



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

September 2, 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. This meeting will include the public hearing on the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook

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

Others Present: Student Member Asraf; Dr. Leslie Jiménez, Director of Equity, Inclusion and Belonging; Dr. Chad Leith, Chief Accountability Officer; David Murphy, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Student Member Jama

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 of members present: Member Rachel, PRESENT; Member Rojas, PRESENT; Member Weinstein, PRESENT; Vice Chair Hunter, PRESENT; Member Harding, PRESENT; Member Hudson, PRESENT; Mayor Simmons, PRESENT

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

There were no registrants for the public hearing.

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Weinstein, the public hearing was closed on the following roll call vote: Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson YEA; Madam Mayor, YEA.

Mayor Simmons welcomed the new student members Eva Asraf and Zihaam Jama and asked them to introduce themselves. They both gave introductory remarks.

1b. Public Comment

The following individuals were heard:

- Chris Montero, Warren Road, Framingham, Superintendent Search **#25-227**; expressed displeasure in the search process and lack of engagement with educators
- Jia-Jing Lee, Second Street, Superintendent Search **#25-227**; expressed displeasure in the search process
- Isabella Ehrlich, Kirkland Road, Superintendent Search **#25-227**; expressed displeasure in the search process
- Virginia Cuello De Suarez, 8th Street, Superintendent Search **#25-227**; expressed displeasure in the search process
- Lily Havstad, Granville Road, Superintendent Search **#25-227**; expressed displeasure in the search process; Revisions Attendance Policy **#25-233**; expressed her displeasure with the revisions and expressed concern that the district's most vulnerable families would be negatively impacted.
- Rosa Rosario, Broadway, Superintendent Search **#25-227**; speaking in Spanish, expressed displeasure in the search process and the limited engagement of families of color.
- LaQueen Battle, Otis Street, briefly spoke on non-agenda items and shared her sentiments regarding Superintendent Search **#25-227**.
- Ann Coburn, Otis Street, Superintendent Search **#25-227**; expressed displeasure in the search process

- Arjun Jaikumar, Richdale Avenue, Superintendent Search, **#25-227**; expressed displeasure in the search process.
- Ilan Levy, Spring Street, Superintendent Search, **#25-227**; expressed displeasure in the search process

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Rojas, public comment was closed on a voice vote.

On a motion by Member Rojas, second by Vice Chair Hunter, the rules were suspended on a voice vote to allow Member Rojas to translate Rosa Rosario's public comment remarks.

Member Rojas read Ms. Rosario's remarks in English.

Following Member Rojas' remarks, individual School Committee members welcomed the students. **Vice Chair Hunter** shared highlights of the students' biographies.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Member Asraf and Student Member Jama highlighted the concerns that have been raised by students and parents regarding the updated absence policies and the new cell phone policies. They believe that the lack of clarity and communications have created confusion.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- August 5, 2025, Regular Meeting

On a motion by Member Rachel, second by Member Rojas, the records were approved on a voice vote.

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:

#25-227 Further the Superintendent Search – Member Hudson

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public School District is currently in the process hiring a permanent Superintendent; and

WHEREAS: We have completed the semi-finalists interviews, but have not yet established dates for all remaining required events, meetings and interviews; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee establish dates for all events at which finalists will introduced, interviewed, and voted upon, no later than August 15, 2025.

The motion was not taken from the table for consideration and expired.

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7a. Superintendent's Update:

An update on items related to the opening of the 2025 - 2026 school year.

Highlights include:

- School Reconfiguration
 - Closure of Kennedy-Longfellow School (KLO); students successfully reassigned with "continuity and choice" guiding the process.
 - Former KLO students at King Open reported positive integration.
- New Schools
 - Official opening of Tobin & Darby-Vassal School with the Ceremonial opening scheduled for October 18.
- Programming Changes

- Restructured high-need programming across schools
- Opened new strands at King Open, King, and Baldwin schools.
- Professional Development
 - Staff at PAUS, Cambridgeport, Haggerty, PAUS, and FMA engaged in early PD focused on strategic goals.
 - Recognition ceremony for educators attaining Professional Teacher Status.
- Colloquium
 - 2,000 staff participated; gratitude bags assembled by administrators.

Ongoing Initiatives

- Extended Learning Time
 - Continued at MLK and FMA schools; evaluation of program's future planned this year.
- Cell Phone Policy
 - New protocols implemented to improve school culture; Superintendent emphasized ongoing dialogue with students and families.
- Transportation
 - Adjustments made to routing and technology; morning routes showed improvement, afternoon routes still need troubleshooting.

Challenges Reported

- HSEP Roof Repair
 - Delays due to vendor disqualification; project underway but may cause noise disruption.
 - Contingency plan in place to temporarily relocate students to Spring Street if necessary.
- Enrollment Pressures
 - Cambridge Street Upper School enrollment exceeds projections.
 - Mr. Murphy flagged system fragility and reliance on attrition; long-term planning required.
- Materials & Budget
 - Math curriculum delivery delayed due to vendor issues.
 - Mr. Murphy assured no teachers penalized; committed to follow up.
 - Addressed recurring concerns that budget constraints block resources—explained often decisions are strategic, not financial.

Committee Member Comments

- **Member Weinstein** praised the Tobin/Darby Vassall opening and the district-wide colloquium as energizing for staff.
- **Member Rojas** requested monitoring of KLO student integration.
- **Member Harding** pressed for clarity on HSEP roof project contingencies and stressed prioritizing safe, supportive learning environments.
- **Member Hudson** asked about delayed delivery of math materials and teacher budget/resource access.

7b. Presentation

The Interim Superintendent and administrative team will report on the activities and objectives advanced during the district's August leadership retreat in anticipation of the start of the 2025 - 2026 school year.

Interim Superintendent Murphy, Dr. Leith and Dr. Jiménez gave the following presentation which can be found on this [website](#).

Presentation Highlights include:

- Leadership Retreats (Summer 2025)
 - Series of retreats held to advance goals for the 2025–26 school year.
 - Focus areas: family engagement, equity-based leadership, AI integration, educator effectiveness, and facilities planning.
 - Administrators, principals, assistant principals, deans, and directors participated.

- Family Engagement & Partnerships – Dr. Chad Leith
 - Delegation attended care map training at Harvard Graduate School of Education.
 - Shift emphasized: *Family involvement* → *Family engagement*.
 - Engagement should build trust, strengthen communication, and link directly to student learning.
 - Parent conferences to evolve into two-way conversations where families share insights on student needs.
 - Launch of Caregiver Academy to support transitions (5th→6th, 8th→9th grade).
- School Leader & Administrator Retreats
 - Two-day principal retreat on district-wide objectives and school-specific improvement plans.
 - Discussions included AI's role in education and plans for professional learning on AI.
 - Monthly principal meetings, cohorts (elementary, upper, high school leaders), and new induction program for early-career administrators.
- Transformative Equity Leadership Plan – Dr. Leslie Jiménez-Sandoval
 - Based on six equity leadership principles.
 - Leaders asked: “*What type of equity leader does your team and community need you to be?*”
 - Leaders to submit draft plans by Sept. 29, aligned with school improvement goals.
 - Expansion of Equity Academy for staff and leaders, focusing on data-driven strategies and “safe-to-fail” experiments to support underserved students.
- Educator Colloquium at CRLS on August 27
 - Gathered ~2,000 staff at CRLS to launch the new school year.
 - Theme: *Cultivating a more student-centered culture*.
 - Included professional learning sessions, keynote messages, and team-building.
 - Reinforced district goals: universal preschool rollout, long-term facilities planning, family engagement, and educator effectiveness.

Committee Members' Feedback

- **Vice Chair** praised the “safe-to-fail” model and Equity Ambassadors' work as valuable and professional.
- **Member Rachel** asked about shifting practices from involvement to engagement and suggested learning from past practices (e.g., home visits).
- **Member Rojas** inquired about leading through turbulent times; Dr. Jiménez emphasized the need to support families amid political and social challenges.
- **Member Weinstein** highlighted family engagement as “gold standard” work and asked how the Committee could support; Mr. Murphy stressed accountability as key.

7c. CPS District Plan: None

7d. Consent Agenda:

On a motion by Member Rojas seconded by Member Hudson, the items **#25-229, #25-230, #25-231, #25-232, #25-233, #25-234, #25-235, #25-236, #25-237, #25-238, #25-239, #25-240, #25-241, and #25-242** were adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Rachel, YEA; Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson YEA; Madam Mayor, YEA.

#25-229 Recommendation: Approval Revisions to Rights & Responsibilities Handbook (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Rights & Responsibilities Handbook as detailed in the [attached document](#).

#25-230 Recommendation: Approval Revisions to Civil Rights Grievance Procedures Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the School Department's Civil Rights Grievance Procedures Policy as detailed in the [attached document](#).

#25-231 Recommendation: Approval Revisions to Transgender & Gender Nonconforming Students Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the School Department's Policy Regarding Transgender & Gender Nonconforming Students as detailed in the attached document.

#25-232 Recommendation: Approval Revisions to Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Cambridge School Department's Title IX/Sexual Misconduct Policy as detailed in the attached document.

#25-233 Recommendation: Approval Revisions to Student Attendance Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Student Attendance Policy as detailed in the attached document.

#25-234 Recommendation: Approval Revisions to Physical Restraint Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the Physical Restraint Policy as detailed in the attached document.

#25-235 Recommendation: Approval Revisions to Non-Discrimination Policy (Second Reading) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee approve the revisions to the School Department's Non-Discrimination Policy as detailed in the attached document.

#25-236 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 on attached list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the general fund and/or grant fund budget.

	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts:	7	\$510,841.59
Residential Program Contracts:	1	\$372,493.44
45 Day Program Contracts:		
Total	8	\$883,335.03

#25-237 Recommendation: Contract Award: Cambridge School Volunteers (FY26 Contract) 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 308 of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Cambridge School Volunteers, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, MA for the period of July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$246,365.00.

#25-238 Recommendation: Contract Award: PowerSchool Group LLC (FY26 Contract) 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 dba PowerSchool Holdings, 150 Parkshore Drive, Cambridge, MA for the period of September 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026 in the amount of \$31,668.63.

#25-239 Recommendation: Grant Award FY26 Early College Support Grant (SC26831) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY26 Early College Support Grant (SC26831) – State - in the amount of \$80,000.00 for the period of July 25 2025, 2025 to June 30, 2025.

#25-240 Recommendation: Grant Award FY26 J Burdie Fitness (SC26175) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY26 J Burdie Fitness (SC26175) – Targeted in the amount of \$3,500.00 for the period of August 1, 2025 to June 30, 2027.

#25-241 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Grant (SC26707) be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY26 McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Grant (SC26707) – Federal Through State
Targeted in the amount of \$25,000.00 for the period of July 15, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

#25-242 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 Expanded Homeless Shelter Funding (SC25218) INCREASE be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY26 Expanded Homeless Shelter Funding (SC25218) - INCREASE through State -Targeted
in the amount of \$239,568.76 for the period of February 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

8. Non-Consent Agenda: None

9. School Committee Agenda (Policy Matters/Notifications/Requests for Information): None

11. Announcements:

- **Mayor Simmons** shared that the Mayor's Office created an info card of important CPSD numbers and emails.

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications and Reports from City Officers: None

Email communications:

- ✓ Missy Page

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, the meeting was adjourned on a voice vote. (8:45 p.m.)

Attest:



Katherine Christo
Executive Secretary to the School Committee