



## CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

**Regular Meeting**

**March 3, 2026**

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:** Vice Chair Dube, Member Harding, Member Hudson (REMOTE/IN PERSON), Member Jaikumar, Mayor Siddiqui, Member de Paul Santos (REMOTE), Chair Weinstein (REMOTE)

**Others Present:** Eva Asraf, Student Member; Melissa Bolden, Director of Family and Community Engagement (appointed); Emily Bryan, Director of ELA/Literacy; Heather Francis, Executive Director of Academics; Kim Huffer, Director of Social Emotional Learning; Zihaam Jama, Student Member; David Murphy, Superintendent of Schools; Desiree Phillips, Executive Director of Special Education; Megan Nason, Social Worker, Cambridgeport School; Geeta Pradhan, President of the Cambridge Community Foundation; Rachel Skerritt, Chief Strategy Officer at Attuned Education Partners; Damon Smith, Chief Operating Officer

**Vice Chair Dube** 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 Harding, PRESENT; Member Hudson, PRESENT; Member Jaikumar, PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui, PRESENT; Member de Paula Santos, ~~ABSENT~~; Vice Chair Dube, PRESENT; Chair Weinstein, ~~ABSENT~~

**Member Hudson** transitioned from virtual to in-person participation at 6:20 p.m.

**Member de Paula Santos** joined virtually at 7:48 p.m.

**Chair Weinstein** joined virtually at approximately 9:30 a.m.

### 1. Public Comment

The following individuals were heard:

- Chris Montero, Warren Road, **Superintendent's Presentation, #26-032**, expressed concern about implementing a blanket policy requiring retention for third graders not reading on grade level and suggested replacing the planned June 29 school day with a student learning day on March 18, which is currently scheduled as a professional development day.
- Karen Engles, Wendell Street **#26-032**, emphasized the need for collaboration with educators, coaches, and curriculum leaders to craft a nuanced retention policy.
- Betsy Preval, Broadway, **#26-032**, urged greater use of physical texts and paper-based work.
- Deirdre McCarthy, King Open School, **#26-032**, questioned the district's reliance on platforms like YouTube, cited Stanford research showing limited or harmful effects of early literacy tech interventions, and urged Cambridge to prioritize children's education over private companies' interests.
- Alyssa Tyler, 333 Main Street, **#26-032**

- Isabella Ehrlich, Kirkland Road, **#26-032**, acknowledged the importance of early literacy but proposed retention policy as too simplistic.
- Anthony Galluccio, Trowbridge Place, **#26-032**
- Ken Reeves, **#26-032**
- Gwynneth Caitlin and Ronan O' Donnell, Gold Star Road, **#26-032**, suggested that students who struggle with reading should receive help from special teachers rather than being retained.
- Quenna Lalonde, Windsor Street **#26-032**, suggested that families and educators should partner to make decisions about retaining students.
- Karen Dobak, Allston Street, **#26-032**, shared her experience as a parent of a child with dyslexia and the need for early intervention in reading.
- Ulric Alfred, Cambridgepark, **#26-032**, suggested implementing universal literacy screening, intensive small group tutoring, and evidence-based reading instruction.

On a motion by Mayor Siddiqui, seconded by Member Jaikumar, public comment was closed on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, ABSENT; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, ABSENT

## **2. Student School Committee Report:**

Student Members Asraf and Jama report included the following highlights:

- Youth Education Summit (YES Day Workshop) - Student leaders from school clubs can present during a regular 60-minute class block to educate other students about their clubs and related issues. The goal is to raise awareness about student organizations and encourage greater participation, particularly among freshmen.
- Yondr Phone Policy Update - Following February break, students are now required to keep their phones locked in their Yondr pouches for the entire school day, including during lunch. The change was implemented to address increased phone usage observed after lunch periods.
- Senior Spoon Game - A longstanding spring tradition started at CRLS.

## **3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:**

- February 3, 2026, Special Meeting
- February 3, 2026, Regular Meeting
- February 6, 2026, Special Meeting (Retreat)

On a motion by Mayor Siddiqui seconded by Member Jaikumar, the records were accepted on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, ABSENT; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, ABSENT

**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 the Cambridge Public Schools. The update will include potential modifications to the SY 25 - 26 academic calendar and announcements pertaining to the district leadership team.*

*The Superintendent will also welcome representatives from the Cambridge Community Foundation and Attuned Education Partners to discuss the district's impending strategic planning process. Specifically the School Committee will hear from Geeta Pradhan, the President of the Cambridge Community Foundation, and Rachel Skerritt, a Chief Strategy Officer at Attuned Education Partners, member of the Boston School Committee and former Principal of Boston Latin School.*

Superintendent Murphy, Ms. Pradhan and Ms. Skerritt gave the following presentation which can be found on this [website](#).

