

**Canton School Committee
Open Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 16, 2023**

- A. **Call to Order:** Chair Merenda called for a motion to convene the Thursday, February 16, 2023 Canton School Committee Meeting at 6:05 pm. Kendall O'Halloran made the motion; Laura Arboleda seconded. Vote was unanimous at 3-0 and recorded as:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O'Halloran	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea

School Committee members went directly into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining, Unit A and Unit E, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body.

Present: Kristian Merenda

Kendall O'Halloran

Nicola Gallagher (arrived at 5:25pm and departed the meeting at 9:15pm)

Laura Arboleda

Maureen Morna (arrived at 6:15pm)

Emma Cummings, Student Representative

Superintendent Derek Folan

Stephen Marshall, Director of Finance and Operations

Joanne Campbell, Recording Secretary

Guests: Ms. Disha Nakak, Junior at CHS and Student Advisor

Ms. Deborah Rooney, Director, Teaching and Learning PreK-8

Mr. Jeffrey Sperling, Principal, CHS

Mr. Joshua Fogel, Data Analytics Manager

School Committee Open Session reconvened at 6:07 pm. Vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O'Halloran	yea
Nicola Gallagher	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea

- B. **Student Advisor Report:** Ms. Disha Nakak, Junior CHS student, shared the student member report about Luce events. Ms. Nakak reported on events that included SHINE, extolling core values like safety and helping others, celebrating culture and diversity, and social and emotional learning. Ms Nakak expects a second similar event in the Spring. She applauded 4th and 5th grade thespians on the success of their recent play, *The Claw*, and announced that a local poet will be at the Luce for an interactive poetry lesson. When asked what she appreciated most about her recent interactions with the Luce students, Ms. Nakak replied that she loved hearing from the

students about the play. Ms. Nakak also noted that the CDEI 3rd Annual Black History Month Event will be held February 28th at 7pm at the Canton Public Library.

D. Superintendent's Report:

Highlights: 100th Day of School: CPS celebrated the 100th day of school on Wednesday, February 8. The celebration included a Hansen Kindergarten 100th day parade and first grade classroom activities.

CPACSS Event: Canton Parent Advisory Committee to Student Services (CPACSS) is hosting a Community Resource Fair on Wednesday, March 8, from 6:00-8:00 pm at the Canton High School Cafeteria. This event will showcase local and regional services available to children with needs and their families.

JFK CAPT Event: Thank you to the JFK CAPT for coordinating a visit with Officer Zeff and Officer Dunkin this week. The students loved observing and learning about the work of K9 Officer Dunkin and his handler Officer Zeff.

Luce Presents *The Claw*: Congratulations to the cast and crew of The Claw. The Luce Crew put on a great show this past weekend. Special thanks to Co-Directors Chris Untersee and Sarah Joncas, all of the parent/guardian volunteers and the Luce CAPT.

Acknowledgments:

School Bus Driver Appreciation Day: February 22 is School Bus Driver Day, a time to show appreciation to bus drivers for bringing kids to and from school and sporting events safely.

President's Day: Monday, February 20th is Presidents Day. Annually, we celebrate President's Day to reflect on not only the first president but also the founding of our nation and its values.

Indicators of Excellence

CAPE Spelling Bee: The CAPE Spelling Bee is back this year! Please hold the date: March 24, 2023, 6-8pm in the CHS Auditorium.

Southeastern Massachusetts School Bandmasters Association (SEMSBA): Congratulations to Joe Clarke (vocal bass) and Atlas Curran Barker (vocal tenor) who both scored high enough to be accepted to the SEMSBA festival on March 17 and 18 at Middleboro High School.

The CHS Athletic office is very proud to announce that this past Wednesday's 5-0 win over Hockomock rival Mansfield was our Boys Hockey team's 300th win under Coach Brian Shuman. Congratulations to Coach Shuman and the Canton High Boys Hockey Team.

Important Dates and Events

Feb. 20-24	No School - February Break
Feb. 28	CDEI 3rd Annual Black History Month Event, Canton Public Library, 7:00 pm
March 8	CPACSS Community Resource Fair, CHS Cafeteria, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm,
March 8-10	Kindergarten Registration - Held at the school your child will be registered.

	Wednesday, March 8, 6:00 - 7:30 pm, Thursday, March 9, 9:15 - 10:30 am Friday, March 10, 1:00 - 2:30 pm.
March 9	School Committee Meeting, CHS DLL, 6:00 pm
March 24	CAPE Spelling Bee, CHS Auditorium, 6:00 pm

E. Teaching and Learning Report: Principal Sperling shared highlights of Project Lead the Way, a collaborative effort to refit outdated existing high school space into the Bulldog Innovation Lab. This student centered space will add depth and innovation to the CHS curriculum with hands-on, project based, solution-centered teaching and learning on a scale that students want. Mr. Sperling called it a “maker space,” and hopes all students have the opportunity to move through the space during their years at CHS. The Lab can also be utilized as a meeting space. Mr Sperling encouraged reserving the space for other classes or meetings and noted the HS Leadership Team and School Council Meetings are currently being held in the Lab.

Phase 3 is still in the planning stages; Mr. Sperling expects the addition of soft furniture and movable white boards for student presentation, laptop cart for CADD, 3-D printing, state of the art color printers and updated tools including a SawStop table saw and a general increased use of the space for students and staff.

Pilot classes, including Exploring Technology, Construction and Design, Sculpture I and II, and Entrepreneurship have begun in the space offering opportunities to work in small groups in a collaborative environment.

F. Unfinished Business:

- 1. Policy Section D - 2nd Read:** After a thorough review of Section D of the Policy Handbook, *Fiscal Management Goals*, with MASC representative, Jim Hardy, Mr. Marshall presented Section D of the CPS policy manual for a 2nd read. There was some question and discussion on Policy DKC-*Business Travel and Reimbursement* details, particularly how they are captured in a personal services contract or Union documents. School Committee members expressed a need to identify what is fair and routine and document these in the policy. Mr. Marshall acknowledged that there is a need to capture these details in a document that will reflect the district’s practice now and for future generations, but recommended they be in the Procedures section rather than Policy. He also noted that writing and adopting these procedures, including cell phone policy, is a priority on his to do list. Because committee members expressed urgency on documenting this procedure, Ms. Arboleda, a member of the Policy Subcommittee, suggested subcommittee members bring these concerns back to Mr. Hardy for review and resolution at the next meeting of the Policy Subcommittee (scheduled for Thursday, March 2nd). In the meantime, Mr. Hardy recommended the School Committee vote on Section D as a whole and review the pieces under discussion. Subcommittee members were charged with returning to the next School Committee meeting (scheduled for 3/9) with an update. Ms. O’Halloran will ask Mr. Hardy for his opinion and options Ms. Merenda will forward *File DO* to Ms. Moran.

Ms. Merenda then called for a motion to approve Section D of the Policy Manual as written and presented. Nicola Gallagher made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. The vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O’Halloran	yea

Nicola Gallagher	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea
Maureen Moran	yea

G. New Business:

1. Review of Advanced Placement (AP) Results: Principal Sperling and Mr. Fogel reviewed CPS student participation and performance in recent AP exams. Mr. Fogel reviewed changes in exam timing and structure reminding all that 2022 AP exams returned to pre-COVID standards meaning tests were administered in person and restored to conventional length. He presented data regarding how many students took AP exams, and how they scored by subject, comparing these results to historical performance in Canton as well as comparable schools in Massachusetts. When asked about key takeaways from this year's scoring, Mr. Sperling stated there was a commendable improvement and hopes the trend will continue. He commented on the dip in US History. He explained that there had been a change in the exam from content to themes, noting that he had already had conversations with teachers and Department Chairs about the recalibration of instruction. Ms. Moran recommended using the breakdown of AP test scores by individual subject tests as a diagnostic to identify subject areas -- indicated by lower numbers of students passing with scores between 3 and 5 -- where teachers and students need additional support to succeed. Ms. Moran asked for a breakdown of AP teachers who have participated in the AP Institute for professional development since 2016. She also referenced \$10,000 that had been discussed within the Budget and Finance Subcommittee that AP teachers could use specifically for AP PD. Mr. Sperling acknowledged an ongoing 3-year Professional Development (PD) cycle for AP teachers. Teachers new to AP have access to AP 101 and subject specific Summer Institutes, as well as a mentoring program for new teachers. Mr. Fogel will work to uncover ways to offer more PD to fill these gaps. Mr. Folan suggested polling current AP teachers. Mr. Folan also expressed appreciation for AP teachers and concern for a balance of challenges to the students without overwhelming them.

A final note on the Course of Studies was discussed. Ms. Moran, having reviewed the 2023-2024 CHS program of studies on the CHS website, noted the four-year math requirement was listed as beginning with the class of 2027. Members agreed that it was the will of the School Committee that the new four-year math requirement begins with the class of 2026. Mr. Sperling thought there was some discussion over which year to start, but will speak with Dr. Chamberlain about officially changing the requirement to include the Class of 2026.

- 2. Benchmark Assessment Update:** Ms. Rooney and Mr. Fogel shared the winter universal screener for K-5, taken by students in early January 2023. These results were compared with STAR assessments in early Fall 2022. A 5% growth was noted in all three categories-Early Lit, Reading and Math. Based on results, 53 students are new to reading intervention and 88 students are receiving math support. All are benefiting from Freckle to enhance skills in both ELA and Math.

Fall Benchmark for CommonLit (does not assess writing skills) and IXL results for GMS show some growth in the percent of students achieving on or above grade level and a slight decrease in students performing below grade level. However, Mr. Fogel noted greater disparities at CHS between historical context and the results of these assessments. He urged teams to pause on an immediate response to these results stating that the variances are too vast to consider them valid. He cautioned against any adjustment to current teaching modes as there is concern that students are simply not taking these

assessments seriously. Discussion has begun on the validity and reliability of these benchmarks, but Ms. Rooney wondered if these tools (CommonLit and IXL) were designed for a different process and are no longer helpful. Further discussion on what changes need to be made is necessary.

- 3. Financial Cost Centers:** Mr. Marshall presented a proposal to add financial cost centers to be used for budgeting, transfers, and reporting of financial information. Based on DESE's recommendation of high level categories, Mr. Marshall recommended seven Cost Centers including Salaries, Contractual Services, Supplies, Transportation, Utilities, OOD Tuition and others. These categories will better provide tracking and allow adjustments within each cost center without the need to ask for the School Committee for approval.

Hearing no questions or requests for further discussion, Chair Merenda called for a motion to approve the inception of Cost Centers for the District as written and presented. Nicola Gallagher made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. The vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O'Halloran	yea
Nicola Gallagher	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea
Maureen Moran	yea

- 4. Student Activity Checking Account Maximum Balance:** Following an audit of Student Activity Accounts in a recent review of Policy D, Mr. Marshall presented a proposal to raise the student activity checking account maximum balance from \$15,000 to \$40,000. Mr. Marshall explained that, in general, pricing has changed since the last update of Policy D and particularly, the \$15,000 ceiling, along with other regular costs for the class, will not cover the deposit needed to secure a venue for the prom. Hearing no questions or requests for further discussion, Chair Merenda called for a motion to approve raising the maximum balance of the High School Student Activity Checking Account as edited and presented. (Original recommendation stated the ". . . *School Committee raise the **minimum** balance. . .*" *The edited version will state a **maximum** balance of \$40,000.*) Maureen Moran made the motion; Kendall O'Halloran seconded. The vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O'Halloran	yea
Nicola Gallagher	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea
Maureen Moran	yea.

- 5. Q2 Financial Report:** Mr. Marshall presented the FY23 Q2 Financial Report for review and discussion. Mr. Marshall provided details of the Operating Budget, noting that it is currently running in a deficit, with an explanation that it is typical to have some financial shortfalls mid-year. These deficiencies will be adjusted by offsetting SED costs. The district is expecting salary costs to rise based on the recent union contract ratifications. Mr. Marshall also updated the committee on Special Education changes. While the District awaits the final percentage increase in Special Education costs, which very likely will be a 14%, Mr. Marshall anticipates some help from Circuit Breaker in the form of reimbursement for out-of-district tuition and transportation and believes there might be some relief coming from the

State. Mr. Marshall did ask for time to reallocate expenditures into proper new categories (cost centers) after their approval earlier in the meeting.

Chair Merenda commended Mr. Marshall for his diligence with the budget. Hearing no questions or requests for further discussion, Chair Merenda called for a motion to approve the Q2 Financial Report as written and presented. Kendall O'Halloran made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. Vote was unanimously approved at 5-0 and recorded as:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O'Halloran	yea
Nicola Gallagher	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea
Maureen Moran	yea

- 6. Annual Report:** Superintendent Folan reminded residents that the Annual Report is based on the calendar year rather than the academic year and then highlighted the District's accomplishments. These included "coming out of Covid," transitioning back to the classroom and out of mandatory masking; the MSBA voting the Galvin Middle School into its "Eligibility Phase" and, just recently, moving CPS to their "Feasibility Phase;" strong hires in Administration, reaching successful agreements on three AFSCME contracts as well as continued good faith negotiations with Units A and E. District goals were set and a new, District wide math curriculum, Reveal, was implemented. Chair Merenda underscored the successes of the School Committee, including self-evaluations and identifying key initiatives for delivery in 2023. The full report will be available at the Annual Town Meeting and on-line [here](#).

