



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Virtual Roundtable Meeting

June 20, 2025

Call for 12:30 p.m. held in and broadcast from the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of discussing the superintendent search community feedback.

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

Also Present: Tracey Jentz, Director of Survey Research, Donovan Group; Ashley Pierre, Executive Director of Human Resources. Dr. Jalene Tamerat, Senior Lecturer of Education Leadership and Director of the BU/BPS Carol Johnson Leadership Fellowship Boston, University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 12:31 p.m.

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

The meeting proceeded with a roll call of members present: Vice Chair Hunter, PRESENT; Member Hudson, ABSENT; Member Rachel, ABSENT; Member Rojas, PRESENT; Member Weinstein, PRESENT; Member Harding, PRESENT; Madam Mayor, PRESENT

Mayor Simmons turned the meeting over to Ashley Pierre, who emphasized the importance of the community forums and the results of the surveys. Ms. Pierre then introduced Dr. Tamerat, who shared a presentation summarizing community input gathered during the 2025 Superintendent Search engagement process. The [presentation](#), prepared by the Office of Student Services, reflected findings from both virtual and in-person forums and is available on this website. The presentation highlighted the following:

What's Working in CPSD

- Strong CPSD educators
- District diversity
- Emphasis on social-emotional learning
- Restorative practices
- Growing student and family voice

Areas for Improvement

- Equity and access gaps
- Policy inconsistency
- Special education support
- Communication breakdowns
- Teacher burnout
- Over-reliance on standardized testing

Priorities Identified by the Community:

- Trust-building
- Academic leadership
- Transparent communication
- Climate and culture
- Staff diversity

The community strongly expressed a desire for a superintendent who leads with equity, listens deeply, and communicates clearly. Participants emphasized the importance of selecting someone who is rooted in the Cambridge community, acts with humility, and demonstrates a long-term commitment to the district. Dr. Tamerat noted that during several forums, community members identified the current interim superintendent as someone who embodies many of the qualities they hope to see in the next superintendent. While questions were raised regarding the interim superintendent's eligibility or consideration for the permanent role, Dr. Tamerat confirmed that these reflections were included in the written report submitted to the School Committee.

Following Dr. Tamerat's remarks, Ms. Tracy Jentz shared an overview of the quantitative results from the community-wide survey administered by the Donovan Group. She explained the survey methodology, including security measures used to ensure validity and prevent duplicate responses.

A total of 439 individuals completed the survey. Of those respondents, approximately 40% identified as CPSD employees, 37.4% as caregivers, and about 25% as students. Survey participants were asked to identify the top qualities they seek in the next superintendent. The most frequently selected attributes included:

- Transparent and clear communication
- Collaborative leadership style
- A focus on instructional excellence and student achievement
- Cultural competence and inclusivity
- A strong equity and anti-racism mindset

Ms. Jentz opens the floor for questions and comments. **Member Rojas** commented on the common needs of most districts for a superintendent. He noted that most districts need the same qualities in a superintendent, with only a small percentage having unique needs. Dr. Tamerat stated that Cambridge is both highly resourced and highly diverse, yet experiences unequal distribution of those resources and related inequities. A new superintendent must understand Cambridge's complexity, engage all communities, gather broad feedback, and strategically allocate resources to close persistent gaps. Ms. Jentz agreed that survey respondents frequently cited diversity and strong resources/funding as major strengths along with the need to bridge inequities.

Member Weinstein inquired about incorporating performance tasks in interviews. Dr. Tamerat emphasized interactive and role-play-based interviews and involving diverse stakeholder groups. **Member Harding** sought clarification on academic achievement vs. leadership, racial demographics of respondents, and superintendent continuity. Ms. Jentz Dr. Tamerat explained that the community prioritized a superintendent who can improve academic instruction to narrow the achievement gap.

The Confidential Secretary roll calls to acknowledge school committee members who joined the meeting later: Member Hudson, PRESENT; Member Rachel, PRESENT.

Mayor Simmons asked Dr. Tamerat to clarify which groups were most positive about the current interim superintendent - specifically, whether the positive sentiment came from students, teachers, or parents. Dr. Tamerat responded that the positive feedback was primarily from faculty and somewhat from caregivers.

Member Harding questioned the representativeness of the 439 survey responses in relation to the district's demographics. Ms. Jentz defended the number, attributing potential fatigue to the time of year and the quality of responses from students and employees. **Member Harding** suggested that the school committee should consider other ways to gather feedback from the business and religious communities.

Member Hudson asked for advice on how candidates should prepare for the superintendent position, including understanding the community's goals and priorities. Ms. Jentz advised candidates to highlight their clear communication, collaborative leadership, and cultural competency. **Member Hudson** inquired about the community's perception of academic rigor and its impact on student achievement. Ms. Jentz and Dr. Tamerat discussed the importance of academic rigor, attendance policies, and ensuring resources are aligned with student needs.

The meeting having reached 1:29 p.m., the meeting was extended to 1:45 p.m. on a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Harding on the following roll call vote, Mayor Simmons, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Hudson; YEA.

Dr. Tamerat mentioned that the school assignment process, particularly at the middle school level, was a recurring concern. Ms. Jentz adds that academic rigor and attendance policies were also frequently discussed as areas needing attention. **Member Weinstein** asked if the community emphasized the importance of a robust search process. Dr. Tamerat confirmed that the community values a thorough search with multiple candidates and stakeholder involvement. Ms. Jentz and Dr. Tamerat discussed the need for candidates to demonstrate their ability to communicate, lead collaboratively, and address diversity and inclusion.

The meeting having reached 1:42 p.m., the meeting was extended to 2 p.m. on a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Weinstein on the following roll call vote: Madam Mayor, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding; YEA.

Ms. Pierre outlined the next steps, including anti-bias training for school committee members and scheduling semi-finalist interviews. The committee discussed the need for a well-rounded report and the importance of transparency in the search process. **Vice Chair Hunter** closed with stating the cross-sectional distribution of survey respondents, noting that while the numbers in each category were not the same, the interest seemed consistent across the community.

On a motion by Vice Chair Hunter, seconded by Member Rachel the meeting was adjourned on the following roll call vote: Mayor Simmons, YEA; Member Weinstein; YEA, Member Rachel, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Hudson, ABSENT; Member Harding, ABSENT; Member Rojas, ABSENT (2:00 p.m.)

Attest:



Aunjalee Galloway
Confidential Secretary to the Office of the School Committee

Documents Distributed:
CPSD Supt. Community Forums - Presentation to School Committee