

Virtual Curriculum and Achievement Subcommittee Report
Thursday, January 19, 2023
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose of discussing the CPSD instructional framework review and discussing a student proposal to grant gym credit for theater participation. This meeting will end by or before 7:30 pm.

Subcommittee Members Present: Member Weinstein (Chair), Member Rojas, Member Wilson

Other School Committee Members Present: Vice Chair Rachel

Also Present: Jeanne Alailima CRLS '25 Student Government Representative, Dr. Lendozia Edwards, Chief of Academics and Schools, Dan Monahan, President of the Cambridge Education Association, Elaine Wen CRLS '24 Junior Class President, Andrea Zuniga, Director of Visual and Performing Arts at CPSD.

The meeting started at 6:01 pm. **Chair Weinstein** welcomed the group and began the meeting by reading the call of the meeting and discussing the meeting's objectives which included:

- Update on CPSD Instructional Frameworks process
- Review student proposal to grant physical education (PE) credit for theater participation

Chair Weinstein shared the agreements of the meeting's structure which included:

- Speak and listen from the heart (respect)
- Step up/step back (watch airtime)
- Progressive Stacking approach to conversation
- Expect and accept non-closure (work in progress)
- Bike rack (list of things that are important but should be addressed another time)
- Public comment participants three-minute limit to present, after which time they will be muted by the Executive Secretary.
- If people want to speak again, they will need for the chair to call on them and be unmuted.
- The aim is to foster greater back-and-forth, which is valuable for subcommittee meetings

Following Chair Weinstein's opening, participants were asked to introduce themselves and share their favorite thing about winter. Following introductions, **Chair Weinstein** passed the floor to Dr. Edwards who gave an update on the CPSD's Instructional Frameworks process. The presentation can be found on the [website](#).

Highlights of the presentation included the defining factors of what an Instructional Frameworks are and are not, an update on the purpose and progress of the project, and reaffirming its solid alignment with CPSD's vision and mission.

Following Dr. Edwards presentation, **Chair Weinstein** opened the discussion by posing the following questions to the group: What does the ideal classroom look like? What are we trying to do? He affirmed that CPSD strived to support autonomy for teachers and foster classrooms that are culturally responsive and empower students.

Member Rojas asked if and how culturally responsive teaching fits into the Instructional Framework.

Dr. Edwards responded that throughout each stage of the Framework, teacher and student practices were embedded within the Frameworks, including culturally responsive classrooms which were identified as a priority.

Mr. Monahan asked how the Frameworks would be operationalized in the classroom. Dr. Edwards highlighted that the Frameworks would be used as a roadmap to guide CPSD's work. She shared that implementing the Frameworks would be seamless for most teachers.

Member Wilson inquired about the focus groups' relatively low numbers and the rate of survey completion, highlighting that the spring could be an opportunity to solicit feedback from larger groups. Dr. Edwards shared that the survey received approximately 700 responses which were considered a good response rate relative to similar surveys and outreach. She added that additional dates in January and February for community outreach would be included. Typical attendance at focus groups were 8 – 12 participants which were lower than her goal of 20 per focus group. Her outreach efforts included teachers and principals, the Community Summit, and identifying typically non-vocal groups. She is considering additional opportunities for the spring. **Member Wilson** highlighted that heightened outreach for the current budget season may be creating tension with her efforts. She highlighted that the Frameworks will be implemented for several years and she wants to ensure that the community feels comfortable and involved.

Chair Weinstein asked about the level of student involvement being mindful that student voices were heard. Dr. Edwards confirmed that students were very vocal in the process and were active participants. She highlighted that surveys have limitations and that perhaps another subcommittee meeting could provide an additional opportunity for feedback.

Vice Chair Rachel underscored the importance of consistent beliefs and values throughout CPSD's schools and that students should arrive at the upper schools with similar experiences. She asked if the Framework would help in these efforts. Dr. Edwards confirmed that the Framework will assist with creating consistent conditions for learning and teacher and student practices. As an example, she highlighted the expectation that CPSD students should develop critical thinking skills. She believes the Frameworks' draft document will clarify some of the questions.

Mindful of time constraints, **Chair Weinstein** pivoted the discussion to the student proposal to grant PE credit for theater participation. He handed the floor to CRLS students Elaine Wen and Jeanne Alailima who shared a presentation about using Theatre as a P.E. Credit. The full presentation can be found on the [website](#).

Following the presentation, **Chair Weinstein** opened the floor to questions and comments.

Ms. Zuniga commended the students on the time and energy they devoted to research and their presentation. She highlighted the following challenges in implementing the students' proposal. They include:

- The vigorous and specific requirements for PE credit and the reality of taking away the creative aspect of theater production.
- The inability to control for specific conditions, unlike the CRLS's Modern Dance Company (with a certified teacher), which was highlighted as a model in the presentation
- Theater enrollment varies due to tryouts and student continuity cannot be guaranteed.
- As part of a public school system, CRLS operates under state guidelines which are not required of independent schools which were highlighted in the students' presentation.

- Teachers who are leading efforts in the theater program would be burdened with ensuring that PE requirements are met.

Ms. Wen and Ms. Alailima responded that the state guidelines allow for PE substitutions by individual school districts. They highlighted that the proposal would incentivize more students to join the theater community noting that some students join sports to satisfy the PE requirement. They shared that the theater community's strong commitment to creativity allows them to adapt to any changes that need to be made.

Chair Weinstein echoed Ms. Zuniga's sentiments regarding the students' efforts and their due diligence. He highlighted that further conversations with theater and PE administrators and teachers would be required. Dr. Edwards agreed and commended the students for using their voices. She recommended that Jamie McCarthy, JK-12 Curriculum Coordinator, and Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel, are involved in the conversations. **Member Wilson** shared her kudos and asked how the subcommittee can support the students' work and better understand the complexities of the issues. She asked for more specifics regarding the time commitment for theater participants and the students outlined the typical time commitments.

Member Rojas thanked the students for their time and energy and noted the challenges outlined by Ms. Zuniga. He highlighted that subcommittee meetings did not provide a forum for decision-making and that input from many individuals would be required. He shared that the subcommittee would be willing to move the discussion forward.

At the meeting's conclusion, **Chair Weinstein** highlighted the next steps which included:

- The subcommittee's need to solicit additional feedback from key stakeholders and secure information for the PE credit for the theater proposal. The subcommittee members would explore the possibility of a follow-up meeting devoted to the topic.
- Confirming that Dr. Edwards will loop in Jamie McCarthy and Maureen MacFarlane regarding the PE credit and theater participation topic.
- The subcommittee's keen interest in viewing the Instructional Frameworks' draft document when made available by Dr. Edwards.

Chair Weinstein concluded the meeting at 7:37 pm.