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To: Members Jose Luis Rojas, Elizabeth Hudson, Rachel Weinstein
CC: Mayor E. Denise Simmons and the Cambridge School Committee
Fr: David Murphy
Date: 11-12-24

Re: Upcoming Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee

Our team is looking forward to presenting to the Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee on Thursday, November 14, 2024. We are grateful for the publicly noticed agenda items focusing on the introduction of Interim COO Damon Smith, the impending facilities condition assessment, the pending summer capital improvements, and an update on the state-wide visits by the MSBA examining district infrastructure and enrollment capacity

I have asked Mr. Smith and Mr. Vedad Konjic, our Director of Facilities/Maintenance, to represent the administration at this meeting. While I recognize that some of the topics relate to issues we have previously discussed in various forums, I believe the continued conversation will be prove useful to the community at-large by providing increased awareness through this public forum for the implications connected to the analysis we are undertaking along with our municipal partners in the development of both short-term and long-term capital improvement priorities.

By way or introduction (or reintroduction) I would offer the following comments as a precursor to what I am confident will be a useful discussion:

- 1. Introduction of Interim COO Smith:** While I know Damon is a familiar face to all members of the committee, I am grateful to Chair Rojas for providing him with an opportunity to reintroduce himself in the role I have asked him to serve in the central administration. Damon's 14 year stint as the principal of our flagship school has afforded him the institutional knowledge, credibility and wealth of relationships to capably serve as the point person for the plethora of areas of responsibility within the operational realm. I am grateful to him for the seamlessness with which he has transitioned and know he will support the subcommittee well in this position.
- 2. Facilities Condition Assessment:** As was discussed at the recent joint roundtable between the committee and the city council, we recognize that the timeline of the complete comprehensive analysis of the district's existing infrastructure has been extended well beyond anything we initially imagined. As the city administration explained at that meeting, that is in part because the further analysis the city has asked for in the context of the forecasted budgetary landscape that was the impetus to that roundtable meeting. Given the density of the forthcoming analysis, and in light of how many times we have previously discussed its (eventual) release, I thought it might be useful to examine a specific excerpt of a preliminary draft focused on a specific school. We have chosen the Peabody/RAUC building, admittedly in part because it is less likely to be central to the strategic deliberations that will need to be undertaken upon the report's release. The excerpt that the team will share with you provides an overview of the building's existing and potential capacity, as well as the areas that - per the consultants who completed the analysis - should be prioritized for repair or replacement. Again, this is merely an excerpt and may well change as additional revisions are completed.
- 3. Summer CIPs:** While it is not yet technically winter, we are already planning our summer 2025 capital

improvement projects and the team will be eager to discuss the developing priorities and the rationale underlying each. There are of course a variety of strategic considerations that will emerge and need to be incorporated into our actions plans, but we wanted to take this opportunity to solicit feedback and questions from committee members based at least on our current thinking.

4. **MSBA School Surveys:** The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) recently announced its intention to visit all school districts across MA this school year to conduct what amounts to an audit of school infrastructure and enrollment capacity. While this is merely consistent with the agency's statutory mandate, it is an opportunity to engage in dialogue with a state partner that eventually may prove critical to the work we need to do in Cambridge. As a reminder MSBA generally offers two types of competitive grant programs, specifically Accelerated Repair Program grants (which focus on the replacement of roofs, HVAC systems and windows) and Core Program grants (which generally involve the reconstruction, new building or major renovations to full school buildings). CPS has not partnered with MSBA on core program projects, but we successfully engaged in ACR programs, most recently the Amigos' roof. This may amount to a routine visit by state officials (or their contractors) but we will be fully engaged in any process available so as to maximize any potential partnerships down the road.

Again, I am thankful to Chair Rojas for the opportunity for our team to engage on these issues and will be happy to connect with you subsequent to the meeting if I can be of any assistance. Thank you.