

Virtual School Climate Sub-Committee Report
Tuesday, November 30, 2021
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the for the purpose discussing the Teen Health Survey.

Members Present: Member Rachel, Member Wilson, Vice-Chair Bowman

Also Present: Mayor Siddiqui; Member Weinstein; Student Member Vera-DeGraff; Student Member Killian; Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Jamie McCarthy; Principal Damon Smith

The meeting started at 6 pm. Member Rachel is the chair.

Chair Rachel outlined the meeting and acknowledged the student walk out that took place at CRLS. Principal Smith took a moment to acknowledge the passing of a student on November 24, 2021.

Chair Rachel turned the meeting over to the administration for a [presentation](#) on [survey results](#).

Ms. McCarthy outlined the presentation: Public Health Context, Findings 2021 Student Health Survey, Priority Areas of Action and then discussion.

- She shared the summary of the findings: mental health worsened during the pandemic, decline in meaningful connections, decline in reported substance use, safety concerns high among students as female, genderqueer, African American/Black, Asian and Hispanic/Latino, percent of students engaging in physical activity declined compared to prior years.

Mr. Clark asked how many people filled out the survey.

- It was confirmed that 3,000 students in total across the middle and upper schools, participation rate of about 70%.

Member Weinstein asked if there were national numbers. Ms. McCarthy confirmed that many school districts across the country participate.

Mr. Clark asked how the survey was administered. Ms. McCarthy discussed how it varied from schools.

Chair Rachel opened the meeting for comments about trends.

- Member Wilson noticed that the transgender/queer/LGBTQ community is significantly suffering and asked for clarification on next steps.
- Mayor Siddiqui expressed concern over the increased number of students who have contemplated suicide.
- Emmanuel Oppong-Yeboah discussed their concern about how one in five students have experienced a death of a family member.
- Member Weinstein was struck by how high these numbers were before COVID.

Chair Rachel discussed how our students are struggling and turned the meeting over to the Committee Student members.

- Student Member Vera-DeGraff discussed how the School Committee can change policy to support the work.
- Ms. McCarthy gave a summary of the health & wellness curriculum. She highlighted the policies: Wellness policy (overdue for review), student athlete waiver of course requirements, Teen Health Center Policy, anti-bullying policy (overdue for review) and

Student Member Killian gave background on the walkout and the demands such as updating the reporting process.

Chair Rachel listed the ideas that the planning team came up with and what to prioritize. The meeting was opened to students.

- Halima Osman, junior, for the high school discussed the issues of the reporting process.
- Lwan Mahari, senior, discussed the importance of centering student voices in policy. She advocated for a third party for reporting.

Chair Rachel opened the meeting to caregivers for questions.

Ms. Emie Michaud-Weinstock discussed her concern of the survey results and wanted to know what the next steps were.

- The administration echoed sentiments over urgency.

Chair Rachel asked about incident reporting protocol.

- Principal Smith provided background and acknowledged the walk out. Principal Smith discussed the protocol and how to better communicate the changes.

Ms. McCarthy discussed a mechanism for the survey results to talk about to help students.

Daniel Michaud-Weinstock commended the students on the walkout and advocated for more SEL support.

Tyrone Bellitti discussed the importance of trust.

Chair Rachel outlined possible changes to policy: 1) Having adult facilitated discussions about assault and sexual harassment 2) Updated communicated incident reporting policy 3) All 9th graders have consent curriculum 4) Stop the athletic waiver policy

Chair Rachel opened the meeting to other members of the Sub-Committee.

- Vice-Chair Bowman discussed the importance of having conversations engaging students in systems and processes.
- Member Rachel discussed how she is suggesting a series of meetings.
- Member Wilson discussed how do we leverage our community partners.

Chair Rachel discussed the motion that Member Weinstein brought to the School Committee.

Student Member Vera-DeGraff and Student Member Killian advocated for a wellness curriculum policy change.

Chair Rachel adjourned the meeting at 7:59 pm.