



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

September 16, 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, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Mayor Simmons

Others Present: Student Member Asraf; Dr. Manuel Fernandez, Chief of Equity; Dr. Karyn Grace, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services; Kim Huffer, Director of SEL, Office of Student Services; Student Member Jama; Dr. Chad Leith, Chief Accountability Officer; Dr. Lee McCanne, Chief Information Officer; David Murphy, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Desiree Phillips, Executive Director of Special Education; Mr. Damon Smith, Interim Chief Operation Officer

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

1. Public Comment

The following individuals were heard:

- Chris Montero, Warren Road, Framingham, **#25-254, #25-256 and #25-257**; expressed displeasure in the search process and lack of engagement with educators; supported non-binding votes for student members
- Ann Coburn, Otis Street, **#25-255 and #25-256**; expressed displeasure in the search process
- Alex Bowers, Pemberton Street, **#25-255 and #25-257**

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein, public comment was closed on a voice vote.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Members Asraf and Jama shared the following highlights:

- The annual Senior Sunrise event took place
- Noted a decline in school spirit included the recent requirement for students to pay admission for football games
- Students' reaction to the implementation of Yondr pouches
- CRLS bike parking regarding the need to additional bike racks.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- September 2, 2025, Regular Meeting

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Rachel, the records were approved on a voice vote.

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar: None

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7a. Superintendent's Update:

An update on pending matters and highlight various initiatives taking place across CPS school communities.

Mr. Murphy highlighted the following:

- CPS policies have not changed despite federal shifts in the immigration policies. School leaders have been prepared to deal with potential issues.
- District-wide professional development day scheduled for tomorrow afternoon with a focus on family engagement.
- Appreciation to staff COO Smith and Ms. Fisher of the Transportation Office for making steady progress in the transportation issues. Mr. Murphy noted that in the future that the district may need to consider systemic changes (example of staggered school start times) to fully address the transportation challenges.

The Committee agreed that there should be a renewed focus on caregiver engagement.

7b. Presentation

The Interim Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services and representatives from the Office of Student Services will present on the recently reviewed Cambridge Public Schools Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan.

Mr. Murphy shared that the plan must be reviewed by the School Committee on an biannual basis and it was last reviewed in early 2023. He and Dr. Grace, Ms. Huffer and Ms. Phillips shared the following presentation which can be found on this [website](#). Highlights of the conversation include:

- Engagement & Process
 - Co-designed with families, staff, students, and community partners.
 - Engagement included virtual sessions, in-person meetings with dinner/childcare, translated documents in five languages, live interpretation, and use of "Pocket Talk" devices (supporting 88 languages).
 - Accessibility improvements included a short video, mind map/graphic organizer, simplified survey, and translated materials.
- Survey & Feedback
 - Positive aspects highlighted:
 - Clear definitions of bullying.
 - Defined roles and responsibilities.
 - Emphasis on privacy, confidentiality, and restorative practices.
 - Clear mandate for swift action by principals.
 - Areas for improvement:
 - Inconsistent enforcement/implementation across schools.
 - Overly legalistic language—need for more accessible summaries.
 - Students want more teacher intervention,
- Plan Revisions
 - Updated roles/titles to reflect current district structure (e.g., Executive Director of Special Ed instead of Asst. Superintendent).
 - Added new accountability measures under Chief Accountability Officer.

- Expanded restorative practices and peer mediation programs.
- Restorative Practices & Training
 - Strong district/community history of restorative justice.
 - Expanded professional development on bias, microaggressions, dehumanizing language, SEL (Wayfinder curriculum), and empathy skills.
 - Peer mediation expanded to upper schools (ROC, PAUS, Darby Vassal, CSUS, Amigos).
 - Training for bus drivers/monitors on de-escalation and awareness.
- Recommendations Going Forward
 1. Enhance communication strategies (definitions, upstander skills).
 2. Provide concise “quick reference” summaries of policy.
 3. Promote and expand anonymous reporting via *Speakfully*.
 4. Continue strong engagement with families, caregivers, students, and staff.

Given the complexity and length of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, the Committee wanted the body and the public to have the opportunity to review the materials in greater detail.

