

Canton School Committee
Open Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 19, 2023

- A. **Call to Order:** Chair Merenda called for a motion to convene the Thursday, January 19, 2023 Canton School Committee Meeting at 5:08 pm. Kendall O'Halloran made the motion; seconded by Maureen Moran. Vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

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

Attendees:

Kristian Merenda
Kendall O'Halloran
Maureen Moran
Laura Arboleda
Emma Cummings, Student Representative
Derek Folan, Superintendent
Stephen Marshall, Director of Finance and Operations
Joanne Campbell, Recording Secretary

Absent:

Nichola Gallagher

Guests:

Mr. Jeffrey Sperling, CHS Principal
Dr. Meredith Chamberland, CHS Director of Counseling
Ms. Julie Shore, Director of Technology & Digital Learning
Mr. Josh Fogel, District Data Analyst Manager

- B. Executive Session:** Committee Members immediately went 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.

Committee members returned from Executive Session at 6:12 pm. Chair Merenda asked for a moment of silence to remember and honor Dr. Peter Capanaros who recently passed away. Dr. Capanaros was Superintendent of Canton Public Schools from 1982-1997. Ms. Moran offered a few memories of her interactions with Dr. Capanaros as a student.

C. Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Folan presented District progress, highlights, and accolades.

Highlights

School Committee Student Advisors: It's our pleasure to recognize the School Committee Advisory Council members who were elected by their peers. The following School Committee Student Advisors will serve in the role for the remainder of the school year: Samantha Vrabel- Grade 12, Disha Nayak- Grade 11, Ryan Garrett- Grade 10, and Viviana Truglia- Grade 9. Students will rotate in and out of upcoming School Committee meetings to talk about events taking place at each of the Canton Public Schools.

CHS Innovation Lab: I am pleased to provide an update on the progress of the Bulldog Innovation Lab Capital Project. The lab will function as a student-centered, faculty-facilitated design space for inter-departmental, collaborative, solution-centered educational research and development. This educational atmosphere is being transformed into a creative, hands-on, project based learning environment that meets the existing and future needs of the Canton community.

Town of Canton Communication Forum: Thank you to Chair Merenda for representing the schools at an upcoming Communication Forum with other Chairs of Select Board appointed Committees on the evening of Tuesday, February 7th. The purpose of this meeting is to provide an update on each Committee's activities.

School Board Recognition Month: We want to take this moment to recognize and thank our school committee members for their service to the students, staff, families and the entire school community. It's not an easy job and it requires countless hours to do it well.

Indicators of Excellence

Senior Districts: Congratulations to the 9 CHS students who participated in the Senior District Festival on January 6 & 7.

Lianna Camille

Derek Mar

Anthony Wang

Leah Condon

Atlas Curran Barker

Alejandra Salazar

Laura Walsh

Abigail Silvasy

Sonia Le

Elementary Concerts: Congratulations to the staff and students in grades 4 and 5 who put on three amazing concerts for the Luce, JFK, and Hansen this week. Thanks for all the hard work.

Update

Spring 2023 MCAS Testing Dates: Please see below for the Spring MCAS dates.

Grade	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
Grade 3	April 4 & 6	JFK & Luce: May 10 and 11 Hansen: May 11 and 12	
Grade 4	April 3 & 5	May 15 & 18	
Grade 5	April 11 & 13	May 8 & 9	May 23 & 24
Grade 6	April 11 & 12	May 15 & 16	
Grade 7	April 5 & 6	May 22 & 23	
Grade 8	April 3 & 4	May 17 & 18	May 10 & 11
Grade 10	March 28 & 29 March 30 & 31 if needed	May 16 & 17 May 18 & 19 if needed	June 6 & 7 June 8 & 9 if needed

Additional GMS Assessments to know about:

World Language Students are completing the Reading and Writing sections of the AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages) testing during their WL classes from March 13-24.

Additional CHS Assessments to know about:

World Language Students are completing the Reading and Writing sections of the AAPPL testing during their WL classes in February and March.

Students who request to take the AAPPL test to qualify for the Seal of Biliteracy in a language that we do not offer at CHS will require additional testing dates. Heidi Olson will schedule these sessions and inform teachers if/when a student may need to miss class.

