



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

October 6, 2026

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 Dube, Member Harding, Member Hudson, Member Jaikumar, Mayor Siddiqui, Member de Paula Santos, Chair Weinstein

Others Present: Jennifer Amigone, Director of Data, Assessment and Accountability; Dr. Heather Francis, Chief Academic Officer; Student Member Imogene Goode; David Murphy, Superintendent of Schools; Joel Patterson, CRLS educator; Student Member Maia Shen

Chair Weinstein in the Chair.

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

The meeting proceeded to the first order of business with a roll call of members present: Member Harding, PRESENT; Member Hudson, PRESENT; Member Jaikumar, PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui, PRESENT; Member de Paula Santos, PRESENT; Vice Chair Dube, PRESENT; Chair Weinstein, PRESENT

1. Public Comment

The following individuals were heard:

- Chris Montero, Warren Road, **#26-215 & #26-224** expressed support for the superintendent's engagement regarding 158 Spring Street but opposes the contract continuation with Morgan, Brown and Joy. He stated that restorative practices should remain central to addressing student substance use rather than shifting toward a punitive discipline model.
- Larry Kim, Sacramento Street, **Superintendent's Presentation**, requested more transparent accountability and clear public goals for academic achievement following disappointing MCAS results.
- Sebastien Arnold, Green Street, **Superintendent's Presentation**, shared concerns over stagnant MCAS scores and widening achievement gaps among marginalized groups, calling for measurable outcomes and timelines.
- Susan Diller, Mass Ave, **#26-214**, thanked the school committee for supporting schoolyard gardens that foster scientific discovery in children.
- Sarah Blout Rosenberg, Putnam Ave, **#26-223**, advocated for granting a non-voting seat to educator representatives on the School Committee.
- Betsy Preval-Godinho, Broadway, **#26-224**, stated that punitive drug enforcement in schools disproportionately harms minoritized students and creates a school-to-prison pipeline.

On a motion by Member Hudson, seconded by Vice Chair Dube, public comment was closed on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, ABSENT; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Members Maia Shen and Imogene Goode gave the following update:

- Senior Activities: CRLS is celebrating Senior Spirit Week, with strong participation and opportunities for seniors to build community during the college application season. Senior merchandise is now available through the school store, and senior yearbook photos are scheduled for October 14 and 15.
- Athletics: Fall sports are underway, with upcoming home football games generating excitement. Winter sports preseason training will begin soon. Students expressed concern over the dismissal of the girls' basketball coach, and team members have organized a petition requesting reconsideration of the decision.
- Clubs and Organizations: Student organizations are actively engaged, including:
 - A cappella groups completing auditions.
 - National Honor Society launching its first hygiene drive and updating its volunteer policy.
 - Bike Club expanding its services and opportunities.
 - Train the Trainer receiving approval and scheduling its first meeting.
- Academics: First progress reports were released last week. Students are preparing for the PSAT, scheduled for Friday.
- Consent Education: All ninth-grade students participated in consent workshops during English and History classes. The workshops encouraged meaningful discussions about consent, current events, and fostering a safe and respectful school environment.
- Student Representation: The student School Committee representatives were featured on the front page of The Register Forum.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- Regular Meeting, September 1, 2026
- Special Meeting, September 8, 2026
- Regular Meeting, September 15, 2026

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Mayor Siddiqui, the records were accepted as presented on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar:

#26-204 Recommendation: Contract Award: Edia Learning Inc.: Professional & Instructional Services

The group discussed **#26-204** which was postponed from the Regular Meeting on September 15.

Superintendent Murphy reviewed the administration's recommendation to approve the Edia Learning contract, referencing a supplemental memorandum from Dr. Heather Francis addressing questions raised at the previous meeting. He emphasized that Edia is an optional, supplemental instructional tool, not intended to replace core instruction or provide screening data. He acknowledged the importance of closely monitoring emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, to ensure they support student learning. **Member de Paula Santos** thanked Dr. Francis for the memorandum and requested that CRLS math educator Joel Patterson be permitted to share findings from a survey of math teachers regarding their use of Edia.

