

CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS



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Dear Members of the Cambridge Public Schools Community,

It is with great excitement that I announce the selection of our four Heads of Upper Schools: Jamel Adkins-Sharif, Mirko Chardin, Manuel Fernandez, and Ralph Watson. These four individuals represent the commitment to academic excellence and social justice that defines our school district. As we continue to develop an outstanding program for grades 6-8, I am pleased to welcome them to their leadership roles.

Jamel Adkins-Sharif will be Head of the Vassal Lane Upper School, the grade 6-8 program for students from the Graham & Parks, Haggerty, and Tobin K-5 elementary schools. Jamel is currently Assistant Principal of the Tobin/Tobin Montessori School here in Cambridge. He was previously Redesign Coach at the Henry Lord Middle School in Fall River, Director of Education at the Martin L. King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence in Springfield, MA, Dean/Crisis Intervention Teacher and IEP Coordinator at the Margaret Douglass Middle School in New York City, and Grade 7-8 Math Teacher at the Gateway Intermediate School in NYC. Jamel began his career as Teacher of Academically Gifted Students, Pre-K and Kindergarten at Cambria Academy, Ltd. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Queens College of the City University of New York, Master's degree in Special Education from Hunter College, Juris Doctorate degree from Rutgers University School of Law, Master's of Education Degree from Endicott College, and is a Doctoral candidate in Leadership in Urban Schools at the University of Massachusetts - Boston.

Mirko Chardin will be Head of the Putnam Avenue Upper School, the grade 6-8 program for students from the Kennedy-Longfellow, Martin Luther King, and Morse K-5 elementary schools. Mirko has served as Academy Leader of the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School in Boston, MA and is currently Assistant Principal of the Multiple Pathways program at Randolph High School, in Randolph. He began his teaching career as a Grade 7 and 8 History Teacher at the Frederick Pilot Middle School, and was the Founder and Director of the New Hope Youth Coalition in Boston. Mirko holds a Bachelor's degree in English Writing and Literature from Wheaton College, a Master's degree in Teaching from Tufts University, and is a graduate of the Northeastern University/Center for Collaborative Education Principals Residency Network. He is a Doctoral candidate of Educational Leadership and Administration at Walden University.

Manuel Fernandez will be Head of the Cambridge Street Upper School, the grade 6-8 program for students from the Cambridgeport, Fletcher-Maynard and King Open K-5 elementary schools. Manuel is currently Principal of the John F. Parker Middle School in Taunton, MA, and previously served as Assistant Principal of the Maurice J. Tobin School in Boston. His professional experience also includes Principal Fellow and Upper School Coordinator at the Young Achievers School in Boston, Executive Director and Co-Founder of Empowering Multicultural Initiatives (EMI) in Wayland, MA, and Director/Coordinator of the METCO Program for the Wayland Public Schools. Manuel holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology from the University of Massachusetts – Dartmouth, Master's in Counseling Psychology from Cambridge College, and Master's degree in Educational Administration from the University of Massachusetts – Boston.

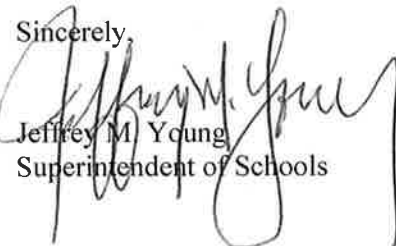
Ralph Watson will be Head of the Rindge Avenue Upper School, the grade 6-8 program for students from the Baldwin and Peabody K-5 elementary schools. Ralph is currently Principal of Swampscott Middle School in Swampscott, Massachusetts, and was formerly Principal of the Andrews Middle School in Medford, MA, Assistant Principal of Watertown Middle School, and Administrator of Student Support Services Grades PreK-8 for the Concord Public Schools. He began his career as Art, English, and Life Skills teacher at Bay Cove Jr. and Sr. High School in Boston, and was a Moderate Special Needs Teacher and Behavior Specialist at the Sharon Middle School in Sharon, MA. Ralph holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Massachusetts College of Art, and Master's of Education degree from the University of Massachusetts – Boston.

I want to offer my thanks to all who participated in the hiring process. Our screening committee was composed of six teachers (Tracey Gordon, Nathan Saveriano, Jo Quest-Neubert, Sarah Shaw, Amatul Mahmud, and Ingrid Gustafson), four parents (John Holland, Steven Immarino, Linda Rabieh, and Pamela Walker), four principals (Jennifer Ford, Martha Mosman, Darrell Williams, and Gerald Yung) and two central administrators (Barbara J. Allen and Carolyn L. Turk). These individuals spent many hours reviewing resumes and conducting first interviews to identify eight candidates for final interviews.

I also want to thank all those parents, teachers and community members who completed surveys, submitted written feedback and attended our finalist panel on January 21. Finally, I appreciate the efforts of our final interview committee (Carolyn L. Turk, James Maloney, Barbara J. Allen, Maryann McDonald, Barbara Van Sickle and Lori Likis) to synthesize all of this feedback and come to a strong consensus in selecting the best possible Heads of Upper Schools.

I look forward to working with Jamel, Mirko, Manuel and Ralph on Innovation Agenda planning and program development over the coming months. To allow them to complete their current professional obligations, the Heads of Upper Schools will assume their positions full-time on July 1. We expect that all four appointees will be able to spend some time in Cambridge in the coming months, and we will keep you posted on opportunities to meet and work with our new leadership team.

Please join me in welcoming them to their new roles in the Cambridge Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Young
Superintendent of Schools