



## CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

**Regular Meeting**

**September 19, 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; Claire Spinner Chief Financial Officer; Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel; Dr. Edwards, Chief of Academics and Schools; Dr., Gittens, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools; Dr. Madera, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools; David Murphy, Chief Operations Officer; Corey Dotson, Chief Talent Officer

Mayor Siddiqui in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:02 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.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein, on a voice vote, the rules were suspended to highlight and recognize Shayne Haynes-Ross. Shayne, a first grader at the Fletcher-Maynard Academy, was recognized as a local hero. On September 6, while swimming with his sister, Shayne witnessed a toddler fall into the pool he was swimming in and quickly came to the aid of the toddler and removed the toddler from the pool safely. He was joined at the meeting by his mother, grandmother, and younger sister.

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

### **1. Public Comment:**

The following individuals were heard:

- Dan Monahan, Lexington Avenue, spoke regarding the Superintendent's presentation on the first week of school.
- Andrew King, Chilton Street, spoke regarding the Superintendent's presentation on the first week of school.

- Matt Meysohn, Sacramento Street, spoke regarding **#23-235**.
- Sara Flynn, Larch Rd, spoke regarding the Superintendent's presentation on the first week of school.
- Joel Patterson, Reed Street, spoke regarding the Superintendent's presentation on the first week of school.
- Isaiah Warsame, Concord Ave, spoke regarding **#23-235**.
- Laura Clawson, Richdale Ave., spoke regarding the Late Order from the September 5<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting
- Bill Folman, educator Vassal Lane Upper School, regarding the Superintendent's presentation on the first week of school
- Jamie Lichtenstein, Harvard Street, spoke regarding **#23-235**.
- Morris Lichtenstein, Harvard Street, spoke regarding **#23-235**.
- Antoniette Preston, Plymouth Street, spoke regarding the Superintendent's presentation on the first week of school.
- Teresa Walker, Magoun Street, spoke regarding the Superintendent's presentation on the first week of school.
- Tiara Murphy, spoke regarding transportation and the Superintendent's presentation on the first week of school.
- Tahmid Rahman, Marlboro Street, spoke regarding the Superintendent's presentation on the first week of school.
- Hermela Shimelis & Helina Mulualem, CRLS students and CRLS Habesa Club members spoke regarding **#23-236**.

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

## **2. Student School Committee Report:**

Interim student representatives, Elaine Wen (Senior Class President) and Nishma Tajnia (Senior Class Vice-President) updated the Committee on the recent student survey regarding MBTA passes, club week at CRLS, the loss of some staff and club advisors, and a recent Massachusetts Association of Student Representatives Legislative Subcommittee meeting in which topics including the new school year and the ongoing teacher contract negotiations.

**Member Weinstein** inquired about the special student elections that are taking place in the upcoming week. Elaine Wen responded that the sign-up period for students to get on the ballot ends this week and voting will occur the subsequent week. **Member Weinstein** also inquired about what is the district's plan for student clubs without an advisor. Dr. Greer mentioned that she will follow up with the leadership staff at CRLS on their approach and will share their feedback with the Committee at a later date. Both Elaine and Nishma concluded their report by thanking the Committee for their support as they served as interim student representatives for September.

## **3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:**

- September 5, 2023, Regular Meeting

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

**4. Reconsiderations:** None

**5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:**

**#23-203 Recommendation: Approval of Student Attendance Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows:** That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Student Attendance Policy that are detailed in the attached redline document. These revisions seek to bring the policy into alignment with the requirements of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as to when a student is chronically absent and to clarify what constitutes an excused and unexcused absence from school.

A discussion followed on **#23-203**.

**Member Hunter** requested some suggestions and corrections to the proposed policy that included:

- Addition of the word “school” on page 2 of the policy – on item 1 to read “one school trip” for further clarity.
- Removal of the language “*disciplinary action before resorting to suspension*” on Page 4, paragraph 2, and students who are chronically absent should not be suspended as it is contradictory.
- Insertion of the word action to replace the removal of the suspension language to read “*school officials are encouraged to take all other appropriate action...*”
- More clarification on Attendance Violations and what happens when an appeal is denied - what would the final grade for the student be?

Attorney MacFarlane clarified that there are no longer AVF and students with chronic absences will receive an Attendance Violation (AV). The revision eliminates the reduction of grades for students with reported attendance violations as the intent is to note students with chronic absences have attendance violations, but it will not impact their final grade. Attorney MacFarlane will add further clarification regarding the policy to include that students will not receive grade deductions.

**Member Weinstein** followed up on Member Hunter’s suggestion to add the word school on page 2, line 1, as *school trips are mentioned*. Attorney MacFarlane shared that she would provide more clarity on line 1.

**Vice Chair Rachel** requested to ensure that the policy included gender-neutral language.

Interim Student Representative Wen noted that according to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), chronic absenteeism is defined as being absent more than 10% of the school year. Interim Student Representative Wen, asked about the difference between this attendance policy and the DESE truancy policy. Attorney MacFarlane responded that the district attendance

policy and the truancy policy vary as the truancy policy refers to students who are chronically absent without an excuse. The district's attendance policy clarifies attendance violations and aligns with the state's terms of attendance violation. With the adoption of the policy, excessive absenteeism does not reduce a student's grade but will note that they had an attendance violation. The current policy reduces the grade of any student with an attendance violation.

**Member Wilson** discussed the messaging the policy might be for students and how can the district hold students accountable if their overall grades are not reduced for attendance violations. Dr. Greer responded that although students need to be present in school, excessive absences should not affect the grade of the student.

**Member Fantini** inquired if the students should report to the Office of Safety and Security. Dr. Greer mentioned that the Office is responsible for reporting truancy in the district and the Safety Personnel have developed a lot of personal connections with the students and have been beneficial in assisting students and families with a multitude of issues and circumstances.

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Rojas, on a voice vote, **#23-203** was amended.

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Hunter, on a voice vote, **#23-203** was adopted as amended.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Wilson, on a voice vote the rules were suspended to bring **#23-236** forward for discussion and adoption.

**#23-236 Joint Motion by Mayor Siddiqui, Member Hunter and Member Wilson**

WHEREAS: It is with a heavy heart that we extend our condolences to Jaden McDaniel's family; and

WHEREAS: Jaden was a talented player on the football team and was a team player; and

WHEREAS: Jaden was an intelligent student who cared about his family and was close to his cousins; and

WHEREAS: Jaden made a huge lasting impression on many of his peers, educators, and staff in his short time at CRLS; and

WHEREAS: He was learning how to be an entrepreneur and had big dreams of opening up his own business; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee formally go on record in expressing its deepest condolences to Jaden McDaniel's family; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Executive Secretary be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Jaden McDaniel's family on behalf of the entire School Committee, Superintendent, and Cambridge Public Schools.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-236**.

**Mayor Siddiqui** provided context on the resolution which was to recognize CRLS student Jaden McDaniels and condolences to his family on his passing.

Based on the comments from two of Jaden McDaniel's peers during the evening's Public Comment, Mayor Siddiqui motioned to amend the resolution to include the following:

*"WHEREAS: Jaden was a member of the Habesha Club and Eritrean Community; and"* on the fourth line of the resolution.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Vice Chair Rachel, on a voice vote, **#23-236** was amended.

On a motion by Member Hunter, seconded by Member Hunter, on a voice vote, **#23-236** was adopted as amended:

WHEREAS: It is with a heavy heart that we extend our condolences to Jaden McDaniel's family; and

WHEREAS: Jaden was a talented player on the football team and was a team player; and

WHEREAS: Jaden was an intelligent student who cared about his family and was close to his cousins; and

WHEREAS: Jaden was a member of the Habesha Club and Eritrean Community; and

WHEREAS: Jaden made a huge lasting impression on many of his peers, educators, and staff in his short time at CRLS; and

WHEREAS: He was learning how to be an entrepreneur and had big dreams of opening up his own business; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee formally go on record in expressing its deepest condolences to Jaden McDaniel's family; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Executive Secretary be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Jaden McDaniel's family

#### **Late Order from Vice Chair Rachel**

WHEREAS: The administration developed elementary school schedule guidelines to ensure that students receive adequate instruction time in core academic subjects; and

WHEREAS: The guidelines address significant differences between individual Cambridge Public Schools' instruction time for particular subjects; and

WHEREAS: Schools have created their SY23-24 schedules; accordingly, and

WHEREAS: Some have interpreted the scheduling guidelines as detailed mandates rather than guidelines, resulting in concerns over rigid learning conditions; and

WHEREAS: Caregivers from every CPS school have contacted the School Committee and Superintendent with concerns about reduced play, nutrition, rest, and transition times; and

WHEREAS: The Superintendent's team clarified, at the August 8 meeting, that the guidelines would neither prevent extending class meeting times when students need longer nor providing requisite transition time between classes; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the administration issues written communication to CPS staff confirming that the elementary schedule guidelines are advisory, and that principals and educators have the trust of the Committee and Superintendent to adjust as they see fit.

A discussion followed on the **Late Order**.

**Member Rojas** exercised his charter right at the September 5<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting to allow the Committee and the community time to further digest the changes in late order and mentioned that he fully supports it.

**Vice Chair Rachel** reiterated her comments, from the September 5<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting, and the late order was created based on community feedback with the intention that all students are allotted the same amount of time on core subjects and to ensure that school leaders and education view the elementary schedules guidelines as guidelines and not specific mandates. The order proposes that the Superintendent will communicate to the CPSD community that the proposed schedule guidelines are to enhance learning time and that school leaders should utilize them in areas they see fit.

**Member Hunter** requested that the School Committee receive copies of the elementary school schedules.

**Member Fantini** shared that he has visited some schools and received feedback from some school personnel. After doing some research on past scheduling policies, he believes the intention of the updated scheduling is well-intended and we should allow leaders to have the flexibility, to schedule accordingly.

**Member Wilson** inquired about the messaging we are sharing with school leadership. Dr. Greer shared some feedback and insight on how the district will communicate the scheduling guidelines. The district will continue to improve the scheduling guidelines as they receive additional feedback and over the school year. **Member Wilson** also inquired about community talking points regarding responding to some public inquiries.

**Member Hunter** asked if parents/caregivers receive copies of the school schedules and if it is possible for the Committee to receive copies of the schedules as it can help with understanding the new elementary school guidelines.

**Member Rojas** proposed to amend the late order to read:

That the administration issues written communication to CPS staff ***“and school community”*** confirming that the elementary schedule guidelines are advisory, and that principals and educators have the trust of the Committee and Superintendent to adjust as they see fit.

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Weinstein, on a voice vote, the late order was adopted.

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Vice Chair Rachel on a voice vote, **the late order** was adopted as amended:

WHEREAS: The administration developed elementary school schedule guidelines to ensure that students receive adequate instruction time in core academic subjects; and

WHEREAS: The guidelines address significant differences between individual Cambridge Public Schools' instruction time for particular subjects; and

WHEREAS: Schools have created their SY23-24 schedules; accordingly, and

WHEREAS: Some have interpreted the scheduling guidelines as detailed mandates rather than guidelines, resulting in concerns over rigid learning conditions; and

WHEREAS: Caregivers from every CPS school have contacted the School Committee and Superintendent with concerns about reduced play, nutrition, rest, and transition times; and

WHEREAS: The Superintendent's team clarified, at the August 8 meeting, that the guidelines would neither prevent extending class meeting times when students need longer nor providing requisite transition time between classes; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the administration issues written communication to CPS staff and school community confirming that the elementary schedule guidelines are advisory, and that principals and educators have the trust of the Committee and Superintendent to adjust as they see fit.

**6. Awaiting Reports:** None

**7. Superintendent's Agenda:**

**7a. Superintendent's Update:** Universal Pre-K Update & School Highlights

**7b. Presentations:** The Superintendent gave two presentations for the evening. The first presentation focused on school highlights and a Universal Pre-K update. The full presentation can be found on the [website](#).

**Member Rojas** inquired if there would be targeted matching in the Pre-K Lottery for English Language Learners when Universal Pre-K is implemented. Dr. Madera shared that the district is required to test English Language Learners but not at the Pre-K level. Since preschool is heavily language-based, students learn the language at a faster rate. **Member Rojas** also inquired about after-school programs for families with children in UPK. **Mayor Siddiqui** shared that after-school programs for UPK are an ongoing discussion topic with the City Council and city personnel.

**Member Rojas** asked the district about the Buildings Assessment Report. COO Murphy provided background on the Facilities Assessment Report. Currently, there is not a specific date for public consumption, but he believes it will be ready sometime during the current school year. **Member Rojas** also inquired about schools that have mixed JK classrooms and would the current JK classrooms become preschool classrooms or kindergarten classrooms. Dr. Greer shared that every elementary school would have at least one preschool class and the district will no longer integrate junior kindergarten (preschool)

and kindergarten classrooms once universal pre-k is implemented. Both Dr. Greer and COO Murphy have shared that the challenge is making room for both preschool and kindergarten classrooms in the school buildings.

**Member Weinstein** inquired about the district's plan to evaluate the preschool curriculum in the future.

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Wilson, on a voice vote, the rules were suspended to bring **#23-225** forward for discussion.

**#23-225 Approval of Revisions to the Controlled Choice Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows:** That the School Committee approve revisions to the Controlled Choice Policy. (Second Reading)

**Description:** (1). Application for enrollment into CPS schools for students turning three- years old and four years old by September 1st will be through the Office of Early Childhood preschool matching system, with the exception of students enrolled via identification of a disability through the district's Office of Student Services via the Special Start Program. Three-year-old enrollees will be matched for the Fletcher Scholar Program located at the Fletcher Maynard Academy; the Montessori program located at the Tobin Montessori Elementary School, or to a peer seat in the district's Special Start program located at one of several elementary schools. Four-year-old enrollees will be matched in a preschool classroom at a CPS elementary school, or to an available seat in one of the aforementioned multi-year programs.

(2). Enrollment into a preschool program at a CPS school shall afford a right to matriculate into kindergarten and subsequent grade levels within that particular elementary school. In the absence of a genuine hardship, students will not be allowed to transfer from one CPS elementary school to another after enrolling for preschool, but unenrolled students turning five years old by September 1st will have the opportunity to participate in the Kindergarten lottery program consistent with current practice whereby the lottery eligibility occurs the January preceding their Kindergarten year.

(3). Siblings of students currently enrolled in a CPS elementary school will have a seat reserved in the preschool or Kindergarten class to which they would be enrolled until a specific date preceding that school year, at which point if the student's family has not claimed that seat it will be available for assignment.

**Member Fantini** shared his thoughts on the policy and asked if the policy allows families to choose six preschool options when they enroll in UPK. COO Murphy responded that when a student is matched into a preschool, that student has the right to matriculate to continue their education at the school that they added preschool in. **Member Fantini** also inquired about the hiring of special education teachers. There are sixteen special-start classrooms and the district plans to keep all sixteen classrooms in the future.



**Member Wilson** expressed her gratitude to everyone who has contributed to the implementation of the city's universal pre-k program. **Mayor Siddiqui** also acknowledged the administration for their efforts and commitment to the universal PreK program.

**Vice Chair Rachel** asked for clarity in the application/selection/registration process for families. Dr. Madera shared that families will have six options when they enroll their child - three choices for CPSD schools and three choices in a mixed delivery system. Families can select up to three options in the district and 3 city-wide options, but more programs are being offered than six. Six is just the maximum number of options for families to choose from. **Vice Chair Rachel** also asked about the impact of the implementation of universal pre-k to the overall school population and what will the demographics look like since the district will now be focused on equity versus the focus on controlled choice. COO Murphy shared that when taking demographics into account we will then take those demographics to look at kindergarten numbers as there will be more spaces at the kindergarten level. The district will need to be very intentional to ensure that the allocation of classrooms will fit into the district's feeder patterns or subsequent grade levels. After the OEC matching process, CPSD has the opportunity to vet the assignments to ensure that they align with CPSD policies. Dr. Greer shared that Dr. Grant and the OEC will begin hosting community information sessions in the upcoming weeks to provide clarity and assistance to families with any questions.

**Member Hunter** asked how private childcare providers opt-in for UPK. **Mayor Siddiqui** shared that it was through an RFP process and community outreach.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Rojas, on the following roll call vote **#23-225** was adopted: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

The second presentation of the evening highlighted the first two weeks of school. The full presentation can be found on the [website](#).

**Member Weinstein** inquired about lunch and transportation issues and what strategies is the district utilizing to ensure that students have enough time to eat meals and arrive at school on time and how can families contact the transportation office when issues arise (late bus, etc.). Dr. Greer shared the district has hired a full-time Customer Service Representative in the transportation office to assist with any transportation inquiries and issues.

**Member Hunter** inquired about the district attendance chart that was shared. The chart shared in the presentation was a comparison of the absences during the first 9 days of school for SY 23-24 and the number of absences during the first nine days of SY 22-23.

Interim Student Representative Wen shared that there was a Food Service worker at CRLS who mentioned she had to resign due to the role being part-time and whether are there full-time positions for

Food Service staff. Dr. Greer shared that the district has offered full-time employment for current part-time Food Service staff to retain them.

**Vice Chair Rachel** inquired about the recruitment strategy to attain food service staff. Chief Talent Officer Corey Dotson shared the district’s recruiting efforts to attain more interest in the hiring of food service staff.

**Member Rojas** inquired about the curriculum expectations for the first few days of the school year. Dr. Edwards shared that teachers spend the first days/weeks of school for relationship building, however, educators are required to provide instruction during these first few days.

**7c. CPS District Plan:** None

**7d. Consent Agenda:**

Vice Chair Rachel pulled **#23-230**. Member Wilson pulled **#23-234**. On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Weinstein, on the following roll call vote, items **#23-226** through **#23-229**, and **#23-231** through **#23-233** were adopted: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter ABSENT; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

**#23-226 Approval of Agreement for Parent Leave for Non-Union Employees be adopted as follows:**

That the School Committee approve the provision of up to eight (8) weeks of paid parental leave (“PPL”) in connection with the birth of a child or the adoption or foster placement of a child under the age of eighteen (18), or under the age of twenty-three (23) if the child is disabled for all non-union employees of the Cambridge Public Schools.

**#23-227 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:** SY23-24 Placement of students in private schools for implementation of educational plans in accordance with Chapter 766.

| Program                               | # | Amount       |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------------|
| Day Program Tuition Contracts         | 6 | \$511,630.38 |
| Residential Program Tuition Contracts | 1 | \$81,123.54  |
| 45-Day Program                        | 0 | 0            |
|                                       |   | _____        |
| Total                                 | 7 | \$592,753.92 |

**#23-228 Contract Award: Bunker Hill Community College: Dual Enrollment Program for CRLS**

**Students 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.

Bunker Hill Community College, 250 New Rutherford Ave., Charlestown, MA 0219, for the contract period of September 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, in the amount of \$53,130.00.

**Description:** This contract will provide a dual enrollment program for CRLS students with Bunker Hill Community College.

**#23-229 Contract Award: PowerSchool Group LLC: Computer Software-Amended 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.

PowerSchool Group LLC, 150 Parkshore Drive, Folsom, CA for the contract period of September 1, 2023, to August 31, 2024, in the amount of \$43,538.92.

**Description:** This contract is for the subscription renewal of TalentEd and Professional Learning platforms. The contract value was incorrect on the School Committee recommendation dated 9/5/23. The recommendation submitted on 9/5/23 included the cost of only one component of the contract (TalentEd) rather than both platforms.

**#23-231 Grant Award: FY24 Title IV, Part A Distribution: Student Support & Academic Enrichment**

**Grant be adopted as follows:** That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated.

FY24 Title IV, Part A Distribution - Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant in the amount of \$92,436.00 for the period of September 12, 2023, to September 30, 2025.

**Description:** The Title IV grant for FY24 will be flexed into the district's Title IIA program. The FY24 Title IV grant will:

- Provide 0.5 FTE of the salary and benefits for an ELA Instructional Coach at Putnam Ave Upper School
- Fund new teacher mentor program stipends.

**District Plan Alignment:** Title IV will support the following Strategic Initiatives: 3.8 - Establish a comprehensive, role-based professional learning strategy and system that improves practices in alignment with district vision. 1.2 - Align instructional practices and resources to instructional framework across content areas and grade bands.

**#23-232 Grant Award: FY24 Title III Distribution-English Language Acquisition & Academic Achievement Program for English Language Learners & Immigrant Children & Youth be adopted as follows:** That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated.

FY24 Title III Distribution - English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement Program for English Learners and Immigrant Children and Youth in the amount of \$99,876.00 for the period of September 12, 2023, through September 30, 2025.

**Description:** Title III provides supplemental resources to local school districts to help ensure that English learners (ELs) and immigrant children and youth attain English proficiency and develop high levels of academic achievement in English, assist teachers and administrators in enhancing their capacity to provide effective instructional programs designed to prepare ELs and immigrant children and youth to enter all-English instructional settings, and promote parental, family, and community participation in language instruction programs. The FY24 Title III grant will:

- Fund summer programs for English learners, progress monitoring software, as well as educator professional development around supporting ELs.
- Provide for English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) courses for parents/caregivers of ELs.
- Support ELs enrolled in Cambridge private schools with before/afterschool programs.

**District Plan Alignment:** Title III will support the following Strategic Initiatives: 1.3 – Establish robust multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to support students’ academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs. 4.10 - Improve families’ access to resources within and beyond CPS.

