

**Canton School Committee
Thursday, November 16, 2023
Open Session
Minutes**

A. Call to Order: Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion to call to order the Thursday, November 16, 2023 School Committee Open Session Meeting at 4:36 pm. Laura Arboleda made the motion; Kimberly McCourt 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'Hallora
Danica Seto, Student Representative

Guests: Aaron Scibelli, School Committee School Advisor
Josh Fogel, Director of Technology and Data Analytics
Saundra Watson, JFK Elementary School Principal
Justin Thibeault, Ai3

A. Executive Session: (a) Approve executive session minutes (10/19/23), (b) conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel - Superintendent.

School Committee members returned from Executive Session at 6:42 pm.

B. Student Member Report: School Committee Student Advisor for the Hansen Elementary School, Aaron Scibelli, shared Hansen school updates. Mr. Scibelli recently met with Hansen School Principal, Mr McKnight and reported on the following events:

1. CAPT sponsored Circus;
2. Hansen Fall Book Sale;
3. Extracurricular activities:
 - i. French Club meets once a month

- ii. 30-40 students are now taking Instrument lessons that will offer multiple performance opportunities;
- iii. 1st graders enjoyed a field trip to the Food Pantry; and held a Food Drive to help benefit Project 51;
- iv. Hansen students enjoyed a surprise visit from CHS student actors who make up the cast of *The Wizard of Oz*;
- v. Mr. Scibelli also announced the State finals for Women's Volleyball will be held at Worcester State University on Saturday, November 18th at 1:30pm.

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

Champions of Excellence

CHS Volleyball: Congratulations to the No. 3 CHS Volleyball team for an epic 5-set win this week over No. 2 Algonquin, moving to 24-0 on the season and earning a spot in Saturday's State Championship game! We wish the very best to all of the players, families, coaches, especially Hall of Fame coach Pat Cawley, who is in her 17th year at the helm. The Bulldogs won the state championship in 2019. The State Championship match against top-seeded Westboro will be held **Saturday, November 18th at 1:30pm at Worcester State University**, 486 Chandler Street, Worcester. We are looking for the Canton community to attend and provide an incredible fan section. All ticket and fan bus information, plus directions, are outlined in the [CHS Athletics blog](#).

Cross Country: Girls Team qualifies for the All-States this weekend by finishing 5th at State Meet. This could be the first time in history the Bulldog Girls team has qualified. It 100% is the first time they have qualified this century! Lauren Raffetto finished 2nd overall!

CHS Student Forum: Yesterday, School Committee Members Ms. O'Halloran and Ms. Merenda joined Principal Jeff Sperling, Ms. Shannon and six Canton High School students for the bi-annual CHS School Committee/Student Forum. The forum provides students an opportunity to share their experiences at CHS, celebrate the strengths, offer ideas for improvement, and reflect on their learning. Student voice was remarkable and provided great insight into the CHS student experience. Thank you to all involved.

Food Pantry Visit: A shout out to the first graders from the Hansen Elementary School who donated 354 pounds of food to the Canton Food Pantry. We are so proud of them for being exemplary students in helping our community. As part of their field trip, students walked to the Food Pantry, helped shelve items, and learned about how the Food Pantry helps our community. This great community engagement was part of a social studies unit.

National Honor Society Induction Ceremony: Congratulations to the Canton High School students who were inducted into the school's Robert W. Tighe Chapter of the National Honor Society (NHS) on November 8. NHS requires students to demonstrate four core values – scholarship, service, leadership, and character. Thank you to all who organized

this memorable event, especially Principal Sperling, guest speaker Adam Hughes, Colleen Brown and Jen Sousa (CHS NHS Advisor). Thank you also to Sarah Shannon for attending the event in my absence. [2023 NHS Inductees](#).

Champions of Wellness Road Race: The Champions of Wellness 5k is this weekend, Sunday, November 19. We have 177 runners signed up already! As a bonus, there will be a Kids Fun Run for any children of adults who are signed up. It is not too late to sign up, so please use this [LINK](#) to register. Registration is open until Saturday, November 18.

Acknowledgments

Substitute Educators Day: I would like to extend a very special thanks to our substitute workers. Substitute Teacher Appreciation Day is tomorrow, November 17. Our substitutes provide a critical link in the education of students by serving as a bridge to provide continued quality education to children in the temporary absence of regular classroom educators. We are grateful for their work.

Thanksgiving: I wish all of you a wonderful, joyous and relaxing Thanksgiving holiday. The 97th annual Thanksgiving football game between Canton and Stoughton will be played at Stoughton High School on November 23 at 10 a.m. Click on the [CHS Athletic Blog](#) for all of the information.

Updates

Social Media Launch: Today, we launched Canton Public School social media platforms for Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. Please consider following as we enhance our community engagement.

CHS Student Forum: Yesterday, School Committee Members Ms. O'Halloran and Ms. Merenda joined Principal Jeff Sperling, Ms. Shannon and six Canton High School students for the bi-annual CHS School Committee/Student Forum. The forum provides students an opportunity to share their experiences at CHS, celebrate the strengths, offer ideas for improvement, and reflect on their learning.

GMS Community Forum No. 3 and Upcoming Forums: We held another successful Community Forum on November 13, which focused primarily on the consideration of an auditorium, a cafetorium or a gymnasium for the GMS Building Project. Here is a [LINK](#) to the recording. Community Forum No. 4 will be held on Wednesday, Nov. 29 at GMS Library. To learn more about the Galvin Middle School Building Project, click on this [LINK](#).

MASC/MASS Conference: School Committee Member Kristian Merenda and I attended the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) / Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) conference last week. Ms. Merenda served on a panel discussion that focused on equity in early literacy. School Committee Chair Kendall O'Halloran was recognized at the MASC Dinner as a member of the All-State School Committee for her work and Canton's work on updating and enhancing school policy.

Superintendent Roundtable/Israeli War: I recently attended the Tri-County Superintendent Roundtable and joined 50 other superintendents to discuss the impact of the Israeli-Hamas War on our students and families. As we hold our Jewish and Palestinian families closely with love and support, we also reaffirm that we do not tolerate hate or discrimination in any form -- especially during this time of war. As the war intensifies, we continue to stand with every member of our community and will not tolerate any acts of antisemitism, anti-Muslim or anti-Palestinian. We will endeavor to deepen our relationships within our community through this difficult time.

Important Dates and Events

Nov. 17	Early Release, Parent Conferences, PreK-8
Nov. 17, 18 & 19	CHS Fall Play, Wizard of Oz, 7:00 pm 11/17, 4:00 pm 11/18, 2:00 pm 11/19
Nov. 19	Champions of Wellness 5K, CHS, 9:00 am
Nov. 22	Early Release, Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 23 & 24	No School, Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 29	GMS Building Project Community Forum #4, 7:00 pm, GMS Library

C. New Business

1. **GMS Building Project Progress Update:** Ai3 representative, Justin Thibeault provided an update on the GMS Building Project. Mr. Thibeault reviewed Building Organization for all nine options. Once the grade configuration decision is made (5-8 or 6-8), criteria for each of the five categories (Educational Program, Community & Access, Construction Phasing, Sustainability, and Cost) will be ranked and presented for consideration.

Mr. Thibeault briefed the School Committee on the three options for performance space at the Galvin–Auditorium, Cafetorium, and Gymatorium. Noting that all three options would provide income opportunities to the town, Mr. Thibeault reviewed all considerations that included historical data of Canton performances, evaluating each option and its benefits and limitations, including examples from previous Ai3 projects. Costs for a stand alone auditorium is estimated at \$12-15 million. This expense will not be reimbursable through MSBA. Ms. Merenda wondered whether the size of the surrounding spaces would be affected. Mr. Thibeault indicated that once there is a decision on the performance space, Ai3 will be able to advise on available rough cost scenarios. If this decision is made early, there may be consideration for cost modifications; however, Mr. Thibeault expects costs to remain in the \$12-15 million range. Ms. Moran inquired over the percent of reimbursement from MSBA for a Cafetorium or Gymatorium. Mr. Thibeault suggested reimbursement for these “eligible spaces” is not fully funded,

but the formula for reimbursement percentages will be further defined after the final decision.

Mr. Thibeault highlighted the nine building configuration options and explained how each would be accomplished, then defined how Ai3's building design concepts directly connect to the CPS Mission Statement and Educational Program. He noted there was a live poll from Community Forum #3 asking attendees whether Canton should invest in an auditorium, cafetorium or gymatorium. For those who were unable to attend the forum but want to participate, the poll will remain live until Monday, November 30th at 3 pm. Members of the School Committee suggested the Canton community make their voices heard by responding to the poll. (www.menti.com; enter code 1464 7717).

2. **Preview Considerations for the Upcoming GMS Community Forum:**

Members of Ai3 discussed considerations for the next Community Forum scheduled for Wednesday, November 29th at the Galvin Middle School. Canton residents are encouraged to attend and give feedback as the School Committee is expected to vote on both grade configuration, performance space type and preferred building option at the December 20, 2023 School Committee Open Session meeting.

