



**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
(Official Minutes)**

Regular Meeting

January 18, 2022

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 Rachel (Remote), Member Bhambi, Member Fantini, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson (Remote), Mayor Siddiqui

Also Present: Nuriel Vera-DeGraff, Anais Killian, Student School Committee Representatives

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: Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

1. Public Comment:

The following individuals were heard:

- **Catherine Reilly** spoke in opposition of current COVID-related restrictions in the schools
- **Sandy Gould** spoke in opposition to the current restriction on in-person audience attendance at CRLS sporting events and other COVID-related restrictions on school grounds.
- **Guilia Fulci** spoke in opposition to the COVID-related restrictions in school cafeterias at the elementary school level.

On a motion by Member Fantini seconded by Member Weinstein on the following roll call vote, it was voted to close public comment: Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

2. Student School Committee Report:

Student Member Killian reported that performing arts performances such as the World Jazz Ensemble, MDC shows, choruses, and orchestra performances have been either rescheduled or recorded with no live audience in attendance. Student Member Killian also gave a brief report about student testing at CRLS and recommended a five-minute block into the schedules of CRLS students for testing and if Cambridge could potentially try an opt-out system regarding testing mandates.

Student Member Vera-DeGraff reported that this week marks the end of Semester One, Quarter 2, and provided the exam schedule to the Committee. The Teen Health Center hosts Booster clinics weekly and recommends scheduling changes to avoid missing class. Student Member Vera-DeGraff also reported the student perspective on the spectator ban at CRLS sporting events.

Mayor Siddiqui briefly addressed the opt-in testing system and gave some background on the previous School Committee discussion.

Member Weinstein referred to what was addressed in Public Comment and students leaving school grounds to have lunch at other places and asked for an estimate on how many students maybe be using that option for lunch. Member Vera-Degraff responded that there are no more than four restaurants within walking distance of CRLS, so few students utilize that option.

Member Wilson inquired about the restrictions of spectators on performances and sporting events.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- January 3, 2022 Organizational Meeting
- January 4, 2022 Regular Meeting

On a motion by Member Rojas seconded by Member Fantini, it was voted to accept the Minutes as written, on the following roll call: Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar: None

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7. Superintendent's Agenda:

7a. Presentations:

Mayor Siddiqui turned the floor over to Interim Superintendent Dr. Greer, who began the Superintendent's Agenda with a COVID update.

Dr. Greer spoke upon the public concern regarding school lunch restrictions and reported that recommendations made by the school are usually from the Health and Safety Working Group. Dr. Greer also reported that action reviews with the district admin team, the CIC, DESE, etc., have been made to determine the best strategies and mitigation in the future on how to open schools after holiday breaks safely. Dr. Greer, Mr. Maloney, and Dr. Dobbleteen also spoke on the District's COVID approaches, including new DESE guidelines released to improve student testing. Mr. Maloney provided statistics on the COVID dashboard during the last week.

Mayor Siddiqui asked about the following steps to improve student testing at the high school. Mr. Maloney mentioned that Principal Smith is ready to implement a new pilot system that students can test inside the classrooms. **Mayor Siddiqui** suggested that the Teen Health center alter the start time of the booster clinics from 8:30 am – 3:00 pm to 8:00 am - 3:30 pm.

Member Fantini inquired about the rationale for eliminating spectators at sporting and performing arts events. Dr. Dobbleteen responded the reasoning was due to increased cases of COVID due to the Omicron variant; it seems best to have restrictions on sporting and performing arts events. Mr. Maloney mentioned that the elimination of spectators is only enforced through Saturday, January 29.

Member Weinstein recommended that booster clinics accommodate parent work hours since students need parental consent before receiving the booster.

Member Bhambi expressed that the community needs to know that these changes are not permanent and that messaging is important.

Member Wilson inquired about adding a School Committee member and a student member (or a member of student government) to be a part of the Health and Safety Working Group. **Mayor Siddiqui** will do a follow-up on the request.

After the discussion, Mayor Siddiqui passed the floor to Dr. Greer, who began the first meeting presentation focused on the FY23 Budget Guidelines and Process. The full presentation can be found on the School Committee [website](#).

Dr. Greer paused the presentation halfway and opened the floor for questions.

Member Bhambi inquired about student success and loss of learning time during COVID and the efforts being made to the current ineffectiveness in the organizational structure.

Member Fantini inquired about student success and referred to a Boston Globe article in how school systems use technology to improve students' needs, leading to the better support of the Social-Emotional Learning for students.

Vice-Chair Rachel touched briefly on the "Culture and Climate" section and recommended adding "inclusive" to that section as part of the work that CPSD is doing.

Member Weinstein inquired about teacher leadership and opportunities for educators that do not incorporate leaving the classroom to share knowledge and grow in diverse areas.

Member Wilson inquired about educator collaboratives.

Mayor Siddiqui turned the presentation back over to Dr. Greer and Ms. Spinner to continue the FY23 Budget Guideline presentation.

After the second half of the presentation, Ms. Spinner turned the floor back to Mayor Siddiqui, who opened the floor up for discussion.

Member Rojas inquired about the per-pupil spending in-district vs. out-of-district. Ms. Spinner responded that out-of-district includes students with special services with needs that the district does not serve, charter school students, and vocational students. **Member Rojas** also suggested that ESSER funding line items be separated into one-time, one-time/temporary expenses vs. long-term expenses

Member Bhambi inquired how to make community outreach more effective regarding the budget and a structured budget with newly identified needs specifically for the young people who do not have a 4-year college career path.

Member Weinstein inquired about how the district can utilize the school council for these budget community meetings since they have built community relationships.

Student Member Kilian inquired about Chapter 70 and its factored into the CPSD annual budget. Ms. Spinner responded that the state has a formula for Chapter 70, in which student aid is allocated to the state to support the CPSD budget.

Member Fantini followed up on Student Member Killian's comment about Chapter 70 and asked if the city holds the district unaccountable for charter school expenses and if inflation affects some areas in the budget. Ms. Spinner explained Chapter 70's impact on the city's revenue formula. Inflation does not directly affect staff and contractual services but can impact food and nutritional service due to supply chain issues.

Student Member Vera-DeGraff asked if families could submit questions about the budget process if they cannot make the community meetings. A survey will be shared with the CPSD community from January 30 to February 10.

Dr. Greer turned the meeting over to Dr. Mullen led the second presentation of the night that focused on the Office of Student Supports and Services. The full presentation can be found on the [website](#).

Following the Office of Student Supports and Services presentation, Mayor Siddiqui opened the floor to the Committee for questions and discussion.

Member Weinstein expressed his appreciation to Dr. Mullen on the findings and asked how the School Committee could support advanced learning resources.

Member Rojas inquired about additional insight on disproportionate and marginalized students.

Member Fantini asked about the DESE report that stated “not needed assistance” and how Dr. Mullen interpreted it. He also inquired about the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). He also inquired about the interventionalist numbers presented in the presentation.

Member Wilson addressed the backlog of OSS and professional learning opportunities. She also addressed the current backlog and if the backlog can be fulfilled by the end of the school year,

7b. CPS District Plan: None

7c. Consent Agenda:

Vice-Chair Rachel pulled **#22-12**. Member Wilson pulled **#22-13**. On the following rollcall vote, it was voted to adopt **#22-09**: Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#22-09, Day & Residential Program Services not Available from the Cambridge School Department, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee contracts to the institutions as detailed in the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, funds to be provided from the General Fund and/or Grant Fund Budget, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

<u>Program</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Day	1	\$38,115.00
Residential	0	
45 Day	0	
	<u>1</u>	<u>\$38,115.00</u>

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

#22-12, Approval of Revisions to Cambridge Public Schools Chapter 74 CVTE (Career/Vocational Technical Education) Student Admissions Policy (first reading), be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Cambridge Public Schools Chapter 74 CVTE (Career/Vocation Technical Education) Student Admissions Policy-Rindge School of Technical Arts (RSTA) at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School as detailed in the attached document (first reading).

Discussion followed on **#22-12**.

Vice-Chair Rachel inquired about gender-neutral language in the Chapter 74 policy and asked If there was a requirement to revise the admissions policy and if this affects RSTA. Dr. Greer responded that this policy change is required and welcomed Dr. Gittens and Mr. Anais for more clarification and feedback. Dr. Gittens further clarified the requirements and mentioned that the district could make the policy reflect gender-neutral language. Mr. Anais also gave further clarification on the Chapter 74 Policy requirements.

Member Weinstein asked for clarification on the policy's language and if the language presented was created by the district or created by DESE. Mr. Anais explained how the district created the policy, and the changes are for the was created by the district to be compliant with DESE.

Per School Committee rules, at 10:00 pm, Mayor Siddiqui entertained a motion to extend the meeting until 11:00 pm. On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by member Fantini, on the following roll call vote, it was voted to adopt **#22-09**: Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

It was voted to adopt **#22-12** for a second reading on the following roll call: Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#21-13, Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for COVID-19 Self-Test Kits, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

IHealth Labs, Inc., 120 SanLuncar Ct., Sunnyvale, CA, for the period of January 20, 2022 to June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$153,200.00

A discussion followed on **#22-13**.

Member Wilson inquired about the district's plan to distribute the COVID-10 Self-Test Kits, and are these only implemented for February break, or is April break included. A distribution plan has not been decided yet, but it is forthcoming. The Self-Test Kits will be for February and April breaks.

Member Bhambi asked for more clarification on how many tests students will receive. At least one self-test kit will be available per student.

It was voted to adopt **#22-13** on the following roll call: Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Student Member Killian YEA, Student Member Vera-Degraff YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

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

#22-10 Motion by Member Fantini

That the attached budget guidelines be adopted for FY23.

Member Fantini requested to add Vice-Chair Rachel and Member Jose on the motion since they are the new budget co-chairs.

On a motion by Member Fantini seconded by Member Weinstein, it was voted to add Vice-Chair Rachel and Member Rojas to motion **#22-10**, on the following roll call: Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Student Member Killian YEA, Student Member Vera-DeGraff YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA

Vice Chair Rachel made some suggestions to modify the language on crisis response teams and add inclusive to the Budget Guidelines. Since the Vice-Chair modifications are minimal, Mayor Siddiqui recommended that Vice Chair Rachel and Member Rojas as Budget Co-chairs connect with Dr. Greer to review the budget guidelines.

On a motion by Member Fantini seconded by Member Wilson, it was voted to **#22-10**, on the following roll call: Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Student Member Killian YEA, Student Member Vera-DeGraff YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

10. Resolutions (letters of congratulations, letters of condolence)

#22-11 Joint Motion by Mayor Siddiqui, Member Wilson, and Vice-Chair Rachel

WHEREAS: The School Committee was deeply saddened to learn that Maurico Gutierrez passed away suddenly on January 7, 2022; and

WHEREAS: Maurico was a CRLS Learning Community-L student and earned his diploma with his classmates in June 2021 and then chose to remain at CRLS this school year to take part in the district's postgraduate program; and

WHEREAS: Maurico is survived by a heartbroken family, including his brothers Alejandro and Armando, his mother Maria, a beloved staff member at the Tobin Montessori, his father Roberto, and his aunts, Maria Vasquez, Ilda Perez, Gloria Vasquez and Pili Vasquez; and

WHEREAS: Mauricio was a connector who had an unique ability to bring people together and cherished his time with peers and staff; and

WHEREAS: Mauricio had an adventurous spirit, loved his longboard, McDonald's fries, and was excited to be learning more about automobiles in the RSTA Garage/Autoshop; and

WHEREAS: Losing Maurico is a huge loss to the Cambridge community and our hearts are heavy with grief knowing he was taken from us far too young; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee go on record extending our deepest sympathy to the family of Maurico Gutierrez at this time of such personal loss; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Executive Secretary be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to his family on behalf of the entire School Committee.

Mayor Siddiqui read the resolution and extended her condolences to the family of Maurico Gutierrez.

It was voted to adopt #22-11 on the following roll call: Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Student Member Killian YEA, Student Member Vera-Degraff YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

11. Announcements: None

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications from City Officers:

- [Mayor Siddiqui: Appointments to Family Policy Council](#)
- [Vice-Chair Rachel: Sub-Committee Appointments](#)

Mayor Siddiqui read-aloud the Appointments to the Family Policy Council

Vice Chair Rachel briefly discussed the Subcommittee Appointments for the 2022-2023 School Committee.

On a motion by Member Fantini seconded by Member Weinstein on the following roll call vote, the School Committee entertained a motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussing strategy for collective bargaining (all CEA Units and Food Service) and to discuss strategy for litigation/arbitration as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining and litigation/arbitration positions of the School Committee. No votes will be taken, and the Committee will not reconvene in open session upon completion of the Executive Session: Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

On a motion by Member Bhambi, seconded by Member Rojas, it was voted on the following roll call vote open session was adjourned: Vice Chair Rachel YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA. (10:21 PM).

Attest:

Ariel B. Kennebrew

Ariel Kennebrew

Executive Secretary to the School Committee