

**Canton School Committee
Thursday, September 7, 2023
Open Meeting Minutes**

A. Call to Order: Chair O'Halloran called the School Committee Open Meeting meeting to order at 6:01 pm. Ms. Arboleda made the motion; Ms. Moran seconded. Vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as:

Maureen Moran	yea
Laura Arboleda	yea
Kimberly McCourt	yea
Kendall O'Halloran	yea

4 yeas 0 nays

Attendees:

Kendall O'Halloran
Kristian Merenda (arrived at 6:04 pm)
Laura Arboleda (departed meeting at 9:05 pm)
Kimberly McCourt
Maureen Moran
Derek Folan, Superintendent
Stephen Marshall, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations
Emma Cummings, Student Representative
Sarah Shannon, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
Joanne Campbell, Recording Secretary

Guests: Ms. Meghan Byrne, Director, Student Services

Mr. William (Billy) Kickham, Assistant Director, Student Services, Grades 6-12
Ms. Sarah Shaw, Assistant Director, Student Services, Grades PreK-5
Ms. Shelley Evans-Needle, Interim PreK Coordinator
Ms. Melanie Omar, MLL PreK-12 Dept. Coordinator/Multilingual Learner Program
Ms. Susan Nash, STEM Coordinator, Grades PreK-5
Mr. Paul McKnight, Principal, Hansen Elementary School
Ms. Kate Gallahue, Assistant Principal, JFK Elementary School
Mr. Michael Moresca, Assistant Principal, Luce Elementary School
Ms. Kelly Fahey, Assistant Principal, Hansen Elementary School
Dr. Kristen Morgan, Dept. Advisor, English, Galvin Middle School
Ms. Ginny Martin, Team Chair, Galvin Middle School

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

Highlights

First Days of School: Canton Public Schools had an outstanding launch of the 2023-24 school year. The energy of the students fills our school and it's just amazing to see our skilled staff welcome everyone with such warmth and care. The buildings were in pristine condition thanks to the custodial and maintenance staff, and every aspect of the schools ran smoothly thanks to the principals, office staff, food service, educators, and SROs.

Orientations & Opening Day:

Sub Orientation: Welcomed back approximately 25 substitutes during Sub Orientation on August 24. We thank all of our substitute teachers for being part of the school community and our team.

New Educator Orientation: New CPS staff members convened at New Teacher Orientation on August 21-23.

Opening Day & Professional Learning: Monday, August 28th kicked off the 2023 - 2024 school year in Canton. We discussed our continued commitment to being #Champions of Excellence, reinforcing the themes of student achievement and growth, the #momentum we have as a District, and living our new Core Values: #REACH. After the full staff convocation at Canton High School, everyone traveled back to buildings where all staff met with their building principals and participated in a Wayfinder professional learning session. Thank you to the Link Leaders for the warm welcome, the Jazz Band for the music, and Food Services for the breakfast.

On Tuesday, August 29, educators met with Department Coordinators to talk about content and curriculum updates and goals for the school year, and started collaborating with one another to continue to build coherence and consistency across grade levels, schools and subject areas. Principals also had more time to meet with staff to build community, address operational and safety items, and build on last year's successes to kick off this year's work.

Our first professional learning early release day on **Friday, September 15.**

Honoring Educators and Professional Milestones: As a new tradition, we honored educators and their professional milestones for their commitment to Canton Public Schools. We recognized educators who earned professional status, anyone who was entering their 10th year in Canton (Canton Coin), 20th year in Canton (Canton Crystal Apple), and 30th year in Canton (30th year Canton sweatshirt).

Updates

GMS Building Project Educational Visioning Sessions: The first GMS Project Educational Visioning session was held Wednesday, September 6th, with one more scheduled for Monday, September 11th. Thank you to all of our educators, staff and parents who attended. The first day for the Community Forums will be published soon.

Open Houses: Open Houses have taken place over the past couple of weeks; there are a few more upcoming and are noted in upcoming events below.

Canton Farmers Market Back-to-School Event: Over a thousand Canton and area residents attended the August 27th Farmer's Market with the Theme of Back-to-School. We had three tents engaging with hundreds of Canton families and students. All of the principals attended; our CAPT hosted a spirit wear tent; and School Committee members Kendall O'Halloran, Laura Arboleda and Kim McCourt joined. Justin Thibault from Ai3 was there to answer questions about the GMS Building

Project. The CHS Jazz Band played, the Wellness Department handed out backpacks, students sang and fundraised for their Disney trip, and we had face painting with high school students.

New Press Releases: I am pleased to announce that we have a new [Press Release](#) page on our Canton Website. I encourage you to check it out.

Indicators of Excellence

CHS receives high ranking: Canton High School earned the 56th ranking out of 437 high schools in Massachusetts in the US News and World Report and 45th among high schools in the Boston Area. CHS earned a score of 91.61 out of a possible 100 points, just 8.11 points behind top-ranked Boston Latin. CHS ranked second in the Hockomock League, only behind Sharon High School.

Instrument Demo with CHS Musicians: One of the great traditions of the Performing Arts Department continued this week as CHS musicians traveled to the elementary schools to demo instruments for Grade 4 and Grade 5. We love seeing the role modeling and inspiration that happens with this event. And it launches our 5th grade music program, now held during the school day.

Important Dates and Events

Sept. 13	Hansen Open House, Grades 2-5, 6:00 pm
Sept. 15	Early Release - PreK-12 Professional Development
Sept. 19	JFK Open House, Grades 2-5, 5:00 pm
Sept. 21	School Committee Meeting, 6:00 pm, CHS DLL
Sept. 25	No School - Yom Kippur
Sept. 26	CHS Open House, 6:00 pm
Sept. 28	GMS Open House, 6:00 pm

Ms. Merenda praised all involved in helping to achieve the CHS high ranking marks, noting a 96% graduation rate and the percentage of students receiving a passing grade in AP exams.

Chair O'Halloran exercised her authority to shift agenda items by advancing **E-1-Introduction of New Administrators** as the next Agenda item.

E. New Business

1. **Introduction of New Administrators:** The CPS Administrative leaders welcomed and introduced new CPS Administrators giving a short history of each administrator's professional history :

- a. Ms. Meghan Byrne, Director of Student Services, introduced and welcomed the following new members of her team:

- i. Mr. William (Billy) Kickham, Assistant Director, Student Services, Grades 6-12;
 - ii. Ms. Sarah Shaw, Assistant Director, Student Services, Grades PreK-5;
 - iii. Ms. Shelley Evans-Needle, Interim Child Care Coordinator;
 - iv. Ms. Melanie Omar, MLL PreK-12 Department Coordinator/Multilingual Learner Program.
- b. Ms. Sarah Shannon, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, welcomed:
- i. Ms. Susan Nash, STEM Coordinator, Grades PreK-5;
 - ii. Mr. Paul McNight, Principal of Hansen Elementary School.
- c. Sandra Watson, JFK Principal, introduced the new Assistant Principal for JFK, Ms. Kate Gallagher.
- d. Yeshi Gaskin Lamour, Luce Principal, introduced Michael Moretta as the Assistant Principal of the Luce;
- e. Paul McNight, recently appointed Principal of the Hansen Elementary School, introduced Ms. Kelly Fahey as Assistant Principal of the Hansen noting that he is looking forward to two new administrators navigating the CPS landscape together.
- f. Mr. Jonathan Mulhern, Principal of the Galvin Middle School welcomed Dr. Kristen Morgan, newly appointed Department Advisor, English, Galvin Middle School and Ms. Ginny Martin as the Team Chair at Galvin Middle School.

Members of the School Committee welcomed the new Administrators acknowledging their warmth and leadership, as well as the knowledge, experience and enthusiasm they will bring to the CPS community.

C. Teaching and Learning Report: Assistant Superintendent Shannon shared summer curriculum work. Highlights of summer projects included:

- 1. Review of the Wellness Department Program updating its framework based on new DESE draft revisions;
- 2. The Visual Arts Program reviewed, addressed and began updating their 2019 Arts curriculum framework as well as developing an updated elementary report card descriptors.
- 3. Social Studies-grades 3-5 worked to develop History curriculum supported by a civics grant;
- 4. GMS Social Studies identified new curriculum resources to support student learning in grades 6-8 and prepared for the implementation of ***Investigating History*** for grades 6 & 7, and ***The Democratic Knowledge Project*** for grade 8 Civics;
- 5. GMS Performing Arts continued to develop drama courses, considering alignment of the two grades;
- 6. CHS Social Studies educators focused on developing US History 1 to better support literacy skill acquisition;
- 7. CHS Math Curriculum worked to redesign math unit plans to support math standards and NEASC goals, and build units for AP work;
- 8. AP Curriculum Work included realigning curricula in Biology and Chemistry and AP training in Chemistry, Statistics, PreCalculus and English Literature and Composition.

All departments will continue updates throughout the school year.

Ms. Moran asked about the ELA program at the elementary school level. Ms. Shannon noted that the elementary school program was not one of this year's summer curriculum projects; she did describe work being done on ELA outside of this review cycle. Ms. Shannon explained that summer curriculum work is

based on submissions from teachers. It is meant for teachers to collaborate with colleagues and focus on their areas of interest to help advance teaching and elevate learning for students. Summer work offers an opportunity for educators to do the work at a different pace and delve more deeply by focusing more on their areas of interest.

Committee members asked for a way to capture feedback from teachers including opportunities for more training and a more detailed explanation of courses when requesting reimbursement for professional development training to get a sense of trends, themes and preferences.

D. Unfinished Business

1. **Policy Updates Section F & Section G - 2nd Read and possible vote**: Superintendent Folan and members of the policy subcommittee presented the updated policy sections F & G. Ms. Merenda proposed holding the vote until the September 21st meeting to review her comments and suggestions noted at the School Committee Open Session meeting of August 18th, for consideration of inclusion in the new policies. Ms. Merenda specifically noted adding more inclusive language to File FA and asked the subcommittee to consider including Facilities Planning in File FCE as per town by-laws. Ms. Merenda forwarded her notes to all committee members. Members agreed to hold the vote until the next School Committee meeting on Thursday September 21 to allow for further review and discussion before a vote.

E. New Business

2. **Transportation Update**: Superintendent Folan and Mr. Marshall provided a transportation update. With 19 buses in total, 18 from First Student and one Canton bus, Mr. Folan reported that route development has been progressing, although not running perfectly. Communication with First Student has not been a problem, but could be improved. Because they are not fully staffed with drivers, both the manager and dispatcher of First Student are driving routes until 12 newly hired bus drivers get licensed. This strains communications, but Mr. Marshall is communicating with their office many times a day. And is hopeful they will be fully staffed by the end of September. Timing is still off, but administration is working diligently with First Student to target critical issues, then investigate, evaluate, and move toward resolution. Mr. Folan indicated that there were several considerations for determining a solution:
 - a. Communications-follow-up is critical. CPS has added staff to respond to all emails regarding bus transportation. The staff member responds to all emails, sorts them, and places them into folders by topic for further follow-up.
 - b. Ridership:
 - i. 52 students per bus is industry standard for secondary student. According to CPS bus registration information, the buses are full, but should not be overcrowded. However, several factors are skewing the numbers:
 1. Students without a bus pass are getting on buses;
 2. some students are pressuring other students to sit in the aisle rather than a seat;
 3. Buses are experiencing some ridership "bus-hopping."
 4. Students are not sitting in seats. Buses will not pull away until all students are seated.
 5. Shuffling routes makes that specific route better, but introduces difficulties for others.

- c. Bus Route Timing Issues: CHS buses are not arriving on time. This affects all remaining tiers and routes.
 - 1. 3rd tier routes experience a domino effect from GMS and CHS;
 - 2. New bus drivers (40% of all bus drivers) are unfamiliar with routes;
 - 3. Kindergarten starts affects dynamics; as well as the Hansen late start;
 - 4. Blue Hill Tech start of the school year also affects timing.