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, the School Committee requests that the Superintendent submit the revisions of *Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan* as a Second Reading to be included on the agenda for the October 7, 2025 School Committee meeting was adopted on a voice vote.

7c. CPS District Plan: None

7d. Consent Agenda:

#25-243, #25-244, #25-247, #25-248, #25-249, #25-250, #25-251, #25-252, and #25-253 were adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson; Member Rachel, YEA; Madam Mayor, YEA.

#25-243 Recommendation: Day & Residential Program Services (Chapter 766 Placements) 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, for placement of students in private schools for implementation of educational plans in accordance with Chapter 766.

	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts:	12	\$1,254,761.55
Residential Program Contracts:	2	\$209,531.26
45 Day Program Contracts:		
Total	14	\$1,464,292.81

#25-244 Recommendation: Contract Award: Fire Equipment Inc.: Fire Alarm Services (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.

Fire Equipment Inc., 20 Hall Street, Medford, MA for the period of October 15, 2025 to October 14, 2026 in the amount of \$50,000.00.

#25-247 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 Title I, Part A Distribution-Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local School Districts (SC26604) 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.

FY26 Title I, Part A Distribution - Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local School Districts (SC26604) in the amount of \$1,434,121.00 for the period of September 2, 2025, 2025 to September 30, 2027.

#25-248 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 Title II, Part A Distribution-Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Learning (SC26731) 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.

FY26 Title II, Part A Distribution - Building Systems of Support for Excellent Teaching and Learning (SC26731) in the amount of \$200,717.00 for the period of September 2, 2025, 2025 to September 30, 2027.

#25-249 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 Title III Distribution - English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement Program for English Learners and Immigrant Children and Youth (SC26737) 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.

FY26 Title III Distribution - English Language Acquisition and Academic Achievement Program for English Learners and Immigrant Children and Youth (SC26737) in the amount of \$118,637.00 for the period of September 2 2025, 2025 to September 30, 2027.

#25-250 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 Title IV, Part A Distribution - Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant (SC26732) 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.

FY26 Title IV, Part A Distribution - Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant (SC26732) in the amount of \$101,862.00 for the period of September 2, 2025, 2025 to September 30, 2027.

#25-251 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (SC26605) 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.

FY26 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (SC26605) in the amount of \$2,926,239.00 for the period of August 22, 2025 to September 30, 2027.

#25-252 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY26 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Early Childhood (SC26607) 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.

FY26 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Early Childhood (SC26607) in the amount of \$64,098.00 for the period of August 22, 2025 to September 30, 2027.

#25-253 Recommendation: Grant Award FY26 Strengthening Career and Technical Education (Perkins V) Secondary (SC26606) 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.

FY26 Strengthening Career and Technical Education (Perkins V) Secondary (SC26606) in the amount of \$111,822.00 for the period of August 20, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

#25-245 Recommendation: Contract Award: Minuteman Regional High School (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.

Minuteman Regional High School, 758 Marrett Road, Lexington, MA for the period of September 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$101,362.54.

A brief conversation followed **#25-245. Member Harding** inquired about the programs that were offered at Minuteman and not RSTA. Mr. Murphy shared that cosmetology and plumbing programs were being sought out at Minuteman and noted that a comprehensive review of RSTA programs was needed. Committee members and COO Smith noted that cosmetology has long been discussed as a possible RSTA offering and should be considered again.

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter **#25-245** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson; Member Rachel, YEA; Madam Mayor, YEA.

#25-246 Recommendation: Contract Award: Concentric Math (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.

Concentric Math, 624 N Silverado Drive, Lafayette, CA for the period of September 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 in the amount of \$50,000.00.

A brief discussion followed **#25-246. Member Weinstein** inquired about the contract's connection with the new Illustrative Math curriculum and Dr. Iwasaki. Mr. Murphy confirmed that Mr. Iwasaki had begun working with the science department this year. Mr. Murphy noted the importance of building internal capacity and that long-term reliance on external professional development was not sustainable. **Member Weinstein** encouraged the importance of balancing rollout with long-term follow through and adaption for new educators.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Rojas **#25-246** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Rojas, YEA; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, YEA; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson; Member Rachel, YEA; Madam Mayor, YEA.

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

#25-254 District's Guidance of the Use of AI – Member Rojas and Member Weinstein

WHEREAS: The April 2025 amendments of the beliefs of the National School Board Association (NSBA) included the adoption the following belief regarding Artificial Intelligence in Education:

“NSBA believes that artificial intelligence has transformative potential in education, offering opportunities to enhance teaching, personalize learning, and streamline administrative tasks. At the same time, we are committed to its ethical and equitable use, ensuring transparency, safeguarding privacy, and addressing risks like bias and over-reliance on technology to create a future-ready, human-centered educational environment.”; and

WHEREAS: In January 2025 the EdTech Department of the Cambridge Public Schools published a Generative AI (GenAI) Guidance document ([see attachment for current version](#)). Its opening paragraph states:

“Generative AI (GenAI) holds transformative potential for K-12 education, offering powerful tools to support curriculum development, personalize learning experiences, and enhance communication with families and staff. However, as we integrate AI into educational settings, it is crucial to approach its use with intentionality, transparency, and responsibility. Educators and students alike must develop a clear understanding of GenAI’s capabilities, ethical considerations, and potential limitations, including biases and inaccuracies. The Educational Technology Department is committed to ensuring that all students, teachers, administrators, and staff have equitable access to and become proficient users of Generative AI (GenAI) as a valuable instructional resource. By establishing guidelines for data security, privacy, and proper citation, and by encouraging critical thinking around AI, we can create learning environments where GenAI supports—not supplants—the creative and intellectual work of students and educators. In doing so, we can leverage AI to open new pathways for learning while upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and equity by keeping humans in the loop.”; and

WHEREAS: The GenAI Guidance document will be updated as we learn more about AI and identify additional guidance to ensure appropriate implementation. The School Committee adopted last month policy order C25-234 requesting the superintendent to develop and present a formal district-wide plan on the use of AI in Cambridge Public Schools, among other things; and

WHEREAS: It is important to socialize the GenAI Guidance document with the public; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: The Cambridge School Committee acknowledges and supports the GenAI Guidance of EdTech Department Cambridge Public Schools.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding **#25-254** which included feedback from Dr. McCanne who stressed that the AI landscape was evolving so rapidly and it is a challenge for policies to anticipate future needs.

On a motion by Member Hudson, seconded by Member Harding **#25-254** was adopted to be referred to the Superintendent and Mayor to schedule a roundtable on a voice vote.

#25-255 Report on the Effectiveness of the Innovation Agenda – Member Hudson, Member Harding and Member Weinstein

WHEREAS: The district undertook a major reconfiguration of grades and schools through the “Innovation Agenda,” which created a system of dedicated middle schools; and

WHEREAS: This reconfiguration represented a significant investment of district resources, community effort, and educational planning, with the goal of improving student outcomes and providing a stronger middle school experience; and

WHEREAS: More than a decade has passed since the implementation of the Innovation Agenda, and the district now has substantial experience, data, and community feedback regarding the middle school model; and

WHEREAS: The Interim Superintendent's employment term currently ends on June 30, 2025, unless both parties affirmatively agree to an extension; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee has the responsibility to review past initiatives in order to guide future policy and investment decisions, ensuring that lessons learned are systematically applied; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent shall produce a report during the 2025–2026 school year evaluating the effectiveness of the Innovation Agenda and the creation of middle schools, including but not limited to:

- Academic outcomes across schools,
- Social-emotional and developmental supports for middle-grade students,
- Enrollment patterns (including feeder patterns from elementary schools) and demographic impacts,
- Staffing and resource allocation,
- Parents' trust and perceptions of the quality of the education we're offering; and be it further

RESOLVED: That this report shall include both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as well as recommendations on how findings should inform future large-scale district initiatives; and be it finally

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent shall deliver the report to the School Committee no later than June 2026, so that it may be used as guidance for upcoming planning and decision-making.

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Member Weinstein **#25-255** was adopted on a voice vote.

#25-256 Report on Parent Choice Patterns and Program Preferences in the School Lottery –
Member Hudson and Member Harding

WHEREAS: The district operates a controlled choice lottery system to assign students to schools, with the goal of balancing family preference, equity, and diversity; and

WHEREAS: The Committee and the community are currently considering the future use of the new school building at 158 Spring Street; and

WHEREAS: Understanding parent choice patterns within the lottery system is essential to inform decisions about programming and to ensure that offerings align with family interests and community needs; and

WHEREAS: Parent feedback on what programming they most value—including programs not currently available in the district—would provide critical insight as the Committee evaluates future options; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent shall produce a report during the 2025–2026 school year analyzing parent choice patterns in the school lottery, including data on initial rankings, final assignments, and any notable demographic or geographic trends; be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent shall oversee the administration of a survey to families asking:

- What school they would have chosen had they been guaranteed their first choice, and
- What types of programming they would most like to see in the district that are not currently offered; be it finally

RESOLVED: That the report and survey findings shall be delivered to the School Committee no later than June 2026, so that the information may guide deliberations about programming for the building at 158 Spring Street and other future planning decisions.

On a motion by Hudson, seconded by Member Rachel **#25-256** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Rojas, ABSTAIN; Member Weinstein, YEA; Vice Chair Hunter, NAY; Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson; Member Rachel, YEA; Madam Mayor, ABSTAIN.

#25-257 Resume Non-binding Votes by Student School Committee Members – Member Weinstein and Mayor Simmons

WHEREAS: The School Committee updated its rules with the passage of Motion #21-306 on October 5th, 2021 to include the opportunity for Student School Committee Members to cast non-binding votes on motions and resolutions; and

WHEREAS: Student School Committee Members cast these votes starting on December 7, 2021, voting after the members of the Committee and before the Mayor; and

WHEREAS: This practice was the result of the leadership and advocacy of then-Student School Committee Members Anaïs Killian and Nuriel Vera-DeGraff in collaboration with then-Vice Chair of the School Committee Manikka Bowman and then-Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui; and

WHEREAS: Over the course of transitions of Student School Committee membership this practice was inadvertently stopped; and

WHEREAS: This practice placed the Cambridge School Committee at the forefront of efforts to lift up student voice in School Committee deliberations, reflected the value the School Committee places on the role and perspectives of

Student School Committee members, and benefited the Cambridge Public Schools by better incorporating the Student School Committee Members in the work of the School Committee; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That beginning with the next regularly scheduled School Committee Meeting on October 7, 2025, subject to updated review by the CPSD legal department, this practice will resume, and the Executive Secretary of the School Committee will call each Student School Committee Members so that they may cast a non-binding vote on all motions and resolutions.

A brief discussion followed **#25-257**.

Member Weinstein shared a brief history of student members non-binding votes and the importance of elevating student voices. **Mayor Simmons** proposed that the student onboarding process should be codified in the School Committee Rules and suggested connecting the MASC. Student Members Asraf and Jama appreciated the members' support. Members agreed about the importance of highlighting student voices but stressed the importance of ensuring clarity for the public.

On a motion by Member Hudson, seconded by Member Weinstein **#25-257** was adopted on a voice vote.

11. Announcements:

Vice Chair Hunter

- Cambridge Science Fair: Sunday, Sept. 21, Kendall Square MIT Open Space (150+ STEAM activities).
- Family Day at Danehy Park: Saturday, 11 a.m.–3 p.m. (resources and giveaways).
- MIT Lemelson program to expose RSTA students to innovation opportunities.
- National Voter Registration Day noted; high school students encouraged to register.

Mayor Simmons

- Ellen Semonoff, Assistant City Manager for Human Services and Michael Johnson, Head of Cambridge Housing Authority will be retiring at the end of the year.
- City Council Charter change efforts are underway with potential impact on the Mayor's role with School Committee.

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications and Reports from City Officers: None

Email communications:

- ✓ Jill Linnell

On a motion by Member Rachel, seconded by Vice Chair Hunter, the meeting was adjourned on a voice vote.
(10:00 p.m.)

Attest:



Katherine Christo
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Distributed Document:
Draft CPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan