

00:00:00,000 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

Evening everyone. I know this is a very, very busy night for folks, and we have some people who are here joining us in person and others who are watching it as this is live streamed and others who will have an opportunity to review the tape when it is posted on the CPS website, which will be as soon as this evening is over. But welcome to everyone. Uh, this evening we are going to have an opportunity to engage in some conversation with our three finalists for the position of Superintendent of Schools for the City of Cambridge. I am Caroline Turk. I am the former deputy superintendent here in the Cambridge Public Schools, and currently work as the education liaison for Mayor Simmons. I am delightfully joined this evening by two of our seniors, uh, the class of 2026. We have our one of our student school committee reps. Eva Ashraf.

00:01:13,167 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

And from learning community are and also a member of the theater crew. Uh, Roz Patterson.

00:01:22,767 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

I'm going to to get us started this evening and then really turn it over to our young people who will be, uh, asking the questions and engaging in the the back and forth with our candidates. Um, I also want to just take a moment to say that, and I'm not going to introduce everybody, but we are really joined by what I consider to be community in community to me in this city, uh, includes our students, our caregivers, educators, elected officials, both current and former. We have some of our faith leaders with us out of school, time partners, university partners, and some of the community. Agencies, just to name a few. So this really is an evening for our community, and we hope that it will be an evening that is meaningful to all. As people know or may know, the community had an opportunity to submit questions that we were able to take a look at and pull from. There were about 75 - 80 questions that were submitted and definitely some themes in there. And as a result, we have identified about 20 questions. But I would say reasonably, we may get to about 14 of those questions tonight. And hopefully you will hear in the questions some of what you have asked as well. It may not be the exact wording because it may have come from a different person or it may be a combination, but we tried our very best to make sure that everyone was represented in terms of those who submitted questions. So with that, I'm going to ask folks to give a very warm welcome to our very to our first finalist, Miss Magaly Sanchez, who is currently the chief Family advancement officer for the Boston Public Schools.

00:03:21,801 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

Hi. Welcome.

00:03:25,000 S2:

Thank you so much. Good evening everyone.

00:03:28,767 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

So, Miss Sanchez, as I just said to to the audience, I'm Doctor Carolyn Turk, currently working with Mayor Eugenie Simmons, who is the chair of the school committee, joined by two of my teammates here who I'm going to ask them to introduce themselves.

09.25.2025 - CPSD Superintendent Interviews – Raw Transcript

00:03:44,267 S3:

Hi, I'm Ross, and I'm a student at Sarah Less.

00:03:47,667 S2:

Hi, Ross.

00:03:48,467 S3:

Hi, I'm Eva and I'm the current student school committee member.

00:03:52,267 S2:

Hello, Eva.

00:03:53,400 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

And we're going to have about 45 minutes together. There are questions that have been submitted by our community members, and our two facilitators here will be asking those questions. I'm going to try to play timekeeper. My suggestion would be to think in terms of responding as concisely as possible, and maybe 2 to 3 minutes per per response, so that you would have an opportunity to respond to as many questions as possible. I will ask you in one second if you're interested in making any sort of opening statement first, and then we can go to the questions. And when we get to about five minutes remaining, I'll give a time warning just to make sure that again, you have time to be able to finish out. So with that, would you like to make an opening statement or would you prefer to go right into the questions?

00:04:45,100 S2:

I would love to make an opening statement. Awesome. Thank you so much. Good evening parents and caregivers here of Cambridge Public Schools. I would like to start by thanking you for being here this evening, and share that. I'm so honored to be one of three finalists for the superintendents position here in Cambridge Public Schools. I'd like to share a little bit about my journey and what has brought me to this position. An education has been my education has been shaped by both instructional leadership as well as deep operational work, and I truly believe both are essential to supporting students and families. I served as a high school leader, designed and implemented curriculum for advanced learning opportunities, and with an effort of ensuring expanding equity and access for all students, I have led the very systems caregivers engage in daily, such as student registration, assessments, school assignments, as well as working cross functionally to develop policies for school choice and transportation. In addition, I dedicated six years in the Providence School Board, and today I serve as chief of the first district in the nation, engaging families authentically and family and community, as well as through expanded learning opportunities for all students. What ties all of this together to me is the simple truth. When families are fully engaged and supported, all of our students thrive. Thank you so much for the opportunity to answer your thoughtful questions. I look forward to engaging.

00:06:25,901 S4:

Our first question is from someone who identifies as a parent, caregiver, and staff member. What leadership principles guide your decision making?

00:06:36,167 S2:

The leadership principles that guide my decision making are the very reason why I decided to apply for the opportunity of Superintendent of Cambridge Public Schools. My leadership and my core values are centered in equity and access, supporting the whole student, as well as ensuring that we're building a strong sense of belonging, incredibly supporting our educators and our school leaders and providing them with the resources necessary in order for our students to be able to impact their their outcomes very positively.

00:07:08,567 S4:

Our next question is from an educator, given that teachers are always trying to improve so that we can better serve our students. What would you do to help our schools be good places for teachers to be learners?

00:07:21,767 S2:

What I would do is I would ensure that all voices, especially our teacher voices, as well as our school leader voices are heard, that they are implemented in the decision making, and that we develop systems and structures to ensure for these processes to be sustained and actually within our decision making processes.

00:07:41,801 S5:

Our next question comes from a parent and caregiver. It is a particularly tough time to be an education. In our experience, the teachers have been the best thing about the Cambridge Public Schools. What specific things will you do to ensure teacher job satisfaction and teacher retention?

00:08:00,067 S2:

I think it's really critical that we ensure that we're supporting our teachers and building a true sense of belonging. Um, reminding them that their voice truly matters. Providing them with the resources and the supports necessary, along with professional development, coaching opportunities, and a strong clarity around our instructional focus and how we'll be supporting them within their craft, ensuring that they have the opportunity to lead with their creativity around pedagogy. That part is very critical to me.

00:08:30,267 S5:

Thank you. Our next question comes from a caregiver during a recent listening session. Tell us about a time when you had to adjust to another person, or another group's working style and or culture in order to achieve a goal or complete a project. What did you learn from that experience?

00:08:48,667 S2:

Thank you so much. I can share a little bit about an experience I had at one of my current schools, where I'm currently leading. Um, within that experience, we had a situation where, um, there were diverse perspective, um, around school side council opportunities. Um, and there were some parents that felt one way and other parents that felt another way in regards to some of the systems and structures that were being implemented in the school. Um, I believe that perhaps culture did come into it. Right. Um, and opportunities in terms of beliefs of how each parent, um, or each side of the parents kind of thought about what their views were. Um, and so what I did is I leaned into each perspective. I listened very, very clearly with intentionality. Um, and I truly, um, engage authentically and understanding what their diverse perspectives were in order to reach a common ground. Uh, I reminded them that we were there for our students. Um, and we together then outlined a path forward with the differences that we had.

00:10:02,701 S4:

Our next question is from a student. What are you doing? Or what will you do to ensure non processed, nutritious foods for our students?

00:10:13,200 S2:

That is an excellent question. And actually today when I took the tour here, which is amazing, I was able to visit both cafeterias. The star students were amazing. Um, and they did share that there were some vegan opportunities in one of our cafeterias here. Um, but it's really critical that what we put into our bodies is very healthy. Um, and so I would work with food and nutrition and our operational teams to see if we can actually, um, build upon our cooking kitchens, um, work with our local farms and foods so that we can actually bring in the foods that are available right across right within our cities and have the opportunity to cook them here fresh so that our students get nothing but the best nutrition.

00:11:00,501 S4:

Thank you. This question is for a parent, caregiver and staff. What steps would you take as superintendent to ensure that neurodivergent students are more fully included in school events, both in planning and participation so they feel welcome, supported and represented? Additionally, how would you support parent or caregiver? Caregiver groups in place are still being developed to support families of students in special education and help them stay connected with the school community.

00:11:29,400 S2:

Thank you so much for that question. I really appreciate that question, Eva. Um, one of my biggest passions is opportunities for students of diverse abilities. Um, and what I would do is I would ensure first that our students, uh, Have the supports that they need, not only as outlined on their individualized education plans, but that we're truly thinking about inclusivity and how we present that within our classrooms. Um, I think that when it comes to inclusivity, it's easy to share the word, but how we truly actually do that, it's what's critical. And in order to be able to do that successfully, we really have to engage our educators. We have to engage our union partners, and we need to engage our school leaders, identify what is needed to ensure that students have that strong sense of belonging, and what types of supports are required within

the space and the academia. Right. Um, so that our students are able to not only access curriculum, but that they also feel that they are part of the school community as well as the classroom itself. Um, my goal would always be that our students are supported as fully as possible within the less restrictive environment.

00:12:41,467 S5:

This next question comes from someone who identified as a parent, caregiver, and staff. It's common in CPS classrooms to have a wide range of student ability, sometimes five or more grade levels between the lowest and the highest performing students. What have you done in your current district, and what will you do here in Cambridge if selected to serve as superintendent to ensure CPS meets this range of student needs?

00:13:06,701 S2:

Thank you. Certainly, we all know the word differentiation, and we understand the complexities of what differentiation brings into the classroom and the heavy weight that it puts on our educators and our teachers. Um, if there's if it's not done correctly. Right. And not to say that our teachers wouldn't do it correctly. Um, but we really have to think about, um, what is our instructional framework? What opportunities are we really putting in place to support our educators? Um, and what are and how are these aligned to our core values? Um, so I think that that would begin with a very clear vision. Um, there's also the opportunity to ensure that we're engaging within our classrooms with high quality instructional materials, that we're evaluating and looking at our programs to make sure that our students are actually receiving what they need in a culturally and linguistically responsive way. Um, and that critically, we're actually assessing our programs and that we're ensuring that there are some type of evaluation and accountabilities, um, within a continuum, uh, how I've engaged in this work. In my current district, we are working on, um, inclusion for all students. Um, and I am also responsible for expanded learning opportunities, which requires me to oversee about 15,000 students during our summer programming. One of the things that I did to ensure that there was strong inclusivity for all students and that students are not only diverse abilities, but also of um in a multitude of different areas are able to be supported. Was really talking to our school leaders, as well as our teachers that were in the classroom, and better understanding what was needed in order to be able to meet those needs. Um, we strengthened our tier one instruction, and it's a continuous process. Right. Um, aligning it with high quality materials, being able to support our teachers by ensuring that they have the proper coaching and the proper professional development as well.

00:15:09,501 S5:

Our next question comes from someone who identified themselves as a parent, caregiver, city partner, and community organizer. What experience do you have in creating and sustaining strategic partnerships with community stakeholders who do not work in school buildings, to support our scholars to become lifelong learners and civically engaged community members?

00:15:31,267 S2:

Thank you. Um, I have an incredible amount of experience, and it's one of my my favorite areas of my leadership journey. Um, again, currently as as the Chief of Family advancement, one of

the departments that I'm responsible for, um, is expanded learning opportunities within our expanded learning opportunities. I have the opportunity to actually engage with, uh, more than 75 community partners, uh, during our summer learning, which we call fifth Quarter. Uh, our fifth quarter programs allow opportunities for students to engage in three hours of academics during the summertime, as well as three hours of enrichment. This is work that we would not be able to do without our community partners. Our community partners come in and they actually are our are part of our community based organization services. And we also have some learning academies. Um, throughout this experience, we offer more than 80 programs for Boston Public School students and serve more than 14,000 students. Um, it's an incredible opportunity for our students, and it's something that our community partners come in and are just key in terms of the services that we're able to deliver.

00:16:46,100 S4:

This next question is from a parent caregiver. How will you address the persistent gap in test scores? The district continues to see for groups like children of color and those with IEPs.

00:16:57,868 S2:

Yes. Thank you for that. Um, it's it's a critical need. And I would say that that, um, alone would be one of the hardest jobs, um, for your future superintendent here in the district, but not a job. That is impossible. Um, and one that definitely can happen. So how I would address it is I would like to be able to understand in terms of our instructional, um, framework, um, where we are with our instructional framework and how are we delivering services across a continuum of our multi-tiered system of support? Um, I had mentioned earlier that we really would need a foundational, clear vision of what our instructional focus is. Um, we need to ensure that our schools and our classrooms have consistent, high quality materials. We also need to ensure that this PD and this coaching is happening pretty consistently, and that we are introducing opportunities to support that are data driven, and our students are really at the center of that. With that, if we're evaluating our programs to better understand if these programs are truly serving our students through assessments and continuous improvement, we take the opportunity to understand, are these working or are they not working right? Um, and so I think that that would be a clear next step in terms of how we would be able to begin to address the opportunity gaps. Thinking about students being at the center and providing those personalized supports for them.

00:18:23,067 S4:

Thank you. This question is from a parent caregiver. What supports do principals most need from the district superintendent in order to be effective in their job? And how have you made that kind of support available to people reporting to you in the past.

00:18:38,467 S2:

Thank you so much for that question. Um, having been a high school leader, I can speak from the school leader perspective in terms of the supports that I saw. Um, when I was sitting in that role and those that I provide today. Um, so as a high school leader, I always hoped that my superintendent would actually be in my school more consistently. Um, and that they really had a

very clear understanding of what was happening within the school. Um, and in addition to that, um, one of the things that I think was very clear that I always needed as a school leader was really genuinely being the having the opportunity to be an instructional leader. Uh, in order for that to happen. Um, you know, as a school leader, you that sometimes your job description doesn't really outline that it's your job to actually be outside picking up all of the garbage so that when students actually walk into school, they feel welcomed and they feel a sense of belonging. Um, other things that are not within your job description is that, um, you know, there is a opportunities where you either have to like, you know, perhaps pick up the broom or pick up whatever is there. What I'm trying to say is that there's a lot of things that a school leader definitely has to do as a school superintendent. If we take the opportunity to ensure that we're supporting with the operational part, our, our, our school leaders could really become those strong instructional leaders that we need. Um, they can be in the classrooms having conversations with teachers, doing observations, providing meaningful feedback so that that way our instruction, especially at the tier one level, can begin to shift and change.

00:20:14,868 S5:

This next question comes from a parent, caregiver, and educator. How will you strengthen the role of classroom educators in making decisions that impact our students learning experiences? For example, how will you make sure that educator input is reflected in decisions about schedules, family partnership models, and evaluation.

00:20:35,400 S2:

Yeah. I mean, our educators are one of our. They're our frontline. Um, they're are one of the most important stakeholders. And our teachers are not only engaging with our students consistently daily, but they're engaging with families. They're engaging within our school communities. And so their voice is really critical in the decision making. Um, how I'd ensure that is there's opportunities for them to be able to provide feedback. Um, I'd have open forums. Um, perhaps coffee hours with the superintendent. Um, and I would welcome educators from all of the schools. In addition to that, I would not lead from behind my desk, but I would also be in the classrooms, in the schools, and in the spaces visiting and just really trying to understand from their perspective. I think what's really critical when seeking feedback and voice is just really ensuring that we're allowing multiple, um, diverse opportunities in order to be able to seek that authentic feedback that I'm sure that they want to provide.

00:21:34,868 S5:

This next question is combined for multiple questions from parent caregivers and staff. What do you see as opportunities that would help build an effective world language program in student language proficiency, proficiency here in CPS, and how would you go about making it happen?

00:21:51,501 S2:

Yeah, I mean, I think that the first thing that I would like to do is engage important. Stakeholder engage our stakeholders, engage our educators, our students and our families to better understand what are those languages that we would like to actually implement and provide in terms of access to our students? What does that look like? And then I think what would be

equally critical is that we're providing the foundational supports for for our students to actually unwrap onto those on ramp, onto engaging in those courses. And and we can do that as, as, as early as possible because of language acquisition and when those occur. Right. Um, so I think what would be critical is really getting the stakeholder voice, understanding what we're currently offering and figuring out what we would like to offer in terms of languages, and then making some decisions around implementation.

00:22:41,868 S4:

This next question is combined from multiple from multiple questions from parent caregivers. In your experience, how have you been able to change budgets to reflect your values and what metrics have you used or would you use to evaluate the effectiveness or budget expenditures and programs?

00:23:00,267 S2:

Yeah, thank you for that. Um, in my experience, I've had the opportunity to manage, um, significant amount of, of of budgets. Um, and what I have done in order to ensure that they are both aligned is ensure that, um, we begin from a zero based budget budgeting process. Um, and actually, we're engaging in that process now. My team is and what we're doing is we are looking at our budget as a totality, and we are actually breaking it down by priorities and district objectives. And we need to align every single line item to those district priorities and objectives, which each of them are required to share. How we're impacting student outcomes. Um, every penny has to be aligned to our priority. Um, and if there is something that happens to be left over for a reason or what have you, then our commitment is that that funding would go to schools. Um, given that I'm at a district level. Um, we we find that the funding needs to be more within schools. Um, and so what I find is that when you take the opportunity to truly, um, more or less what I call take your budget apart and really align it to, um, where you believe and your core values and the district believes, um, we'll be able to, uh, impact student outcomes. Um, now there's a true commitment to the success of our students. Um, so ensuring that we're starting from a zero based budget, aligning it to priorities and district objectives. Um, and ensuring that, uh, funding is more focused on at the school level.

00:24:46,767 S4:

Thank you. This next question is from an educator. What is your experience with curriculum and instruction?

00:24:53,667 S2:

Yeah. So my experience, um, I have a strong passion for curriculum and instruction, especially advanced learning opportunities as well as equity and access. Um, in my previous job in New Bedford Public Schools, I had the opportunity to engage in curriculum development and implementation around advanced learning opportunities, AP courses, and International Baccalaureate. Um, I was able to successfully bring, uh, the second, uh, International Baccalaureate program to New Bedford High School. Um, and also not only bring the program there, but we had to do a very strong feasibility study to understand if we were going to be able to sustain it and increase equity and access. As part of that feasibility study. We found that most

of the students in New Bedford High School accessing advanced learning opportunities. We did not represent the student demographics, and that was one of our biggest goals. Um, we were able to increase the participation of black and brown students as well as students on IEPs. Um, when I first walked in, walked into New Bedford, we were somewhere around 1 to 2%. And that is really true. And prior to leaving New Bedford, we were well over 12% of students participation. Um, what's important here is that it's not a really about just participation, but it's more about how are we supporting our students not only to access, but also to on ramp into these programs? And what kinds of academic experiences are we providing our students so that they can access these programs successfully? And we really focused on that portion of it and that increased student success. Some of those examples. Sorry to be long winded, but this is my passion and what I really love. Um, were peer opportunities where they supported each other in advanced learning. We also had tutoring opportunities for students. Um, and we ensured that we removed barriers in terms of access.

00:26:47,267 S5:

This next question comes from a caregiver during a recent listening session. What experience do you have with hiring and human resources? How have you improved a district's process for hiring, evaluating, and facilitating change management across the district?

00:27:03,467 S2:

Yes. Thank you for that. Um, well, I, I have a pretty strong background in, in hiring, um, training and also coaching leaders. Um, from the from my basically pretty much from my leadership journey. Um, in a recent experience, uh, in my current role, uh, I did have to engage in a reorganization of part of my department, and that was came at the at the request of of the district leadership. Once they understood that, we really wanted to align to priorities and align our budgets. Um, um, in doing that, uh, we did that with humility. We did that with ensuring that there was clear empathy and support for those that were being impacted. Um, and went through a process where we, we did a reorganization, aligned the department to our goals, aligned it to our budgeting goals as well. Um, and ensured that the folks that were hired for certain positions were also aligned in that way. Um, very clear, um, expectations around goals and objectives.

00:28:11,100 S5:

This next question comes from a parent caregiver. How would you plan to improve early education experiences for kids on an IEP so they can get the supports they need in the classroom setting in a way where they aren't stigmatized by having to be pulled out of the classroom community.

00:28:27,400 S3:

Sure.

00:28:28,067 S2:

Thank you for that. I would say again, as I shared earlier, my goal would always be to ensure that students and educators have the resources and the supports that they need to be educated in the least restrictive environment. All students deserve the opportunity to have a sense of

belonging and also the resources that they need to be successful. So as educators, is our role to meet our students where they are and help them rise to the occasion as to where they need to be. But that really takes a lot of thought and a lot of intentionality, as well as collaboration with school leaders and educators in order to ensure that we can successfully make that happen, and that there's true intentional planning and supports for the students to be able to be supported within the general education space.

00:29:13,000 S4:

This next question was asked earlier today during the student mini forms at CLS. How will you ensure that students of all identities feel seen, valued and supported in our schools.

00:29:24,000 S2:

I loved that question. Um, actually, my my tour with star was with the star students was amazing. Um, actually, I think it was the most nerve wracking part of this entire process. Um, I felt that they were going to come with and they did with authenticity, with great questions. And it was just truly the best part. So thank you to the students that I had the opportunity to spend my afternoon with. Um, I would ensure that by I would love to have a I shared this with the students earlier. Uh, a student council, um, a superintendent student council. And the goal of that would be so that that way they can share their thoughts and their advocacy for their school community. Um, and that we can actually think about how do we have those come to fruition? Right. Um, I also shared with them earlier today that, uh, they asked me a second part to that question, if I may share. And that second part was, um, how would you make the decision on who would be on this council? And I shared that I wouldn't, that I would expect that the students would draft the process on how we would be identifying who would be on this council, and one that would be representative of the school community that we serve, and also give opportunities for new students. That's the only those are the only guardrails that I would put in, but that I would ask the students to actually come up with the plan. And then I would commit to meeting with my student council pretty consistently, to be able to hear what their thoughts are, where they're coming from, and what they're advocating for.

00:30:55,167 S4:

Thank you. This next question is from a parent caregiver. How will you measure success and hold yourself and others accountable?

00:31:02,667 S2:

My success is our students success, and I think all of our successes, including our school committee members, our teachers, our school leaders, is our student success. I would measure success by our student outcomes. And so when we begin to narrow that achievement gap, I would call that success, and that needs to happen. And we have 7100 reasons as to what that success would look like. And so I don't mean 1 or 2 students, I mean every single Cambridge public School student.

00:31:32,167 S5:

This next question comes from a parent, caregiver and staff. We often hear about CPS being well resourced based on your understanding of what makes a district highly effective, and what you've learned about CPS in this process. What do you believe are the most powerful resources within the district? Where do you see strengths or successes?

00:31:53,267 S2:

Yeah, so the most powerful resources are our students, right? Um, our educators, because our educators are who are at the front line of educating our students. Um, honestly, here in CPS, yes. Resources is one of the most powerful things that you all have here. Um, I just wonder in terms of how we're spending those resources and what and are they truly aligned to the results that we're trying to get for our students? Right. And so I think that one of the, the best things of CPS is that, um, the resources are certainly available. I would wonder if there's a it seems to me that there's definitely a lot of opportunity to ensure that we are aligning those resources to, to impact student outcomes in the right way.

00:32:45,501 S5:

This next question comes from a caregiver during a recent listening session. I believe in data driven decision making. We have seen the school conduct surveys to collect feedback from staff, students, and families, but I know that there are families who felt so removed from the process. One example is that many families did not participate in the climate survey one year ago, because they did not understand the purpose of the survey, and thought that the survey was perhaps related to climate change. What strategies have you used in other districts, or would you introduce here in CPS to ensure all families feel included and valued with respect to their feedback to the district?

00:33:24,100 S2:

Sure. Thank you for that. Um, I think one of one of the most critical strategies ensuring that all families are feeling welcomed, um, is ensuring that we're actually meeting their cultural and linguistic needs. Um, it's quite impossible for a family member or caregiver, um, to complete a survey if if they don't even understand what the purpose of the survey is. And perhaps there could be a language barrier or opportunity for us to be able to ensure that we're providing the appropriate translations and supports for our families to feel included and have the opportunity to participate. Um, if we're really, genuinely seeking feedback. Um, one critical thing that I always share in terms of feedback is really having clear, a clear purpose and intentionality, one that all families understand in a culturally responsive way. Um, and then we also need to tell our families, our caregivers, What are we doing with that feedback? We need to share the results of that feedback, and also share how we're going to be using that feedback. Otherwise, we begin to lose trust. It minimizes transparency, and that wouldn't be good for anyone. Right. So really just ensuring that our families can access it's almost like all of our students, right. As well that they have access, that our families have access to these, um, surveys in a way that they're able to understand.

00:34:43,667 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

Thank you so much. This has been an absolute pleasure. Uh, we've actually been able we're right on on track, on time and actually being able to get a little bit further along with the questions than we thought. So this is perfect. We have about five minutes remaining. And so in that time, if you'd like to be able to make a closing statement to the community, you are more than welcome to do that.

00:35:06,167 S3:
Awesome.

00:35:06,701 S2:
Thank you so much, Doctor Kirk. I do want to make a closing statement. I'd like to share that. I want to thank you all for allowing me the opportunity to answer your thoughtful questions. I'd like to close by sharing my why for Cambridge Public Schools. That is because Cambridge's values of equity, excellence, belonging and shared accountability align with the very purpose that has guided my entire leadership. I see Cambridge Public Schools as a district with both courage and commitment, and I am honored by the possibility of building on those strengths with you all as caregivers, our school community. I'm sorry. Our school committee members, educators and unions, with our dedicated school leaders and district teams, as well as our community partners as it will take this village to keep our students at the center and positively impact their academic outcomes. I really appreciate the opportunity and am so honored of of being your finalist for a superintendent, and I thank you so much for engaging me with me this evening. And look forward to next steps.

00:36:18,667 Dr. Carolyn Turk:
Again, thank you very much. Thank you to my teammates here and we wish you. Safe travel this evening.

00:36:24,267 S2:
Thank you.

00:36:32,901 Dr. Carolyn Turk:
So folks we we are right on schedule actually just a little bit early which is great. We have a little bit of a break which was planned. And our next candidate will be arriving and getting set up at 645. So you can stretch for a little bit and then we will continue. So thank you.

00:00:01,501 Dr. Carolyn Turk:
I want to take a moment to welcome everyone who has joined us here in the auditorium this evening, and also those of you who may be watching via livestream. There will also be an opportunity for folks to watch this programming as it is posted on the CPS website at the end of the evening. This is our second opportunity this evening to be able to hear from one of three finalists for the position of Superintendent of Schools here in Cambridge. My name is Carolyn Turk, Doctor Carolyn Turk, and I am the former Deputy Superintendent of Schools here in Cambridge, and currently the educational liaison for Mayor Denise Simmons. I am joined by my

two teammates on this on the stage here, uh, Eva Ashraf, who is our student school Committee representative.

00:01:06,767 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

And Ross Patterson, who is also. They're both seniors who's also a senior. And she draws from learning community are and is also a member of the theater crew. And that has been invaluable in terms of some of the workings of this evening. So welcome to everyone.

00:01:27,100 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

We're going to have about 45 minutes together this evening to hear from, uh, our candidate, our next candidate. And when I say we, I would be remiss if I did not say that. Really, what this evening is meant for is for the community and the community as a whole to be able to, um, engage and listen and consider. And when I slash, we think about community. We're talking about a lot of folks, and I'm not going to introduce people in the audience one by one. But I do want to say that between the various venues of tools that people are using to be a part of this evening, those that are represented include students, caregivers, educators. We have elected officials here, both current officials as well as former elected officials, faith leaders out of school time partners, university partners, and some of our agency partners as well. And so this really is for all of us. And us truly does mean community. So with that, what I would like for us to be able to do right now is to give a warm welcome to our next finalist, Doctor Lorenzo Garcia, who is currently the assistant superintendent for the Revere Public Schools.

00:03:03,267 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

Welcome and welcome and welcome to Cambridge. Um, as I just mentioned to our audience here, I'm Doctor Caroline Turk, and I'm joined by team members here who I would like them to introduce themselves to you.

00:03:18,000 S2:

Nice to meet you. I'm Eva Ashraf. I'm a current student school committee representative.

00:03:22,968 S3:

Nice to meet you. Hi, I'm ros, I'm a student at Sarah Alice. Nice to meet you.

00:03:28,601 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

So we are going to have about 45 minutes together this evening for you to respond to some questions. The questions were actually submitted by community members. There was an opportunity for folks to submit questions. And what we've done is we've tried to take a look at there were about 75 questions that were submitted, looked for themes, things that were most frequently asked, and put together a set of questions. My suggestion a recommendation would be to think in terms of trying to be as succinct as possible, and perhaps 2 to 3 minutes per question. I'll try to play timekeeper, but outside of that, I am really going to turn it over to the students in one moment. Um, first I will ask you if you would like to be able to make some sort of opening statement, or if you would like to dive right into the questions.

00:04:20,000 S4:

I'd like to make a statement.

00:04:24,701 S5:

Good evening everyone. I'm so excited to be here tonight. And thank you for inviting me to be here tonight. Um, I believe very strongly that schools are built on strong relationships, and when students, families, educators and community work together, every child thrives. My vision for the future Cambridge Public Schools is to be a national model for excellence and equity, where every student has access to high quality learning. Every educator feels supported and the families are full partners in the education process. Tonight is about listening, learning and focusing on what matters, what unite us. The future of our children. So let's get started. Your voices, your ideas, your perspectives, your experience and hopes and dreams for our students will guide this conversation. I am committed to leading with transparency, collaboration and equity so that together we can make this vision a reality. Thank you.

00:05:53,167 S2:

Our first question is from someone who identifies as a parent, caregiver, and staff member. What leadership principles guide your decision making?

00:06:07,100 S5:

My decision and all my leadership practice has been anchored on supporting families and all families. I'm not talking about some families versus the others. If you look at your demographics of the city, it's a very diverse demographic. Starting with families, caregivers, community members and students in general. I am an immigrant and your city has lots of immigrants. I lived in three different countries Angola, Cape Verde, Ukraine actually four and the United States. So I have a wide perspective, and I have a good understanding of what immigrant children go through, what African American students go through, what white kids go through. So I have this perspective that so vast that my job and my practice has to be ingrained in what parents want us as public servants to deliver. And that throughout my career, whether in Rhode Island, in Massachusetts, concretely in in Brockton and Revere, all my experience has been on creating structures, policies and practices that support our families and our newcomers in general. So my focus is on equity equity for families by engaging them in school activities by inviting them to the school is not. My leadership is all about transformation. It's a transformative leadership, not the transactional leadership. That's what I have seen, and that's what I have been calling people. Not many leaders are not engaging the transactional leadership. You need parents only when you need them. You don't help them in a transformative way by really empower them and bring them to the table by giving them a voice in the decision making process, and also to ensure that they have a voice in curriculum design and to have a voice in the school district so that they can support their children. I've done that in Revere by creating a community school where English language learners is offered. Financial literacy is offered. Classroom technology is offered, high sex classes are offered for their children, and I also run many, many community events where I invite families, particularly during this difficult time, the climb that we have in our country to climb and attend workshops every, every month on a basically on a on a regular basis, focus on immigration. We bring media to come and do those workshops for families, to empower them so

they know how to act and navigate this complex time that we live in. Bringing them workshops on how to access housing, which is a very difficult, um, uh, you know, a difficult situation for many of our families right now. They cannot afford housing right now. I bring them to come and learn about some of the interesting cultural, competency based learning that we're doing for our families, for our teachers also. We do that for our families as well. So there is a variety of things that we do in Revere that I could potentially bring to Cambridge Public Schools to support and to continue to build on the legacy you have built in this district. Just looking around today, walking around and with students like yourself taking me to different classrooms. I saw the climate at the high school. I saw the climate that got built at the Peabody Elementary School. I've seen some great practices in this building, in this, in this district, which means that I can certainly capitalize on that, continue to add on and bring my own innovation, innovative approach to continue to support our Cambridge public schools. That's what I have done in my, uh, you know, in my current job that we have done in my past practice, and that's the practice that I would like to replicate in the district, like Cambridge Public Schools.

00:10:19,067 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

And just just so that you can, uh, help pace yourself. That was just a little over four minutes. So, no, you don't need to apologize, but I want to make sure that you have an opportunity to respond to as many questions as possible and just.

00:10:38,667 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

See, I get to be the bad guy.

00:10:41,567 S2:

Our next question is from an educator. Given that teachers are always trying to improve so that we can better serve our students. What would you do to help our schools be good places for teachers to be learners?

00:10:54,701 S4:

Right.

00:10:56,167 S5:

Teachers are the backbone of our system. Let's put it that like, you know, I'm just going to put it out there. I have been a classroom teacher. So, um, without teachers, there is no schooling. And obviously without students, there is no teachers. Right. So it's a biological relationship between these two agents of teaching and learning. Students and teachers. And obviously they need support like us, the superintendent, the directors, the school committee to support them. So that's the premise of education is by having two agents coming together to really do a good job. Therefore, my approach to supporting teachers is manifold. I would say one is to ensure I create a climate in the school that supports them. What that climate look like supports them by providing them with professional development. They need professional development so that they can have the skills to know how, and the expertise on how to teach diverse population. We need to create spaces in school where teachers can collaborate with each other, learn about how to how to design a lesson plan, share experiences in a common planning time or

professional learning group time, whatever you want to call it. Making sure you give them space actually to learn, and also looking at student work and provide, you know, specific feedback. Share experiences, do some peer observation and go into classrooms and learn from each other. We want to make sure that we create the climate that support our teachers. Education now. Education now and even before is a very, very, um, complex proposition, let's put it that way. So my job as a superintendent is to make sure that I create the a climate. When we do talk about social emotional learning, we. We tend to focus just on kids. It needs to also be focused on teachers as well. And our job is to make sure we create that mechanism so that everyone benefits from it. So Covid left certainly left a lot of issues in our schools for teachers, for students. For the administrators, it's our job to create a system that is inclusive for our teachers. Also that supportive of our teachers, for our teachers and all that to support our, you know, students as well. If teachers are happy, students are happy. It's that's what I say. It's a Bionicle relationship and intrinsic relationship. So the two work together to make sure that they feel students thrive, and teachers will support it so that they can deliver, you know, a good education for our kids, regardless of the background, whether they are whatever background kids are. And that's why we need to train them on cultural responsive practice. Social emotional learning mtss, which is multi-tiered systems of support equity. Make sure that we provide them training on how to act with immigrant children, black students. Because the reality is we know that it's very complex out there. So we want to make sure that we teach our teachers on how to navigate bias, you know, and on implicit bias so that they can really be able to work with different students, including those who have been historically marginalized over the centuries.

00:14:02,100 S6:

Our next question comes from a parent caregiver. It is a particularly tough time to be in education. In our experience, the teachers have been the best thing about the Cambridge Public Schools. What specific things will you do to ensure teacher job satisfaction and teacher retention?

