

Canton School Committee
Open Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 25, 2023

A. Call to Order: Chair O'Halloran called for a motion to convene the Thursday, May 25th, 2023 School Committee Open Session at 5:35 pm. Maureen Moran made the motion; Kimberly McCourt seconded. Vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

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| Kendall O'Halloran | yea |
| Maureen Moran | yea |
| Kimberly McCourt | yea |
| Kristian Merenda | yea |
| 4 yeas | 0 nays |

Executive Session: The School Committee went directly into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Canton Educators Association (CEA) as an Open Meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body.

School Committee members returned to Open Session at 6:02 pm.

Attendees: Kendall O'Halloran
Maureen Moran
Laura Arboleda (arrived at 5:41 pm) (left at 9:59 pm)
Kimberly McCourt
Kristian Merenda
Derek Folan
Stephen Marshall

Guests: Deborah Rooney, Director Teaching & Learning PreK-8
Jackie Abrams, PreK-5 Humanities Coordinator
Rebecca Ashley, CHS ELA Department Head
Dr. Kristen Morgan, GMS ELA Department Head
Anthony Natale, GMS Social Studies Department Head
Pat Connor, CHS Social Studies Department Head
Rich Labrie, CPS Transportation Consultant
Ms. Donna Kilday, Rodman Early Childhood Program
David Brauninger, Principal, Hansen Elementary School
Saundra Watson, Principal, JFK Elementary School
Yeshi Gaskin, Principal, Luce Elementary School

Absent: Emma Cummings, Student Representative

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

Highlights

CHS Boys Hockey State House Visit: The CHS Boys Hockey team visited the State House on May 17 in recognition of their State Championship. Each team member received a citation from Representative Galvin and Senator Feeney. They also met with Governor Healey and Lt. Governor Driscoll.

Updates

Professional Development Update: On Friday, May 19 we held our District-wide afternoon of educator-led professional learning. Our educators were recruited to plan and facilitate workshops that helped us #elevateourlearning as we become more familiar with the components of the Canton vision for high quality teaching, leading and learning. Workshops ranged from 20-minute lightning rounds to 90 minute sessions. Staff chose to attend the workshops that were most meaningful and relevant to them. The feedback for the day was overwhelmingly positive and most requested that we repeat this professional learning opportunity again next year.

Indicators of Excellence

Luce Fun Run: The 21st Annual Luce Fun Run took place on Sunday, May 21. Congratulations to all who participated.

Scholastic Honors Night: This evening celebrates academic excellence, service, leadership and character and was attended on Tuesday, May 16. In addition to department awards, students are recognized for the Mass Seal of Biliteracy, Book Awards, Ralph Clough Academic Honors, Citizenship Awards and Century Club Awards.

World Language Honors Night: On Thursday, May 18, 2023, over two hundred world languages students in grades 7-12 were recognized for their leadership, excellence and growth in French, German, and Spanish in the annual World Languages Recognition Night. Students working toward the MA State Seal of Biliteracy and seniors who earned the MA State Seal of Biliteracy were honored with special awards as well.

Scholarship Night: Seventy-five different students received awards during the May 23rd CHS Scholarship Night. Seventy-seven organizations gave out 168 scholarships totaling \$213,850.

Senior Externship: This day was one of the highlights of the school year for seniors. Sixty-four students encompassing 35+ businesses across many career clusters had their externship final presentation ceremony on May 24th. Nineteen of the sixty-four students got up and gave passionate and detailed speeches to the mentors, parents and others about their 25-day experience. [Here](#) a link to a video that highlights the placements, student quotes and mentor quotes.

GMS Concert: The GMS strings and chorus put on a terrific performance last night. Congratulations to all!

District Art Show: All PreK-12 students taking art classes had work displayed in this year's District Art Show from Monday, May 22 to Thursday, May 25. This year materials for our open studio activities have been generously funded by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, in conjunction with the Canton Cultural Council.

Important Dates and Events

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| May 29 | No School - Memorial Day |
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| May 30 | Performing Arts Gala, CHS Cafeteria/Auditorium, 6:00 pm |
| June 2 | CHS Graduation, CHS Turf, 6:00 pm (Rain Date: June 3 @ 10:00 am) |
| June 5 | GMS Spring Concert, CHS Auditorium, 7:00 pm |
| June 6 | Elementary Strings Concert, CHS Auditorium, 7:00 pm |
| June 7 | Elementary Band Concert, CHS Auditorium, 7:00 pm |
| June 8 | Unity Day, GMS, all-day |
| June 8 | School Committee Meeting, CHS DLL, 6:00 pm |
| June 9 | Early Release, Professional Development, Prek-12 |
| June 9 | Last Day of School PreK & K |
| June 9 | Cultural Heritage Night, GMS, 6:00 pm |
| June 13-15 | Kindergarten Screening |
| June 16 | Last day of School, Early Release, Grades 1-11 |

C. Teaching and Learning:

- 1. Literacy Discussion:** Ms. Rooney, Ms. Abrams, Ms. Ashley and Dr. Morgan, newly appointed GMS ELA Department Head, shared literacy updates for the Canton School System. Ms. Rooney gave an overview of Canton's literacy program history from 1999 through 2022 highlighting recommendations and shortfalls and the emergence of the science of reading. Current literacy programs have been adapted by eliminating subjective test measures in favor of NORMS, a curriculum based measure, ensuring explicit instruction, and eliminating 3 cueing prompts. For the 2023-24 academic year, phonics instruction will shift to UFLI (University of Florida Literacy Institute Foundations), a curriculum specific to phonics, which has been designed, field-tested, and employed by teachers. A full roll out the program will occur in the Fall of 2023. Elementary Literacy Instruction was also discussed. Ms. Rooney is concerned about having enough time in grades 1 and 2 for "instructional time, but feels instructional time in grades 3-12 is fairly sufficient. The data presented supported a rise in early literacy, part of which Ms. Rooney attributed to the "reading room."

Next steps for ELA include building connections with K-6 and 6-12, implementing UFLI in grades K-2, Professional Development for GMS and CHS as well as the "Science of Reading," establishing closer connections between the English and History departments, aligning 8th grade English with Civics, and boosting reading stamina through cognitive engagement.

School Committee members noted that GMS students, in both student forums with School Committee members, asked for greater access to the GMS library, namely

before and after school, as well as during X-block. Ms. Moran asked if additional funding or a stipend was needed to allow for student supervision. Ms. Rooney is working on finding ways to allow students access to the library before and after school.

Questions/comments from School Committee members focused on seeking assurance that CPS will align with DESE on finding and offering intervention for students affected by COVID; whether explicit phonics instruction for students in grades 6-12 should be offered; and how will students - particularly at the middle school - be caught up with the transition to UFLI in the lower grades; how did CPS decide on UFLI; the impact on teachers to learn UFLI; what elements of the Lucy Calkins literacy program would no longer be used in CPS; how to ensure students are reading at grade level, whether in grades 3-5, 6-8 or in high school; and whether literacy specialists are needed at GMS and CHS. CPS staff said students might be encouraged by determining if concerns are a lack of ability or a need for more practice, and having reading specialists help “course correct”; using informal decoding to diagnose where breakdown occurs; increased focus on “word study” (suffixes, prefixes, etc.) and bringing lessons around with resources through teachers; classroom libraries; and rolling carts of books. Taking a closer look at how reading and ELA class time in grade 6 is allocated could be an opportunity to allow for greater reading instruction, as well as smaller ELA classes at CHS and funding for substitute teacher classroom coverage to allow teachers to collaborate.

2. **Social Studies Review:** Ms. Rooney, Ms. Abrams, Mr. Natale and Mr. Connor summarized the Social Studies Curriculum Program Review process formalizing a 6 year cycle evaluating standards, curriculum resources, particularly through an equity lens, and professional learning opportunities. Review and evaluation of current research and best practices, potential additions to curriculum resources, and budgetary impacts helped determine goals for future successes. Grant funds from DESE helped support civic education. Team members shared Program review findings and recommendations for progress forward districtwide as well as specific goals for individual buildings including timelines for addressing, revising and aligning the Social Studies program throughout these buildings. The full report can be found on the CPS website.

D. New Business:

1. **Transportation Efficiency Report:** CPS Transportation Consultant, Rich Labrie, presented the April 2023 CPS School Transportation Efficiency Report. He addressed district enrollment history, transportation operation efficiency and tier times in regards to routing and scheduling. His findings supported adequate staffing in operations; however, Mr. Labrie suggested the District provide temporary administrative help to assist in addressing parental/guardian transportation issues and concerns during the period of beginning of school year transportation adjustments. Mr. LaBrie noted a national driver shortage, proposing long and short term solutions. There was in-depth analysis of routes and tiers including consideration for revising school bell schedules. However, Mr. LaBrie was clear that changing school bell schedules for the sake of school transportation is not recommended. School schedules should be based on the educational benefit of the students.

Overall, Mr. LaBrie concluded that the District transportation operation is both relatively cost effective and as efficient as possible under the current bell schedules and economic circumstances. District management was commended on several levels for their efforts

in bidding, negotiating and overall efficiency of the school transportation operations. His recommendations included:

1. Address re-routing possibilities over the summer and consider possible changes in August;
2. Plan proposal bids in October to allow for more planning time for any route recalculations and hiring of drivers.

The full report can be found on the CPS website.

2. **PreK and Elementary End-of-Year School Improvement Plans (SIPs):** Principals shared their end-of-year SIPs. Full reports for each school can be found on the CPS website.
 - a. **Rodman Early Childhood Program:** Ms. Donna Kilday, Early Childhood Coordinator, reviewed statistics and noted successful growth in early literacy and math; focused on social and emotional skills, and fostered core values of inclusion, acceptance and respect through various events. Ms. Kilday presented data supporting progress toward goals in math and literacy and steps taken to cultivate climate, culture and community engagement. A dashboard was created to help identify and analyze data to improve student outcomes and allow easy readability and understanding for parents. Ms. Kilday reported on improved programming including the creation of ACCESS, a comprehensive referral sheet, and new systems for reporting and maintaining compliance. She noted good progress on staff training, restorative justice, and self-regulation and lots of joy.
 - b. **Hansen School:** Noting that the Hansen School is making learning visible through kindness and relationships. Mr. Brauninger reported on enrollment demographics and student learning outcomes via Star Benchmark Data. Compared to 2022 average scores and percentile rankings in Math and early literacy, 2023 results have improved. Mr. Brauninger spoke about the positive student school experience with Reading and Writing Buddies, the Great Kindness Challenge, STEAM alley and the newly incorporated Library/Technology where a student-led podcast was created and is flourishing. Progress towards 2022-23 School priorities continues for educational excellence and equity, restorative practices, and social/emotional/behavioral development with the help of a behavior tracker. The Leadership team continues to meet bi-weekly to review staff work and provide feedback, host professional learning opportunities, and analyze data and information that are supporting strong increases in Math (6%) and ELA (3%) percentile ranks.
Committee members asked Mr. Brauninger to forward links to the student podcasts.
 - c. **JFK School:** Principal Watson reported on enrollment demographics and documented student learning outcomes via Star Benchmark Data. 2023 results show increases in average percentile rankings in both ELA and Math and predicted increases in MCAS scoring. Ms. Watson talked about how students feel connected through All School Meetings, Reading Buddies, Acts of Kindness and STEAM week, and how, through the community survey, parents/caregivers feel their child feels safe, a sense of belonging, and is “having a high quality experience in Canton Public School.” Ms.

Watson gave a summary of JFK's progress towards meeting their 2023 School Priorities, highlighting work on educational equity, restorative justice, social-emotional skills, positive student behavior and academic growth through high quality instruction that meets the needs of all students.

- d. **Luce School:** Principal Yeshe Lamour submitted enrollment and demographic numbers for the Luce and presented evidence of steady academic growth for Luce students via Star Benchmark and Early Literacy data. Both Reading and Math assessments showed increased percentile ranks. Ms. Gaskin provided highlights of the Student School Experiences at the Luce including SHINE core values. Celebrated daily, these values help students experience joy, inspiration, and excellence. For the first time, 5th graders created, voted for peers, and participated in student council, engaging in community service and student leadership. Ms. Lamour also reported on community survey feedback from families acknowledging that students feel safe and welcomed at the Luce and are having a high quality experience there. Positive progress towards 2022-23 School Priorities included educational equity, restorative practices modeling restorative circles and affirmative language, and improved community survey rating for school culture and student well-being. Suffolk University webinar training on Restorative Justice was offered to parents in all elementary schools. Excellence in teaching was elevated with the introduction of Cycles of Support (COS). While steady gains were made throughout the year, Ms. Lamour looks forward to fostering student coherence more intentionally and better engaging parents by expanding communications home.

3. **Cabot Fund:** Mr. Marshall gave a brief history of the Cabot Fund and noted that beginning with this year's awards, recipients will be asked to report back to the School Committee on how monies were disbursed. He then presented 2023 recommendations for approval of nine recipients for Cabot Fund awards, totaling \$14,745. Hearing no further questions, Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion to approve Cabot Fund awards as written and presented. Maureen Moran made the motion; Kimberly McCourt seconded. Vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

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| Kendall O'Halloran | yea |
| Maureen Moran | yea |
| Kimberly McCourt | yea |
| Kristian Merenda | yea |
| 4 yeas | 0 nays |

4. **Human Resource Restructuring Recommendations:** TABLED until June 8, 2023 School Committee Meeting.
5. **Solidarity Statement (1st Read):** TABLED until June 8, 2023 School Committee Meeting.
6. **District Goal Update:** TABLED until June 8, 2023 School Committee Meeting.

E. Unfinished Business:

1. **Policy Section E - 3rd Read:** Members of the policy subcommittee presented

Section E for a possible vote of approval. Chair O'Halloran advised committee members on updates to Section E based on questions and conversation at the May 11th School Committee meeting. Hearing no further questions or requests for changes to Section E, Chair O'Halloran called for a motion to accept Section E as written and presented. Maureen Moran made the motion; Kimberly McCourt seconded. Vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

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|--------------------|--------|
| Kendall O'Halloran | yea |
| Maureen Moran | yea |
| Kimberly McCourt | yea |
| Kristian Merenda | yea |
| 4 yeas | 0 nays |

F. Public Comment-None

G. Director of Finance and Operations Report: TABLED until June 8, 2023 School Committee Meeting.

H. Consent Agenda:

1. Regular Session Minutes: April 27, 2023, May 11, 2023
2. Executive Session Minutes: April 27, 2023, May 11, 2023
3. Warrant: May 26, 2023

Chair O'Halloran announced the contents of the Consent Agenda and asked if there were any requests to remove an item for further discussion or changes. Ms. Moran requested that Regular Session minutes from May 11, 2023 be removed for further review. Hearing no other requests, Ms. O'Halloran asked for a motion to approve Regular Session Minutes from April 27, 2023, Executive Session Minutes from April 27, 2023 and May 11, 2023, and the Warrant for May 26, 2023 as written and presented. Maureen Moran made the motion; Kimberly McCourt seconded. The vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

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|----------------|--------|
| Ms. O'Halloran | yea |
| Ms. Merenda | yea |
| Ms. Moran | yea |
| Ms. McCourt | yea |
| 4 yeas | 0 nays |

I. Update of Sub-Committee, Task Force and Liaison Posts: TABLED until June 8, 2023 School Committee Meeting.

J. Other Business: None

K. Future Business: The next Open Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 8, 2023 @ 6:00 pm.

L. Adjournment: Hearing no requests for further discussion on any items, Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion to adjourn the Thursday, May 25th, 2023 School Committee Meeting at 10:15 pm. Maureen Moran made the motion; Kimberly McCourt seconded. Vote was unanimous at 4-0 and

recorded as:

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|--------------------|--------|
| Kendall O'Halloran | yea |
| Maureen Moran | yea |
| Kimberly McCourt | yea |
| Kristian Merenda | yea |
| 4 yeas | 0 nays |

Documents presented:

Superintendent's Report, Thursday, May 25, 2023

CPS Literacy Update

CPS Social Studies Curriculum/Program Review Report

CPS School Transportation Efficiency Report, Allied Education Associates, LLC

Rodman Early Childhood Program, 2022-23 Improvement Plan End-of-Year Report

Hansen Elementary School, 2022-23 Improvement Plan End-of-Year Report

JFK Elementary School, 2022-23 Improvement Plan End-of-Year Report

Luce Elementary School, 2022-23 Improvement Plan End-of-Year Report

FY23 Dr. Arthur Tracey Cabot Trust Fund 2023 Recipients