

School Committee - Regular Meeting

March 3, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

Held in and broadcast from the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge, and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge for the purpose of discussing the agenda items listed below.

Individuals may sign up in advance to provide public comment for the March 3 Regular Meeting: The sign-up window is Friday, February 27 through Tuesday, March 3 at 12:00 PM (by phone) and 5:30 PM (online).

To register for public comment during the sign-up times:

- Visit the School Committee online portal: https://secure1.cpsd.us/school_committee.
- Or contact the School Committee office at 617.349.6620.

Regular Meetings will be live-streamed at www.cpsd.us and broadcast on Cambridge Educational Access TV (CEATV) Channel 26, as usual. The meeting can also be viewed on Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/96081106637>. This meeting will be video and audio recorded which may include third party devices.

AGENDA

1. Public Comment

2. Student School Committee Report:

3. Presentation of Records for Approval:

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

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.

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.

7c. District Plan None

7d. Consent Agenda

- #26-020 Recommendation: Day & Residential Program Services not Available from the Cambridge School Department
- #26-021 Recommendation: Contract Award: Insight Public Sector, Inc.: Computer Software (FY27 Contract)
- #26-022 Recommendation: Contract Award: CDW Government LLC: Computer Software-Amendment
- #26-023 Recommendation: Contract Award: Empire Cleaning: Cleaning Services
- #26-024 Recommendation: Contract Award: Leonard's Music LLC: Musical Instruments
- #26-025 Recommendation: Contract Award: Leonard's Music LLC: Music Consumables
- #26-026 Recommendation: Contract Award: Leonard's Music LLC: Musical Instrument Repairs
- #26-027 Recommendation: Contract Award: Gerry's Music Shop Inc.: Musical Instrument Repairs
- #26-028 Recommendation: Contract Award: NCS Pearson, Inc.: Assessment Materials & Software
- #26-029 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 Credit for Life Grant (SC26901)

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.

#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.

#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.

11. Announcements:

12. Late Orders:

13. Communications and Reports from City Officers: