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**VICE CHAIR**  
CAROLINE HUNTER

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
459 BROADWAY  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**  
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**MEMBERS**  
RICHARD HARDING, JR.  
ELIZABETH HUDSON  
JOSÉ LUIS ROJAS  
DAVID J. WEINSTEIN  
RACHEL B. WEINSTEIN

--IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE--

February 4, 2025

ORDERED:

That the following be adopted as amended:

WHEREAS: The School Committee was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Robert S. Peterkin—a distinguished and visionary educator who leaves a profound legacy of advocacy for children’s rights, dedication to educational innovation, and an enduring impact on countless lives—on December 23, 2024; and

WHEREAS: Dr. Peterkin’s extraordinary 50-year career began in Albany, New York, where he taught emotionally disturbed children and founded an alternative school for high school dropouts, demonstrating his commitment to addressing the needs of vulnerable students; and

WHEREAS: As Boston’s first Black public school Headmaster, Dr. Peterkin guided The English High School during the busing era, transforming it into an integrated Magnet School for the Arts, and he later served as Deputy Superintendent in Boston and Superintendent of Schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he introduced initiatives such as school-level decision-making, bilingual education, and specialized programs for African American boys; and

WHEREAS: Dr. Robert Peterkin continued his commitment to learning for excellence and equity and to providing a quality education to all students during his tenure as the Superintendent of the Cambridge Public Schools, 1984-1988, and

WHEREAS: Many of the educational initiatives by Dr. Robert Peterkin continue on today, including many of the recommendations of the Concerned Black Staff in the CBS Report, “An Enrollment Study of Minority Academic Achievement at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 1985-86”, that were added by Dr. Peterkin to the CPS District Plan, including access to Algebra in the 8th grade, foreign language and advanced courses in the Upper Schools, the addition of a parent liaison at CRLS, and new standards for academic awards and rewards.

WHEREAS: In 1991, Dr. Peterkin joined Harvard University as Director of the Urban Superintendents Program, preparing a diverse cadre of urban school leaders, particularly women and persons of color, while serving as an indispensable mentor and advocate for educational equity; and

WHEREAS: Dr. Robert Peterkin was committed to diversifying the educational leadership, and encouraged, inspired and mentored a generation of diverse group of educational professionals, especially the Urban Superintendents, including Dr Carolyn Turk;

WHEREAS: Beyond his professional accomplishments, Dr. Peterkin contributed as an educational consultant, court-appointed expert, and board member for organizations including the B.E.L.L. Foundation, National Urban Alliance, TERC, and Boston Youth Theater, further amplifying his impact on education and young people’s well-being; and

WHEREAS: Dr. Peterkin was a devoted husband to the late Louise Bauer, to whom he was married for 56 years, and a beloved community figure whose passions for jazz, the New York Yankees, and education reflected his vibrant character; and

WHEREAS: Dr. Peterkin’s warmth, wisdom, and unwavering belief in individuals’ potential inspired colleagues and students to rise to challenges and achieve their fullest potential, leaving an indelible imprint on the hearts and minds of those fortunate to know him; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee formally go on record in extending its deepest condolences to the family of Dr. Robert S. Peterkin for their tremendous loss; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Executive Secretary be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to the family of Dr. Robert S. Peterkin on behalf of the entire School Committee.

A true copy:

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Christo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and a distinct 'Christo'.

Katherine Christo  
Executive Secretary to the Cambridge School Committee

Motion #25-006

Mayor Simmons  
Vice Chair Hunter  
Member Hudson  
Member Harding  
Member Rachel  
Member Rojas  
Member Weinstein  
Superintendent