



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

March 7, 2023

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 Fantini, Member Hunter, Member Rojas, 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 6:00 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 Fantini PRESENT; Member Hunter PRESENT; Vice-Chair Rachel PRESENT; Member Rojas PRESENT; Member Weinstein PRESENT; Member Wilson PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui PRESENT.

1. Public Comment:

No one spoke in Public Comment.

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Weinstein on a voice vote, public comment was closed.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Member Clemente and **Student Member Escamilla-Salomon** provided updates on the recent happenings and updates which included a recap of several events including the Student Mock School Committee Meeting on February 10th, the Annual Black History Assembly on February 28th, and the Social Justice Equity Summit on March 6th. The Student Mock School Committee meeting was organized by Tufts ACTION in which students discussed an array of issues that included the distribution of funding for high-quality and more equitable meal options, and the quality of school buses and transportation methods.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- February 7th Regular Meeting
- February 28th Regular Meeting

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Vice Chair Rachel on a voice vote, the records were approved as written and placed on file.

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar: None

6. Awaiting Reports:

C22-311 Joint Motion by Member Weinstein and Mayor Siddiqui

WHEREAS: The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is reviewing and revising bus service schedules; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge Public School District (CPSD) students and their families rely on public bus service to attend school and to participate in out-of-school time opportunities including extracurricular activities, sports, jobs, and internships; and

WHEREAS: CPSD does not provide school bus transportation to students in grades 9 to 12; and

WHEREAS: Proposed changes to MBTA bus routes serving the City of Cambridge include reductions and changes in routes and/or schedules that would greatly impact the ability of CPSD students to access school and other activities; and

WHEREAS: Many issues with the proposed route modifications and recommendations have been brought forward by the community, including:

- **Route 68** Harvard - Kendall / MIT (travels down Broadway between Kendall Sq. and Harvard Sq.). MBTA proposes reducing service to weekdays only 6:00 am- 9:00 am and 4:00 pm-7:00 pm every 30 minutes. Afterschool activities and sports need evening rush hour frequency service extended to 3:00 pm-8:00 pm;
- **Route 69** Harvard - Lechmere (travels down Cambridge St. between Lechmere and Harvard). MBTA proposes a reduction from every 15 mins to every 30 mins;
- **Route 83** (Rindge Ave to Central Sq. via Porter Sq.). MBTA proposes a reduction to every 30 minutes from the current 20 minutes. Current frequency should be maintained, or increased to every 15 minutes to make the bus usable between 3:00 pm and 8:00 pm;
- **Routes 69 and Route 83** are being cut drastically; the frequencies of both routes should be increased to account for the needs of students;
- **Route 78** (78 Arlmont Village - Harvard via Garden St., Concord Ave to Cambridge Highlands). MBTA proposes a reduction from every 25 minutes to every 60-90 minutes (6:00 am-1:00 am). Students on this line need more frequent service to access school and afterschool activities and sports need evening rush hour frequency service extended to 3:00 pm-8:00 pm. Cuts to Route 78 also reduce access to Neighborhood Nine, Cambridge Highlands, Concord Ave between Huron and Blanchard Rd, including assisted care and medical facilities; it is also the only connector between West Cambridge and Arlington;
- **Route 75** (The dedicated CRLS route on school mornings) provides essential transportation services for high school students to get to school on time and should be reinstated and additional dedicated CRLS routes considered for other areas of the City;

- **Routes throughout the City** need to be assessed in light of new and planned housing units including affordable housing and the potential future needs of students living in that housing; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent and Mayor Siddiqui send a letter and forward this policy order along with emails from the community to representatives at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and the Cambridge state delegation on behalf of the entire School Committee, and be it further

RESOLVED: That this letter will detail the MBTA bus routes and schedules that are critical for the needs of CPSD students, with particular attention to those students and families who rely the most on MBTA busses; and be it further

RESOLVED: That CPSD will review student needs and the most recent MBTA proposals before submitting the letter and will add to or modify the list noted above if needed, and be it further

RESOLVED: The Cambridge School Committee goes on record in support of changes that improve access and in support of further changes to address the concerns of residents as summarized above, and be it further

RESOLVED: That this letter will be delivered to the MBTA, the state delegation, and the Governor-Elect Maura Healy as soon as possible with a request for a response.

There was no response and no update on the awaiting report, so this item will remain Awaiting Report.

Member Rojas motioned to suspend the rules and move **#23-046** forward for discussion and adoption, seconded by Member Wilson, on a voice vote, the rules were suspended to bring **#23-046** forward.

#23-046 Joint Motion by the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee (Member Rojas and Member Fantini) and Member Wilson

WHEREAS: In response to the emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 the School Committee and Administration implemented multi-layered strategies outlined in the “COVID-19 Safety & Facilities Procedures Manual” developed with the advice of the superintendent-appointed COVID-19 Safety, Health & Facilities Working Group made up of expert volunteers, the Department of Public Health, Safety committees at each school and the wider community through regular meetings of the Building & Grounds Subcommittee; and

WHEREAS: The multi-layered strategies included ventilation, CO2 monitoring, masking, distancing, and vaccination to minimize the spread of the virus so that we could return to in-person learning during the school year 2020-2021; and

WHEREAS: In the autumn of 2021, when the state required all students to return to in-person learning, our high-school-age student vaccination rates were low and vaccination access was not in place for all students; and

WHEREAS: To contribute to a higher vaccination rate among high school and middle school students and at the recommendation of the superintendent, the School Committee passed Order C21-340 ([See: Appendix A](#)) on October 5, 2021, that approved “mandatory vaccination requirements for all currently

age-eligible Cambridge Public School students effective November 22, 2021, and further, that as additional students become age-eligible for vaccines the same mandate will apply to these students at a date to be determined once the vaccine expansion is announced.; and

WHEREAS: The Administration subsequently, on October 6, 2021, announced it was implementing this requirement such by November 29, 2021, no unvaccinated, age-eligible student will be allowed to participate in the CPS-sponsored after-school extracurricular activities; initially for students ages 12 and older, and later for all students; and

WHEREAS: On February 15, 2022, with everything we have learned about the virus, the wide availability of vaccines in our community, and the emergence of treatments against COVID-19, it appears we will not eradicate the virus and we are unlikely to eliminate it the School Committee adopted Order C22-038 ([See: Appendix B](#)) that modified the goals of the “COVID-19 Safety & Facilities Procedures Manual” from zero transmission to “balancing the costs and benefits of COVID-19 protocols on students and staff …and that we … continue to make decisions based on the latest science and give that COVID-19 will continue to evolve and be ready to reassess the priorities of [Manual] including returning to a zero-transmission goal/strategy.

WHEREAS: On June 7, 2022, the administration changed the mandatory vaccination requirement from students needing to be completely up to date with their COVID-19 vaccine to only needing to be vaccinated with the initial vaccinations against Covid-19, as it was challenging to monitor the ever-evolving logistics of boosters; and

WHEREAS: The fully-vaccinated rate of our high school and upper school students is now 85% and 74% respectively; and

WHEREAS: Based on current COVID-19 trends, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is planning for the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) for COVID-19 to expire at the end of the day on May 11, 2023; and therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee request the administration to present data on the outcomes of Cambridge’ s COVID-19 vaccination requirements for students relative to those of surrounding communities where their school districts do not have a mandated vaccination requirement for students; and be it further,

RESOLVED: That assuming that there are no material differences in the above-referenced outcomes, that the administration, with the advice of the COVID-19 Safety, Health & Facilities Working Group, presents a date by when our mandatory COVID-19 student vaccination requirement policy should be rescinded; and be it further,

RESOLVED: That as we have stated before, we have and will continue to make decisions based on the latest science, and given that COVID-19 will continue to evolve, we need to be ready to reassess the priorities of the “COVID-19 Safety & Facilities Procedures Manual” , including implementing any new vaccine requirements for students issued by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Committee continues to recommend all students be fully vaccinated and up to date with the most recent boosters available, to best protect themselves, their families, and the CPS community.

A discussion followed on **#23-046**.

Member Rojas gave a summary of **#23-046**. The motion is not to rescind the current vaccine mandate but to gather recommendations and ask for advice on when the district should rescind the mandate. This motion is to begin discussions on the mandate and to get recommendations from the Superintendent and the district's Health & Facilities Working Group. **Member Wilson** highlighted the importance of bringing the conversation forward to further discuss, collaborate, and get advice on what the outcome of rescinding the mandate would be.

Member Hunter expressed an interest in knowing what DESE's recommendations are regarding the covid vaccine. **Member Rojas** mentioned that we are the only district in the state that has this current vaccine requirement.

Vice Chair Rachel asked to hear from Dr. Dobberteen and Ms. Lichtenstein regarding the motion. Ms. Lichtenstein shared that the CDC recently announced that covid vaccines will be a part of the routine childhood vaccination schedule and this will reclassify the vaccine from an emergency declaration to a routine vaccination. Generally, there is a pre-requisite for vaccinations for children before they can attend school. The CDC guidelines currently recommends that everyone five years and older, receive a bivalent booster dose of the covid vaccine. Given this, she thinks it makes sense to align district vaccination requirements to align with the CDC guidelines. **Vice Chair Rachel** highlighted that we still have medically vulnerable students and staff so having a requirement is important.

Mayor Siddiqui summarized the motion which allows the Health and Safety Working Group to come up with recommendations on continued strategies for vaccination requirements.

Vice Chair Rachel asked the motion-makers if they would like to refer the motion to the Superintendent for further review and recommendations. **Member Fantini** shared that whenever the CDC and state that will be what ends up taking precedence once they determine a vaccine requirement and also agreed that the motion be forwarded to the Superintendent with hopes that she will bring back recommendations to the Committee. Dr. Greer shared that the Health and Facilities Working Group will meet on March 15th.

Member Rojas reiterated that the reasoning of the motion was to create an open dialogue on the vaccination mandate and thinks now is a good time to figure out the next steps. He shared that the district should always recommend the vaccine but doesn't think it shouldn't necessarily be mandated especially for after-school programs. The way that school districts set up vaccine requirements is based on state requirements and since the vaccine is not a state requirement it would be tough for us to have a mandate for the vaccine. During the pandemic, the policy was made and stated as an emergency declaration, given that, the policy should not remain as something forever. **Member Weinstein** also agrees that we should continue to evolve our approach as things change and evolve over the years.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein, on a voice vote, **#23-046** was referred to the Superintendent.

7. Superintendent's Agenda:

7a. Superintendent's Update:

Dr. Greer provided an update on SC Order **#C22-229 HBCU Tours**. During the April break, 10 students will be attending the HBCU college tours and the district was able to provide \$5,150 in scholarships for those 10 students to attend. Principal Smith and others will partner with Citizens of the World to hold an HBCU fair this upcoming spring.

Member Wilson thanked the administration for their efforts in moving forward with the motion and organizing the college tours and looks forward to hearing more about the college tours. She inquired about the costs the district provided as she thinks it's lower than what the initial costs were. Dr. Greer responded that the district's costs were excluding multiple funding sources which included funding from students & families along with grants, etc.

7b. Presentations:

Dr. Greer passed the floor to the administration for a presentation from the ELA/Literacy Department led by Dr. Edwards, Emily Bryan, and Katie Gribben. The full presentation can be found on the [website](#).

After the presentation, Mayor Siddiqui opened up the floor for questions and discussion:

Member Hunter expressed her interest in learning more about the K-3 curriculum including the science of reading and the implementation rollout. Emily Bryan responded that in the years leading up to implementation, strategies of learning will be enforced. Starting in September all kindergarten classrooms will implement the Haggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum. Every school is doing a phonics program. The title of the new Kindergarten curriculum is called "Focus K".

Member Weinstein inquired about curriculum flexibility for educators. Katie Gribben responded that curriculum change is a hard change however teachers in these grades have realized that there needs to be consistency for students as they transition to high school. The curriculum itself is not scripted – fish tanking has a calendar that allows extra time in the school year to allow educators and teachers to have the flexibility to make alternations if/when needed. Emily Bryan also reiterated that this curriculum allows 10-day padding in each unit to provide flexibility for reassessment for teachers as well as MCAS, snow days, etc. There is an expectation that these curriculum components are done at every asset at every school.

Member Fantini inquired about the goal that when children transition to different school levels, they are ready for high-level work and are reading at grade level. He inquired about examples of different scenarios including what would the experience be like for a sixth grade who is two years behind on reading at grade level. Emily Bryan responded that the best approach to improving students who are under-grade level is to maintain them at grade level and not resort to any remedial efforts. The district can use high-quality screeners to target the best intervention efforts, but it is important to keep grade-level tests to help the improvement of any students who were behind grade level. Ms. Gribben responded that

if Tier 1 instruction is very strong at the elementary grades along with high-quality screeners, the number of students reading under grade level would significantly decrease. Dr. Greer responded that the district is committed 100% to strong Tier 1 instruction to set students up for the best success and intervention cannot replace strong Tier 1 instruction this can assist significantly in closing achievement gaps. **Member Fantini** also inquired about homework and Reading Recovery. Dr. Greer mentioned that studies about homework are conflicting but believes that homework should be aligned with either the instruction from that day or instruction for the following days. Although the district has decided to move away from Reading Recovery it will be replaced by resources and practices aligned to research-proven methods to address and prevent reading difficulties for students.

Vice Chair Rachel inquired about how phonics instruction aligns with the ongoing curriculum, how phonics fits in, and what types of texts are being used for students. Emily Bryan responded that reading comprehension is important with decoding more significant for students in lower grades vs students at the upper level and because of that decodable texts will be purchased for K-5 schools for the upcoming school year. The Focus Curriculum balances phonics, decodable text phonemic awareness, and an engagement with complex-type texts for comprehension and critical thinking.

Member Wilson discussed her experience as an educator and how students are engaged with text that allows them to strategically think. She looks forward to the continued implementation of the ELA/Literacy Curriculum to better assist students in the district to garner love and interest in reading and would like to be a part of the conversations as a community partner to better align and improve the implementation. She also inquired about communications with families and community caregivers and if any conversations were had in improving engagement to ensure success and equability regarding the implementation of the new curriculum. Emily Bryan mentioned that the ELA/Literacy Department has informational and feedback sessions this year with students and families to gain their insight and feedback on the curriculum before its implementation in the fall.

Member Rojas inquired about the fish tank and how is it being leveraged in our bilingual immersion schools. Katie Gribben shared some feedback from some of the educators at the Amigos School and mentioned how they were active in the involvement in some of the dual-language texts. Emily Bryan mentioned that every educator was involved including educators in a bilingual classroom.

Mayor Siddiqui summarized the presentation and expressed the significance of ensuring that current practices align with research. A major theme within this School Committee is to ensure that every student is reading at grade level, and she looks forwards to the implementation and seeing the improvement of students in the upcoming year(s). She then transitioned the meeting to the Consent Agenda.

7c. CPS District Plan: None

7d. Consent Agenda:

Vice Chair Rachel pulled **#23-034** and **#23-037**. **Member Rojas** pulled **#23-035**. **Member Hunter** pulled **#23-036**, **#23-038**, **#23-040**, and **#23-041**. **Member Weinstein** pulled **#23-042**.

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Weinstein, on the following roll call vote, items **#23-039, #23-043, and #23-045** were adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#23-039 Contract Award: CCS Presentation Systems: Interactive Display Hardware 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.

#23-043 Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the following donations as described:

1. \$741.88 from Custom Ink to the Morse School as commission for school merchandise. Funds will be used for general support of the school.
2. \$642.40 from HELPSY to the Kennedy Longfellow School in return for items collected in the school's clothing/book collection box. Funds will be used for the general support **of the school.**

#23-044 Grant Award: FY23 Influence 100 (SC23167) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below from Influence 100 (SC23167) in the amount and for the period indicated:

<u>Amount:</u>	\$1,000.00	<u>Period:</u>	3/7/23 – 6/30/2023
<u>Source:</u>	State, Competitive	<u>Administrator:</u>	

Expense Category	FY 20 Budget	FY20 FTE	FY23 Budget Original	FY23 FTE
Permanent Salaries & Benefits	-		-	
Temporary Salaries	\$2,000.00		\$1,000.00	
Other Expenses	-		-	
Total	\$2,000.00	-	\$1,000.00	-

Description: The MA DESE has created the Influence 100 fellowship program to increase the racial and ethnic diversity of school leaders in MA, create more culturally responsive districts and leaders across the state, and promote better outcomes for students. One CPS staff in the Office of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging will receive a stipend

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

##23-034 Approval Revisions to the School Entrance Age Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the School Entrance Age Policy as detailed in the attached document.

A discussion followed on **#23-034**.

Vice Chair Rachel mentioned that the first line of the policy still needs some minor modifications to ensure clarity for all families regarding the enrollment of students once Universal Pre-K is implemented and asked to include “limited opportunities” to ensure clarity that not everyone will be entitled to a Pre-K spot at CPSD as Universal Pre-K is part of a mixed delivery system within the city, **Member Weinstein** suggested that instead of using the word “limited”, replacing it with the words “subject to availability.”

Member Rojas shared that the School Committee be mindful of the wording of the policy. For some schools and programs such as the Tobin Montessori and Bilingual Programs, the enrollment has different enrollment requirements, and the policy can create a disservice to families of children in those programs who could not be eligible to return after kindergarten. Dr. Greer shared that the reasoning for the implementation of Universal Pre-K is to ensure equitable education for all families in Cambridge as the current policy wouldn’t allow families not enrolled in a preschool program at a certain school to attend Kindergarten at another school as the current policy allows currently enrolled students the option to continue enrollment at the school through kindergarten which doesn’t allow enough seats for students entering kindergarten who were not enrolled in a preschool program.

The meeting transitioned into a robust discussion about how implementing the policy affects the current enrollment of families in the JK/K programs.

Mayor Siddiqui summarized the importance of adopting the school entrance age policy as it is vital to modify these policies to implement the city’s Universal Pre-K system and once the policy is adopted, the administration and School Committee can have further discussion and follow-up to include more inclusion in the policy in the upcoming months.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Mayor Siddiqui on the following roll call vote, **#23-034** was adopted as amended: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas NAY; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA. (6-1)

#23-035 Approval of the Revisions to the School Admissions Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the School Admissions Policy as detailed in the attached document.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-035**.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Wilson, on the following roll call vote, **#23-035** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#23-036 Approval of Revisions to the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook in the attached document.

Description: These proposed revisions include updating language to align with the School Committee's Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policy and the recent changes in state law with respect to the student's discipline process as well as updates to ensure the language used is gender-neutral and updates to contact information and job titles that are referenced in the document to ensure clarity and accuracy.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-036**.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Wilson, on the following roll call vote, **#23-036** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#23-037 Approval of the SY2023-2024 Cambridge Public Schools District Calendar be adopted as follows: That the School Committee Approve the SY2023-2024 Cambridge Public Schools District Calendar

A brief discussion followed on **#23-037**.

Vice Chair Rachel asked for some modifications to the draft calendar to update the following Religious Holidays to align with the Jewish Calendar:

- September 15th -17th for Rosh Hashanah
- April 22nd -30th for Passover

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Vice Chair Rachel; on the following roll call vote, **#23-037** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#23-038 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 the 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.

Description: SY22-23 Placement of students in private schools for implementation of educational plans in accordance with Chapter 766.

	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts:	3	\$112,933.70
Residential Program Tuition Contracts		
45-Day Program Contracts:	_____	_____
Total	3	\$112,933.70

A brief discussion followed on **#23-038**.

Member Hunter inquired about a circuit breaker allocation and parent settlements. CFO Spinner clarified that a circuit breaker allocation is a grant received from the state for students who have high-cost special education services. The state has a threshold for student spending and when we reach the threshold, we are reimbursed for 75% of the over-the-threshold costs. Dr. Greer shared that parent settlements are mediations between families and the district that usually happens when families may not agree with suggested specialized services.

On a motion by Member Hunter, seconded by Member Wilson, on the following roll call vote, **#23-038** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#23-040 Contract Award: Insight Public Sector: Computer Software be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve a contract to the following vendor for the annual license fee and maintenance for the OpenGov Budgeting & Planning financial system software. Funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference below. Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Insight Public Sector, 6820 S. Harl Ave., Temple, AZ 85283-4318 for the period of July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024 in the amount of \$66,649.43.

Description: The OpenGov software system is a cloud-based budget tool that supports the annual preparation of the CPS budget. The system includes a workflow and approval process, multi-year budgeting capabilities, and the ability to input and track goals and performance measures. The software also supports publishing online budget information that is both user-friendly and interactive.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-040**.

Member Hunter asked for clarification regarding the contract. CFO Spinner clarified that this contract is a renewal of the current budget software used in the district.

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Vice Chair Rachel; on the following roll call vote, **#23-040** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#23-041 Contract Award: ParentSquare: Computer Software be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve a contract to the following vendor to provide a single, upgraded comprehensive communication management system for school-to-home communications. Funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference below. Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

ParentSquare, Inc., 5144 Calle Real, Suite 200A, Goleta, CA 93117 for the period of July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024 in the amount of \$35,700.00

A brief discussion followed on **#23-041**.

Member Hunter asked for more clarity on the ParentSquare contract. Dr. Greer clarified that ParentSquare is our current communications platform.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Mayor Siddiqui; on the following roll call vote, **#23-041** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#23-042 Contract Award: Sunbelt Rentals: Equipment Rental- Winterization Services be adopted as follows: That Superintendent's Recommendation #23-042, Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve a contract to the following vendor to provide winterization services for tent covers and structures. Funds to be provided in accordance with the budget reference below. Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Sunbelt Rentals, 2431 Deerfield Drive, Fort Mill, SC 01545 for the period of November 15, 2022, to March 15, 2023 in the amount of \$41,000.00.

Description: This contract will provide winterization services for the tent covers and structures at the following buildings: Baldwin, Fletcher Maynard Academy, Graham and Parks, Haggerty, Kennedy-Longfellow, King Open/CSUS, Morse, and Tobin/VLUS. Tent structural frames will remain in place over the winter after canvas covers are removed in November. This will facilitate more efficient re-installation in March 2023.

Note: A CPS contract is already in place for the rental of these tents through 6/30/23.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-042**.

Member Weinstein asked for an update on the district's current utilization of the tents and what the district is doing to utilize outdoor space.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Mayor Siddiqui; on the following roll call vote, **#23-042** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

**9. School Committee Agenda (Policy Matters/Notifications/Requests for Information):
##23-045 Motion by the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee (Member Rojas and Member Fantini)**

WHEREAS: At the beginning of the school year the Vice Chair asked Members to revise existing policies through the Subcommittees of the School Committee; and

WHEREAS: The Building & Grounds Subcommittee reviewed over its last two meetings suggested changes to the Transportation Policy; and therefore, be it

RESOLVED: To correct the first sentence of the Transportation Policy to read, "Students will be entitled to transportation to and from school at the expense of the Cambridge Public Schools when such transportation conforms to applicable provisions of Massachusetts General Laws and the policies of the School Committee." This corrects the following mistake, "Students will be entitled to entitled to transportation...."

A brief discussion followed on **#23-045**.

Member Rojas provided a summary of the motion which was to correct a typo in the current transportation policy.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Hunter, **#23-045** was adopted via a voice vote.

#23-047 Joint Motion by Vice Chair Rachel, Member Hunter, and Member Weinstein

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee's policy on the "Non-Tolerance of Hate Crimes" specifies that we "will not stand for hate crimes;" and

WHEREAS: Despite a change in how the federal government collects hate crime statistics, in 2021 the FBI reported the highest rates of hate crimes in a dozen years, and multiple advocacy organizations documented record levels of hate crime incidents based on race, nationality, gender, and religion; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools not only prohibits hate incidents, but takes pride in our active embrace of anti-racist, equitable, and liberatory education, as reflected in the CPS Anti-racist vision and mission statements to "support learning spaces where all students are known, celebrated, empowered and thrive;" now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee updates policy [JICFA-E-1 - NON-TOLERANCE OF HATE CRIMES](#) to elaborate that the Committee and district also are intolerant of all incidents of biased-based behaviors and expressions of hate, be they legal crimes or not; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the policy include that educators will prioritize responding to incidents of hate in a manner that utilizes the experience as a teachable moment for students, allowing all students to engage, process, learn and build community; and be it further

RESOLVED: That educators may invite students directly impacted or involved to participate in restorative practices; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge Public Schools will provide access to and counseling support for students following such incidents; and be it further

RESOLVED: That, when incidents of hate occur, the Superintendent or their designee will alert School Committee Members in a timely manner.

A discussion followed on **#23-047**.

Vice Chair Rachel gave an overview of the motion as the current policy regarding hate crimes is currently one sentence that does not specify anti-bias and racism issues.

Member Hunter reiterated the importance of this motion, to prepare our young scholars to take hate crimes as something casual and for these instances to be learning experiences.

Member Weinstein also discussed the significance of the non-tolerance of hate crimes and the reasoning for the policy is to respond effectively and efficiently when issues of hate and anti-bias arise and also shared that at the recent School Climate Meeting where the Youth Health Survey reports were shared, it was revealed that students are still experiencing some form of hate.

Mayor Siddiqui announced that she is joining a group called “Strong Cities” which is a coalition of cities that join together to tackle issues such as hate crimes.

Member Hunter asked to include staff in the second to last paragraph to read “*That the Cambridge Public Schools will provide access to and counseling support for students and staff following such incidents; and be it further...*”

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Weinstein, **#23-047** was adopted as amended via a voice vote.

#23-048 Joint Motion by Vice Chair Rachel and Member Hunter

WHEREAS: CPS [policy](#) states that, “The Cambridge School Committee believes that any educational program is influenced greatly by the environment in which it functions. The development of a quality educational program and school facilities that help to implement the program must go hand in hand. Therefore, it is the School Committee’s goal to provide the facilities needed for the number of students in the school district, and to provide the kind of facilities that will best support and accommodate the educational program;” and

WHEREAS: CPS [policy](#) charges the Chief Operating Officer with maintenance, improvement, and repair responsibilities; and

WHEREAS: Students at the High School Extension Program and Tobin Montessori school are currently housed in the district’s swing space, the old Longfellow School building; and

WHEREAS: Montessori pedagogy considers the learning environment the “third teacher” (after the teacher and the student); and

WHEREAS: Portions of the roof of the Longfellow building have been deteriorating over an extended period of time, causing water to periodically leak onto an area of the second floor of the building; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools are firmly committed to maintaining learning environments that in no way constitute a health hazard to students, staff, and other building occupants; and

WHEREAS: The Committee reaffirms its commitment to teaching and learning environments that foster enthusiasm and health, as well as a sense of respect for students and educators; and

WHEREAS: The Superintendent previously directed that air quality testing occur to ensure that no harmful exposure, including but not limited to mold and asbestos, is present in the Longfellow building due to the deteriorating roof and associated leaking; and

WHEREAS: Air quality testing for purposes of mold detection will be conducted on Thursday, March 2, 2023, and preliminary findings will be provided to the School Committee immediately; and

WHEREAS: Additional testing for asbestos has been scheduled to occur as soon as possible on an upcoming Saturday, in order to avoid the disturbance that such testing would cause to educational programming in the building; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent will direct the Chief Operating Officer to report immediately to the Committee on the data collected as part of that asbestos testing; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent will instruct the COO to confer with environmental engineering consultants as necessary to determine the safety of the Longfellow building for inhabitants based on the data accumulated through the aforementioned testing; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent will instruct the COO to provide an anticipated timeline for any necessary roofing repairs as well as any operational implications for such repairs such as the potential temporary and/or relocation of programming affecting students and staff by the next regular School Committee meeting, March 21, 2023.

A discussion followed on **#23-048**.

Vice Chair Rachel shared that she and co-sponsor Member Hunter have heard from various people about the space in the old Longfellow building and inquired about the Asbestos findings from the recent testing to reassure the community about the health and safety of the building. She also inquired if the building will be used for preschool classrooms once Universal Pre-K is implemented. **Member Hunter** inquired about a timeline for repairs and the asbestos testing findings.

Member Rojas mentioned that this motion should have been recommended to the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee. **Member Rojas** requested this be referred back to the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee or the Subcommittee. **Vice Chair Rachel** clarified that the motion makers felt that this motion is an emergency and **Member Hunter** further clarified the reasonings for bringing this motion forward tonight versus referring it to the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee for review. Dr. Greer mentioned that mold testing occurred on March 2 and on March 3 the findings were reported to have no evidence of mold. Asbestos testing was conducted the week prior and results should be made to the district sometime this week. COO Murphy provided some updates on the roofing and will provide an update at the next meeting.

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Fantini, on the following roll call vote, the motion to refer **#23-049** to the Superintendent failed for adoption: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter NAY; Member Rojas YEA; Vice Chair Rachel NAY; Member Weinstein NAY; Member Wilson NAY; Mayor Siddiqui NAY. (2-5)

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member, **#23-049** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Member Rojas NAY; Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA. (6-1)

#23-049 Joint Motion by Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Chair Rachel, and Member Wilson

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee recognizes the need most working families have for after-school care; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee believes high-quality after-school programming benefits our student's academic and social-emotional growth; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge is fortunate to have numerous high-quality after-school partners, both public and non-profit; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge Public Schools worked with the Department of Human Services last year on an expansion plan to grow Community School capacity by over 100 seats, but, due to staffing challenges, more seats were not possible; and

WHEREAS: The Superintendent and her team have worked diligently to identify classrooms and school space for after-school expansion, assisted in recruiting CPS staff who may be interested in after-school roles, and modified transportation plans to maximize access to after-school seats this school year; and

WHEREAS: The Department of Human Services (DHSP) currently aims to add 170 seats by Fall 2023, grow programs with stable staffing models, add full-time teachers to grow select Community School programs, and expend an additional ~\$1.5M towards this effort; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent explore the feasibility of providing additional space to accommodate the Community Schools expansion and explore opportunities to partner with the Department of Human Services (DHSP) in considering creative staffing models to support after-school programming; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent reports back to the Committee by April 4, 2023.