00:14:20,100 S5:

One thing I would like to do, um, you know, Cambridge Public Schools, that's one of the things I have done in my, in my current job is to, um, ensure that we diversify our teaching profession and our workforce development. Um, in my current job, over the last 2 or 3 years, I brought to the district over 200 educators of color, and that was intentionally done because I am in charge of the equity advisory board in the district. So I will bring the same strategies to Cambridge Public Schools. We need to diversify our teaching force. There is no other way around it. If we don't diversify, the gap will continue to be there and obviously we will not have a teaching force that is competent culturally to really teach our diverse students. Look at your demographics and how many black teachers we have in the district compared to the demographic of our kids that you serve. So we want to make sure that we create an inclusive environment where students see teachers who look like them, because certainly it helps a lot. There is a study that was done by Johns Hopkins University. I think it was in 2020 2019 where the finding certainly, um, you know, stated that students were taught by teachers who look like them has the, um, has the ability to graduate at a faster rate, at a high, at a high school and also in colleges and universities. So that study is out there. You can go and look it up for you, for yourself, so that it's

important we continue to diversify our teaching staff. It is important, important also for us to continue to support our teachers by providing them with relevant, um relevant cultural proficiency training, relevant social emotional learning training and also making sure that they have the curriculum, know how to focus on standards, understanding the standards, understanding how to differentiate instruction in the classroom. Show up in the classroom. Administrators, teachers, directors, principals. Even the superintendent needs to show up in the classroom. Be visible in the classrooms. Look what's happening in the classroom. Provide teachers feedback so that they can improve their instruction and that classroom instruction and learning across the board. So we want to make sure that the curriculum is consistent. In other words, there is an alignment between high school, middle high and elementary school. Alignment. Alignment means that we know that standards shows standards and instruction in general, or it shows that the competency that every grade level, you know, learned because teaching teaching tend to be sequential. What you learn in fourth grade, you set the foundation for the fifth grade, etc., etc., etc.. And one thing that I must say is that we're not investing a lot in literacy, and that's important, or in numeracy or, um, in Stem subjects. We want to make sure that we invest in those areas. Studies show that a kid who cannot read by the third grade, by the by the third grade level, then the the likelihood for that child to be illiterate for the rest of the career is stronger. So we want to make sure that all the work is done at the pre-kindergarten level, all the way up to the grade level, so that our kids have the strong foundation to come prepared for all the levels that come after. So. And those things are delivered by our teachers. That's the reason why we got to invest in them. Making sure they have the know how, the expertise, how to navigate the curriculum, the pace and sequence, all that needs to be done by teachers. That's the reason why I said that the teaching profession is a hard profession, and they need to get our backing from the superintendent, school committee members all the way down. It's, you know, everyone needs to work with the teachers. And obviously if we want them to produce good results, they need to be supported.

00:18:09,701 S6:

Our next question comes from a caregiver during a recent listening session. Tell us about a time when you had to adjust to another person's or another group's working style and or culture in order to achieve a goal or complete a project. What did you learn from that experience?

00:18:26,567 S5:

Well, many times. I'll tell you many times when I when I was a teacher at the Brockton High School in the past, um, you know, um, I came from a traditional, uh, educational background, uh, where, uh, standing and deliver that's, uh, you know, from Cavour that I was a social study there in high school standing and deliver. So, uh, then I met, uh, this outstanding teacher, uh, at Brockton High School that, uh, invited you to go and observe a class. I was talking about peer observation, um, in my previous, uh, response. So it is so important. When I went there, I sat throughout 45 minutes. I learned so much from that teacher because he got group formation in the classroom. He got kids involved in project kids doing different things. He was walking around supporting students, and that's one of the greatest lessons that I learned in my life, that he's have different learning styles. You have to diversify your teaching style so that they can learn in the classroom. And I was just standing and delivering and standing. Deliver is a teacher

centered pedagogy. It doesn't work with different with diverse students. That was a particular case that opened my eyes that teaching and pedagogy goes beyond what the traditional classroom looks like. So it was a it was it was a great experience for me.

00:19:47,667 S2:

This next question comes from a student. What are you doing or what will you do to ensure non processed, nutritious foods for our students?

00:19:58,767 S5:

I want to make sure.

00:20:00,767 S4:

I want to make sure I understand the question. Could you repeat that for me?

00:20:04,100 S2:

What are you doing or what will you do to ensure non processed nutritious nutritious foods for our students?

00:20:11,901 S5:

I will hire the I don't know who provides food for your.

00:20:15,701 S4:

Uh.

00:20:16,767 S5:

Um, you know, you.

00:20:18,167 S4:

Know.

00:20:18,567 S5:

The whole catering and things like that. But I would certainly work with the school committee, uh, and, uh, and the mayor, obviously, she's the chair of the school committee to make sure that we hire, um, companies that really, um, um, relies on more, uh, you know, organic, um, type of, uh, food that really, uh, you know, for our students. Um, I've seen certainly even in my current, you know, we have done we have gone a long way, but there are certain products that are food that are, that is processed that we I do not approve. And obviously, I would have to make sure that I wherever the vendor I'm bringing to the district, uh, with the support of the school committee members and the mayor and the overall, you know, community that I'm serving. Uh, we focus on, uh, nutritious on, um, on on the food that is good for, um, our students, uh, because certainly food has, um, has, you know, food has, uh, you know, processed food tends to be harmful to our children, and we want them to, uh, you know. Um, eat well so that they can function properly. So that's a priority of mine, if, you know, um, you know, as a superintendent is

to make sure that I provide nutritious but healthy, uh, food for our children and for our faculty and for the community in general.

00:21:42,567 S2:

Thank you. This next question is from a parent, caregiver and staff member. What steps would you take as superintendent to ensure that neurodivergent students are more fully included in school events, both in planning and participation so they feel welcome, supported, and represented? Additionally, how would you support parent or caregiver groups in place are still being developed to support families of students in special education and help them stay connected with the school community?

00:22:12,567 S5:

Well, it's a long question, but I'm going to try to answer it. So, um, what I will do the first part of the question was about, Um.

00:22:22,267 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

And we can we can repeat that.

00:22:25,267 S2:

What steps would you take us, superintendent, to ensure that neurodivergent students are more fully included in school events, both in planning and participation? So they.

00:22:36,367 S5:

So I would, um, make sure that their voices count and they are part of the, of the decision making process. So, um, I would include them, whatever your policy or practice is being developed or implemented, I would invite them to the table and seek their input and perspectives on the matter. So that's the only way, because as long as you let adults dictate what adults want, kids voices are missed in the process. You have a problem. So I always believe that students should be part of the conversation, and that should be provide input and insight into the decision making process. That's student voice. So without that, um, without that, we will continue to do the same thing. And I think that students have a lot to contribute to the process. So that's the reason why I always believe that whatever student body government that you have in your school, whatever, um, you know, the school committee, I heard it made me very happy that you have student representation on the school committee. So all these structures that you have, student voice needs to count. One of the things that I met, actually, uh, this morning with a group of students, and they they were those kids were amazing. They're very impressive with their perspectives, sharing their ideas and stuff like that. They told they they I asked them, they they they they have a lot of pride about the district. I just want to put this out there. They're proud about their school. They they're very proud about their teachers. They're proud about their leaders and so on and so forth. The one thing that they said was that I said, do you participate in course of development and providing input to into courses development? And one of one of the keys asks are two kids. They said, we would like to and we would like our voice to be better heard throughout the school district. And we. One of the things that probably we feel that we've been left aside because certain decisions are made and we

don't we're not informed about those decisions and we learn about them too late. I said, okay, that is the case. Talk to your teacher. Talk to your leaders and stuff like that if you feel that way. Not over overwhelming number of kids, but some of them expressed that feeling. And I said, you. But you have been also asked to do to bring you a voice into other things. Yeah, yeah, we did, but I, I also want to be part of that, of the process of, you know, practicing transparency in the building. That's one of the that came from one student. That's something that the feedback I'm giving you, it's coming from a student. So I'm sharing that feedback with school committee, you know, with entire community because certainly will benefit, uh, decision makers.

00:25:11,667 S6:

Our next question comes from a parent, caregiver and staff member. It's common in CPS classrooms to have a wide range of student ability, sometimes five or more grade levels between the lowest and the highest performing students. What have you done in your current district and what will you do here in Cambridge if selected to serve as superintendent to ensure CPS meets this range of student needs?

00:25:35,267 S5:

Okay. I want to go back to your question because I did not answer that. And I'll answer that question about the special education. I want to go back because I don't want to. So, um, families should be part of the IEP process. That should be part of the special education meeting that we do, that we conduct in this, you know, in in any school. So compliance needs to be there. And they need they voice needs to be heard. And they should be part of the we should as a district, we should provide translators and interpreters to interpret for families who want to be part of that one, or they should be part of that. They should be also given access to review the review, the, um, the protocols that you have for special education and also give them access also to review the student records to see if the keys are properly be served in special education. And we should also make sure that, you know, we have a co-teaching model in in a special education classes. Special education is not an option is essential for our kids, especially those who cannot express themselves properly. So I want to make sure that our families are fully involved in the process and compliance is there, the evaluation is there, the evaluation is there, and we make sure we have a robust special education program that serves the needs of our kids. All kids. Back to your question.

00:26:52,467 S3:

Uh, do you want to repeat it?

00:26:54,667 S5:

Could you repeat it for us?

00:26:56,901 S6:

It's from a parent, caregiver and staff member. It's common in CPS classrooms to have a wide range of student ability, sometimes five or more grade levels between the lowest and the highest performing students. What have you done in your current district and what will you do here in

Cambridge if selected to serve as superintendent to ensure CPS meets this range of student needs?

00:27:19,000 S5:

Right. So, um, that's you have a wide range of grade levels in the classroom. That's perfect. That's good. I have nothing against that. I think what we need to invest in our teachers to ensure that they know how to teach those kids, because that will require differentiated class instruction strategies. Not every single teacher has that skill match to teach those kids. We want to make sure that I had know how to differentiate instruction. We want to make sure that we want to make sure, I will make sure I and my team will make sure that those teachers have the knowhow in terms of how to, um, scaffolding instruction to make sure that they're using a variety of techniques in the classroom that will make sure the kids are learning. Because kids, certainly we have different kids with different learning styles, auditory, you know, uh, you know, kids who To touch things. You know that there's a lot of things there to unpack. So those lifestyle that our kids also have been taught in traditional settings back home. So when they come here, they see all these things and then the language, they have language problems. Well, they are real, they are formal, they have student. All this kicks in into the, uh, practice and pedagogy in the classroom. So we want to make sure that we invest heavily in our teachers, that provide them with the skills and knowhow on how to teach those kids, and that includes planning and delivering and assessing.

00:28:39,400 S6:

Our next question is from a parent, caregiver, city partner, and a community organizer. What experience do you have with creating and sustaining strategic partnerships with community stakeholders who do not work in school buildings, to support our scholars to become lifelong learners and civically engaged community members?

00:28:58,767 S5:

Of course, I have a lot of experience with that. As a matter of fact, I have experience with the many nonprofit organizations that come to school that provide training on restorative justice practice for our kids. They come. They provide training on a social emotional learning for our kids. Um, I reach out, I pick up the phone the minute I hear Doctor Garcia, they come. Um, so I. One thing that you need to know about me, I'm a good, uh, cultural, you know, cultural bridge, uh, you know, um, builder, let's put it that way. So I tend to, uh, when I do sit with a parent who's probably a difficult parent or any other stakeholder, I tend to put the person easy. And I had a conversation, a constructive conversation, an educational conversation, even if the person is very difficult. In the end, we shake hands. We leave. So that's who I am, and I bring people to the table. I do not deflect, even if the issue is very difficult. I don't deflect that. I meet with people. I'm an empathetic and I talk to people first because it's by talking that you educate people. So this ability and these skills that I have set in me, uh, provides me with the opportunity to reach out and be part of, uh, of, of of the structure that is there really to support our families and our community partners. I bring meeting to the school, uh, into our school district. We bring a variety of organizations, the school community, the mayor, um, you know, universities to come and and work with our students, College. Um, you know, job corps. There's a variety of

partnerships that I have. As I said, you need partners, reliable partners, but you also need to be utilizing your, uh, the leadership. You should. Utilizing the leadership that transforms people. It's not just. Okay, just come and do it, and you leave. It's not just transactional. It may help. Transactional leadership sometimes is good, but sometimes it's not good. And we need to be authentic about our approach in terms of leadership and deliver. Yeah.

00:30:54,267 S2:

Our next question is from a parent caregiver. How will you address the persistent gap in test scores? The district continues to see for groups like children of color and those with IEPs, of course.

00:31:05,801 S5:

Um. Um, let's go to the IEP. Um, I think, um, one of the things that we need to do in special education is to change the mindset, uh, mindset. Unfortunately, we have a lot of people in our schools that still have the mindset that special education is a place, and they should not be special education is a place, but a meaningful place where the same keys that we call students with disabilities have also, they also deserve, uh, you know, a quality education like any other student that also goes to our real population as well. The same thing that those are the kids we serve. So we want to make sure that they have, uh, teachers, competent teachers who understand them, where they come from and build the gaps that they have. So, um, regarding the the, uh, closing achievement gap and the opportunity gap. Um, well, the first thing we need to do is to really. Understand the root cause of the, uh, of those gaps. What is at stake? What's really causing that? Right. And, um, obviously there's a lot of metrics, a lot of data that we need to use, we need to use to make sure we understand what's happening. One, we need to review the early warning indicators, the early early warning indicator systems, a system that allows us to check attendance, coursework and behavior. That's why those three those three elements is are important. If kids are not showing up in school, there's something wrong. If kids are not passing a course or grasping the content, there is something wrong. Where is it? It could be the teaching that's faltering in the classroom. It could be the lack of motivation. It could be something that comes sometimes for very difficult for from houses where there is lack of support. Right. There's a variety of things that provokes that. Right? We don't know that. So we need to go into the data and start to study the data. Two we want to make sure we create structures like Mtss multi-tiered system of support that really are socially and also social emotional learning support that really understand the mental health of many of our kids. After Covid, many kids were this became disrupted, disrupted in terms of um, they the routine was broken. You know, obviously they need to catch up. So uh, and they also suffer from mental issues, right? A lot of our kids, they don't have the right support. We want to make sure that that problem, we need to understand whether that's not the issue that's causing that. We have a lot of immigrant children right now with immigration the way it is right now, that certainly all that is affecting them. Right. So we have a variety of issues that are affecting our children. So we need to make sure the mental health is a big is a big issue. When I make sure that we understand that second the skills they might not have, the skills that don't have to. Really? What's going on in the classroom? What's happening in our classroom? Right. Are we showing enough in the classroom to give teachers feedback when they teach the yellow kids or special education

students, etc., etc.? We don't know that we need to dig into the data and see the test scores. What part of are of the literacy defaulting or mathematics or Stem? What's really falling behind that. So we need this is a variety of things. So one that said we need to we need to do what. As a superintendent I will make sure that my curriculum directors, my principals really I'm sure they do. They know how to do that. They should certainly look at the data and disaggregate the data by race, ethnicity, level of income and see who's falling behind. Right. Once you know that, then you can put a robust plan in terms of addressing those gaps with teachers curriculum alignment. Um, make sure that they are trained on culturally responsive teaching. Make sure they are trained on mtss. Make sure they are trained on social emotional learning. Our guidance department, our social workers, all that is important. So because I see students as a whole, I don't see fragments teaching here, teaching there and then it's all fragmented. It's in silence. It will not work. You want to teach the whole child? It's not an MCAS. It's one data point. I want to make sure that all kids have access to advanced coursework. That's one of the things that we want to make sure not just select few, okay? Because that's soft bigotry. When you claim that you teach everyone and then you teach just a few. That's soft bigotry. You know, in our system and we cannot tolerate that. So these are these are all important things we need to do. And we need to make sure we provide spaces for teachers to collaborate during school hours. Provide job embedded professional development where they learn, they implement right away. You don't leave that. You provide it on Saturday after school. It's expensive, but it's more productive than anything else. So those are the things that we should be doing with our teachers and support them the best we can. Um, I'll leave it at that. There's so many other things I could say, but we don't have time. I see you making that sign.

00:36:06,767 S7:

There you go.

00:36:07,367 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

So what can I tell you?

00:36:09,367 S7:

All right.

00:36:10,567 S2:

Thank you. Our next question is from a parent caregiver. What support do principals most need from the district superintendent in order to be effective in their job? And how have you made that kind of support available to people reporting to you in the past?

00:36:26,067 S5:

Um, I do that I did in the past, and I continue to do that. Um, I in my district, I have people know me as an empathetic leader, I have I take the time to, uh, we we have what the so called the equity, uh, equity plan. I take the time, I sit with the principals, we'll go over the data together. It's a collaborative effort. It's not me. Because of my position dictating what the principals need to do. Principals are autonomous in their building and they should be autonomous. They should make decisions based on what they see in the ground, what they see in the in their building.

And my job as a principal is to ensure that we are aligned. That's all we have a strategic planning. That is the it's a mothership document in the district and all the the all the decisions, the the school improvement plans, the equity plans should emanate from the from from that, from that, from that plan. So my job is to make sure that I have my principals meeting with me regularly, um, you know, having cabinet meetings, discussing best practice, discussing teacher evaluation, making sure that what teachers are performing well, others are not, and identify areas that we can support our teachers. That's what true education is all about. It's basically showing up in, you know, in a in classrooms, observe classrooms and providing feedback, constructive feedback to, to our teachers. That's the only way they can grow. And our principals, principals, by by definition, they are. Technical executive. You know, update building. And that's the job. But the principal is a master, you know, a teacher, let's put it that way. So the goal here is to make sure that we work. You know, we have competent principals supported by the central office that they can support. They, they, they, they children and they teach teachers in their building. So that's the goal here. So obviously there will be consultation meetings. There will be, uh, cabinet meetings. We'll discuss scenarios. We discuss, you know, evaluations. We discuss who's making progress was not making progress is a collaborative effort. So if I my principals are performing well, I'm in good shape as a principal, as a superintendent. So if I am, if I have a good relationship with, uh, with my, um, school committee members, I feel great that they will support me and I will support them as well. If the union leadership also has a good relationship with the superintendent and also with with with the school committee. It's a collaborative effort. That's a that's a win win proposition. So that's the type of collaboration, the type of community we want to build. These jobs cannot be done by one person. It needs to be done by several people united towards one front, which is our students. They are the ones who really matters here. And obviously we need to support our families. But the common denominator here is our students. Everything we do, they should be at the center of everything we do.

00:39:21,467 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

And we have just about six minutes left. And so, Ross, I'm going to ask you to go to your next question. We'll see where we are and then give you an opportunity if you would like to make a closing statement. Okay.

00:39:35,467 S6:

Our next question comes from a parent, caregiver and educator. How will you strengthen the role of classroom educators in making decisions that impact our students learning experiences? For example, how will you make sure that educator input is reflected in decisions about schedules, family partnership models, and evaluation?

00:39:56,000 S5:

Um, I think I touched upon some of these things as I was, uh, talking, but, um, I tend to believe in building teacher capacity and teacher leadership. When you have coaches, you have teachers. Um, you know, wanting to come and support, uh, the vision of, uh, the principals in the building, because we have a lot of teachers who do that. They work beyond, you know, uh, beyond hours. And, uh, actually, they go above and beyond supporting their principals. It's not about it's not about culture. You set up a good culture. People will come and work with you. You

set up a toxic culture. It's not going to work. So, um, principals rely a lot on, you know, rely on teachers that rely on teacher leaders that rely on facilitators, that rely on coaches. They rely on a variety of people so that they can effectively run their buildings. It's all about that. So as long as you provide them support, they'll do the job. Obviously, if the cause is toxic, then obviously they'll work. Rule to rule. They got the camp, they do the work and they leave. But as long as you set up a good culture, uh, you can go, uh, you know, uh, you can go, uh uh, uh, further away. So you can really make a good progress, uh, in the process. So what I'm trying to say is that, you know, principals, teachers, they need to work together and, uh, uh, making sure that we invest in our teachers and build capacity and give them the joy of really teaching and really exercising leadership. Leadership does not have to be just the assistant principal, the principal or the superintendent. Teachers are our leaders in the classroom. These are our leaders, as all depends how you really frame it, how you structure it, and the culture that you create. A culture of collaboration and a culture of helping each other to ensure that our kids are properly served. So that's a call that you want to build in your school. And obviously students also do that. If you really invest your in your teachers and your students by really believing in and delivering student centered leadership. Kids will do amazing things. They can run things for you that can make you proud in your school. Pretty much like I did see today when those kids taking me around took me around. Pretty much what I do in our in my district, teacher and student leadership is critical to the running and of any school or individual school or school department or school district. And obviously, we set the tone for the district, and we support our teachers along the way to make sure that the vision we have set gets carried out with fidelity, fidelity and with, you know, accuracy.

00:42:36,567 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

And would you like to make a closing statement?

00:42:39,367 S5:

Yeah. Um, sure. Um, I just want to thank those who are watching us home. Those who are, you know, these rainy where, you know, weather decided to come and, uh, you know, uh, uh, engage in this exercise with us. Uh, look, I mean, what I have shared with you today is just a slice of what I have done. And, uh, uh, obviously I've done, uh, some transform with deep, transformative work, uh, in my current job in Revere. Uh, and that's the type of I am. I have a strong work ethic. And there's a time of philosophy. The same type of philosophy, the same type of practice that would be able to, uh, replicate in your district. You have a great district with a very diverse population, diverse families, diverse students. And it's our job, my job as a school district, to work with the school department, to work with the school committee, the mayor, to make sure that we continue to reshape, uh, the future of our children in this district. Uh, Cambridge Public Schools is well situated. Look at your demographics and you are surrounded by major college universities. Um, you know major things in the city. So you have the we have the opportunity to really take our kids further and, uh, with the right support, the right leadership that will come for me. And also in combination with the vision and the of the, um, for everyone, uh, in the process, which students like yourself, parent families, we can take Cambridge public Schools and transform it into a model of excellence for the country. So I'm not talking in Massachusetts. I'm talking a model for the country. I have dealt with, uh, schools who were in

the stage of, uh, being almost taken over by the state. And two year period, I transformed the school at level one and level two. So I have experienced you can go and read about me, uh, what I've done in life and in my current position, previous position and my ability to speak seven languages is a key. It's an asset. I can speak with any parents. Um, uh, except Mandarin Chinese and, uh, uh, Arabic. You know, probably all the languages. Probably. And maybe, you know, um, I can, you know, entertain a conversation with all of you, any of you in this, in the, in this, uh, auditorium and those who are watching us. So thank you for the opportunity you gave me. Um, I look forward to, uh, collaborating with you. And I look forward to, uh, supporting the, uh, this district. Uh, if I am selected as a superintendent of your district. Thank you for attending tonight. Those who are watching us. Thank you. Good night. Benoit.

00:45:24,367 S7:

Um.

00:45:25,300 S5:

A torch observer movement one has noticed a todos Los padres a las personas mirando siento a. I could go on and say it a few words in Russian, but I'm going to stop here.

00:45:43,567 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

Well, Doctor Garcia, it has been a pleasure spending time with you this evening. Thank you from the team here. Thank you from the Cambridge community. And we wish you safe travel home this evening.

00:45:54,367 S5:

Thank you.

00:45:54,801 S7:

Thank you.

00:45:57,968 S5:

Thank you.

00:45:58,868 S3:

Thank you.

00:46:02,000 S3:

Thank you.

00:46:05,000 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

All right, folks, so we will again have about a 15 minute break here. It's just 731 right now. And our third candidate will arrive shortly. And we will begin promptly at 745. Thank you.

00:46:32,167 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

As well as those community members who may be watching at home. I'd also like to let folks know that there will be an opportunity to view both this interview or conversation, as well as the other two on the CPS website, as each of the conversations will be posted to the CPS website. After this meeting is over. So again, good evening, I'm Carolyn Turek, doctor Carolyn Turek, I'm the former deputy superintendent of schools here in Cambridge, mass. And currently the educational liaison for Mayor Denise Simmons. I am joined this evening on the stage by two of our amazing seniors here at Carol's. We have with us Eva Asra, who is our student school committee rep, and also Roz Patterson, who is a student in learning community and also a part of the theater crew team, which, as I have said a couple of times today, has been invaluable in terms of helping this evening move smoothly. So just to sort of get us going, we are going to have about 45 minutes together. And when I say together, I really am meaning the community because this evening is meant for the community. There are many folks in the audience that represent various constituents, and I'm not going to introduce people individually, but I would say that we have folks who represent students, caregivers, educators, elected officials, both current elected officials, as well as former elected officials, faith leaders out of school time partners, university partners, as well as community agency partners as well. So this is really for us. When I say us, I mean everyone that is a part of the Cambridge community as we are all very invested in this process. Um, so let's get started. And with that, what I would appreciate it if you would please give a nice, warm welcome to Mr. David Murphy, who is currently our interim superintendent of schools here in Cambridge.

00:49:03,767 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

So again, welcome, Mr. Murphy. As I just mentioned to the to the audience, I am Caroline Turk, and we have my two team members here who I'd like them to introduce themselves to you.

00:49:20,200 S2:

I'm Eva. I'm a senior and I'm the current student school committee member.

00:49:24,400 S3:

Good to see you.

00:49:25,601 S6:

Hi, I'm Ross. I'm a.

00:49:26,667 S3:

Senior. Hi, Ross.

00:49:28,667 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

So we'll have about 45 minutes together right now to be able to hear from you in terms of some questions that have been submitted by community members, there was an opportunity for folks from the community to submit questions, which we looked at. There were about 75 or 80. We looked for themes, we looked for questions that were most frequently asked, and we'll try to ask as many as we can today in that 45 minute time. My suggestion it is to think in terms of

responses that are concise and maybe about 2 to 3 minutes each, which would allow for a good cross-section of.

00:50:08,868 S7:

I often think about concise responses.

00:50:11,767 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

There we.

00:50:12,100 S7:

Go. Execute concise responses. But I'll try my best.

00:50:15,367 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

And there may be moments where I may need to sort of just help move.

00:50:18,901 S7:

I encourage you to do that with.

00:50:20,100 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

Me, move the conversation along, and with that, I'm going to turn it over to my teammates. Thank you. Oh, actually you know what I did forget. I want to make sure that if you wanted to have an opportunity to provide an opening statement, that you would do that, and then we will turn it over to this.

00:50:37,701 S7:

This is a practice round for brevity.

00:50:39,567 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

It could.

00:50:40,200 S7:

Be. I will just say that I'm very grateful for the opportunity to be here, and I'm very grateful for those of you who have either who are here this evening or who are watching, whether live or on tape, the decision that's before the school Committee, with respect to who will serve as the superintendent of schools is a significant one. Probably an understatement. And I appreciate very much the engagement on the part of members of the community, on the part of members of the student body, um, in, uh, I think helping all the candidates be our best selves. Um, and I think that's really we've had, as I mentioned, it's been mentioned, a full day of lunches and breakfasts and interviews and student forums. And I would say that I imagine the other candidates feel the same way with each step in that process. I think it helps us to be a better candidate. Even for myself. Having served as interim superintendent, I think it helps me to know the community better. And so on. The just I would just thank everyone who is taking the time to participate in this and to follow along. So and thank you, Doctor Chair, for the chance to be here.

00:51:42,467 Dr. Carolyn Turk:
Thank you.

00:51:45,100 S2:
Our first question is from someone who identifies as a parent, caregiver and staff member. What leadership principles guide your decision making?

00:51:54,868 S7:
Um, imagine that there's many and but the ones that come to mind first are, um, trying to be in a listening posture. What I, what I mean by that is, um, as someone who was new to the community and came into Cambridge with experience in leadership roles in other districts, but not, um, with not nearly the level of experience or institutional knowledge that some of my colleagues had included. Um, I, I think I had the advantage of needing to be in a listening posture and needing to make sure that I was, um, trying to hear from as many constituencies within the Cambridge community as I needed to. And I would say that both as chief operating officer and interim superintendent, um, my sort of like the the necessity of having to listen to others and learn from others. Um, I think it's helped me to grow as a leader. So I don't know that I would have said that, um, you know, three years ago when I, when I came to Cambridge. But I think now that to me is sort of the first organizing principle that, um, regardless of what your own views are, what your own experience is, if you're part of servant leadership, is making sure that you're staying connected with the various, um, portions of the community that you are serving. And if you don't have a willingness to hear people and to listen to people, uh, the likelihood that they're going to have any interest, frankly, in what you have to say or the priorities that you want to help forge for the district is significantly diminished. And so I think I think always listening first is a piece of it. And then, um, I have a few others, but I expect they'll come out in future questions. So thank you.

00:53:34,968 S2:
Thank you. Our next question comes from an educator. Given that teachers are always trying to improve so that we can better serve our students. What would you do to help our schools be good places for teachers to be learners?

00:53:49,467 S7:
Well, I think it's a really good question. And I for this particular process, because I think that the superintendency, as much as anything, is about establishing the conditions in which educators are going to operate. And, um, the way I think that sort of manifests itself in a school district or in an individual school is in how we prioritize culture as an organization, as an employer, and and as an educational institution. And my team hears me say this all the time. The school committee has heard me say it many times, but I'm I'm a believer in the mantra of culture over strategy. Um, probably another way of saying that is that I think the best strategy to have is to focus on culture and the elements of a culture that is going to be conducive to high quality teaching and learning. To me, is one heavy focus on relationships and understanding that the public school system, uh, the foundation of it, has to be a genuine belief in equity. And when I say a genuine belief in equity, what I do not mean is just saying the word equity as often as you can. Okay. And

I think sometimes we fall into that trap, frankly. But if we can define equity and if we can measure our commitment to equity based on the level of access that we are able to afford students, that to me is how we make measurable progress. And I think to your question about what does that mean for for teachers, it means that they have to know that the organization is committed to those fundamental tenets. That is what I think in the vast majority of cases is why people got into the profession. Um, you know, frankly, like this is a very difficult profession. It is not an easy place to work. It is grueling. It is not terribly lucrative. And so if you're not here for those principled reasons, this is frankly, you usually don't last that long. And I think what we, as the organization, owe to our educators is to equal that commitment from an institutional standpoint. They have to believe that we in leadership and that the organization as an entity has that same level of commitment to equity and access that they do, which is why they got in here in the first place. And I think that is what how we instill confidence. I think that's how we build trust. And ultimately, I think that leads to better teaching and learning.

00:56:15,667 S6:

Our next question comes from a parent and Caregiver. It is a particularly tough time to be in education. In our experience, the teachers have been the best thing about the Cambridge Public Schools. What specific things will you do to ensure teacher job satisfaction and teacher retention?

00:56:32,767 S7:

Thank you. Russ. Uh, I think that, um, I agree with the parent caregiver, first of all, that the best thing that we have going for us is our teachers. Um, that has to be true instantly because any school system is a human capital, um, entity. We are made up of people. That's where the money goes. That's we're trying to develop people. It is. We are, you know, we are not a widget factory. We are a school system, and we are wholly dependent on the human capital that we have in order to advance our mission. And I think in terms of how does how does the superintendent make, uh, the job essentially more sustainable, which is, I think, sort of the subtext of that question. What I would say is that, um, I understand that each individual school committee. Excuse me. Sorry. School committee. Each in each individual school community functions as an ecosystem unto itself. They are very dynamic places, and they are places that only those who are embedded within that school school community truly understands how that school community is operating at that moment. And its why in. This may sound a little attenuated, but I think just I don't think it is. My job is to support the school leaders, and by support I mean make sure the school leaders are fostering the type of culture within the individual school that is going to make teachers feel, um, appreciated. I try to model that and make sure that I'm connecting with educators as much as possible, and are listening and setting priorities and communicating in a way that they can respect the office of the superintendent and the district administration. But I will tell you that, by and large, I think educators care much more about. I don't know if I wanted to quantify this at this moment, but like to some degree, I think they care more about they're making sure that their principal and the administrators that they work with on a daily basis understands what they're doing, appreciates what they're doing, and respects their commitment to doing that. And it is my responsibility as the district leader to make

sure that our administration across the board is exhibiting that type of commitment to the professionals that do the actual work.

00:58:45,167 S6:

This next question comes from a caregiver during a recent listening session. Tell us about a time when you had to adjust to another person, or another group's working style and or culture in order to achieve a goal or complete a project. What did you learn from that experience?

00:59:02,467 S7:

Um hmm. That's a good question. I when I've had to I mean, I think for people who have worked in this field, um, Or in the last. Recently the people have worked in this field. The adjustments that we all had to make during the Covid crisis, I think, is going to go down for most of us as some of the most pronounced period of adjustment and certainly some of the most abrupt periods of adjustment that any of us had to make and probably hope to ever make again in the course of our careers. And I was, at the time, the assistant superintendent in for the Medford Public Schools. And like every district, Cambridge included, um, there was a period of, I'll say, fraught labor relations, and there was, um, varying viewpoints as to how and when we would reopen and we would adjust and like, um, like Cambridge, at least in certain grade levels. We were able to get ahead of many other districts and we were able to, um, I think, prioritize the interests of students, particularly the most vulnerable students in our community, but that it took a lot of rapid relationship cultivation and trust building in order to make that happen. And so if you ask me, 15 minutes later, I might have a different answer. But that's in terms of when I've had to make that adjustment. I was new to the district at the time, too. That's part of why there had to be a rapid relationship building. But that's sort of what comes to mind in terms of, um, really needing to adjust on the fly.

01:00:42,067 S2:

Our next question is from a student. What are you doing? Or what will you do to ensure non processed, nutritious foods for our students?

01:00:52,767 S7:

Well, that's a good question, but I'm not going to. Um, that's something that if we probably have to take a closer look at, frankly, I don't know that that's something we are doing to the degree that we need to. Um, I will say that, um, Mr. Smith, our interim chief operating officer, and I have just in the last week or two, been, uh, starting the process of establishing a student advisory council specific to food services. Um, I will say our focus was on the middle schools. Um, and like a lot of policies, it did come out of a mistake that was made. We had a situation in which one of our middle schools, um, didn't order the right amount of food, and the answer was not call and order more food. The answer was offer fewer choices to students. Um, in the last lunch. I disagree with that. Uh, I, I expressed that to our team, and, uh, one of the ways that we're going to make sure that that doesn't happen again is have a standing body that will meet with students to talk about, um, the, the food nutrition options that we have available. And I was thinking of it in the middle school, frankly, in part because I think it's a good sort of student leadership development opportunity for students in that age bracket. But as I'm saying this now on stage

unexpectedly. I don't know why we wouldn't do the same at the other grade levels. And so I guess I'm making an announcement tonight. If anyone's interested in the Student Advisory Council for Food Services, you're welcome to join. Um, and Mr. Smith will have that announcement out very soon. And thank you to the students at the school that I don't think I named, and I don't think I'm going to who spoke up and let us know that they were having, um, in inequitable menu in last lunch.

01:02:35,567 S2:

Thank you. Next question is from a parent, caregiver and staff member. What steps would you take as superintendent to ensure that neurodivergent students are more fully included in school events, both in planning and participation so they feel welcomed, supported and represented? Additionally, how would you support parent or caregiver groups in place are still being developed to support families of students in special education and help them stay connected with the school community.

01:03:04,267 S7:

Thank you for that question. I think that I mean, I think this question, um, goes to the heart of the question of whether or not, as an organization, we're going to truly be grounded in equity or not. Um, because there's nothing more inequitable in my experience than a school community that sees the students or families, uh, with a particular learning style learning needs or who are in a program, um, that historically is referred to as a separate program, uh, as something separate and apart from the full school community. And I will say that I think there have been instances that I've observed in Cambridge where I think sometimes that's been the case, that there's been the school and then there's the program sort of somehow like over separate and aside from the school. And I think that, uh, the first thing that we have to do to make sure that every member of the community is embraced and supported in a way that they are entitled to be embraced and supported is to make sure that the leaders of the school understand that that is what the organizational expectation is, and that if you foster a really strong culture, as I was talking about a moment ago, and it's not inclusive of the community in its entirety, then you failed. And that that takes vigilance, frankly, because we know that populations who find themselves, uh, susceptible and vulnerable to, um, you know, essentially being ostracized, um, that in the absence of that type of renewed affirmative commitment, um, that's what's going to happen. I think that's there's a lot of reasons for that. I think there's there's some inherent bias reasons for that. I think there's, um, I think there's some misunderstandings about sort of things that are views and policies that can be very well intentioned, but not necessarily serve the interests of, of learners of diverse needs. Um, and so I think being vigilant about that and making sure that when we talk about the community, we're talking about the entire entirety of the community. I think that's a big piece of it. Um, I think with regard to parents and caregivers, I think it's everything I just said with the type of family partnership mindset that we are currently trying to instill in our leaders and in our organization, which is a big part of our goals for this year, that we're not just trying to keep parents informed. We're trying to keep families engaged so that they are as much a part of the school community and their child's education, um, you know, as possible.

01:05:54,000 S6:

This next question comes from someone who identified as a parent, caregiver, and staff member. It's common in CPS classrooms to have a wide range of student ability, sometimes five or more grade levels between the lowest and the highest performing students. What have you done in your current district and what will you do here in Cambridge if selected to serve as superintendent to ensure CPS meets this range of student needs?

01:06:18,267 S7:

At the beginning of the question, did you say CLS or CPS.

01:06:21,200 S3:

CPS.

01:06:21,868 S7:

CPS? Thank you. Um, well, I think what I've, what I've tried to do is prioritize just in my current district, um, I am the do everything else. I haven't done anything alone because I'm the beneficiary of the team, and I work with a school committee that I think share a certain sense of values, a certain sense of priorities. And I think what our team has done, um, is prioritize what we refer to as educator effectiveness in a way that I believe is sort of our our best prospect for being able to provide quality instruction to all students. And similar to sort of my the point I made a moment ago about equity means if we're talking about a school community, we're talking about an entire school community. I think educator effectiveness is, well, if you're if you're only effectively teaching two thirds of the class, then that's, you know, that's like sort of saying that, you know, there's well, only one room in the house is on fire. It's like, well, that means the house is on fire. I think if there's an active flame in one room of the house and I think that, um, the, the emphasis that we are putting now on educator effectiveness as defined by, um, quality professional learning that is relevant and linked directly to the programming and the curriculum that teachers are, are teaching, um, evaluations that include the types of quality and consistent feedback that has not always been the norm, at least recently, in the Cambridge Public Schools. Um, and having an appreciation for what those levers can do in terms of elevating the caliber of instruction. Um, I think that is the best formula, um, for getting to a point where we can differentiate instruction in a way that all students will be well served.

01:08:22,501 S6:

This next question comes from someone who is a parent, caregiver, city partner, and community organizer. What experience do you have with creating and sustaining strategic, strategic partnerships with community stakeholders who do not work in school buildings to support our scholars to become lifelong learners and civically engaged community members?

01:08:44,167 S7:

Well thank you. Um, my I think my own experience, um, I sort of the my path toward this role. um has been somewhat atypical for a person, um, serving as a superintendent. Um, I was a substitute teacher. Not a terribly good one. Um, but I was I was one, and from that I ended up going to school and sort of starting a different career. And, um, was either persuaded or

coerced, depending on how you look at it, into running for a position on the school committee in my hometown and as a community representative responsible for overseeing the school system. Much of the work that I had as a as a school committee member, then as the chair of the school committee, um, was we used to refer to as, um, trying to open up the doors to schools, understanding that in the absence of those types of partnerships, we were unlikely to be able to see the the types of success that we wanted to see. And in that time, um, sort of an unusual time in the history of that school system that I was serving due to some sort of rapid superintendent. Transition. Um, my. I ended up with sort of the responsibility of overseeing the development of a district strategic plan. Um, and one of the key components of that strategic plan. I think we framed it as better community relations. But what we were talking about was understanding. Um, seeing the community, uh, in a holistic fashion and basically seeing in exploring and aggressively pursuing how each part of the community could contribute to the mission of the public school system. And as part of the strategic planning process, we adopted a new mission and vision statement that is on a plaque inside every one of the schools in that district. And the vision statement says that our vision is to be the center of a community united around education. And some of people have heard me say before that my the sort of why behind my work in this is that I believe that public education should be the epicenter of all public policy. And so if that's the case, then in a community like Cambridge with essentially infinite resources and I just I do not mean infinite financial resources, but infinite resources in terms of opportunities to partner and cultivate relationships that can ultimately benefit students. Um, that that is. Those are things I think we need to explore. And just as a specific example of that, of where I think we need to do that, and it's very similar to work that I did in the district that I just mentioned. For our high school students, um, we have great teaching, learning. We were great courses. We were just talking backstage about some of the courses that, like, students get excited about. Um, but I think the reality of being a 16, 17, 18 year old is you are either do or will soon want to see what's happening outside of the building. And I don't think that we can maximize the potential of this particular school community as our flagship, unless we are fostering a better relationships with all of the entities that want to contribute to us and give our students experiences outside of the doors of our schools. And that's something that I would sort of hold up as a priority, and something I think we need to pursue. I think that's the first one that I went a little over on. I just want to note that I was waiting for the signal.

01:12:11,267 Dr. Carolyn Turk:
You're good.

01:12:13,601 S3:
I'm sorry. Sorry.

01:12:15,200 S2:
This next question is from a parent caregiver. How will you address the persistent gaps in test scores? The district continues to see for groups like children of color and those with IEPs.

01:12:27,701 S7:
Thank you. Yeah, and I think that, um.

01:12:33,167 S7:

There's a lot of complex challenges that we face as a school system, complex challenges that we face as a society. Um, but I think one of the ways that we increase our chances of advancing the mission of the school system in the way that we want to, um, is not losing sight of the sort of basic, fundamental responsibilities that we have. And the most basic fundamental responsibility that we have is that our, um, the educational programming that we are offering to students is grounded in equity, such that no matter where a student is coming from or the context in which that student is learning, they have a chance to succeed. And to do that effectively. I think we have to employ some of those strategies that I referenced earlier. Um, because in the absence of solid professional learning, legitimate educator evaluations, legitimate accountability for us as an institution as well as, um, our professionals, uh, the, the, the discrepancies that exist within society are going to be too much for us to overcome as a school system. I think we have to acknowledge that reality that there are there is economic injustice. There's deeply ingrained systemic racism. There are. Um, we're in a tumultuous political climate when you take all those things into account, if a public school system is not operating at a very high level of functionality with extremely sound execution, we are not going to close any gaps, and we're not going to give children the experiences that they deserve. And I think that they're entitled to and I think that they need if they're going to be positioned for post-secondary success. The only other thing I would add about that, because I know, you know, I say often that I don't want to shy away from the need to improve student outcomes. And I we cannot be afraid of, um, testing when it's done right and when the time for is allocated appropriately. But I think that we should also never lose sight of the fact that the reason student outcomes are important is because they are evidence of the experiences that we are affording to students. And when we see the types of persistent gaps that we have seen historically in Cambridge, I think there is an inescapable conclusion that our students have not had equitable experiences. And I think that is an obligation that that we owe to them. And I think it's something we need to, um, work toward. Thank you.

01:15:07,901 S3:

Thank you. Next question.

01:15:12,667 S2:

Our next question is for a parent or caregiver.

01:15:14,767 S3:

Did it go on?

01:15:16,267 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

Did the mic go up?

01:15:21,000 S3:

Nate.

01:15:22,868 S7:

He says we're.

01:15:23,267 S3:

Good.

01:15:24,701 S7:

I just met Nate backstage. He's a new employee, so.

01:15:27,300 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

Well, she's doing that. And he injured that one.

01:15:32,901 S2:

Our next question is from a parent or caregiver. What support do principals most need from the district superintendent in order to be effective in their job? And how have you made that kind of support available to people reporting to you in the past?

01:15:48,901 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

And if that's not working, we may have to have a little lesson in sharing today. Okay. We can share.

01:15:55,901 S7:

Here comes that again. There's a constituency that we're talking about that needs to support our leadership.

01:16:01,467 S3:

Or you will do this.

01:16:04,667 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

Well this is interesting.

01:16:07,901 S7:

Thank you. Okay. We're back in business. I'm sorry. Could you just read the first part again, I apologize.

01:16:17,267 S2:

This is from a parent or caregiver. What support do principals most need from the district superintendent in order to be effective in their job?

01:16:26,501 S7:

Thank you. Thank you very much. All right. Thank you. Thank you. Ava. Um, I think the first thing I would say about our school leaders, um, is that, um, other than Nate, they are most important employees. Okay. Um, they. I'm getting. They, um. You're important to them. Thank you very much. Um, I think that, uh, school leaders are the hinge that determines whether or not the work is going to happen. Because the superintendent and the leadership team can talk all

they want about the goals, the strategy, the priorities. At the end of the day, the work in a school district happens in schools. And so if there isn't a recognition of the unique importance of the position of principal, then principals are never going to feel the level of support that they need. Other than that, and I would say I go back to my second round interview with the Cambridge Public Schools to be chief operating officer sitting at my dining room table. Uh, Principal Darryl Williams was, uh, a panelist. And he's the question, I think I asked somewhat similar question about what do you need from the then the COO and Darryl. Miss principal Williams answer was, we need access. We need you to be available to us. Um, and I had done enough of this work to know that that was true. I also live with the principle, so it's reminded to me often that this is true. Um, but it was the way, I guess, the way he said it and the way he said it in that moment, it just stood with me. And I hope that all of our principals feel that, uh, with the, you know, along with a few of our elected officials over here tonight, that there are 17 people who, if my phone rings like, I need to answer it, I need to make sure that they have what they need. Um, because they are the portal to the school communities that I ultimately represent and that I, you know, because there's sort of a reverse deference, um, phenomenon in public education that the higher up you are sort of in the chain of command, the further you are away from the actual work and the kids that we're here to serve. And they the closer you are to the kids, the more deference I think we need to have. Um, but along that chain, it's the principles that sort of determine whether or not anything's going to actually be operationalized and happen. And I think having that awareness and that as, as, as Prince William said that day, having that access, I think is critical.

01:18:50,167 S6:

This next question comes from a parent, caregiver and educator. How will you strengthen the role of classroom educators in making decisions that impact our students learning experiences? For example, how will you make sure that educator input is reflected in decisions about schedules, family partnership models, and evaluations?

01:19:10,868 S7:

Well, I think the first thing is just making sure it's actually incorporated into the decisions. I don't know that there's a I don't know that I have a hugely complicated answer to that. I think that, um, as I just said, I think that the I think understanding that in a district or a school district that the deference has to flow toward, um, the closer you out of the kids, the greater expertise you have and the closer we need to listen to what you're saying. And so I think that that mindset, I think is really important in terms of structurally, how do we make sure that that happens in a systemic way? Um, I believe very strongly in teacher leadership, and I think it's something that, um, I don't know that I find it to be as fully ingrained in our organizational culture as I think it could be. Um, in part because the way we are currently organized as a school system is that in a lot of ways, we are, we are, we are many, many small teams. And I think the because we are an organization composed largely of a multitude of small teams, we are not always able to scale up to the degree that we could and empower educators in a way that we could. Um, not so much that we then just sort of do whatever they say as much as it is by empowering them and scaling up the teams of teachers that work together, I think it's more likely that the educators are able to gain a broader perspective on the organizational implications to the. To the decisions that we

have to make. Um, and I think that that's sort of of a I mean, it might sound a little abstract, but I think that ultimately, if we are, if we're organized in a way that is more conducive to, um, sound teacher leadership, I have a lot of trust and faith in the professionalism of our educators, that we're going to be able to position educators to have a greater decision making capacity. Um, but right now, I don't know that I don't know that it's something that we have fully prioritized. And I think to some degree, I think that I think that in itself has an impact on morale and culture, um, in ways that I think we should we should be in conversation about.

01:21:14,467 S6:

Our next question is a combined question for multiple different questions from parents and caregivers and staff.

01:21:20,567 S3:

Okay.

01:21:21,467 S6:

What do you see as opportunities that would help build an effective world language program and student language proficiency here in CPS? And how would you go about making it happen.

01:21:33,400 S7:

Well, I think that we should not lose sight of the the ways and the places that we do that very that we do that particularly well. Um, and I think that one of the things that I, um, I guess I think I offer as a, as a candidate, as a professional, is that, um, there are some things that Cambridge does exceptionally well that I don't know, that we always internally realize how well we do it, or how fortunate we are to be positioned the way that we are. Our language immersion programs. Um, easily would be the envy of any, any district, frankly. I mean, we have very, very strong programs. I think the question is, how do we make sure that one, um, these are not sort of specialty programs that only a small constituency of students have the opportunity to benefit from. And I think that goes in part to making sure that we are organized in a way that, um, expands our capacity for students and families who want to participate in those programs that have the chance to do that. I don't think that's a pipe dream to say that for families for whom a world language program is a priority, um, that in a district that's resourced the way that we are and have it has some of the assets that we do. Um, I think it's it's a it's a doable project to say that those that there should be greater capacity and there should be greater access to those programs. Um, beyond that, what I would say is, I think we have to think creatively about what does it look like to have programs like that in, uh, in other school communities, potentially. But I would and I don't have a strong position, frankly, one way or another as to whether or not that is, you know, something that definitively we must do. But what I would say is that our decision making process should have a couple of key components. One, it should be inclusive because it's a decision that's going to affect the full community. And so the full community, um, should be informed and should be engaged on an issue like that. And second, we should take into account not just the benefits or the implications for an individual school community or an individual program, or a group of students that are going to participate in a program. We should take into account what is the ripple effect across the organization, which I think is true for a lot of

questions that maybe not specific to world language, but a lot of these sort of content programming programmatic questions. I think it's really important that we not look at those decisions in a silo, but instead look at it holistically as to what are the implications and the sort of consequences for the organization as a whole. Because if we don't, we know the inequities that will incur. We know that if we do not take into account the entirety of the of the outcomes, then we can pursue certain goals in ways that are most vulnerable. Student populations are going to suffer from the most. And I think that is, I could cite to a few different examples as to how I think that's happened historically, but I won't right now because I'm keeping an eye on the time.

01:24:34,667 S2:

Our next question is a combined question from multiple parent and caregivers. In your experience, how have you been able to change budgets to reflect your values and what metrics have you used, or would you use to evaluate the effectiveness of budget exponentials and programs?

01:24:52,367 S7:

Sure. I mean, I will say that I think the you've said my how have I changed budgets to reflect my values? And I would say the first, um, sort of, um, thought I have is that I think one of the biggest mistakes that superintendents make is thinking that when they arrive in a community, they are supposed to show up with a suitcase with all of their previous priorities, values and things that they would like to impose upon a community. Pop the suitcase open and then everybody's going to get on board. I don't think that's the role of the superintendent. I think the superintendent has to have priorities, and I think the superintendent has to have values. And I think the superintendent has to be positioned to help facilitate and lead a conversation. But if you're leading a conversation that is not consistent with the the priorities and the values of the community that you're serving, uh, in my experience, it's going to be a very short superintendency, and I think it probably should be. So what I would say is that the budget process and I think, you know, in terms of just specific experiences, I would point to the budget process that, um, I was given the opportunity to, to lead along with our CFO, Miss Washington, this past year, where, um, we we did take the opportunity to, to listen to what our educators, what our caregivers, what our central office staff, um, obviously, what our school committee, what they were saying they felt like needed to be incorporated in. And the participants of that, I think I think and I'm saying I think because they did would say two things. They would say They I think they genuinely felt as though we listened, and that we did incorporate some of those priorities into the decision making. And they would also say that they didn't get everything they wanted. And I think I take a certain degree of pride in both of those things, because I don't think that part of the process of building a budget that reflects your strategic priorities and your values as a community is just essentially, you know, putting out a blank slate of paper and hoping that you have enough money to get everybody's wish list included. Because I think when you do that, what you have is essentially an incoherent budget that is not necessarily being driven by specific goals and priorities that you're trying to leverage in order to improve the experience for students. So maintaining that focus, I think, while also having, um, a process that contemplates the need for people's input, which, you know, it should be essentially a basic expectation since this is members of the community. This is your money that we are spending. Um, to quite a

order of magnitude. Um. And we should, um. You know, I think that the process is important, but being anchored in specific goals and priorities. And again, for us this year, it's it's educator effectiveness and partnerships with families. I think that has to be sort of the driving force. Otherwise, I think you have a budget that is rich in resources and short on values.

01:27:49,267 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

So we have we have about five minutes remaining. And so I'm going to ask you if you would ask the the next question and then allow a little grace with the the sharing debacle there so that you have an opportunity to make a closing statement if you so desire. So one more question, one more question and a closing question and closing statement.

01:28:08,567 S6:

What is your experience with curriculum and instruction? I come from an educator.

01:28:14,601 S3:

By the way.

01:28:14,901 S7:

I came from I, I think it's a I think it's a really good question, and I think I'm just going to use it as an opportunity to, I think, address what may be a question that a lot of members of the community have about my own experience. Um, I was not a career educator, and at least in the traditional sense, and I think to some degree I have a I'm an unconventional, um, candidate, an unconventional superintendent, I hope to a degree. Um, but my experience is in working in public education, and I have spent the better part of the last 15 years in one role or another, um, doing work that is grounded in the belief that I shared earlier, which is that I think we should build our communities around our public school system. Um, I have a long explanation as to why I think that, and I think there's a lot of data to support it, and I'm happy to share that at some other time. Um, but my experience and I again, I'm not going to count my experience as a substitute teacher because it didn't go well. But my experience is in empowering educators to make decisions that they are best positioned to make. And I think that the role of the superintendent is to do that. I don't think the role of the superintendent is to say, well, because I was a teacher 20 years ago in a, you know, maybe in, you know, in a in a different setting. I don't think the role is to dictate to teachers exactly what is the best way to reach students. And even that's true, I think whether you're a lawyer or an educator or, you know, you came from the nonprofit world or whatever you've been doing before you come to this role. Um, the reality is that once you're superintendent, you're not a teacher. And, you know, an example that a colleague shared with me that I think sort of resonates with me. Um, had I instead of, you know, been a if I had been a different career path and I had been a high school social studies teacher in a problem came to my desk that involved early childhood. Um, I would be surprised that the early childhood educators and the professionals who have devoted their life to to contributing to the development of children at that particular stage in the developmental cycle, would want a high school social studies teacher telling them, you know, what they really need to know, and that in that situation, I don't think that's that's the job of the superintendent. I think the job of the superintendent is to build systems and to build a culture in which those who are the experts in

how to connect with students at this, this day and age, in this community, in that school, at that grade level and that content area or that program, that their expertise is respected and that the systems that we build are conducive to them making the best decisions for individual students. And so my short answer to you is my, my, um, experience is in supporting the people who do that work and who do it well.

01:31:08,467 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

Thank you. And would you like to make a closing statement?

01:31:12,167 S7:

Um, I think I would just close by again, reiterating what I said at the start that, um, you know, the decision as to who will serve as the superintendent of the school system, um, is, uh, and I, you know, not my own personal stake in this aside. It's an extremely important decision. Um, this is a role that has the potential to have an impact, um, not just on our students and on the school system, but on the future of this community. And I appreciate and respect very much the significance of that decision. The decision that's before the school committee. And I'm grateful to those people in the community who have taken the time to show interest in this and have expressed interest. Whatever that, whatever the views or opinions might be. Um, I recognize that the, the, the seriousness with which this community, um, takes this process and takes this institution, that it's been my honor to lead over the course of the last year, plus. Um, and I would just say that, um, I think I'm going to have an opportunity to speak again on this subject next week. And, you know, I'll reiterate that then, but I mean it sincerely that serving in this role is the great honor of my professional life, and I will continue to do it to the best of my ability.

01:32:30,567 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

Well, it has been a pleasure spending time with you this evening, and thank you from the team here on the stage and from the Cambridge community, and we wish you a safe travel home.

01:32:42,667 S7:

Thank you very much. Thank you everyone.

01:32:52,000 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

So I want to thank everyone who sort of hung in there with us this evening in person. Uh, again, this you will be able to view the full evening as it is posted on the web. As was just mentioned, there will be another opportunity to hear from candidates. Tuesday the 30th, you should check the school department website for the specific times and who is in which which time slot. The last thing I would want to say before we close out there were there's a tremendous list of people, a very long list of people who have helped make the especially the the last 12 to 18 hours, um, work and work well and be effective and impactful. Uh, there have been a range of activities and so on behalf of the school committee, I would really like to make sure that I give special shout outs to folks such as Kate and Anjali, who are part of the school committee office. Our schools today that that hosted school tours. We had elementary schools and upper schools, as well as here at the high school. The Khalil's admin team and our Teachers were amazing today in helping to support some student forums that happened with the candidates as well. Security

staff. Custodial staff. Tech staff, the VPA department, Mr. Arista students actually provided boxed lunches for our candidates and some of our school committee members as well. The library in this building is where our set came from. They were very helpful. And last but not least, not just during the day, but also this evening our students. So thank you to everyone.

01:34:47,968 Dr. Carolyn Turk:

So as we said to the candidates as well, thank you. It was a pleasure being here this evening. I think I can say that for the team and we wish you all safe travel home this evening.