Important Dates and Events

Jan. 20	GMS 6th-8th Grade Orchestras and Chorus Concert, GMS Gymnasium, 1:30-2:00 pm
Jan. 27	Early Release, PreK-12, Professional Development
Jan. 27	JFK Presents Annie Jr., CHS Auditorium, 7:00 pm
Jan. 28	JFK Presents Annie Jr., CHS Auditorium, 3:00 pm
Jan. 31	GMS 6th-8th Grade Band Concert, GMS Gymnasium, 1:30-2:00 pm
Feb. 2	School Committee Meeting, CHS DLL, 6:00 pm
Feb. 7	Communication Forum, Canton Public Library Community Room, 6:00 pm (Chair Merenda)

D. Teaching and Learning Report: Ms. Julie Shore and Mr. Kevin Sullivan provided an update on Elementary Digital Learning. Initially introduced to the elementary curriculum as a 30 minute “Tech Block,” Digital Learning has morphed into a 45 minute extended library block that allows for both literacy and STEM expansion. Areas of focus include Digital Tools, Coding, Robotics, Digital Wellness and Computer Science. Exposure to all of these areas help students move from consumers to innovative creators who are good digital citizens. Ms. Shore and Mr. Sullivan presented highlights from each of the three elementary schools that included work on sequencing and debugging concepts, coding, podcasting, and Green Screen technology that laid the groundwork for independent research projects.

Chair Merenda inquired about assessing success for the program. Ms. Shore noted the program is guided by DESE standards, but the Digital Learning team often judges success by what happens in the classroom and monitoring and evaluating the preparedness of 5 and 6th graders for middle and high school. When asked if there is any urgency for additional tools, Ms. Shore feels that, currently, the program has all it needs. The team continues to work on best practices for the program and is looking to other districts for conversations on what is working well and where improvements might be made.

E. New Business:

1. **HS Program of Studies:** CHS Principal, Jeffrey Sperling and Dr. Meredith Chamberland, CHS Director of Counseling, presented the 2023-2024 CHS Program of Studies. Highlights included updating graduation requirements, raising the required credit load from 36 to 38, adding Wellness courses for all four grades, adding AP classes in Precalculus and Government, new electives in English, and a

new four year Italian language cohort open to all grades (made possible through a generous donation from community members).

Chair Merenda asked if student feedback was part of the process of adding new courses. Mr. Sperling acknowledged that student input is invaluable. Student representative, Emma Cummings, agreed and was particularly excited about opportunities that would become available for Performing Arts students.

Principal Sperling and Dr. Chamberland distributed a template comparing the current model of classes and a “semesterized” model, and gave an in-depth explanation of semesterization of the high school schedule. Suggesting that the new model is course construction, rather than a schedule change, both Dr. Chamberland and Principal Sperling were confident that by adding only 1.4 FTE in Wellness, this model would unlock scheduling and allow more flexibility for students’ class choices while maintaining core classes. Master proposal includes a 6x/cycle schedule either for the full year or for a semester (2 terms). This aligns CHS with MA Core and DESE’s 4-year Wellness requirement. This will also ensure students have no more than 1 period of study in a given semester (currently students can have up to 9 studies per cycle).

Subject to a deep concern from a committee member, there was further discussion on prioritizing reducing class size. Superintendent Folan asked that the committee allow this process to play out and move forward in approving the CHS Program as presented so as not to hold up students’ course selection. As semesterization is a top priority for him, Mr. Folan pledged to keep the committee informed of the changes and endorsed continued discussion around the ramifications of the change as well as their concerns. With no further questions, Chair Merenda called for a motion for approval of the 2023-24 CHS Program of Studies as presented. Kendall O’Halloran made the motion; Laura Arboleda seconded. Vote was recorded as 3-1.

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O’Halloran	yea
Maureen Moran	nay
Laura Arboleda	yea

2. **Negotiations Update:** Superintendent Folan reported that he was pleased with the progress made at the most recent mediation session held on Saturday, January 14th 2023. Mr. Folan commended Union officials on the decision to suspend “work to rule” as students prepare to close the semester. The next mediation session is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24th. Updates can be found here: cantonma.org.
3. **Rodman Building/Cole Harrington Space Discussion:** Cole Harrington has a rental agreement with the town of Canton that includes modular space in the Galvin Middle School and 3 classrooms, an office, and motor space in the Rodman Building. The current agreement includes a 2 year lease with an option for a three year extension. Total annual revenue is approximately \$69k. CPS continues to broaden its services leaving little adequate space for expansion. The Cole Harrington management team is aware that CPS will need to reclaim the space and are looking for a new location. CPS is committed to working with them to help find an appropriate new locale. In the meantime, CPS continues to be creative in evaluating current spacing and ways to provide Cole Harrington flexibility in transition.

4. **Superintendent's Formative Assessment:** Mr. Folan reported on the mid-year progress made on District goals and Superintendent goals.

Summary of Progress on Goals:

Canton Public Schools continue to make significant progress toward meeting and achieving key action metrics and objectives in District Action Goals, Professional Practice, and Student Learning Goals. It is anticipated that CPS will increase the percentage of students scoring in the meeting/exceeding expectations range on the Spring 2023 MCAS by 3-5%. Data would also suggest that the Superintendent will fulfill all coursework and leadership learning requirements as outlined in the NSIP and REDI frameworks, and construct a plan for restructuring its organizational design. The full Formative Assessment with Priority Goals outlined is available on the School Committee webpage Meeting/Agenda/Minutes.

Recommendations on any mid-course adjustments:

The team is extremely pleased with the District goals as a driving force and acceleration points across the District. The Superintendent believes key areas have been identified and believes the work is relevant, rigorous, and attainable.

The District will need to dedicate more time around student retention and school promotion, expanding learning opportunities beyond the buildings, and enhancing communication plans and platforms. The District is working to build a sense of belonging around welcoming and "threshold points" for every family. In thinking about equity, it is agreed that a continuous thread should run through all four pillars.

The District is on track for long-term Strategic Planning in March to set forth key focus areas and goals for the next 5 years. Strategic Planning will have a committee, but it will be a full community effort.

5. **District Goal Update:** Superintendent Folan and Ms. Shore reported on Priority #4, Goal #1 - *Select and negotiate a multi-year agreement for a new Student Information System and begin the data migration and training phase of implementation.*

1. Identify initial Student Information System (SIS) minimum requirements:

With input from area districts, district administrations, and our committee members, the committee has identified 9 minimum requirements that will be used in our first round of proposal reviews. Minimum requirement evaluations will be conducted after proposals are received on or after February 17, 2023.

2. Create a SIS Selection Committee and stakeholder groups for vendor presentations:

An SIS Search Committee of 17 members representing various stakeholder groups within the District has been formed and has met as a committee to review the Request For Proposals (RFP) process, review the survey data, review the minimum requirements and evaluative criteria.

3. Survey stakeholders and share out findings to support Request for Proposal (RFP):

Stakeholder surveys were sent to staff, GMS and CHS students, and parents/guardians.

4. Finalize minimum requirements and evaluative criteria for RFP bid:

Minimum requirement evaluations will be conducted after proposals are received on or after February 17, 2023. Additionally, six areas of evaluative criteria are being finalized. These criteria will be used for vendor proposal scoring after all demonstrations and “sandbox opportunities” are complete.

5. Engage in RFP bid process for SIS selection:

The RFP bid is slated to be distributed and available to vendors on January 26, 2023.

6. Host vendor presentation with SIS Selection Committee and stakeholder groups:

Vendor demos to various stakeholder groups are being planned for the weeks of March 13-March 24.

7. Select new Student Information System:

The current timeline is to have a vendor announced no later than April 15, 2023.

8. Execute contract negotiations with selected vendor:

Migration will begin in the summer and run parallel to the current system starting in August. The committee is hopeful the new system will be fully operational by the end of the 2023 Fall semester.

Highlights of program improvements include ease of scheduling, data mining, upgraded day to day back end user processes, and enhanced elementary grading mechanisms.

F. Unfinished Business:

6. **FY24 Budget Roll Out (VOTE)**: Mr. Marshall reviewed the most updated FY24 Budget. Ms. Arboleda requested a “no vote” to allow more time to review the budget. Mr. Marshall noted that a vote could be delayed until the next School Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, February 2nd. Discussion ensued at the request of Committee member, Ms. Moran, regarding several concerns including:
 - Quality Enhancements-3.0 FTE Elementary Assistant Principals (Line item #63)-Mr. Marshall explained that this budget item is a role change, not new roles. Ms. Moran asked for a list of all personal service contracts. Mr. Marshall will review and return with a report of these contracts.
 - Math Tutor (line item #66)-Ms. Moran asked for clarification of the Math tutor role. Mr. Marshall explained that this budget item is a short term solution for the current academic year. The 2023-24 budget includes a Math Interventionist at both the middle school and high school (line items 64-65).
 - District HR Manager (line item 57)-Ms. Moran wanted to understand the role this person is playing in the District. This role will include building a common template for job description, then writing and editing job descriptions for every role in the district. ONce completed, these new documents will be reviewed by the CTA, Canton’s attorney and the Town Director before being published.
 - Consideration for an EA (Educational Assistant) in each classroom. Discussion ensued

including budget implications. Mr. Marshall will return with a thoughtful response with respect to the right path moving forward.

- Consideration for stipends for after school activities and clubs as well as a dedicated Special Ed teacher. Ms. Moran queried about an appetite for School Committee funding. Mr. Folan acknowledged that there was a Stipends Committee circa 2019 that reviewed budget allocations and mechanisms of funding and wondered if this committee should be revived and remain a standing committee. The District will look at creating a formal process and regular review of stipends—perhaps a pilot.

With no further questions from the committee, it was decided to hold the vote for a third read and vote at the Thursday, February 2nd, 2023 School Committee meeting.

7. **2023-2024 District and School Committee Calendar (VOTE)**: Superintendent Folan presented the District and the School Committee meeting calendar for the 2023-2024 school year for a 2nd read and a possible vote of approval. Mr. Folan explained that it is important to have two School Committee meetings in August as there is a need for approval of documents before the beginning of the school year.

Hearing no concerns or requests for further explanations on either calendar, Chair Merenda asked for a motion to approve the 2023-2024 District and School Committee meeting Calendars as written and presented. Kendall O’Halloran made the motion; Laura Arboleda seconded. Vote was recorded as 4-0.

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

G. Public Comment: Ms. Amy Eagles, Kindergarten teacher at JFK and mother of students in the CPS system, spoke about her role as an involved parent, teacher and advocate of fair contract negotiations.

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

I. Consent Agenda:

1. Regular Session Minutes: January 5, 2023
2. Executive Session Minutes: December 3, 2022 (emergency session), January 5, 2023, January 11, 2023
3. Warrant: January 20, 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 and Laura Arboleda seconded. The the vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as follows:

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

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

Kendall O'Halloran reported that BCPS met last week and discussed feedback from the April 2022 survey. Ms. O'Halloran reminded the community that CCPC pre-op applications are still being accepted. For Content and Communications, committee members are gathering options and are seeking to add a high school student interested in graphics to the committee to build computer artwork for community ads, etc.

Kristian Merenda reported that the Master Planning Implementation Committee is expecting Annual Reports for schools prepared for the next meeting. Building renovations will begin on January 25th and OPM final candidate for Middle School new construction is due to the MSBA by February 8th.

Superintendent Folan commended the work of the CAPT and CAPE volunteers and asked the community members to consider volunteering for these committees and experience the satisfaction of accomplishment and fulfillment.

Mr. Marshall reported back from the Sustainability Committee. They are piloting several green projects:

1. a Composting Program for back of the house kitchen waste in the elementary schools;
2. recycling single use gloves at the Luce;
3. a composting pilot at the fire station;
4. Canton Clean Up Day is scheduled for April 1st.

K. Other Business: Chair Merenda took the opportunity to remind the community that it is election season and to consider becoming a part of the School Committee. Please reach out to Ms. Merenda via the School Committee email address (schoolcommittee@cantonma.org) for more information.

L. Future Business: The next Open Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 2, 2023, @ 6:00 pm.

M. Adjournment: With no requests for further discussion, Chair Merenda called for a motion to adjourn the Thursday, January 19, 2023 Open Meeting of the School Committee at 9:45 pm. Ms. O'Halloran made the motion; seconded by Laura Arboleda. Vote was 4-0 and recorded as:

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

Action Items:

1. Regarding 2024 Budget Item E-1, CHS 2023-24 Program of Studies, Ms. Arboleda asked the team to provide data around class size that might demonstrate inclusivity versus providing the best possible education.
2. Regarding 2024 Budget Item F-1, Ms. Moran asked for a list of all personal service contracts. Mr. Marshall will review and return with a report of these contracts.
3. Regarding 2024 Budget Item F-1, Ms. Moran also requested further discussion around adding a high school English teacher.
4. Regarding Budget Item F-1, Mr. Marshall will return with a thoughtful response with respect to the right path moving forward for EA's in each classroom.
5. Regarding Budget Item F-1, the District will look at creating a formal process and regular review of stipends—perhaps creating a pilot.

Documents viewed/discussed:

Superintendent's Report dated 1/19/2023

Elementary Digital Learning Presentation

2023-2024 CHS Program of Studies

Proposed CHS Semesterization Model

Superintendent Folan's Formative Assessment

District Goals Update: 1/19/2023

FY24 Budget

2023-2024 School Calendar

2023-2024 School Committee Meeting Calendar