

**Canton School Committee
Open Session Meeting
Thursday, March 9, 2023
Minutes**

A. Call to Order: Chair Merenda called open the School Committee meeting at 6:02 pm.

Attendees:

Kristian Merenda
Kendall O'Halloran
Maureen Moran
Nicola Gallagher
Laura Arboleda (arrived at 6:17 pm)
Derek Folan
Stephen Marshall
Sarah Shannon
Samantha Phan, Student Representative to the School Committee
Joanne Campbell, Recording Secretary

Guests:

Ryan Garrett, Student Representative for Hansen Elementary School
Saundra Watson, Principal John F. Kennedy Elementary School
Kathryn Gallahue, M.Ed, Special Education Team Chair
Noreen Rowland, President, CAPT, JFK School
Priscilla Lourenco, Vice President, CAPT, JFK School
Helena Rafferty, Canton Chief of Police
Eric Kakovitch, School Resource Officer, Elementary Schools
Steve Mullaney, School Resource Officer, Galvin Middle School
Ensley Cotard, School Resource Officer, Canton High School
Joshua Fogel, District Data Analytics Manager
Meghan Byrne, Student Services Director

B. Student Advisor Report Mr. Ryan Garrett, Canton High school sophomore and Student Representative for the Hansen Elementary School, shared the student member report about the school's recent events. He reported on Kindness Week which began Friday, March 3rd. The goal of Kindness Week is to be kind and build community between students and staff. Promoted by signs throughout the school and special guests, students learned about leadership and respectful ways to treat others. Mr. Garrett also talked about Downs Syndrome Day, scheduled for March 21st. Students are encouraged to wear colorful socks to show awareness of this disability. When asked if he noticed any differences since he had attended elementary school, Mr. Garrett stated that he "just felt like I was home. It was a great atmosphere to be around."

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

Highlights

Community Resource Night: Congratulations to the organizers and attendees of last night's Community Resource Night, organized by the Canton Parent Advisory Council for Student Services (CPACSS). Special thanks to Lauren

Cipriano, Anna Sanina and Cathy DeMassi for being the key organizers. This new event showcased local and regional services available to students with special needs and their families.

CHS Students Attend Hamilton: A huge thank you to the Rodman Foundation for donating 30 tickets for our students to attend Hamilton in Boston! Thanks to CHS Counselor Ed Amico for coordinating the event, to MusicCounts! for sponsoring the bus, and to PreK-12 Performing Arts Coordinator Catherine Eckersley for all her efforts.

World Language Week: This week we celebrate World Language Week. Many activities and events are taking place throughout the week including spirit wear days, Latin Dance, Chinese Acrobatics, listening lunches, Global Citizenship, Social Justice & Service events and several after school activity options. To view the full list of events, please see [this link](#). Thank you to Ms. Heidi Olson and the entire World Languages staff for coordinating this amazing week.

Canton Clean-Up Day: Canton Public Schools is proud to partner again with the Great Canton Cleanup Team. Please consider volunteering on April 1, from 10-12, to help with the town-wide cleanup.

Artist in Bloom: The Visual Arts Department, in conjunction with the Canton Garden Club, is once again hosting "Artists in Bloom" at Pequitside Farm (79 Pleasant Street, Canton) on March 25th and 26th from 10am-5pm each day. This event is a fundraiser for the Canton Garden Club's CHS Scholarship for Seniors pursuing Visual Arts related studies in college. All proceeds from this event benefit this Scholarship program.

Acknowledgements

Maintenance Worker Appreciation Day: Friday, March 3rd was Maintenance Worker Appreciation Day. We would like to thank all of our maintenance staff for keeping our buildings and grounds clean and safe throughout the year.

School Social Worker Week: This week is National School Social Worker Week. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our Home School Interventionists and Social Workers for helping our students succeed and achieve their goals.

National Athletic Trainer Month: Special shout out to our Athletic Trainer, Danny Erickson, as we celebrate and recognize him for his vital role in the development of our athletes. Thanks for all your hard work and dedication.

Women's History Month: March is Women's History Month. Please join me in celebrating the amazing accomplishments women have made in our history, culture, and society.

National Nutrition Month: March is also National Nutrition Month. We would like to take this time to thank Food Services Director, Martha Lawless, and all of our Food Services staff for helping students learn about making informed food choices and guiding them in developing healthy eating habits.

Indicators of Excellence

Massachusetts Music Educators All State Conference: Shout out to Catherine Eckersley, Betsy Pabon and Sherrill Morrison for presenting at the Massachusetts Music Educators All State Conference last Friday. They presented strategies for Universal Design For Learning (UDL) at the secondary level with a session called "Getting started with UDL for Middle and High School Music Students". In this session, two music teachers and one special education teacher shared UDL materials, strategies, and examples they have been practicing in their classrooms this year.

Massachusetts Association for Jazz Education (MAJE): Thanks to the efforts of Ms. Eckersley and the Performing Arts Staff, Canton was fortunate to host the MAJE Southeast Jazz festival last week. Six schools came to compete. This month, we also celebrate *Music in Our Schools Month*. Thank you to our tremendously gifted and dedicated teachers in our Performing Arts Department for continuing to bring excellence and joy to their work every day.

CHS Playoffs: Both Girls and Boys Hockey are still playing well and moving through the MIAA playoffs. We wish both teams much success. See the [Athletic Blog](#) for ticket information and location.

JFK CAPT Event: Thanks to the JFK CAPT for organizing a visit from Tevin Wooten, a meteorologist from channel 10 who joined the JFK 3rd graders for a weather presentation.

Important Dates and Events

March 8-10	Kindergarten Registration - Held at the school your child will be registered. Last Day: Friday, March 10, 1:00 - 2:30 pm. The link above provides additional information on what to bring for registration.
March 10	Early Release PreK-12 - PD
March 14	Black History Month CDEI Event, 7:00 pm, Canton Public Library
March 17-19	CHS Drama Presents Musical <i>Little Shop of Horrors</i> - 3/17 & 3/18 @ 7:00 pm, 3/19 @ 2:00 pm, CHS Auditorium
March 23	School Committee Meeting, 6:00 pm, CHS DLL
March 24	CAPE Spelling Bee, CHS Auditorium, 6:00 pm
March 25-26	Artists in Bloom Art Show, 10:00 pm -5:00 pm, Pequitside Farm
March 30 & 31	CHS Spring Concert, 7:00 pm, CHS Auditorium

Other School Committee members took the opportunity to share District news. Ms. Phan spoke of a recent Asian Culture Club event where Asian cuisine was shared; Ms. Merenda reminded the community that both the boys and girls high school hockey teams are in the play-offs; and Ms. O'Halloran noted that lots of Canton Youth Sports teams are also in contention for looming playoff spots and thanked all sports commentators for their hard work and dedication to Canton sports.

D. Teaching and Learning Report: Principal Sandra Watson and Kathryn Gallahue reported that total student enrollment at JFK is 477, all of whom are supported by 66 faculty members. Highlights of the presentation included the very successful inauguration of monthly "all-school meetings" and an explanation of instructional models as well as special events like the recent STEAM Week. Principal Watson reported on a few of the programs, all of which she is deeply involved with, for Professional Development and Collaboration. Instituted just last year, the Teaching and Learning Alliance (TLA), led by the Literacy Department, continues to explore and refine instructional strategies. As part of the Academic Leadership team, Ms. Watson collaborates with teachers to analyze data that will inform instructional planning and intervention cycles. Ms. Watson is also quite proud of the Instructional Leadership Team that is helping to create structures and systems for a more

inclusive and equitable community. The work of these and other groups at the JFK were instrumental in the creation of JFK's School Improvement Plan. When asked if there were any surprises with the school's new programs,

Ms. Watson noted there were none as she really listened to the staff and planned accordingly. . . she made a special effort to go "back to what we do (collaborate)."

E. New Business

1. **JFK CAPT Honors**: JFK School CAPT President, Noreen Rowland, and Vice President, Priscilla Lourenco presented some highlights of their work including fundraising efforts such as the current Raise Craze (March 13-24th), Spirit Wear apparel and Dining Out cards. Proceeds from all of these efforts help enhance an already impressive list of CAPT programming. The two officers also announced a sneaker drive. Donations may be placed in the box in front of the JFK building. Ms. Roland and Ms. Lourneco acknowledged efforts of current CAPT volunteers and also acquainted the community with available volunteer opportunities for membership and leadership roles. Ms. Roland and Ms. Lourenco were presented with Certificates of Appreciation from School Committee members.
2. **School Resource Officer (SRO) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**: Superintendent Folan and Canton Chief of Police Rafferty reported on the updated SRO MOU in the hopes of eliciting a vote of approval. Chief Rafferty introduced the three SRO's. The SRO's spoke briefly about "a day in the life. . ." highlighting their passionate commitment to the District and each building as well as establishing and maintaining great relationships with students and staff. All SRO's continually work on Guidance and student follow-up and act as guest educators, offering a "police perspective", and teaching students about Street Law and Forensics. The group reviewed the MOU. Ms. O'Halloran noted that the MOU was reviewed and endorsed by Mr. Jim Hardy, Canton's representative from MASC. The SRO states clearly that the SRO's are employees of the Canton Police Department, and members of the District staff. With no further questions or requests for further discussion, Chair Merenda called for a motion to approve the SRO MOU as written and presented. The motion was made by Kendall O'Halloran and seconded by Nicola Gallagher. Vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

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

5 yeas	0	nays
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3. **Nurse Substitute Pay**: Mr. Marshall presented a proposal for a rate change to the nursing substitute pay increasing substitute nurse pay from \$120 per day to \$240 per day, amounting to a pay rate of approximately \$35 per hour, half the typical rates for nurses. If this increase is approved, Mr. Marshall hopes to appoint one to two substitute nurses to help alleviate the current workload. He also recommended consideration for a 3% raise for substitute nurses in August 2023. A short discussion followed. With no questions or further discussion requested, Chair Merenda called for a motion to approve the Nurse Substitute Pay Increase as written and presented. The motion was made by Kendall O'Halloran and seconded by Nicola Gallagher. Vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

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

5 yeas 0 nays

4. **Policy Files DKC and DO:** Superintendent Folan and members of the policy subcommittee presented an update to two policies: **File DKC-Business Travel and Conference Training Attendance and Reimbursement.** This policy includes in-district reimbursable mileage. Superintendent Folan and Ms. O'Halloran reported they looked to Mr. Hardy, MASC Representative, to advise on the appropriateness of this policy. Mr. Hardy found the policy as written to be sound, but cautioned that all benefits, except for increased pay for longevity, should be consistent for all job levels. Mr. Hardy suggested there be more specific language around reimbursable mileage. Committee members looked at language from other towns for equivalent language, but did not find any comparable. They feel more research is required and will tackle this policy at their next Policy Subcommittee meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 16th, and return to the next School Committee Meeting (March 23rd) with consideration for a vote.
Secondly, Mr. Folan gave a brief history of award funds under **File DO: Scholarship and Award Funds.** He also submitted that decisions and awards of these scholarships must be done in a fair and equitable manner suggesting the selection process might begin with outlining process criteria and best practices for selection. These changes might include updated pronoun use, blind applications, inclusivity and accessibility. Committee members asked for more time to address these concerns to allow updated policy to include most current best practices that are right for Canton.
5. **DESE Report Cards:** Superintendent Folan and Mr. Fogel shared information about the DESE School & District Report Cards. This report addresses specific subject areas important to the state using tiers and expanded methodology. (This report was previously reported on in November 2022.) Mr. Fogel reported wide variances and lower scores for 2022 compared to the 2019 performance level. While Canton scored best in achievement in standardized tests, because of lower scores and achievement loss, DESE has proposed a path to more successful scoring including changed methodology for accountability and increased achievement. The team is negotiating new targets and understandings for the District– MCAS testing and scores, lowered absenteeism, and access for multi-language learners for grades K-8; and for the high school, advanced course completion, AP performance, and drop-out/graduation numbers.
There was extended conversation over DART data comparability and trends for literacy with data clarification from Mr. Fogel. There was consideration for what great ideas might be found in discussions with other, comparable school districts. However, Mr. Fogel cautioned that scoring for each town is not based on comparisons to other district scoring. Rather, target setting is unique to each district and dependent on DESE's assessment of each town's ability to improve in specific areas as compared to the previous year.
Chronic absenteeism, particularly a disproportionate rate of absenteeism for students with disabilities, was also discussed. Ms. Meghan Byrne, Student Services Director, indicated that any student in a 45-day placement window is considered present. Secondly, the district tracks elongated absences due to an intensive illness, asking them to manage schoolwork "as much as able." Ms. Byrne also noted that Covid has had an effect on attendance for those students who may be physically compromised or whose family might be compromised.

6. **MSBA Update:** Superintendent Folan announced that the MSBA OPM Selection Process has successfully concluded with the hire of LeftField. With LeftField as the lead, Canton now moves into the next phase which will include the vetting and selection of a design/architecture team. Decisions will need to be made with LeftField grade configuration, whether to rebuild versus

finding a new site and then completing construction documents. A firm is expected to be named in early July 2023.

7. **Long-Term Strategic Planning Update:** As part of his goals to facilitate and coordinate a Strategic Long-Term Planning process that fully engages all stakeholders to shape the mission, vision and values and sets multi-year goals, Superintendent Folan reported that he sent out a letter late last week kicking off a Strategic Planning outreach program designed to make students successful. A 20 person committee is being formed and will include representatives from parents, School Committee, the community, and educators. Mr. Folan encouraged all to sign up. A survey is expected to be released to the school community as part of the process. School Committee members will be invited to join a focus group regarding next steps. Action items from all these processes will be incorporated into next year's District Action Goals. Mr. Folan announced he is in receipt of the Equity Audit results. Findings will be presented on April 6th.

F. **Public Comment**-There were no requests for Public Comment, virtual or in person.

G. **Director of Finance and Operations Report:** Mr. Marshall had no further business to report.

H. **Consent Agenda:** Chair Merenda asked if any member wanted to remove any items from the Consent agenda. Ms. Moran requested that Regular Session Minutes for February 16, 2023 be removed for further review. After the removal of those minutes, Chair Merenda called for a motion to approve the remaining items as written as part of the Consent Agenda below:

Executive Session Minutes: February 16, 2023

Out-of-State Travel Request: College Planning Visit to St. Anselm, April 3, 2023

Scholarship Approval: Susan Corrado LaRosa Scholarship

Warrant: March 10, 2023

Laura Arboleda made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. Vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

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

5 yeas 0 nays

I. **(5 min.) Update of Sub-Committee, Task Force and Liaison Posts:**

1. Ms. Arboleda reported that the next Wellness Committee will meet next week and she will report back on updates.

2. Ms. Gallagher noted that the next Budget and Finance Committee meeting will be held Friday March 17th.
3. Kendall O'Halloran announced that there is a candidate for the Design Assistant role in Content and Communications and reminded all that if there are concerns regarding publications to please reach out to the School Committee or Superintendent's Office to resolve any issues. CCPC will meet later in March.
4. Superintendent Folan gave an update on CAASA. The appointment of a new director is being finalized. The new director intends to focus on schools regarding vaping etc.
5. Maureen Moran indicated that the Capital Budget will be reviewed on March 22nd and the next Budget and Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 17th.

J. Other Business:

1. Ms. Gallagher inquired when the School Committee members might have access to the Equity Audit results. Superintendent Folan expects to present these results to educators on Friday, March 10th as part of the PD program. Mr. Folan will send the results to the School Committee at the conclusion of this PD.
2. With the recent release of the Governor's Budget, Canton's school district received an additional \$745k, a 9% increase from 2022. The municipal side has asked the District to share \$200k back so they might fill several positions currently not funded. Discussions regarding this request have occurred in the Budget and Finance Committee as well as a March 8th Town Budget meeting. At this meeting, there was a contingency vote to return \$200k to the municipal side pending agreement from the School Committee. In consideration for what the town is trying to accomplish and the tremendous benefit to the entire town, there were no reservations from the School Committee. Needing no further discussion, Nicola Gallagher called for a motion to accept supporting the town by returning the \$200k to the municipality. Kristian Merenda made the motion and Maureen Moran seconded. Vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

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

5 yeas 0 nays

K. Future Business The next Open Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 23, 2023, @ 6:00 pm.

L. Adjournment: With no requests for further discussion on any subject, Chair Kristian Merenda called for a motion to adjourn the Thursday, March 9, 2023 Open Session School Committee meeting at 8:40 pm. Motion was made by Maureen Moran; seconded by Kendall O'Halloran. Motion passed unanimously at 5-0 and recorded as follows:

Kristian Merenda	yea
Kendall O'Halloran	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea

Nicola Gallagher yea
Maureen Moran yea

5 yeas 0 nays

Items Reviewed/Discussed:

Superintendent's Report - March 9, 2023
Nurse Sub Pay Memo
2023 SRO MOU
JFK CAPT Presentation
JFK Spotlight Presentation
CPS Policy DKC
Corraro LaRosa Scholarship

Action Items:

1. Mr. Folan will send results of the Equity Audit to School Committee members at the conclusion of the Friday, March 10th Professional Development program.