



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

January 21, 2025

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 (REMOTE), Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Mayor Simmons

Others Present: Student Member Barua; Karen Feeney, Executive Director of Early Childhood; Dr. Heather Francis, Executive Director of Academics; Dr. Michelle Madera, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary and Early Education; David Murphy, Interim Superintendent; Student Member Shimelis; Ivy Washington, Chief Financial Officer

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:04 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 Rachel, PRESENT; Member Rojas, PRESENT; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, PRESENT; Member Harding, PRESENT; Mayor Simmons, PRESENT

Member Weinstein arrived at 7:15 p.m.

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Harding, the rules were suspended to introduce, Aunjalee Galloway, new Confidential Secretary to the School Committee, and bring forth the Superintendent's Update (7a), allowing him to recognize two CPSD faculty members: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (6-1-0)

Ms. Christo, Executive Secretary, introduced Ms. Galloway to the group and Ms. Galloway gave brief remarks.

Mr. Murphy recognized the following faculty members for their recent accolades:

- Karen Kugel, Baldwin School Librarian received the 2024 Super Librarian Award by the Massachusetts School Library Association.
- Ariel Serkin, CRLS chemistry teacher, named a 2024 National Awardee for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching (PAEMST).

Ms. Kugel and Ms. Serkin gave brief remarks regarding their backgrounds and motivations for working with students. Committee members thanked both educators for their impactful service to CPSD.

Following the discussion with Ms. Kugel and Ms. Serkin, Mayor Simmons opened Public Comment.

1. Public Comment:

The following individuals were heard:

- Laura Clawson, Richdale Ave., spoke regarding the **Superintendent's Update/Presentation**.
- Anne Coburn, Otis Street, spoke regarding the **Superintendent's Update/Presentation**.
- Lilly Havstad, Granville Road, spoke regarding the **Superintendent's Update/Presentation**.
- Carrie Jung, Standish Street, spoke regarding the **Superintendent's Update/Presentation**.
- Becca Lester, William Street, spoke regarding the **Superintendent's Update/Presentation**.

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Hudson on the following roll call vote, public comment was closed: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, ABSENT; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (6-1-0)

The rules having been suspended, **Mayor Simmons** turned the floor over to Mr. Murphy to continue with the **Superintendent's Update (7a)**.

Responding to the Public Comments referencing the Kennedy-Longfellow community, Mr. Murphy shared:

- 66% of families have shared their preferences for destination schools.
- 90% have engaged in meaningful discussions with CPSD.
- Allocation of Special Education staff to Kennedy-Longfellow.
- Impact of feeder patterns on King Open and MLK schools.
- Acknowledging the uncertainty of enrollment trends over the next 3 years.
- The very low likelihood of an unsustainable enrollment bubble to CSUS.
- Emphasizing the importance of minimizing student transitions.
- As a district, thinking differently about space utilization.
- Appreciating the partnership between Principal Gerber, her team, and the Kennedy-Longfellow families.

Member Harding left the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Members Barua and Shimelis shared an update from their recent FY26 Budget Priorities information session with CRLS students. Some notable highlights of the discussion included:

- Interest from students in funds supporting social activities and clubs
- Increasing support for health and mental wellness
- Increasing school spirit at CRLS
- Yearbook funding and exploring funding opportunities

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- January 7, 2025, Regular Meeting

On a motion by Member Rojas seconded by Member Hudson on the following roll call vote, the records were accepted as presented: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, ABSENT; Mayor Simmons, YEA (6-1-0)

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...”

#25-006 Dr. Robert S. Peterkin Condolence – Mayor E. Denise Simmons and Vice Chair Caroline Hunter

WHEREAS: The School Committee was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Dr. Robert S. Peterkin—a distinguished and visionary educator who leaves a profound legacy of advocacy for children’s rights, dedication to educational innovation, and an enduring impact on countless lives—on December 23, 2024; and

WHEREAS: Dr. Peterkin’s extraordinary 50-year career began in Albany, New York, where he taught emotionally disturbed children and founded an alternative school for high school dropouts, demonstrating his commitment to addressing the needs of vulnerable students; and

WHEREAS: As Boston’s first Black public school Headmaster, Dr. Peterkin guided The English High School during the busing era, transforming it into an integrated Magnet School for the Arts, and he later served as Deputy Superintendent in Boston and Superintendent of Schools in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where he introduced initiatives such as school-level decision-making, bilingual education, and specialized programs for African American boys; and

WHEREAS: In 1991, Dr. Peterkin joined Harvard University as Director of the Urban Superintendents Program, preparing a diverse cadre of urban school leaders, particularly women and persons of color, while serving as an indispensable mentor and advocate for educational equity; and

WHEREAS: Beyond his professional accomplishments, Dr. Peterkin contributed as an educational consultant, court-appointed expert, and board member for organizations including the B.E.L.L. Foundation, National Urban Alliance, TERC, and Boston Youth Theater, further amplifying his impact on education and young people’s well-being; and

WHEREAS: Dr. Peterkin was a devoted husband to the late Louise Bauer, to whom he was married for 56 years, and a beloved community figure whose passions for jazz, the New York Yankees, and education reflected his vibrant character; and

WHEREAS: Dr. Peterkin's warmth, wisdom, and unwavering belief in individuals' potential inspired colleagues and students to rise to challenges and achieve their fullest potential, leaving an indelible imprint on the hearts and minds of those fortunate to know him; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee formally go on record in extending its deepest condolences to the family of Dr. Robert S. Peterkin for their tremendous loss; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Executive Secretary be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to the family of Dr. Robert S. Peterkin on behalf of the entire School Committee.

On a motion by Member Hudson, seconded by Member Rojas on the following roll call vote, **#24-259** and **#24-006** remained on Unfinished Business/Calendar: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, ABSENT; Mayor Simmons, YEA (6-1-0)

6. **Awaiting Reports:** None

7. **Superintendent's Update:**

7b. Presentations:

The Interim Superintendent and members of the district leadership team will provide concise updates on matters previously presented to and discussed by the Cambridge School Committee as part of a mid-year check-in by the administration.

David Murphy, Interim Superintendent of School
Karen Feeney, Executive Director of Early Childhood
Dr. Heather Francis, Executive Director of Academics
Dr. Michelle Madera, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary and Early Education
Ivy Washington, Chief Financial Officer

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

The presentation covered the following topics:

- School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and Potential Policy Revisions – Dr. Madera
SIP timeline objective is being reviewed with a goal of formulating a uniform two-year cycle approach.
SIP budget would align with SIF and FY calendars. School leadership would retain discretionary funding balance for mid-year consultations with school councils.
- Upper School Math Updates – Dr. Francis
Modest acceleration to the current 7th grade curriculum began in January.
 - Supports for students
 - Advanced Math Pathways Diversified (AMP'd) after school math support available to all 7th graders (in-person or virtual)
 - AMP'd Up Academy offered during February and April Vacations (in-person or virtual)
 - Targeted math practice during WIN/Flex blocks
 - Supports for educators
 - Additional planning time
 - Additional coaching support
 - Using data to drive decision-making
 - End-of-Unit Assessments

- iReady screener data
- Teacher observation/classwork

- Cambridge Preschool Program Update – Ms. Feeney
On Thursday January 16th families received their children’s SY 25-26 match assignment. Response deadline is January 31st.
 - Among priority families:
 - 89% received their first choice
 - 7% received their second or third choices
 - 4% received their fourth choice or below
 - Among non-priority families
 - 75% received their first choice
 - 17% received their second or third choices
 - 8% received their fourth choice or below
 - Curriculum and Extended Day
 - The Focus Curriculum is used by DESE with their Early Childhood Playful Learning Institute.
 - CPP will work with DHSP and think creatively about how to utilize staff to provide extended day programming for families.

- Budget Season Updates – Ms. Washington
 - Budget and Audit Season align which includes a review of individual federal grants
 - CPS online budget increases transparency and allows viewers to review individual school data

Following the presentation, the Committee and the presenters discussed the following topics:

- Ensuring the parents are made aware of the math offerings and timeline of key decisions related to their student’s placement.
- The math placement of students involves data (readiness) as well as educator and caregiver feedback.
- The importance of students mastering middle school math.
- A review of the math supports and offerings.
- The reutilization of space to accommodate the CPP program.
- Online budget tool showcasing prior years for comparison purposes.

Member Harding returned to the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

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

7d. **Consent Agenda:**

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Harding the items **#25-008, #25-009, #25-110, #25-011** and **#25-012** were adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0)

#25-008 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to the Sexual Misconduct/Title IX Policy (First Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Sexual/Misconduct Title IX policy as detailed in the [attached document](#). (First Reading)

#25-009 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:	3	\$149,675.74
Residential Program Contracts:		
45 Day Program Contracts:		
Total	3	\$149,675.74

#25-010 Recommendation: Contract Award: Student Logistics: Cost Share 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.

Student Logistics, 17 Chester Road, Derry, NH for the period of November 12, 2024 to June 30, 2025 in the amount of \$36,508.50.

#25-011 Recommendation: Contract Award: Cambridge Public Health: Nursing 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.

Cambridge Public Health Department, 119 Windsor Street, Lower Level, Cambridge, MA for the period of September 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 in the amount of \$89,924.31.

#25-012 Recommendation: Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the following donations as described:

DONATION - \$1,521.73 from HELPSY for the Kennedy Longfellow School 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.

8. **Non-Consent Agenda:** None

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

#25-013 January 14, 2024, School Councils Ad Hoc Subcommittee Report

A brief discussion followed **#25-013**.

Vice Chair Hunter noted an incorrect statement on the minutes and asked for the minutes to be amended.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Weinstein, **#25-013** was accepted amended on the following roll call vote: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0)

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

#25-014 CRLS Boys Basketball Domestic & Gender Based Violence Prevention
Vice Chair Hunter, Mayor Simmons and Member Rachel

WHEREAS: The CPS Director of Athletics, Tom Arria, the Cambridge Athletic Department, and the CRLS Boys Basketball Team have been working in coordination with Shameka Gregory, Coordinator, Domestic and Gender Based Violence Prevention Initiative for the City of Cambridge, and with Kimberely Sansoucy, Executive Director, Cambridge Commission on the Statue of Women, and the Lincoln Sudbury Boys Basketball Team and Coaches; and

WHEREAS: The CRLS Boys Basketball Teams and Coaches and the Lincoln Sudbury Boys Basketball Teams and Coaches have completed an educational workshop on prevention of domestic and gender-based violence, and

WHEREAS: The theme of the night for the January 14th CRLS Boys Basketball Game Cambridge vs. Lincoln Sudbury was Players for Prevention; and

WHEREAS: The game's theme aligned with the consent education work done by our student advocates Title IX Aurelia Advocates and Train the Trainer (T3) in building a culture of consent throughout our athletic teams, school, and community; and

WHEREAS: The CRLS Boys Basketball Teams and Coaches and the Lincoln Sudbury Boys Basketball Teams and Coaches stood together and took a pledge against gender based domestic violence; and

WHEREAS: The following individuals and organizations attended in solidarity with both teams and coaches to stand against gender based domestic violence: Shameka Gregory, Coordinator, Domestic and Gender Based Violence Prevention Initiative in the City, Kimberly Sansoucy, Executive Director, Cambridge Commission on the Status of Women, Caitlin Dube, Consent Counts, Caroline Berz, T3 Instructor, along with the following groups and students belonging to those groups, Transition House Cambridge, Sisters on the Runway, Train the Trainer students, Title IX Aurelia Advocates, BARCC, WOW, and BAM; and

WHEREAS: The Players for Prevention Game, and the activities and efforts for the CRLS Boys Basketball Team and Coaches along with those of the Lincoln Sudbury Boys Basketball Team and Coaches have created awareness campaign and have made a significant impact on the prevention of domestic and gender-based violence for their fellow students and the community in attendance; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee go on record appreciating the leadership of and congratulating the CRLS Boys Basketball Team and Coaches, along with Athletic Director Tom Arria, and the Athletic Department.

A brief discussion followed **#25-014**. Members unanimously recognized the importance of the event and expressed overwhelming support for the organizers, players and CRLS community. Members noted that the culture at CRLS had continued to move in a highly positive direction.

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, **#25-014** was accepted on the following roll call vote: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0)

11. Announcements:

- **Member Rachel** gave an update on the superintendent search and encouraged working groups to share their information relating to the IFB.
- **Member Rojas** congratulated students for completing their first semester.
- **Mayor Simmons** noted that there would be a Town Hall meeting at Fletcher Maynard Academy the following evening.
- **Vice Chair Hunter** shared an update about her participation in the service events related to Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday.

12. Late Orders:

Condolences to the Travers Family – Mayor Simmons

WHEREAS: The School Committee was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Robert V. Travers, Sr. on January 15, 2025 at the age of 89; and

WHEREAS: Robert V. Travers, Sr. was a longtime resident of East Cambridge and South Dennis, and was the devoted husband of the late Mary Travers and a loving father to Robert V. Travers, Jr.; and

WHEREAS: Robert V. Travers, Sr. dedicated 36 years of service to Harvard University as a custodian, security officer, and parking officer, and was one of the founding members and president of the Harvard University Security Guard Union (Local 254), advocating for the rights and well-being of his colleagues; and

WHEREAS: His commitment to public service extended beyond his profession, as he was a proud and active member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and numerous East Cambridge community and civic organizations, through which he worked to better the lives of others; and

WHEREAS: In recognition of his lifelong dedication to faith and service, Robert V. Travers, Sr. was honored as a recipient of the prestigious Cheverus Medal of the Archdiocese of Boston, a testament to his selflessness and contributions to the community; and

WHEREAS: Robert V. Travers, Sr. was a dedicated brother-in-law to Johnny O'Connor and his wife, Mary, of Cromane, Killorglin, County Kerry, Ireland, and was the beloved brother of the late Joseph and Helen Travers and Barbara and William Gillespie, he was survived by his many loving and caring nieces and nephews, his passing is deeply felt not only by his family but also by his friends, neighbors, and all those whose lives he touched with his warmth, generosity, and unwavering commitment to others, and his memory shall be forever cherished by all who knew him; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee formally go on record in expressing its deepest condolences to Robert Travers, Jr. and the Travers family on the loss of their father, Robert Travers, Sr.; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Executive Secretary to the School Committee be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to Robert Travers, Jr. and the Travers family on behalf of the entire City Council.

Mayor Simmons read the **Late Order** and noted Mr. Travers' dedication to the City of Cambridge and shared that he would be sorely missed. **Vice Chair Hunter** asked that the Resolution be made on behalf of the entire Committee.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Harding, the Late Order was adopted and voted as unanimous on the following roll call vote: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0)

13. Communications from City Officers: None

Email communications:

✓ Lauren Gibbs

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Rachel, the meeting was adjourned on the following roll call vote: Member Hudson, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Mayor Simmons, YEA (7-0)
(9:07 pm.)

Attest:



Katherine Christo
Executive Secretary to the School Committee