Superintendent Murphy reviewed the foundation for the work, including the district's prior strategic plan, the Building Equity Bridges process, and the Thrive Equity Audit. He noted that Cambridge will need strong community partners to support the next phase of work.

Ms. Pradhan stated that the Cambridge Community Foundation is prepared to financially support the district's pursuit of excellence for all students, especially those who have been underserved. She said the Thrive Equity Audit pointed to the need for a clear district plan, evidence-based tools and training, strong use of disaggregated data, and investments tied to measurable outcomes. She emphasized that the district already has many strengths, but that success is inconsistent across schools, and that the next step must focus on implementation, accountability, and transparent progress.

Ms. Skerritt outlined Attuned's proposed support for a phased strategic planning process. She said the work would build on existing reports and engagement already completed, while adding further analysis, including classroom observations, additional stakeholder feedback, and development of clear measures and priorities. The proposal would focus on establishing long-term aspirations, defining a four-year plan with sequenced initiatives, and identifying measurable outcomes and implementation benchmarks that could be monitored regularly.

Committee members raised questions and concerns about the purpose, scope, and urgency of the planning process. **Member Harding** stressed that any plan must include concrete metrics, timelines, and active progress monitoring rather than broad statements of intent. **Member Hudson** questioned the value of spending additional time on strategic planning when pressing district issues remain unresolved and expressed concern that the committee had not previously discussed the possible outside facilitation in a public setting. In response, Superintendent Murphy said the intent was not to outsource goal-setting, but to secure support for facilitating an inclusive and actionable process. Ms. Skerritt and Ms. Pradhan both emphasized that the work should center on implementation, prioritization, accountability, and identifying the specific actions needed to improve outcomes.

Committee members also discussed the importance of measuring school culture, belonging, and student experience alongside academic outcomes. Ms. Skerritt said those indicators could strengthen the district's accountability framework and help create a more coherent student experience across schools. She noted that Attuned's role would be to help the district focus its work, organize priorities over multiple years, and establish a structure for monitoring progress.

During the discussion, questions were raised about how the partnership would be funded and whether committee action would be required. Superintendent Murphy explained that the Cambridge Community Foundation would sponsor the facilitation work and that the final strategic plan itself would ultimately come before the School Committee for adoption.

As part of the Superintendent's report, Superintendent Murphy also announced two leadership appointments. Mr. Smith was formally appointed Chief Operating Officer after serving in the role on an interim basis since October 2024. Superintendent Murphy also introduced Ms. Melissa Bolden as the new Director of Family and Community

Engagement. He highlighted her experience with the Department of Human Service Programs and her deep ties to the Cambridge community.

**7b. Presentation:**

*The Superintendent and Director of Social and Emotional Learning will provide a presentation and take questions from the School Committee on the district's efforts to build a more comprehensive system of mental and behavioral health supports within the Cambridge Public Schools.*

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

Ms. Huffer described the district's effort to develop a coordinated school mental health system that supports student well-being and academic success. She explained the relationship between social-emotional learning (SEL), mental health, and restorative practices, noting the district's goal of moving from isolated initiatives toward a more integrated system across schools.

**Data and Rationale**

District data shows that 67% of students in grades 3–5 report a strong sense of belonging, compared with 56% in upper grades. In addition, 44% of upper school students and 54% of high school students reported struggling with mental health in the past 30 days. Research indicates that SEL and school-based mental health systems can improve school climate, reduce absenteeism and behavioral issues, and support academic achievement.

**Tiered Support Model**

The district uses a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

Tier 1 includes universal supports such as SEL instruction, restorative practices, screening tools, and community-building circles.

Tier 2 includes targeted supports such as small-group SEL interventions and expanded peer mediation programs.

Tier 3 includes individualized support plans and crisis response for students with acute needs.

**District Investments**

Ms. Huffer highlighted investments in several areas, including expanded staffing of social workers, psychologists, counselors, and behavior specialists. The district is expanding the Wayfinder SEL curriculum, currently implemented in ten schools. Data sources such as climate surveys, attendance and behavioral data, and Waypoints SEL assessments guide decision-making. Community partnerships include Cartwheel for teletherapy and parent coaching and Cambridge Health Alliance for school-based health and mental health services.

**Future Priorities**

Next steps include expanding the SEL curriculum to all elementary schools, strengthening SEL implementation at upper schools, expanding peer mediation programs, providing training pathways for paraprofessionals in restorative practices and de-escalation, strengthening crisis response teams, and improving supports for students returning from hospitalizations or extended absences.

**Committee Discussion**

Members asked questions about how the district's current work differs from past efforts, training for paraprofessionals, and balancing district consistency with school-level flexibility. Ms. Huffer emphasized increased consistency across schools, stronger skill-building interventions, and greater focus on student voice.

Members also asked about responses to student behavioral crises, restorative practices, and staffing levels. Ms. Huffer stated that safety is the priority during acute incidents and noted that restorative practices aim to balance accountability and support. She added that the national benchmark is one social worker per 250 students and that Cambridge is close to this level. Ms. Nason noted that strong systems and collaboration are essential to effective student supports, particularly in schools experiencing staff turnover. The administration reiterated that the district has made significant investments in staffing and resources and is now focused on improving coordination and consistency.

Following the presentation, Superintendent Murphy announced that March 18th Professional Learning Day would be converted to a typical school day so that the last day of school would be Friday, June 26.

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

**7d. Consent Agenda:**

On a motion by Mayor Siddiqui seconded by Member Jaikumar, **#26-020, #26-021, #26-022, #26-023, #26-024, #26-025, #26-026, #26-027, #26-028, and #26-029** were adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, ABSENT

**#26-020 Recommendation: Day & Residential Program Services not Available from the Cambridge School Department be adopted as follows:** That the School Committee award contracts to the institutions on attached list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the general fund and/or grant fund budget.

	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts:	4	\$168,348.20
Residential Program Tuition Contracts		
45 Day Program Contracts:	<u>1</u>	<u>\$32,221.08</u>
Total	5	<b>\$200,569.28</b>

**#26-021 Recommendation: Contract Award: Insight Public Sector, Inc. 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, Inc., 2701 E. Insight Way, Chandler, AZ for the period of June 30, 2026 to June 29, 2027 in the amount of \$78,395.68.

**#26-022 Recommendation: Contract Award: CDW Government LLC 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.

CDW Government LLC, 230 N. Milwaukee Ave, Vernon Hills, IL for the period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 in the amended amount of \$150,000.00.

**#26-023 Recommendation: Contract Award: Empire Cleaning 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.

Empire Cleaning, 669 Main Street, Suite 4, Wakefield, MA for the period of January 6, 2026 to January 5, 2027 in the amount of \$31,320.00.

**#26-024 Recommendation: Contract Award: Leonard's Music LLC 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.

Leonard's Music LLC, 128 Great Rd, Bedford, MA for the period of March 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of \$809,694.00.

**#26-025 Recommendation: Contract Award: Leonard's Music LLC 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.

Leonard's Music LLC, 128 Great Rd, Bedford, MA for the period of March 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of \$32,233.52.

**#26-026 Recommendation: Contract Award: Leonard's Music LLC 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.

Leonard's Music LLC, 128 Great Rd, Bedford, MA for the period of March 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of \$75,000.00.

**#26-027 Recommendation: Contract Award: Gerry's Music Shop Inc 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.

Gerry's Music Shop Inc, 80 Lamb Street, South Hadley, MA for the period of March 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of \$46,500.00.

**#26-028 Recommendation: Contract Award: NCS Pearson, Inc. 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.

NCS Pearson, Inc., PO Box 599700, San Antonio, TX for the period of March 16, 2026 to October 31, 2027 in the amount of \$34,464.85.

**#26-029 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 Broad Institute Coding Clubs be adopted as follows:** That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY26 Credit for Life Grant (SC26901) - State in the amount of \$3,200.00 for the period of February 11, 2026 to December 31, 2026.

## 8. Non-Consent Agenda

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

#### **#26-030 Review of Snow Day Closure Protocols – Mayor Siddiqui, Chair Weinstein & Vice Chair Dube**

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools has had four snow days so far in the 2025-26 school year to ensure the safety of students, staff, and families; and

WHEREAS: The last scheduled school day of the 2025-26 school year is now Monday, June 29, 2026, with any subsequent closures extending the school year accordingly; and

WHEREAS: Decisions regarding school closures are made solely on the basis of safety and logistical feasibility; and

WHEREAS: There is an urgent need to review existing protocols regarding delayed starts and the structure of the school calendar for future years to ensure the best academic opportunities for students without compromising the safety of students and CPSD staff and faculty; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee requests that the Superintendent and administration review current protocols regarding delayed starts and snow-day decision-making, as well as implications for the school calendar in future years, and report back to the Committee with recommendations.

A discussion followed **#26-030**.

**Mayor Siddiqui** introduced a motion requesting that the administration review snow day and delayed start protocols and report back with recommendations regarding decision-making and calendar impacts. **Member Harding** expressed support and asked that the review examine the impact of delayed starts on instructional quality and family logistics. The Superintendent stated the analysis would prioritize safety and maximizing instructional time within the 180-day calendar and agreed to report back before the end of the school year.

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Mayor Siddiqui, **#26-030** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, ABSENT

**#26-031 Principal Evaluations –Member Hudson, Member Harding & Member Jaikumar**

WHEREAS: The School Committee recognizes and supports the Superintendent's leadership in building a strong culture of continuous improvement across the district; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee requests that the Superintendent, consistent with his commitment to excellence in school leadership, develop and implement a regular, independent 360-degree feedback process for all school principals, incorporating input from families, students, and staff; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the results of this process shall serve as an input to the Superintendent's existing principal evaluation and support processes, and are intended to strengthen and inform — not replace — the Superintendent's professional judgment and decision-making authority regarding school leadership; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Committee affirms its confidence in the Superintendent's leadership and views this initiative as a resource to support his ongoing efforts to develop and retain excellent school leaders.

A discussion followed **#26-031**

**Member Hudson** explained that the motion seeks to strengthen principal evaluations by incorporating broader feedback to ensure strong building leadership and support continuous improvement. **Member Jaikumar** noted that DESE regulations call for staff feedback in administrator evaluations and emphasized the value of more systematic input from staff, caregivers, and students.

**Superintendent Murphy** stated that additional feedback could be incorporated into the existing evaluation framework and agreed to report back before the end of the school year on implementation, with enhancements continuing into the 2026–2027 school year. Members discussed the value of 360-degree feedback while recognizing that evaluations remain confidential and the Superintendent remains the final evaluator.

On a motion by **Member Harding**, seconded by **Member Hudson**, **#26-031** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, PRESENT

As the meeting approached 10:00 p.m., the meeting was extended to 10:30 p.m. on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

**#26-032 Third Grade Reading – Member Hudson & Member Harding**

WHEREAS: Reading proficiency by the end of third grade is a significant predictor of future academic success, and those who enter fourth grade without adequate reading skills fall further behind in every subject, every year; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools currently promotes students based on age — not mastery of the material for their current grade level and preparedness for the greater academic challenge of the next grade level — a practice that not only fails the individual student but widens the range of preparedness in every subsequent classroom, making effective teaching harder for everyone; and

WHEREAS: A substantial body of research shows that states which have adopted comprehensive literacy policies — policies that combine evidence-based instruction, universal screening, intensive intervention, and an externally measured reading standard for promotion — have seen significantly greater gains in student reading achievement than states which adopted only a subset of these measures; and

WHEREAS: A substantial proportion of Cambridge Public School students cannot read at grade level today, as measured by state standardized tests — a crisis that demands urgent action; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools has undertaken promising literacy initiatives, including the adoption of high-quality instructional materials and expanded intervention supports, and this policy is intended not to replace those efforts but to build upon them — providing the accountability structure necessary to ensure that every child who needs intensive support actually receives it, and that we can see, with clarity, whether our efforts are working; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That beginning with the 2027–2028 school year, no student shall be promoted from third grade to fourth grade unless the student has demonstrated reading proficiency at or above grade level, as measured by an externally validated, standardized assessment selected by the Superintendent; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the assessment must be developed and normed by an independent, external organization, and that the assessment produce results that are comparable across schools and classrooms. The Superintendent must select the assessment and announce the proficiency threshold no later than December 31, 2026; and be it further

RESOLVED: That a student who does not meet the proficiency threshold may be promoted only if the student qualifies for a good cause exemption and only upon written recommendation of the principal and approval by the Superintendent. The definition of a good cause exemption is left to the Superintendent's discretion, but for illustration, may include situations where:

- a) The student has a disability whose IEP indicates the standard assessment is not appropriate, and the IEP team has documented that promotion is appropriate;
- b) The student is an English Learner enrolled in U.S. schools for fewer than two full years whose reading deficiency is attributable to limited English proficiency;
- c) The student has demonstrated proficiency through an approved alternative standardized assessment;
- d) The student experienced a documented significant medical emergency preventing assessment.

All exemptions shall be documented in writing. If exemptions exceed 15 percent of students in any year, the Superintendent shall provide a written explanation to the Committee; and be it further

RESOLVED: That no student's promotion shall be determined by a single test. Students who do not meet the threshold on initial administration shall receive at least two additional opportunities, including one during a mandatory summer reading program provided at no cost to families; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent shall, no later than the start of the 2027–2028 school year, identify all students in grades four through eight who are reading below grade level and who entered the district before this policy took effect, and shall provide those students with intensive, evidence-based reading intervention. These students did not have the benefit of this policy's early identification and support framework, and the district owes them no less urgency than it brings to students entering the system now; and be it further

RESOLVED: That it is the intent of this Committee that implementation of this policy not require the adoption of any new assessment instrument if an instrument already in use by the district meets the criteria set forth above. The district currently administers externally validated literacy assessments across the elementary grades, and the Committee expects the Superintendent to make use of existing tools, processes and programs wherever possible — adding accountability, not bureaucracy.

**Member Hudson** introduced the motion and stated that, while she expected it would be referred for further discussion, the purpose was to create urgency and accountability around ensuring students read proficiently by third grade. She acknowledged concerns raised in public comment about retention, including social-emotional impacts and logistical challenges, but argued that allowing students to advance without foundational literacy skills

causes greater long-term harm. She emphasized that the motion was intended to complement, not replace, existing literacy investments and supports, and said the district must clearly communicate that it is unacceptable for students to reach later grades unable to read proficiently.

**Member Harding** supported the motion and described literacy failure as a crisis, particularly for students who are repeatedly underserved. He argued that promoting students who are not reading on grade level causes lasting academic and life consequences. He also urged the district to better support parents who wish to retain a child when they believe the child is not ready to advance.

**Member Jaikumar** said he did not support the motion as written, though he agreed with the importance of reading proficiency by fourth grade and appreciated the urgency behind the proposal. He raised concerns about research on retention, the risks of tying advancement to a specific test, and the need to hear more directly from educators and literacy experts before adopting a policy change. He expressed support for referring the matter for further study.

**Mayor Siddiqui** said she supported the goal of ensuring all students read proficiently and asked district staff to speak about the current literacy strategy, gaps that remain, and what additional supports may be needed. She noted that the district has made substantial changes in recent years and said she was interested in how accountability, intervention, summer programming, tutoring, and progress monitoring are being strengthened.

District staff responded that there is real urgency around early literacy, but expressed concern that the motion as written would not address the students with the greatest needs, particularly multilingual learners and students with IEPs. Staff explained that the district has recently implemented stronger curriculum, intervention programs, joint professional development for general education, special education, and multilingual staff, and more targeted use of data. They also said they are examining ways to strengthen summer programming, expand tutoring, and improve progress monitoring.

**Chair Weinstein** said he agreed that third grade literacy is critically important and that the district must act with urgency, but he did not support the motion as written. He said the committee should build on the district's current work, hear from educators and families, and avoid creating unintended inequities through a blanket retention policy. He moved to refer the motion to the Superintendent for further review and recommendations.

As the meeting approached 10:30 p.m., the meeting was extended to 10:45 p.m. on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

Discussion followed regarding whether the matter should be referred directly to the Superintendent or to the Curriculum and Achievement Subcommittee. **Member Hudson** expressed concern that referral solely to the Superintendent could limit the committee's role in shaping the discussion and preferred referral to the subcommittee. **Member Harding** also voiced concern that the issue could lose momentum if referred too broadly. Other members said the matter required both committee oversight and substantive administrative input. Superintendent Murphy shared that the core issue was institutional improvement and execution, not only retention policy, and said the administration welcomed the opportunity to develop recommendations in collaboration with the committee.

On a motion by Chair Weinstein, seconded by Mayor Siddiqui, the motion was referred to the Superintendent to report back to the Curriculum and Achievement Subcommittee on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

#### 11. Announcements: None

#### 12. Late Orders: None

**13. Communications and Reports from City Officers:** None

On a motion by Mayor Siddiqui, seconded by Member Jaikumar the meeting was adjourned the following roll call vote: Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA (10:35 p.m.)

**Email Communications:**

Attest:



Katherine Christo  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee