



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

February 1, 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, Member Bhambi, Member Fantini, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson, 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 6:01 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 of members present: Member Weinstein PRESENT, Member Wilson PRESENT; Member Bhambi PRESENT; Member Rojas PRESENT, Vice-Chair Rachel, PRESENT; Member Fantini PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui PRESENT.

1. **Public Comment:**

The following individuals were heard:

- Dan Monahan, Lexington Street, spoke in support of #22-18, #22-21, and #22-23.
- Abigail Price spoke in support of #22-21.
- Morgan Nerich spoke in support of #22-21.
- Molly Stone-Peterson spoke in support of #22-21.
- Kaelyn Silva spoke in support of #22-21.
- Nasra Samater, spoke in support of #22-21.
- Anna Bellows spoke in support of #22-21.
- Sarah O'Neil, Chilton Street, spoke in support of #22-23.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Member Weinstein, to extend Public Comment for all speakers for unlimited time. It was voted to extend to public comment on a voice vote.

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

2. **Student School Committee Report:**

Student Member Vera-DeGraff began his report by extending his gratitude to the TIAA group for their testimonies spoken in public comment. Student Member Vera-DeGraff mentioned the finals schedule for the new semester was released the week prior. There will be a semester two curriculum night on February 17th. COVID-19 booster clinics and testing are still occurring during school hours, making it difficult for students to choose between testing/vaccines and going to class.

Student Member Killian reported on the CRLS Scholarship workshops. The scholarship workshop portal is open and virtual workshops are held every Thursday through February 24th. **Student Member Killian** also addressed the possibility of Cambridge using an “opt-out” system for COVID testing.

Mayor Siddiqui mentioned that she and Dr. Greer are working on modifying testing times at the Teen Health Center.

On a motion by Vice-Chair Rachel motioned, seconded by Member Wilson, it was voted to suspend the rules and bring motion **#22-21** forward for discussion and adoption, on the following roll call vote: Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA, Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Fantini YEA, Member Rojas YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#22-21 Joint Motion by Vice Chair Rachel, Mayor Siddiqui, Member Wilson in collaboration with Student Member Killian and Student Member Vera-DeGraff

WHEREAS: Cambridge Rindge and Latin School students have spoken out about troubling levels of sexual harassment and assault; and

WHEREAS: Students have repeatedly advocated for more education around consent and prevention of gender- and sex-based discrimination; and

WHEREAS: Educators in the Wellness and Athletics Departments as well as school leadership have joined the students in pushing for additional required Health instruction; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee and Interim Superintendent are on record supporting further Health education that would address sexual assault prevention, consent, healthy relationships, and related matters; and

WHEREAS: The School Committee holds that this supplementary learning would help improve the climate at the high school as well as better prepare students for external situations; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee changes File IKF High School Graduation Requirements Policy from five Health credits to fifteen Health credits, providing a second semester of Health courses for the class of 2026 in their junior year and every class thereafter; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Wellness Department will develop the new curriculum in collaboration with a group of students representative of the student body; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the School Committee revises File IHAE Physical Education Policy to specify that waivers provided to CRLS students participating in approved team sports will apply to physical education, but not Health course requirements.

A discussion followed on **#22-21**.

Student Member Killian gave the context of the reasonings for revising the File IHAE Physical Education Policy. One semester of health is inefficient for students, and the motion creates the opportunity to add more to the health curriculum surrounding student interests. **Student Member Vera-DeGraff** clarified that the motion creates an additional semester of health, effective with the class of 2026, and thanked Jamie McCarthy for help assistance with the Wellness and Health Curriculum,

Vice-Chair Rachel acknowledged the students and mentioned that last November was the third student walkout in the past eight years. She also noted that the extra semester of health is necessary but not sufficient and is eager to work with the district to create more efficiency outside of health classes. Scholar Athletes will be required to take health classes but will still be exempt from Physical Education requirements in lieu of being a part of an athletic team,

Member Weinstein echoed his support of the motion and asked Dr. Greer to highlight a few next steps. Dr. Greer mentioned that a detailed update would be provided at the next Regular School Committee.