A discussion followed on **#23-049**.

Mayor Siddiqui gave the context of the motion, which is a request for the Superintendent to explore the feasibility to have discussions with school principals to provide additional space for the community after-school programs. She praised the Superintendent and her teams for the previous efforts in the last year on work in identifying some spaces for these programs. The motion is to continue to support the ongoing work that is happening.

Member Fantini discussed how the increase in the quality of after-school programs as the quality of the programming is a bigger issue than just the expansion.

Member Rojas asked for the reasoning for adding additional after-school space as the current issue with the after-school programs has been staffing. Currently, community schools only use a fraction of our buildings. **Mayor Siddiqui** responded although staffing is a challenge, there is needed space for several programs such as those at the Morse and Cambridgeport schools. She announced that the City Council's

Human Services Committee recently held a meeting regarding the afterschool programs. The meeting highlighted specific schools that need additional space for after-school programs. Space will always be contingent on staffing,

Member Rojas suggests amending the motion to omit the word “explore” before the following text “*opportunities to partner with...*” given concerns he has heard from families about the challenges of aging space after-school programs and causing a confusing message on the space for programs with the community. **Vice Chair Rachel** responded clarifying the motion which is for us to do as much as we can to create the space for after-school programs and the current administration has done a great job on the efforts so far. With no second vote, to vote on the amending language, there was no amendment.

On a motion by Mayor Siddiqui, seconded by Vice Chair Rachel, **#23-049** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#23-050 Report of the February 16, 2023, Communications and Community Relations Subcommittee

A brief discussion followed on **#23-250**.

Member Weinstein provided a summary of the February 16th Communications and Community Relations Subcommittee.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Wilson, **#23-050** was adopted via a voice vote.

10. Resolutions:

#23-051 Joint Motion by Member Hunter, Vice Chair Rachel in collaboration with Student Member Clemente and Student Member Escamilla-Salomon

WHEREAS: A Mock School Committee Meeting was held on February 10, 2023, for the Upper Schools Student Governments in the CRLS Media Café, and

WHEREAS: The Mock School Committee Meeting was organized by Sam Musher, Youth Advocate Specialist in the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, with the support of Director of Equity, Leslie Jimenez, and Chief Equity Officer Manual Fernandez, and

WHEREAS: Tufts ACTION, which stands for **Advancing Civic Thought In Our Nation**, is a student-run organization that aims to promote youth civic engagement in the greater Boston area, and

WHEREAS: Alison Cedarbaum, Olivia Iannini, and Maxwell Dryfoos of Tufts ACTION, coordinated with Sam Musher, leading the CPS Upper Schools Student Government members in small group activities including brainstorming, consensus building, and voicing opinions; and

WHEREAS: The Upper School Student Government members meet and work in their schools with the following teacher-advisors:

- Marilyn Rottersman and Jose Oliveira – Rindge Ave Upper School (RAUS)

- Anays Baez –Cambridge Street Upper School (CSUS) with help from Assistant Principal Blaine Yesselman
- Mary Tiernan and Danielle Rivers – Putnam Ave Upper School (PAUS)
- Oksana Deinak –Vassal Lane Upper School (VLUS)
- Michael Batt – Amigos School; and

WHEREAS: The CPS Upper Schools Student Government members took their roles as School Committee members seriously and deliberated on the issues and projects that should be considered for the 2023 budget allocations; and

WHEREAS: CPS Upper Schools Student Government members discussed all options presented and voted on their 2023 budget recommendations for allocations of funds for the following issues:

- 50% funding to improve the choices, quality, and dietary options at the Upper Schools.
- 50% funding for improved bus schedules and addressing overcrowding on busses; and therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee would like to thank and commend Sam Musher, Youth Advocate Specialist, the Tufts ACTION Crew, the Upper School Student Government Members, and their Advisors on a successful Mock School Committee Meeting that modeled exemplary civic engagement.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-051**.

Student Members Clemente and Student Member Escamilla-Salomon gave a brief overview of the motion which was to go on record congratulation the students who participated in the Mock Student School Committee Meeting that was held on February 10, 2023.

#23-052 Motion by Member Hunter

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee is committed to the ideals of social justice exemplified by the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and

WHEREAS: The King Open School is named after the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and

WHEREAS: The King Open School celebrated the legacy of Dr. King with a whole school assembly on Thursday, January 19 at 10 am in the King Open Auditorium, and this event was the first time that the entire King Open School was able to come together after COVID-19 restrictions.

