



## CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

**Regular Meeting**

**December 5, 2023**

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: Vice-Chair Rachel, Member Fantini (Remote), Member Hunter, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson, Mayor Siddiqui

Also Present: Dr. Greer, Superintendent of Schools; Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel; Dr. Edwards, Chief of Academics and Schools; Dr. Gittens, Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Schools; Dr. Madera, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools; David Murphy, Chief Operations Officer; Corey Dotson, Chief Talent Officer; Ivy Washington; Interim Chief Financial Officer; Sheila Keady Rawson, Personnel Director for the City of Cambridge

Mayor Siddiqui in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

The Chair provided a statement to the public regarding Governor Charlie Baker's Executive Order on guidelines for remote participation and then 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 Rojas PRESENT; Member Weinstein PRESENT; Member Wilson ~~ABSENT~~; Member Fantini PRESENT; Member Hunter PRESENT; Vice-Chair Rachel PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui PRESENT.

**Member Wilson** joined the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

### **1. Public Comment:**

The following individuals were heard:

- Dan Monahan, Lexington Ave, spoke regarding **#23-287 & #23-288**.
- Sarah Adkins, Bishop Allen Drive, spoke regarding **#23-285**.
- Anaiya Brown, Fairmount Street, spoke regarding **#23-285**.
- Barbara Dorritie, Broadway, spoke regarding **#23-285**.
- Yasmeen Abu-Rubieh, Brookline St, spoke regarding workshops and more open discussions surrounding the Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim communities.

Given that Yasmeen Abu-Rubieh wanted to speak on a subject not on the meeting agenda, Member Wilson motioned to suspend the rules to allow public comment seconded by Vice Chair Rachel, on the

following roll call vote, the rules were suspended to allow the public comment on a topic not on the agenda: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

On a motion by Member Weinstein, seconded by Member Hunter, on the following roll call vote, public comment was closed: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

## **2. Student School Committee Report:**

Student Member Alailima and Student Member Anjaria gave a student update on happenings at CRLS which included the recent walkout at CRLS regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict in Gaza, the planning of a student community budget planning meeting in the upcoming weeks, and their excitement in motion **#23-285**.

On a motion by Member Hunter, to suspend the rules and bring **#23-285** forward, seconded by Member Rojas on the following roll call vote, the rules were suspended and **#23-285** was brought forward for discussion and adoption: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

### **#23-285 Joint Motion by Mayor Siddiqui, Member Rojas, and Member Hunter in collaboration with Student Member Anjaria**

WHEREAS: Green Cambridge and School Committee Student Representative Naseem Anjaria created a [proposal](#) for a garden on the sloped roof of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School; and

WHEREAS: The plan includes concrete information on the positive impact it will bring on the climate to reduce Cambridge's CO2 levels; and

WHEREAS: The proposal will provide sustainable food that will be sent to community food pantries to serve unhoused people and those that would benefit from free food; and

WHEREAS: The garden will create community service opportunities for students who would want to help plant the garden and perform upkeep on it; and

WHEREAS: The creation of a garden will contribute towards Objective 2: Provide Accessible College and Career Pathways and Object 4: Build Welcoming & Supportive Schools & Districts by serving as an opportunity to increase college & career exploration and be used by other classrooms and organizations to foster community; and

WHEREAS: This will allow educational experience for high school students, to help achieve equitable learning opportunities for those that would benefit from this out-of-classroom learning environment; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: This order be referred to the Building & Grounds Subcommittee of the School Committee for further discussions of this proposal with the administration and community partners; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent provides an update by the end of January on how the Cambridge Public School District (CPSD) might be able to collaborate with Green Cambridge to create a garden on the slope roof of CRLS; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent provides an update by the end of January on whether CPSD might be able to provide funding to support the creation of the garden.

A discussion followed on **#23-285**.

**Member Hunter** expressed her excitement about the motion and earlier initiatives she has made in the past regarding community gardens. She also expressed her gratitude to Student Member Anjaria and Ms. Dorritie for their efforts in creating the CRLS Sustainable Campus + Community Initiative and is looking forward to working with the group once the initiative is implemented.

**Member Rojas** also discussed his excitement and support for the motion and is looking forward to discussing the initiative further during the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee meeting.

**Member Weinstein** shared that with the importance of climate change, it is important to provide opportunities and optimism grounded in reality and is looking forward to seeing this be integrated with the district curriculum in the future.

**Student Member Anjaria**, who created the proposal discussed his goals and objectives, the significance of farming in the city, and his hopes and expectations of the garden for the community.

**Vice Chair Rachel** also expressed excitement about the motion and its suggestion to include a sustainability pathway in the RSTA program.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Wilson, on the following roll call vote **#23-285** was adopted: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

### **3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:**

- November 21, 2023, Regular Meeting

**Member Hunter** motioned to amend the record for the November 21, 2023 Regular Meeting to correct the verbiage in her announcement that she attended an event on behalf of My Brother's Keeper L.I.F.T. Program and MIT Lemelson; seconded by Member Wilson on the following roll call vote, the records were approved as amended and placed on file: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

### **4. Reconsiderations: None**

### **5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:**

#### **#23-259 Report of the Special Education and Student Supports Subcommittee**

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Member Weinstein on the following roll call vote, **#23-259** was adopted as amended and removed from the calendar: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Wilson, to suspend the rules and bring forward **#23-287** for discussion and adoption, on the following roll call vote, the rules were suspended: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

**#23-287 Approval of the Memorandum of Agreement between The Cambridge School Committee & Cambridge Education Association, Units A & B for a Successor Collective Bargaining Agreement for the period of September 1, 2023 through August 31, 2026 be adopted as follows:**

That the School Committee ratify and approve the Tentative Agreement between the Cambridge School Committee (the "Committee") and Cambridge Education Association Units A&B for a successor collective bargaining agreement for the period of September 1, 2023, through August 31, 2026, as detailed in the [attached document](#).

A discussion followed on **#23-287**

**Vice Chair Rachel** provided a summary of the tentative agreement and the negotiations. In the tentative agreement, some long-term goals were achieved such as an additional thirty minutes of instructional time four days a week, an increase in teacher salaries which included a 9% COLA over 3 years, and an 8% increase for the additional 30 minutes of instructional time for the four days. She also acknowledged and thanked former Deputy Superintendent Carolyn L. Turk, Claire Spinner, Member Fantini, and many others who have helped and aided in the negotiation process.

**Member Fantini** also highlighted the bargaining efforts and praised both sides for agreeing and mentioned the new contract puts Cambridge educators in the top ten percent of salaries and benefits in the state.

**Mayor Siddiqui, Member Hunter, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson, and Member Rojas** each expressed their gratitude for the bargaining teams and the tentative agreement.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Fantini, on the following roll call vote, **#23-287** was adopted: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Ms. Keady Rawson (on behalf of the City Manager) YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

**6. Awaiting Reports: None**

**7. Superintendent's Agenda:**

**7a. Superintendent's Update: General Updates**

Dr. Greer provided the committee with general updates that included: an update on the expansion of additional grades at the Tobin School. The Superintendent and some additional ELT members will be meeting with Tobin families in the upcoming weeks. She also introduced two new staff members Samuel Constant, Employee and Labor Relations Manager; and Skylar Nash, Chief Strategy Officer.

**7b. Presentations:** The Superintendent introduced the presentation for the evening with a focus on Student Success Planning and was led by Dr. Edwards, Chief of Academics and Schools, and Terrance Mitchell, Harvard Fellow Student Success Planning Project Support. The full presentation can be found on the [website](#).

After the presentation, Mayor Siddiqui opened the floor for discussion for any additional feedback from the committee based on the updates and the presentation.

**Vice Chair Rachel** inquired about the timeline and how the district is socializing the idea of getting input from principals, educators, and families early on regarding student success planning. Dr. Edwards shared that the district is still in the very early stages of the implementation. The Student Success Planning team meets twice a month to create an action plan that will outline details such as that.

**Member Hunter** shared schools have students 20% of the time and a goal is to bring in all of the resources that impact student lives. This upcoming week, there will be a presentation from Khari Milner to the Family Policy Council about the data of out-of-school partners. The goal is to determine where students are currently engaged and how our partners can collaborate.

**Member Weinstein** shared his excitement about student success planning and its impact on the students and the community and the significance of the Family Policy Council.

**Member Rojas** asked what are the learnings and biggest challenges that the team has learned from other districts. Dr. Edwards shared that one challenge she has faced coming from a district that has implemented a Student Success Plan is that community input is essential which wasn't a factor in the other district she was employed in. Mr. Mitchell shared that Cambridge is fortunate enough to have a lot of resources and knowledge from the growth of the core team and support.

**Member Wilson** shared her excitement about the updates to the Student Success Plan but reiterated the importance of coordinating our resources richly to ensure that the student success planning is successful.

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

**7d. Consent Agenda:**

On the following roll call vote, items **#23-282**, **#23-284**, and **#23-288** were adopted: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini ABSENT; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

**#23-282 Day & Residential Program Services Not Available from the Cambridge Public Schools be adopted as follows:** that the School Committee contracts to the institutions as detailed in the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, funds to be provided from the General Fund and/or Grant Fund Budget, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

**Description:** SY23-24 Placement of students in private schools for implementation of educational plans in accordance with Chapter 766.

Program	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts	2	\$158,407.54
Residential Program Tuition Contracts		
45-Day Program		
Total	<u>2</u>	<u>\$158,407.54</u>

**#23-284 Contract Award: Research for Better Teaching: Professional Development 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.

Research for Better Teaching, One Acton Place, Acton, MA for the contract period from December 31, 2023, to June 30, 2024, in the amount of \$40,000.00.

**#23-288 Approval of Revision to the 2023-2024 Cambridge Public Schools District Calendar be adopted as follows:** that the School Committee approve a half day of work on the day before winter break.

**Description:** In accordance with the Tentative Agreement between the Cambridge School Committee & the Cambridge Education Association, Units A & B for a successor collective bargaining agreement for the period of September 1, 2023, through August 31, 2026, effective September 1, 2023, there will be a half day of work on the day before the winter break added to the Cambridge Public Schools District Calendar. This means that for the current school year, December 22, 2023, will be a half day.

#### **8. Non-Consent Agenda:**

**#23-283 Contract Award: The Calculus Project: Instructional 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.

The Calculus Project, 168 Pond Street, Randolph, MA for the contract period from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024, in the amount of \$30,500.00.

A discussion followed on **#23-283**.

**Member Wilson** asked for clarity on the contract including the capacity of students for the project. Dr. Gittens shared that the capacity for the current year is 75 students (25 students in 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades). The district hopes to roll out a district-wide plan for 7<sup>th</sup> graders in the upcoming years.

**Vice Chair Rachel** asked for clarity on the dates on the contract and if it includes services from the previous summer (i.e. 2023). Dr. Gittens clarified that the contract is from July 1, 2023, and runs through the current school year with after-school programming.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Member Hunter, on the following roll call vote **#23-283** was adopted: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Fantini ABSENT; Member Hunter YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

**9. School Committee Agenda (Policy Matters/Notifications/Requests for Information):**  
**#23-286 Joint Motion by Vice Chair Rachel, Member Hunter and Member Rojas**

- [Policy Regarding Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students \(First Reading\)](#)

A discussion followed on **#23-286**.

**Vice Chair Rachel** provided context and background on the motion which is the proposed policy based on **C23-256** and the goal of the policy is to align with the district goals of becoming an antiracist and equitable district in which it will assist in improving the academic, social, and social-emotional experiences of transgender, gender nonconforming and non-binary students and reducing stigmatization.

**Member Rojas** shared that several districts in the state have passed several policies and the committee is a bit behind in placing a policy to support these efforts

**Member Hunter, Member Weinstein, and Member Wilson** also shared their support for the motion and the importance of affirming transgender and gender nonconforming students in the community.

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Hunter, on a voice vote **#23-286** was adopted to a second reading.

**11. Announcements:**

- **Member Hunter** acknowledged the conversations and the discussions at the Roundtable focused on Mathematics that occurred on November 28<sup>th</sup> by thanking all of the community partners who participated in the discussions.
- **Mayor Siddiqui** announced that the Mayor's Office in collaboration with the Cambridge Public School is hosting a Toy and Gift Card drive this holiday season. She also announced that the Mayor's Office is hosting a Free Skate Day on December 16<sup>th</sup>.
- **Member Rojas** announced that the winter sports season has begun and congratulated all of the student-athletes who will be participating in winter sports this year.

**12. Communications from City Officers: None**

**13. Late Orders: None**

**Email communications:**

- ✓ Dan Monahan
- ✓ Elizabeth Case

On a motion by Vice Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Wilson on the following on a voice vote, it was voted to adjourn the Meeting. (7:43 p.m.).

Attest:

*Ariel B. Kennebrew*

Ariel B. Kennebrew  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee