

Canton School Committee
Open Session Meeting
Thursday, March 21, 2024
Minutes

A. Call to Order: Kendall O'Halloran called for a motion to convene the Thursday, March 21, 2024 School Committee Open Session Meeting at 5:22 pm. Maureen Moran made the motion; Laura Arboleda seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

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

5 yeas 0 nays

Attendees:

Laura Arboleda
Kimberly McCourt
Kristian Merenda
Maureen Moran
Kendall O'Halloran
Derek Folan, Superintendent
Emma Cummings, Student Representative
Joanne Campbell, Recording Secretary
Press/Public

Absent: Stephen Marshall, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations

Guests:

Dr. Meredith Chamberland, CHS Director of Counseling
Adam Hughes, PreK-12 Wellness Coordinator, Health & Wellness
Debra Rooney, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

B. Executive Session (a) Purpose 7 - G.L. c. 30A, section 22 - Approve executive session minutes (3/7/2024) **(b)** Purpose 3 - to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body, **(c)** Purpose 4 - to discuss the deployment of security devices or personnel or strategies with respect thereto.

School Committee members returned from Executive Session at 6:11 pm.

Chair O'Halloran accommodated an agenda move of (E-1) CAPT Recognition from later in the agenda to begin Open Session.

C. CAPT Recognition: Recognizing officers and principals, Superintendent Folan thanked CAPT Leaders from all CPS schools for their ongoing support and collaboration in enriching experiences of students and educators, bringing families together, and bringing joy into each building. Each CAPT representative gave a brief summary introducing leadership members, highlighting fundraising and the events these proceeds supported, and expressed gratitude for all who volunteer in any capacity. School Committee members presented each of the leaders with Spring flowers as a token of appreciation.

D. Superintendent Report: Superintendent Folan presented District progress, highlights, and accolades.

Champions of Excellence

Legally Blonde: The Canton community had a blast this weekend at the CHS Drama Club's production of *Legally Blonde: The Musical*. With about 75 students involved on stage and off, this high-energy musical based on the hit 2000 movie wowed the crowd for 3 performances. The show included incredible singing and dancing, hilarious acting, beautiful costumes, sets, and lights, a rockin' pit band, and two live dogs.

We hope to see everyone out again for our last performance of the year, the Spring Cabaret, on Friday, May 10 at 7 pm. This FREE show is a super fun musical revue where we perform all your favorite songs from both classic and modern Broadway shows.

DECA: DECA brought 13 students to compete at the State Career Development Conference this past weekend. The conference was held at Marriott Copley and the Hynes Convention Center.

Two students, Ethan Tran (junior) and Pranav Addanki (junior) earned the distinction of State Champion. They were top 6 in their category earning a spot at the International Career Development Conference in Anaheim, CA, where they will compete against students from all over the world. Anthony Wang (junior) earned a medal for having a top 3 score in the state on his written exam, and Anushka Nair (freshman) and Pranav Addanki earned medals for having a top 3 score in the state on their individual role-plays. Congratulations to all participants and a special thank you to Adam Maislen for his work.

JFK Events: Presenters from the Neponset River Watershed Association came into all fifth-grade classrooms at the Kennedy School last week to kick off our water unit in science. The Program ties in with the MA State Frameworks for 5th grade Earth and Space Sciences (ESS2. Earth's Systems) and (ESS3). Earth and Human Activity. Students participated in a 2-day workshop that covered the following topics:

- Local water resources, drinking water infrastructure, water usage and conservation, sewer and septic systems, stormwater runoff, and water pollution.
- A groundwater model is used to demonstrate groundwater and surface water, and the effects of excessive water use, drought, and water pollution.
- An interactive enviroscape model is used to demonstrate polluted runoff.

Family Glow Night: On Friday, March 15, JFK CAPT sponsored a Family Glow Night. It was a great success and lots of fun! Thank you to CAPT for hosting this event.

CHS Art Awards: The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards were founded in 1923. This is the longest running awards competition in the country for creative teens. I am pleased to share that the following students have received Scholastic Art Awards:

Hannah Isaac - [Time After Time](#) (digital art), Silver Key

Hannah Isaac - [At the Crossroads: Still](#) (digital art), Honorable Mention

Mekhala Costello - [Stand Tall](#) (photography), Silver Key

Dianna Peters - [The Bloodline Melody](#) (photography), Honorable Mention

Additionally, Hannah Isaac has received a Recognition Award from the Massachusetts Art Education Association (MAEA) for her artwork *Time After Time*.

Amelia Chambon (grade 9) has received a *Youth Art Month President's Choice Selected Works Award* for her digital artwork, "[Untitled](#)" which is a self-portrait. In other exciting news, Amelia's CHS Visual Arts teacher, Steve Gaul, also recently learned that one of his artworks, [a watercolor painting](#), has been selected to be included in the Art of Education University's inaugural exhibit, "Palette Perspectives". Works by both Amelia and Mr. Gaul will be on display at this year's National Art Education Association's national convention in Minneapolis

Amelia's work, along with the other selected artworks by Canton High School students are now on display in the [MAEA Youth Art Month online gallery](#). Canton is listed in Gallery 1 (you can find the galleries by scrolling down the page).

The writing awards will be announced soon and will be shared in an upcoming report.

Great Canton Cleanup Day: Canton Publics are proud to partner with the Canton's Walk, Bike, Hike Committee for the 3rd Annual Great Canton Cleanup Day on Saturday, April 6, from 10 a.m. to Noon. Groups and individuals can sign up on the link provided on [this](#) flyer.

Updates

GMS Building Update: The [School Building Committee](#) met last night to review the Construction Management Selection process and to receive an in-depth look at the current design of the building and the site outside. We will share the recording of the meeting when we receive it, as it gives great visuals of the building's development, inside and out. The subcommittee will conduct interviews on April 22 and April 23 for the construction management selection process. We hope to have a company under contract by May 1.

Additionally, we reported out on our highly successful MSBA Facility Assessment Subcommittee. The FAS team commended our educational plan as one of the best they have seen; they felt the “education vision was married to the design of the building.”

MCAS Schedule: Spring MCAS Testing starts at the end of this month. CHS grade 10 ELA testing is on March 26 & 27. Hansen School ELA testing is on March 26 & 28. JFK ELA testing is on March 26 & 27. [Here](#) is a full schedule of all spring ELA and Math MCAS.

Important Dates and Events

March 29	No School, Good Friday
April 2	Annual Town Election Day, voting taking place at the Rodman gym and the JFK
April 2	CHS Spring Concert, 7:00 pm, CHS Auditorium
April 5	Early Release, PreK-5 Parent Conferences
April 11	School Committee Meeting, 6:00 pm, CHS DLL
April 15-19	No School, April Vacation
April 23	CPACSS Virtual Event, Practical Strategies to Boost Executive Functioning Skills, 6:00 pm. Register in advance for this webinar: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kNs3z1sfTAGnaQZa3MZ-xQ
April 26	Early Release, PreK-12, Professional Development

D. Public Hearings All interested persons shall be given the opportunity to be heard.

1. **FY25 Budget Public Hearing:** Chair O’Halloran asked for a motion to open the Public Hearing on the topic of the School Committee FY25 budget, consistent with the provisions of Chapter 71, Section 38N of the Massachusetts General Laws. Ms. Moran made the motion; Ms. Arboleda seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

Laura Arboleda	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Kimberly McCourt	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Kendall O’Halloran	yea

5 yeas	0 nays
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No public comments were heard, in person or virtually.

- a. **FY25 Operating Budget:** Mr. Folan presented the FY25 Operating Budget. He described the process of building this budget indicating that it is grounded in the CPS vision and core values, and then reviewed expectations of state funding. Mr. Folan described the FY2025 budget as a “level service” budget, meaning there will be no enhancements or additions to current positions; no cuts are expected. He noted increases in costs for Out of District tuition and transportation for special needs students (18%), contractual obligations (4.2%), and supplies and services (bus contracts, etc). Other asks included:
 - i. Recommended reduction of 2 staff positions-1 BCBA and 1 “bubble” class teacher (a 1-year contracted position that is reevaluated at the end of the school year) due to expected reductions in elementary schools class size. Mr. Folan indicated this reduction would allow for 2 additional Special Education teachers-one at the high school to support incoming ACCESS students and one at the Luce;
 - ii. Contractual increases of \$20k for PD, \$50k for yellow bus transportation, \$400k for out of District tuition, and \$250k for Special Education van transportation;
 - iii. A request to FinCom of \$1million to replenish the Special Education account. FinCom has generously released \$1.6 million to this reserve account.

Mr. Folan asked the committee for consideration to vote in favor of this budget as presented so he may take it to FinCom for approval. He also asked for some added time and grace to review and consider ways to balance the budget that will work in the best interests of students.

Ms. Moran expressed concern over reduction of the BCBA position. She felt strongly that these roles are integral to classroom practices, oversight of ABA’s, and general

operations. Ms. Moran stated that she could not support cutting teachers, and called for alternative ways to identify reductions to balance the budget.

Hearing no further questions or concerns, Chair O'Halloran, called for a motion to close the FY25 Budget Public Hearing. Ms. Moran made the motion; Ms. Arboleda seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

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

5 yeas 0 nays

Chair O'Halloran then called for a motion to approve the FY25 budget at a 4.76% increase with more work to be done and details on how to reach that increase. Ms. Moran made the motion; Ms. Arboleda seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

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

5 yeas 0 nays

2. **Public Hearing On School Choice for the School Year 2024-2025:** Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion to open the public hearing to withdraw from School Choice for the year 2024-2025 according to Chapter 76, Section 12B, of the Massachusetts General Laws. Ms. Moran made the motion; Ms. Merenda seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

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

5 yeas 0 nays

No public comments were heard, in person or virtually.

Superintendent Folan recommended that CPS opt out of School Choice for the 2024-2025 school year as nonparticipation allows more stabilization of class size.

Hearing no further questions or concerns, Ms. Moran, Clerk, (in Chair O’Halloran’s stead) called for a motion to close the public hearing on School Choice for the year 2024-2025 according to Chapter 76, Section 12B, of the Massachusetts General Laws. Ms. Arboleda made the motion; Ms. McCourt seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as follows:

Laura Arboleda yea
Kristian Merenda yea
Kimberly McCourt yea
Maureen Moran yea

4 yeas 0 nays

Hearing no questions or requests for further discussion, Ms. Moran called for a motion to vote for withdrawal from School Choice for the year 2024-2025 according to Chapter 76, Section 12B, of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Ms. Arboleda made the motion; Ms. McCourt seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as follows:

Laura Arboleda yea
Kristian Merenda yea
Kimberly McCourt yea
Maureen Moran yea

4 yeas 0 nays

E. New Business

- 2. **Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)**: Mr. Hughes and Dr. Chamberland reviewed CHS and GMS YRBS data. In total, 738 surveys (82% of all students) were conducted on December 13, 2023 at GMS and December 14, 2023 at CHS. Students were asked to submit responses regarding Mental Health, Violence and Safety, School Climate (including bullying), Substance Use, School Climate (bullying), Sexual Health and Safety, Nutrition and Physical Health, and daily Leisure Time Activities (including sleep and screen time). While the goal is to reduce them to 0%, Mr.Hughes is encouraged by survey results, reporting that, in most instances, CPS efforts and Wellness programs have been effective in reducing risky behaviors (vaping, bullying, alcohol, marijuana, etc). He indicated that the DECIDE model, community circles that heighten awareness, Student Voice & Choice, and extracurricular activities all empower students. Programming (SEL curriculum and Restorative Practices) for academic staff has had a great effect on educating both students (in particular, student peer led activities) and educators, Mr. Hughes acknowledged all of these implemented programs have had a major impact on student voice, knowledge and ability to empathize. Lunch leaders in each grade level also allow active promotion of student voice. Dr. Chamberland noted that Professional Development for counselors has helped standardize practices, predictability, and continuity of care between schools. Full reports may be found on the CPS website.

3. **Wellness Program Review Update:** Ms. Rooney and Mr. Hughes shared a Wellness Program review update. The Review Committee reviewed 2023 MA Curriculum Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Frameworks, identified areas of focus and devised a plan for integrating new SEL curriculum resources into existing units of study at all grade levels. They also revised curriculum units to match recent course restructuring at CHS, added Wayfinder curriculum resources across all levels, and identified professional learning opportunities and program improvements to address areas of need. With these changes, CPS expects to provide consistency, connectivity and continuity as students transition from elementary to middle and then high school.

Committee members shared some recommendations for program improvement. Having identified the need for unit and equipment consistency, the committee proposed equipment upgrades to allow all students to receive similar learning experiences;

- a. Life skills funding;
- b. Support so all Wellness staff might attain dual certification in health and physical education
- c. Assessment tools for adaptive physical education to give access and a sense of belonging to all students.
- d. Departmental vertical alignment.

4. **Student Opportunities Act (SOA) Plan Approval:** Ms. Rooney presented the SOA plan for a vote of approval. Including components from the Strategic Plan and recommendations from the Equity Audit, the SOA plan calls for the implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and creation of a culture of reflective practices. Additionally, the District will apply budgetary allowances and additional funding for continued staff professional learning to address and reduce achievement gaps in the District's lowest academic performance. (This population is based on data gleaned from MCAS scores.) Interventions include small group instruction, tiered interventions, differentiated instruction, mentorship and tutoring, and Social-Emotional learning to address anxiety, motivation and self-confidence. Progress and/or strategy adaptation within the 3-year DESE target period will be tracked through monitoring, data-driven assessments (taken from Star and IXL benchmark data, MCAS and classroom performance, etc.), staff surveys, student feedback, collaboration with parents/guardians as well as the whole of the academic community. This 3-year plan is updated annually. Full report may be found on the CPS website.

