting out of a dedicated forum and certain Committee behaviors, but emphasized that the process still produced three exceptional finalists. **Member Rachel** praised Dr. Garcia's strong community-building and teamwork in Revere. He highlighted Ms. Sanchez's clear instructional vision and focus on supporting teachers and the whole child, and Mr. Murphy's effective communication, thoughtful leadership, and ability to rebuild morale within the district. She noted the importance of consistency in leadership, citing the district's frequent superintendent turnover, and expressed confidence that Mr. Murphy's responsiveness, decisiveness, and respect for staff make him the right choice to continue advancing Cambridge Public Schools without further disruption.

Vice Chair Hunter expressed gratitude to colleagues, staff, and the search professionals, by emphasizing the rigor and fairness of the process, including blind screening, anti-bias training, site visits, and extensive community engagement.

Vice Chair Hunter acknowledged the strengths of all candidates, highlighting Dr. Garcia's international experience and team-building in Revere, but ultimately recommended Ms. Sanchez for the following reasons: insightful analysis of Cambridge's district needs; strong parent outreach and empowerment strategies; emphasis on cultural relevance and linguistically rich curriculum; effective 90-day plan; clear and concise communication; and positive engagement with students, staff, and communities of color. **Vice Chair Hunter** stressed that this recommendation reflects the candidate's alignment with the district's priorities rather than a dismissal of other finalists.

Member Hudson acknowledged prior concerns about the search process but emphasized focusing on outcomes rather than restarting the search, arguing that doing so would harm students by prolonging leadership gaps. She commended all candidates and highlighted Dr. Garcia's international background and community-building skills, as well as Ms. Sanchez's clarity, direct communication, and ability to handle complex personnel situations with fairness and decisiveness. **Member Hudson** expressed strong support for Mr. Murphy, citing his proven leadership as interim superintendent and COO, his focus on student outcomes over adult politics, and his ability to make tough operational decisions, such as closing Kennedy-Longfellow when necessary. **Member Hudson** agreed with Mr. Murphy's view that a superintendent's role is to build and guide a strong instructional team rather than be the sole instructional leader. She praised Mr. Murphy's clear, jargon-free communication and data-driven approach, concluding that his leadership best serves Cambridge students.

Member Harding expressed gratitude to his colleagues and staff for their work throughout the superintendent search, acknowledging frustrations with aspects of the equity-focused process but emphasizing that it largely achieved its goal of reducing bias and protecting candidate confidentiality. While he praised Ms. Sanchez for her insight, communication skills, and leadership potential, he emphasized that the district's immediate needs require someone already familiar with Cambridge's unique challenges. **Member Harding** highlighted Mr. Murphy's steady leadership as interim superintendent, his ability to make difficult operational and personnel decisions with discretion and respect, his strong relationships with the Committee, and his readiness to address urgent student achievement issues, including schools with extremely low performance among low-income students. He concluded that Cambridge needs a superintendent who can act decisively, maintain collaboration, and focus on student outcomes from day one, and therefore supports appointing Mr. Murphy as permanent superintendent.

Mayor Simmons acknowledged the challenges and imperfections of past superintendent searches, noting that this third search was similarly difficult but ultimately productive. She emphasized the importance of ensuring diverse voices were heard and maintaining the integrity of the process, thanking staff, the City Solicitor's Office, CPS Human Resources, the Donovan Group, and Committee members for their efforts. She highlighted Dr. Garcia's leadership, multilingual skills, and ability to empower his team, and praised Ms. Sanchez's focus on students, engagement with families, and strong

performance in the selection process. She explained her priorities for proven experience in closing the achievement gap. She was impressed by Mr. Murphy's responsiveness and ability to make difficult decisions, she was concerned that that he was not an instructional leader. She shared her strong support for both Dr. Garcia and Ms. Sanchez. then yielded the floor and called for members to announce their votes.

The Executive Secretary read the roll call and Members shared their votes for superintendent:

Member Harding – Mr. Murphy
Member Hudson – Mr. Murphy
Member Rachel – Mr. Murphy
Member Rojas – Mr. Murphy
Member Weinstein – Mr. Murphy
Vice Chair Hunter – Ms. Sanchez
Mayor Simmons – Ms. Sanchez

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, Mr. Murphy was formally nominated as the permanent superintendent on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madam Mayer, ABSTAIN

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, the vote was made unanimous on a voice vote.

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein, it was voted to suspend the Rules for the purpose of moving reconsideration of the foregoing vote on a voice vote.

The Rules having been suspended, a motion to reconsider the foregoing vote, hoping the same would not prevail, was adopted: Member Harding, NAY; Member Hudson, NAY; Member Rachel, NAY; Member Rojas, NAY; Member Weinstein, NAY; Vice Chair Hunter, NAY; Madam Mayor, NAY

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rachel, Mr. Murphy is selected as the next superintendent of Cambridge Public Schools, conditioned on the ability of the School Committee and the candidate to reach a negotiated agreement on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Madam Mayer, YEA.

Following the votes, **Mayor Simmons** gave a brief overview of next steps regarding contract negotiations with Mr. Murphy. She noted that the Committee would not be entering an Executive Session for the purposes of contract negotiations as she wanted to consult with legal counsel before moving forward. **Member Hudson** and **Member Harding** stressed that they would like the Committee as a Whole to be involved with contract negotiations.

On motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rojas, the meeting was adjourned on a voice vote. (6:25 p.m.)

Email Communications:

- ✓ Jennifer Bump
- ✓ Linda Nathan
- ✓ Sam Ribnick

Attest:



Katherine Christo
Executive Secretary to the School Committee