



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

October 18, 2022

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 Rachel, Member Bhambi, Member Fantini, Member Rojas (Remote), Member Weinstein, Member Wilson, Mayor Siddiqui

Also Present: Dr. Greer, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent

Mayor Siddiqui in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

The Chair provided a statement to the public regarding Governor Charlie Baker's Executive Order on guidelines for remote participation and then read the call of the meeting.

The meeting proceeded to the first order of business with a roll call vote for the purpose of a soundcheck: Member Wilson PRESENT; Member Bhambi ABSENT; Member Fantini PRESENT; Vice-Chair Rachel PRESENT; Member Rojas PRESENT; Member Weinstein PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui PRESENT.

Member Bhambi arrived at 6:32 p.m.

1. Public Comment:

The following individual(s) were heard:

- Paula Paris, Fayerweather Street, spoke regarding motion #22-258.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein on the following roll call vote, public comment was closed: Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi ABSENT; Member Fantini YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Member Clemente and Student Member Escamilla-Salomon provided updates on the recent happenings and updates at CRLS which included One School One Story Day, the recently hired Youth Specialist in the Office of Equity and Inclusion, reopening of the CRLS library and Friday Night Hype – an after-school program created for middle schoolers created by Equity Roadmaps to lead scholars in fun activities and build positive relationships.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- October 11, 2022, Regular Meeting

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Vice Chair Rachel on the following roll call vote, the records were approved as written: Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi ABSENT; Member Fantini YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar: None

6. Awaiting Reports:

#C22-230 Joint Motion by Vice Chair Rachel, Mayor Siddiqui, and Member Fantini

WHEREAS: The Superintendent and School Committee have been working with the Department of Human Services Programs to expand access to afterschool programs; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge Public Schools have increased access to space for programs within school buildings, and have recruited district staff to apply for DHSP after-school positions; and

WHEREAS: A waiting list of over two hundred families remains for city-run after-school programs this school year; and

WHEREAS: Many students attend afterschool programs run by community partners; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools transportation policy has made extended considerations for students in grades 6-8 beyond the state requirement; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee requested a plan for transporting students to after-school programs last year (21-311, Members Wilson and Fantini); and

WHEREAS: Cambridge Public Schools provided additional funding to community partners last year to address the transportation needs of their participants; and

WHEREAS: The administration has examined options for bus routes and policies, including those outlined in the Student Transportation Assessment; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge Public Schools will work with the contracted transportation company to address student transportation to afterschool programs, including but not limited to allowing students to ride buses that have the capacity, and exploring adding stops along/near existing routes; be it further

RESOLVED: That the administration will provide the School Committee with an update on related efforts no later than October 31, 2022.

Dr. Greer provided an update on the Awaiting Report. The district has been able to accommodate transportation for all families who are attending DHSP after-school programs at a location other than their home school. The district has also contacted and offered afternoon transportation accommodations for families living in public housing as well as accommodations for families who did not receive a DHSP spot and who enrolled in another community after-school program.

On a motion by Member Fantini seconded by Vice Chair Rachel on the following roll call vote, C22-230 was placed on file and removed from awaiting reports: Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi ABSENT; Member Fantini YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

7. Superintendent's Agenda:

7a. Superintendent's Update: None

7b. Presentations:

Mayor Siddiqui passed the floor to the administration and members of the Academic and Schools Team for a presentation on Data and Accountability. Presenters included Dr. Lendozia Edwards (Chief of Academics and Schools), Jennifer Amigone (Director of Research, Assessment, and Evaluation), Emily Bryan (K-12 ELA/Literacy Coordinator), Siobhan Mulligan (Director of Mathematics) and Dr. Barbara Mullen (Assistant Superintendent of Student Services.) The full presentation can be found on the [website](#).

Following the presentation, Mayor Siddiqui opened the floor to the Committee for discussion.

A robust discussion followed on the data presented in the presentation which included chronic absenteeism, MCAS results, district accountability, student outcomes, and summer programming.

7b. CPS District Plan: None

Vice Chair Rachel motioned to suspend the rules to bring motion #22-258, forward for discussion. Seconded by member Wilson, on the following roll call vote, the rules were suspended: Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#22-258 Joint Motion by Vice Chair Rachel, Mayor Siddiqui, and Member Wilson

WHEREAS: The School Committee adopted the Innovation Agenda in 2011, establishing four new Upper Schools; and

WHEREAS: The Upper Schools were named after the streets on which they were located; and

WHEREAS: Community members have since learned that the namesake of the Vassal Lane Upper School, John Vassal Jr., enslaved multiple people on his Cambridge property and his family enslaved hundreds of individuals in the Jamaican sugar industry; and

WHEREAS: The horrors to which Vassal submitted human beings are incompatible with the Cambridge Public Schools' mission, vision, values; and

WHEREAS: CPS strives to educate our students in an anti-racist, liberatory manner; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: By December 31, 2022, the Superintendent will bring the Committee a proposal for a process to rename VLUS; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the process will list criteria for suggesting new school names, including honoring a Black Cantabrigian or multiple local Black leaders who contributed to the advancement of equitable education, civil rights, and/or the local community; and be it further

RESOLVED: While the School Committee retains the responsibility of naming schools, the Superintendent's proposed process will include opportunities for students, families, educators, and community members to provide input on the new name; and be it further

RESOLVED: The School Committee will rename VLUS before the end of the 2022-23 school year.

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent will present an update on this plan by June 30, 2023.

A discussion followed on **#22-258**.

Vice Chair Rachel provided context and background on the motion and reasoning for the name change for the Vassal Lane Upper School. The reasoning behind the motion is to honor the naming of our schools to reflect the history of our diverse population, in which the current school's namesake is named after a person who was known to enslave Jamaicans in the sugar industry

Mayor Siddiqui highlighted that the City Council recently passed a resolution honoring the work of the School Committee regarding the motion for the name change. The Mayor's Office is working with the historical society to update historical language amongst landmarks in the city.

Member Weinstein showed support for the motion and discussed the importance of a collaboration between the School Committee and City Council for this motion on the name change of the school and thinks the timing of renaming the school is great because it will coincide with the rebuilding of the schools.

Member Rojas discussed his support for the motion and expanded the motion to add the renaming of the school after anyone of color rather than just someone of African ancestry specifically. **Vice Chair Rachel** provided further clarification on the reasoning why the motion states the renaming of Vassal Lane should be named after an African American. **Member Rojas** also asked for clarification on the motion and if it was just the renaming of Vassal Lane or the pos from other schools. **Vice Chair Rachel** acknowledged the importance of representing immigrants from across the globe and people of all colors. She believes that it is probably to face the history of the enslavement of African-Americans and recognized black leadership in Cambridge. There are other schools in the district named after the streets they are on that can also be renamed to honor the diversity of the city.

Member Rojas inquired about possibly amending the motion to reflect the potential possibly to name all schools. **Mayor Siddiqui** recommended Member Rojas put in a motion if he would like to rename a specific school. **Member Rojas** asked Dr. Greer about the current process of renaming schools and buildings. Dr. Greer highlighted that she does not initiate that process alone and it would consist of principals, students (both former and current), families, and community members. Once processes are placed, the School Committee can determine ways to rename the schools. There is a current district policy for renaming buildings and schools.

Mayor Siddiqui provided additional context for the motion and the reasoning for the renaming was proposed. The proposal for the Vassal Lane name change was brought to the Committee based on student feedback and recommendations.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Vice Chair Rachel on the following roll call vote, **#22-258** was adopted and referred to the Superintendent: Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Student Member Clemente (Non-Binding) YEA; Student Member Escamilla-Salomon (Non-Binding) YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

7c. Consent Agenda:

Member Weinstein pulled **#22-254**

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Bhambi, on the following roll call vote, items **#22-255** and **#22-256** were adopted: Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#22-255 Contract Award: Center for Educational Development (CEL): Professional Development be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Center for Education Development (CEL), 9709 3rd Avenue NE, Suite 505, Seattle, WA, for the period of October 24, 2022, to June 30, 2023, in the amount of \$85,500.00.

#22-256 Day & Residential Program Services not Available from the Cambridge School Department be adopted as follows: that the School Committee

contracts to the institutions as detailed in the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, funds to be provided from the General Fund and/or Grant Fund Budget, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Program	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts	1	\$177,706.10
Residential Program 45 Day Program		
Total	1	\$177,706.10

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

#22-254 Contract Award: Engage21learn: Professional Development, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Engage2learn, P.O. Box 695, Portland, TX, for the period of October 24, 2022, to June 30, 2023, in the amount of \$59,400.00.

A brief discussion followed on **#22-254**.

Member Weinstein inquired about the role the contract will play in creating an instructional framework. Dr. Edwards responded that the contract will assist in navigating and ensuring the instructional framework is researched based and involves multiple stakeholders all over.

Member Wilson inquired about the timeline of the research and recommendations. Dr. Edwards responded that the research work is currently going on and the timeline for recommendations from the contract will be around February 2023.

On a motion by Member Weinstein seconded by Member Wilson, on the following roll call vote, **#22-254** was adopted: Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

9. School Committee Agenda (Policy Matters/Notifications/Requests for Information): see page 3

10. Resolutions: None

11. Announcements:

Member Weinstein announced that the North Cambridge Family Opera will be hosting auditions for their annual opera production to occur in the spring,

Member Wilson made two announcements regarding the Landers family. The first was to announce that Jessica Lander recently published a book titled *“Making Americans: Stories of Historic Struggles, New Ideas, and Inspiration in Immigrant Education”*. The second announcement was that Lori Landers is currently exhibiting new paintings at the Cambridge Public Library through November 15th.

Mayor Siddiqui announced that the Mayor’s Office and the Cambridge Public Library will be hosting a Diwali Festival on Saturday, October 22nd.

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications from City Officers: None

Email communications:

✓ Piotr Mitros

On a motion by Fantini, seconded by Member Wilson on the following roll call vote, it was voted to adjourn the meeting: Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA. (9:43 p.m.):

Attest:

Ariel B. Kennebrew

Ariel B. Kennebrew
Executive Secretary to the School Committee