Hearing no questions regarding the SOA plan, Ms. O'Halloran called for a motion to accept the SOA Plan as written and presented. Ms. Arboleda made the motion; Ms. Merenda seconded. Ensuing vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

Laura Arboleda	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Kimberly McCourt	yea

Maureen Moran yea
Kendall O'Halloran yea

5 yeas 0 nays

5. **Scholarship Approvals:** Superintendent Folan presented the *Timothy Patrick Morrissey Memorial Fund Scholarship*. Noting the family's academic support of Canton students in memory of Mr. Morrissey, Mr. Folan asked the committee for a vote of approval. Ms. O'Halloran called for a motion to accept the Timothy Patrick Morrissey Memorial Fund scholarship. Ms. Arboleda made the motion; Ms. Merenda seconded. Ensuing vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

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

5 yeas 0 nays

Superintendent Folan also acknowledged the recent acceptance of another scholarship, the *Paul Mitcherony Memorial Scholarship*. Mr. Mitcherony was a member of CHS class of 1974 and parent to a CHS student. On behalf of CPS, Mr. Folan expressed his gratitude to the Mitcherony family.

F. Unfinished Business

Policy Section I: Chair O'Halloran suggested the second read of Section I of the Policy Manual be held for the next School Committee meeting (scheduled for Thursday, April 11th). All members were in agreement. Policy Section I will be added to the 4.11.24 agenda.

G. Public Comment: Canton resident, Jennifer Sykes, spoke in support of the School Committee and Superintendent Folan. She applauded the continued work of CPS to promote student safety, maintain open communications with the District, and successful resolution of contract negotiations.

H. Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Report: No report.

I. Consent Agenda:

1. Open Session Minutes: March 7, 2024
2. Warrants: February 23, 2024, March 21, 2024

Chair O'Halloran announced the contents of the Consent Agenda asking if there were any requests for discussion or removal of any of the items. Ms. Moran asked that Open Session Minutes from 3.7.24 be removed for further review. Ms. O'Halloran then asked for a motion to accept the Warrants for 2.23.24 and 3.21.24 as written and presented. Kristian Merenda made the motion; Laura Arboleda seconded. Roll Call vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

Laura Arboleda	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Kimberly McCourt	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Kendall O'Halloran	yea
5 yeas	0 nays

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

a. Superintendent Folan-nothing further to report;

b. Kendall O'Halloran:

i. The next Policy Subcommittee meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 27th at 12 noon. This subcommittee will meet weekly in an effort to complete Policy Manual updates by early June 2024. Ms. Merenda asked for a list of policy issues that have yet to be resolved.

Ms. O'Halloran asked committee members to forward feedback on Section J.

ii. Content & Communications-work is progressing on the next ad; samples have come back to the committee for review and approval;

iii. CCPC will meet in April.

iv. Ms.O'Halloran remains hopeful that another member will appropriate this committee;

c. Maureen Moran-nothing to report;

d. Laura Arboleda-nothing to report;

e. Kimberly McCourt-noted that she believes in schools and families and sits proudly with all CPS schools and administrators.

f. Kristian Merenda:

i. Next Master Plan Meeting is scheduled for March 28th;

ii. SBC Committee-interviews for CM-R candidates are scheduled for Monday, April 22 and Tuesday, April 23.

K. Other Business: None

L. Future Business: The next Open Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 11, 2024 @ 6:00 pm.

M. Adjournment: Hearing no further questions or requests for discussion on any topic, Chair O’Halloran asked for a motion to adjourn the Thursday, March 21, 2024 School Committee Open Session Meeting at 9:34 pm. Maureen Moran made the motion; Laura Arboleda seconded. Ensuing vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

Laura Arboleda	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Kimberly McCourt	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Kendall O’Halloran	yea

5 yeas 0 nays

Documents reviewed:

- Superintendent’s Report, Thursday, March 21, 2024
- FY25 Operating Budget
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey-GMS
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey-CHS
- Wellness Curriculum Program Review
- FY24 Student Opportunities Act (SOA) Plan
- Timothy Patrick Morrissey Memorial Scholarship