

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

**A. Call to Order:** Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion to call to order the Thursday, December 7, 2023 School Committee Open Session Meeting at 5:06 pm. Maureen Moran made the motion; Kristian Merenda seconded. Roll call vote was unanimous at 4-0 and recorded as follows:

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

**B. Executive Session:** Committee members went directly into Executive Session for: **(a)** to approve executive session minutes (10/19/23 & 11/16/23), **(b)** discuss strategy with regard to negotiations.

School Committee Members returned to Open Session at 6:09 pm.

**Attendees:** Laura Arboleda  
Kimberly McCourt  
Kristian Merenda  
Maureen Moran  
Kendall O'Halloran  
Danica Seto, Student Representative  
Derek Folan, Superintendent

**Absent:** Stephen Marshall, Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations

**Guests:** Brianna Geoghan, Advisor to the School Committee  
Melanie Omar, MLL PreK-12 Dept. Coordinator/Multilingual Learner Program  
Meghan Byrne, Director of Student Services  
Josh Fogel, Director of Technology and Data Analytics  
Justin Thibeault, Ai3  
Jen Carlson, LeftField, GMS Project Manager

**C. Student Member Report:** School Committee Student Advisor, Brianna Geoghan, shared JFK updates including:

1. JFK Holiday Shop is open to students throughout each school day. With the help of JFK parent volunteers, the shop offers 10 tables of unique gifts at different price points that students can purchase for friends and family.
2. JFK students are also enjoying a Holiday Countdown that recognizes and observes holiday celebrations from all cultures. Currently, they are celebrating Hanukkah.
3. Reading Buddies are sponsoring a Book Drive through December 18th. They are accepting new and gently used PreK to Grade 5 level books that will be delivered to the Rodman and elementary schools to bolster their sharing libraries.

**D. Teaching and Learning Report:** Ms. Melanie Omar, MLL PreK-12 Dept.

Coordinator/Multilingual Learner Program, shared a Multilingual Learner update. After giving a brief history of the program, Ms. Omar acknowledged there has been a substantial increase in multilingual learners since 2012 as well as the number of languages spoken. Student enrollment in this program is now approximately 3% of the District's total enrollment. State guidelines have also shifted to include strengthening home-school partnerships and better monitoring of students' progress via ACCESS (a federally and state mandated standardized test measuring language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing.) Ms. Omar indicated that CPS has a 100% graduation rate; however, the ML program continues to support all students through Flashlight 360, a structured speaking practice platform and Title III subsidized platforms for foundational language learning, as well as the Sheltered English Immersion instructional model. She also noted that there are now extended learning opportunities through Summer Scholars. Ms. Omar was delighted to announce that an ELPAC had just been formed. She believes this PAC will offer community members security and community engagement, while advocating for students and families, and extended learning opportunities they hope will result in greater success.

**E. Superintendent Report:** Before presenting District progress, highlights, and accolades, Superintendent Folan remembered Mr. Dickie, a longtime employee and friend of the District. He acknowledged his family's continued legacy in Canton, and asked for a moment of silence to honor Mr. Dickie. Mr. Folan also announced that the Champions of Wellness 5K Road Race held on November 19th was a great success raising over \$5000.

### **Champions of Excellence**

DESE Visit to JFK: Canton Public Schools is doing extremely strong work in the realm of high-quality curricular implementation and instruction. Members of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) reached out to observe our K-2 Literacy work (UFLI - University of Florida Literacy Institute) and our integration of social studies and literacy in grades 3-5. Our educators and students at JFK elementary did a phenomenal job during the visit leaving DESE guests with this great appreciation of rigorous and equitable learning experiences, and the high-quality instruction delivered by staff. We also hosted educators from Middleboro who wanted to learn more about UFLI, and educators from Dover-Sherborn visited Canton to learn about Reveal Math.

Westfield State and CHS student visit: Students in CHS teacher Rebecca Ashley's English class had a great opportunity this week to interact with Westfield State students and professors, discussing literary analysis through the lens of social class. Our students "blew the audience away" with their analysis, reflections and critical thinking. Westfield provided a bus for them, and Commissioner Riley came for the visit.

English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) Presentation: The Multi-Language Learner team, led by MLL Coordinator Melanie Omar, coordinated a second meeting for ML families last night (12.6.23). The team secured interpreters, offered light snacks and had student volunteers to play with the kids. The goal was to provide an overview of the services and experiences, and to establish an English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC).

Annual Waterfall Hills Donation: Last week, we accepted the annual donation from the residents of Waterfall Hill Apartment Complex. Waterfall Hills generously donates backpacks, school supplies, and a monetary donation each year. Backpacks are available in the Enrollment Office for families in need.

CHS Club Highlights: **DECA** members are preparing for their online testing on December 7 followed by an in-person conference on January 3 and 4.

The **Math Team** is having a productive year so far. They have been conducting weekly practice sessions on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 7:00 pm since August. Freshmen are coming to practices, while seniors are doing a great job of explaining advanced concepts to the underclassmen. There is a lot of overlap between Math Team participants and orchestra and the play production; advisors Paul Dybdahl and Kevin Ng report that it is great to see the level of dedication these students have for their regular schoolwork and extracurricular activities.

**Robotics** is off to a busy start so far this year. Robodog leaders presented at the FIRST Technical Challenge Kickoff event on Saturday, September 9th at Archbishop Williams High School. The presentation was geared to help Rookie teams get up and running for the season.

They held their annual E-waste drive and Kids & Bots events on October 15th. The team redirected 1800 lbs of electronic waste from landfills and received \$1750 in donations to support the CHS Robotics Program during the E-waste drive. Hundreds of children interacted with EV3 Lego Mindstorm robots and watched demonstrations of the Canton Robodogs Robot.

On November 7th, eight members of the Canton Robodogs went to the Boston Convention Center and joined the Rockwell Automation EXPO.

The team also participated in a scrimmage on November 17th at Needham High School. They tested out their lift design and airplane launcher. Robodogs recorded the airplane launch high score of the event (30 points!).

Back home, the Robodogs hosted a scrimmage for the three Galvin Middle School teams to help them prepare for their FLL Qualifier on December 3rd.

Lastly, on November 25th, the team hosted the CHS Robotics Alumni for a light breakfast, a Jeopardy game, and networking. Alumni shared advice on college, internships, co-ops, and jobs. The event ended with a look at this season's game and robot.

Teams are currently preparing for competitions to be held on December 9 at Needham High School and January 21 at Worcester Polytechnic Institute. We will be hosting a competition at Canton High School on Saturday, February 3, 2024.

The **CHS Science Team** has been busy competing in West Suburban Science League (WSSL) team events, in preparation for the Massachusetts Science Olympiad in March. After two meets and a handful of new members, Canton currently ranks 13 out of 20 teams in the Metro-West Boston area, advancing 4 places from our first to second meet. When asked to describe their experience this year in three words, team captain Abby Qiu stated "fun, inclusive, and communicative."

World Languages Grant: Congratulations to Ms. Heidi Olson for being awarded another grant to help support our Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages (AAPPL) testing in world language classes.

### Important Dates and Events

Dec. 8	Early Release: PreK-12, Professional Development
Dec. 14	World Languages Honors Society Induction Ceremony, 6:00 pm, CHS Auditorium
Dec. 19	CHS Winter Concert, 7:00 pm, CHS Auditorium
Dec. 20	Joint Meeting of School Building Committee and School Committee, 6:00 pm, CHS DLL
Dec. 21	School Committee Meeting, 6:00 pm, CHS DLL
Dec. 22	Early Release: PreK-12, Winter Break
Dec. 25 - Jan. 1	No School: Winter Break
Jan. 2	School resumes for all grades

### F. New Business:

1. **GMS Building Project Progress Update:** Ms. Jen Carlson, LeftField Representative, provided an update on the GMS Building Project. After reviewing the GMS Project schedule overview, Ms. Carlson indicated that some key decisions will be made before the end of the year. On December 20th, 2023, the School Committee and the School Building Committee will host a joint meeting. Grade configuration (5-8 vs. 6-8) will be decided by the School Committee, and performance space (auditorium vs. cafetorium or gymatorium) will be discussed and voted on by the School Building Committee (SBC).

Superintendent Folan then reviewed the grade configuration options (5-8 vs. 6-8). Mr. Folan had thoughtful conversations with the Canton community as well as other local districts who had recently made similar decisions. He particularly engaged in substantial elementary educator discussion and feedback. After thoughtfully deliberating over the many aspects of the GMS school project, Mr. Folan recommended the 5-8 grade configuration for GMS.

In January 2024, the SBC will meet to decide on a preferred model for the school.

Once these decisions are made, costs of the project as well as ultimate cost to individual taxpayers can be better determined.

2. **German American Partnership Program (GAPP) Approval:** Ms. Melanie Omar, MLL PreK-12 Dept. Coordinator/Multilingual Learner Program shared details of the German exchange program. Supported by a DESE grant, this 21 day study abroad immersion and family homestay program has been in existence for 40 years. Ms. Omar described the objectives, itinerary, timeframe, and selection criteria (academic excellence, intellectual passion and curiosity). Ms. Omar did acknowledge that students studying German have first preference, but selection is not based on ability to pay. After responding to questions, Ms. Omar requested a vote of approval. Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion to approve the German American Partnership Program (GAPP) as written and presented. Laruan Arboleda made the motion; Maureen Moran 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

#### **G. Unfinished Business:**

1. **FY25 Capital:** Mr. Folan reviewed the FY25 Capital Budget as a third read indicating that all numbers remained consistent with the previous read. On behalf of Mr. Marshall, he asked for clarification on how the committee preferred to assign monies provided through *Grounds Improvement–General Landscaping or Landscaping and Design*. Members agreed these monies would be best spent on *Landscaping and Design* to add a progression of curb appeal.

Ms. Moran requested:

- backup paperwork for the Landscaping work. Mr. Folan will forward this once received from the vendor.
- clarity on the warehouse paving project;
- Chromebook replacement purchases; insurance reimbursement for Chromebook losses, as well as an analysis of whether the cost of insurance is beneficial to the District in covering the cost of replacements. Mr Fogel will forward this information to Ms. Moran.
- the need for Hansen indoor window shades;
- an explanation of where the Elementary School furniture has been placed. Mr. Folan indicated that this cost is for collaborative seating and is a two phased approach–2025 being the second year.

Ms. Merenda requested a comprehensive review and plan for how all lots needing repair will be managed.

Hearing no further questions, Chair O'Halloran asked for a motion to approve the FY25 Capital Budget totaling \$1,056,000 as written and presented. Kimberly McCourt made the motion; Kristian Merenda seconded. Ensuing vote was recorded as follows:

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

4 yeas 1 nay

2. **Policy Section H vote:** Members agreed to table a vote to approve changes in Section H until the next School Committee meeting (scheduled for Thursday, December 21, 2023).

**H. Public Comment:** Canton resident, Ms. O'Donnell, spoke about human rights and dignity and local government's obligations to uphold these rights without discrimination.

**I. Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations Report:** No report was given.

**J. Consent Agenda:**

1. Open Session Minutes: November 16, 2023
2. Warrants: December 8, 2023

Chair O'Halloran announced the contents of the Consent Agenda and asked if any member wanted 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 11.16.23 and the warrant for 12.8.23 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

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

Ms. Merenda:

1. The School Building Committee meeting will be held on Wed. December 20th;
2. Master Planning Committee recently met and discussed storm water

management and ways to be diligent around it;

Ms. McCourt-nothing to report;

Ms. Moran-Budget & Finance Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 12th at 12pm;  
the subcommittee will begin discussions on the Operating Budget;

Ms. Arboleda: nothing to report;

Ms. O'Halloran:

1. CCPC-Committee members are working through the third round of interviewing;
2. Content & Communications-asked if any member would be interested in taking on the tasks of this committee;

Stephen Marshall: absent

Superintendent Folan: Meeting with all CAPT groups regarding the GMS building;

Emma Cummings: National Honor Society is hosting a Toy Drive until December 18th.  
Ms. Cummings asked the committee and community to consider supporting this drive.

**L. Other Business:** None

**M. Future Business:** A joint meeting of the School Building Committee and School Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, December 20 @ 6:00 pm in the CHS DLL. The next School Committee Open Session meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 21, 2023 @ 6:00 pm.

**N. Adjournment**

Hearing no questions or requests for further discussion, Ms. O'Halloran asked for a motion to adjourn the Thursday, December 7, 2023 School Committee Open Session Meeting at 8:00 pm. Laura Arboleda made the motion; Kimberly McCourt 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 Report, December 7, 2023  
German American Partnership Program (GAPP)  
GMS Building Project Progress Update  
CPS Policy Manual, Section H  
FY25 Capital Budget  
Open Session Minutes: November 16, 2023

Warrant: December 8, 2023