WHEREAS: The theme of the King Open's MLK Celebration was "Be The Dream: King Open Change Makers, and

WHEREAS: The MLK Celebration was organized by teachers May Petrov (5th Grade) and Aida Riggs (1st Grade), and the celebration was the culmination of the classroom work done by MLK scholars who learned about the life of Dr. King,

WHEREAS: King Open MLK Celebration includes the following participants"

- **MLK Celebration Organizers:** May Petrov (5th Grade) & Ada Riggins (1st Grade)
- **Ushers:** Jenan Fak, Henry Doan, Tsion Arega, Devin Depina, Sage Rivas- Amaya (all 5th Grade),

- **Song:** Lift Every Voice: Ms. Erika Agard & the ESL 4th grade students
- **Welcome Address by Emcees:** Cecelia Parker, Miles Barham, and Zaria Johnson (5th Grade)
- **Song:** We are King Open & Here We Are by the MLK Chorus of JK-5 students & Family Members,
- **MLK Portraits:** Digital portraits displayed by JK students
- **Guest Speaker:** Caroline Hunter, School Committee member & local hero
- **Movement Break:** "I Believe in the Dream"
- **Song: I Lift My Voice:** 5th-Grade Students
- **Letters to Dr. King and/or Mrs. King:** 5th-grade Students
- **Portuguese Song: 3rd & 4th Grade students with Ola Teacher(s):** Fabiane Noronha & Jonathan Horowitz
- **Spoken Word Original Poem:** Devonte Cooper, King Open Extended Day Teacher & King Open Alum
- **Our Dreams:** King Open Change Maker
- **MLK Choir:** Yonder Come Day, We Shall Overcome
- **Closing Remarks:** Principal Williams.

WHEREAS: The work of the following teachers in preparation of students for this wonderful program with special thanks, to teachers: Jessica Ober, Tawnie Hespler (4th Grade) Ms. Erika Agard (ESL), Matt Thoman & Annie Fox (J/K), Ana Travassos, Shana Gargiulo, & Isabella Pereira (5th Grade) and Priya Zerai, Grace Bailly, Molly Camp, & Aida Riggins (1st and 2nd Grade), Art Display: by JK-5 King Open Students under the direction of Art Teacher Kelley Mowers, Music support on Piano: Rania El-Kareh, CSUS Music Teacher, Music Teacher: Jesse Jackson and Musical Direction: Ada Riggins, and therefore be it,

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee would like to go on record and thanking and commending all King Open Community of students, teachers, and families for an exemplary program dedicated to the celebration of the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through art, song, letters, portraits, and videos in a true whole community celebration.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-052**.

Member Hunter congratulated the King Open School for their MLK celebration.

On a motion by Member Hunter, seconded by Member Weinstein, **#23-051** & **#23-052** were adopted via a voice vote.

Per the Rules of the School Committee due to the meeting time running past 10 p.m. On a motion by Mayor Siddiqui, seconded by Vice Chair Rachel, on a voice vote, the meeting was extended.

11. Announcements:

Mayor Siddiqui announced that the Cambridge Community Iftar will be held on March 29th at 6 pm and that the Mayor's Office is holding an art contest through March 24th.

Member Weinstein congratulated the CRLS theatre scholars for advancing in the Massachusetts Educational Theatre Guild competition.

Member Fantini announced that the CRLS high-school fencing team won the state championship.

Member Wilson congratulated recent retiree Miriam Da Silva who served 30 years of service at CPSD. She also announced that tomorrow is the 25th Annual Boston-area International Women's Day Breakfast at Simmons University and the ACE Mentor Workforce Scholarship night at Wentworth.

Member Rojas announced that the Pride Basketball players are playing in a regional tournament on March 8th.

12. Late Orders:

WHEREAS: Sara Reese is an exceptional and distinguished champion of students and careers in trade; and

WHEREAS: Sara Reese, as the Career Counselor & Cooperative Education Advisor at Cambridge Rindge & Latin School in the Rindge School of Technical Arts (CRLS/RSTA) has been strengthening the relationship between the ACE Mentor Program and CRLS since 2020; and

WHEREAS: Sara Reese played a critical role in the ACE Mentor Trade Day 2022, an event open to all high school students in the Greater Boston Area that introduced students to careers in trade through hands-on activities, meetings with union members, and educating about opportunities and

WHEREAS: Sara Reese introduced the ACE Mentor Program to pivotal educators and administrators that were all necessary to the event, as well as personally recruiting students to attend; and

WHEREAS: The ACE Mentor Trade Day 2022 consisted of 65 students from 17 different high schools with 20 mentors and 25 tradespeople the ACE Mentor Trade Day 2022 would not have been possible without Ms. Reese; and

WHEREAS: Since Sara Reese's involvement in ACE Mentor Program, CRLS students involved in the program have grown by 250%; and

WHEREAS: Sara Reese is a continuous advocate for trade opportunities and industry connections for youth and CRLS students helping ACE present in a multitude of classrooms this past fall to recruit, connect, and inspire students; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee go on record honoring and appreciating Sara Reese's outstanding impacts on expanding trade opportunities for high school students and thus, promoting success for them in their post-secondary endeavors; and be it further

RESOLVED: That a formal copy of this resolution be prepared by the Executive Secretary to the School Committee and be forwarded to Sara Reese.

Member Wilson presented the late order as a resolution for Sara Reese, who is an exceptional educator at the CRLS. She was recently recognized as an elementary champion.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Vice Chair Rachel the late order was adopted via a voice vote.

On a motion by Member Wilson seconded by Vice Chair Rachel on a voice vote, the meeting was adjourned. (10:09 p.m.).

Email Communications: None

Attest:

Ariel B. Kennebrew

Ariel B. Kennebrew
Executive Secretary to the School Committee