

Documents referred to within the interview include:

- [Building Equity Bridges](#)
- Concerned Black Staff Report of 1986-87

<u>David Murphy</u>		
Section	TC	Question Text
	02:08:04.210	<p>Simmons: The time of our recess having expired, we will call this process – the superintendent searched public interviews with the finalists – back to order. Good evening.</p> <p>As you know, we've had a rigorous, engaging process, and I want to welcome you to the finalist round. I'm just going to go over some of the ground rules, if you will. Thank you.</p> <p>So...you've had a very brief opening from me on behalf of the school committee, and I'd like to just inform you the process is going to be a 90-minute process. You will have an opportunity to make an opening statement.</p> <p>There'll be 20 questions, and then you can make a closing statement. So the beginning and the end is entirely up to you. You should pace yourself, and aim for a maximum of 3 minutes per response. So, there'll be a 3-minute opening statement. Again, that's...optional. There'll be a 65-minute round robin of assigned questions from school committee members. Finalists should aim for a maximum of 3 minutes per response in order to have time to get through all the 20 questions. We have put into this process 10 minutes, just in case... an additional 10 minutes, just in case there's a follow-up question, which should be asked after the initial question that they've asked, and so can I ask a follow-up? And then there'll be a 3-minute closing for the finals, and again, that is optional. So with that... Yeah, I did say that. Okay.</p> <p>So, with that, I'd like to give the floor over to you if you'd like to make an opening statement.</p>

<p><i>Opening Statement</i></p>	<p>02:09:46.900</p>	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Mayor, and good evening to you and to members of the school committee, as well as members of the community who are watching this evening.</p> <p>My name is David Murphy, I'm currently the interim superintendent of schools at the Cambridge Public Schools, and I am deeply grateful and honored to be here with you this evening to discuss my candidacy for what is referred to as the permanent superintendency, and to discuss with you the priorities, values, and vision that I would hope to bring to that role.</p> <p>I think I would be remiss to not start by saying that I have sought this position on the basis of the work that I've done here in Cambridge since coming to here in January of 2023 as Chief Operating Officer, and having served as the interim superintendent over the course of the past 15 months.</p> <p>I would... I don't know what my answer would have been had I been asked at the time, when I was first asked to serve as superintendent, whether or not this is something that I would pursue.</p> <p>But I do think over the course of the last 15 months, I have developed my own answer as to why I'm seeking this position and why I believe that I have the potential to serve the Cambridge Public Schools in this capacity, and to do so effectively. So, I'm looking forward this evening to answering your questions as best as I can, and to expand upon, what I hope has been a consistent, set of views and priorities that I've articulated in this room and, throughout this community over the course of the past, however long. While I have not, I've prided myself, frankly, on serving in this role. And not doing so in some type of campaigning capacity, because frankly, I think the work is too important, for interests to be mixed or conflicted in that way.</p> <p>I would say, and I expect I'll have the opportunity to say later tonight, that the work I've done for you and the type of leadership that I've tried to provide to this organization, is consistent with the work I hope to continue to do for you, and the leadership that I hope to provide to this</p>
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		<p>organization. I don't think there are different versions of me, or different versions of my leadership, for better or worse. I try to lead and, frankly, live in as authentic a manner as possible. And it's... it is on the basis of the love that I've developed for this community and for this organization, that I've submitted my name before you as a candidate. So, again, I thank you for the opportunity to answer your questions, and I look forward to doing my best to answer them in 3 minutes or less, starting now.</p>
Q1	02:12:23.430	<p>Simmons: Very good. The first question is going to be offered by Member Weinstein. Weinstein, the floor is yours.</p> <p>David Weinstein: Thank you, Mayor Simmons. Thank you for being here, Mr. Murphy. Cambridge likes to think of itself as on the cutting edge, but even here, it could be said that the model of public education is outdated in the 21st century. What is your vision for public education in Cambridge? What roles do you see for staff, students, and families in making change?</p>
	02:12:47.950	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Weinstein, and what I would say... I would say I really appreciate how those... the two parts of that question are molded together because, while I think I have a responsibility as the interim superintendent, as a candidate for superintendent, to articulate my vision and my priorities, and I said something to this effect the other night at the forum, I think that one of the biggest mistakes that superintendents make is thinking that they have a monopoly on the responsibility to provide a vision for the organization. That might be true in different fields and different leadership roles, but I think it is particularly true in a public school system because of those constituencies that you've articulated in this question of our educators and staff, our students, and our families. We are, as a school system, an educational community, and I think the superintendent's role is essentially as the chief facilitator of a conversation about what it is that this community wants from its school system, and what is it that our students need from this school system. And so, while I have certain priorities and certain values that, in this forum, I'm happy to articulate, and again, I think they'll be consistent with things that you've heard me say before, which is that I think we have to put a high premium on the</p>

		<p>relevance of the instruction that we are providing to students, because, one, it's... we have to make sure that we are preparing them for success and fulfilling and happy lives, but also because, if we don't, they will eventually see through it, and they will not have the level of engagement that they need to in order to be successful, in order to build those capacities that they will need, later in their life.</p> <p>And so...I believe that experiential learning and taking students out of the classroom and making sure that they have the opportunity to make the types of social connections with each other, and connections between the work that we're putting in front of them and in the world that they will be applying that, I think that's really important, and that is a value and a priority that I would bring to that conversation.</p> <p>But... and there are others as well. I think that, we have to have a...we have to value and prioritize accountability for ourselves as professionals, and I believe that the foundation of what it is that we're trying to do, is that... is that we have to value and lift up equity in a way that is not going to be consistent with what's happening in the outside world. The reason that we talk about equity as frequently as we do in public education is because we are preparing children for a world that is, fundamentally inequitable. And so, public education, from my perspective, is our effort as a society to confront and combat those inequities, and I think that that has to be operationalized within a school system. But to do that, it has to be the values, and it has to be based on the consensus of the community that we are serving.</p>
Q2	02:15:42.060	<p>Simmons: Thank you. Our next question is going to be offered by Vice Chair Hunter. Vice Chair Hunter, the floor is yours.</p> <p>Hunter: Good evening, Mr. Murphy. 22% of Cambridge students are on individual education plans, and our climate surveys show that parents do not feel they are adequately informed and involved in the IEP process. In addition, we have a significant number of out-of-district placements. What strategies would you employ to include parents and</p>

		<p>counter their feelings of exclusion in their child's educational program? In addition, how would you systematize the review of out-of-district placements and facilitate the return of students to district classrooms?</p>
	02:16:26.420	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Ms. Hunter. And I'll start by, just addressing the disconnect that is felt between some of our families, and I know that you cited to the culture survey here, but, frankly, we have a lot of evidence and a lot of different sources to indicate that the families of our students who have certain high-need profiles are disproportionately feeling disconnected from our organization and from their school community.</p> <p>And I think the... there's just a, you know, I'll flag this early, that there's a consistency between what I think is important and what has to happen at the school level. So I'll speak about it in this context of our families of students with disabilities. But I, again, I think it's going to apply through... in various other dimensions of this conversation. School communities. First of all, families and students and staff, frankly, see themselves much more so as part of their school community than they do part of a school district community. And so part of the reason that I think we have a responsibility in the central office leadership roles to prioritize and owe a certain level of deference to what's happening at the building level. It's because the people that we are serving are much more embedded within those communities than they are those sort of behemoth of the Cambridge Public Schools.</p> <p>And so, recognizing that fact, and recognizing that our responsibility at the school committee level, at the superintendent level, is about empowering school communities and setting expectations for them so that they are enjoying the type of relationships that need to exist between families and between them and families and between them and staff. I believe that that is, sort of... is the foundation of how we start to chip away at the problem that you are identifying there. School systems, more so than other organizations, are completely dependent upon the way in which relationships are valued. That's true for relationships between adults and children, that's true for</p>

		<p>relationships between adults and adults in a professional capacity, and it's true with the relationships that we have with families. The through line between all of our families who feel disenfranchised or are disaffected by the relationship with this organization is a lack of trust. And we will build more trust with families by having greater follow-through, and improved communication, and perhaps more than anything else, listening to what they are asking for. And I think when you ask this question in the context of the IEP process, and I think there's a lot of nuance and complexity that in a non-3 minute window, I will be... I would be happy to expand upon.</p> <p>But I think the expectation has to be, in our... in the formalized communications and vehicles that we have to connect with families about this, we have to adopt more of a listening posture so that we are hearing directly from families about what they expect from us, and most importantly, what they believe their students need. And I think in doing so, we will have better relationships, better engagement, and ultimately better trust.</p>
Q3	02:19:24.910	<p>Simmons: Thank you, Vice Chair. Our next questioner will be Member Rojas. Member Rojas, the floor is yours.</p> <p>Rojas: Thank you, Madam Mayor, and good afternoon, Mr. Murphy. Many CPSD constituencies have called for better communication from CPSD at every level and for greater transparency from central administration in particular. So, how would you assess the needs, the needs for greater communication and transparency at CPSD, and how would you address those needs? And secondly, what role would communication and transparency play in your work as superintendent?</p>
	02:20:00.650	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Rojas. So, I would... I would go back to what I said a moment ago to Vice Chair Hunter, which is that I do think that while I know there are families that have very strong feelings, very strong opinions, and have at times been rightfully disappointed with how we as a central office have operated.</p> <p>I do think that part of the challenge is sometimes... I think sometimes a central office tries to occupy more space than</p>

		<p>we should. I don't think the superintendent – while I might have the most responsibility, and that I am ultimately accountable for whatever happens in any school, and I will never shy away from that, I embrace that. I think that's necessary in a leadership role. I think it's really important that the superintendent not see himself or herself as the star of the show.</p> <p>Because I'm not. And... For families and for students who – who want, what at some level is, is, something that is much – very profound and life-altering, which is a strong education. They also just want something that is pretty fundamental and simple, which is that they want to be informed about what's happening in their children's school. And that doesn't just mean what time the bake sale is, or what time the events are taking place. They want to understand what it is that we are teaching, and why is it that we are teaching it to them. What skills is it going to unlock? What opportunities is it going to create? And so, I think that from the central office perspective.</p> <p>We have a responsibility to be setting those expectations for our school communities, that they understand the responsibility they have to make sure that we are, continuously improving in the area of communication. And I say, continuously improving, because I think, I think it would be imprudent or unwise for any leader in any organization to declare perfection in the context of communication.</p> <p>I have never claimed to be a perfect communicator, and I'm grateful that I've never had the opportunity to work for one, because I think communication is something that... it has to be dynamic, and I think that goes back to what I said a moment ago to Ms. Hunter, which is that if we are not listening first, then it doesn't really matter what it is that we are sharing or what we are saying, because there's going to be a large constituency from that school community that we've already lost, and they're not there to hear us – to hear what it is that we are saying. So I think that, I don't know that we're ever going to get to a point where, you know... and it's okay if we don't. I don't think... I hope people say on our surveys that we're steadily</p>
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		<p>improving in the area of communication. But...the moment we say that we've reached the mountaintop with regard to communication, I think is the moment we start lowering our standards. And what I would say to a school leader who says, I think I've... I think we've mastered communication in my building, I would say then, you've got to go back to the drawing board and master the art of conversation, because that's really what we should be having with our families, is a dialogue, a reciprocal dialogue that is continuously building stronger trust.</p>
Q4	02:22:55.330	<p>Simmons: Thank you, Member Rojas.</p> <p>Rojas: Thank you.</p> <p>Simmons: Our next person to ask questions is Member Rachel. Member Rachel? The floor is yours.</p> <p>Rachel Weinstein: Evening.</p> <p>Murphy: Hi, Member Rachel.</p> <p>Rachel Weinstein: So you're familiar with the collective movement that was the Building Equity Bridges that came out of this Cambridge Education Association, the administration, students, families, and the community, and the 2010s, looking at the barriers that you have in front of you there, the barriers to racial equity that Building Equity Bridges identified. Please pick one that resonates with you today, just...I know other days might be other ones, but today, and share with us, the reasons you picked it.</p>
	02:23:32.180	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Rachel. I am familiar with the building equity bridges that preceded my time in Cambridge, but I've had the opportunity to review its findings, and I've had the opportunity to have a good amount of dialogue with some of the individuals in the community who were engaged in that process.</p> <p>As you said, I don't know that there's a single bullet point that I would, you know, say, day in and day out, this is the bullet point from the report. I think part of the value of that report was the comprehensive nature in which it assessed and analyzed, to a degree, some of the systemic and</p>

		<p>structural barriers that exist within the Cambridge Public Schools community.</p> <p>I will say, for purposes of this conversation, and to never be held to this with regard to always saying this is the one that stands out among, you know, first among equals, is that the third bullet here about youth are not centered.</p> <p>I've been as forthcoming as I know how to be that I think one of the challenges that we have within the Cambridge Public Schools is that, too often we have an adult-oriented culture. And...that's not a good thing for a public school system.</p> <p>We are here for one purpose, and one purpose only, and that it is to improve experiences for students so that they can lead better lives. And...the nature of a public school system, any public school system at any time, is that we are susceptible to distractions.</p> <p>And so, what I try to impart to our administrators and our leaders on a regular basis, and to the community at large when appropriate, is that in understanding that a public school system must have a mindset of a singular mission.</p> <p>And while there are other causes, and there are other things that most of us believe in that are attracted to this work, there are values that we have to bring to the work, and, you know, there are pieces here with respect to making sure that we are treating our colleagues with the dignity and respect that they deserve. Those all have to be there.</p> <p>But I do believe, and I think, I think it is necessary to understand that at the end of the day, if we don't...recognize the need to have a singular focus on improving the experiences for students, those distractions that we are very susceptible to are going to pull us in directions that are going to make it less... much less likely that we advance that mission.</p> <p>And I think that, you know, we are in a time of...A moment in our history in which distractions are occurring in</p>
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		<p>abundance. And while we have to be responsive and reflective to those... reflective about and responsive to those challenges. At the end of the day, I think it is critical that we stay anchored in our commitment to the well-being of students and to the improvement of their educational experiences.</p>
Q5	02:26:26.540	<p>Simmons: Thank you. The next question is going to be offered by Member Harding.</p> <p>Harding: Good evening, Superintendent Murphy. What examples would you offer for effective evaluation processes for teachers and administrators that actually work to improve performance and motivate teachers and administrators? How would you...how would a process like this be consistent with the current requirements of professional standards, curriculum frameworks, and proper roles and responsibilities? In particular, describe a process that would work best, in your opinion, over a reasonable period of time.</p>
	02:27:01.360	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Harding. This is a topic that, as you know, we've discussed on several occasions in this room, and it's connected to a point that I think I'd like to make very briefly about what I think is important within the superintendency. I think it's the superintendent's responsibility to understand what are the needs of that school district at that particular time.</p> <p>Again, I mentioned this the other night, but I don't think superintendents can just come to a district and say, I believe in this, this is really important, or I am really good at this, and say to the school district, this is what you are now going to do. The reason we have talked about educator evaluation as frequently as we have in the last year is not because I have a personal penchant for educator evaluation. I think it's a really important instrument, I think it's a really important lever, I think it's something that every school district should do, not just because we are legally required to, but because I think it can be a lever of change. The reason we've talked about it in this room is because it is not something that we have been doing as well as we need to do. It's not something that we as an organization have prioritized, that has been</p>

		<p>unfair to our educators, but more importantly, frankly, it has been unfair to our students.</p> <p>I have... you've heard me say on many occasions that when I say that our top priority is educator effectiveness, I am not speaking only about educator evaluation. And to go to your question, Member Harding, part of the reason that I have to continue to say that, and I will continue to say that, is because if...all we think about is the evaluation instrument. If all we think about is the technocratic process of making sure that we observe educators on a contractually, you know, mandated frequency, and that we apply with all the deadlines, and we have a sort of technically sound evaluation system.</p> <p>We will potentially be able to submit ourselves for an award around compliance, but we're not going to move the needle for any students. I don't think that's what the evaluation instrument is designed for. The evaluation instrument has to be paired with the type of professional learning that is going to deepen and improve our... the capacity of our educators to serve students. And so the reason that I think... well, I am proud of the significant increase in the percentages of our educators who have been evaluated, in our steady progress toward, adhering to all contractually mandated timelines, what I am both... more proud of, at least with respect to the incremental progress that we've made, and what I am more hopeful about, is the way in which we are taking – we are improving our professional learning systems to...to increase the connection and the connectivity between what we do in our professional learning and the programming and the curriculum that our educators are using to serve students.</p> <p>We're not just trying to go out and improve pedagogy for the sake of improving it. We are trying to improve our educators' capacity with the programming that we have them immersed in, and ultimately, I think that's going to lead them to be more sufficiently empowered to serve students.</p>
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	02:29:59.700	<p>Harding: Madam Mayor, just one quick follow-up. Through you, Madam Mayor, so how do you...understanding the removal of the MCAS broadly, so just not talking about one instrument, but how do you... how would you measure student achieve...excellent instruction, excuse me.</p>
	02:30:11.800	<p>Murphy: Well, thank you, thank you, Member Harding. I would hasten to add that the MCAS is still there. The graduation requirement is removed, but our... all our students, the same students who took the MCAS prior to the ballot initiatives are still taking it. And while that is a data point, it is only a data point. And I think that that particular instrument, I don't think it is a particularly effective tool for evaluating individual educators, but I think it is a critically necessary tool to evaluating our school system and individual school communities. With respect to the data points that I want to be looking at, I think that, I think diversity of data points with regard to an educator's evaluation is much more important than any one single data point. And I think that, you know, those data points consist of the observations that our administrators make, they consist of the professional relationships that the educators are able to build with one another, and they consist, ultimately, I believe they need to consist, ultimately, of student outcomes as measured by a diverse methodology of assessing student outcomes.</p> <p>And I will just... last thing, if I could, Member Harding, there is a misnomer, and there's a myth, frankly, that those who believe the MCAS system is important, are somehow using it to assess individual educators. And I say this as someone who has dealt with the evaluation system and arbitrations connected to the evaluation system for an extended period of time.</p> <p>If there is a... if there is a case of an educator being held ultimately accountable for an MCAS score, I am not familiar with it, and I would challenge anyone to sort of, you know, show us that time that it happened. But to neglect it, and to ignore it, is to take a significant pool of data and to be dismissive in a way that risks lowering standards.</p>

		<p>And when we lower standards, it is the same students who suffer the most from it every single time. And I think that... I think that this... I understand this is not necessarily a politically... I didn't...it only took me four questions to get into my most politically unpopular answer, I guess, but, you know, I get why this is a challenge from a political perspective across our Commonwealth.</p> <p>But I am of the belief that we have to start having a more serious conversation about the standards that we are applying, and the progress that was made between the Education Reform Act and more recent times. And I think that's a conversation we have to have here in Cambridge, and I think it's a conversation we have to have in Massachusetts.</p>
Q6	02:32:40.840	<p>Harding: Thank you.</p> <p>Simmons: Thank you. The next question is going to be offered by Member Hudson. Member Hudson, the floor is yours.</p> <p>Hudson: Thank you, Madam Mayor. It is common for CPS classrooms to include children whose preparedness for the material at that grade level differs wildly, with some far behind and some far be – some far ahead, the district explicitly moved away from tracking or grouping students by ability and placing them in different classrooms years ago, based on the understanding that we could effectively differentiate instruction within a classroom. But many charge that this differentiation doesn't happen, or doesn't happen effectively in practice, leaving many students without instruction that appropriately challenges them. What do you do in this scenario?</p>
	02:33:18.850	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Hudson. So, I do... I would say that I think this is... this is a challenge in the Cambridge Public Schools, and I think it's a challenge that, there's a lot of discussion about, and rightfully so, because it is a cha... it is... when we fail at this at a systems level, it is a challenge that families and educators, and I think, you know, tragically, students, observe in real time.</p>

		<p>And at the same time, what I would say is that this is a challenge that every public school system in the country deals with, because the nature of public schools, and what it should be, is that everyone gets to come here. And we have different skill levels, and we have different learning needs, and we've got different language levels of language capacity.</p> <p>And for most of us who are drawn to this work, it's what we like about public schools. It fits with our vision of a thriving and flourishing community. And so, I don't...at some level, my answer to, like, well, how do we do this better, is that, well, this is...this is, as we... as you've heard me say many times, and I've heard you say it, this is about the actual execution of the work.</p> <p>And...I think... I bring up the point that every school district sees... has this challenge day in and day out, every class that convenes. You know, there's, at some level, some degree of variability, and there's an educator who was up the night before, probably really late, getting ready for that lesson, and they may be particularly adept at a particular way, you know, some students, they may just be a little better, you know, suited to serve, and yet they have a responsibility to serve all.</p> <p>And the difference between us and all these other school systems that are struggling with this is we're funded to do it. And that means that our expectations have to be higher. And what I do not mean, just to be clear, is we should just throw more people in the classroom and then break up the classroom, because that's not public education. But what it does mean is that we have the human capital, we have the expertise, we have the skills, and we have the talent amongst our educators to be able to do this well.</p> <p>It gets to, you know, why would someone want to be superintendent in Cambridge but nowhere else? Because I think there's a strong argument elsewhere that school districts are set up to fail, because they're not properly funded. And, you know, executing perfectly is not necessarily going to make a difference.</p>
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Q7	02:36:45.730	<p>Simmons: Thank you for that answer. Can you describe your knowledge and experience of school finance? Describe a budget planning process you've used, and what has been your experience with budget management, budget controls, and budget reductions.</p>
	02:37:01.940	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Mayor Simmons. So I've had the perspective, or the experience of, planning a public school budget, as a school committee chair, as a district chief financial officer when I was the assistant superintendent for finance and operations in the Medford Public Schools, and then most recently, as the interim superintendent in Cambridge. And I think the through line in those experiences is that the budget must reflect the values of the community that is funding it, and that, ultimately, that it will serve. And it's also true that the budget for a public school system is...like everything else in the organization, it is a cruise liner, as opposed to a speedboat. And I think that, you know, one of the biggest misconceptions that, you've heard myself and Ms. Washington speak about in this room is the idea that in any given moment, you know, through our budget process, we can abruptly change the direction of a particular program or a component of the organization, because the reality is that our, our fixed costs</p>

		<p>every year are going to occupy the vast majority of the budget. And I don't think the budget development process should just be about listening to small constituencies and making sure the small constituencies have a few things in the budget. I think it is more about understanding that over the long term, the trajectory of a school system,</p> <p>What we are funding is consistent with both our values and priorities as a community and as an organization, but are also specifically supporting the goals and the objectives that we've set as a school system. a budget that does not articulate in a clear and compelling fashion what it is that we are trying to achieve in the long term. I think is a budget that's ultimately not going to serve the interests of students as well as it needs to. And that can be frustrating, I think, for people. I think that, especially in a district like ours that is so well-resourced, it's understandable and it's reasonable. For staff or families to say that with the funding at our disposal, how is it that there's any problem that we cannot address in the immediacy? And the answer sometimes, unfortunately, is history.</p> <p>Because the institution has built up inertia around some of the challenges that we have to acknowledge are going to be multi-year challenges that need to be addressed, and that can be difficult in a context where the budget is happening on... you know, a fiscal year is 365 days, and it always... except for a leap here, I guess, but, like, you know, it's always going to be, and I think that understanding that long-term vision and what it is that we're trying to achieve, not just July 1st to June 30th, but what are we trying to achieve long-term, and staying in conversation with the community, to me, I think, is the most sound way of making sure that you have a budget that is, in fact, tied to that singular mission.</p>
Q8	02:40:12.980	<p>Simmons: Next question is being offered by Member Weinstein. Member Weinstein? The floor is yours.</p> <p>David Weinstein: Thank you, Mayor. How should CPSD balance or consider or prioritize our children's academic achievement, social, emotional, and cognitive development, and pursuit of non-academic interests and</p>

		skills, college and career readiness, and development of life skills? In other words, what role does whole child support play in our work as a school district?
	02:40:38.900	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Weinstein. I think the first thing I would say is that I do believe that the social and emotional learning aspect that you've referenced in your question, that must be the sturdy foundation on which everything else that we build stands. If our students do not feel a level of psychological safety, they are not going to be well-positioned to learn. It's true for our professionals, too, incidentally, but for our students in particular, and I think the more vulnerable the student, the more important that is. And so, I do think that everything has to start with our social and emotional learning, and I think, one of the things I was heartened by, and very clear, this was not a directive from me, but it was certainly something that made me feel as though this is an organization that I wanted to be a part of.</p> <p>When we initiated the redesign efforts at the Fletcher Maynard Academy in the course of the last year, because we were looking at outcomes that leave the school as an outlier as compared to the rest of our schools, and understanding that there are needs reflected in that building that are not necessarily consistent with all of our other school communities, what the team came back and said, they came back and said many things.</p> <p>One of the things they came back and said was that they wanted an emphasis to be on the social-emotional learning, and so we were piloting the Wayfinder program in other schools, and sort of an easy transition to extend that there. I was incredibly inspired by the educators who reported to work early this year to go through the professional development and the training that was part of that program led by Ms. Huffer. And...I think that, what it speaks to is that there are districts where you have schools that have achievement data discrepancies, and there are strategies that superintendents can employ, and that school districts employ, that can boost those scores rapidly.</p>

		<p>There's a formula to it. It is how, you know, it is frankly how... it's something that leaders do, and it's something that I've... I've been a part of it in other context. And...what I've found, and what I think what anyone who's looked at the data has found, is that those types of strategies do not... are not necessarily sustainable. And a leader moves on, and... or, you know, a couple of individual positions within the org structure of the school changes, and all of a sudden, the gains quickly evaporate.</p> <p>And what I am grateful for to the team at the FMA, and the people that... our staff who have been prioritizing that work, is that they are building a system there that I think, ultimately, we are going to be able to build on, and we're going to be able to capitalize on the sound and high-quality, high-caliber teaching that we know is happening, and we can look at the data, we can see that that's happening in that school, but it's not going to happen if we do not improve our practices around SEL, as a foundation, and I think... I cite the FMA as an example, because I think that's where we've made strides in the last year, but I think it's the type of practice that we have to systematize across the district and do better at each of our school communities.</p> <p>David Weinstein: Thank you.</p>
Q9	02:43:53.560	<p>Simmons: The next question is being offered by Vice Chair Hunter. Vice Chair Hunter, the floor is yours.</p> <p>Hunter: Thank you, Madam Mayor. The Concerned Black Staff Report of 1986-87 reported a tale of two cities, where Black and Brown students are not getting the same education as their white peers. Unfortunately, while CPS has made some progress, we see significant academic gaps and behavioral problems with our Black and Brown students, especially boys. How do you propose to address this issue?</p>
	02:44:18.630	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Vice Chair Hunter. One of the things that has resonated or affected me the most in the conversations that we've had here in this, in this conference room is how, several of you who have been in Cambridge much, much longer than me and been working</p>

		<p>and doing this work and immersed in this commitment longer than I have, is when you've asked the questions about what is going to be different, why... I know that I'm not the first superintendent to come in and talk about data, and I know I'm not the first superintendent to come in and talk about the importance of closing gaps. And I welcome and I respect the skepticism that is voiced at times about what it is that we can do differently to make sure that all of our students are receiving the same quality and caliber of an experience.</p> <p>And I... I don't want to pretend that I have some type of magic formula that I've been keeping from you all that I plan to unfurl, after being appointed, and say, well, this is actually how we're going to close all these gaps. I don't... I don't think... I don't think this work lends itself to that type of strategy or that type of approach. I think the way you close gaps is by being relentless in being insistent that there are high standards across the board for all students, and that educators are supported in their development as educators. And then they are respected as professionals, and then, they are empowered as professionals, to make sure that they are able to afford, afford students whatever it is that they need, wherever they happen to be, so that we can follow the mantra of meeting students where they are. I think that, as superintendent, the thing that I can do most to help that is to prioritize the cultivation of systems that insist on that level of standards and insist on that level of accountability.</p> <p>And to make sure that we are fostering a culture in which the best educators want to be here more than they want to be anywhere else, and that they are continued to inspire to do the work that they are capable of doing. I think that that type of execution needs to be coupled with the types of investments that you as a committee have made.</p> <p>And that I... I am deeply grateful to the previous administration for advancing and for, and for pursuing, through, curriculum that provides a degree of consistency and a baseline across all school communities. You asked me at lunch the other day about what is the evidence that this is working, and I think that, as you will see over the</p>
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		<p>course in the coming weeks, our data indicates that the investments we are making is having an impact, and it is having a difference. It is not yet closing those gaps. But I... I don't think... I don't take that as evidence that our investment or our priorities are not working. I take that as evidence that investments and priorities, if not coupled with execution, are going to leave some students behind. And I think that... that is the change that we need to see in the coming years.</p> <p>Thank you, Vice Chair Hunter.</p>
Q10	02:47:25.760	<p>Simmons: Thank you. The next question is being offered by Member Rojas.</p> <p>Rojas: Thank you, Mayor. The question is, how would you approach a community and stakeholder engagement in a district like Cambridge, where privileged and underrepresented communities coexist in silos?</p>
	02:47:42.510	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Rojas. I think the first thing I would say is that all caregivers, or at least all caregivers that I've ever met, really do want the same thing.</p> <p>And I think that sometimes, there's maybe a responsibility on the part of the school system to make sure that we are being effective in our communication in a way that points that out. Because, at the end of the day, what families want from their school system is for their children to be better prepared for life. And it doesn't matter what your economic status is, or what language you speak, or what you look like, the expectation on the part of families is that we better prepare their children for life. And I think the way that we allow our socioeconomic diversity to be an asset or a benefit to our community is to make sure that there is widespread agreement that the Cambridge Public Schools functions at the highest level, that we are an organization that has a professional culture, that is clear and consistent with respect to its mission, and values and respects the families of this community and the role that we play in their lives. And I think if we do that, while there may be, at times, a curriculum decision or some type of, like, structural decision that, for some people, just the immediate impact feels better or worse, depending on</p>

		<p>where they are situated, those situations will happen. At the end of the day, if we as an organization have cultivated enough trust with the community that what we are doing is impactful, and that our intentions about making sure that all children are able to live a better life and to pursue lives and careers that will be fulfilling. I don't think our differences or the different perspectives is going to in any way be prohibitive from us getting to a point that we need to get to to better serve students.</p> <p>I fully acknowledge that the challenges that are contemplated by your question, I think, are more pronounced in the Cambridge community than they are in communities that are differently situated in one way or another. But we should not in any... ever use those circumstances as an excuse as to why we have to operate differently. At the end of the day, our... again, it's why I go back to the idea that we have a singular mission. I think... I believe, and I've experienced in Cambridge, people will respect that. They respect the difficulty of the work that we do in this organization.</p> <p>And they respect the importance of the work that we do. And as long as we are executing properly, and as long as we are, fostering a sense of professionalism. I'm not concerned about the fact that, you know, our folks across the city are sort of coming at it from a different perspective. They may be coming from a different perspective, but where they are coming to when they show up at 7.45, 8.15, 8.45, they all want the same thing, and their expectations, I think, are pretty consistent, and I think we should capitalize on that.</p>
Q11	02:50:56.190	<p>Simmons: Thank you for that answer. Member Rachel, floor is yours.</p> <p>Rachel Weinstein: Thank you, Mayor Simmons. Please tell us about a time when you've put a matter of ethical practice, principle, or urgency ahead of your own personal or professional interest. Have you ever put your position or job security on the line to pursue what you believe to be fair or just? What was it, or if more than one, if there was</p>

		<p>more than one, that required you to demonstrate personal courage in your work or in your life.</p>
	02:51:25.940	<p>Murphy: Well, I came out in favor of the MCAS a few minutes ago, so that... I'll start there, but, I think... I think that, I mean, one that, I mean... I think over the course of the last – I've been extremely fortunate to hold the leadership positions that I have, this one included. And I don't... and while I think that, I think I've... I've put my principled belief in the importance of public education and my heartfelt belief in this organization, ahead of my own professional interests or ambitions.</p> <p>I think I've stayed true to that while serving in this role, and, you know, there are times or moments that I think I could probably point to and say, a different decision or a different strategy might have engendered more popularity on my part.</p> <p>There's never been a moment where I've really felt like, you know, there's never been a... I've never really, felt as though that was anything that... was anything so great that I should be talking about in a job interview, I guess, is what I'm trying to say. Because I think that's just part of the job. I think the job of being superintendent is you have to be willing to lose the job of superintendent, if you're going to do it well, because there are decisions that have to be made that are unpopular, and there are decisions you have to make... you have to, make that are going to antagonize powerful interests, and they're going to, you know, I always appreciate when the powerful interests are willing to attach their names to their attacks, and I think that's sort of a basic... should be a basic principle of public life, but I hope that I... I hope I represent that approach on a regular basis, and I hope that I've never appeared to be putting my own interests ahead of the organizations, because I would say, I think that's essentially rule number one.</p> <p>I will tell you that, I'll just... because you asked for some examples, I... my second day working for the Cambridge Public Schools was, I was asked to go to City Hall, and it was a discussion about the long-term facilities condition assessment. And it was pretty evident that part of that</p>

		<p>discussion was going to be about potentially potential structural changes that need to be made in the organization to be more sustainable, and to ultimately create an environment that is better suited for students. And the report and the work that's been done around the report is much, much more complicated. So please, you know, don't go read the report and try to figure out what school we're trying to close, because that's not in there, and it's not going to be.</p> <p>But what the report does do is it sets an expectation that we have to ask ourselves some pretty important and pretty consequential questions about how we as a school system are organized, and whether or not we are organized in a way that best serves the interests of students. And I've, I think that the decision around the Kennedy Longfellow, which – it was a decision that was, I think, first and foremost, the right decision, and I'm happy to expand upon that later this evening, but it was your decision – so I'll just be very clear, the school committee was right to do that. It was not a decision that I think was easy from the standpoint of just sort of, like, what would be the most popular in a given political moment. But that is just sort of one example of how I think the decisions that those of us who sit at this table have to make on a regular basis.</p>
Q12	02:55:02.570	<p>Simmons: Thank you for that answer, and the next one will be rendered by Member Harding. Member Harding?</p> <p>Harding: Yeah, thank you. The next superintendent will begin the tenure with a half-dozen open labor agreements. How would you deal with the contentious negotiations with a given labor partner when there are multiple units bargaining simultaneously? How would you go about prioritizing high-quality teaching and learning while ensuring fair labor conditions?</p>
	02:55:28.340	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Harding. The first thing I would say that I think is a core tenet of all labor relations, and maybe just all relationships and professional contexts, is, I think we have a responsibility to be forthcoming and to be transparent, as much as we possibly can.</p>

		<p>And so when we're at the bargaining table, I think we have to be, I think, trying to sort of, game our way around conversations or, strategize around, you know, messaging that we want to send. I have not found that to be a terribly effective, collective bargaining strategy. And I think that, we...I think that part of why I've been able to foster what I think are largely constructive relationships with our bargaining partners since I came to Cambridge, is that I've tried to be as available, accessible, and transparent as I possibly can. That includes the, things that I disagree about, or things that are being advocated for that I don't think are going to serve the interests of students. So to go to the, one of the parts of your question, how do we make sure that our teaching and learning is not affected by what at times can deteriorate into a less constructive discourse with our bargaining partners?</p> <p>And I don't... I have not been here where that's really happened here, but it's certainly the climate in our state, and I've certainly been a part of it in other places. I think the first – the way we do that is to continue to treat our educators with the utmost respect and understand that they are... they're in a professional environment, and their representatives are zealously advocating on their behalf, which is their responsibility and their duty. And I think respecting that, I think, goes a long way in terms of making sure that our... our classroom experience is as insulated as it possibly can be from that type of... or any potential acrimony.</p> <p>That said, I also want to be really clear that it is a two-way street, and...our labor leaders have a responsibility to be transparent and to be honest, and to not manipulate actions or messaging that is coming from the school committee or from the administration.</p> <p>I'm grateful that we have the partners that we do. I believe that we do have a healthy discourse. I think it's my responsibility to continue to maintain the health of that discourse, but I also want to be very, very clear tonight that that is not a responsibility that I can fulfill alone.</p>
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		<p>And we will need partners at the bargaining table who share that commitment. That's been my experience in Cambridge. I'm confident that will continue to be the case. But I think I would be being disingenuous with you if I said I thought that was something that I can fully control myself.</p>
Q13	02:58:13.140	<p>Simmons: Our next question is going to be... I think it's Member Hudson. Indeed. Hudson, the floor is yours.</p> <p>Hudson: Thank you, Madam Mayor. Some parents feel that their children are labeled as bad... bad behavior students. And some of this could be related to cultural differences. Other parents feel that their child's learning time is being taken away due to another child's disruptive behavior in the classroom. Have you encountered this before, and how can you reassure all of our parents and caregivers that we are balancing the need for instruction in the least restrictive environment, as you were speaking about before, with the needs of the other students in the classroom to, you know, to...be able to learn from the instructor, and not have that learning time taken away by this disruption.</p>
	02:58:42.580	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Hudson. So, I... I will assure to all families that this is something that, as an organization, we are fully committed to. And I will say that, all... I've never met an educator who wants to label a child as a troublemaker, or wants to not embrace a child from wherever he or she is in the moment. But that's what we want, and that's what we aspire to. And...here and in other districts, disproportionality is a real issue. And...I would tell you there's sort of two lanes that we need to make sure that our disproportionality is not, perpetuating the... that experience that you're talking about there. One, we've got to make sure that our systems are in place, that we're closely monitoring our data and making sure that if we see trends of disproportionality that we are responding in real time and making sure we're supporting our school leaders and our educators and our counselors and all the other staff who are involved in those situations, to make sure that they are, cognizant of and fulfilling their responsibility to explore all possible strategies to support every child. That's the systems level. This, as much as any other situation that we will talk about here tonight, comes down</p>

		<p>to the actual execution of the practitioner, the child, and with the support of the family. And...in terms of what leadership can do, I think we go back to making sure that we are holding ourselves accountable, and making sure that we... the individuals that we have interacting with our children on a daily basis don't just have these values, because again, I've never really... nobody... there's no other reason to go into this field unless you have these values. Like, we attract the right people.</p> <p>But...we have to have people that continue to develop and maintain the capacity to serve children in the way that they should be served, and that requires a level of vigilance that can be challenging for a school district. Most school districts. But again, we're not most school districts. We have no excuses. We have all the oversight that we could possibly imagine.</p> <p>And we've just got to make sure that that oversight is executing on... and in a way that we need to. I will just provide a very, very quick example that, is, again, like most of the work of the Cambridge Public Schools, it is not my work. I am the person who talks about the work in this room. I am the representative figurehead, so to be very clear, this is substantive, important, inspiring work that other people are doing.</p> <p>But in the Equity Academy that Mr. Fernandez and Dr. Jimenez fostered and led last year, one of the programs that was developed at the...I believe at the King Open School, was taking the disproportionality data that we know is there, and then essentially isolating that data, and looking closely and deeply at what was causing it? And what levers are available to the students who, to the, excuse me, to the educators and to the staff who were having a disproportionate level of referrals of students of color. And...that is a hard conversation to have within a school community. It is... it is a hard conversation to have as a professional.</p> <p>I am grateful to Mr. Fernandez and his team for creating the space for those conversations to take place, and I am incredibly grateful to the staff at, hopefully, the King Open,</p>
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		<p>because if I'm misquoting the school, they're not going to be happy about it – for taking on that very real challenge and doing something about it. And I think that sets a good example. There's other ways that we have to do it, and we've got to apply that type of work in different contexts in which there is greater accountability, as I said earlier, and not just in sort of the... sort of the pilot stage and something that is good, that we're building our capacity, but not necessarily fully embedded in the work that we're doing. And I think that's sort of the next step where we have to go from there.</p>
Q14	03:02:30.090	<p>Simmons: Thank you. Thank you so much. The next question...I will give you. How would you and the school committee come together to identify district priorities and resource them? How would you advance student achievement through the budget process, and how would you consider adding new budget initiatives or phasing out old, ineffective programs?</p>
	03:02:52.810	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Mayor. I think that, as you know, we extended the district's strategic plan due to the superintendent transition into the course of this year, but I think your question really gets at the heart of what, sort of, step one for the next superintendent will need to be, which is to develop a new strategic plan that is reflective of the community's goals, values, and priorities, and then identifies, with specificity.</p> <p>Where are the areas that we're seeing strength and improvement, and what are assets that need to be maintained or potentially built upon, and what are systems or practices that have been in place for however long that need to be retired? We do not...I think with the regularity that you and every school committee would like, talk publicly as much about the programs and systems that we are retiring due to ineffectiveness, or resource allocation.</p> <p>And that's, again, not to say that we... we retire very few programs because we don't have funding to do it. As you've heard me say before, I think sometimes we have a bad habit of saying we are retiring something because we don't have the money, and really, we have the money, we</p>

		<p>just would like to spend it somewhere else. And I think one of the things that I would say in response to your question, Mayor, is I think we've got to get... we've got to lose that habit. We've just got to be more transparent. When we decide something's not working, we need to just be clear that it's not working, and therefore it's ending, and if there are hurt feelings about it, there's other ways in which we can support in response to that. But the sort of, reflective habit of saying, we can't do that because we don't have money. This is the one school system that really just can't do that.</p> <p>What I was saying a moment ago, though, is that the... part of the reluctance, or part of why we're not as institutionally inclined to talk about the things that we are retiring, is that we are a school system, and we are a budget that is made up entirely of people. And when we retire something, there's frequently some type of personnel implication of it. And so it becomes a communications challenge, frankly, because we don't necessarily... it's not something that we necessarily can be or are inclined to be as transparent about. And I think... I flagged that because I just think it's something we have to be a little more cognizant of, that it is not true that we do not retire programs that are not working. We have done it just very recently, I would say. But there is a problem if we're going to build the type of culture that we want to build, where people are feeling appreciated and valued and respected, if we are rolling in and making it seem as though we're taking credit for people that are maybe not necessarily going to work with us or for us anymore.</p> <p>And so, I just say that because I think it's a challenge of the sort of the nature of this work and the public nature of the work. But I think that by continuing the dialogue and making sure that we're maybe not necessarily talking about the specific programs that are ending, or personnel implications of it, but going back to what are the goals that we are looking to advance, I think that can instill on the community's part, a level of confidence in at least having a rationale for the investments that we are making, or the goals that we are setting.</p>
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Q15		<p>Simmons: Thank you. Member Weinstein, the floor is yours.</p> <p>David Weinstein: How do you view and work with subcommittees of the school committee?</p>
	03:06:16.700	<p>Murphy: On a regular basis, I would say that I, I think that the governance... I think what's important about people understanding the role of the school committee, and again, as you know, I say this in my... from my perspective as a former school committee chair, is that the school committee has the responsibility to set the broad direction of the school system. I do think that that has to be done in tandem with the superintendent, as well as with a variety of other constituencies. But I think the sort of specific structural way in which a school committee organizes itself, I think is one of those areas that is squarely within the prerogative of the governing body, and I think the administration's responsibility is to be as respectful and responsive to that as possible. If a school committee were to inform a superintendent that we've decided to have 65 subcommittees, and they're going to meet every day, and you and your staff will need to be represented properly, I would probably say I think that's gonna be dysfunctional, and I wouldn't recommend it.</p> <p>I've never gotten that – I've never had that experience here. I have found this committee to be extremely focused, and...consistent with respect to your expectations of myself and expectations of our team, and ultimately expectations of the organization. And so, as long as the subcommittees, or ad hoc committees, or however else the committee wants to organize itself, continue to be anchored to that singular mission and to the goals that we have collectively set, I wouldn't have any reservations about different, sort of permutations of how the committee would organize itself. I think it is important that the committee, because you are ultimately the lead representatives of the community, so I think it's important that the committee be, also be sort of in a listening posture and make sure that you are reflecting the views of the community. But I think that it's just sort of an example of where the super... well, I'm never on the school</p>

		<p>committee, certainly, but I think we have to function as a team, and to understand that collectively we represent the governance structure and the leadership of the organization.</p>
Q16		<p>Simmons: The next question will be given by the Vice Chair. Vice Chair Hunter, floor is yours.</p> <p>Hunter: There are many times when simple intelligence is not enough to solve a problem. Can you describe a complex problem, situation, or crisis that you confronted in which you had to rely on more than intelligence, when you had to call upon other skills and abilities, For, say, communicating, thinking quickly, working with people, political savvy, instincts, academic training, and intellect.</p>
	03:08:56.160	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Vice Chair Hunter.</p> <p>I think I... I think the... well, first of all, I would just say, there are very few problems, that I've encountered, Superintendent, where just, either intellect, or claimed intellect, in my case, is enough to solve a problem. Most... the problems that get to the superintendent if... if the district is functioning properly, are complex, and they are nuanced, and they require all of the types of attributes and skill sets that you are reflected in your question, and probably many others. With respect to an example that I, you know, whatever, you know, smartness is definitely not something that I think was...of particular usefulness. I would say to the decision that we collectively made at the Kennedy Longfellow last year.</p> <p>That decision... That...as has been said in other forums, and I think is accurate, was a long time coming, was a decision that had a profound and significant and lasting impact on the members of that school community. And it is the type of decision that a superintendent and a school committee should never make unless you have to.</p> <p>And I am grateful to you as individuals, I am grateful to you as a body for supporting that recommendation. And I would say that it is a good example of something that required, not just from myself, but from the members of our team, my team, who helped execute it, and did so with grace,</p>

		<p>and with dignity, and with a commitment to the students in that school. And it was work that was carried out by the educators in that school. And it was work that was carried out by Principal Gerber. And... it was, at the end of the day, in addition to the sort of skill sets that it required us to employ, it was a decision that was grounded in a fundamental belief that we have a responsibility to put all students in better positions to succeed.</p> <p>And the conditions...under which that school was operating, for an extended period of time, were not, under any circumstances, putting those students in the best position available to us as an organization to succeed. And... I think that...the, the, the sort of...communication skills and political savvy, understanding the teaching and learning implications. I do think all of those – I think they were required of me as the individual who made that recommendation. It was... they were absolutely required of the individuals who helped execute it.</p> <p>But at the end of the day, that fact, the fact that those skill sets were not and can't be contained within a single individual, is why we were able to make that transition successfully. And putting aside any of the skill sets or attributes of myself or the other leaders who helped execute that decision, what the decision was grounded in, was fundamental equity.</p> <p>The school... closing the school was not...an example of inequity. Allowing the conditions to develop over an extended period of time, such that the decision was as clear as it was. That was an example of inequity.</p> <p>And I think what it... what I think about when I read your question and those sorts of attributes is, at the end of the day, you can... it doesn't matter how much intellect you have, it doesn't matter what your credentials are, it doesn't matter all the other things that you may have that are good.</p> <p>This work will not be done effectively unless the leaders have a shared purpose and are grounded in those fundamental values that, more so, I believe, than any other</p>
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		profession, you have to bring to work with you every single day. Thank you, Ms. Hunter.
Q17	03:13:15.470	Rojas: Thank you, Mayor. A few people, if any, can equally... can be equally strong, knowledgeable, and experienced in every aspect of the role of superintendent. What are your most significant gaps, or gap, with regard to this role? And how would you address that gap, or those gaps?
	03:13:33.899	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Rojas. So, I talked a little bit about this at the forum the other night. You know, my path toward the superintendency has not necessarily been a conventional one.</p> <p>I... when I was practicing law, I said to some of you at one of our meals that I... I found myself enjoying the civics education program that I was working with students more so than I did the intellectual property litigating that I was doing, or was supposed to be doing, during the day.</p> <p>And as a result of that, I... I found myself sort of moving toward this path that I... I guess I could say I found myself... I found a profession, but I found myself, I think, more than anything else. But as a result of that sort of path that I took.</p> <p>I am, you know, it's been said about me that I don't necessarily bring the traditional teaching and learning experience that some superintendents have.</p> <p>I have found that...where that leaves me is I am much less susceptible to thinking I know better than the people around me, or the people who are closer to that work. But I think it's a legitimate answer in terms of a gap that I have.</p> <p>Because I have a... there's a credibility issue that I have a responsibility to be responsive to. It's a perfectly reasonable question to, for educators to ask, how, how exactly did they end up working for a lawyer? Anyone would ask that. If anyone's ever met a lawyer would ask that.</p>

		<p>But...I think that the experiences that I've amassed over the course of the last, 12, 13 years, serving in various leadership roles as a chair of a school committee, as a deputy superintendent, an assistant superintendent, as a chief operating officer, and chief financial officer for a school district, and outside counsel to school systems as well, has positioned me to understand the superintendency, I think, as, as well as I could. And so...is there... there's a... there's a gap, but I... I've tried to sort of...capitalize on that gap to make me a better leader, and I think in many cases I have.</p> <p>Thank you, Member Rojas.</p>
	03:15:46.070	<p>Simmons: That's good. Yes, Member Weinstein, do you have a question?</p> <p>David Weinstein: I wanted to ask a quick follow-up question?</p> <p>Simmons: Yes. Very good.</p> <p>David Weinstein: Mr. Murphy, could you say anything more about ways that you've sought to, in addition to the experience that you mentioned, like, build your, I guess, scalability, effectiveness as a superintendent?</p> <p>Murphy: Sure, I mean, I think, if I could, I would just speak to, as I've been doing this work professionally over an extended period of time, not just in the last year, but beyond that, I think one of the things that I have, I have an extra responsibility to do is to stay connected to students, because, well, I do think that there is risk in people who have been educators and then worked as administrators for an extended period of time, thinking that they know students as well as maybe they did when they were in the classroom, and that is, again, not something I'm necessarily susceptible to, but I think that there is a first-hand knowledge and a first-hand experience that people who do this work, have to have.</p> <p>And the only way to do that is interacting directly with students. And it can be short moments, you know,</p>

		<p>moments where you just go into a classroom and, there's a classroom from the Tobin that is nice enough to have offered me a standing invite to do some reading with them, so, hello to the SEI kindergarten classroom at the Tobin. Working with the student leaders at the high school. And I think, you know, I think about, like, what was the best day that I ever spent as superintendent? Easily the best day of the year for me last year was the civics program at the State House that – to... and I know many of you were there, so thank you for that. But to spend day the day, engaging directly with 8th grade students on projects that they have built themselves, and having conversations with them about why it was that they identif... that they picked those particular projects, and why it was they were advocating for what they were advocating for. It... and I know maybe it sounds a little... I don't hope it doesn't sound cliché, because I mean it, but, like, it was the most fulfilling moment of what has not always been the most enjoyable 15 months in this seat.</p> <p>And I think that probably that's my own, sort of, predisposition to public service and thinking about, sort of, the role that public education plays in our democracy.</p> <p>Part of it is because, other than seniors in their final few weeks, 8th graders in their final month of middle school are some of the, you know, some of the most enjoyable conversations that you can have, because they can... they have a slight understanding of the freedom that they're about to enjoy.</p> <p>And part of it is just because they were just really... they were just really interesting projects and really interesting kids. But I think that that... that... and I could... I could give you many other examples of how I think I need to... I... what I try to do to stay grounded and to stay informed and... and never be sort of presumptuous enough to really understand that I know what it's like to be in an educator's shoes to the degree that the educator does. All those things are necessary, but I think just making sure that you have regular interaction with real, live students, I think, is probably an invaluable experience in this role. Thank you.</p>
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Q18	03:18:56.270	<p>Simmons: Thank you for that answer. The next question comes from Member Rachel. Member Rachel, the floor is yours.</p> <p>Rachel Weinstein: Thank you, Mayor. While we believe that all students can learn, not all students are learning in Cambridge. Our data shows us persistent achievement gaps along demographic lines. What is your personal philosophy about the root causes? Are they a function of a) curriculum; b) teaching competence; c) the teaching environment, or d) something else? Please tell us what we can do to help use the curriculum teaching, competence teaching, environment, something else to ensure that more students will reach and surpass grade-level standards.</p>
	03:19:34.460	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Rachel. So I... I am inclined to sort of lean all of the above, in terms of... just in terms of the multiple choice aspect, but I will say, amongst the... what's listed here. Nothing is more important than the educator. That the educator is the variable over which we have both the most control as an organization, as well as, what data has shown for an extended period of time at this point has the greatest potential for impact. So making sure that there's a well-trained educator who's being supported by the district and provided the type of professional learning and resources that we, we absolutely can provide in Cambridge, that's the variable that we know is going to make the biggest, the biggest difference. But in terms of my, sort of, philosophy around root causes, I think what I would say to that is that never losing sight of what data tells us is the most important variable. I think we have a responsibility to look at each of these situations as comprehensively as we possibly can.</p> <p>The... the... inequity... you know, inequity... in this field rarely... presents itself as some type of...sensational moment, right? We're living in a political context in which sensational moments are happening every day, and they are rooted in some of these systemic problems and challenges that we have as a society. But in a public school system, inequity grows over time. And inequity is represented by the inertia that organizations have, and reluctance to change. And so, when I talk about what I</p>

		<p>think is a culture that is, frequently overly concentrated on the well-being or levels of satisfaction amongst adults, as opposed to the needs of children.</p> <p>That is a variable that will yield inequity.</p> <p>Because, as we were saying earlier, we know students are coming in from different starting points. So if they come in from different starting points, and they are met with a culture that is not responsive to their needs, and is not sufficiently nimble enough to meet their needs, then we should not be surprised, and when they get to the finish line, those discrepancies still exist. And so, I think that...a public school system's responsibility is to make sure that we take account of every variable.</p> <p>And make sure that we hold ourselves accountable for making sure that every variable is tightened in a way that, at a minimum, we're not going to exacerbate the inequities that children arrive in. And when we are fully functional and fully thriving.</p> <p>We are actively and intentionally eliminating those inequities. And I... so, that's my...answer, I'm... this is...this is not one that I think I can give you what I would consider to be a quality answer in three minutes, just to be honest with you, but, like, it is... it's the work. I mean, this is central to the work that we're doing, and I, I'd like to keep doing it.</p>
Q19	03:22:53.530	<p>Simmons: Thank you for your answer, and our next question is going to be offered by Member Harding. Member Harding, the floor is yours.</p> <p>Harding: Thank you. We have five upper school programs which feed into one comprehensive high school. How would you ensure that we have equitable instruction in these school programs, and that all 8th graders arrive at high school prepared?</p>
	03:23:14.130	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Member Harding. One of the things that we've done in the last year, is to organize our school leaders into principal learning communities with the specific purpose of trying to foster greater consistency of</p>

		<p>practices, across our teams. Our upper school leaders have... you essentially were ahead of us with respect to organizing themselves like that, because they recognize the critical importance of building in that type of consistency. There's a balancing act that always needs to be struck in school district leadership, because...we want schools to function as laboratories of innovation. We want them to be ecosystems unto themselves. We want them to hold themselves to high standards and high levels of accountability. But I think that one of the challenges that the Cambridge Public Schools have faced over a period of time is that our idea around autonomy, I think, proliferated to a degree that was not always in keeping with the best interests of students. We had schools that functioned in a very autonomous fashion, we had educators who functioned in a very autonomous fashion.</p> <p>And there's a tension there because, as I said, the work happens in individual schools, they are more communities unto themselves than they are part of our broader network, and so you want them to have autonomy, you want them to be empowered.</p> <p>But if you don't set clear levels of expectations around consistency, it is inevitable that you're going to have variability with regard to experience. And when students ultimately arrive at our flagship school as part of a much broader community, those, that variability, makes the functionality of the learning environment more challenging, and then no students are benefiting, regardless of whether they had a high-quality experience at upper school or not. And so I think going to more aligned curriculum and setting clear expectations, as we have in recent years, I think is our...I think that is our best hope for that type of consistency and seeing greater equity, and I commend our school leaders at the upper school level for recognizing that on their own, and essentially forming their own principal learning community before we told them they had to do it.</p>
	03:25:32.400	<p>Simmons: Member Harding, are you yielding the floor? Member Hudson, do you have a follow-up question to that question?</p>