Administrators noted a 90% on time delivery to school, but understand the frustration and are working hard to improve to 100% on time delivery by the next report. Mr. Marshall explained that the software system that helps build the routes does not take into account traffic patterns as it cannot predict them and noted that this year's late starting school, the Hansen, is the most difficult geographical district to manage. Mr. Marshall took full responsibility for the missteps. He noted that over 200 additional bus registrations for students were received after the registration due date. While past practice for late bus registration included holding the registration until Oct. 1, Mr. Marshall also recognizes that these students need to be in school, and is diligently making adjustments every day to get these students into the classroom. Adjustments do take a few days to implement.

Mr. Marshall reiterated that the best way to communicate issues and concerns is to email CPS at transportation@cantonma.org. Emails are prioritized by safety. Mr. Marshall suggested calling his office or cell number for any immediate needs or critical issues.

Chair O'Halloran voiced concern over reports of middle school students not allowing other students to sit in seats as it is a safety issue. She urged parents to discuss this issue of intimidation with their children. Ms. O'Halloran wondered if CPS could build neighborhood stops. Mr. Marshall is considering help from the Transportation consultant to help build standard routes with standard stops. Standardization of routes and increases in bus fees to accommodate more buses are not as challenging as the annual change of the "late" elementary school.

There was discussion on the effectiveness of the bus app. Mr. Marshall reported that the app was not expected to be turned on for the first few weeks as every change in any bus route necessitates an update on the app. He is hopeful that within the next week, 99% of the routes will be correct and updated in the app.

Ms. McCourt wondered about safety on the middle school/high school bus loading and pass checking. Mr. Folan assured her that passes are being checked by teaching and administrative staff and every student is in a seat. Ridership is greater in the afternoon. Administration is continuing to adjust routes so student riders are safely in a seat.

Ms. Moran asked about vetting routes with information from previous years, Mr. Marshall confirmed that administration does look at old routes and does drive them (in the summer). He indicated that CPS does not have turn by turn instructions, that traffic patterns change, and traffic is less dense throughout the summer. He also mentioned that most routes are running on time.

Ms Moran voiced concern about overcrowding and asked about pulling video camera footage from buses for routine spot checks, perhaps by Dr Green, particularly for problematic buses to proactively address issues. Mr. Folan suggested that anything a parent feels is problematic be brought to the principals. Mr. Marshall raised a concern over the amount of footage that would have to be reviewed and the staff to manage the reviews. The definition of overcrowding needs to be discussed as well as the maximum amount of time a student should be on a bus. Ms. O'Halloran underscored that bus footage is for internal review and not for public viewing.

Ms. Merenda raised concerns about the current bus company's accountability and asked administration to consider what have we changed and what can we change with regard to bus transportation. Concern over communication issues led her to suggest offering a forum with parents, bus company and administration to help understand and allay parent/guardian apprehensions and frustrations. Questions that might be addressed are "What are the norms?" "How can we get there?" Discussion over how Operations work, whether bus monitors are an effective way to avoid chaos on the bus; (Currently the District only has two); how people might be attracted to that job and how to manage the late school start vs more buses to avoid constant chaos. Ms. Merenda asked the administration to try to figure out a way to get more info sooner to parents and solve the issue of the late school. Ms. Merenda was vocal about her appreciation of the work of the administration to resolve current bus issues, but noted that the District must make these recurring issues a priority this year.

- 3 **Policy - Book Reconsideration Section IJL & IJ-R:** Assistant Superintendent Shannon presented policy IJL (Selection and Consideration Policy for School Library) and IJ-R (Reconsideration of Instructional Resources) for a vote of approval. Ms. Shannon noted that MASC had encouraged CPS to update these policies and they reviewed them once updated. Updates include new roles and names of roles at the school level and written requests for appeals of the Reconsideration Committee's decision initially and further appeals after the committee's decision for Policy IJL (Selection and Reconsideration Policy for School Library). There were no changes to Section U-R (IJ-R)-REconsideration of Instructional Resources).

With no further discussion or questions, Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion for approval of both policies as written and presented. Laura Arboleda made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. Vote was unanimous and recorded as:

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

5 yeas	0 nays
--------	--------

Ms. Moran asked that updated policies be made available on the CPS website as soon as possible. Ms. Arboleda suggested that Policies that have been vetted and approved be uploaded. Chair O'Halloran will look into this and return with information to the Committee.

It was also requested that progress of the Policy Sub-Committee be posted regularly. Ms. Moran also wondered whether this year's proposed District Goals were discussed and set by the Committee as in previous years. Ms. O'Halloran noted that they were not.

4. **District Goals:** Superintendent Folan introduced the 2023-2024 District Improvement Goals. Prior to the start of his presentation, Ms. Moran inquired about the context of goal setting compared to previous years when the School Committee set their goals and District goals followed. Mr. Folan responded that last year's goals were set in retreat with the help of consultants and strategic planners who helped develop and set goals. They were further designed by the team and a number of stakeholders within the District and in conjunction with the work around strategic planning. For the current year, the team looked at last year's goals, and planned this year's goals to continue alignment with strategic initiatives and student achievement. Ms. Moran understood the continuity, but questioned the process of including the School Committee sooner than later. Mr. Folan noted that he hoped for a vote, but understood it was at the will of the School Committee.

In setting these goals, Mr. Folan noted that the group had been broadened to include educators, department heads, and joint administrators with the hope of expanding last year's goals while continuing to align new goals with the strategic initiatives. Mr. Folan was pleased that the District met all the goals from last year, particularly significant student achievement. Strategic planning link and the Equity Audit links are included in the goals.

Priority #1: Goal #1: Teaching, Learning and Leading for All: Goal-to document a consistent process, identify tools and create a training and implementation plan to support students who need interventions and specialized instruction across PK-12. Core Values were established and introduced-**REACH** (Respectful and collaborative relationships, Equity, Academic and personal excellence, Community engagement, High quality teaching, learning and leading). By documenting a consistent process that pushes District to build a MTSS (multi tiered system of support), the District will know students better, help them remain aligned with peers, and responsiveness to meet students' needs culturally and academically.

Priority #1: Goal #2: Engage all stakeholders to gain a consistent understanding and shared ownership of the CPS vision for HQTLL. Aligning with DESE priorities, the goal will look for and publish descriptors that define the HQTLL vision by recognizing what is in everyday learning to help provide equitable learning to every child. The goal will be met with conversations and feedback with administrators and educators identifying data, Learning Walks, classroom visits, and surveying students.

Priority 2: Management and Operations: Roll out and implement new SIS (Student Information System), PowerSchool. The goal is not about implementation this year, but rather to train all staff to fully understand the capacity of the system.

Priority # 3: Communications and Community Engagement: Establish and initiate a district communication and engagement plan. Goals will be met by PR firm engagement, quality content development for an online and community presence and use of social media to positively celebrate and showcase the school community. This will include face to face engagement opportunities with stakeholders and opportunities for the community to engage in GMS project.

Priority #4: Provide differentiated Equity and SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) PD (Professional Development). Goals will include targeting implicit bias with a

concerted effort and understanding those who are not the same.

School Committee members asked for time to review the goals and assure they match the existing rubric and expectations of the Committee. Ms. Merenda would like to see more detail about planned metrics, more discussion around the Equity Audit results and the theory behind meeting the focus and needs of the students-particularly in Priority 1 Goal 2 (how SEL will help all students) and where the connections are. Ms. Moran wondered about alignment of these goals to last year's rubric; she would like to see a "period of action" included in the goals; more specific metrics to rate successes, and a way to know what is working and what is not working within the goals.

5. School Committee Operating Protocols - First Read: Chair O'Halloran noted that she had forwarded the updated draft for the School Committee Operating Protocols to the attorney for review and comments, and is awaiting a response. She will forward to the full Committee any and all correspondence received from the attorney in a single document that includes track changes and comments from the group. This document will be added to the agenda for Thursday, September 21, 2023 for public discussion and decisions on finalizing language.

