



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Roundtable Meeting

January 25, 2022

Called for 6:00 p.m. broadcast from the Dr. Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purpose of introducing the Youth Resource Officers Program to the School Committee.

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

Also Present: Dr. Greer, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent of Schools
Claire Spinner, Chief Financial Officer
Dr. Gittens, Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Schools
Anais Killian, Student School Committee Member
Nuriel Vera-DeGraff, Student School Committee Member
Christine Elow, Commissioner
Rob Lowe Superintendent
Steven Magalhaes, Lieutenant
Fred Cabral, Deputy
Youth Resources Officers: Michel Daniliuk, Devon Brooks, Pamela Norris, Nicole Pacheco, Ozzie Ortiz, Frank Greenidge, John Jones Anthony Santiago, Che Santos, Christopher Ponte
Dr. Jamie Barrett.
Jeremy Warnick

Mayor Siddiqui in the Chair

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

The Chair read the call of the meeting and explained that this meeting is being televised, votes will not be taken, and there will be no public comment.

Mayor Siddiqui turned the floor over to **Vice Chair Rachel**, who provided a brief overview of the purpose of the Roundtable Meeting, the current Youth Resource Officer Program. **Member Wilson** also provided context about the Youth Resources and the significance of having conversations about policing in schools.

Vice Chair Rachel then turned the meeting over to Commissioner Elow, who introduced the Youth Resources Officers and program to Committee. Throughout the overview, several current Youth Resource Officers shared their experiences working in the Cambridge Public Schools that included relationship building, ensuring safety for all children, anti-bullying presentations, youth services funding, girls acting and discovery programs, and sports camps.

After the presentation, Mayor Siddiqui passed the floor over to the Committee for discussion.

Member Rojas shared his experience as a parent seeing the YRO program and inquired about concrete examples of YRO and student intervention. Deputy Cabral responded by giving examples of student intervention, including an incident in 2014 on social media, where a family member of a student who

struggled with mental health and domestic issues created a post telling students not to attend school based on a threat from that family member who had access to firearms.

Member Bhambi inquired about the intimidation young people may have with people in uniform and how the Youth Resources Officer Program can be a resource to those students. Commissioner Elow responded about her experience as a woman of color, raising two sons of color, and the importance of having conversations with young people to view the Youth Resource Officers as a resource.

Member Bhambi inquired about YRO engagement disciplinary actions amongst students regarding suspensions etc. Deputy Cabral mentioned that Youth Resource Officers are not involved in school disciplinary actions.

Member Fantini discussed the national model of the Cambridge Youth Resource Officer Program and inquired on how can the Youth Resource Officers add to make operations more helpful to students. Deputy Cabral responded that there is a vacancy he would love to fill for the private and charter schools. He would like to see parental/family counseling to prevent young scholars from getting into trouble for domestic issues.

Member Weinstein inquired if the Youth Resource Officers had two to three points or initiatives they did not touch base on that they would love to discuss tonight. Lieutenant Cabral responded that the Youth Resource Officer Program divergence is community-based in which the Youth Resource Officer will lead a divergence with a student for twelve weeks. Students can do a divergence more than once, and if the student makes a mistake, they will not be charged during a divergence.

Member Wilson inquired about hearing about examples of stories from which the Youth Resource Officer program felt they needed to learn. Commissioner Elow and Jamie Barret provided context on how Youth Resource Officers view all incidents as something they can continually improve on and how they aim to improve them.

Member Wilson inquired about the increase in violence at the middle and upper schools and how the Youth Resource Officers can decrease the violence. Deputy Cabral responded that one of the ways the Youth Resource Officers decrease violence in schools is by adding a presence in schools.

Member Wilson inquired about “plain-clothes” officers on school campuses. Commissioner Elow responded that if having officers in uniform creates a barrier, then discussions can be made to have the YRO’s in plain clothes on school grounds.

Vice Chair Rachel – asked to view the most recent MOU for the School Committee to review. Talked about a potential survey about YROs to distribute to young people. Also asked, how do we prepare interactions with police officers beyond Cambridge (six miles).

Vice Chair Rachel inquired about the next steps with Commissioner Elow. Officer Daniliuk recommended for the YRO survey be included as a part of the annual Teen Health Survey.

Member Bhambi inquired about the divergence and the connection of Youth Resource Officers on campuses and effective diversion. Dr. Barrett responded that having Youth Resources Officers on campus can assist in being a support system for both staff and students in and out of school.

Member Wilson asked for clarification on the Youth Resource Officer Program as a referral system and the demographics of those using the program as a referral/resource. Both Officer Barret and Deputy Cabral explained that the Youth Resource Officer program is not a referral system, and the demographic referrals reflect the school district

Mayor Siddiqui inquired about the role of officers regarding school discipline and if the Youth Resource Officer interplay with school security regarding discipline. Superintendent Lowe responded that the Youth Resource Officers are more of a supporting role with school security.

Mayor Siddiqui inquired about a community question on why Youth Resource Officers are not at the public and charter schools in the city. Deputy Cabral responded that there is some presence at charter schools, and there is a good relationship between the Youth Resource Officers and the charter and public schools.

Mayor Siddiqui wrapped up the Roundtable and mentioned that follow-up conversations would happen.

On a motion by Member, seconded by Member, the meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m. on the following rollcall vote: Member Rojas YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

Attest:



Ariel B. Kennebrew
Executive Secretary to the School Committee