



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Special Meeting

April 13, 2021

Called for :600 p.m. broadcast from the Media Arts Studio, 454 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of the School Committee Vote of Adoption of the FY 2022 Superintendent Budget, Adoption of the SY 2021-2022 Cambridge Public Schools District Calendar, and a Presentation on Preliminary Planning Related to the Federal Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSR) Funds.

Members Present: Vice Chair Bowman, Member Fantini, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson, Mayor Siddiqui

Also Present: Dr. Salim, Superintendent of Schools
Claire Spinner, Chief Financial Officer

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 read the call of the meeting and explained that this meeting is being televised, votes will be taken and there will be public comment.

The meeting proceeded to the first order of business with a sound check: Member Fantini PRESENT; Member Rojas PRESENT; Member Rachel PRESENT; Member Weinstein PRESENT; Member Wilson PRESENT; Vice Chair Bowman PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui PRESENT.

The Mayor turned the floor to Superintendent Salim who informed the Committee that he has adjusted the School Year 22 Calendar. After looking at attendance data to make informed decisions; recognizing families and staff members that observe Rosh Hashanah, conferring with CEA President, Dan Monahan, other Superintendents in the area, New England Anti-Defamation League some key changes have been made: September 1st, 2nd and the 8th staff will report for professional development and Thursday, September 9th 2021 will be the first day of school for grades 1 through 12. The last day of school will be Thursday, June 23, 2021. Making an allowance to include five potential snow days, the last day of school will bring us to Thursday, June 30, 2022; which by state law is the last possible day of school since the school year cannot extend into July.

The Mayor opened the floor for public comment. The following individuals were heard:

- Peter Squires, Fairmont Street, re: School Calendar
- Dan Monahan, Lexington Avenue, re: School Calendar
- Jamie Lichtenstein, Harvard Street, re: School Calendar
- Valerie Bonds, Memorial Drive, re: School Calendar

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

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Member Rachel, on the following roll call, the Rules were suspended to bring the Presentation on Preliminary Planning for Federal COVID-19 Relief Funds (ESSR)

forward: Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

Presentation: Preliminary Planning Related to the Federal Elementary & Secondary School Relief (ESSR) Funds.....Dr. Kenneth N. Salim,
Superintendent of Schools

Mayor Siddiqui turned the floor over to Dr. Salim; the Superintendent took everyone through the Presentation. https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0?ui=2&ik=0ef808350d&attid=0.1&permmsgid=msg-f:1696874333121397037&th=178c82372e2dc12d&view=att&disp=inline&realattid=f_knf40leb0

The presentation ended and the floor was opened for questions, comments and concerns.

Member Wilson asked how the funds in this presentation will be used outside of what is already in the budget?

- Dr. Salim answered that as it relates to the tutoring work, some of it may be outside of what is in the tutoring model in the general funds, this tutoring work will be specifically designed for the recovery from COVID-19 period. Curriculum materials may also come from ESSR funding.

Member Wilson stated that she was looking for something more robust and visionary. What are the new programs and initiatives that are being planned? Are they just ideas or are there any intentional plans?

- Superintendent Salim responded that it may be a good idea in terms of implementation and review cycle for getting feedback from the users of these supports. He added extended learning time is substantial; this is not part of a general funds budget line item.
- Ms. Spinner added it is important to highlight extended learning time STEAM program is that is not part of the general fund budget. In last years' budget, CPS was able to increase summer planning; creating stronger, robust tutoring and now can we increase extended learning time through a state grant. It is a lot of money, we have a three-year cycle to use this money well, it should be a goal we set for ourselves. It has been a highly intensive planning period among everything else.

Member Rojas asked about the oversight structure for ESSR funds and also wants to know if the one year positions we have funded are intended to continue through the general budget.

- Dr. Salim replied that one-time funding may not necessarily mean one time during one school year.

Member Rachel stated that this is the first time we are hearing of the STEAM extended learning program. She expects to learn more about it in a WEEKLY. She requests a timeline on grants.

- Dr. Salim answered that they are going to look to state funds guidance for some grants. These funds are a critical part of the recovery that will take a number of years.
- Ms. Spinner added more clarity on grants; School Committee accepts all grants, not just contracts that are over \$25,000.00 to a single vendor. Ms. Spinner explained that CPS did not know that there will be an ESSR 2, or ESSR 3. CPS will apply for ESSR 1 and it will be on our books for several years as we plan for expenditure.

Member Weinstein asked whether eating outside will be included in what we do with the ESSR funding. He also wonders if there are places where we will use ESSR funds and reallocate our general funds.

- Ms. Spinner explained that with IDEA and Title 1 we cannot supplant, there are restrictions, we can with ESSR funds. The thing about general funds is that they die annually on June 30th, grant funds can go for more than one year.
- Dr. Salim stated that the guidelines around the ESSR funds are very broad.

Member Fantini asked if anything that is allowable under the grants is allowable under the ESSR 1? It was answered in the affirmative. Have we spent anything out of ESSR 1?

- Ms. Spinner stated that we had to share that funding with private schools, halfway through the year that changed and we have the full allocation at this moment. There will be a deadline in July

to apply for ESSR 2 and the same thing will happen for ESSR 3. We will get our planning done after we apply. It is not only multiple year spending, it also includes multiple year planning.

Vice Chair Bowman asked how Dr. Salim is planning on these resources in the context of his transition?

- Superintendent Salim answered that his planning will carry-over into the Cabinet, he is laying down the groundwork; CPS cannot wait until July 1, 2021 to do so. This planning process does not mean they are trying to spend 12 million dollars by June 30th. As a new leader comes in, part of that work will be around this handoff of what decisions are expected and what else will be coming.

Vice Chair Bowman asked about the deadline and the ability to make amendments

- Dr. Salim responded that there can be a variety of things that can happen during the compliance aspect of federal grant money and it is labor intensive. It is routine to have amendments to grants.

Vice Chair Bowman is concerned about the lack of data in this presentation. Moving forward, she would like to see clear data in the presentations. CPS spends a lot of money per student, if we don't leverage our data, our outcomes will not improve.

- Dr. Salim replied that they identify the objectives that are based on research strategies.
- Dr. Pinkus Brown added that there is data in each of the programs previously identified to focus on assessing data and looking at where students may need more time on learning skills, etc.

Mayor Siddiqui mentioned that this is a preliminary presentation, she is happy to schedule more meetings or roundtables to address these funds.

Dr. Salim's opening remarks framed the budget section of this meeting and explained the process up to this point tonight with a balanced budget. This is a 10 million-dollar increase over the FY 21 budget. This budget is positioning us to recover from the past year in terms of process, he is pleased that we were able to access technology, he thanked the partnership and leadership of Vice Chair Bowman and Member Fantini, and thanked the City Manager Louis De'Pasquale for his ongoing commitment to schools and Ms. Spinner and her department. He asked if the Budget Co-Chairs have anything to add before the vote.

Budget Co-Chair Fantini stated that due to the pandemic, the process was difficult; he is open to a different kind of process in the future. Budget Co-Chair Fantini is grateful for the input from everyone. Budget Co-Chair Bowman thanked Dean Fantini for his knowledge and expertise; she stated that the virtual aspect of this process helped move public participation forward. The Members mentioned various forms of appreciation about how this process was successfully completed with cooperation and collaboration from the entire CPS district.

#21-105, that the School Committee receive and approve the FY 2022 General Fund Budget of the Cambridge Public Schools in the following Statutory Categories:

Salaries, Wages & Benefits:	\$ 183,267,580.00
Other Ordinary Maintenance:	\$ 38,777,365.00
Travel and Training:	\$ 1,212,945.00
Extraordinary Expenditures:	\$ <u>460,300.00</u>
Total	\$ 223,718,190.00

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On a motion by Vice Chair Bowman, seconded by Member Fantini, on the following roll call votes for **#21-205**, the FY-22 Budget was adopted:

Salaries, Wages & Benefits: \$183,267,580.00 Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

Other Ordinary Maintenance: \$38,777,365.00 Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson PRESENT; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

Travel & Training: \$1,212,945.00 Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

Extraordinary Expenditures: \$460,300.00 Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

Total: \$223,718,190.00 Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson PRESENT; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#21-106, that the School Committee Approve the SY2021-2022 Cambridge Public Schools District Calendar as amended.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Member Weinstein, on the following roll call vote, the SY 2021-22 Cambridge Public Schools District Calendar was adopted as amended: Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Vice Chair Bowman, on the following roll call vote, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m.: Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

Attest: 

Dosha Beard
Executive Secretary to the School Committee