

School Committee - Regular Meeting

April 7, 2026 at 6:00 p.m.

Held in and broadcast from the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge, and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge for the purpose of discussing the agenda items listed below.

Individuals may sign up in advance to provide public comment for the April 7 Regular Meeting: The sign-up window is Thursday, April 2 through Tuesday, April 7 at 12:00 PM (by phone) and 5:30 PM (online).

To register for public comment during the sign-up times:

- Visit the School Committee online portal: https://secure1.cpsd.us/school_committee.
- Or contact the School Committee office at 617.349.6620.

Regular Meetings will be live-streamed at www.cpsd.us and broadcast on Cambridge Educational Access TV (CEATV) Channel 26, as usual. The meeting can also be viewed on Zoom at <https://zoom.us/j/96081106637>. This meeting will be video and audio recorded which may include third party devices.

AGENDA

1. Public Comment

2. Student School Committee Report:

3. Presentation of Records for Approval:

- March 11, 2026, Special Meeting (3:00 p.m.)
- March 11, 2026, Special Meeting (6:00 p.m.)
- March 11, 2026, Special Meeting (8:00 p.m.)
- March 17, 2026, Regular Meeting

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:

#26-040 Temporary Pause on Non-Essential Student Screen Use, Grades Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2 – Vice Chair Dube and Member de Paula Santos

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee has a duty to safeguard student health, well-being, and learning conditions; and

WHEREAS: There is increasing evidence and concern from families, educators, and health experts about the impact of excessive screen use on student attention, vision, sleep, and social development, particularly for younger children; and

WHEREAS: The Committee has already directed the District to conduct a comprehensive audit of student screen time and digital tool use; and

WHEREAS: Access to developmentally protective learning environments with minimal screen exposure currently varies across schools and programs within the district, creating inequitable conditions for students during the school day; and

WHEREAS: The continuation of current practices during the audit period risks unnecessary and inequitable exposure for students; and

WHEREAS: The American Academy of Pediatrics has repeatedly emphasized, including in recent guidance published in *Pediatrics*, that excessive or non-purposeful screen use during the school day can displace critical developmental activities such as physical movement, peer interaction, play, and self-regulation, particularly for younger children; and

WHEREAS: Recent large-scale observational research and surveys reported in *The Lancet* and its affiliated journals have raised concerns about associations between higher screen exposure in childhood and adverse outcomes related to attention, emotional regulation, mental health, and physical well-being, reinforcing calls for precautionary

limits in educational settings; and

WHEREAS: The guidance cited herein is particularly urgent for younger children, for whom screen exposure most significantly displaces foundational activities such as play, movement, peer interaction, and self-regulation, and for whom the long-term consequences of early and excessive screen exposure are of greatest concern; and therefore the Committee has determined that a precautionary pause is most urgently warranted for students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2, while evidence and audit findings for older grade levels are evaluated; and

WHEREAS: Both pediatric and public-health experts emphasize that screen use should not replace movement, recess, or restorative breaks during the school day, and that minimizing non-essential exposure is a reasonable protective measure while districts evaluate screen practices; and

WHEREAS: Pediatric and public-health guidance consistently affirms that caregivers have a right to know how much screen exposure their children experience during the school day, particularly when such exposure is required or unavoidable, in order to support student health outside of school; and

WHEREAS: The Committee affirms the professionalism, care, and expertise of educators, and recognizes that this temporary pause is intended to clarify system-level expectations and reduce inequitable conditions for students; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee directs the Superintendent to suspend all student-facing screen use for students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2, pending completion and presentation of the screen time audit, or until the end of the 2025–2026 school year, whichever occurs first, unless extended by vote of the Committee.

This pause shall not apply to teacher-directed projection of district-approved curriculum materials onto a classroom display as part of direct instruction, where students are not individually operating a device.

This pause shall take effect upon issuance of written guidance by the Superintendent, which shall be issued no later than ten school days following adoption of this resolution; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the only permitted exceptions to this prohibition are:

1. Assistive technology, IEP or 504 accommodations, and legally required accessibility supports
2. Translation or communication supports necessary for student access
3. Health, safety, or other legally mandated services
4. State-mandated or district-required assessments where no paper-based alternative is legally permissible
5. Any additional exception explicitly approved in writing by the Superintendent, consistent with the intent of this resolution, reported to the Committee, and time-limited; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent shall issue guidance to schools clarifying expectations during this interim period and report back to the Committee on implementation challenges or needed adjustments; and be it further

RESOLVED: That for any required assessment-related student screen use for students PreK-5th grade, the District shall provide daily written notification to families by the close of the school day that includes:

1. The name and purpose of the assessment administered that day
2. The anticipated duration of screen use prior to administration
3. The actual duration of screen use once the assessment session has concluded

Such notification shall be provided on each day that a student engages in required assessment-related screen use. Where a paper-based alternative is legally or logistically permissible, the District shall offer that option as the primary choice; and be it further

RESOLVED: that the District shall establish a dedicated feedback channel, such as a named email address or online form, through which families and staff may submit concerns and suggestions regarding compliance with this resolution to the Superintendent; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Superintendent shall submit a written implementation report to the Committee every thirty (30) days during the audit period, which shall include:

- The number and nature of any exceptions granted
- Implementation challenges encountered
- Patterns of concern identified through the feedback channel, including concerns raised by families or staff

These reports shall be reviewed by the Committee as part of its ongoing oversight.

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7a. Superintendent's Update:

The Superintendent will provide an update on pending matters and highlight various initiatives taking place across the Cambridge Public Schools. The report will include comments related to several time sensitive matters, including:

- (1) The proposed FY 27 operating budget;
- (2) A brief update on the strategic planning process;
- (3) A recommendation pertaining to a specific timeline for consideration of the use of the 158 Spring Street facility and the public engagement process that will precede the resolution of that matter as contemplated by previous discussions at the Building and Grounds Subcommittee;
- (4) Current or impending hiring processes for district and school leadership positions.

7b. Presentation:

The Superintendent and representatives from the district administration will present to the committee on the myriad of specific metrics used to assess students and schools' academic progress. The report will detail the distinctions between statewide common assessments, intermediate universal screening assessments and curriculum-based assessments. The administration will share the objectives and purposes that underlie these assessment systems and how they function in conjunction with one another to inform strategies for continuous improvement for students, schools and the district.

7c. District Plan None

7d. Consent Agenda

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| #26-044 | Recommendation: Fiscal Year 2027 Recommended Budget |
| #26-045 | Recommendation: Approval of Authorization for an Additional Appropriation for the Feasibility Study/Schematic Design Agreement with the Massachusetts School Building Authority for the Replacement of the Cambridgeport School Building Roof |
| #26-046 | Recommendation: Approval of Private School: Harmony Academy |
| #26-047 | Recommendation: Day & Residential Program Services not Available from The Cambridge Public Schools |
| #26-048 | Recommendation: Contract Award: Boston Tutoring Services: Special Education Services-Amendment |
| #26-049 | Recommendation: Contract Award: Research for Better Teaching: Professional Development (FY27 Contract) |
| #26-050 | Recommendation: Contract Award: Lakeshore Learning: Instructional Materials & Classroom Furniture (FY27 Contract) |
| #26-051 | Recommendation: Contract Award: School Specialty: Instructional Materials (FY27 Contract) |
| #26-052 | Recommendation: Contract Award: WB Mason: Instructional Materials (FY27 Contract) |
| #26-053 | Recommendation: Contract Award: WB Mason: Classroom & Office Furniture (FY27 Contract) |
| #26-054 | Recommendation: Contract Award: School Specialty: Classroom Furniture (FY27 Contract) |
| #26-055 | Recommendation: Contract Award: Apple: Staff Devices, Student iPads & Other Apple Accessories |
| #26-056 | Recommendation: Contract Award: Sterling Business Products: Printing, Promotional & Mailing Services (FY27 Contract) |
| #26-057 | Recommendation: Contract Award: Ockers Technology: Computer Software & Supplies |

- #26-058 Recommendation: Contract: Award: Ricoh USA, Inc.: Multi-function Printer Leases, Maintenance & Supplies (FY27 Contract)
- #26-059 Recommendation: Gifts & Miscellaneous Receipts

8. Non-Consent Agenda

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

- #26-060 **Governance Subcommittee Report - February 26, 2026**
- #26-061 **Buildings & Grounds Subcommittee Report - March 18, 2026**
- #26-062 **Curriculum & Achievement Report - March 19, 2026**
- #26-063 **Youth Risk Behavior Survey Roundtable – Member Harding and Member Hudson**

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Schools is committed to supporting the health and well-being of all students through data-informed decision-making and collaboration with public health partners; and
WHEREAS: The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) provides critical data on student health, wellness, and risk behaviors that can inform district policies, supports, and interventions; and
WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public Health Department Epidemiology Division plays an essential role in analyzing and contextualizing public health data that impacts Cambridge youth; and
WHEREAS: The results of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) are expected to be completed by June, providing an opportunity for timely review and discussion; now therefore be it
RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee requests that the Superintendent coordinate with the Cambridge Public Health Department Epidemiology Division to schedule a Roundtable in fall 2026 to discuss the results and information gathered from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS); and be it further
RESOLVED: That the Roundtable shall serve as an opportunity for collaborative discussion and information sharing and shall not be an agenda item as part of a Regular School Committee meeting; and be it further
RESOLVED: That the Roundtable will not include public comment.

#26-064 Establishing School Council Subcommittee and Working Group – Member de Paula Santos, Member Dube and Chair Weinstein

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public School District (CPSD) is committed to family and community engagement as a key to strengthening schools, and Superintendent Murphy continues to emphasize a commitment to improving family engagement; and
WHEREAS: Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 59C establishes School Councils to "assist in the identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school, make recommendations to the principal for the development, implementation and assessment of the curriculum accommodation plan, assist in the review of the annual school budget and in the formulation of a school improvement plan"; and
WHEREAS: The Cambridge Public School District (CPSD) School Council Handbook outlines the role of School Councils in collaborating with and advising school leadership to strengthen schools; and
WHEREAS: The School Committee has a statutory and moral responsibility to ensure that School Councils are functioning as intended and that parent and caregiver voices are meaningfully incorporated into school-level decision-making; and
WHEREAS: From March to June 2021 a School Council Working Group consisting of CPSD parents, educators and staff and Cambridge community members convened with the support of then-Director of Family and Community Engagement Robin Harris and drafted the School Councils Handbook, later revised and adopted as policy by the School Committee in June 2023; and now therefore be it
RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee establish a standing school council subcommittee, and the subcommittee actively engages with caregiver representatives, educator representatives serving on a School Council, principal or assistant principals, and the Director of Family and Community Engagement (or designee), should serve as Executive Leadership Team (ELT) member; and be it further
RESOLVED: That the subcommittee shall convene by May 15, 2026, and shall meet at least quarterly through June 2027, with a cadence to be established thereafter at the start of each school year; and be it further
RESOLVED: That the subcommittee in conjunction with the Superintendent and their designees should establish a

School Councils Working Group, with membership to include parent/caregiver representatives who are current or former school council members at each school, educators and community representatives, selected through an open application process with attention to diversity across schools and grade levels; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Councils Working Group will be supported by the CPSD Director of Family and Community Engagement and/or another designee appointed by the superintendent; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Councils Working Group will convene before the end of the 2025-26 school year, and will meet regularly thereafter; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Councils Working Group will be charged with

- Establishing a cadence for their meetings,
- Reviewing the School Councils Handbook and proposing any updates they recommend,
- Making recommendations for trainings and induction supports for new school council members and ongoing supports for sitting members,
- Soliciting feedback from the school councils and making recommendations for district supports for school councils based on that feedback, and
- Other work in support of school councils; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Councils Working Group will report back to the full School Committee at a public meeting prior to the end of the 2026-27 school year with updates and recommendations, and the School Committee will receive and review recommendations and requests submitted by the Working Group via the School Councils Subcommittee before then as well.

11. Announcements:

12. Late Orders:

13. Communications and Reports from City Officers: