

Canton School Committee
Open Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 2, 2023

- A. **Call to Order:** Chair Merenda called for a motion to convene the Thursday, February 2, 2023 Canton School Committee Meeting at 5: 06 pm. Laura Arboleda made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. Roll Call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

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

School Committee members went directly into an ELA workshop to review the elementary literacy curriculum.

Present: Kristian Merenda

Kendall O'Halloran (via Zoom video)
Laura Arboleda
Maureen Moran
Samantha Phan, Student Representative
Superintendent Derek Folan
Stephen Marshall, Director of Finance and Operations

Absent: Nichola Gallagher

Guests: Deborah Rooney, Director, Teaching and Learning PreK-8

Jackie Abrams, Humanities Coordinator, PreK-5
Samantha Vrabel, Student Advisor
Jonathan Mulhern, QMS Principal
Donna Kilday, Early Childhood Coordinator PreK-2
Meghan Byrne, Director of Student Services

School Committee Open Session reconvened at 6:18 pm. Roll Call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

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

Chair Merenda asked for a moment of silence to remember and honor former Canton educator, Edward Posnas who recently passed away. Ms. Moran offered a few memories of her interactions with Mr. Posnas when a student in CPS.

- B. **Student Advisor Report:** Ms. Samantha Vrabel, a senior at CHS, shared the student member report for the Galvin Middle School. Ms. Vrabel reported that she was delighted and excited to see the changes at GMS during her recent tour. She noted creative work on the walls, display cases full of art, and more collaborative work

spaces. Through these designs, Ms. Vrabel noted the ability for students to see themselves reflected in the school. She spoke of her hopefulness of seeing additions of a “late bus” opening up opportunities for more students to experience after school programs and activities. Ms. Vrabel believes these programs will encourage a greater sense of belonging for the students, opening the door for greater inclusivity. As a leader in the Best Buddies program, she intends to introduce this program to GMS students.

C. Superintendent’s Report

Highlights

Black History Month: Black History Month is celebrated each year in February. All schools have events and activities planned to engage students in learning, discussion and reflection. The Canton Diversity Equity and Inclusion (CDEI) Black History Month event is on Tuesday, February 28, 2023 at 7 p.m. in the Canton Public Library. Please save the date.

JFK 2nd Graders Win MassDOT Snow Plow Naming Contest: The JFK second grade team was named one of the state winners of the MassDOT Snow Plow naming contest. This morning, members of the Channel 5 WCVB news team interviewed some of the students and Principal Sandra Watson to highlight this great story.

Arctic Beast is now the official name of one of the MassDOT snow plows. See the [LINK](#) for the official announcement and the other winners.

Staff and Student Acknowledgement

National School Resource Officer Appreciation Day: February 15, 2023 is National School Resource Officer (SRO) Day. Please join me in thanking Officer Ensley Cotard (CHS), Officer Stephen Mullaney (GMS) and Officer Eric Kascavitch (Elementary Schools) for all they do for our staff and students.

National School Counseling Week: Please be sure to thank your School Counselors next week as February 6 - 10, 2023 marks National School Counseling Week (NSCW). Our School Counselors are often a consistent presence for students amidst challenges and change. Thank you all for your support.

National Girls and Women in Sports: Established in 1987, National Girls and Women in Sports Day has evolved to recognize the positive aspects of athletics and all female athletes, whether professional, amateur, or simply aspiring. In addition, the day is meant to celebrate the progress that was made when Title IX was passed in 1972, providing equal access to sports for females in the United States. The MIAA holds an annual event in April to honor girls and women in Sports.

Indicators of Excellence

JFK Presents Annie, Jr.: Congrats to the JFK cast and crew on a wonderful production of Annie Jr this past weekend. 66 students participated as either actors, ushers or stage crew. We had over 600 audience members for each night.

Emerging Young Artists Juried Exhibition: For the past 10 years UMass Dartmouth has hosted a juried online exhibition for high school students from New England. This year, CPS had two student artists included in this exhibition. Congratulations to Olivia Schnock, grade 12 (Stress) and Caroline Ye, grade 12 (Cherry Blossoms) on earning this recognition.

Scholastic Arts & Writing Award Winners: This year Canton High School has 3 students that have received Scholastic Art Awards and 4 students that have received Scholastic Writing Awards. Congratulations to the following students on this great achievement and special thanks to Ms. Patricia Palmer and Ms. Tara Iacobucci for their excellence in helping students reach great honors.

Scholastic Art Awards

Molly Dvoske, Tara Geoghan, and Caitlin O'Sullivan

Scholastic Writing Awards

Emily Kelly, Kelly Woodworth, Rachel Pirrera, and Sadie Gugliotta

Students receiving Silver and Gold Key awards will be honored at an awards ceremony and their work will be on display at Breed Hall on the Tufts Medford Campus in March.

GMS Concerts: The GMS proudly showcased the work of their young musicians on Jan.20 and Jan. 31. Band and Orchestra students performed for family, friends and staff.

GMS Math Team: The Galvin Middle School Math Team has been hard at work during their 2022-2023 season. They have officially returned to traveling. In December, they traveled to Mansfield Middle School where they took home 2nd and 4th place. On January 26, GMS hosted for the first time ever since joining the IMLEM League and it was a huge success. The teams placed 2nd and 3rd with several students taking home "High Scorer" certificates.

Hockomock Champions: Congratulations to the CHS girls swim team, the girls hockey team and the boys hockey team for earning Hockomock League Championship titles. Girls swimming went undefeated in league meets, 5-0, and has an overall record of 6-1. Girls hockey has a 5-1 league record and 11-2-2 overall. Boys hockey is 6-1 in the league and boasts a 12-3 overall record.

Important Dates and Events

Feb. 7	Communication Forum, Canton Public Library Community Room, 6:00 pm (Chair Merenda)
Feb. 10	Early Release - PreK-12 PD
Feb. 10-11	Luce Theatre Production, <i>The Claw</i> , CHS Auditorium, 7:00 pm
Feb. 16	School Committee Meeting, CHS DLL, 6:00 pm
Feb. 20-24	No School - February Break
Feb. 28	CDEI 3rd Annual Black History Month Event, Canton Public Library, 7:00 pm

Kendall O'Halloran added that CHS Athletic Boosters Club is sponsoring Restaurant Week beginning Sunday, February 5th. Participating restaurants are listed in the Canton newspaper.

Chair Merenda reminded the community that local elections, including School Committee seats, are upcoming. Papers can be pulled by February 10th; due back with 50 signatures by February 14th.

- D. **(20 min.) Teaching and Learning Report:** Principal Mulhern reported that middle school students are finding their voices and asserting independence. While these qualities may manifest differently in each child, the goal is to have academic work contribute to strengthening both peer-peer and teacher-student relationships. To that

end, educators at GMS are advancing instructional practices that challenge students to find connections between academic disciplines while giving students the opportunity to connect their learning to day-to-day lives. Mr. Mulhern outlined collaborative projects for each grade level grounded in specific subjects that reflected these goals: Team cookbooks for 6th grade-ELA; a water quality project for Grade 7 students-Science; and Identity Charts for Grade 8-Social Studies. All offered opportunities to participate, cooperate and be influenced by and successful with peers and educators. Final projects are on display now at the Galvin.

E. Unfinished Business:

1. **(20 min.) FY24 Budget (VOTE)**: Mr. Marshall presented an update of the FY24 Budget. Mr. Marshall reported that the new contractual obligations added a significant amount to the budget. Members of the Budget and Finance Committee determined that the final budget's bottom line should remain as previously set. Members agreed to reduce line Item # 99 (Districtwide Curriculum Materials) and remove line item #101 (Consultants) for FY 2023-24. Mr. Marshall awaits publication of the Governor's budget (due out in early March) for true budget allocations to be finalized. Proposed cuts will then be reevaluated. An amended budget will then be set.

Ms. Moran requested continued conversation regarding literary specialists at the high school level and EA's at the elementary level. She suggested a pilot program at the Luce. Superintendent Folan will meet with Ms. Byrne, Director of Student Services to ask about the level of services in each elementary school that will best serve its students. Mr. Folan reminded the team that the current budget includes a 14% expected increase in out of town tuition. There is hope this increase can be meted out gradually allowing more latitude with the current proposed budget. Mr. Folan also noted that he is hoping for feedback from the School Committee on the job descriptions of the Assistant Principals.

Hearing no further discussion on the budget, Chair Merenda asked for a motion to approve the 2023-24 Superintendent's Budget as written and presented. Laura Arboleda made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. Roll Call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

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

G. New Business:

2. **GMS CAPT Honors**: Ms. Catherine Holberg, GMS CAPT President, described the projects, fundraising efforts and successes of CAPT. Highlights included the successful annual fundraiser netting over \$41k; teacher appreciation breakfasts and luncheons, and the 8th grade trip. Ms. Holberg talked about the invaluable goodwill given and received as a volunteer, and listed all open positions and anticipated volunteer opportunities, encouraging the community to participate in this very worthwhile cause.
3. **GMS Program of Studies**: Principal Mulhern presented the 2023-2024 GMS Program of Studies for GMS. He noted there were no major changes or shifts, but does include some language updates that reflect current practices at GMS. Mr. Mulhern noted a significant change in the math curriculum, "Reveal," and a modification in World Languages to include a survey class for Grade 6 students. This pilot program offers 6th graders an opportunity to take 1 semester of Spanish and 1 semester of French rather than choosing Spanish or French for the entire academic year. He

announced changes in 7th and 8th Grade 8 Drama and a more dynamic and interactive Wellness program. Mr. Mulhern hopes to decentralize teaching by making educators facilitators who guide and encourage students to uncover and thrive in a deeper learning community at GMS. Chair Merenda asked that Ms. Mulhern add the finalized GMS 2023-24 Program of Studies to the website to give access and called for a motion to approve the GMS 2023-24 Program of Studies with changes incorporated. Kendall O'Halloran made the motion and Laura Arboleda seconded. Roll Call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

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

4. **Early Childhood Tuition Proposal:** Ms. Kilday gave a brief overview of the preschool population, programming, and process for identifying and evaluating referrals. She announced that the 2023-24 program will include 2-3-4 and 5 day options. Ms. Kilday advocated for a 2-3% increase in 2023-2024 PreK tuition rates. There were some inquiries on expenses. After discussion, School Committee members determined a 2% increase to be reasonable and fair. Chair Merenda then called for a motion to increase the Early Childhood Tuition rate by 2%. Laura Arboleda made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. Roll Call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

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

5. **Policy Section D - 1st Read:** Superintendent Folan, members of the policy subcommittee, and Stephen Marshall presented Section D of the CPS policy manual for a 1st read. With the assistance of MASC expert, Jim Hardy, the committee is working on updating this document with best practices, including language that reflects what is actually happening in practice and working to align them with state requirements. These practices help clarify the purpose and transparency of the School Committee. Specifically, proposed changes include adding cost centers to the financial process to better manage the budget and a request to raise the maximum balance allowed in Student Activity accounts from \$15k to \$40K. This proposed change will need to be brought to the School Committee for a vote. Chair Merenda asked to move this item to a second read to give committee members time to review changes and understand implications.
6. **Negotiations Update:** Superintendent Folan announced that there has been a tentative agreement following the latest mediation session with CTA leadership. While there is still work to be done for ratification of the agreement, Mr. Folan stated that he appreciated the partnership with the union and hopes to be able to bring a signed contract to the next School Committee (scheduled for Thursday, February 16, 2023).
7. **(15 min.) District Goal Update:** Assistant Superintendent Sarah Shannon updated the School Committee on the efforts undertaken to develop and meet objectives for Priority #3, Goal #2 - *By June 2023, the Canton Public Schools will create a shared vision for high-quality curriculum planning, instruction, and assessment across the District.*
1. The team created a structured learning walk that has been successfully executed in all six schools. Principals of each school identified three focus areas based on those elements. This feedback is being built into an original draft of elements of teaching,

learning and leading that could be included in the CPS vision.

2. After defining and developing a common set of district-wide expectations around best practices in teaching and learning, first semester learning walk feedback was used to inform the original draft.
3. After each monthly walk, the district leadership team debriefed and discussed observations and identified patterns and trends that the principal shared with the faculty. There was feedback & discussion regarding how the school can make progress regarding the area(s) of focus. With the completion of the first round of learning walks, patterns and trends have been identified. The team will work on creating a first draft of the CPS vision for HQTLL.
4. At an October faculty meeting, teachers had an opportunity to provide input on elements of teaching, learning and leading to be included in the initial draft of the CPS vision. Principals will share the draft with staff between February and March for further input for the next iteration of the work. The team is looking to gather student input as well.
5. Data has been collected throughout the six visits that included 109 classrooms across the district.
6. Currently, the Ed Eval Ad Hoc Committee has been put on hold as contractual negotiations were a higher priority. The team will look to meet once a contract is signed.
7. Next steps include continued revision of the draft and scheduling the next round of learning walks. These walks will include department heads, ILTs and ALT's and students.

H. Public Comment: None

I. Director of Finance and Operations Report: Mr. Marshall had nothing further to report.

J. Consent Agenda:

1. Regular Session Minutes: January 19, 2023
2. Executive Session Minutes: December 3, 2022 (evening session), January 19, 2023
3. Overnight Travel Request: DECA State Competition - Boston Marriott Copley, March 9-March 11, 2023
4. Warrant: February 3, 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. Laura Arboleda made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. The Roll Call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as follows:

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

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

Laura Arboleda-Policy review is ongoing;

Kristian Merenda/Superintendent Folan and Stephen Marshall--updated the search for a Project Manager for Galvin School Building via MSBA. The School Building Committee, employing the MSBA process for identifying a Project Manager, is pleased with the selection process. A final candidate has been endorsed by the committee. They are currently in negotiations. The committee hopes to have an announcement at the Thursday, February 19th School Committee meeting.

Kendall O'Halloran-None

Maureen Moran-No further updates

L. Other Business: Ms. Moran posed a question based on the Commissioner's newsletters regarding changes to the IEP portal. Ms. Meghan Byrne gave an update on the new portal that aims to refocus and have concentrated discussion around SIS, including new language on content area and "life of the school" access to peers. The template is not yet ready to be fully released; however, Ms. Byrne recommended educators start using the template to get used to a different order of keying in information.

M. Future Business: The next Open Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 16, 2023 @ 6:00 pm.

N. Adjournment: With no requests for further discussion, Chair Merenda called for a motion to adjourn the Thursday, February 2, 2023 Open Meeting of the School Committee at 8:33 pm. Ms. Arboleda made the motion; seconded by Maureen Moran. Roll Call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

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

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Ms. Moran requested continued conversation regarding literary specialists at the high school level and EA's at the elementary level, particularly asking to consider a pilot program at the Luce.
2. Superintendent Folan will meet with Ms. Byrne, Director of Student Services, to ascertain the level of services in each elementary school and which programs would best serve its students.
3. Superintendent Folan requested feedback on the job descriptions for Elementary Assistant Principals from School Committee Members.
4. Chair Merenda asked that once finalized, Mr. Mulhern add the GMS 2023-24 Program of Studies to the website to allow access for parents.