



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

October 19, 2021

Called for 6:00 pm in the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of discussing any and all business that may properly come before the Committee.

Members Present: Vice-Chair Bowman, Member Fantini, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson, Mayor Siddiqui

Also Present: Anais Killian, Student School Committee Representatives. Nuriel Vera-Degraff was not present for the meeting.

Mayor Siddiqui in the Chair

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

The Chair provided a statement to the public regarding Governor Charlie Baker's Executive Order on guidelines for remote participation and then read the call of the meeting.

The meeting proceeded to the first order of business with a roll call vote for the purpose of a soundcheck: Member Weinstein PRESENT; Member Fantini PRESENT, Member Wilson PRESENT; Member Rojas PRESENT, Vice-Chair Bowman PRESENT; Member Rachel PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui PRESENT.

1. **Public Comment:**

The following individual was heard:

- **Abby, St Sauveur Ct.**, a CRLS student, expressed feelings about the loss of school experience via remote learning during the last school year on behalf of her fellow students.

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Rachel, on a voice vote, it was voted to close public comment.

2. **Student School Committee Report:**

Member Killian and **Member Vera-Degraff** were not present during the initial Student School Committee Report. However, Member Killian entered the meeting during the Superintendent's Agenda (7a.). Member Killian gave the Student School Committee Report after the Superintendent's presentation. Student government, vaccination, and testing awareness continue and are prevalent right now. A Subcommittee has been meeting during the Thursday morning meetings at CRLS to discuss the prevalent issues. Member Killian also discussed COVID testing, the vaccination mandate, and the student experience. It was reported that some students rather opt out of activities than take the COVID vaccine. Member Killian encouraged both the District and CRLS to provide more information and resources (via presentations, videos, etc.) for hesitant non-vaccinated students to enable them to get the vaccination.

The mock student vote returns with a mock School Committee election hosted by a ninth-grade CRLS history classroom. CRLS students have created a website devoted to the mock elections titled CambridgeVote. The mock election takes place on Wednesday, October 27. PSAT and Senior Workshops will take place on Tuesday, October 26.

Member Fantini questioned if the Rindge Register Forum was available to obtain, **Member Wilson** asked how the school administration can leverage Cambridge/Boston area affiliated athletes to encourage students to get the vaccination. The district has some plans in the works in regards to Member Wilson's question. Mayor Siddiqui has done some outreach.

Member Weinstein discussed the importance of the student vote and support. He also praised the student website Cambridge Vote for their excellent work on the website's content and their assistance in spreading the awareness and importance of the School Committee elections.

Member Rojas expressed his interest in data and demographics on students mentioned by Member Killian, who considered opting out of extra-curricular instead of getting the vaccine

3. **Presentation of the Records for Approval:** None

4. **Reconsiderations:** None

5. **Unfinished Business/Calendar:** None

6. **Awaiting Reports:**

C21-311 Joint Order by Member Fantini, Member Wilson and Mayor Siddiqui

That the following be adopted and amended and referred to the Superintendent:

That the School Department work with the City to develop a plan to support transporting students attending after school programs given the issues that DHSP has with after school this year

7. **Superintendent's Agenda:**

7a. Presentations:

Mayor Siddiqui turned the meeting over to the Interim Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Greer.

Dr. Greer presented the first presentation for the evening that focused on the district's COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate. The full presentation can be viewed on the [website](#).

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Mayor opened the floor for questions, comments, and concerns.

Member Rojas commented on the presentation by thanking Dr. Greer for her COVID student vaccination recommendations. He suggested that the Superintendent provide more scenarios to the Committee by recommending discussions and examples surrounding the issue.

Member Fantini questioned the updated numbers of staff and student vaccination. Dr. Greer responded that she doesn't have the numbers for this week as it takes HR a bit to track the data, but she can include the updated data in her weekly newsletters. Member Fantini questioned if that data could be added to the dashboard and posted on the website. Dr. Greer replied that this data could be added to the dashboard and in her weekly newsletter.

Mayor Siddiqui echoed Dr. Greer's response to Member Fantini's question about student and staff data. She also recommends the data to be posted on the dashboard and in the weekly newsletters for School Committee members.

Member Wilson questioned how student data is being collected. Dr. Greer responded that parents would upload that information into the student portal. The current portal is being worked on by ITCS and will be launched soon. Once the parent uploads the data onto the new portal, Principals, Principal's Confidential Clerks, Central Office, Club Advisors, Nurses, and Coaches would access the student data.

Member Weinstein questioned about student vaccination exemption. Dr. Greer responded that those students would need to submit exemption documents via the portal, and they will be flagged in the portal that they have an exemption. Member Weinstein followed up on exempt student vaccinations by asking if exempt students must comply and follow a testing regime. Dr. Greer responded that exempt students are not required to undergo a testing regime or additional testing. Member Weinstein followed up, asking the reasoning for not requiring further testing. Dr. Greer mentioned stated that due to the nurse testing about 5000 COVID tests given per week, the nurses cannot do any additional ones. Member Weinstein asked for clarification that exempt students can still undergo regular testing. Dr. Greer replied with Yes.

Dr. Greer turned the meeting over to Dr. Nicole Gittens (Assistant Superintendent to Secondary Education), Principal Smith (CRLS), and Lynn Williams (Coordinator of Guidance) to begin the second presentation of the night focused on “College and Career Readiness: Postsecondary Options.”

[The presentation can be found online](#), and copies are filed in the School Committee office. After the presentation, the Mayor opened the floor for questions, comments, and concerns.

Member Fantini asked Dr. Greer about her key takeaways from the presentation. Dr. Greer responded by recognizing the significant amount of work being done for the students at CRLS. Dr. Greer gave a deeper explanation of MYCAP and mentioned that post-secondary readiness begins before high school. She believes that readiness should be developed for students at the Middle School level. **Member Fantini** followed up on Dr. Greer’s response discussing that MYCAP is a requirement for graduation and its importance to the students of Cambridge. **Member Fantini** questioned what would be done to prevent students from “falling through the cracks.” Dr. Greer responded that the effort in preparing, supporting, and identifying those students by resources to avoid that scenario from happening is significant.

Member Fantini and Principal Smith led a discussion on the high school’s role in preparing students to succeed. Dr. Gittens joined the discussion to highlight CRLS’s engagement with the students while enrolled in school. She discussed that additional resources should also be provided to the city for those no longer enrolled in school.

Member Rachel shared her thoughts and questions on the discussion. She echoed previous comments on job/career readiness through CRLS) and the importance of Goals and MyCAP for high school students. She inquired about the student caseload for CRLS guidance counselors, the Career and College Resource Center information (that can be shared through the Superintendent’s weekly), and post-secondary retention.

Mayor Siddiqui discussed the importance of elected officials having a role in college and career readiness. She mentioned initiatives like the New Haven Promise, where the community and private institutions like Yale provide 100% tuition for students in public colleges. She reiterated the significance of funding for student college success.

Member Weinstein shared his views and opinions on the degree attainment numbers at CRLS by discussing the importance of internships, internship opportunities and inquired about viewing post-secondary data. Dr. Gittens responded by referring to the district’s Chapter 74 Vocational Program. Discussed CRLS’s need for City support to assist students in job(career) opportunities

Member Rojas asked questions surrounding further elaboration on CRLS’s connection to U-Aspire and U-Aspire assists families. Principal Smith elaborated that U-Aspire counselors are available to meet with families both in-person and virtual. They assist families, especially those with first-generation college students. Mr., Smith elaborated on his experience with students using U-Aspire at CRLS. CRLS is one of the top schools in the region that utilize U-Aspire. He also inquired about CRLS guidance to students who are not US citizens. Principal Smith responded by referencing CRLS’s international center where ELL support and secondary planning for non-English speaking students and non-US citizens. Ms. Williams echoed Principal Smith’s comment and discussed scholarship opportunities for ELL and non-US Citizens.

Vice-Chair Bowman entered the discussion referencing the Boston Opportunity Agenda. Thinks Cambridge can benefit from the entire education pipeline to better serve students. She also referenced

the data given in the presentation by asking the questions- “what's the data? What does that data mean for the programs that are being offered?” Encourages doing a deeper data dive and conversations with students on the cost of education. She referenced the “Level Up” program as an example of where a deeper data dive would be good to explore.

Member Wilson entered the discussion by referring to the challenges of student access to the great resources at CRLS. She elaborated by asking, “What is CRLS doing to assist with these children?” Principal Smith responded by referencing the–MyCAP program as the aid to assist in resolving the problem. Member Wilson also inquired on how the CRLS administration can mandate training staff in MyCAP. Ms. Williams answered by stating that at least one person in core academic and extra-curricular areas will be trained on MyCAP and bring that training to their respective departments. The state caps training to ten people. Principal Smith added the scaling up of the ninth-grade guidance program to create a better ninth-grade pathway. **Member Wilson** questioned how CRLS could piggyback on the data from the students in eight-grade when creating a ninth-grade pathway. She also inquired about information regarding remedial classes and student enrollment data for remedial classes.

Member Fantini requested to review a page on post-secondary data in the presentation. A link in the data table expressed that the data shown is data that the district should do a deeper dive into. He also mentioned the possibility of including a student internship requirement in construction bids. He also questioned the Pell Grant and if it covered the entire cost of community college.

Vice-Chair Bowman reiterated the Boston Opportunity Agenda and Success Boston by mentioning the reasoning behind implementing the programs. The programs were based on aggregate data, which highlighted strengths and weaknesses. She emphasized the importance of a deep data dive to obtain the best resources for students.

Mayor Siddiqui discussed the significance of utilizing Cambridge alumni and the alumni association,

7b. CPS District Plan: None

7c. Consent Agenda:

Member Fantini moved, seconded by **Member Wilson**, on a voice vote, to bring the Superintendent's Agenda forward for discussion and adoption.

Member Rojas removed **#21-315**.

On the following roll call vote, items **#21-312** through **#21-314**, **#21-316** through **#21-319**, were adopted: Member Weinstein YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Vice-Chair Bowman YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#21-312, Special Needs Contract Award: Day & Residential Program Services Not Available from the Cambridge School Department, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions as detailed in the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget and/or Grant Fund Budget.

<u>Program</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Amount</u>	
Day Program Tuition Contracts:	2		\$156,885.21
Residential Program Tuition Contracts:	0		
45 Day Program Contracts	0		
	Total	2	\$156,885.21

#21-313 Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor for Special Education Services, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Cambridge Health Alliance, 1493 Cambridge Street, Macht Bldg., Room 506, for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 in the revised contract amount of \$67,000.00.

#21-314 Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor for Instructional Materials, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

The Prophet Corp., dba Gopher Sport, 2525 Lemond St. SW Owatonna, MN, for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$75,000.00.

Recommendation: Contract Award: The Prophet Corp DBA Gopher Sport:
Instructional Materials

#21-316 Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract with the following vendor for Special Education Staffing Services, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Norton Staffing & Recruiting, 34 Elm Street, Cohasset, for the period October 18, 2021 to June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$160,340.00.

Contract Award: Norton Staffing & Recruiting:
Special Education Staffing Services

#21-317 Approval of Gifts to the Cambridge Public Schools, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the following gifts and receipts as described:

1. \$250.00 to the Morse School made from the Massachusetts Cultural Council Big Yellow School Bus program. Funds are being transferred from the Morse School's student activity account and will be used for field trips.
2. \$80.00 to the Morse School made by the Friends of the Morse School Funds are being transferred from the Mores School's student activity account.
3. \$100.00 by an individual donor to Fletcher Maynard Academy for the purchase of library books.
4. An in-kind donation of fabric and sewing patterns made by an individual donor to the Visual and Performing Arts Department for fashion design classes.

Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts

#21-318 Grant Award be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award in the amount and for the period indicated:

ARP Special Education IDEA (SC22610) in the amount of \$540,262.00 for the period October 4, 2021 to June 30, 2022.

Description:

The purpose of the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) IDEA grant is to provide additional funds beyond the district's IDEA allocation grant in order to ensure that eligible students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education that included special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs. As with the allocation grant, the largest portion of the ARP IDEA grant will be used for out of district tuition. To meet the requirement of proportionate share for private schools, a set-aside of \$20,487 will be used to provide consultant services to private school students and staff. The remainder of the grant (\$88,249) will be used for activities under the comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS), including a consultant in culturally responsive behavioral interventions, an Extended Learning time teacher stipend for the pre-school class at Fletcher Maynard Academy, and stipends for staff to attend trainings outside normal working hours.

Grant Award: FY22 ARP Special Education IDEA (SC22610)

#21-319 Grant Award be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award in the amount and for the period indicated:

ARP Early Childhood IDEA (SC22611) for the period October 5, 2021 to June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$48,058.00.

Description:

The purpose of the Federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) Early Childhood IDEA grant is to provide additional funds beyond the district's Early Childhood IDEA allocation grant in order to ensure that eligible students with disabilities receive a free and appropriate public education that includes special education and related services designed to meet their individual needs. The ARP Early Childhood grant will be used for a consultant in Equity and Inclusion as well as for classroom materials and stipends for a New Family Welcome event.

Grant Award: FY22 ARP Early Childhood IDEA (SC22611)

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

#21-315 Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve a contract with the following vendor for Office Furniture, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Creative Office Pavilion, 1 Design Center Place, Boston, for the period October 22, 2021 to June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$100,000.00.

Contract Award: Creative Office Pavilion: Office Furniture

Discussion followed on **#21-315**

Member Rojas suggested clarity on the number of years for the lease space and the contract. Mr. Maloney spoke and provided further clarification. **#21-315** is to purchase furniture for the space that will be used for at least five years.

On the following roll call vote, **#21-315** was adopted: Member Weinstein YEA; Member Fantini YEA, Member Wilson YEA; Member Rojas YEA, Vice-Chair Bowman YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

9. School Committee Agenda (Policy Matters/Notifications/Requests for Information):

#21-320 Joint motion from the Building & Grounds Subcommittee

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Election Commission needs to hold special elections in December and January around a vacated state senate seat, in addition to the already scheduled municipal elections, and **WHEREAS** the Cambridge Election Commission continues to face challenges securing election-compliant polling places, now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee allow the Cambridge Election Commission to use the Martin Luther King and the Morse school for the special election, following the same health & safety protocols used in the municipal elections, and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Committee will request a roundtable discussion with the City Council and the Cambridge Election Commission to discuss the challenges of using school buildings as polling sites and what other options are available for the Election Commission

Member Rojas summarized the Building and Grounds Subcommittee meeting that took place on October 12, 2021. There will be special elections after the regular elections in December 2021 and January 2022. The Building and Grounds Subcommittee motioned to allow the two schools to be used as polling sites for the special election.

This is a working conversation, and a roundtable will be requested with City Council and the Cambridge Election Commission as there is not much room for election poll places in the city.

Vice-Chair Bowman acknowledged Member Rojas for his leadership and hard work on the Building and Grounds Subcommittee and working with the election commission. Mayor Siddiqui discussed the perspective on the City Council side and will work to get the roundtable discussion started.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Member Fantini, it was voted, on a roll call vote, to adopt motion **#21-320**. Member Weinstein YEA; Member Fantini Yea; Member Wilson YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Vice-Chair Bowman YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

10. Resolutions (letters of congratulations, letters of condolence): None

11. Announcements:

Vice-Chair Bowman announced the appointment for Ms. Ariel Kennebrew – the new Executive Secretary to the School Committee for Cambridge Public Schools. Ms. Kennebrew came from Watertown Public Schools and served as the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools and School Committee.

Member Wilson wants the community to know that MIT will host a Volpe Block Party on Saturday, October 23, with a rain date of Sunday, October 24, from 11 am-3 pm.

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications from City Officers: None

On a motion by Member Fantini, seconded by Member Wilson, it was voted to adjourn the meeting on a voice vote. (8:23 pm)

Attest

Ariel B. Kennebrew

Ariel Kennebrew
Executive Secretary
to the School Committee