



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

December 17, 2024

Called for 6:00 p.m. held in and broadcast from 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

Others Present: Student Member Urbana Barua; Jaime Frost, Principal, Tobin Montessori School; David Murphy, Interim Superintendent; Student Member Hermela Shimelis; Darrell Williams, Principal, King Open School; Gerald Yung, Principal, Martin Luther King School

Vice Chair Hunter in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:01 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 Hudson, PRESENT; Member Harding, PRESENT; Member Rachel, PRESENT; Member Weinstein, PRESENT; Member Rojas, PRESENT; Vice Chair Hunter, PRESENT; Mayor Simmons, ~~PRESENT~~

Mayor Simmons joined at 7:45 p.m. and assumed the Chair position.

1. Public Comment:

Vice Chair Hunter opened Public Comment and asked Christine Gerber, Principal of the Kennedy-Longfellow School, if she would like to speak first.

The following individuals were heard and all spoke regarding the proposed closure of the Kennedy-Longfellow School:

- Christine Gerber, Spring Street
- Dan Monahan, Lexington Avenue
- Sabrina Alves, Hatch Street
- Charron Alves, Hatch Street
- Jacob Augenstern, Elm Street
- Sarah Branz, Shawmut Avenue
- Christine Burke, Allston Street
- Stephen Cellucci, Vineyard Street
- Laura Clawson, Richdale Avenue
- Anne Coburn, Otis Street
- Zora Coburn-Zeller, Otis Street
- Keely Danielson, Exeter Street
- Lisa Domigan, Harvey Street
- Tracy Dwyer, Huron Ave.
- Isabella Ehrlich, Kirkland Road
- Shawdee Eshghi, Walden Street,

- Amber Fisher, Griswold Street
- Jennifer Gillen, Almont Street, Medford
- William Hansberry, Norfolk Street
- Lilly Havstad, Granville Road
- Meilyn Huq, Cambridge Street
- Arjun Jaikumar, Richdale Avenue
- Carrie Jung, Standish Street
- Andrew King, Chilton Street
- Quenna Lalonde, Windsor Street
- Jia-Jing Lee, Second Street
- Becca Lester, William Street
- Tina Lieu, Huron Ave.
- Evan MacKay, Linnaean Street
- Duncan MacLaury, Dover Street
- Carroll Magill, Waterman Road
- Siobhan McDonough, Walden Street
- Sophia Merriweather, Dudley Street
- Chris Montero, Warren Road, Framingham
- Banke Oluwole, Bolton Street
- Missy Page, Gore Street
- Joel Patterson, Reed Street Terrace
- Tracey Pratt, Bonair Street
- Sana Qureshi, Sargent Street
- Luisa Santos, Walker Street
- Sushma Scalera, Gore Street
- Mary Shillue-Goldberg, Clifton Street
- Bonnie Steyer, Roosevelt Road
- Andy Suarez, 8th Street
- Doria Summerfield, Hall Street
- Tamanna Syed, Newtowne Ct.
- Dan Totten, Bishop Allen Drive
- Alyssa Tyler, Main Street, Medford
- Nick Watter, Sciarappa Street
- Marya Wegman, Hancock Street
- Isabelle Woollacott, Highland Avenue
- Claire Yu, Cambridge Street
- Kaelyn Yu, Cambridge Street
- Adam Zeller, Otis Street

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Hudson on the following roll call vote, public comment was closed: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0)

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Members Urbana and Shimelis shared that they had spoken with Kennedy-Longfellow caregivers, alumni and students. They expressed their support for the Kennedy-Longfellow community and asked that the administration consider delaying the closing of the school.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- December 3, 2024, Regular Meeting

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Hudson on a voice vote, the records were accepted as presented. (7-0)

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:

#24-259 Tobin Montessori Preliminary Report – Member Hudson and Member Harding

WHEREAS: The Tobin Montessori School was recently recognized by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and by the Cambridge Public Schools Superintendent for its high student achievement;

WHEREAS: The Tobin Montessori School is leading the way within the Cambridge Public School District, delivering clear, measurable progress in narrowing gaps in achievement between students with different backgrounds – an issue that the District has long stated is its most important; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee went on record a year ago supporting the expansion of the and directed the Superintendent to "...provide a report and recommendation to the committee a plan of action for the possible next steps..."; and

WHEREAS: No report nor recommendation was ever made; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee request that the Superintendent provide a preliminary report on the feasibility of making this change, and a recommendation from the Superintendent as to whether next steps are warranted and what those next steps would be, no later than December 31, 2024 (with the definition of preliminary to be determined by the Superintendent). Tobin Montessori program (specifically, "...to explore the recommendation of the American Montessori Association Accreditation team to extend the Tobin Montessori Upper Elementary Program to three years...") and referred the matter to the Superintendent "...for further review of the recommendations from the Accreditation team to explore implications of such a change including but not limited to the budget impact, upper school enrollment, and feeder patterns..."

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Hudson on a voice vote **#24-249** remained on Unfinished Business/Calendar. (7-0)

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7. 7a. Superintendent's Update:

An update on pending matters within the Cambridge Public Schools, including the recommendation to reassign students of the Kennedy Longfellow School, effective the start of the 2025-2026 school year.

Mr. Murphy opened his remarks highlighting the strength of the Kennedy-Longfellow community and acknowledging the pain in which it is experiencing. He expressed his belief and commitment that the district can better serve Kennedy-Longfellow students.

7b. Presentations:

Following the previous four presentations focused on district & school-based performance data & the systemic factors affecting student outcomes at all schools the interim superintendent will present a recommendation to the

Cambridge School Committee to reassign all students currently enrolled in the Kennedy-Longfellow School effective the 2025-2026 school year. The presentation will include contingency planning related to the reassignment of students into new CPS school communities, expectations with respect to capital investment into the building in which the school is currently located to prepare for the 2026-2027 school year & the district administration's intention to engage staff & family representatives of the Kennedy-Longfellow as well as the Cambridge community at-large to ensure orderly transitions.

David Murphy, Interim Superintendent of Schools

Mr. Murphy gave the following presentation which can be found on this [website](#).

Following the presentation, on a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Hudson, on a voice vote, the rules were suspended (7-0).

On a motion by member Rachel, seconded by Member Hudson, on a voice vote, the **Late Order** by Mayor Simmons and Vice Chair Hunter was brought forth (7-0).

Following the presentation and reading of the **Late Order**, the following topics were discussed. Principals Frost, Williams and Young joined the latter part of the discussion.

- Addressing Longstanding Challenges at Kennedy-Longfellow: Recognizing the persistent issues at K-Lo and the urgent need for the current administration to take decisive action.
- Supporting K-Lo Students During Transition: Ensuring that K-Lo students receive the necessary support during this transitional phase and are positioned for long-term success.
- Prioritizing K-Lo Students in Next Year's Placement: Ensuring that K-Lo students are prioritized in placement decisions for the upcoming year, whether through cohort-based groupings or individual placements.
- Equitable Allocation of Student Seats: Ensuring fair distribution of available student seats across the district to meet all students' needs.
- Maximizing the Use of District Facilities: Committing to better utilization of physical spaces within the district to benefit all students.
- Ensuring Transparency and Collaboration in the Process: Maintaining an open, transparent, and collaborative approach with the K-Lo community.
- Reviewing the District's Controlled Choice Policy: Reviewing of the Controlled Choice Policy to prevent similar challenges from arising in the future.
- Challenges in Assigning Off-Cycle Students: Addressing the unique challenges associated with assigning students who enter the district outside the regular cycle. Avoiding the Mistakes of Past School Mergers.
- Commitment to a Safe and Welcoming Environment for K-Lo Students: Upholding the district's commitment to providing a safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment at schools welcoming K-Lo students.
- Ongoing Support for K-Lo Students: Ensuring consistent communication and support to monitor and ensure that K-Lo students are thriving academically and socially.

During the discussion, at 9:55 p.m., on a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Harding, the meeting was extended to 11:00 p.m. on a voice vote. Member Rojas voting in the negative. (6-1)

The discussion continued regarding the **Late Order**.

Following discussion, **Mayor Simmons** brought the **Late Order** to a vote. The **Late Order** was adopted on a voice vote. For clarity, Vice Chair Hunter asked for a roll call of votes affirming the acceptance of the Late Order: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0)

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Rojas it was voted to suspend the Rules for the purpose of moving reconsideration of the foregoing vote on the Late Order, the Rules were suspended on a voice vote. (7-0).

The Rules having been suspended, on a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein to reconsider the foregoing vote, hoping the same would not prevail, was adopted on a voice vote of NAY. (0-7)

Member Harding brought forth a **Late Order** to the floor related to the closing of the Kennedy-Longfellow School. He read the following:

Requested that the Superintendent of Schools in conjunction with the Family Resource Center ensure that all Kennedy-Longfellow students who are affected by the closure of the current Kennedy-Longfellow academic program are given the opportunity to relocate at the school of their choice, space permitting, for 2025-2026 academic school year. Further that, this a one time school choice special consideration be granted to these students in light of the Kennedy-Longfellow reassignment plan.

The group discussed the motion and solicited the Superintendent's feedback. "Family Resource Center" was updated to "Student Registration Center" and Mr. Murphy shared that the date of the academic year be updated to "2026-2027". He noted that he would prioritize placements for 2025-2026 but the new date gives the administration two years to revisit the situation.

On a voice vote, the amendments to the **Late Order** were adopted (7-0).

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent of schools in conjunction with the Student Registration Center ensure that all Kennedy-Longfellow students who are affected by the closure of the current Kennedy-Longfellow academic program are given the opportunity to relocate to the school of their choice, space permitting, by the 2026-2027 academic school year; and be it further

RESOLVED: That this is a one-time school choice special consideration to be granted to these students in light of the Kennedy-Longfellow reassignment plan.

On a voice vote, the **Late Order** were adopted as amended (7-0).

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

7d. **Consent Agenda:**

On a motion by Member Rachel seconded by Vice Chair Hunter the items **#24-295, #24-296, #24-297, #24-298, #24-299, #24-300** and **#24-301** were adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA

#24-295 Recommendation: Approval of the Transition of the Current Structure of the Kennedy/Longfellow School be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the district administration to transition the Kennedy/Longfellow School from its current structure and reassign all current Kennedy/Longfellow students to other schools within the Cambridge Public Schools, effective the 2025/2026 school year.

#24-296 Recommendation: Approval of Corrected Salary Schedules for American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Council 93, Local 1611 be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the corrected salary schedules for American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 93, Local 1611 for the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026.

#24-297 Recommendation: Contract Award: 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:	2	\$120,422.97
Residential Program Contracts:		
45 Day Program Contracts:		
Total	2	\$120,422.97

#24-298 Recommendation: Contract Award: PowerSchool Group LLC: Computer Software (FY25) 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 LLC, Folsom, CA for the period of September 1, 2024 to August 31, 2025 in the amount of \$31,668,63.

#24-299 Recommendation: Contract Award: Ascentis Corporation: Time & Attendance System 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.

Ascentis Corporation, 9680 Haven Avenue, #200, Rancho Cucamonga, CA for the period of January 25, 2025 to January 24, 2026 in the amount of \$58,132.56.

#24-300 Recommendation: Contract Award: Obas Enterprise LLC: Unhoused (MKV) Student Transportation Services 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.

Obas Enterprise LLC, 315 GREENE Street, Unit 2, North Andover, MA for the period of December 9, 2024 to June 30, 2025 in the amount of \$25,155.00.

#24-301 Recommendation: Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the following donations as described:

DONATION - \$8,000 from Shark/Ninja to support the FIRST Robotics Team at CRLS/RSTA. Funds may be used for competition entry fees, supplies and materials, and other costs required to support the Team's work preparing for competitions.

DONATION - \$1,269.80 for Kennedy Longfellow 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 school.

Non-Consent Agenda

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

#24-302 November 25, 2024, School Climate Subcommittee Report

Member Rachel gave brief highlights of the School Climate subcommittee meeting.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rachel on a voice vote, **#24-293** was accepted as presented (7-0).

#24-303 Open House for Kennedy-Longfellow Families – Member Hudson and Member Harding

WHEREAS: The Superintendent is expected to recommend to the Cambridge School Committee the reassignment of all students in the Kennedy-Longfellow to other schools within the Cambridge Public Schools for the start of the 2025-2026 school year; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That – in addition to the already planned community engagement - the School Committee direct the Superintendent to organize an open house, with all elementary school Principals in attendance, where Kennedy-Longfellow families may hear from each, learn about their schools and the opportunities therein, and ask questions, before assignments to new schools are made.

There was a brief discussion regarding **#24-303**. The Superintendent and Committee members agreed that an open house for Kennedy-Longfellow parents was a good idea. If the format proves successful, the group thought that in the future hosting open houses to include the wider community should be considered.

On a voice vote, **#24-303** was adopted (7-0).

11. Announcements:

- **Member Weinstein** highlighted the upcoming productions by the CRLS Visual and Performing Arts department.
- **Vice Chair Hunter** gave kudos the Haggerty School's peace concert and the RAUC's sixth grade mock trial.
- **Member Rachel** highlighted the CRLS read-a-thon.
- **Member Rojas** shared upcoming CRLS athletic events.
- **Mayor Simmons** noted the upcoming MASC Charting the Course opportunity on January 25 in Everett and a social event on December 18 for City and CPSD colleagues hosted by her and the City Manager.

12. Late Orders:

Member Harding brought forth the following Late Order to the table.

That the superintendent in conjunction with the facilities manager investigate and address existing physical emergency needs at the HSEP located at the Longfellow school building. Further that the superintendent report back to the School Committee with an update on the outcome of the investigation and any remedies that have or will be done to fix the emergency physical plant issues at the 1st meeting of the School Committee in January 2025.

A brief discussion followed the Late Order and formatting updates were made on the floor. **Mayor Simmons** asked to be included as a co-motion maker and Member Harding agreed. Mr. Murphy thank Member Harding for bringing the motion forward and agreed that the situation needs to be addressed.

RESOLVED: That the superintendent in conjunction with the facilities manager investigate and address existing physical emergency needs at the HSEP located at the Longfellow School building, and be it further;

RESOLVED: That the superintendent report back to the School Committee with an update on the outcome of the investigation and any remedies that have or will be done to fix the emergency physical plant issues at the 1st meeting of the School Committee in January 2025.

On a voice vote, the **Late Order** was adopted (7-0).

13. Communications from City Officers: None

Email communications:

- Susan Diller
- Mary Ellen Doran
- Jim Dwyer
- Tracy Dwyer
- Isabella Ehrlich
- Lauren Gibbs
- Dan Monahan
- John Mussman
- Lily Read
- Ricardo Rodriguez
- Katie Starbuck
- Sheli Wortis

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter seconded by Member Harding on a voice vote the meeting was adjourned (7-0). (10:55 p.m.)

Attest:



Katherine Christo

Executive Secretary to the School Committee