**#23-233 Grant Award: FY24 Title II, Part A Distribution-Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching & Learning be adopted as follows:** That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated.

FY24 Title II, Part A Distribution - Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Leading in the amount of \$202,770.00 for the period of September 12, 2023, through September 30, 2025.

**Description:** Title II, Part A provides supplemental resources to school districts to improve high-quality systems of support for excellent teaching and leading. The FY24 Title IIA grant will:

- Funding for a new teacher mentor program, including stipends and supplies.
- Fund a .5 FTE History Instructional Coach
- Support high-quality professional development opportunities at Cambridge private schools.

**District Plan Alignment** Title IIA will support the following Strategic Initiatives: 1.2 – Align instructional practices and resources to instructional framework across content areas and grade bands. 3.8 - Establish

a comprehensive, role-based professional learning strategy and system that improves practices in alignment with district vision.

**#23-238 Contract Award: Robert Avossa DBA K-12 Leadership Matters: Professional Development – Amended 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.

Robert Avossa dba K-12 Leadership Matters, 156 Manor Circle, Jupiter, FL 33458, for the contract period of September 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, in the amended amount of \$55,000.00.

**Description:** Professional Development Services for the Superintendent and Executive Leadership Team to support the recommendation from the School Committee to secure an Executive Coach to further support leadership development.

A brief discussion followed in **#23-238**.

**#23-238** was an amended version of a previous recommendation (**#23-220**) that was charter-righted by Vice Chair Rachel at the September 5, 2023, Regular Meeting.

**Member Rojas** inquired about the reasoning for the amended recommendation and what is the difference between this version and the previous version. **Vice Chair Rachel** responded that this recommendation was amended to identify a clear definition of the role of a coach – which should be someone of third person in an unbiased position who also will serve as a cheerleader. The coach will also supervise and facilitate retreats between the School Committee and district administration.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Hunter, on the following roll call vote **#23-238** was adopted: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#### **8. Non-Consent Agenda:**

**#23-230 Contract Award: Minuteman Regional High School: Student Tuition 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.

Minuteman Regional High School, 758 Marrett Road, Lexington, MA for the contract period of September 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, in the amount of \$32,913.00.

**Description:** This contract is for SY 23/24 Tuition for one student to attend Minuteman Regional High School.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-230**.

**Vice Chair Rachel** inquired about the contract. This contract is for one student to attend Minuteman Regional High School with an area of study in the school's cosmetology program.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Wilson, on the following roll call vote **#23-230** was adopted: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter ABSENT; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

**#23-234 Grant Award: FY24 Title I, Part A Distribution-Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local School Districts be adopted as follows:** That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated.

FY24 Title I, Part A Distribution - Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local School Districts in the amount of \$1,465,618.00 for the period of September 12, 2023, through September 30, 2025.

**Description:** Title I provides financial assistance to districts and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. FY24 Title I grant will:

- Fund ELA and Math teaching staff at five elementary schools – Fletcher Maynard, Kennedy Longfellow, King Open, Morse, and Haggerty; two upper schools (CSUS and PAUS); and the High School Extension Program (new in FY24);
- Fund a Title I Coordinator, a Social Worker for homeless students/families, a .75 FTE Title I Family Liaison, and a .75 Clerk.
- Support an after-school literacy program at Kennedy Longfellow, provide for extensive caregivers, family and community engagement activities throughout the year, partially fund the CPS summer program and provide services to eligible students in private schools.

**District Plan Alignment:** Title I will support the following Strategic Initiatives: 1.3 – Establish robust multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) to support students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral needs. 4.10 - Improve families' access to resources within and beyond CPS.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-234**.

**Member Wilson** inquired about the Social Worker position listed in the grant award and if the position was included and voted for in the FY24 budget. CEO Spinner clarified that for SY23-24, the Social Worker is exclusively for students who are targeted as homeless and the position was shifted to a full-time position, given that the previous positions that were implemented through the grant are no longer.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Member Hunter, on the following roll call vote **#23-234** was adopted; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

**9. School Committee Agenda (Policy Matters/Notifications/Requests for Information):**

**#23-235 Joint Motion by Mayor Siddiqui, Vice Chair Rachel and Member Weinstein**

WHEREAS: According to the [Community Use of School Facilities: Policies and Procedures](#), it is the Cambridge School Committee's desire that the maximum use of school property be enjoyed by the citizens of Cambridge; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee reserves the right to make changes, deletions, and/or additions to the policy if deemed appropriate for the School Department; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee recognizes four categories of users: Category I: Cambridge Public Schools; Category II: City Departments, CPS-related Organizations, and Cambridge Youth Organizations, State or Federal departments; Category III: Cambridge Residents, Cambridge Community Organizations; Category IV: Non-Resident Individuals and organizations, and For-Profit Businesses; and

WHEREAS: The policy outlines that Category I: Cambridge Public Schools takes priority over events and activities permitted by other users described in Category II, III, and IV; and

WHEREAS: The policy does not outline if any preference is given to other categories including non-profits providing free programming to CPS students over for-profit companies charging adults fees; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee discuss if there should be priority ranking for the four categories outlined above if organizations request permits for the same space; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent works with the CPS facilities team to understand how permits from different organizations are approved when submitted at the same time; and comes back with any suggested recommendations

A discussion followed on **#23-235**.

**Mayor Siddiqui** provided an overview of the motion which is for the district to provide recommendations on the current Community Use of Facilities Policy. She provided background on the motion and thanked the Superintendent and Chief Operations Officer for their assistance in finding space for the basketball lab. There are some ongoing conversations with the administration and facilities team to review the policy on the community use of facilities and provide some findings and recommendations to the committee to revise the policy.

**Vice Chair Rachel** discussed supporting prioritization categories to book facilities in the current policy that allow community use of CPSD facilities and allow youth services organizations more time to sign up to use the facilities.

**Member Rojas** supported the motion and asked for the assistance of the legal team to ensure no discrimination in the revising of the policy.

**Member Hunter** expressed her concern about a for-profit league utilizing our spaces and inquired about the data of everyone who utilizes space in our school buildings and for the revision of the fee structure since it has not been revised since 2017.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein on a voice vote, **#23-235** was adopted.

#### **10. Resolutions:**

##### **#23-237 Joint Motion by Vice Chair Rachel and Member Rojas**

WHEREAS: Members of the LGBTQIA+ community face significant discrimination and bullying both in schools and in society at large; and

WHEREAS: The 2022 Teen Health Survey reflected that students in the LGBTQIA+ community face higher rates of suicide and depression, and research suggests this is true for adolescents and adults nationwide; and

WHEREAS: Student and staff well-being is a fundamental concern of the Cambridge School Committee and school boards across the country; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee affirms its support to promote the needs and safety of all staff and students who are LGBTQIA+ and Gender Non-Conforming within our district; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Committee gives its support to responsible civic actions by students, educators, and others who are raising the visibility of this issue and seeking changes in public policy; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Committee of Cambridge, Massachusetts urges state and federal policymakers to support laws and regulations that;

- Provide adequate funding for LGBTQIA+ awareness and anti-bullying training for both staff and students;
- Provide for safe bathrooms, locker rooms, and changing spaces for transgender and Gender Non-Conforming staff and students;
- Strengthen counseling and mental health services for LGBTQ students.

A brief discussion followed on **#23-237**.



**Vice Chair Rachel** provided an overview of the resolution and shared that members of the LGBTQIA+ community face discrimination and higher rates of suicide and depression. The resolution is modified language created by the Watertown Public School Committee. The resolution will be a record of the Committee supporting the LGBTQIA+ community and people of color.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein, on a voice vote, **#23-237** was adopted.

**11. Announcements:**

- **Mayor Siddiqui** announced that the Tobin Topping Top Ceremony will take place on Thursday, September 21<sup>st</sup> at 1 p.m.
- **Mayor Siddiqui** also addressed MCAS and expressed her gratitude to our educators and students regarding the significant progress of the district in MCAS scores.
- Elaine Wen & Nishma Tajnia thanked the Committee for the opportunity to serve as Interim Student Representatives for the past few weeks.

**12. Communications from City Officers:** None

**13. Late Orders:** None

**Email communications:**

- ✓ Dan Monahan
- ✓ Sara Smolik
- ✓ Talia Brown
- ✓ Katharine Weigle
- ✓ Lilly Havstad
- ✓ Marcin Balicki
- ✓ Amber Bifolck-Fisher
- ✓ Gaëlle Llambi
- ✓ Jennifer Kupiec

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Fantini on a voice vote, the meeting was adjourned. (9:22 p.m.).

Attest:

*Ariel B. Kennebrew*

Ariel B. Kennebrew  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee