

Town of Canton

Canton School Committee Minutes of the Meeting of August 11, 2022

Members of the public were also able to view a live stream of the meeting via  
<http://cantoncommunitytv.org/>

A. Call to Order:

The meeting of the School Committee reconvened in Open Session meeting at 6:05 pm.  
Motion made by Kendall O'Halloran; seconded by Maureen Moran. It was voted by roll call  
4-0.

**Roll Call Vote: 4-0**

Kendall O'Halloran	yea		
Kristian Merenda	yea		
Maureen Moran	yea		
Nichola Gallagher	yea		
4 yeas		0	nays

Present are:

Kristian Merenda, School Committee Chair  
Kendall O'Halloran, School Committee Vice Chair  
Maureen Moran, School Committee Clerk  
Nichola Gallagher, School Committee Member  
Laura Arboleda, School Committee Member - Absent

B.

Also Present:

Derek Folan, Superintendent  
Stephen Marshall, Director of Finance and Operations  
Deborah Rooney, Director of Teaching and Learning  
Josh Fogel, District Data Analyst  
Joanne Campbell, Recording Secretary  
Martha Lawless, Director of Food Services  
Meghan Byrne, Interim Director of Student Services  
Jeff Sperling, Principal, CHS  
Jonathan Mulhern, Principal, GMS  
David Brauning, Principal, Hansen School  
Saundra Watson, Principal, JFK

C. **Superintendent's Report**

**Updates**

Back-to-School Communication: Communication from the District and the building principals will start tomorrow, Friday, August 12. Families can expect District updates and welcome back letters from the principals. All will include essential information for the upcoming year. Please note the Open Houses dates and times.

First Day of School: The first day of school for students 1-12 is Wednesday, August 31. The second day is Thursday, September 1. Friday, September 2 is no school, providing families, students, and staff with a 4-day weekend around Labor Day weekend.

Tuesday, September 6 is the first day for Kindergarten. Wednesday, September 7 is the first day for PreK.

Hansen is now the “Late School”: Every two years, one of our elementary schools becomes the “late school”. Hansen Elementary School is the late school this year, starting at 9:10 AM and dismissing at 3:25 PM.

JFK and Luce will start at 8:40 AM and dismiss at 2:55 PM. Click on this [link](#) to see all school start and end times.

Health and Safety Updates: In regards to COVID health and safety practices and protocols, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Department of Public Health (DPH), local safety officials and Canton Public Schools continue to collaborate and share best practices as we return to school. The DESE medical team is advising that we follow the health and safety protocols we followed in the spring.

Canton Backpacks from CAASA: The Canton Alliance Against Substance Abuse (CAASA), in collaboration with Canton Public Schools and other town departments, are handing out backpacks filled with items to reinforce healthy habits and choices. This year, the 4th and 9th graders are receiving them. Pick up will be Sunday, August 28 at the Farmer’s Market.

### **Indicators of Excellence**

Canton Academy 2022: This year, Canton Academy exceeded 700 kids. Superintendent Folan thanked Mr. Ed Amico and the teachers, nurses, and aides who worked at Canton Academy this year and helped create wonderful memories for all participants.

Summer Scholars and Extended School Year: Our Summer Scholars program and Extended School Year program wrapped up today. Robotics, drama and band will be running camps in the final weeks of August.

### **Important Dates and Events**

August 22-24	New Educator Orientation
August 25	Substitute Orientation
August 24	Hansen School <b><i>New Student Orientation</i></b> , 6:00 - 7:00 pm
August 25	School Committee Meeting, CHS DLL, 6:00 pm
August 29	All Staff Report to Work (no students)
August 29	Hansen School Open House, <b><i>Grades K &amp; 1, 6:00 pm</i></b>
August 30	Teachers Report to Work (no students)

August 30	Luce School Open House, <b><i>Grades K &amp; 1, 5:00 pm</i></b>
August 30	JFK Open House, <b><i>Grades K &amp; 1, 5:00 pm</i></b>
<b>August 31</b>	<b>1st Day of School, Grades 1-12</b>
<b>Sept. 2</b>	<b>No School</b>
Sept. 5	No School, Labor Day
<b>Sept. 6</b>	<b>1st Day of School Kindergarten</b>
<b>Sept. 7</b>	<b>1st Day of School PreK</b>
Sept. 8	School Committee Meeting, CHS DLL, 6:00 pm

D. **Teaching and Learning Report:** Ms. Deborah Rooney gave an update on Elementary Schools' Title 1 process. The school system must reapply annually; this year's application is due by the end of August. Ms. Rooney explained the financial amount received is based on the number of economically disadvantaged students; however, funding received must support all needs. Ms. Rooney did note that CPS is able to provide reading support for all three elementary schools. If a student meets the benchmark requirements, Title 1 support ends, but the classroom teacher stays in close contact with Title 1 personnel. Should concern arise about the student maintaining reading benchmarks, Title 1 teams step back in for support. Ms. Rooney reported that they are working to improve communication with parents. This will include sending progress reports home.

E. **New Business**

1. **School Handbooks - 1st read:** School Handbooks are updated annually. They establish clear expectations for students and add the most updated legal policies.

a. **Meghan Byrne, Interim Director of Student Services, presented the District Appendix.** This appendix works side by side with the district's handbooks, but is too lengthy to be in each handbook. Most changes are minor tweaks to learning, but Ms. Byrne noted several substantive changes including:

- i. Electronic devices (pg 20)
- ii. Field trips (pag 26-27):
  1. financial assistance is available;
  2. overnight field trips-60 day notification to parents will change to 45 days;
- iii. Students leaving school permanently (pg. 28-29)-"no invisibility":
  1. added exit interview in an effort to change the student's mind or give the student options for next steps.

- iv. Updated Wellness Concussion protocol (pg. 32)
- v. Reorganized Code of Conduct (pg. 32) to include behavior expectations and responses to violations. School Committee members requested more specificity/clarity in this section suggesting restorative practices be proportional to the number of offenses.
- vi. Use of the word “harass” (pg 53) should include “all protected classes”

FAQ’s had substantial changes for clarity’s sake

Ms. Moran expressed concern about the school field trip policy becoming a School Committee policy.

- b. **Mr. Jeff Sperling, Principal of Canton High School, presented their revised Handbook** noting small updates in wording to better reflect ethnicities as well as “every child succeeds” vs. “no child left behind”. Specific references to changes included:
  - i. Code of Conduct (pg 17-19) clarified definitions of “progressive accountability” with some “space for grace;”
    - 1. There was some discussion over how this will work in the classroom. Mr. Sperling explained this policy will focus on upfront work rather than reactive by empowering teachers to develop “team building” or a sense of community. This will be a process–training will be a three to five-year process.
  - ii. more specific attendance requirements with a note to extracurricular activities, not just athletics;
  - iii. Added absence limits;
  - iv. clearer communication of absence policies and consequences as well as absence notification process. Mr. Sperling noted that DESE rules do not differ between excused or unexcused absences
  - v. School Committee members commented on the absence/attendance changes:
    - 1. Ms. Merenda asked that device use and mental presence be explored in the future.
    - 2. Ms. Gallagher noted that excused absences do not include bereavement or mental health needs. Mr. Sperling responded that the handbook committee is making an effort to lessen qualifiers.
- c. **Mr. Jonathan Mulhern, Principal of GMS and Mr. Gibson, Dean of Students,** announced three substantial changes:
  - i. “Phones away all day”-will allow students full engagement and presence in classes.

- ii. The dress code will require removal of hats and hoods in the school. Mr. Mulhern considers this change in policy imperative to the safety in the school. It will allow staff to identify students quickly.
- iii. Changes to the code of conduct philosophy will align with the high school's intent and consistency. At the middle school level, though, the policy will help students identify intent vs. impact. Ms. Merenda suggested this policy be more specific by introducing consequences. Mr. Mulhern responded that he preferred conversation with the student before punitive action.

**d. David Brauninger, Principal, Hansen School and Saundra Watson, Principal, JFK,** reported on the handbook for the three elementary schools. highlights included:

- i. 1 handbook for all three elementary schools;
  - ii. (pg 12) attendance policy aligns practices across all three schools including the process for notifying parents in an effort to achieve “open communication;”
  - iii. (pg. 16) Code of Conduct:
    - 1. expectation to be a “good citizen”;
    - 2. establishes accountability;
      - a. tier levels for restorative practices
    - 3. promotes opportunities for learning and growing:
      - a. develop life skills
      - b. repair harm
      - c. build successful relationships
  - iv. (pg. 26) removal of language regarding school attire that appears to be gender specific and provides specific examples.
- School Committee members offered the following suggestions to consider in the next read:

- 1. Absence policy-let parents know purpose, including the importance of a note upon return to school (for documentation purposes)
- 2. Add educational philosophy to school overview
- 3. List staff “Who to Call” so parents know protocol
- 4. Add PE concussion protocol
- 5. Add Volunteering opportunities and include CAPT website (to ALL schools’ handbooks)
- 6. Include language regarding “ability to pay”
- 7. Spell out acronyms

**ACTION ITEM:** School Committee members will look for an update on the elementary school policy and philosophy on restorative justice

**e. Rodman Pre-School-**Ms. Byrne, on behalf of Ms.Kilday, highlighted the following updates:

- 1. Contact list

2. addition of a list of curriculum highlights and holiday celebrations-a committee member asked if this was in all handbooks.
3. Changes in “report card” distribution

Due to the extended length of time spent on the handbook first reads, Ms.Moran, as Clerk of the School Committee, made a motion to move Public Comment to the next agenda item. All were in favor of the move.

**F. Public Comment:** Mr. Adam Mantel, parent of a child in the Canton School system, commented on an incident his child was involved in this past Spring.

**E. Continuation of New Business:**

2. **Policy Section B 1st read**: Vice Chair O’Halloran presented policy section B for a 1st read.

ACTION ITEM: When changes in the language of policies are flagged for review and added to the website as needed.

3. **MSBA Update**: Superintendent Folan and Mr. Marshall provided an update on the GMS MSBA process.
  - a. Educational vision from Statement of Interest has been submitted;
  - b. Enrollment analyses have been updated;
  - c. Looking at the feasibility of a middle school that includes grades 5-8.
4. **School Lunch Update**: Mr. Marshall and Ms. Lawless provided an update on the extension of the universal free school meals for the academic year 2022-23.
  - a. Ms. Lawless explained:
    - i. the process of applying for universal free and reduced lunch emphasizing the need for parents of ALL students to fill out the paperwork that is sent home within the first few days of school or from the CPS website.
    - ii. multiple menus will be available including meatless entrees, and gluten-free and peanut-free items
    - iii. Pin numbers will be used as accounts for each student. A plan is in place to assist students to memorize and remember their PIN numbers.
    - iv. Ms. Lawless voiced some concern that if this program continues, there may be a need for additional staffing.

- F. **Director of Finance and Operations Report**: Mr. Marshall provided an update including:
  - a. Hansen Kindergarten and first-grade enrollment numbers continue to be monitored.
  - b. Transportation update:
    - i. Finalizing bus routes.
    - ii. Anticipates they will be available to parents on the website by 8/25

- iii. Introduced new audio and visual devices that will be installed on every bus. Expects the “first view” app will be available to parents on or around 8/24.
- iv. Mr. Marshall noted a change in Bus labels to C1; C2, etc.

Mr. Marshall will present a full enrollment report at the August 25th School Committee meeting.

G. Consent Agenda:

**Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda as presented:** Kendall O’Halloran

**Seconded:** Maureen Moran

**The Consent Agenda was approved unanimously:** 4-0

**Roll Call Vote:** 4-0

Kendall O’Halloran	yea
Maureen Moran	yea
Kristian Merenda	yea
Nichola Gallagher	yea

**The following items were approved in the Consent Agenda:**

- Open Session Minutes: July 18, 2022 Workshop, July 21, 2022
- Executive Session minutes July 21, 2022
- Warrant dated August 12, 2022

H. Sub-Committee, Task Force, and Liaison Post Updates:

- a. Nichola Gallagher:
  - i. PRCH meeting scheduled for Monday, Aug. 15th
  - ii. Registration is now open for Delegate Conference
- b. Kendall O’Halloran:
  - i. CCPC-next meeting scheduled for Monday, Aug. 15th
  - ii. Content:
    - 1. preparing for rotation of ads for fall;
    - 2. mass mailing to newspapers scheduled for September 15th
    - 3. suggested a notice for parents to go through the proper channels for contacting school officials.
      - a. If issue is classroom related-contact teacher first
      - b. if there is a building question-direct it to principal or counselor
      - c. Note that student issues are not in the purview of the School Committee
    - 4. Recommended upcoming event, “Charting the Course” which helps understand the acumen of committees.
    - 5. Both MPIC and VRC are on hold for the summer
- c. Local Farmers Market appearances:
  - i. School Committee members on Saturday, August 21st 10a-12p
  - ii. Superintendent Folan and the School Department on Saturdays, Aug. 14th and 28th
- d. Sustainability efforts:
  - i. black earth composting-hoping to add to teachers areas;
  - ii. School specific recycling;
  - iii. District action goals are in the works-more information will be provided at August 25th meeting.

I. **Other Business:** none

J. **Future Business:** Next Open Session School Committee meeting will be held Thursday, August 25, 2022, @ 6:00 pm in the Distance Learning Lab at CHS.

K. **Adjournment** Kendall O'Halloran motioned to close the Open Session @ 9:07 pm. Nichola Gallagher seconded. It was voted 4-0.

**Roll Call Vote:** 4-0

Kendall O'Halloran

Kristian Merenda

Maureen Moran

Nichola Gallagher

4 yeas

0

nays

**Documents Used During the Meeting:**

1. Superintendent's Report dated August 11th, 2022
2. Canton Public Schools 2021-22 Title I Program Evaluation
3. Canton High School Handbook Revisions
4. Canton Middle School Handbook Revisions
5. Canton Elementary School Handbook Revisions
6. Canton Pre-School Handbook Revisions
7. Canton School District Appendix Revisions