



**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)

Regular Meeting

September 10, 2024

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: Member Harding, Member Hudson, Vice Chair Hunter, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Mayor Simmons

Also Present: Dr. Lendozia Edwards, Chief of Academics and Schools; Mr. Manuel Fernandez, Chief Equity Officer; Dr. Heather Francis, Director of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support; Dr. Chad Leith, Director of Professional Learning and Leadership; Mr. David Murphy, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Attorney Maureen MacFarlane, General Counsel; Mr. Abdel Sepulveda, Principal of the Peabody School

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. and 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 Rojas PRESENT; Member Weinstein PRESENT; Vice Chair Hunter PRESENT; Member Harding PRESENT; Member Hudson PRESENT; Member Rachel PRESENT; Mayor Simmons PRESENT

On a motion by Mayor Simmons, seconded by Member Harding, on a voice vote, the rules were suspended to bring forth the **Late Order** regarding the recent passing of Cambridge City Council member, Joan Pickett.

Joint Resolution by Mayor Simmons, Vice Chair Hunter and Member Harding

WHEREAS: It is with profound sorrow that the School Committee learned of the passing of our esteemed colleague and friend, City Councilor Joan Pickett, on August 31, 2024 at the age of 69; and
WHEREAS: City Councilor Joan Pickett was a dedicated public servant and a resident of Mid-Cambridge for the past 26 years, bringing a strong background in planning, municipal finance, and community leadership to the City Council during her tenure; and
WHEREAS: Prior to joining the City Council, Joan Pickett's distinguished career included significant contributions in commercial lending, municipal bond finance, and strategic planning at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, where she worked closely with both academic and community physicians and staff; and
WHEREAS: Joan Pickett's commitment to community service was demonstrated through her leadership roles in organizations such as the Mid-Cambridge Neighborhood Association, Cambridge Streets for All, the Charles River Conservancy, and Caring Canines Pet Therapy, where she worked tirelessly to improve the lives of Cambridge residents and beyond; and
WHEREAS: Joan Pickett's dedication to ensuring that the City's policies reflect the broad sentiment of the community, her desire to ensure that all community voices were given ample consideration in creating City policies, and her focus on maintaining the City's strong financial position were hallmarks of her service on the City Council; and

WHEREAS: Joan Pickett earned the respect, admiration, and affection of her colleagues and people throughout the Cambridge community for her warmth, her thoughtfulness, her desire to serve, and her willingness to engage with every person she came across with a sense of true decency; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge community will greatly miss Joan Pickett's thoughtful approach to governance, her commitment to transparency and accountability, and her unwavering dedication to making Cambridge a safe, vibrant, and inclusive city for all, and her colleagues shall surely miss her warmth, knowledge, and amiability; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee go on record expressing its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and community of City Councillor Joan Pickett for their tremendous loss; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Committee Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Adane Dessie, husband of City Councillor Joan Pickett, on behalf of the entire School Committee.

Mayor Simmons read the motion and shared highlights of working alongside Councillor Pickett and the many contributions that she made to the City. Several members shared additional sentiments.

Member Rachel put forth a motion to make the **Late Order** a policy order from the entire body.

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Mayor Simmons, on a voice vote, the Late Order was adopted by the entire body.

Mayor Simmons acknowledged the two new student members in attendance, Student Member Barua and Student Member Shimelis.

Both students introduced themselves as CRLS seniors who are very enthusiastic to work with the School Committee. Members welcomed them to the group.

1a. Public Hearing on the Revisions to the CPSD Rights and Responsibilities Handbook

There were no registrants for the public hearing.

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Hudson, on a voice vote, the public hearing was closed.

#24-208 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Rights and Responsibilities Handbook be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to *the Rights & Responsibilities Handbook* as detailed in the [attached document](#). (Second Reading).

Mayor Simmons brought forth Recommendation **#24-208**. Member Rachel inquired about the issue of Scouting, the 3-day notice for student absences and student grading as it related to attendance. Attorney MacFarlane and Mr. Murphy shared that the 3-day notice is the floor for CPSD outreach to families of the absent student. The current CPSD systems communicate students' absences much sooner. **Member Rachel** asked about the grading policy in reference to attendance and asked that the topic be discussed in further detail at a future meeting. Mr. Murphy agreed. **Vice Chair Hunter** asked for the policy to address vaping and Mr. Murphy agreed to amend the document to include this language. The group discussed the following topics including school suspension policy, distribution of the Handbook, chronic absenteeism, and creating an executive summary of the Handbook.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Harding, on a voice vote, **#24-208** was adopted as amended.

1b. Public Comment:

The following individuals were heard:

- Dan Monahan, Lexington Ave., spoke regarding the Superintendent's Presentation and Superintendent Search
- John Summers, Fairmont Street, spoke regarding **#24-213** and **#24-225** and **#24-153**
- Lily Havstad, Granville Road, spoke regarding **#24-253**

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, on a voice vote, the public comment was closed.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Member Barua and Student Member Shimelis shared the following highlights:

- Bunker Hill Community College dual enrollment
- CRLS positive start to the new school year
- Mentoring workshops
- New cell phone policy
- Extended school day and bell schedule
- Club Hub Week
- Senior Sunrise
- MBTA Distribution

1. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- August 6, 2024, Regular Meeting

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Weinstein, on a voice vote, the records were accepted as presented.

2. Reconsiderations: None

3. Unfinished Business/Calendar:

#24-100 Motion by Member Rachel

WHEREAS: School Committee [policy ABA](#) notes the Committee's commitment to seeking and encouraging public participation in the body's decision-making processes; and

WHEREAS: The body's Rules do not specify when meeting registration opens to the public, but past practice has been two days before the meeting; and

WHEREAS: The Committee intends to remove barriers to participation; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED: That meeting registration and public comment sign-up will be available to all members of the public beginning at the time a meeting is officially noticed with an agenda or designated purpose.

Given the full agenda, **Member Rachel** informed the Committee that she would table **#24-100** until the next meeting.

#24-153 Joint Motion by Member Weinstein, Vice Chair Hunter and Member Rachel

WHEREAS: School Councils are established by the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts ([General Laws Part I, Title XII, Chapter 71, Section 59C](#)); and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public School District's [School Council Handbook](#) was drafted by a working group that included Cambridge parents, caregivers, community members, and CPSD staff and was adopted as policy by the School Committee June 20, 2023; and

WHEREAS: The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education advises that the ["law provides for an explicit oversight role for school committees"](#) with respect to School Councils; and

WHEREAS: In Cambridge the School Council has the following main responsibilities, as noted in the School Council Handbook:

- Adopt educational goals for the school that are consistent with local educational policies and statewide student performance standards;
- Identify the educational needs of students attending the school in the relation to the goals;
- Collaborate with school community and district instructional staff to form an annual School Improvement Plan (SIP) to be reviewed by the School Committee prior to approval by the Superintendent;
- Review the school budget annually;
- Review the student's Rights and Responsibilities handbook regularly to ensure the school discipline policies.
- Assess student discipline data; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee plays a critical role in policymaking, establishing the CPSD budget, and reviewing School Improvement Plans; and

WHEREAS: This School Committee is committed to supporting the caregivers, staff, teachers and community members serving on School Councils with the shared goal of best supporting the education and growth of all of the children of Cambridge; therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee establishes a School Councils Subcommittee; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Councils Subcommittee will be focused on supporting the School Councils; coordinating the School Committee's review of School Improvement Plans; providing a forum to review and support School Councils and their work; and will undertake other work determined by the chair of the subcommittee, in consultation with the members of the subcommittee, to be relevant and timely.

A discussion followed **#24-153**.

Member Weinstein offered to amend the motion to establish an ad-hoc subcommittee that would be active for SY24-25. Committee members were very favorable to this amendment.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Rachel, on a voice vote, **#24-153** was accepted as amended.

