

# SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## (Official Report)

### Regular Meeting

December 19, 2017

Called for 6:00 PM 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: Ms. Bowman, Ms. Dexter, Mr. Fantini, Mr. Harding, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Nolan and Mayor Simmons

Also Present: Student School Committee Members Juliette Low-Fleury and Paul Sullivan

Also Present: Dr. Salim, Dr. Turk, Dr. Adams, Dr. Likis, Ms. MacDonald, Ms. Allen, Mr. Maloney and Ms. MacFarlane

Mayor Simmons in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

### 1. Public Comment:

The following individuals were heard:

- Emie Mchaud Weinstock, Coolidge Hill Rd., re: #17-299, CRLS Black Student Union (BSU) wants the students to know that there are parents that hear their distress and they are supported. She supports Mr. Kevin Dua, and does not want the students or the BSU advisor to be slapped down. She is uncomfortable because the administration is requiring authorization for students to speak from their hearts. She wants the district to demonstrate what solutions are in place for micro or macro aggressions against students; and she wants to know how the district and the CEA plan to investigate and provide support for teachers that feels they have been accused of any micro or macro aggressions from students by inadvertent statements have accidentally caused harm.
- Christina Astrove, Witney Christie & Karen Engels, Wendell Street, Graham & Parks Task Force, #17-299, CRLS BSU read a letter in support of the motion to the Black Student Union students for their bravery in making their video. As educators and parents they represent Graham and Parks school and they want these students to know they feel it is their responsibility to make a change.
- Lana Wolfson, Copley Street, #17-299, CRLS BSU a senior at CRLS, stated she has heard negative feedback regarding calling out certain departments, she was part of the video, and would like to explain her intentions. She wants to be taught in a community of teachers that want negative issues to become better and not stay the same. It was a small portion of the video and it has been blown out of proportion and seems to be given more importance that the frustration of micro aggression that caused the students to make the video in the first place.
- Bilien Teklu, Lorra Marseille, Naia Aubourg Columbia Street, Windsor Street, Marion Street, #17-299 BSU the video as a whole was a critique of some of our cultural issues in Cambridge. The way things are now, it is hard to hold anyone accountable. Moving forward to next steps, when we talk about race, it should be acknowledged that this issue is not abstract it is tangible.
- Dan Monahan, Lexington Avenue, did not prepare remarks but he is moved by the prior testimonies. These are very difficult conversations and the CEA is working as hard as possible to get the mindset in place that was described tonight. He recognizes the urgency, but wants to make sure it is done in the right way. It is important as a union and important in our schools.

On a motion by Ms. Bowman, seconded by Ms. Nolan, on a voice vote, it was voted to close public comment.

The rules were suspended by Mr. Harding, seconded by Ms. Dexter to bring **item #17-299** forward for discussion. On a voice vote, the rules were suspended for the purpose stated.

**#17-299, Joint Motion by Ms. Nolan and Mr. Harding, Jr.** that whereas the School Committee supports student voice and encourages involvement in the school district, and whereas the CRLS Black Students Union has sought to document the experience of students of color to raise awareness within the community, and whereas new CPS teacher and BSU advisor Kevin Dua has engaged students in creative ways to amplify students voice, therefore be it resolved that the School Committee supports those efforts to engage students and start difficult conversations about race and identity and the student experience.

Ms. Nolan agreed that this is a difficult conversation. The district is trying to put it at the center of their work.

Mr. Harding stated that the powerful video is showing student voice, this is the first time a group of students have come together to show micro aggressions. It was very troubling to know these students are struggling with the same demons our ancestors have struggled with. The students are angry; and we need to do something about it.

Ms. Bowman stated she was looking at the MCAS math scores on the same day she saw the video. There is 60% gap between students of color and white students; this also is tangible, it is not abstract. Talking about race as abstract and looking at the video – the reality is that there is absolutely nothing abstract about any of it. We have new leadership and the new framework should move this district forward while looking at these experiences. The video will hold us accountable. She is optimistic that all students will feel empowered.

Mr. Fantini stated that he spoke to the Superintendent regarding this. They agreed that the video is disturbing and alarming. Student resources are needed so that they can have someplace and someone to express themselves, put these issues behind them and move on with their academic careers. The CEA union has to step up and be a part of this as well. Lets deal with it in an upfront and transparent way.

Ms. Kelly thanked all that spoke and all that came to support the speakers. This was an important role that the youth have taken to remind the adults what is going on in our society. It is a difficult issue and it is not new when we look at the history of the United States. She appreciates the courage that all students have shown and she hears them.

Ms. Low-Fleury, as a member of the BSU and a member of the greater Rindge community, thinks it is very important that the administration supports these students that made the video because they and Mr. Dua have received a lot of backlash and it has been very difficult for them. It makes the students wonder whether their voice is even supposed to be heard. This backlash does not make Black students feel valued; instead it creates a feeling of hopelessness. The Jewish Heritage Club came forward and talked about their experiences with swastikas; there was no backlash, there was support. When the Muslim Heritage club came forward with their experiences with anti Muslim sentiments and Islamophobia; there was support, not backlash.

Ms. Dexter thought it was a very powerful video and she is sorry to hear that some reactions have not been positive. She wants students to feel more empowered to speak out when they feel oppressed.

Ms. Bowman wants to go on record to say that when the feminist club came forward it was responded to without backlash. It was supported completely. What does that mean from a systemic perspective?

Mr. Harding stated that he wants these students to be fearless and know that they don't need permission to do the right thing. If some people in power in this school system get mad when injustice has a light shown on it, always remember you don't have to back down.

Dr. Salim responded that he affirms and supports all of the students that are part of the BSU. He highlighted how some of the experiences were intended to be positive and in fact were hurtful. We end

up becoming numb to it and we begin to wonder if it is even worth bringing it up. He is optimistic, he attended a cultural proficiency seminar, and was exposed to how vulnerable the teachers are to their biases. We need to advocate for students. There is commitment from Principal Smith to continue to work with Mr. Dua to advance this in a meaningful way.

Dr. Turk has spent additional time in CRLS over this issue. She questioned if we really value the voice of these students. She informed the students that having and sharing their voice should not only be at a time when they are at a breaking point. The School Committee does not shy away from uncomfortable topics; we need to be informed so that we can figure out how to do a better job. There will be a range of feelings and emotions about this and we need to be able to work through the emotions and not take anything for granted. She encouraged the students to continue with their voice.

Mayor Simmons thanked the parents and teachers for coming and speaking; and apologized to all the students and stated it is a shame they had to come here and speak. She reflected back to a parents group that rose up and spoke against the name of a school; the school was renamed the Maria Baldwin school. When she watched the BSU video, she felt like it was 1890 again.

Mr. Harding in the chair. (7:00 pm)

Mr. Harding mentioned the fact that there was a lot of opposition to the renaming of the Baldwin School because Mr. Agassiz was a man of his time. He believes as recent as tomorrow, a well intentioned adult will accidentally say something that will stick to a child forever; and there will be more videos.

Ms. Kelly supports the motion. She is happy that Ms. Bowman reminded the assembly of the feminist club issue and all of the support behind it. The Black Student Union needs that same kind of support.

Ms. Bowman supports it also. She would like it be part of the district wide framework. We should already have frameworks in place to fix the problem. Reinventing the wheel is not needed; we should examine the pedagogy.

Ms. Low-Fleury feels in this case at CRLS; the wheel that has been invented only works for some people and suggested looking at other school districts.

Ms. Nolan agreed that this motion is meant to support an uncomfortable issue. We want lasting action quickly. The feminism movement was successful, but the issue is not gone. Women are still objectified and called bad names. We cannot address what is not brought forward to us. Let us not only look at the BSU; there are a range of races that are treated badly. The treatment of race within the girls volley ball team was also insulting.

Mr. Sullivan turned the attention back to the specific nature of the BSU video which was micro aggressive comments made by teachers and stated that CPS does not have enough teachers to change the culture; we need more diverse teachers in our schools. Some teachers need more outlets and colleagues to have conversations with. The responses to this video are very different than other minority groups that have spoken up.

Ms. Bowman cautioned her colleagues about including other races into a BSU issue. She compared when they took on the issue of anti-feminism, it did not include any other issue; the topic remained solely on that one purpose. This is not about multi-culturalism; bringing up other cultures can also be seen as a type of micro-aggression. We have a budget coming up and nothing speaks to your values more than a budget. She wants our money to be spent on frameworks for Black students.

Ms. Dexter mentioned this may come under the Civic Unity Sub-Committee.

It was brought up that anything other than racism against Black students is irrelevant. The students have charged the School Committee to keep moving forward.

Dr. Salim appreciates the focus of the discussion. He wants to connect this issue to the issue of the under performance and achievement of our students; particularly our African American students. He agrees that we need to be precise. Culture and success are the need of the hour.

It was brought up that the CSUS manages to maintain teachers of color. Why can't CRLS do the same?

Mr. Sullivan reiterated the BSU did not make a video about racism; which is a very broad term, it was about micro aggressions. He cautioned that we keep it specific.

Mr. Harding read a **Late Joint Motion by Mayor Simmons and Mr. Harding** *Whereas the Cambridge Public Schools has championed the ethos of celebrating the great diversity of CPSD and whereas the video released by the Black Student Union on December 4, 2017, provided needed contextualization to fully examine the racial and cultural blind spots that unfortunately exist in our schools; therefore the School Committee, working in conjunction with the CPSD administration, create a working group that should be made up of a diverse subset of stakeholders that solely examines race, class and micro aggressions through the vehicle of a comprehensive and uniform practice procedure and policy for students, families teachers and administrators for CPSD.*

On a motion by Mr. Harding seconded by Mayor Simmons, on the following roll call, **Late Joint Motion by Mayor Simmons and Mr. Harding** was adopted: Ms. Bowman YEA; Ms. Dexter YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mr. Harding YEA; Ms. Kelly YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Madam Mayor YEA.

Mayor Simmons in the Chair 7:25 pm

On a motion from Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to suspend the Rules for the purpose of reconsideration of the foregoing vote. The Rules having been suspended for the purpose stated, a motion to reconsider the foregoing vote, hoping the same would not prevail, on a voice vote, failed of adoption.

On a motion by Mr. Harding seconded by Mayor Simmons, on the following roll call **item #17-299**, was adopted: Ms. Bowman YEA; Ms. Dexter YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mr. Harding YEA; Ms. Kelly YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Madam Mayor YEA.

We returned to the Regular order of business.

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

- Juliette Low Fleury reported on micro aggressions in the X block. The presentation had mixed results however it was a good starting point for further conversation.
- Paul Sullivan reported that both he and Juliette were accepted into HARVARD.

## **3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:** None

## **4. Reconsiderations:** None

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

On a motion by Ms. Dexter, seconded by Ms. Bowman, it was voted to bring forward Calendar **item #17-273** for discussion. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Bowman, on a voice vote, the reading was waived.

**#17-273, Joint Motion by Ms. Dexter and Ms. Bowman**, that whereas the School Committee and CPS administration have prioritized expanding and strengthening family and community partnerships; and

Whereas annual School Committee budget discussions held in public, along with public hearings at which family and community members are invited to speak, influence how educational resources and

opportunities are distributed to CPS schools and students in the following year; and Whereas not all family or community members can easily attend public meetings due to childcare responsibilities, physical disabilities, work schedules, lack of transportation, and other circumstances; Therefore be it resolved that the School Committee will seek to increase community participation in the budgetary process by expanding community engagement efforts for the FY19 budget discussions by:

- 1) Providing childcare at budget hearings and publicizing childcare availability on notices about budget hearings;
  - 2) Assessing the need for language interpreters, including sign language interpreters at meetings;
  - 3) Holding at least one budget hearing on a Saturday in a location other than the School Committee Meeting Room;
  - 4) Broadcasting, live streaming, and video-archiving all budget-related roundtable discussions, workshops, retreats, and special meetings. These rules will apply to the FY19 budget convenings, to be reviewed for permanent status in Fall, 2018.
- ( Fantini 11-21-17)

Ms. Dexter spoke primarily about videotaping and having meetings in public. She mentioned many reasons why people cannot physically make it to a meeting.

Ms. Bowman stated she has no problems with videoing Roundtables. She is more concerned with being intentional on the piece around sign language and making sure people that need it are going to show up at the meetings.

Mr. Harding stated that his experience is that politicians want to be seen in the public eye but that does not mean all in the CPS administration want to be on television. Saturday meetings are not always well attended. There was a meeting in Jefferson Park, all about Jefferson Park, and no one came to it. We need to make sure the transparency is valuable. The Committee needs to have a safe place to have some meetings. All employees and parents do not want to be on television.

Ms. Kelly spoke on the budget. There were workshops and retreats to get feedback from the community. Some people mince words when they know they are being recorded, making transparency moot. We may need to explain why we have so many different forums; examine each forum and see whether or not it matters whether or not they are televised. She agrees on some issues, i.e. interpreters; however, it is still worth further discussion and review.

Mr. Fantini is inclined to do two things: He wants to either refer **item #17-273** to the Co-Chairs of the Budget for the School Committee session 18-19 or Mr. Fantini offered to amend **item #17- 273** to say *Budget Co-Chairs may follow some or all of the items listed below.*

Ms. Nolan is glad we are beginning to talk about this issue of bringing more people into our process. This motion is about the tactics to get there. She supports childcare. Saturday meetings at City Hall are also supported. Input at public comment is a good reason for portable meetings around the city. She is happy to have every meeting broadcast and will also support not having them all broadcast.

Mr. Harding cautioned that we should allow some flexibility to ensure that there is a forum that is not televised. Cultures do not change overnight. It is not easy to be on TV for everyone. There needs to be an outlet that staff members and parents feel empowered to be honest without worrying it goes viral. Mayor Simmons brought the assembly's attention to the section of the Rules on Roundtables, reading that section of the rules and then stated #4 of this motion speaks against our Rules.

Ms. Bowman offered to amend the motion by striking #4. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, on voice vote, **item #17-273** was adopted as amended.

**6. Awaiting Reports:** None

**7. Superintendent's Agenda:**

**7a. Presentations:** None

**7b. Innovation Agenda:**

**7c. Consent Agenda:**

Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Ms. Nolan, to bring forward the Superintendent's Consent Agenda for discussion and adoption. On the following roll call, **items #17-291 through #17-297** were adopted: Ms. Bowman YEA; Ms. Dexter YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mr. Harding YEA; Ms. Kelly YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Madam Mayor YEA.

**#17-291**, response to AFSCME Council 93, Local 1611 Level III Grievance,: that the School Committee approve the Superintendent's recommendation relative to the Level III grievance response to the AFSCME Council 93, Local 1611 Grievance in accordance with WR17-635 (A).

**#17-292**, Approval of Revisions to Cambridge Public Schools Criminal Offender Record Information Policy: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Criminal Offender Record Information Policy as detailed in the document (second reading).

**#17-293**, Special Needs Contracts for Day and Residential Program Services not Available from the Cambridge School Department that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions as detailed in the 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 Budget and/or Grant Fund Budget.

**#17-294**, Approval of Gifts to Cambridge Public Schools: that the School Committee accept and approve the following gifts and receipts as described.

1. \$398.56 to the Kennedy Longfellow School from Recycle That, LLC, in return for items collected in the school's clothing/book collection box. Funds will be used for general support for the school.
2. \$200.00 to the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School made from individual donors to support the CRLS food pantry.
3. An in-kind donation of photography equipment to the Visual and Performing Arts Department made from an individual donor to be used for CRLS photography courses.

**#17-295**, Contract Award: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Special Education Services, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Favorite Healthcare Staffing, 333 Washington Street, #856, Boston, for the period December 15, 2017 to June 30, 2018, in the amount of \$50,000.00.

**#17-296**, Grant Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the Grant Award for the period and amount indicated:

Innovation Lab-Center for Artistry & Scholarship Increase, for the period July, 25 2017 – August 31, 2018 for the increase amount of \$20,000. Project/Grant (SC18142).

**Description:** This new \$20,000 grant from the Center for Artistry and Scholarship is in addition to their initial gift of \$10,000. All funds are to be used to provide partial support for a 0.50 FTE Design and Innovation Coach to facilitate the work of the newly created Innovation Design Lab, a clearing house for generating, exploring and scaling successful innovative ideas and practices. The Design and Innovation Coach will collaboratively engage educators in design-based problem solving for persistent educational challenges, review new models and partnerships, and explore opportunities for bringing successful innovation to scale.

**#17-297**, Grant Award be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the Grant Award for the period and amount indicated:

FY18 Expanded Learning Time, for the period July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018, for the increase amount of \$2,409.00. Project/Grant SC18829.

**Description:** This grant will provide 300 additional hours of instruction/year for all students at the Fletcher/Maynard and M.L. King Schools. The funding supports stipends for additional working hours for teachers and assistant teachers. The 2.04 FTE's include a .54 FTE position of project coordinator at the FMA and 1.5 FTE's for assistant teachers at the King School (down from 2.0 last year). Other expenses are for field trips, which is also where this increase has been added.

**8. Non-Consent Agenda:** None

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

On a motion by Ms. Dexter, seconded by Ms. Kelly, it was voted to bring the School Committee Agenda forward for discussion and adoption. Ms. Dexter removed **items #17-298 through #17-302**.

**#17-298, Motion by Ms. Dexter**, that the administration establish a parent and community food advisory group to provide feedback and advice about food and beverages served in Cambridge schools; that this group meet at least four times per school year in meetings open to the public; and that all parents be informed about the group and its meeting times.

Further that the administration will seek out the recommendation of the Cambridge Public Health Department regarding drinks served in school cafeterias to ensure that they do not contribute to childhood obesity and diabetes;

And that all parents will be reminded, twice per year, that they have the option to limit the types of foods and drinks their children purchase in school cafeterias, and instructed on how to communicate these restrictions to the school staff.

Further that the administration will provide the School Committee with data on student weight that is gathered annually by physical education teachers and school nurses and provided to the Cambridge Department of Public Health.

[Strategic Goals #1, #2, and #4]

Attachment: [http://www.cambridgepublichealth.org/publications/Youth\\_Weight\\_Surveillance\\_2015.pdf](http://www.cambridgepublichealth.org/publications/Youth_Weight_Surveillance_2015.pdf)

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Dexter, on a voice vote, the reading was waived.

Ms. Dexter spoke to the fact that childhood obesity is high and we need to take it very seriously.

Ms. Kelly agreed that obesity is an ongoing problem among certain groups. Students need to develop a healthy relationship with food. She is not only concerned with overweight children but also underweight children and building community gardens.

Ms. Nolan appreciates the attention to this issue. She would rather request a report on what is currently happening. We did have a food and advisory committee and over time people stopped coming to it. She suggested a substitute motion or an amendment to the motion.

Mr. Harding implied most school age kids will be overweight. The Public Health Department feels that Cambridge Public Schools is outstanding in their use of nutritional food to our children. There are statistics about underweight kids too. He agrees with Ms. Nolan's suggestion to amend or substitute this motion.

Ms. Dexter spoke on the issue of underweight children. Only 3% of low income kids are underweight vs. 40% that are overweight. She also made mention of the difference between chocolate milk and punch; and that we do not need another report. She also wants to make sure that parents know that medically related dietary restrictions are not their only options.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Harding, on a voice vote, **item #17-298** was adopted as amended: *that the School Committee requests a report from the school administration and from the Food Services Department, in conjunction with the Public Health Department and Healthy Children's Task Force on current policies and practices and any recommendation to address obesity.*

**#17-300, Motion by Mr. Fantini**, In order to provide a well rounded educational experience for all of our student's;

And whereas some student's have financial hardships in order for them to participate in field trips; That the Superintendent provide financial support to all schools that do not have sufficient funds to pay for school busses.

Mr. Fantini says schools don't all have the money for field trips. He is happy to refer it to the Superintendent.

Ms. Nolan is concerned about the unintended budget consequences that may come out of this. It is likely that schools may have made different plans if they had known funding was possible.

Ms. Dexter appreciates the field trip motion; she would like to see reports on how many field trips are being taken.

Mayor Simmons suggested that this be discussed during the next budget season.

Mr. Harding asked for clarification.

Mr. Fantini answered that this is for schools that do not have the school improvement funds allocated for it or the school doesn't have the "friends of" funds.

Ms. Kelly answered that at a citywide PTO meeting, the issue of how expensive busses were was discussed and questions were asked of where will the money come from; it was acknowledged there will never be enough money.

Ms. Bowman stated she would prefer not to vote on this now. Debate ceased, and **item #17-300** was placed on the Calendar.

**#17-301, Motion by Ms. Bowman**, whereas the School Committee seeks to identify effective ways to communicate with Cambridge Public School stakeholders for the purpose of informing the public on the CPS District Planning Framework in addition to the overall work of the district;

And whereas the Cambridge School Committee sees the importance of using as well as understanding the challenges and opportunities of effectively communicating in a rapidly changing technological environment,

Therefore be it resolved that the Cambridge School Committee form a Communication Sub-Committee to work with the Superintendent and key district leadership to identify strategic communication efforts that will assist the district in effectively engaging the public on key initiatives within the district.

Ms. Bowman explained her motion and shared that when she picks her daughter up from school, there are always flyers from charter schools recruiting students. We don't recruit, and she feels we should.

Mr. Harding shared that members of the community could also pitch in and advocate for CPS through emails or bulletins, to name a few.

Ms. Dexter agreed these issues are very important. It was established that there is already Community Engagement Sub-Committee.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Ms. Dexter, on a voice vote, **item #17-301** was adopted.

**#17-302, Motion by Mr. Harding**, that the Superintendent schedule a roundtable with the CRLS Athletic Director, CRLS coaches and athletic staff to discuss the concerns and issues that CRLS coaches have expressed around the athletic programs. Further that this request is supporting a previously passed Order by the School Committee. This roundtable should be scheduled by May of 2018.

Ms. Dexter asked who would have the Roundtable. The School Committee was supposed to hear concerns expressed by the coaches and athletes. These ongoing issues may have been fixed.

On a motion by Ms. Dexter, seconded by Mr. Harding, on a voice vote, **item #17-302** was adopted.

#### **10. Resolutions:**

**#17-303, Motion by Mr. Harding, Jr.**, Mr. Harding would like to express his heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all of the students, teachers, and school administration that he has worked with over his sixteen years of service on the School Committee. In particular, he extends his thanks for the support of Dr. Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Maryann MacDonald, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education; Mr. James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer; Ms. Claire Spinner, Chief Financial Officer and Ms. Barbara Allen, Executive Director of Human Resources. A special thanks is also extended to the exceptional School Committee Staff, whose hard work and guidance has assisted him immensely during his time of service on School Committee: Ms. Marilyn Bradshaw, Ms. Patricia Berry, Ms. Judith Martin and Ms. Doshia Beard.

And further that he would also like to express his gratitude and appreciation to his fellow colleagues that have served with him on the School Committee: Ms. Cronin, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Lummis, Mr. McGovern, Mr. Osborne, Mr. Price, Ms. Schuster, Ms. Tauber, Ms. Turkel and Ms. Walser.

Mr. Harding sends special recognition to his current colleagues on the Committee. They are held in high esteem and will be remembered with great respect and admiration: Ms. Bowman, Ms. Dexter, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Nolan and of course "the Dean" Mr. Fantini whose leadership has been immeasurable.

And further that Mr. Harding would like to also extend extraordinary appreciation to the Mayors who have worked with him during his time on the School Committee that have helped to make sure that the Cambridge Public Schools purpose is to provide an excellent education for all children: Mayor Henrietta Davis, Mayor David Maher, Mayor Kenneth Reeves, Mayor E. Denise Simmons and Mayor Michael Sullivan.

Further that Mr. Harding asks all of his colleagues to continue to work diligently and with passion on behalf of all of the children in the Cambridge Public Schools and continue to be guided by the words of Nelson Mandela "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world".

Mr. Harding reflected back to being elected to this office as a young man, and in 16 years has worked with a lot of smart and talented people. He remembered all of the many Members he has served with over time and how he learned to do the work of this very august committee. Highlighting a few things on his long list of memories of the School Committee; he remembers being a little boy when Mr. Fantini was on the committee; he remembers when the Fletcher school and the Maynard schools were merged. Although there were some difficult issues and unpopular decisions; he is still very proud of this school system. This opportunity to serve Cambridge was never about him on a Tuesday evening; but about collaborative leadership. He thanked Mr. Maloney and Dr. Turk for their continued support from beginning to end. It was with particular pride that he spoke of his daughter stating that she is his greatest accomplishment; she is thriving and he is proud to see her as a fierce young intellectual woman, doing very well. He thanked CPS for being good to his family and quoted Mr. Nelson Mandela – "Education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world".

Mr. Harding was acknowledged as this being his last meeting and was publicly thanked for his service. The Members individually shared their different experiences with him over the years with heartfelt compliments that were both humorous and emotional.

Ms. Nolan remembers when they met; winning by seven single votes; adding that it has been an honor to serve as his colleague, has learned a lot from him, and will miss him tremendously.

Ms. Bowman shared that they did not start off on good terms, is grateful that he eventually forgave her mistakes and accepted her positive merits. She acknowledged that there is a group in Cambridge that will be sorry to see him go; she thanked him for his dedication, forgiveness and service to this community.

Mr. Fantini hates good-byes, noting that Mr. Harding is a good friend and always will be. He has always been a voice for the underprivileged and speaks to the truth. He is going to miss being told when he's messing up; Mr. Harding was not shy, he was clear and to the point. No one ever had to worry about what Mr. Harding was thinking; he would easily let everyone know. He wished him the best, hoping that he will be back.

Ms. Kelly shared that when she first met him; she realized she had to earn his respect. He watches and assesses. He has been a strong mentor; he has her deepest respect, and she wishes him all the best.

Ms. Dexter remembers the excitement of when he first ran for office. She admitted they did not always agree, but when they did; those things they did agree on were a thrill. She will most miss his ability to say what needs to be said in a clear and powerful way.

Dr. Salim spoke about the passion Mr. Harding brings to this work, adding that Mr. Harding has great leadership and tremendous insight. He complimented the way he handled the budget and thanked him for his service.

Dr. Turk addressed him as Mr. President, adding she has no intentions of letting him just go away so she will not say goodbye. His motives are always clear. She hopes his voice will continue to be a very strong part of this community.

Mayor Simmons compared his service to the song "*May the Work That I've Done Speak for Me*". She mentioned the Men of Color Health Initiative, supporting the students to reach their full potential, and holding all colleagues to a high standard.

Ms. Judy Martin was in attendance throughout the meeting and was acknowledged for her 40+ years of service. Mayor Simmons stated that Ms. Martin is a quiet strong presence that produced exemplary work, kept the School Committee out of trouble and out of its own way. She hopes she is happy in her retirement; doing the things she wants to do and that she thinks of us often.

Mr. Fantini made it clear that Ms. Martin's work here in Cambridge has always been about excellence and integrity, he acknowledged that she was a great role model; you could always tell that she cares about Cambridge and she is smart enough to be the CEO of any company.

Ms. Kelly thanked her for her support, remembering that she did not complain no matter how much was asked, she worked with the difficult public with ease and was always fair to everyone.

Ms. Dexter stated that Judy has the rare character of being unflappable and she is very grateful and enjoyed working with her.

Ms. Nolan is impressed at how Ms. Martin knew how to step back and think a problem through without over reacting and also stated it is stunning how long she worked in the Cambridge Public Schools District in a variety of capacities.

Ms. Bowman wanted everyone to know that Ms. Martin always carried herself with grace and dignity, which is not easy to do in this position.

Mr. Harding acknowledged that interacting with seven people with strong opinions all the time is more than some could bear. The role of the Executive Secretary and that of Ms. Sandra Albano are two of the most under valued positions in the City and she did her job with humility, respect and patience. He glanced at Doshia and stated that it will be different.

Dr. Turk made it known that she has had the opportunity to know Ms. Martin in a variety of positions saying that everything that has been said tonight is true and then some. Her co-workers have looked up to her over the years and she wishes her well.

Dr. Salim congratulated her; saying she could have worked anywhere and is grateful she chose CPS, as with all other Members, he extended his heartfelt best wishes.

Ms. Martin thanked everyone for their support and guidance over the past five years adding that it was her honor to serve each of them. The children are privileged to have such a committed and dedicated School Committee. She also thanked Dr. Salim and Dr. Turk, and all Cabinet members for being helpful and available to her and the office whenever needed. She eloquently thanked all of her co-workers in the school system over the many years and let it be known that she appreciates their friendship. With open sincerity, Ms. Martin made mention of the special bond between herself and Dosha Beard, thanking her for her work and wishing her well in her new role.

Ms. Beard went on record to say that "Jude" has led by example and she will try to live up to it.

Mayor Simmons stated that it has been a pleasure working with each Committee Member, mentioning their specific merits one by one noting that they each came to this role with different skills; she noted the ease with which she was able to work with Dr. Salim and Dr. Turk and the entire administrative team. She thanked Judy and Dosha for the work they have done while she has been Mayor.

#### **11. Announcements**

Ms. Dexter announced that tomorrow night there will be an over night vigil for DACA at the Cambridge Common at 6:00 p.m.

Mayor Simmons announced that there will be an event tomorrow evening at 6:30 p.m. at the Frisoli Youth Center for fire victims.

#### **12. Late Orders:**

It was voted to adopt the following:

**Motion by Ms Nolan** that the School Committee goes on record in expressing its deep condolences to the family of Professor Calestous Juma, internationally recognized authority on sustainable development in Africa.

**Joint Motion by Mr. Harding and Mayor Simmons** that the School Committee goes on record in sending a condolence letter to the family of Mr. Richard Murrell a former custodian at the Baldwin School.

It was voted to place the following on the Calendar:

#### **Late Order by Mayor E. Denise Simmons, Mr. Harding and Mr. Fantini,**

WHEREAS, The Cambridge Public Schools has acknowledge the urgency of addressing the Achievement Gap as outlined in the adopted 2017-2020 Cambridge Public Schools District Plan;

WHEREAS, The current passage rates on statewide assessments show gross disparities as it pertains to race; and

WHEREAS, Research has shown that greater communal involvement in children's lives, which consist of parents, members of the school community, non-profit partners, former CPSD staff members, and alumni can aptly serve as thought partners to uncover strategies to eradicate the Achievement Gap in CPSD; and

WHEREAS, The US Department of Education defines the achievement gap as “the difference in academic performance between different ethnic groups; and

WHEREAS, Increasing the attainment rate must be done by both increasing the rate at which minority students enter, matriculate, and successfully graduate from college; and

WHEREAS, College graduates earn over \$1 million more than high school graduates over the course of a lifetime; and

WHEREAS, The disparity between attainment rates results in disparities in the economic welfare and career options at meaningful careers throughout the city of Cambridge and across the nation; and

WHEREAS, The emerging shift in public education to standards-based curriculum and data driven metrics and decision making should provide the afro mentioned stakeholders to aid in garnering substantive strategies to eliminate the achievement gap; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, The administration of the Cambridge Public Schools partner with stakeholders to collaborate in creating a commission that solely and explicitly addresses the Achievement Gap with ambitious goals and benchmarks along with a time frame to cut in half and/or eliminated by 2026;

RESOLVED, That CPSD Administration in conjunction with the task force publish a yearly report to be available to the public on strategies and prospective policies to improve the academic achievement gap: and be it further

RESOLVED, The Commission commence an annual conference for the larger Cambridge community to share their findings and to discuss the pervasive issues that contribute to the existence of the achievement gap in a resource rich district ; such as, CPSD.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 9:40 pm).

**Distributed Back-up Documents/Handouts:** None

**Statements read during Public Comment:**

- Graham and Parks Task Force, BSU video

(Copies on file in the School Committee office)

**E-mail communications received:**

- ✓ Anna Henchman, #17-273 broadcasting videos
- ✓ Sharon Mombro, #17-298 meal selection policy

*The communications are on file in the Office of the Executive Secretary to the School Committee and can be viewed.*

Dosha Beard  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee