



**C A M B R I D G E
S C H O O L C O M M I T T E E**

(Official Minutes)

Special Meeting

March 12, 2024

Called for a 6:00 p.m. broadcast from the Media Arts Studio, 454 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of a presentation of the Superintendent's Proposed FY25 Budget.

Members Present: Member Harding, Member Hudson (ABSENT), Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Vice Chair Hunter, Mayor Simmons (ABSENT)

Also Present: Dr. Greer, Superintendent of Schools, Ivy Washington, Interim Chief Financial Officer

Vice Chair Hunter in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

The Chair read the call of the meeting and explained that this meeting is being televised, votes will not be taken and there will be no public comment.

The meeting proceeded to the first order of business with a roll call of members present: Member Harding PRESENT; Member Hudson ABSENT; Member Rachel PRESENT; Member Rojas PRESENT; Member Weinstein PRESENT; Vice Chair Hunter PRESENT; Mayor Simmons ABSENT.

Vice Chair Hunter turned the meeting over to the Superintendent, who provided an overview of the current budget process for FY25. The Superintendent and Interim CFO Ivy Washington shared that revenues for FY25 are \$268,250,000.00 where 91% of the budget funds are from property taxes (\$243.2 million), 7.6% from Chapter 70 funding (\$19.7 million), and \$5.3 million from other funding sources. The general revenue has an increase of \$23.25 million (9.5%). Salaries and Benefits are the vast majority of the budget at 84% with a cost increase of \$21.54 million.

Other key highlights in the FY 25 proposed budget include:

- Net increase of 25.7 FTEs
- Increases related to current employees:
 - \$ 9 million for cost-of-living adjustment, steps, and benefits.
 - \$10 million for longer school day
- An Increase in Energy Costs
 - Large increase (\$1M) for electricity costs
- A Decrease to Food & Nutrition Services Subsidy
 - The decrease is offset by carryover funding from previous years.
 - Steady revenue for the program from federal and state reimbursements
- Other cost increases include software licenses (technology), and materials and professional learning costs, more than 50% for math/ELA curricula.

- Professional and technical services are reduced slightly due to reallocations.
- Student transportation and out-of-district transportation – will be higher in FY25 but costs are associated with the circuit breaker and not the general funds.

Key investments in the FY25 proposed budget include:

- **Ensuring reading proficiency by grade 3:**
 - CKLA (Core Knowledge Language Arts) curriculum and professional learning (1-5) (\$200K)
 - Addressing the achievement gaps for Black/African American Students and Students with Disabilities:
 - 1 additional CPP classroom with 2.0 FTEs (\$140K)
 - Longer school-day staff salary increases (\$10M)
 - Illustrative Mathematics curriculum/Professional Learning (\$210K)
 - ELA & math software (\$140K)
 - Excel tutoring program (\$330K)
- Effectively serving students with increased special needs which includes the implementation of:
 - 3.0 FTE ESL teachers (\$285K)
 - 1.0 FTE SEI teacher, CRLS (\$95K)
 - 0.5 FTE MLE literacy interventionist, VLUS (\$47.5K)
 - Special educators, 2.0 FTE at CRLS (\$190K); 3.5 FTE Special Education Paraprofessionals (\$151K); and 11-month stipends (\$24K)
- Implement Student Success Planning and Accessible College and Career Pathways that include:
 - Student Success Planning pilot (\$15K)
 - 1.0 FTE Career Pathways program manager (125K)
 - Early College program manager (0.8 FTE, \$87K)
 - Youth guidance (BAM/WOW) expansion (\$70K)
 - Partner organization increases (\$50K)
 - Telehealth services (\$103K)
 - Out-of-school-time communications & outreach specialist (0.75 FTE, \$51K)
- Support professional learning with:
 - Educator Pathways Program (EPP) expansion, Cambridge College (\$130K)
 - Employee Resource Group funding (\$7K)
 - Tuition reimbursement increase (\$60K)
- Promote Family and Community Engagement:
 - School Council honoraria and math pop-ups (\$45K funds transfer)
 - 0.5 FTE increase to secretary supporting Family Engagement Department (\$40K)

After the presentation, Vice Chair Hunter turned the floor to the Committee for questions and discussions based on the following discussion prompts:

- Clarifying Questions
- Please share feedback regarding the overall budget.
- What additional information would you like to have at upcoming budget workshops?

The Committee members led a robust discussion following the presentation that included additional resources, opportunities, and priorities in the budget which included:

- Additional funding sources for additional budget priorities that the Superintendent highlighted in the budget include a CRLS safety and engagement plan, student behavior and emotional challenges (out-of-district placements), and a student wellness and behavior task force.
- Addressing systems to support underperforming schools.
- Additional clarity regarding student success planning
- Additional questions/clarity regarding structural and capital improvements including building operations, additional FTEs proposed in the budget, implementation of the electrical fleet, and increased electrical costs.

The full discussion can be found on the [website](#).

Vice Chair Hunter gave an overall summary of what members have expressed they would like to discuss at the upcoming Budget Workshop on March 14th and concluded the meeting by thanking the Superintendent, Interim CFO Ivy Washington, and the district administration for the budget book and proposed budget presentation.

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Rachel, on the following roll call the meeting was adjourned: Member Harding YEA; Member Hudson ABSENT; Member Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Vice Chair Hunter YEA; Mayor Simmons ABSENT (8:00 p.m.).

Attest:



Ariel B. Kennebrew
Executive Secretary to the School Committee