Member Rojas asked why the changes would occur with the class of 2026. Ms. McCarthy explained the reasoning is due to planning both on a curriculum level and that most students currently in high school already have plans mapped out for their four years. Making changes to those plans can be problematic, but the district is working on alternatives in the fall. **Member Rojas** inquired if the district could have done

the policy change. **Vice-Chair Rachel** explained that since this is a change in graduation requirements, it has to come through to the School Committee.

Member Wilson asked about the process and timeline and how the process can be speeded so more students can utilize the new policy and resources around restorative justice and healing.

Mayor Siddiqui discussed several options the Committee can do to pass the motion. Since it is a policy change, this would be a first reading of the policy change unless the Committee votes to waive the second reading.

On a motion by Vice-Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Wilson, it was voted to waive the second reading on a voice vote.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Vice-Chair Rachel, the following roll call vote **#22-21** was adopted: Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA; Vice-Chair Rachel, YEA; Member Fantini YEA, Member Rojas YEA; Student Member Killian (Non-Binding) YEA; Student Member Vera-DeGraff (Non-Binding) YEA Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- **January 18, 2022 Regular Meeting**
- **January 25, 2022 Roundtable Meeting**

On a motion by Vice-Chair Rachel, seconded by Member Weinstein, it was voted to accept the Minutes as written via a voice vote.

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar: None

6. Awaiting Reports: None

7. Superintendent's Agenda:

7a. Presentations:

Mayor Siddiqui passed the floor over to Dr. Greer, who, along with Dr. Dobberteen, gave an update surrounding COVID metrics to ensure a safe return for students and staff following February break. Her full presentation can be found on the [website](#).

After the presentation, Mayor Siddiqui opened the floor for questions and discussions,

Member Wilson discussed the possibility of extending the hours of the Teen Health Center to echo the comments made by our Student Committee Members about testing and vaccines being only available during school hours which causes students to decide whether they want to be tested/vaccinated vs. going to class. Dr. Dobberteen responded that they could not extend their hours at the moment due to staffing issues.

Member Wilson inquired about eligibility for students who contracted COVID and getting the booster shot. Dr. Dobberteen mentioned that once the students feel well, they are encouraged to get the booster.

Member Wilson also asked about pre-planned travel before the February break. Dr. Greer responded that parents should let their principal and front office know.

Member Weinstein inquired if upper school students (ages 12 and up) could benefit from the vaccination site at the Teen Health Center. Dr. Dobberteen responded that currently, it is just for CRLS students as it is hard to mitigate the logistics for students not at CRLS.

Student Member Vera-DeGraff talked about the Teen Health Center times regarding students testing processing times and if learning community hours can be extended. Dr. Greer responded that she could consult with Principal Smith on the matter.

Student Member Killian asked for clarity surrounding unvaccinated individuals since Test and Stay will no longer be implemented. Dr. Dobberteen mentioned that students will still be surveillance tested twice a week to meet the needs of any students that need testing. Those students will be tested Monday and Tuesday. They will then have the open to test at home via a rapid test later in the week.

Member Rojas mentioned that Student Member Killian's question is a great example of the district's evolution in its resources surrounding the COVID pandemic. He also expressed his gratitude for the video instructions on the rapid tests.

Vice-Chair Rachel posed a follow-up question to Student Member Killian's question and asked for clarification on "expanded surveillance testing." Does expanded refer to an increased participation rate? Dr. Greer responded that testing numbers at the elementary and middle schools are relatively high. The high school can improve on their numbers.

Member Bhambi asked about the district receiving rapid testing supplies from DESE on time and switching to the new testing protocols. Dr. Greer mentioned that her office was proactive in ordering the supplies to opt-in to the DESE testing protocols.

