

School Committee - Regular Meeting

March 7, 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

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

A G E N D A

1. **Public Comment (3 Minutes)**
2. **Student School Committee Report:**
3. **Presentation of the Records for Approval:**
 - February 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 SC Order **#C22-229 – HBCU Early College**

7b. Presentations:

Office of Academics: ELA/Literacy Department Update: Superintendent’s Student Learning Goal 2:
Academic Achievement Standard I-E: Data-Informed Decision Making..... Dr. Lendozia Edwards
Chief of Academics & Schools
Emily Bryan,
Coordinator, ELA/Literacy Department

7c. CPS District Plan: None

7d. Consent Agenda:

#23-034 Recommendation: Approval Revisions to the School Entrance Age Policy (Second Reading)

#23-035 Recommendation: Approval of the Revisions to the School Admissions Policy (Second Reading)

- #23-036 Recommendation: Approval of Revisions to the Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (Second Reading)
- #23-037 Recommendation: Approval of the SY2023-2024 Cambridge Public Schools District Calendar
- #23-038 Recommendation: Day & Residential Program Services not Available from the Cambridge School Department
- #23-039 Recommendation: Contract Award: CCS Presentation Systems: Interactive Display Hardware
- #23-040 Recommendation: Contract Award: Insight Public Sector: Computer Software
- #23-041 Recommendation: Contract Award: ParentSquare: Computer Software
- #23-042 Recommendation: Contract Award: Sunbelt Rentals: Equipment Rental- Winterization Services
- #23-043 Recommendation: Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts
- #23-044 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY23 Influence 100 (SC23167)

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

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

#23-045 Motion by the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee (Member Rojas and Member Fantini)

WHEREAS: At the beginning of the school year the Vice Chair asked Members to revise existing policies through the Subcommittees of the School Committee; and

WHEREAS: The Building & Grounds Subcommittee reviewed over its last two meetings suggested changes to the Transportation Policy; and therefore, be it

RESOLVED: To correct the first sentence of the Transportation Policy to read, "Students will be entitled to transportation to and from school at the expense of the Cambridge Public Schools when such transportation conforms to applicable provisions of Massachusetts General Laws and the policies of the School Committee." This corrects the following mistake, "Students will be entitled to entitled to transportation...."

#23-046 Joint Motion by the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee (Member Rojas and Member Fantini) and Member Wilson

WHEREAS: In response to the emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 the School Committee and Administration implemented multi-layered strategies outlined in the "COVID-19 Safety & Facilities Procedures Manual" developed with the advice of the superintendent-appointed COVID-19 Safety, Health & Facilities Working Group made up of expert volunteers, the Department of Public Health, Safety committees at each school and the wider community through regular meetings of the Building & Grounds Subcommittee; and

WHEREAS: The multi-layered strategies included ventilation, CO2 monitoring, masking, distancing, and vaccination to minimize the spread of the virus so that we could return to in-person learning during the school year 2020-2021; and

WHEREAS: In the autumn of 2021, when the state required all students to return to in-person learning, our high-school-age student vaccination rates were low and vaccination access was not in place for all students; and

WHEREAS: To contribute to a higher vaccination rate among high school and middle school students and at the recommendation of the superintendent, the School Committee passed Order C21-340 ([See: Appendix A](#)) on October 5, 2021, that approved “mandatory vaccination requirements for all currently age-eligible Cambridge Public School students effective November 22, 2021, and further, that as additional students become age-eligible for vaccines the same mandate will apply to these students at a date to be determined once the vaccine expansion is announced.”; and

WHEREAS: The Administration subsequently, on October 6, 2021, announced it was implementing this requirement such by November 29, 2021, no unvaccinated, age-eligible student will be allowed to participate in the CPS-sponsored after-school extracurricular activities; initially for students ages 12 and older, and later for all students; and

WHEREAS: On February 15, 2022, with everything we have learned about the virus, the wide availability of vaccines in our community, and the emergence of treatments against COVID-19, it appears we will not eradicate the virus and we are unlikely to eliminate it the School Committee adopted Order C22-038 ([See: Appendix B](#)) that modified the goals of the “COVID-19 Safety & Facilities Procedures Manual” from zero transmission to “balancing the costs and benefits of COVID-19 protocols on students and staff...and that we ... continue to make decisions based on the latest science and give that COVID-19 will continue to evolve and be ready to reassess the priorities of [Manual] including returning to a zero-transmission goal/strategy.

WHEREAS: On June 7, 2022, the administration changed the mandatory vaccination requirement from students needing to be completely up to date with their COVID-19 vaccine to only needing to be vaccinated with the initial vaccinations against Covid-19, as it was challenging to monitor the ever-evolving logistics of boosters; and

WHEREAS: The fully-vaccinated rate of our high school and upper school students is now 85% and 74% respectively; and

WHEREAS: Based on current COVID-19 trends, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is planning for the federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) for COVID-19 to expire at the end of the day on May 11, 2023; and therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee request the administration to present data on the outcomes of Cambridge’s COVID-19 vaccination requirements for students relative to those of surrounding communities where their school districts do not have a mandated vaccination requirement for students; and be it further,

RESOLVED: That assuming that there are no material differences in the above-referenced outcomes, that the administration, with the advice of the COVID-19 Safety, Health & Facilities Working Group, presents a date by when our mandatory COVID-19 student vaccination requirement policy should be rescinded; and be it further,

RESOLVED: That as we have stated before, we have and will continue to make decisions based on the latest science, and given that COVID-19 will continue to evolve, we need to be ready to reassess the priorities of the “COVID-19 Safety & Facilities Procedures Manual”, including implementing any new vaccine requirements for students issued by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Committee continues to recommend all students be fully vaccinated and up to date with the most recent boosters available, to best protect themselves, their families, and the CPS community.

#23-047 Joint Motion by Vice Chair Rachel, Member Hunter, and Member Weinstein

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee’s policy on the “Non-Tolerance of Hate Crimes” specifies that we “will not stand for hate crimes;” and

WHEREAS: Despite a change in how the federal government collects hate crime statistics, in 2021 the FBI reported the highest rates of hate crimes in a dozen years, and multiple advocacy organizations documented record levels of hate crime incidents based on race, nationality, gender, and religion; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools not only prohibits hate incidents, but takes pride in our active embrace of anti-racist, equitable, and liberatory education, as reflected in the CPS Anti-racist vision and mission statements to “support learning spaces where all students are known, celebrated, empowered and thrive;” now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee updates policy [JICFA-E-1 - NON-TOLERANCE OF HATE CRIMES](#) to elaborate that the Committee and district also are intolerant of all incidents of biased-based behaviors and expressions of hate, be they legal crimes or not; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the policy include that educators will prioritize responding to incidents of hate in a manner that utilizes the experience as a teachable moment for students, allowing all students to engage, process, learn and build community; and be it further

RESOLVED: That educators may invite students directly impacted or involved to participate in restorative practices; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge Public Schools will provide access to and counseling support for students following such incidents; and be it further

RESOLVED: That, when incidents of hate occur, the Superintendent or their designee will alert School Committee Members in a timely manner.

#23-048 Joint Motion by Vice Chair Rachel and Member Hunter

WHEREAS: CPS [policy](#) states that, “The Cambridge School Committee believes that any educational program is influenced greatly by the environment in which it functions. The development of a quality educational program and school facilities that help to implement the program must go hand in hand. Therefore, it is the School Committee's goal to provide the facilities needed for the number of students in the school district, and to provide the kind of facilities that will best support and accommodate the educational program;” and

WHEREAS: CPS [policy](#) charges the Chief Operating Officer with maintenance, improvement, and repair responsibilities; and

WHEREAS: Students at the High School Extension Program and Tobin Montessori school are currently housed in the district's swing space, the old Longfellow School building; and

WHEREAS: Montessori pedagogy considers the learning environment the “third teacher” (after the teacher and the student); and

WHEREAS: Portions of the roof of the Longfellow building have been deteriorating over an extended period of time, causing water to periodically leak onto an area of the second floor of the building; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools are firmly committed to maintaining learning environments that in no way constitute a health hazard to students, staff, and other building occupants; and

WHEREAS: The Committee reaffirms its commitment to teaching and learning environments that foster enthusiasm and health, as well as a sense of respect for students and educators; and

WHEREAS: The Superintendent previously directed that air quality testing occur to ensure that no harmful exposure, including but not limited to mold and asbestos, is present in the Longfellow building due to the deteriorating roof and associated leaking; and

WHEREAS: Air quality testing for purposes of mold detection will be conducted on Thursday, March 2, 2023, and preliminary findings will be provided to the School Committee immediately; and

WHEREAS: Additional testing for asbestos has been scheduled to occur as soon as possible on an upcoming Saturday, in order to avoid the disturbance that such testing would cause to educational programming in the building; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent will direct the Chief Operating Officer to report immediately to the Committee on the data collected as part of that asbestos testing; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent will instruct the COO to confer with environmental engineering consultants as necessary to determine the safety of the Longfellow building for inhabitants based on the data accumulated through the aforementioned testing; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent will instruct the COO to provide an anticipated timeline for any necessary roofing repairs as well as any operational implications for such repairs such as the potential temporary and/or relocation of programming affecting students and staff by the next regular School Committee meeting, March 21, 2023.

#23-049 Joint Motion by Mayor Siddiqui and Vice Chair Rachel

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee recognizes the need most working families have for after-school care; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee believes high-quality after-school programming benefits our student's academic and social-emotional growth; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge is fortunate to have numerous high-quality after-school partners, both public and non-profit; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge Public Schools worked with the Department of Human Services last year on an expansion plan to grow Community School capacity by over 100 seats, but, due to staffing challenges, more seats were not possible; and

WHEREAS: The Superintendent and her team have worked diligently to identify classrooms and school space for after-school expansion, assisted in recruiting CPS staff who may be interested in after-school roles, and modified transportation plans to maximize access to after-school seats this school year; and

WHEREAS: The Department of Human Services (DHSP) currently aims to add 170 seats by Fall 2023, grow programs with stable staffing models, add full-time teachers to grow select Community School programs, and expend an additional ~\$1.5M towards this effort; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent explore the feasibility of providing additional space to accommodate the Community Schools expansion and explore opportunities to partner with the Department of Human Services (DHSP) in considering creative staffing models to support after-school programming; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent reports back to the Committee by April 4, 2023.

#23-050 Report of the February 16, 2023, Communications and Community Relations Subcommittee

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

#23-051 Joint Motion by Member Hunter, Vice Chair Rachel in collaboration with Student Member Clemente and Student Member Escamilla-Salomon

WHEREAS: A Mock School Committee Meeting was held on February 10, 2023, for the Upper Schools Student Governments in the CRLS Media Café, and

WHEREAS: The Mock School Committee Meeting was organized by Sam Musher, Youth Advocate Specialist in the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging, with the support of Director of Equity, Leslie Jimenez, and Chief Equity Officer Manual Fernandez, and

WHEREAS: Tufts ACTION, which stands for **Advancing Civic Thought In Our Nation**, is a student-run organization that aims to promote youth civic engagement in the greater Boston area, and

WHEREAS: Alison Cedarbaum, Olivia Iannini, and Maxwell Dryfoos of Tufts ACTION, coordinated with Sam Musher, leading the CPS Upper Schools Student Government members in small group activities including brainstorming, consensus building, and voicing opinions; and

WHEREAS: The Upper School Student Government members meet and work in their schools with the following teacher-advisors:

- Marilyn Rottersman and Jose Oliveira – Rindge Ave Upper School (RAUS)
- Anays Baez –Cambridge Street Upper School (CSUS) with help from Assistant Principal Blaine Yesselman
- Mary Tiernan and Danielle Rivers – Putnam Ave Upper School (PAUS)
- Oksana Deinak –Vasal Lane Upper School (VLUS)
- Michael Batt – Amigos School; and

WHEREAS: the CPS Upper Schools Student Government members took their roles as School Committee members seriously and deliberated on the issues and projects that should be considered for the 2023 budget allocations; and

WHEREAS: CPS Upper Schools Student Government members discussed all options presented and voted on their 2023 budget recommendations for allocations of funds for the following issues:

- 50% funding to improve the choices, quality, and dietary options at the Upper Schools.
- 50% funding for improved bus schedules and addressing overcrowding on busses;

and therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee would like to thank and commend Sam Musher, Youth Advocate Specialist, the Tufts ACTION Crew, the Upper School Student Government Members, and their Advisors on a successful Mock School Committee Meeting that modeled exemplary civic engagement.

#23-052 Motion by Member Hunter

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee is committed to the ideals of social justice exemplified by the life of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and

WHEREAS: The King Open School is named after the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and

WHEREAS: The King Open School celebrated the legacy of Dr. King with a whole school assembly on Thursday, January 19 at 10 am in the King Open Auditorium, and this event was the first time that the entire King Open School was able to come together after COVID-19 restrictions.

WHEREAS: The theme of the King Open's MLK Celebration was "Be The Dream: King Open Change Makers", and

WHEREAS: The MLK Celebration was organized by teachers May Petrov (5th Grade) and Aida Riggs (1st Grade), and the celebration was the culmination of the classroom work done by MLK scholars who learned about the life of Dr. King,

WHEREAS: King Open MLK Celebration includes the following participants"

- **MLK Celebration Organizers:** May Petrov (5th Grade) & Ada Riggins (1st Grade)
- **Ushers:** Jenan Fak, Henry Doan, Tsion Arega, Devin Depina, Sage Rivas- Amaya (all 5th Grade),
- **Song:** Lift Every Voice: Ms. Erika Agard & the ESL 4th grade students
- **Welcome Address by Emcees:** Cecelia Parker, Miles Barham, and Zaria Johnson (5th Grade)
- **Song:** We are King Open & Here We Are by the MLK Chorus of JK-5 students & Family Members,
- **MLK Portraits:** digital portraits displayed by JK students
- **Guest Speaker:** Caroline Hunter, School Committee member & local hero
- **Movement Break:** "I Believe in the Dream"
- **Song: I Lift My Voice:** 5th-Grade Students
- **Letters to Dr. King and/or Mrs. King:** 5th-grade Students
- **Portuguese Song: 3rd & 4th Grade students with Ola Teacher(s):** Fabiane Noronha & Jonathan Horowitz
- **Spoken Word Original Poem:** Devonte Cooper, King Open Extended Day Teacher & King Open Alum
- **Our Dreams:** King Open Change Maker
- **MLK Choir:** Yonder Come Day, We Shall Overcome
- **Closing Remarks:** Principal Williams.

WHEREAS: The work of the following teachers in preparation of students for this wonderful program with special thanks, to teachers: Jessica Ober, Tawnie Hespler (4th Grade) Ms. Erika Agard (ESL), Matt Thoman & Annie Fox (J/K), Ana Travassos, Shana Gargiulo, & Isabella Pereira (5th Grade) and Priya Zerai, Grace Bailly, Molly Camp, & Aida Riggins (1st and 2nd Grade), Art Display: by JK-5 King Open Students under the direction of Art Teacher Kelley Mowers, Music support on Piano: Rania El-Kareh, CSUS Music Teacher, Music Teacher: Jesse Jackson and Musical Direction: Ada Riggins, and therefore be it, RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee would like to go on record and thanking and commending all King Open Community of students, teachers, and families for an exemplary program dedicated to the celebration of the life and legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. through art, song, letters, portraits, and videos in a true whole community celebration.

11. Late Orders: None

12. Communications and Reports from City Officers: None