

**School Committee - Regular Meeting**

**March 21, 2023 6:00 p.m.**

Held in and broadcast from the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge, and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge. To sign up to call in using the ZOOM app on your computer or mobile device: visit [www.cpsd.us/school\\_committee/virtual](http://www.cpsd.us/school_committee/virtual)

Regular Meetings will be live-streamed at [www.cpsd.us](http://www.cpsd.us) and broadcast on Cambridge Educational Access TV (CEATV) Channel 98/99, as usual.

**AGENDA**

**1. Public Hearing on the FY24 Budget (3 minutes)**

**1a. Public Comment (3 Minutes)**

**2. Student School Committee Report:**

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

- March 7, 2023 Regular Meeting

**4. Reconsiderations: None**

**5. Unfinished Business/Calendar: None**

**6. Awaiting Reports:**

**C22-311 Joint Motion by Member Weinstein and Mayor Siddiqui**

WHEREAS: The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is reviewing and revising bus service schedules; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge Public School District (CPSD) students and their families rely on public bus service to attend school and to participate in out-of-school time opportunities including extracurricular activities, sports, jobs, and internships; and

WHEREAS: CPSD does not provide school bus transportation to students in grades 9 to 12; and

WHEREAS: Proposed changes to MBTA bus routes serving the City of Cambridge include reductions and changes in routes and/or schedules that would greatly impact the ability of CPSD students to access school and other activities; and

WHEREAS: Many issues with the proposed route modifications and recommendations have been brought forward by the community, including:

- **Route 68** Harvard - Kendall / MIT (travels down Broadway between Kendall Sq. and Harvard Sq.). MBTA proposes reducing service to weekdays only 6:00 am- 9:00 am and 4:00 pm-7:00 pm every 30 minutes. Afterschool activities and sports need evening rush hour frequency service extended to 3:00 pm-8:00 pm;
- **Route 69** Harvard - Lechmere (travels down Cambridge St. between Lechmere and Harvard). MBTA proposes a reduction from every 15 mins to every 30 mins;
- **Route 83** (Rindge Ave to Central Sq. via Porter Sq.). MBTA proposes a reduction to every 30 minutes from the current 20 minutes. Current frequency should be maintained, or increased to every 15 minutes to make the bus usable between 3:00 pm and 8:00 pm;

- **Routes 69 and Route 83** are being cut drastically; the frequencies of both routes should be increased to account for the needs of students;
- **Route 78** (78 Arlmont Village - Harvard via Garden St., Concord Ave to Cambridge Highlands). MBTA proposes a reduction from every 25 minutes to every 60-90 minutes (6:00 am-1:00 am). Students on this line need more frequent service to access school and afterschool activities and sports need evening rush hour frequency service extended to 3:00 pm-8:00 pm. Cuts to Route 78 also reduce access to Neighborhood Nine, Cambridge Highlands, Concord Ave between Huron and Blanchard Rd, including assisted care and medical facilities; it is also the only connector between West Cambridge and Arlington;
- **Route 75** (The dedicated CRLS route on school mornings) provides essential transportation services for high school students to get to school on time and should be reinstated and additional dedicated CRLS routes considered for other areas of the City;
- **Routes throughout the City** need to be assessed in light of new and planned housing units including affordable housing and the potential future needs of students living in that housing; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent and Mayor Siddiqui [send a letter](#) and forward this policy order along with emails from the community to representatives at the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) and the Cambridge state delegation on behalf of the entire School Committee, and be it further

RESOLVED: That this letter will detail the MBTA bus routes and schedules that are critical for the needs of CPSD students, with particular attention to those students and families who rely the most on MBTA busses; and be it further

RESOLVED: That CPSD will review student needs and the most recent MBTA proposals before submitting the letter and will add to or modify the list noted above if needed, and be it further

RESOLVED: The Cambridge School Committee goes on record in support of changes that improve access and in support of further changes to address the concerns of residents as summarized above, and be it further

RESOLVED: [That this letter](#) will be delivered to the MBTA, the state delegation, and the Governor-Elect Maura Healy as soon as possible with a request for a response

7. **7a. Superintendent’s Update:** Update on School Committee Order **#C23-052** Longfellow Building Repair

**7b. Presentations:**

Superintendent’s Formative Evaluation.....Victoria L. Greer, PhD  
Superintendent of Schools

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

**7d. Consent Agenda:**

**#23-053** Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to the School Council Handbook (First Reading)

- #23-054** Recommendation: Contract Award: Henry J. Turner: Professional Development
- #23-055** Recommendation: Contract Award: Cartwheel Health Services P.C.:  
Mental Health Services
- #23-056** Recommendation: Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts
- #23-057** Recommendation: Grant Award: FY23 Special Education IDEA Allocation (SC23605)  
Increase

**8. Non-Consent Agenda:**

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

**#23-058 Joint Motion by Vice Chair Rachel, Mayor Siddiqui, and Member Wilson**

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools prioritizes the safety of our students, staff, and everyone in our school communities; and

WHEREAS: Keeping our schools safe from gun violence is a responsibility of all adult stakeholders in each of our school communities; and

WHEREAS: In the United States, gun violence is the leading cause of death in children and teens. An estimated 4.6 million American children live in households with at least one loaded, unlocked firearm, and every year, roughly 350 children under the age of 18 unintentionally shoot themselves or someone else; and

WHEREAS: 1200 children and teens die by gun suicide each year, and over 80 percent of children under age 18 who died by firearm suicide used a gun belonging to a family member;<sup>6</sup> and

WHEREAS: Research shows that secure firearm storage practices are associated with up to a 78 percent reduction in the risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries and up to an 85 percent reduction in the risk of unintentional firearm injuries among children and teens; and

WHEREAS: In incidents of gun violence on school grounds, the US Secret Service found that 76 percent of shooters under age 18 acquired their firearm from the home of a caregiver, or that of relatives or friends; and

WHEREAS: Evidence strongly suggests that secure firearm storage is an essential component of any effective strategy to keep schools and students safe; and

WHEREAS: The US Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center recommends the importance of appropriate storage of weapons because many school attackers used firearms acquired from their homes; and

WHEREAS: Across the country, lawmakers, community members, and local leaders are working together to implement public awareness campaigns, such as the Be SMART Program, which is endorsed by the National PTA and encourages secure gun storage practices and highlights the public safety risks of unsecured guns; and

WHEREAS: Secure storage of firearms is a legal requirement in Massachusetts pursuant to G.L. Chapter 140, sections 131L and 131C, and failure to comply with secure storage laws can lead to criminal prosecution, jail time, fines, and/or revocation of FID card or license, depending on the offense; and

WHEREAS: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends storing firearms unloaded and locked, with ammunition locked separately to reduce risks of injury to children; and

WHEREAS: The epidemic of school shootings and mass shootings requires more preventative measures in order to increase student and school safety; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge Public Schools will update the Student Handbook for SY24-25 and all following years to include information about caregivers' legal obligations regarding the secure storage of firearms; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent will send an appropriate communication to caregivers that explains the importance of secure firearm storage to protect children and teens from unauthorized access to unsecured firearms, and their legal obligations consistent with Massachusetts safe storage law. Notification will be included on the district website and in annual registration materials at each school site.

**#23-059 Joint Motion By Member Weinstein, Vice Chair Rachel, and Member Hunter in collaboration with Student Member Clemente and Student Member Escamilla-Salomon**

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public School District (CPSD) has made a commitment to providing access to menstrual products to students; and has been a leader in menstrual equity,

WHEREAS: CPSD has been a leader in this area thanks to a policy order put in place in 2016, as a result of Motion C16-298, sponsored by then Building and Grounds Subcommittee Chair Member Manikka Bowman and then Subcommittee Members Fred Fantini and Patty Nolan, and because of the advocacy of CPSD students and the leadership of Member Bowman during her service on the School Committee; and

WHEREAS: Recent research shows nearly a quarter of all students in the United States experience “period poverty” – the inability to access menstrual hygiene products and many people miss out on school time because of lack of access to period products; and

WHEREAS: Legislation that includes expanding menstrual equity to all schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, known as the I AM Bill, is being considered by the Massachusetts State Legislature; and

WHEREAS: CPSD is committed to continual review and improvement; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That CPSD will update its policy to clarify that menstrual products will be accessible at no cost to all menstruators using our buildings including students, staff, and visitors and that the policy includes all CPSD buildings; and be it further

RESOLVED: That menstrual products will be accessible to all students, staff, and visitors in a gender-inclusive manner following best practices, including with regard to the locations of products and dispensers, the labeling of products and dispensers, and the communications about this availability; and be it further

RESOLVED: That menstrual products will be easily accessible to all who need them and that the availability of menstrual products at no cost is clearly communicated to the entire school community every year, and on the labeling on dispensers; and be it further

RESOLVED: That dispensers are clearly labeled with contact information for alerting CPSD of the need to restock or repair the dispensers; and be it further

RESOLVED: That providing menstrual products is accounted for in every annual CPSD budget, and that it is part of the assigned work of the CPSD Facilities Department to maintain dispensers, keep them fully stocked, and consult with CPSD’s healthcare partners to ensure that the products being provided are the best available for the needs of those we are serving.

**#23-060 Joint Motion by Member Hunter, Mayor Siddiqui, and Member Wilson in collaboration with Student Member Clemente, and Student Member Escamilla-Salomon**

WHEREAS: Florida Governor Ron DeSantis publicly signed the Stop Woke Bill and banned the teaching of AP African American History in Florida; deeming it as “lacking educational value”, preventing and discouraging students from taking this course and other ethnic and racial studies classes that go beyond current standard history curriculums around the country; and

WHEREAS: The newly introduced College Board’s AP African American Studies class at CRLS is a pilot course that explores Black history to a new extent, exposing students to a comprehensive curriculum at a college level that is centralized around the concept of Harvard’s Henry Louis Gates Jr.’s idea of the “42 million ways to be Black”; and

WHEREAS: This class follows the trajectory of Black history via four units: Unit One - Origins of the African Diaspora, Unit Two - Freedom, Enslavement, and Resistance, Unit Three - The Practice of Freedom, and Unit Four - Movements and Debates; and

WHEREAS: AP African American studies equips students with the foundational tools to apply their understanding of the historical evolution of Black societies around the world in addition to the more general skill of historical analysis which can be utilized on an everyday basis beyond this course; and

WHEREAS: By the end of their time in this class, scholars have a more holistic understanding of various sub-themes that together create the curriculum of AP African American Studies; and

WHEREAS: Students learn about the concept of intersectionality through examining the implications of race, gender, and class on the experiences of Black Americans and those in the broader African diaspora; and

WHEREAS: Scholars gain the critical skill of understanding the diversity within and across Black societies both before and after the emergence of trans-Atlantic slavery; and

WHEREAS: Members of the class conceptualize the various ways that Black communities have advocated for autonomy and authentic representation, the advancement of opportunities, and justice as a means to combat global systemic inequality; and

WHEREAS: CRLS is one of 60 select high schools across the nation that were given the opportunity to implement the pilot course of AP African American Studies, this district has demonstrated its continued commitment to equity in education, both in Cambridge and beyond; and

WHEREAS: More than 200 colleges and universities have already committed to recognizing the AP African American Studies for college credit, and

WHEREAS: We must acknowledge that this revolutionary stride towards a better future for our schools has only been possible through the persistence and empowerment of marginalized students and educators whose histories are a vital part of our curriculum and should be treated as such; and

WHEREAS: Due to the national threat towards the learning of our youth and the preservation of the historical narratives of Black and other marginalized peoples, it is our duty to act in solidarity and actively support and protect this course; and

WHEREAS: AP African American Studies is a course with a culturally responsive curriculum that represents a foundational part of Americans' authentic shared history. By uplifting underrepresented trailblazers such as Michelle Browder and Kathleen Cleaver and frequently unrecognized events such as Gabriel's Rebellion, the St. Augustine Movement, and the Watts Truce, this course shifts from a eurocentric focus to an alternative yet equally important point of view that every student deserves to have access to learning from; and

WHEREAS: 54 students have taken AP African American Studies between this past Fall and the current Spring semesters, including 38 Black Students; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee reaffirms its commitment to including AP African American Studies in the Cambridge Public Schools and publicly declares intent to protect the teaching of this course and material despite any forthcoming backlash.

#### **#23-061 Motion by Member Fantini**

That the School Committee receive budgetary reports from the schools regarding their school improvement funds.

#### **#23-062 Report of the March 1, 2023, School Climate Subcommittee**

### **10. Resolutions (letters of congratulations, letters of condolence):**

#### **#23-063 Joint Resolution by Mayor Siddiqui, Member Weinstein, and Member Hunter**

WHEREAS: Congratulations to the CPSD students who brought home awards from the 2022-2023 Scholastic Art and Writing Awards, the nation's longest-running, most prestigious award and recognition program to identify students with exceptional artistic and literary talents; and

WHEREAS: Our students received 25 Gold Keys, 34 Silver Keys, and 46 Honorable Mentions; and

WHEREAS: The Gold Key winning artwork and portfolios are currently being judged in New York City for National Medals and there will be an exhibition of all Massachusetts Gold and Silver Key Award-winning work at Tufts University in March; and

WHEREAS: In 2022, students across America and Canada entered nearly 260,000 original works of art and writing; and

WHEREAS: Some alumni of the awards include Andy Warhol, Amanda Gorman, Richard Avedon, Cy Twombly, Ezra Jack Keats, Ken Burns, Stephen King, Sylvia Plath, John Updike, Red Grooms, Zak Posen, and many more great artists; and

WHEREAS: A special thank you to the CRLS Students who have created this excellent work and won the Awards and to the CRLS Educators for teaching and creating these opportunities for Cambridge Rindge and Latin students; and

WHEREAS: These students were supported by extraordinary CPSD writing and visual arts teachers; and

WHEREAS: The students' artwork can be viewed [here](#), the winners for the art award can be found [here](#), and the list for the writing awards can be viewed [here](#); now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee goes on record congratulating the students and teachers on this wonderful accomplishment.

**11. Late Orders:** None

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

*After the Regular meeting, the School Committee will entertain a motion to enter into an executive session for the purposes of discussing strategy for collective bargaining (CEA Units A&B) as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee.*