3. **Elementary Handbook and District Appendix Revisions:** JFK Elementary Principal, Saundra Watson, proposed changes to the cell phone policy in the elementary school Handbooks and District Appendix for a possible vote of approval. As "Away-for-the-Day" schools, Ms. Watson recommended that all cell phones and other electronic devices be off and in backpacks, not to be used during the school day without the principal's permission. Students will be reminded to put devices away. If the rule is ignored, devices will be confiscated for the day. (If parents/guardians must contact their children during the school day, they are asked to go through the school office.) Students are not allowed to take pictures or videos of other students or staff. If this occurs, cell phones will be confiscated and parents/guardians will be notified. Additionally, the school cannot be responsible for phone loss or theft.

Principal Watson noted that this same policy is in effect at both the middle and high schools, and reiterated that devices can be brought into the building, but must be left in backpacks.

School committee members voiced their support of this update and offered further advocacy if appropriate. They did suggest that the updated policy be included in any teacher/school/District communications (SMORES, Blackboard, etc) to allow parents/guardians every opportunity to understand and embrace the policy.

There was a request from a community member at the meeting to hold the vote until after Public Comment so their thoughts and concerns could be voiced. After a short discussion, Kristian Merenda made a motion to hold the vote to approve the proposed changes to the cell phone policy in the elementary school

Handbooks and District Appendix as written until after Public Comment. 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

4. **CCPC Projects:** Mr. Marshall brought forward three proposed CCPC projects, requesting a vote of approval:
 - a. **Gibson Field Lighting:** funding requested: \$550,000 to install lighting at Gibson Field. Used by a variety of youth, adult and high school sports programs, lighting will allow additional hours for practice and games allowing accessibility to more teams and players. Two existing poles will be updated by adding two extra heads. LED lighting will be used; a reduction in lighting costs is expected. Lighting costs will also include remote lighting controls. Requestors have done due diligence in acknowledging abutting neighbors. *Mr. Marshall recommended moving this request forward.*
 - b. **JFK Little League Bathroom Supplement:** funding requested: \$250,000. Project will include construction of a Little League bathroom facility. Delays and changes in design added unforeseen costs. Funds are being sought to cover the total shortfall of the project. *This project will not move forward with CCPC monies as funds cannot be accessed until after project date completion. Canton Recreation Department, School Committee and Select Board will fund this project.*
 - c. **The John F. Kennedy Elementary Playground:** The playground is heavily used by elementary school students as well as the Canton community. This project will include the removal of all existing playground equipment. The current mulch base will be excavated. A sub base will be installed, topped by a pour in place rubber playground surface. New, updated structures including slides, and a climbing structure suitable for elementary age children will be installed. *Mr. Marshall recommended moving this request forward. He did acknowledge that a potential, anonymous donor may come forward. The CCPC board is aware of this situation, and has asked that this be resolved before funding decisions are made.*

Mr. Marshall asked for a vote of approval for projects A and C above.
Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion to approve CCPC applications for projects A and C as written, presented, and listed above. Laura Arboleda made the motion; Maureen Moran 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

D. Unfinished Business

1. **FY25 Capital - 2nd read and possible vote of approval:** Mr. Marshall presented the FY25 Capital Budget for a 2nd read and possible vote of approval. Mr. Marshall acknowledged that he continues to await back up quotes for some of the projects (warehouse lot paving, landscaping design & construction, Rodman Staircases (3), and Chromebook replacements) and understood that the School Committee might prefer to hold a vote for FY 25 Capital until these quotes become available. Further discussion on Capital issues included:

- a. Ms. Moran requested a copy of the safety recommendations from the recent Canton Police review as well as the backup information for Hansen's interior window shades.

Action Item: Mr. Folan will send Ms. Moran the CPD report. Mr. Marshall will forward the Hansen shades quote.

- b. A local business has offered to fund a new scoreboard and CHS. There was discussion over the naming rights for this scoreboard. Committee members expressed concern that the donor might expect to include their logo on the scoreboard, and wondered what the school might give up in accepting this donation.
- c. Ms. Moran asked for an inventory of the District's musical instruments. Mr. Marshall stated he is working on it; however, the responsible person is out on leave. He does not expect to have this inventory available for the FY25 budget.
- d. Ms. Moran inquired about the devices inventory she requested at a previous meeting. She asked for:
 - i. a report on insurance usage;
 - ii. a report on whether the insurance is beneficial to the District;
 - iii. how the District manages the devices at "end of life;" (Mr. Marshall reported that they are sold off at a minimal price);
 - iv. Mr. Marshall also reminded the committee that some of these expenses have been moved into "Operating Expenses" as he feels that is a more appropriate place for device costs.

- v. Mr. Fogel will forward a copy of a devices inventory when completed;
 - vi. elementary school furniture inventory-Mr. Marshall will provide backup.
- e. Ms.Moran recommended holding the vote on FY25 Capital until the next School Committee meeting (scheduled for 12.7.23). Members agreed. FY Capital vote of approval will be added to the December 7, 2023 agenda.

Ms. Merenda did note that a Capital Plan for the District is underway.

2. **Food Allergy Management Policies - 2nd Read and possible vote of approval:** Members of the policy subcommittee shared updated policies **00JLCEA** and **JLCEA-R** for a 2nd read and possible vote of approval. Ms. O'Halloran noted these policies include updated practices instituted after the last update in 2018, and following professional medical recommendations. There was a question on where these policies might be posted. Mr. Folan assured committee members that they will be embedded in the CPS website with links the community might follow. A question was asked about the availability of epi pens on buses. Because each epi pen is individualized, there are currently no "standard" epi pens available in the first aid kits on buses. However, Ms. Byrne agreed to look into opportunities to include a "standard" dose epi pen for each bus.

Hearing no further questions or comments, Ms. O'Halloran asked for a motion to approve the 2023 Food Allergy Management Policies **00JLCEA** and **JLCEA-R** as written and presented. Kristian Merenda made the motion; Maureen Moran 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

E. Public Comment:

1. Canton resident Jennifer O'Donnell spoke of her concerns of normalizing bad behavior of students, and vocally opposed proposed new cell phone policy in the elementary schools due to safety concerns she has.
2. Canton resident Eileen Coyle commended the work of Mr. Marshall and his staff in aligning the budgetary process for the District. She also asked that the District consider the process for vetting an anonymous donor; cautioned care in interpreting the very specific software/hardware rules; advised against including epi pens on buses as it is not the responsibility of the bus company, but did suggest making a detailed safety plan for general use of an epi pen.

With no further comments voiced from the community, School Committee members entered into a short discussion of the proposed Elementary Handbook and District Appendix revisions regarding cell phone use. Ms. O'Halloran noted that the School Committee is not allowed to see any videos of any students or personnel. Ms. Moran wondered if the committee should revisit the policy for any unintended consequences. Superintendent Folan reiterated that he supports the policy as it was brought forward. The policy has stood up to the process-moving through school councils and he felt the new policy is important for clarity for all.

Hearing no further questions or requests for further discussion, Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion to approve the Elementary Handbook and District Appendix revisions as written and presented. Kristian Merenda made the motion; Kimberly McCourt seconded. 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

F. Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Report: Mr Marshall had nothing further to report.

G. Consent Agenda:

1. Open Session Minutes: November 2, 2023
2. Warrant: November 17, 2023

Chair O'Halloran announced the contents of the Consent Agenda and asked if any member had a need for discussion or a request to remove any of the items. Hearing none, Ms. O'Halloran asked for a motion for approval of the Open Session Minutes from 11.2.23 and the warrant for 11.17.23 as written and presented. Laura Arboleda made the motion; Maureen Moran 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

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

Ms. McCourt-nothing to report;

Ms. Moran-nothing to report;

Ms. Arboleda: nothing to report;

Ms. O'Halloran:

1. The Policy Subcommittee will meet next November 29, 2023;
2. CCPC-Committee continues to review applications and presentations;
3. Content & Communications: a CHS student has been hired as the graphic artist for ads and communications.

Stephen Marshall: nothing further to report;

Superintendent Folan: nothing further to report;

I. Other Business: None

J. Future Business: The next Open Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 7, 2023 @ 6:00 pm.

K. Adjournment: Hearing no questions or requests for further discussion, Ms. O'Halloran asked for a motion to adjourn the Thursday, November 16, 2023 School Committee Open Session Meeting at 8:47 pm. Laura Arboleda made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. Ensuing vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

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

Documents Reviewed:

Superintendent's Report November 16, 2023

Galvin Middle School Building Update November 16, 2023

Revisions to Elementary Handbook and District Appendix

CCCP Project applications (3)

CPS Food Allergy Management Policy-revised October 17, 2023

FY25 Capital Requests-Summary of Requests

Action Items:

1. Mr. Folan will send Ms. Moran the CPD report.

2. Mr. Marshall will forward the Hansen shades quote.