Member Fantini asked for clarity on the testing process for students who may test positive. Dr. Dobberteen mentioned protocols have been modified for accuracy and productivity. Students will be swapped with two swabs – one will be in a pool, and the other will be individual so both results can return quickly. **Member Fantini** asked about the timeline of mask removal and if that would be discussed. Dr. Greer passed the floor to Dr. Turk, who mentioned the district is following DESE guidelines which currently has the mask policy expire on 2/28. Dr. Turk mentioned that that might be extended another week due to returning to school from February break.

Mayor Siddiqui asked for clarity on the new testing system – if families need to opt-in and consent again. Dr. Greer responded that, unfortunately, families would need to re-consent for testing. Dr. Greer also reported that consent at the high school is 77% and in the 80% range at the other schools. She believes the district can reach those consent numbers again. **Mayor Siddiqui** asked about other districts participating in the DESE testing program. Dr. Greer responded that most districts in the state are participating.

Student Member Vera-DeGraff inquired about an opt-in program and unvaccinated students. If there are identified as close contacts and there is no more test and stay, then what happens. Will there be any notifications from the principal alerting someone if they were a close contact?

Member Wilson inquired about CRLS consent numbers (1200 consent and 400ish non-consent) and if the consent forms will be physical or electronic. She noted that it took a while to get to those numbers and asked the plan to ensure students/parents would consent again. Dr. Greer responded that previous methods would be done to get the consent numbers again.

Member Weinstein asked if families needed to opt-in to receive regular rapid testing. Dr. Greer responded that there isn't an opt-in for February break, but they will need to do so going forward. **Member Weinstein** asked if there was a way to inform the district if tests were taken. Dr. Greer mentioned that if a student/staff member has a positive test, they will report it. There is no need to report negative tests.

Vice-Chair Rachel asked for clarification on the consent portal and if families need to opt-in for pool or rapid testing. Dr. Greer and Dr. Brown responded that families need to opt-in for rapid testing supplies per DESE guidelines.

Member Rojas discussed the mask mandate expiration date. He believes it should be extended past the February 28 deadline because that is the first day back from February break.

Member Fantini asked for clarity on opting in. Dr. Brown mentioned that the new opt-in system could be done via mobile, proxy over the phone, and online.

Dr. Greer spoke briefly on the mask requirement situation. Dr. Greer and Mayor Siddiqui acknowledge that this is an ongoing discussion.

After the discussion, Mayor Siddiqui turned the floor over to Dr. Greer and Ms. Claire Spinner. They presented the second presentation for the night, which focused on the FY23 Enrollment & Budget Projections. The full presentation can be found on the [website](#).

Vice-Chair Rachel asked for clarity surrounding the enrollment decline and the budget. Since the district has more city funding than state funding, enrollment decline does not impact the CPS budget.

Member Rojas asked for clarity on the downward enrollment trend and how this trend is relevant in the district's budget going forward. Ms. Spinner responded that enrollment predictions are usually created five years out (five-year grade projection). Until the third year of that projection, the district factors those enrollment numbers into the budget.

Member Wilson inquired about available seats in the JK/K lottery. Ms. Spinner mentioned that she does not have the numbers directly but can follow up.

Member Bhambi asked for clarity surrounding the decrease in enrollments and the projected salary increase. Ms. Spinner responded that the salary increase for staff is for the current workforce, including step and COLA increases.

Member Rojas asked for clarity on the salary increases and if ESSER-related positions are also a part of these salaries. Ms. Spinner clarified that salary adjustments are only applicable to the General Fund. Member Rojas asked if air scrubbers will be replaced and if that is projected in the FY23 General Fund,

Member Fantini briefly discussed the Emerging Themes portion of the presentation and mentioned the possibility of opening public comment for community discussion. Ms. Spinner clarified that the Emerging Themes portion is based on staff (admins, principals, department leaders, and curriculum coordinators).

After the presentation, Dr. Greer shared a few discussion points with the Committee and turned the floor over to Mayor Siddiqui, who opened the floor up for discussion.

Vice-Chair Rachel discussed the Culture and Climate theme in the presentations and its significance to students currently.

Member Bhambi discussed the recent articles about staff retention in school districts across the country and asked if the issue was prevalent in Cambridge. Dr. Greer mentioned that staff took extended leaves or left due to the pandemic, but staff attainability remains strong in the district.

Member Weinstein inquired about curriculum alignment in the district, advanced learning opportunities, and budget implications for online frameworks and extra-circular activities.

Member Rojas discussed key challenges and mentioned that the district needs move from an emergency response to COVID to more of a management response to COVID.

Member Fantini discussed the student success equity issue in the district; Student success is the biggest driver.

Student Member Killian mentioned that Bourne Public Schools provided free AP (Pre-AP) courses to 8th-grade students and asked Dr. Greer about her thoughts. Dr. Turk mentioned she would love to see what Bourne is doing; however, the district does provide Preview-AP classes that are an option available to some students. **Student Member Vera-DeGraff** discussed the differences in Bourne's Pre-AP class versus CPS's Preview AP program.

Member Wilson inquired how the district can improve our vocational program to be more robust and create resources and resource space to assist in the staff burnouts and SEL spaces for students.

Mayor Siddiqui discussed the school schedule analysis and design. Leveraging school vacation, after school programs, and expanding student leadership are some of the opportunities explored in the school schedule analysis and design.

Member Wilson inquired about the i-Ready tool and leveraging community partners.

Dr. Greer thanked the Committee for their input, thoughts, questions, and discussions.

7b. CPS District Plan: None

7c. Consent Agenda:

#22-14, Approval of Revisions to Cambridge Public Schools Chapter 74 CVTE (Career/Vocational Technical Education) Student Admissions Policy (second 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 (second reading).

#22-15, 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:

Program	#	Amount
Day Program	1	\$31,055.31
Residential Program		
45 Day Program		
Total	1	\$31,055.31

#22-16, Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for groceries, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Gordon Food Service, 1300 Gezon Parkway SW, Wyoming, MI for the period of February 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$100,000.00.

#22-17, Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for fresh produce, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Guaranteed Fresh Produce, Inc., 35 Iyannough Road, Hyannis, for the period of February 1, 2022 to March 15, 2022 in the amount of \$33,551.20.

#22-19, Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for temporary employment services, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

NOVAtime Technology Inc., 1440 Bridgegate Drive, Diamond Bar, CA, for the period of January 24, 2022 to January 3, 2023 in the amount of \$58,000.00.

#22-20, 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. An in-kind donation of photography equipment (cameras, batteries, lenses, flashes, tripod, paper, travel bags) made by an individual donor to the Visual & Performing Arts Department.
2. An in-kind donation of a music equipment (3 conga drums, 1 cajon drum, and a USB interface) made by an individual donor to the Visual & Performing Arts Department.

Member Wilson removed **#22- 18**.

On the following roll call vote, items **#22-14** through **#22-17**, **#22-19** through **#22-20** were adopted: Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA, Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

#22-18, Contract Award-be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for professional development, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:
Lesley University, 29 Everett Street, Cambridge, for the period of December 6, 2021 to June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$141,156.00.

Discussion followed on **#22- 18**.

Member Wilson asked for more information on **#22-18**. Dr. Turk provided more context on the recommendation, including reading recovery data anti-bias work (including speaker series and collaboration time between teachers). Funding also supports take-home materials for students to build libraries in their homes and action research.

Member Wilson inquired how the sixty educators would be selected for the PD. Dr. Madera mentioned that the district's forty-two reading recovery specialists are in the front line for professional development.

Member Fantini inquired about the paraprofessionals and if the extra spots could be offered to paraprofessionals. Dr. Greer responded that the district needs to improve professional development opportunities for paraprofessionals, and the district has made strides. This professional development opportunity is specifically for reading and literacy specialists positions.

On the following roll call vote, **#22-18** was adopted: Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Member Bhambi YEA, Vice-Chair Rachel YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

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

#22-22 Report of the January 26, 2022 Buildings and Grounds Sub-Committee

Member Rojas invited the public to view the recording of January 26, 2022, Building and Grounds Sub-Committee meeting as there were topics discussed that were not mentioned at tonight's meeting.

On a motion by Member Rojas, seconded by Member Weinstein on a voice vote, **#22-22** was adopted.

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

#22- 23 Joint Motion by Member Wilson. Mayor Siddiqui and Vice-Chair Rachel

WHEREAS: On January 21, 2020 the Cambridge School Committee voted unanimously to prioritize racial equity and anti-racist work; and

WHEREAS: On June 15, 2021 the Cambridge School Committee adopted anti-racist mission and vision statements; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee fully endorses [Massachusetts Senate Bill S. 2506 and House Bill H.584](#) " An Act relative to anti-racism, equity, and justice in education." This legislation, sponsored by Representatives Nika Elugardo of Boston and Erika Uyterhoeven of Somerville, would support the creation of a Commission for Anti-Racism and Equity in Education, the purpose of which would be to:

- Develop curriculum materials with a social justice perspective towards dismantling racism and advise the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on improving the history and social sciences framework;
- Ensure that ethnic studies, racial justice, decolonizing history, and unlearning racism is taught at all grade levels using an analytical approach and pedagogy that is age-appropriate;
- Advise the Department on ways to ensure equity on the Massachusetts Test for Education Licensure;
- Ensure that teachers and school counselors have access to professional development that fosters equitable, inclusive curriculum, and pedagogy and practices that support racial justice;
- Advise the Department on how to best promote efforts to increase, support and retain teachers and school counselors of color in our public-school workforce;
- The Commission, in conjunction with the Commissioner of the Massachusetts Board of Education, will develop and administer an Anti-Racism and Equity in Education grant program to allocate funds for public schools and school districts to promote racial equity and racial and ethnic studies within and across school districts on an application basis. Funds and resources for universities and other community groups working in education will also be considered and administered by the Commission and the Commissioner;
- The Commission, the Commissioner, and awardees of these funds will work together to analyze the effectiveness of their initiatives, analyze social studies and history curricula and framework through a lens of racial justice, and make amendments to the social studies and history curricula and framework where necessary.

and be it further;

RESOLVED: that the Executive Secretary will send copies of this resolution to legislators representing Cambridge at the State House.

Member Wilson provided context on the resolution and its significance on the District's anti-racism work.

Vice-Chair Rachel recognized the importance of the Commonwealth to support policies on accurate, inclusive education, and Cambridge should be a leader.

Member Rojas inquired about the best way to present the bill and expressed his support. **Mayor Siddiqui** clarified how the state legislations are supported by the School Committee and on the City Council side.

Member Weinstein asked for clarity on how the resolution will be passed. If the vote has to be unanimous, **Mayor Siddiqui** clarified that if someone does not support the resolution, they can vote "present" or explain their reasoning for not supporting it. Resolutions supporting a state legislative bill do not need to be unanimous. The resolution would only need a 2/3 vote by the Committee.

On a motion by Member Wilson, seconded by Vice-Chair Rachel, **#22-23** was adopted on a voice vote.

11. Announcements:

Member Fantini announced that Joseph Huber, Assistant Principal at the Tobin Montessori School, would be leaving soon. **Vice-Chair Rachel** echoed Member Fantini's announcement.

Member Wilson announced Thomas Trainor at the Rindge Ave Upper School on a recent award. She also announced the CRLS scholarships workshops for seniors mentioned by the Student Members earlier in the night. These workshops are available weekly on Thursdays from 3:30 pm -4:30 pm through February 24. The scholarship portal is open from February 1st through March 1st.

Member Weinstein recognized the students who won the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards and the Lunar New Year.

Mayor Siddiqui recognized the start of Black History Month.

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications from City Officers: None

Email communications:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ✓ Robert Travers Jr. | ✓ Kate Skubecz | ✓ Christie Rother |
| ✓ Dan Monahan | ✓ Alex Gourevitch | ✓ Patrick Barrett |

On a motion by Member Fantini seconded by Member Rojas, it was voted, on a voice vote, to adjourn the meeting (9:10 p.m.)

Attest:

Ariel B. Kennebrew

Ariel B. Kennebrew
Executive Secretary to the School Committee