6. Operating Budget Process and Timeline: Mr. Marshall reviewed the FY25 budget process and timeline, noting that any requests for the next fiscal year are due on October 6, 2023. Ms. Moran suggested members consider and submit priority budget items (wish lists) early. She will revisit last year's requests and update their status and progression. Ms. Merenda would like to prioritize finding funds in the budget for capital planning. The end of October will bring a kick-off of the Operating Budget, and the first presentation of the Capital budget to the School Committee will be on Thursday, November 2nd.

F. Public Comment:

- 1. Jennifer O'Donnell:** Ms. O'Donnell thanked all the teachers in the District, then asked questions about the availability of copies of several District protocols and DESE guidelines. Ms. O'Donnell also questioned equity in classrooms.
- 2. Mary Mallory-**Discussed the lack of safety in Canton District bus transportation and transportation equality for students attending St. John's.
- 3. Sebastian Gonzalez** (virtually)-voiced concerns over district bus transportation, particularly the continued tardiness of Bus C-25. Mr. Gonzalez was also disappointed to not have received a response from the District after sending an email regarding his concerns.

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

H. Consent Agenda:

1. August 15 Workshop, August 17, 2023
2. Executive Session Minutes: August 17, 2023
3. Warrants: September 8, 2023.

Chair O'Halloran announced the list of items posted to the consent agenda and asked if any committee member would like any minutes or warrants listed removed from the consent agenda for further review. Ms. Moran requested removal of Regular Session minutes from August 17, 2023 for further review and asked about the availability of August 15th Executive Session minutes. Chair

O'Halloran noted that the 8/15 minutes will be available at the next Open Session meeting on September 21st. Ms. O'Halloran asked that regular session minutes from August 3, 2023 be removed for further review. Hearing no further requests, Chair O'Halloran called for a motion to approve the Consent Agenda to include the August 15, 2023 Workshop, Executive Session minutes for August 17, 2023 and the Warrant for September 8, 2023. Kristian Merenda made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. Vote was unanimous at 5-0 and recorded as:

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

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

Emma Cummings-Student Advisory Committee met on September 6th, 2023 for the first time with newly elected upper class officers. Rules and regulations were reviewed and questions were answered. Election of Freshman representatives will be held in early October (10/11). The Massachusetts Association of Student Representatives met for a "Day on the Hill" over the summer. Student representatives met State Representatives and Senators to discuss an act regarding student representative voting rights (HH474).

Stephen Marshall-nothing further to report

Derek Folan-acknowledged CAASA's Celebration of Life.

Kendall O'Halloran-Policy Subcommittee meetings are ongoing; CCPC-meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 11th; Content and Communications-first ad of the year will be in newspaper week of 9/11-asked for consideration for future ads being from the leadership team of the District. Ms. Merenda expressed interest in posing a united front. By celebrating milestones of the school, giving credit to volunteers, and creating access for the community will create greater connections in the community to better know members. Ms. O'Halloran noted that rates for advertisements have not increased.

Maureen Moran-Budget & Finance Subcommittee meets Friday, September 15th.

Kimberly McCourt-nothing further to report.

Kristian Merenda-recommended adding MASAR to the list of Liaisons; noted opportunity for attendance at al MASAR convention to represent the District. Ms. Merenda is interested in discussing how the School Committee as a whole will want to manage budgetary issues of School Committee members attending conferences in general.

J. Other Business: None

K. Future Business The next Open Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 21, 2023 @ 6:00

pm.

L. Adjournment: With no further business to discuss, Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting of the School Committee at 9:19 pm. Kristian Merenda made the motion; Maureen Moran seconded. Vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as follows:

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

Documents:

September 7, 2023 Superintendent's Report
School Committee Update-Teaching and Learning-Summer 2023 Curriculum Work Projects
CPS Policy Update Section F-Facilities
CPS Policy Update Section G-Personnel Policies
CPS Policy Section IJL-Selection and Reconsideration Policy for School Library
CPS Policy Section IJ-R-Reconsideration of Instructional Resources
CPS 2023-24 District Goals
2023-2024 Canton Public Schools-School Committee Operating Protocols
FY25 Operating Budget Process and Timeline