Late Order Joint Motion by Member Rojas and Member Rachel

Timeline for 2024 Superintendent Search

That the School Committee discuss and adopt the following timeline for the Superintendent Search

CPSD Superintendent Search 2024

Timeline	Action
By July 15	Name Ad-Hoc Superintendent Search Sub-Committee
By July 22	Engage with MASC and/or Search Firm to help with search process
By July 29	MASC and/or Search Firm draft community surveys
July 30	Ad-Hoc Subcommittee meeting to review surveys
By Aug 5	Send community surveys
By Sep 15	Posting goes live
By Sep 30	Finish vetting applications
By Oct 21	School Committee finishes 1st round of interviews of candidates
By Nov 4	Compile feedback from community of top candidates
By Nov 18	If finalist(s) are identified, School Committee finishes 2nd round of interviews. If not, adopt a calendar for extended search.
By Dec 16	School Committee appoints new Superintendent

Mayor Simmons thanked the motion makers for their efforts. She shared the document entitled: [Mayor's Communication re Plan of Work for Superintendent Search](#).

Mayor Simmons offered to join her documents with the motion so that all material would inform upcoming discussions involving the superintendent search.

On a motion by Member Rojas seconded by Member Weinstein, on a voice vote, the **Late Order** and the Mayor's Plan of Work were joined and remained on the table.

- 4. **Awaiting Reports:** None
- 5. **Superintendent's Agenda**

7a. Superintendent's Update: School Year 2024-2025 Opening

Mr. Murphy shared highlights of the opening of the School Year. They included:

- Success of the Colloquium and the community's positive fresh start
- Kudos to the maintenance team for their work in preparing the buildings and grounds
- Booklet of warm greetings from CPSD administrators
- Challenges of transportation issues and the importance of addressing these issues
- Start of CPSD's Universal Preschool program

Members thanked Mr. Murphy and shared their overall positive sentiments regarding CPSD's opening.

7b. Presentations:

Leadership Development & Goal Setting Activities Undertaken by District/Building Administrators
August 2024 Retreats

- David Murphy, Interim Superintendent of Schools
- Dr. Lendozia Edwards, Chief of Academics and Schools
- Mr. Manuel Fernandez, Chief Equity Officer
- Dr. Heather Francis, Director of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
- Dr. Chad Leith, Director of Professional Learning and Leadership
- Mr. Abdel Sepulveda, Principal of the Peabody School

The presentation can be found on this [website](#). After the presentation, the following topics were discussed:

- Looking beyond data to provide meaningful insights and share results.
- Emphasizing the role of principals as learners.
- Ensuring teacher evaluations are tied to student achievement, with a focus on results.
- Addressing the achievement gap for Black and Brown students.
- Prioritizing a strong school climate and educator effectiveness, with a recognition that culture matters.
- Setting consistent expectations while maintaining fairness for educators.
- Managing a reasonable evaluation caseload.
- Sharing best practices among educators to foster growth.
- Ensuring professional development opportunities are relevant and impactful.
- Making equity work explicit, central, and actionable, not merely implied.
- Encouraging productive collaboration with the CEA.
- Highlighting the importance of amplifying student voices.

Member Weinstein left the meeting at approximately 7:45 p.m.

7c. CPS District Plan: None

7d. Consent Agenda:

On a motion by Member Rojas seconded by Member Hudson the items were adopted on the following roll call vote, #24-209, #24-210, #24-211, #24-212, #24-213, #24-214, #24-215, #24-216, #24-217, #24-218, #24-219, #24-220, #24-221, #24-222, #24-223, and #24-224 Member Rojas YEA; Member Harding YEA, Member Hudson YEA, Member Weinstein ABSENT, Vice Chair Hunter YEA, Member Rachel YEA Member Simmons YEA.

24-208 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Rights & Responsibilities Handbook (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the Superintendent's Recommendation #24-208 be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to *the Rights & Responsibilities Handbook* as detailed in the [attached document](#). (Second Reading).

#24-209 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Cambridge School Department's Non-Discrimination Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to Cambridge School Department's Non-Discrimination Policy detailed in the [attached document](#). (Second Reading)

#24-210 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Non-Discrimination on the Basis Of Sex Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex Policy detailed in the [attached document](#). (Second Reading)

#24-211 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Civil Rights Grievance Procedure Policy Formerly Known as the Uniform Grievance Procedures Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to Civil Rights Procedures Policy formerly known as the Uniform Grievance Procedures Policy detailed in the [attached document](#). (Second Reading)

#24-212 Recommendation: Approval of the Waiver of Accounting form In Regards to the Estate of Kevin Higgins be adopted as follows: That the School Committee waive the right to receive an accounting from the Estate of Kevin Higgins with respect to the gift bequeathed to Cambridge Rindge and Latin School and authorize the Executive Secretary to sign the Waiver of Accounting form to that it can be returned to the Personal Representative of the Estate of Kevin Higgins in order to facilitate the distribution of the gift to Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

#24-213 Recommendation: Day & Residential Program Services not Available from the Cambridge School Department be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions as detailed in the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts funds to be provided from the General Fund and/or Grant Fund Budget.

Description: SY24-25 Placement of students in private schools for implementation of educational plans in accordance with Chapter 766.

	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts:	3	\$357,350.28
Residential Program Contracts:		
45 Day Program Contracts:	<u>1</u>	<u>\$43,269.30</u>
Total	4	\$400,619.58

#24-214 Recommendation: Contract Award: TeachTown: Specially Designed Instruction Software & Professional Development 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.

Teach Town, 2 Constitution Way, Woburn, MA for the period of December 1, 2024 to November 30, 2025 in the amount of \$42,785.00.

#24-215 Recommendation: 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, for the period of September 1, 2024 to June, 30, 2025 in the amount of \$40,000.00

#24-216 Recommendation: Contract Award: Baystate Interpreters: Translation Services-Amendment #1 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.

Baystate Interpreters, 55 Lake Street, Gardner, MA for the period of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 in the amended amount \$281,250.00 (Original Amount: \$225,000.00).

#24-217 Recommendation: Contract Award: Concentric Math: Professional Development 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.

Concentric Math, 624 N Silverado Drive Lafayette, CA for the period of July 1, 2024 to June, 30, 2025 in the amount of \$100,000.00.

#24-218 Recommendation: Contract Award: Crescendo Education Group: Professional Development 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

Crescendo Education Group, 360 Grand Avenue, Suite 71 Oakland CA for the period of September 1, 2024 to June, 30, 2025 in the amount of \$47,000.00.

#24-219 Recommendation: Contract Award: High Output, Inc.: Media Supplies & Equipment 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.

High Output, Inc. 495 Turnpike St., Canton, MA for the period of September 1, 2024 to June, 30, 2025 in the amount of \$27,540.00.

#24-220 Recommendation: Contract Award: Imagine Learning: Instructional Materials-Amendment #1 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.

Imagine Learning, 8860 E. Chaparral Road, Scottsdale, AZ, for the period of July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 in the amended amount of \$156,250.00 (original amount \$125,000.00).

#24-221 Recommendation: Contract Award: Trustees of Boston College: Professional Development 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.

Trustees of Boston College 140 Commonwealth Avenue Chestnut Hill, MA, for the period of September 1, 2024 to June, 30, 2025 in the amount of \$38,500.00.

#24-222 Recommendation: Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the following donation as described:

1. DONATION - \$191.94 for Cambridgeport School from HELPSY in return for items collected in the school's clothing/book donation collection box. Funds will be used for the general support of the

#24-223 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY25 Strengthening Career & Technical Education (Perkins V) Secondary (SC25606) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY25 Strengthening Career and Technical Education (Perkins V) Secondary (SC25606), Federal Through State in the amount of \$115,054.00 for the period of July 8, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

#24-224 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY24 Expanded Homeless Shelter Funding (SC24218) - Increase be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY24 Expanded Homeless Shelter Funding {SC24218} (Increase) State, in the amount of \$277,958.50 for the period of May 9, 2024 to June 30, 2025.

8. Non-Consent Agenda

#24-206 Recommendation: Approval of Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex-Title IX Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Policy, including renaming policy as Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Sex – Title IX policy as detailed in the [attached document](#). (Second Reading)

A brief discussion followed **#24-206**.

Vice Chair Hunter had additional edits to the policy. She exercised her Charter Right to table the recommendation.

#24-207 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Policy, as detailed in the [attached document](#). (Second Reading)

A brief discussion followed **#24-207**.

Vice Chair Hunter had additional edits to the policy. She exercised her Charter Right to table the recommendation.

#24-225 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY24 Circuit Breaker Allocation (SC24776) – Increase: That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY24 Circuit Breaker Allocation (SC24776) (Increase) State, in the amount of \$7,129,811.00 for the period of October 13, 2023 to June 30, 2025.

A brief discussion followed **#24-225**.

Member Hudson asked for additional clarity regarding the grant.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Hudson, **#24-225** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Rojas YEA; Member Harding YEA, Member Hudson YEA, Member Weinstein ABSENT, Vice Chair Hunter YEA, Member Rachel YEA Member Simmons YEA.

9. School Committee Agenda:

#24-226 Cleanliness of School Grounds – Motion by Mayor Simmons

WHEREAS: The cleanliness and upkeep of the playgrounds and yards in and around our public schools are critical to ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for students, parents, and staff; and

WHEREAS: Several playgrounds and areas near the City's public schools, particularly those in and near the Port neighborhood such as the Fletcher Maynard Academy, have been observed to have an unacceptable amount of trash and debris, including overflowing trash and recycling receptacles; and

WHEREAS: The presence of such trash and debris is especially concerning during the first week of the new school year, when students and families are returning to or becoming acquainted with their school environment; and

WHEREAS: The Public School Department has a responsibility to maintain these areas in a clean and well-manicured condition to support the health, safety, and aesthetic appeal of our communities; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Interim Superintendent be and hereby is requested to direct the appropriate CPSD staff to increase the frequency and thoroughness of cleaning in and near the playgrounds and areas surrounding our public schools, with particular attention to those in and near the Port neighborhood; and be it further

RESOLVED: The Interim Superintendent be and hereby is requested to ensure that this heightened maintenance effort is sustained throughout the school year to prevent future accumulations of trash and debris, and to report back to the School Committee on a plan of action for this process in a timely manner.

A brief discussion followed **#24-226**.

Mayor Simmons shared that she and Mr. Murphy had discussed the issue earlier and she was pleased with CPSD's responsiveness. She highlighted that all students deserved a clean and safe outside environment adjacent to their schools.

On a motion by Mayor Simmons, seconded by Member Harding, **#24-226** was adopted on a voice vote.

10. Resolutions (letters of congratulations, letters of condolences):

11. Announcements:

- **Mayor Simmons** shared that the Cambridge Mosaic was taking place at the Brattle Theatre on September 20; Meet Your Neighbor Day on September 15; and the distribution of School Numbers card during the first day of school.
- **Vice Chair Hunter** highlighted that 9th Graders were meeting with the deans; and she shared photos of a James Earl Jones' visit to CRLS in 1994. She is hopeful that the photos will be exhibited at CRLS.

12. Late Orders

13. Communications from City Officers:

[Mayor's Communication re Plan of Work for Superintendent Search](#)

Email communications:

- Jodi Ekelchik
- Dan Monahan

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Harding, on a voice vote, the meeting was adjourned (9:15 p.m.).

Attest:



Katherine Christo

Interim Executive Secretary to the School Committee