

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

February 4, 2020

Called for 6:00 P.M. 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: Mayor Siddiqui, Vice-Chair Bowman, Member Fantini, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson

Also Present: Superintendent Salim, Dr. Turk, Dr. Morgan, Ms. MacDonald, Dr. Madera, Ms. Spinner, Ms. MacFarlane, Mr. Monahan

A quorum of the School Committee being present, Mayor Siddiqui called the meeting to order at 6:05 P.M. and read the call of the meeting.

1. **Public Comment (3 Minutes):** There was no public comment. Vice Chair Bowman Moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini to close Public Comment.
2. **Student School Committee Report:** Ms. Green and Mr. Kanner thanked the Mayor and City for passing the home rule petition last night. Mr. Kanner spoke to a CRLS senior who tutors 8th grade Vassal Lane Upper School students that are doing algebra work and want 8th grade level work. The participatory budget is starting soon and student government will remind students to submit their ideas.

Ms. Green announced in honor of Black History Month the Black Student Union (BSU) will be reading Black history books tomorrow at the public library to preschoolers for the social justice story time event. BSU received handwritten cards from FMA students. Next week the BSU will participate in the Black Lives Matter spirit week to improve schools for students of color. Detention harms Black students and the BSU will start a petition for CRLS administration to stop after school detention. Next Wednesday the BSU will have an after school desk project on What is Black Love to You presentation and Becoming a Man (and student government) will collaborate on that. The BSU has been nominated for the Kathleen Roberts Creative Leadership Award by the Mass. Teachers Association Human Rights and Civil Rights Award. The Scholastic Art Awards have been announced and 34 CRLS students won. There is a slideshow on line. Ms. Rachel wants to send a congratulatory letter to the Art students.

3. **Presentation of the Records for Approval:** On a Motion by Ms. Rachel, seconded by Ms. Bowman, it was voted to accept the minutes of the: Special Meeting Budget Retreat, January 14, 2020, Budget Workshop, January 21, 2020, and Regular Meeting, January 21, 2020 as presented.
4. **Reconsiderations: None**
5. **Unfinished Business/Calendar:**

(C20-020) Motion by Vice-Chair Bowman: Whereas the Cambridge Public School District works to create a school climate that fosters respect and collaboration with community members and residents that live adjacent to CPSD facilities, and

Whereas there have been multiple reports of incidents at various levels within CPSD regarding challenging interactions between some Cambridge Rindge & Latin School students and abutters, and Whereas CPSD leaders need to collaborate with community members and city staff to find solutions to issues that involve CPSD students that impact the broader community,

Therefore be it resolved that CPSD and CRLS staff hold a meeting with CRLS abutters and city staff to address ongoing issues involving CRLS students and abutters,

Be it further resolved that CPSD and CRLS leadership provide a report to the School Committee outlining a plan that will address these issues by *April 30, 2019*, as well as provide ongoing updates on the plan of

action to the *School Climate Sub-Committee* to ensure progress is being made toward the goals identified to resolve these current issues. (1/21/20 Bowman)

Discussion followed on **C20-20**:

Vice Chair Bowman explained that she brought this Motion in at the last meeting that relates to students behaviors and being in spaces during and after school that are not conducive to being a good neighbor. If the school district wants to be a good neighbor we need proper policies in place so kids are aware. Mr. Weinstein appreciates the impact of this Motion and thinks it should be expanded to all schools. Mayor Siddiqui asked Mr. Weinstein to bring in a separate Motion for that.

Mr. Fantini asked Principal Smith to respond. Dr. Salim stated that Principal Smith has been working with the security and police department regarding this. Mr. Smith stated he would like to be engaged with the Committee and other entities about being good neighbors. We are the largest school in the district and some of our students are not on campus during all hours. There are parking lots and other spaces behind the building where students can be cutting class or behaviors that we don't support. We have some meetings set up, one is tomorrow. We need to be more engaged with our neighbors before and after school especially during the Spring time. The vast majority of our students interact really well with our neighbors. Mr. Rojas asked if this Motion passed how would it help or hinder these issues. Principal Smith thinks it would push the school to engage more concretely with the neighbors. We have had discussions with the Joan Laurenz neighbors about parking bikes.

Mr. Kanner added when you approach students don't persecute them to have a better relationship with members of the community. Ms. Wilson agrees with Mr. Kanner, how do we work cohesively with the community, safety and security? How do we have the conversations with our students around being a good neighbor? Should we start in the Upper Schools?

Ms. Bowman said this Motion is not to typecast the CRLS students but as a district we struggle with naming a problem and how to deal with it. A community member reached out because there was an incident that involved drugs and we can either pretend that's not the case or we can come together and put solutions in place so those types of things don't happen. It is more challenging to talk about those things that may come across as stereotyping. We need to work with students and community members to move this forward. Mayor Siddiqui thinks we need to have a plan and the School Committee should be updated by the leadership because we get a lot of questions and don't always know the answers.

Mayor Siddiqui stated that at the last meeting she made a friendly Motion to amend the Motion to include the correct date of **April 30, 2020**. Just to clarify a Motion was made by Vice Chair Bowman, seconded by Ms. Rachel on a voice vote; it was voted to adopt the amended date.

Ms. Bowman made a Motion to change the last paragraph where it says "as well as provide ongoing updates on the plan of action to the **Committee of the Whole**".

On a Motion by Vice Chair Bowman, seconded by Ms. Rachel to amend the last sentence to update to provide ongoing updates on the plan of action to the Committee of the Whole, on a voice vote, it was voted to adopt the amendment.

Whereas the Cambridge Public School District works to create a school climate that fosters respect and collaboration with community members and residents that live adjacent to CPSD facilities, and Whereas there have been multiple reports of incidents at various levels within CPSD regarding challenging interactions between some Cambridge Rindge & Latin School students and abutters, and Whereas CPSD leaders need to collaborate with community members and city staff to find solutions to issues that involve CPSD students that impact the broader community, Therefore be it resolved that CPSD and CRLS staff hold a meeting with CRLS abutters and city staff to address ongoing issues involving CRLS students and abutters, Be it further resolved that CPSD and CRLS leadership provide a report to the School Committee outlining a plan that will address these issues by April 30, **2020**, as well as provide ongoing updates on the plan of action to the **Committee of the Whole** to ensure progress is being made toward the goals identified to resolve these current issues. (1/21/20 Bowman)

Motion by Vice Chair Bowman, seconded by Mr. Rojas, on a voice vote the amended Motion was adopted.

6. Awaiting Reports: None

Mayor Siddiqui asked for a Motion to suspend the rules to bring forward Dr. Salim's recommendation #20-16 the Allium Montessori Elementary School.

Motion to suspend the rules by Vice Chair Bowman, seconded by Mr. Weinstein, on a voice vote it was voted to suspend the rules to bring forward **#20-16**.

Dr. Salim shared that the School Committee has to vote on the approval of private schools and Ms. Dwyer is here for permission to start the Allium Montessori Elementary School. Dr. Turk added to frame the recommendation; a private school is required to get approval from the School Committee under Mass. General Law Ch. 76, section 1 whether or not children from that town attend it. The content and space provided meets the expectations by the State of Mass. School Committee approval is not an endorsement of any school but we want to know any school operating in our city is ready to receive students. I have worked with Ms. Dwyer for a year and the curriculum is Montessori the same one we use, school staffing and certifications, administration, services that will be provided, financial support, learning time which is the same as CPS, performance of students and the actual building space which is at 1555 Mass. Ave. I did the final site visit and am happy to report that all is in order.

Ms. Rachel stated that it feels funny that we need to approve a private school but not a Charter school. There will be a total of 35 students with none coming from CPS. They have a feeder pattern into this school. This school is part of the Wild Flower network, are there subsidized slots for families with low income from DHS. Ms. Dwyer answered our business model is to accommodate 2/3 of the students on scholarships and from low income families. The primary schools are working with Cambridge and Somerville to provide a high quality education. There are separate businesses that are participating.

Mr. Fantini asked Ms. Dwyer do you want to make a statement about the school. The flower is allium that comes from flowering onions and garlic we want kids to investigate beyond the surface. On the surface allium is a long purple beautiful flower. We want students to delve into that and be inspired. We are planting the seeds for these children to develop and there is a lot more happening under the surface. My background is in neuroscience and I want to work with children about public education. Mr. Fantini stated this school is going to be certified and accredited by Montessori and supports children with tuition of \$20,000 and some is subsidized for students.

Mr. Rojas asked if the program has started. Ms. Dwyer responded no, we are operating as a home school program now. Mr. Rojas stated it sounds like there is no space for sports and physical fitness. Ms. Dwyer replied we are across from the Cambridge Common and a playground for the kids. I am being trained by BOX from the Boston Public Schools.

Vice Chair Bowman asked how does the Montessori Network work? Is there a fee to be part of the Wild Flower network? Ms. Dwyer responded there is a foundation that helped us to be on the right track. It is a three-sided agreement of affiliation. There has not been a fee associated with the network but that is changing to help other schools get on line and help that process.

Mr. Fantini how does someone apply to be a student there? Ms. Dwyer responded they fill out applications on line and paper and I make myself available to families to connect about the program. Mr. Fantini asked what is the website. Ms. Dwyer answered AlliumMontessori.org.

On a roll call vote **#20-16** was approved: Vice Chair Bowman (YEA), Mr. Weinstein (YEA), Mr. Fantini (YEA), Mr. Rojas (YEA), Ms. Rachel (YEA), Ms. Wilson (YEA), Mayor Siddiqui (YEA)

Mr. Fantini asked to finalize it and moved, seconded by Vice Chair Bowman for suspension of the rules for purposes of reconsideration hoping that the same will not prevail; on a voice vote for reconsideration **#20-16** was approved.

7. Superintendent's Agenda:

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| 7a. Presentations: Culturally Responsive Teaching in CPS | Dr. Carolyn L. Turk, Deputy Supt. Maryann MacDonald, Assistant Superintendent of Elementary |
| Education | |
| Assistant | Dr. Michelle Madera, Interim |
| Instruction | Superintendent of Curriculum & |
| Superintendent | Dr. Alexis Morgan, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services |

Mayor Siddiqui turned the meeting over to Dr. Salim for the Presentation (in the School Committee Office and on the CPS website). Dr. Salim asked the Presenters to introduce themselves: Principal Williams, Dr. Grace, Janet McNeil, Dr. Madera, Kate Sousa, May Petrov, and Janine Rodriguez. Dr. Salim will leave a copy of the book *Culturally Responsive Teaching & The Brain* by Zaretta Hammond in the School Committee office if anyone wants to read it. Dr. Turk stated we want people to know what culturally responsive teaching looks like. There was a team of people that shared what is included in this presentation and are very excited about it. We will frame the conversation how will culturally responsive teaching improve student learning and outcomes? What are we doing to align our system to support culturally responsive teaching? It is an interplay of affective and cognitive learning, a focus on empowering the learning capacity of diverse students and Building resilience and academic mindset. It is not a focus on celebrating diversity, creating positive social interactions across difference or raising student consciousness about inequity within the everyday aspects of life. The next slide speaks to the teachers for them to think about "Dimensions of our vision for teaching & learning", a reflective tool for educators to consider how their practice advances our District Plan's vision of joyful and culturally responsive learning."

Dr. Madera began with a quote from John Hattie "How we think about the impact of what we do is more important than what we do." She spoke about some of the instructional practices to see through the eyes of the students, use data, progress and impact and being explicit when teaching students when you want them to know what success looks like to students. Students need to build relationships and trust each other, their teachers, their environment and know making mistakes is OK as long as they use it as a springboard for learning. How will culturally responsive teaching improve student learning and outcomes? We expect that instruction pairs high expectations with appropriate supports, puts students at the center by identifying strengths, provides multiple entry points to access learning, fosters interactive & personalized learning, promotes critical thinking and problem solving. The leadership team read the *Culturally Responsive Teaching & the Brain* which explains the Ready for Rigor Framework: awareness, information processing, learning partnership and community of learners & learning environment. She reviewed what we are doing to align our system to support culturally responsive practices. Principal Williams and the King Open team reviewed culturally responsive teaching and co-collaboration. Dr. Turk outlined the ways we support educators to improve their capacity to implement culturally responsive practices. (on file in the School Committee office and website).

Mayor Siddiqui opened the floor for questions.

Mr. Weinstein wants to highlight the collaboration to develop and carry it out and having more adults in the classroom that know what their roles are. How does this align with Project Based Learning? Principal Williams responded yes, King Open is a Project Based Learning School where student voice and choice is taken into consideration and we are growing together.

Mr. Rojas has been reading the book and one of the things is for teachers to form an alliance with students. How do teachers do that given their time constraints? Principal Williams answered time is a concern being culturally proficient and being engaged in learning. The planning started last year during our professional development and our focus needs to be ongoing, reflective and not a one time deal. Dr. Grace added we are reflecting and doing the same thing thinking where they have been, where they are and where they want to be. Principal Williams has an instructional leadership team at King Open and we all construct the professional development calendar, give it to the staff and then finalize it after everyone

has a say before the end of the school year. Mr. Rojas asked what were some of the hardest things for teachers to change. Principal Williams replied it is the mind set. Mr. Rojas inquired how is that going to be evaluated in the District. Principal Williams answered the teachers are implementing what we are teaching them with learning walks and going to start culturally responsive learning walks. The work should be measured by the impact on MCAS.

Ms. Bowman appreciates the warm demander piece. Sometimes because of cross-cultural differences there are lower expectations because a student comes from a certain place, so we aren't going to be as hard. Hopefully we will see the impact on academic outcomes. How do we determine the age appropriateness for cultural curriculum cultural problems? Dr. Salim responded when we talk about cultural content it is the way it is framed and delivered. There is a curriculum review system where a team of teachers choose the curriculum. Dr. Madera added there are many levels in appropriateness and cultural curriculum. We looked at every book to see how people were portrayed and not because there was a person of color on the cover does not mean the book is appropriate. We look at are there stereo types, implicit bias? ELA trained the educators on culturally responsive practices so we are really seeing the impact of what is being said. It's a process that's going to take time. The DOE has some tools to look at those things. We may be modifying the tool because we want better. We are starting with 4th grade and every year expanding how to modify them.

Ms. Rachel asked about the multi tiered support for adults. Who is giving that feed back? Some educators need coaching 101 and some don't. Principal Williams answered we remove judgment from the conversation; the learning walks are not evaluative. The math leadership team, the literacy team and the social emotional team facilitates the learning walks and we create a tool so we can measure our work. We are creating a safe environment. We tell them this is what you can do to improve your teaching practice. Dr. Madera responded to the racial equity course work to tier this; what are the racial equity competencies that every employee should have. We are thinking about sense of self and how you affect others, systems how do we dismantle them, creating positive welcoming and learning are under development. We will look at what is the core and we will build a hybrid model and tier it by creating and differentiating on line modules and hoping to pilot it in June 2020. Ms. Rachel asked what is the implementation support for this. Dr. Madera responded we are thinking about portfolios to demonstrate growth, TED talks, and ways for them to train other staff members. Mr. Fantini stated we want to close the achievement gap and see high growth in every school and it sounds like this will get us there. Has Loretta Hammond conducted any training for us? Principal Williams responded not at the King Open. Dr. Salim commented that there are a number of conferences around here that staff has attended and we hope to have her come to the colloquium in August. Mr. Fantini added maybe she can do something on line before August. Do they get credit for those courses? Dr. Grace responded it was originally a 10 hour course but we made it 15 hours and DESE approved it for teacher's re-licensure. Paraprofessional's can get PTP's. She will explore getting college credit. Mr. Fantini stated that the King Open is bare and they want to have flags hanging in the building. Ms. Wilson asked what the conversations look like. Principal Williams responded at the school level we worked with Dr. Amante and the staff about privilege and expanded it to families thru the School Council. Alice Cohen invited families to the table to raise topics they wanted to talk about. We have advised families to download the audio book. Ms. Wilson inquired is there any collaboration between Number Talk and Math Talk? Dr. Turk replied there are protocols to help students work thru a problem; there is no right or wrong way and that there are different ways to approach and solve the problem.

Mayor Siddiqui stated it is very clear that you work well together and how cohesive we are across the district.

7b. CPS District Plan: None

7c. Consent Agenda:

Motion by Ms. Bowman, seconded by Mr. Rojas to bring the Superintendent's Consent Agenda forward. On a roll call vote the Superintendent's Agenda was accepted and adopted, Vice Chair Bowman (YEA), Mr. Weinstein (YEA), Mr. Fantini (YEA), Mr. Rojas (YEA), Ms. Rachel (YEA), Ms. Wilson (YEA), Mayor Siddiqui (YEA)

#20-15 FY19-20 General Fund Budget Statutory Transfers

#20-16 Approval of Private: Allium Montessori Elementary School

#20-17 Day & Residential Program Services not Available from the Cambridge School Department

#20-18 Contract Award: Heinemann Publishing: Instructional Materials

#20-19 Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

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

#20-20 Motion from Mr. Fantini, Whereas CPS strives to engage parents, students, educators, staff and the community in CPS decision-making, the School Committee will televise all budget meetings and budget hearings in the Attles School Committee Room.

Mr. Fantini amended his Motion to include *that take place* in the *Henrietta S. Attles*. On a Motion by Mr. Fantini seconded by Mr. Weinstein on a voice vote the Motion was amended.

#20-20 Whereas CPS strives to engage parents, students, educators, staff and the community in CPS decision-making, the School Committee will televise all budget meetings and budget hearings **that take place** in the **Henrietta S. Attles** School Committee Room.

On a Motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Wilson, on voice vote the Motion was adopted as amended.

10. Resolutions (letters of congratulations, letters of condolence): Ms. Rachel requested to send a letter to all 34 art award students.

Ms. Wilson requested to send a condolence letter to the family of Julia Hogan-Jackson.

11. Announcements: Dr. Salim announced on Thursday there is a budget retreat to share a summary of Budget Priorities from staff, different co-teaching models and the Level Up Program.

The Workforce open house is next Wednesday at 194 Windsor Street from 6:30–7:30.

There is a roundtable a week from today at 5:30 P.M. with the City Council.

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications and Reports from City Officers: None

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Wilson, on a voice vote the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

On a roll call vote to enter Executive Session, Vice Chair Bowman (YEA), Mr. Weinstein (YEA), Mr. Fantini (YEA), Mr. Rojas (YEA), Ms. Rachel (YEA), Ms. Wilson (YEA), Mayor Siddiqui (YEA)

Documents on file in the School Committee Office:
CPS Presentation: Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices
Dimensions of Our Vision for Teaching and Learning