- 7. Negotiations Update:** Superintendent Folan and Chair Merenda announced that the District presented a tentative agreement that both unions A and E have agreed upon. Each union has ratified an MOA that is ready to be reviewed and signed by the School Committee. Superintendent Folan expressed appreciation to the community at large for their patience, and particularly, to all the educators who are always committed to Canton's students. Chair Merenda highlighted the key wins as well as the sustainability of the budgets. Ms. Gallagher, a member of the Negotiating Committee, described Canton as a tight knit community, and thanked residents for persevering and trusting the process. Hearing no further questions or requests for further discussion, Chair Merenda called for a motion to ratify the collective bargaining agreement for Units A & E. Nicola Gallagher made the motion and Maureen Moran seconded. The vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O'Halloran	yea
Nicola Gallagher	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea
Maureen Moran	yea

- 8. Superintendent Goals:** Superintendent Folan shared a quarterly check of K-12 Math curriculum implementation process observing that it was going well. For grades K-5, the second of four benchmark assessments is being completed. Data is being collected and analyzed and is helping to identify areas of strength and growth and areas of continued focus. Trends are becoming evident, but these may be readjusted after Lesson 10- the next scheduled benchmark assessment. At the K-5 level, Dr. Alison Mello is providing additional professional development to support math instruction to help teachers become stronger teachers of math. Dr. Mello has visited all three schools, led Professional Learning on February 10th and is expected back in each of the elementary schools in March and April to provide

additional professional learning.

At GMS, benchmark assessments are being used to help with placement decisions for next year. Grade 8 students have already completed their benchmarks. Information gleaned from these benchmarks along with other data is being used to make placement recommendations for Grade 9 right now.

At CHS, the high school team is working on adapting Precalculus courses in preparation for the new AP Precalculus course.

H. Public Comment: No public comments were heard, virtually or in person.

I. Director of Finance and Operations Report: Mr. Marshall gave the committee an update on the work of the Transportation Consultant and is looking forward to the first draft of his report, expected to be delivered sometime next week. Mr. Marshall reported progress with vans. The District brought on more vendors and the consultant is reviewing current routes and will inform on results and recommendations as part of his final report.

Mr. Marshall continues to meet regularly with the bus company, First Student. Re-Routing planning is underway as they take a comprehensive look at Canton's traffic patterns and street designations (one-way; dead end streets, etc.).

J. Consent Agenda:

1. Regular Session Minutes: February 2, 2023, ELA Workshop February 2, 2023
2. Executive Session Minutes: January 27, 2023, February 8, 2023
3. Scholarship Approval: Cornerstone at Canton Assisted Living and Memory Care
4. Warrant: February 17, 2023

Hearing no questions or concerns regarding the above documents, Chair Merenda called for a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as written and presented. Kendall O'Halloran made the motion; Laura Arboleda seconded. The vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as follows:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O'Halloran	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea
Maureen Moran	yea

K. Update of Sub-Committee, Task Force and Liaison Posts:

Emma Cummings-State representatives are expected to vote on Bill #STE759 which will affect Student Representatives voting rights in both chambers on certain matters.

Chair Merenda asked that Ms. Cummings give an update at a future School Committee meeting.

Maureen Moran-The next Budget and Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Tues. February 28th.

Derek Folan-the next MSBA will be held on March 6th. The CPS OPM finalist will be reviewed and hopefully approved.

Kristian Merenda-recently attended a Canton Communications Forum. All members of the School Committee are required to read the mandatory Open Meeting Law paperwork, sign it, and return to the Town Hall Clerk at their earliest convenience. Ms. Merenda is asking all in the community for ideas on how to manage St. Gerard's; she encouraged the community to attend the 2/28 CDEI event at the library and the 4/1 trail clean up day. Ms Merenda noted that FINCOM is looking to address inequities in compensation for town officials, highlighting the role of the School Committee; Board of Health wants help from the school district to increase coordination on bathing; CCPC pre-applications are being solicited. Finally, Chair Merenda has signed the contracts for Units A and E.

Kendall O'Halloran-Policy Handbook continues to be reviewed and updated. Next meeting is scheduled for early March.

Content and Communication: Ms. O'Halloran is looking for feedback regarding current ad size (quarter page) versus having a larger ad, and is looking for a Design Assistant-preferably a student with interest in graphic design. If anyone is aware of a student who might be interested in this position, please contact her.

A reminder to the community that School Committee voting takes place on April 4th; early voting is available. If you have a high schooler who is 18, they are eligible to vote as well as long as they are registered.

Other Business: No other business was discussed.

Future Business: The next Open Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 9, 2023, @ 6:00 pm.

Adjournment: Hearing no requests for further discussion on any topics, Chair Merenda called for a motion to adjourn the Thursday, February 16, 2023 School Committee meeting at 9:43 pm. Kendall O'Halloran made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. The vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as follows:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendal O'Halloran	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea
Maureen Moran	yea

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Policy Subcommittee members were charged with returning to the next School Committee meeting (scheduled for 3/9) with an update on *Policy D-Fiscal Management Goals*, Items DKC and DO.

Items Viewed/Discussed:

Superintendent's Report dated 2/16/2023
Building Innovation Lab report before and after
Policy Section D
CHS AP Performance and Participation Review
Winter '23 T & L Update Benchmark Assessments
Memo Cost Center
Memo Student Activity Checking Balance
Q2 Report

Annual Town Report 2022
Superintendent's Goals Update
Unit A MOA
Unit E MOA