		<p>Hudson: I do, Madam Mayor. Through you – to Mr. Murphy, could you...could you elaborate on how the controlled choice program, the school lottery program, and the feeder patterns that we have from the elementary school to the middle school, put our middle schools or our upper schools in, you know, on different footing in terms of... of, you know, from where they're starting, even though they're all trying to get their students to the same point before they, you know, matriculate at CRLS?</p>
	03:26:07.150	<p>Murphy: Sure. Thank you, Member Hudson. What I would say about that is, and I...we are...there have been conversations in the last year, some of which coming out of the Kennedy-Longfellow decision, some of which, coming from the community and people rightfully demanding answers with respect to what are the implications for what is referred to as the innovation agenda, and what is...how is...how does that issue, how is that connected with, school choice in Cambridge? And what I would say to that is, I... one, I think this is a conversation that's overdue, and I appreciate those urging us to look at these issues. But I think it's really important that we understand that when we go to look at what was dubbed the innovation agenda, or we look at our school choice policy, we are talking about...at a very basic level, how we as a school... excuse me, as a school system, function.</p> <p>You can't separate out our organization of, of feeder patterns, our triad system in our elementary schools, and the school assignment process that we have. You can't separate that from just how we function and how we operate as a school district. It would be like talking about, well, it'd be like saying, like, well, we're going to examine a human body except for the heart and the brain. Like, these are, like, vital components to how we function, and I think, to your question about, like, well, what has it done? What has the impact been?</p> <p>I think that...because of the intentionality around building consistency across our middle schools, excuse me, our upper schools, I don't think it's the case that our... the organization... the reorganization that was done a little</p>

		<p>more than 10 years ago, or the specific school choice policies, are themselves exacerbating inequities across our upper schools, but what it does do is it creates operational deficiencies that then, in turn, have an impact on the consistency and the quality of educational opportunities for – so what I'm saying is, I think the policies that were adopted around school assignment and the policies that were adopted around the organization of elementaries and upper schools, they have an attenuated effect on... on how we operate and how well we serve students, and I think it has to be part of the conversation, but I think we... there are other variables across that whole formula that I think are probably more impactful.</p> <p>But what is most important as we get into this conversation is that we not lose sight of any of the variables. That what I'm saying is you can't isolate this variable and say, well, we'll talk about school choice, but we won't talk about triads, or we'll talk about triads, but we won't talk about school choice, or we'll talk about the size of our schools, but we won't talk about the number of our schools.</p> <p>I mean, like, these variables are all completely interconnected, and if we want to improve the experience for all students across Cambridge, we're gonna have to have a comprehensive conversation about what it is that we're trying to achieve, what it is that we can afford, and what it is, what vision does that actually look like?</p>
	03:29:05.820	<p>Simmons: So, let's see, where are we? Was that a question...20, yeah. So... We are... I got feedback.</p> <p>Hudson: We didn't ask 20 yet, I just asked a follow-up to 19. It's around 20 now.</p> <p>Simmons: Right, which was actually a different question. So we're... I'm trying to follow... okay, so we're... now this is your question.//</p>
Q20	03:29:24.450	<p>Hudson: As you know, Cambridge has a wealth of resources, money, of course, but also dedicated and skilled educators, other staff and community organizations, city staff and departments, programming, and more. Yet not every child fully benefits from this. Member Harding</p>

		<p>just asked you about our upper schools. We have an upper school. MCAS results were released last night. We have an upper school where only 6% of low-income students – students are working at or above grade level. How can CPSD effectively ensure that every child benefits from our resources to the utmost, receiving the supports and opportunities that will help them thrive?</p>
	03:30:00.350	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Mayor Simmons, and everyone else. What I would... I think that... what I see as the heart of this question, Mayor, is that despite this variable that distinguishes us from almost every other school system, in terms of the resources that are available, we are not distinguishing ourselves from every other school system with respect to our performance. And...while there is an enormous amount to be proud of in the Cambridge Public Schools, and the pride belongs to our educators, they belong to our families that are committed to education, they absolutely belong to our students who, inspire us on a daily basis.</p> <p>There are things that don't work as well as they should. And the result of things not...some of these things not working as well as they should is that we have students who are not having the same level of an experience, and because they don't have the same level of experience, they are not as well positioned for success as they can be. And I think that...there are certain things that we have to do if we... if we...want that reality to change. I do go back to what I've said before, that I think that first and foremost, we have to be honest with ourselves about the culture under which we are currently operating. We have to be more focused on children and less focused on adults. I say that to every employee, I say that to every member of the community, I say that to my members of my team, I say that to myself, that have...if we continue to be satisfied with how our culture manifests itself currently, and if we continue to fail to recognize that every single thing that we do, every action that we take, every decision that we make, is in one way or another contributing to that culture, then...we will continue to have the same results, and there will be another school committee and another</p>

		<p>superintendent in another year, asking the same question, having the same conversation.</p> <p>And so I do believe that it starts with looking in the mirror and being honest with ourselves about how we've gotten here. After that, I think there are practices that we have to change, some of which we have changed, or are in the process of changing, and I think, as I said, I credit my predecessors for some of those decisions that have been made. I credit the school committee for some of the difficult decisions that you have made, and the space that you have given our leadership team to operate in the course of the last year, and I could give you a long list of, sort of, mechanical things that I think need to change, but, I think that, ultimately, the goals that we've set as a team, and the commitments that we've made to recognize the vital importance of educator effectiveness, and recognize that we have to fundamentally change the relationships we have with caregivers in this community to engender greater trust and bring them into the conversation about what their children need, I think those have to be the two cornerstones that, when coupled with our resources, give us a better chance for success.</p>
	03:33:18.030	<p>Simmons: Thank you. And thank you so much for that answer. We have five more minutes, so at this point, we'd like to... we've offered every finalist candidate an opportunity to have a closing statement, and you have till 7, so, if you'd like to, you are encouraged and offered the opportunity to make a final statement. The floor is yours.</p>
<i>Closing</i>	03:33:35.420	<p>Murphy: Thank you, Mayor, and thank you to each of you, the members of the committee, for your questions tonight, and for the conversations that we've had over the course of the last, several weeks. Thank you to Dr. Turk.</p> <p>To our student representatives who facilitated the forum the other night. I, as I've said, to be considered for this position is a great honor. To have served in it is the great honor of my professional life. And I...I've tried to represent our team here tonight, as much as I have, myself. I've tried to represent our school leaders.</p>

		<p>Because I think that we...while there's all sorts of things that we have to do better and things that we'll have to change in the coming years, I think that what has been demonstrated, again, by our team as much as myself over the course of the last year is that this is an organization with the capacity to change.</p> <p>And I recognize that for those of you who have been in this conversation for much longer than me, and for those of you who have been connected to this community much, much longer than me and much deeper than me.</p> <p>I... I think...if you view that statement or that assertion with a degree of skepticism, I want to be very clear that I don't blame you for it. Because as a community, you've been well-positioned for a long time, and as an organization, we have not fully delivered yet for the community in a way that I think we need to. And so while I am the incumbent, for lack of a better term, I hope I have said nothing tonight, or have acted in a way over the course of the last year that indicates to you that I am satisfied with where we are as an organization, or that I believe that we have come anywhere close to maximizing our potential as an organization. There is a real change that has to happen in this organization.</p> <p>And at the same time, I think there's also real momentum. I think there are things that are moving in the right direction, and I think there are professionals who are coming in every day.</p> <p>And... and our...working relentlessly on behalf of the students in the Cambridge Public Schools, and it is a great honor to represent them, it's a great honor to work with them, and it's a great honor to work alongside them. And I think I'm gonna leave it at that, Mayor. Thank you very much.</p> <p>Simmons: And thank you. Thank you for your, putting your name in contention, and we hope you have a... Great rest of your evening.</p> <p>Murphy: I'll try. Thank you very much, everyone.</p>
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