On a motion by Member de Paula Santos, seconded by Member Jaikumar, Mr. Patterson was permitted to join the meeting to present his findings on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

Mr. Patterson shared his findings from a survey of 22 CRLS math teachers:

- Eleven teachers had used Edia, but seven subsequently discontinued its use.

- Only four teachers (18%) reported currently using the platform.
- Teachers cited concerns about the usefulness of diagnostic data and individualized learning pathways.
- Several educators preferred existing platforms, including DeltaMath and Amplify/Desmos.
- Mr. Patterson explained that he had chosen not to use EDIA, preferring to evaluate students' handwritten work to better understand their mathematical reasoning and identify learning opportunities through mistakes.

Member Harding questioned whether Edia duplicated functions already available through DeltaMath and asked the Superintendent to explain the rationale for the additional expenditure. Superintendent Murphy responded that Edia offers more detailed data and differentiated instructional support. He reiterated that the platform would remain optional and that the administration continued to recommend its approval. **Member Jaikumar** noted that the approximately \$30,000 investment warranted close monitoring and that he would not recommend committing to the platform beyond the current school year without further evaluation. **Member Hudson** raised questions about the differences between the department leadership's recommendation and feedback from individual teachers, emphasizing the importance of communication and alignment within the department. **Vice Chair Dube** expressed concerns about the policy implications of AI-based instructional tools, particularly the lack of caregiver notification and opportunities to opt in or out. She indicated that these issues would be addressed by the Curriculum and Achievement Subcommittee as part of its work on AI policy.

On a motion by Chair Weinstein, seconded by Member Hudson, **#26-204** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, NAY; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, NAY; Vice Chair Dube, NAY; Chair Weinstein, YEA

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7a. Superintendent's Update

The Superintendent will present to the school committee on various matters pertaining to the Cambridge Public Schools, including an update on the community engagement process preceding the recommendation for the use of the building that formerly housed the Kennedy-Longfellow School located at 158 Spring Street.

Superintendent Murphy gave the following update which can be found on this [website](#).

Student Achievement and Accountability Data

- Emphasized the importance of using objective data to evaluate students' educational experiences and identify areas requiring improvement.
- Acknowledged longstanding challenges and the need for urgency in addressing systems and structures that have not served all students and families equitably.
- Stressed the importance of recognizing the dedication of educators, families, and students, while acknowledging that the district has not yet achieved its desired outcomes.
- The evening's presentation would focus on English Language Arts (ELA) and civics, with mathematics and science data to be presented at a future meeting.

Opening of the 2026–2027 School Year

- Thanked the district's 17 school leaders, faculty, staff, and families for a largely successful first month of school.
- Acknowledged the challenges associated with the beginning of each school year and expressed appreciation for the efforts of staff in addressing them.

Transportation Update

- Recognized Mr. Smith and his team for improvements in transportation services during the first month of school.
- Reported that the opening weeks of transportation operations were smoother than in previous years.
- Noted that morning transportation issues have been addressed as they arise, but challenges remain with lengthy afternoon routes and after-school drop-offs.
- Acknowledged ongoing concerns with specialized transportation provided by NRT Beacon, which continue to require individualized attention.

Leadership and Family Engagement

- Welcomed new members of the district's senior leadership team and thanked them for their contributions.

- Identified improving the onboarding experience for new employees and families as an organizational priority.
- Recognized Executive Director of Family and Community Engagement Melissa Bolden for her work in bringing teams together and improving families' initial experiences with Cambridge Public Schools.

Collective Bargaining

- Acknowledged that many district employees are currently working under expired contracts.
- Reported that approximately 20 collective bargaining sessions have taken place, with additional sessions scheduled.
- Expressed appreciation for both parties' continued efforts and emphasized the goal of reaching agreements as expeditiously as possible while remaining responsible and sustainable.

Strategic Planning

- Thanked community members who participated in focus groups and surveys to help inform the district's ongoing strategic planning process.

158 Spring Street

- Reported that the district is nearing completion of an extensive community engagement process regarding 158 Spring Street.
- Families and staff have participated in discussions about the three scenarios previously presented to the School Committee.
- The Superintendent anticipates bringing a formal recommendation to the Committee in the near future.
- The Chair encouraged members to reserve questions for the upcoming meeting or submit them in advance.

Student and Staff Safety – North Cambridge Incident

- The Superintendent acknowledged an incident in North Cambridge earlier in the day that required implementation of student safety protocols.
- Thanked district staff, the Cambridge Police Department, and the communications team for their coordinated response and timely communication with families.

Upcoming Follow-Up Items

- Future presentation of mathematics and science achievement data.
- Continued work to address transportation concerns and evaluate longer-term solutions.
- Additional collective bargaining sessions.
- Continued development of the district's strategic plan.
- October Special Meeting regarding 158 Spring Street and the Superintendent's formal recommendation.

7b. Presentation

The Superintendent and the Director of Data, Research & Accountability will present to the committee an overview of the district's recent accountability data as released by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in late September. The presentation will include a report on the English Language Arts (ELA) and Social Studies (Civics) MCAS achievement and growth data, including year over year comparisons and the district's data contrasted against state averages. The presentation will encompass various efforts underway or under consideration for the purpose of continuously improving the educational experiences of all students.

Superintendent Murphy, Dr. Francis and Ms. Amigone shared the following presentation which can be found on this [website](#).

Presentation Highlights

- District Accountability: CPS is making moderate progress toward state accountability targets. Four schools—Amigos, Baldwin, King, and Rindge Avenue—are meeting or exceeding improvement targets. No schools are in the lowest accountability progress category.
- Academic Achievement: CPS students outperform state averages across all tested subjects. In grades 3–8 ELA, the district's performance exceeds the state average by 19 percentage points.
- Curriculum Improvements: The implementation of CKLA in elementary grades and Fish Tank in upper schools has coincided with improved ELA outcomes. Grade 8 ELA achievement increased nine percentage points since 2023.
- Student Growth: Grades 4–8 demonstrated strong ELA growth, with particularly positive results in upper schools. High school ELA performance remains an area of concern.

- Achievement Gaps: Significant disparities persist, particularly for Black/African American and low-income students, whose ELA achievement remains nine percentage points below 2019 levels.
- Attendance and Graduation: Chronic absenteeism and dropout rates have declined, while extended engagement and graduation-related outcomes have improved.
- Instructional Priorities: The administration outlined plans to strengthen curriculum implementation, align interventions and tutoring, expand targeted professional development, and provide additional support to schools with greater needs.
- Assessment Practices: Dr. Francis emphasized that MCAS is one of several assessments used to guide instruction, alongside i-Ready, literacy screeners, and curriculum-based assessments.

The Committee discussed the importance of establishing clear district goals, measurable benchmarks, and accountability measures to assess student achievement and progress. Members expressed concern about persistent achievement gaps, inconsistent school performance, and the lasting academic impacts of COVID-19. Discussion focused on strengthening targeted academic interventions, evaluating the effectiveness of tutoring programs, and ensuring that resources are directed toward students and schools with the greatest needs. Members also emphasized the importance of family engagement, instructional oversight, and using student growth data to inform decision-making. The Committee stressed the need for a strategic plan with clear priorities, measurable outcomes, and actionable steps to improve student achievement and address disparities across the district.

7c. CPS District Plan: None

7d. Consent Agenda:

On a motion by Member Harding, seconded by Vice Chair Dube **#26-216, #26-217, #26-218, #26-219, #26-220, #26-221 and #26-222** were adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

#26-216 Recommendation: Day & Residential Program Services not Available from the Cambridge School Department be adopted as follows: That the School Committee award contracts to the institutions on attached list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the general fund and/or grant fund budget.

	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts:	2	\$137,228.23
Residential Program Tuition Contracts		
45 Day Program Contracts:		
Total	2	\$137,228.23

#26-217 Recommendation: Contract Award: Tutoring Plus of Cambridge, Inc. 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.

Tutoring Plus of Cambridge, Inc., 225 Windsor Street, Cambridge, MA for the period of September 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of \$43,120.00.

#26-218 Recommendation: Contract Award: City Sprouts 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.

City Sprouts, 678 Massachusetts Ave, Cambridge, MA, for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of \$145,000.00.

#26-219 Recommendation: Contract Award: Cambridge Housing Authority 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.

Cambridge Housing Authority, 362 Green Street, Cambridge, MA for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027 in the amount of \$231,632.00.

#26-220 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY27 Food & Nutrition Services Appropriation (SC00402) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY27 Food & Nutrition Services Appropriation (SC00402) – Federal through State allocated in the amount of \$2,000,000.00 for the period of July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

#26-221 Recommendation: Grant Award: FY27 Circuit Breaker Allocation (SC27776) be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY27 Circuit Breaker Allocation (SC27776) – State in the amount of \$11,065,624.00 for the period of September 23, 2026 to September 22, 2027.

#26-222 Recommendation: Contract Award: Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the following donations as described:

IN-KIND - The Red Sox are donating 100 complimentary tickets to CRLS for the "Football at Fenway" event on November 24th when the CRLS Falcons Boys Football will compete against the Somerville High School football team at Fenway Park.

8. Non-Consent Agenda

#26-215 Recommendation: Approval of the Agreement with the Law Firm of Morgan, Brown & Joy, LLP be adopted as follows: That the School Committee retain the law firm of Morgan, Brown & Joy, LLP to provide in accordance with M.G.L. _c. 71, §§37E & 37F, legal services for labor and employment matters; and further, that the Superintendent of Schools to be authorized to take the necessary steps to effectuate the retention of these services in an amount of not to exceed \$75,000 (Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars).

A brief discussion followed **#26-215**.

On a motion by Member Jaikumar, seconded by Member Harding **#26-215** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, NAY; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

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

#26-223 Governance Subcommittee Report – September 10, 2026

On a motion by Chair Weinstein, seconded by Mayor Siddiqui **#26-223** was adopted on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA

#26-224 Disciplinary Consequences for Drugs and Vaping – Member Hudson and Member Harding

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee reaffirm the prohibition on unauthorized drug possession or use, possession of drug paraphernalia, and possession or use of vaping devices on school grounds. The

Superintendent shall ensure prompt, consistent enforcement and meaningful disciplinary consequences for substantiated violations. Education, counseling, and restorative practices shall supplement, rather than substitute for, disciplinary consequences.

A discussion followed **#26-224**.

The Committee discussed ongoing concerns regarding student vaping and drug use, particularly at CRLS, and the need for consistent enforcement of existing district policies. **Member Harding** and **Member Hudson** emphasized that the motion was intended to reaffirm current policies and encourage stronger, meaningful disciplinary consequences without requiring changes to existing policy or mandating suspensions. **Member Hudson** expressed concern that current restorative practices have not sufficiently deterred vaping and advocated for greater use of available disciplinary measures. **Mayor Siddiqui** questioned whether the motion included a specific directive or reporting requirement for the Superintendent.

Superintendent Murphy clarified that the district already utilizes a range of disciplinary responses, including loss of privileges, counseling, and restorative measures. He emphasized the importance of addressing each incident individually while prioritizing student health, well-being, and educational access. He acknowledged the Committee's concerns and agreed that reducing vaping requires consistent expectations, effective enforcement, and full cooperation from school leadership and staff.

On a motion by Chair Weinstein, seconded by Member Hudson **#26-224** failed on the following roll call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, NAY; Mayor Siddiqui, NAY; Member de Paula Santos, NAY; Vice Chair Dube, NAY; Chair Weinstein, YEA; Non-Binding Student Votes: Member Goode, NAY; Member Shen, NAY

10. Resolutions: None

11. Announcements:

Member Harding recognized and thanked the Cambridge Public Health Department, the City's Office of Disabilities, and other city agencies and coalition partners for organizing the recent Disability Pride Day event.

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications and Reports from City Officers: None

On a motion by Member Hudson, seconded by Member Harding, the meeting was adjourned on the following call vote: Member Harding, YEA; Member Hudson, YEA; Member Jaikumar, YEA; Mayor Siddiqui, YEA; Member de Paula Santos, YEA; Vice Chair Dube, YEA; Chair Weinstein, YEA (9:10 p.m.)

Email Communications:

✓ Maria Collins

Attest:



Katherine Christo
Executive Secretary to the School Committee