



CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Minutes)

Regular Meeting

December 7, 2021

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 Bowman (Remote), Member Fantini, Member Rachel, Member Rojas, Member Weinstein, Member Wilson, Mayor Siddiqui (Absent at start of the meeting).

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

Member Rachel in the Chair at the start of the meeting for Mayor Siddiqui.

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: Member Fantini PRESENT, Member Rachel PRESENT; Member Rojas, Member Weinstein PRESENT, Member Wilson PRESENT; Vice-Chair Bowman PRESENT; Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

1. **Public Comment:**

The following individuals were heard:

- **Dan Monahan** – Lexington Street, spoke in support of #21-333, #21-334 and about the Social Emotional Learning presentation
- **Jodi Ekelchik** – Walden Street, spoke in requests for public information on the District Leadership Plan at the Putnam Upper School

Member Fantini motioned to suspend the rules and allow for Ms. Ekelchik to speak on the item, not on the agenda, seconded by Member Rachel; it was voted to allow Ms. Ekelchik to continue: Member Fantini YEA, Member Rachel YEA, Member Rojas YEA, Member Weinstein YEA, Member Wilson ABSENT, Vice-Chair Bowman YEA, Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

- **Emie Michaud Weinstock** spoke about **#21-343** and the lack of transparency with CPSD regarding the budget calendar and the Social-Emotional Learning presentation.

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

2. **Student School Committee Report:**

Student Member Killian discussed the CRLS walkout on November 29, 2021. The walkout was conducted to protest student sexual harassment and assault. About 400 students attended the walkout, including three School Committee members. CRLS is implementing a new "Get Real" program in wellness classes that increase the graduation requirement of wellness classes and end the P.E. athletic waiver. Vaccines are available at the Teen Health Center by appointment only on Fridays and through

parental consent. Some students have faced challenges regarding not joining extracurricular due to not being vaccinated. Computer Science Day is also happening at CRLS this week.

Member Wilson addressed the CRLS walkout on November 29 and was one of the School Committee members who participated. She inquired about key takeaways from the students who participated in the walkout. **Student Member Killian** responded that CRLS provided resources for break-out spaces, guidance, and to take the remainder of the day as a mental health day. There were some students concerned about a Boston Globe article regarding the walkout. The newspaper outlet did come back to re-do the article. **Student Member Vera-DeGraff** also briefly discussed the student responses and testimony to the updated Boston Globe article.

Member Weinstein talked about his experience at the walkout and School Committee, discussed the impact of his understanding of the issue, and briefly talked about Member Vera-DeGraff's experience with being a part of a previous walkout. Students have been doing this type of work for years. He expressed his interest in seeing the student member's experience. As a high school parent, he is interested in viewing the opportunities to support families and adults who may not know much about the walkout of the stories behind it and asked the student members if they had any information on work. **Student Member Killian** responded that CRLS Principal Smith and Dr. Greer provided information to families during and following the walkout. Student Member Vera-DeGraff believed Principal Smith's follow-up email reassured the issue.

Member Rojas questioned that some administrators were surprised by the walkout even advertised. **Student Member Killian** mentioned that the walkout stemmed from a class called STARS, which was promoted on social media a week prior. An email notice was given to Principal Smith before the walkout.

Member Fantini mentioned he would like to be notified of other actions similar to the walkout as he is interested in participating in the student initiatives. Noted that at the Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee, it was reported that student vaccination data rates were high and would like to see the report of students missing out of extracurricular due to not being vaccinated.

Student Member Killian asked the Committee how they were aware of the walkout. Member Rachel and Member Weinstein found out via Social Media, and Member Wilson found out the day of the walkout as she was reporting to work.

Member Rachel spoke on behalf of the Committee and the Interim Superintendent that they all believe the student testimonies and are pained by some students' issues. She thanked Dr. Greer for urgency surrounding the student issues and echoed Member Weinstein's comments on providing resources to caregivers on how to have these conversations with their children,

3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:

- **November 9, 2021, Special Meeting**

On a motion by Member Rojas seconded by Member Wilson on the following roll call vote, it adopted the presentation of records as written: Member Fantini YEA, Member Rachel YEA, Member Rojas YEA, Member Weinstein YEA, Member Wilson YEA, Vice-Chair Bowman YEA, Mayor Siddiqui ABSENT.

4. Reconsiderations: None

5. Unfinished Business/Calendar: None

6. Awaiting Reports:

C21-311 Joint Order by Member Fantini, Member Wilson, and Mayor Siddiqui

That the School Department work with the City to develop a plan to support transporting students attending after school programs given the issues that DHSP has with after school this year

Member Fantini requested for **C21-311** to remain as an Awaiting Reports to obtain some additional information. He recognizes the efforts being made on **C21-311** but thinks some work needs to be done.

7. Superintendent's Agenda:

7a. Presentations:

Member Rachel turned the floor to Dr. Greer, who provided an update on the CRLS student walkout and addressed sexual harassment, misogyny, gender discrimination, and sexual assault.

A brief discussion followed Dr. Greer's update.

Student Member Killian thanked Dr. Greer for her presentation and work on what students are currently experiencing. She asked Dr. Greer what the "independent assessment" would look like. Dr. Greer responded that the district is seeking guidance from the City Solicitor.

Member Weinstein discussed the importance of including students in independent assessment planning. Inquired about Dr. Greer's thoughts with involving students. Dr. Greer mentioned that the students are currently involved and share their experiences on the issues. She noted that some of the issues are highly personal and need to be kept between the Superintendent and the attorney but believes that the district has made a significant process in a short amount of time.

Student Member Vera-DeGraff asked what can be done for students to feel reassured about speaking up on these issues. Dr. Greer mentioned that D.A. Ryan has taken a special interest in being available to students and the community to get their voices heard and assist in taking action. There are also additional resources from the City to support students.

Vice-Chair Bowman believes that she has been in discussions with the D.A. Ryan's office and has participated in a task force representative of the district. She mentioned that the district has to think about these issues and do the work to shift the culture. She thanked the students and Dr. Greer for their efforts in assisting with the culture shift.

Member Rachel mentioned she is thrilled that the district is moving forward with the assessment and hopes each school will create a safe, inclusive environment for students.

Dr. Greer then turned the floor to Dr. Turk, who led the second presentation of the evening that focused on Social Emotional Learning (S.E.L.). Jamie McCarthy, Alice Cohen, Ariana Starling, Megan Nason, and Dr. Nicole Gittens were also a part of the presentation. The entire presentation can be found on the website [here](#).

Mayor Siddiqui joined the meeting during the S.E.L. presentation. At the conclusion of the presentation, she opened the floor up for discussion following the presentation.

Member Wilson discussed the importance of Social Emotional Learning (S.E.L.) and Professional Development. She mentioned her focus is more on the high school level and sees the urgency and the need for a space for young people to take a mental break. She also shared her experience seeing the success of the walk breaks at CRLS and inquired about S.E.L. screeners at the high school level. Alice Cohen mentioned screeners at the high school level will be implemented soon. Dr. Turk confirmed the screeners will be implemented this winter.

Member Rachel shared a reflection about the Culturally Responsive Curriculum at the upper schools and shared the importance of naming what is being done with the "we do it for the culture" curriculum. She also asked for more elaboration on the evidence-based curriculum at Tier 1 for elementary and the DESSA threshold. Ms. McCarthy reported that the district's Health Education department has partnered with Jamila Simms and attended a two-day training to implement this curriculum. The curriculum will be soon used at the Middle School level, and depending on the school, it may be used

beyond the health curriculum and in an advisory or history class. In elementary, there is a variation with some as the heath smart and Michigan models. The curriculum is in-house designed and unique to the school, and rooted in the Social Justice Framework and National Health Education Standards.

Member Rojas addressed why there hasn't been an S.E.L. screener in the past and what is being said about having one now? Ms. Cohen answered that the primary reason was finding a suitable screener. The district has made more efforts to implement S.E.L. screeners in the past five years.

Member Weinstein asked how the district can assist families in being more knowledgeable about Social Emotional Learning topics and language that can be used at home. Ms. Cohen answered that the district is getting more community and parental involvement.

Member Fantini asked how S.E.L. the data will be used for students with high mental needs and what resources will be given to those children. Ms. Cohen mentioned the first step of prevention and explained the district's strides and goal to have all students receive a quality education despite their mental health status. **Member Fantini** also asked who will be the "champion" of assisting struggling schools in supporting students to get on track and implement better support and likes the model used.

Vice-Chair Bowman briefly addressed a comment made on the presentation regarding the commitment to circle time for students. She expressed the importance of why Social Emotional Learning is used.

Member Wilson requested a follow-up response on the presentation and inquired about any thoughts on a class at the high school level for "regular life skills training." Dr. Gittens replied that the district thinks about how the work given to students can be more reflective of the student's well-being.

Mayor Siddiqui inquired about the Social Worker drop-in support center timeline at CRLS and the rollout of the new S.E.L. curriculum. Dr. Turk responded that the plans to roll out the drop-in support would be in the second half of the school year. Ms. McCarthy responded that the rollout for the new S.E.L. curriculum will be rolled out in January,

7b. C.P.S. District Plan: None

7c. Consent Agenda:

Dr. Greer withdrew recommendations **#21- 333** and **#21-334**. Member Rojas removed **#21-337** and Member Wilson removed **#21-339**.

On the following roll call vote, items **#21- 335** through **#21-336**, item **#21-338**, and items **#21-340** through **#21-342** were adopted: Member Fantini YEA, Member Rachel YEA, Member Rojas YEA, Member Weinstein YEA, Member Wilson YEA, Vice-Chair Bowman YEA, Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#21-333 Approval of the Settlement Agreement Between Sarah Rosenberg and the City of Cambridge By and Through its School Department and School Committee, be adopted as follows: This is a negotiated settlement agreement regarding an arbitration petition filed by Ms. Rosenberg with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, American Arbitration Association Case Number 01-21-0016-1388, alleging a violation of the provisions of M.G.L. c. 71 42D.

#21-334 Approval of the Settlement between Rose Levine And the City of Cambridge by & through its School Department & School Committee be adopted as follows: That Superintendent's Recommendation #21-334, Approval of the Settlement Agreement Between Rose Levine and the City of Cambridge By and Through its School Department and School Committee be adopted as follows: This is a negotiated settlement agreement regarding an arbitration petition filed by Ms. Levine with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, American Arbitration Association Case Number 01-21-0016-1384, alleging a violation of the provisions of M.G.L.c. 71 § 42D.

#21-335, Day & Residential Program Services Not Available from the Cambridge School Department be adopted as follows: That Superintendent's Recommendation #21-335, Day & Residential Program Services not available from the Cambridge School Department be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions as detailed in the list in amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget and Grant Fund Budget.

<u>Programs</u>	<u>Active Contracts</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Day	1	\$45,012.00
Residential	1	<u>\$27,566.76</u>
	2	\$72,578.76

#21-336, Contract Award, be adopted as follows: the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for Interactive Display Hardware, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

C.C.S. Presentation Systems, 132 Northeastern Blvd., Nashua, NH, for the period November 1, 2021 to October 31, 2022 in the amount of \$300,000.00

#21-337, 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:

Thompson-Grove, Gene, 9 Champlin Place, Newport, RI, for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$54,250.00.

#21-338, Gifts/Miscellaneous Receipts be adopted as follows: That the School Committee accept and approve the following donations as described.

1. \$104.16 made by the Microsoft Workplace Giving Programs as a match for employee volunteers' time in the TEALS Program at CRLS to support computer science programs at CRLS.
2. An in-kind donation of a collection of books by and about Asian American/Pacific Islanders estimated at a value of \$8,800 made by the Chinese American Association of Cambridge to the Library Media Services for Media Services department for school libraries.

#21-339, Grant Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

FY22 Reading Recovery, for the period December 15, 2021 to June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$234,000. Grant SC22632.

Description: This state-funded grant supports ongoing professional development by Lesley University in Reading Recovery for two C.P.S. Teacher Leaders (0.40 FTE each). These Teacher Leaders support the Early Literacy Interventionists, who provide individual tutorial assistance to at-risk first grade students. In addition to part-time teaching duties, the Teacher Leaders supervise first grade students. In addition to part-time teaching duties, the Teacher Leaders supervise, train and conduct professional development for Reading Recovery teachers from both in and outside the district. The grant supports data collection and reports from Lesley University as well as instructional materials for teachers. It also supports participation in the annual Reading Recovery Teacher Leader Institute and the National Reading Recovery and K-6 Literacy Conference, as well as conference registrations for Reading Recovery teachers to attend an anti-racism series sponsored by Lesley University.

#21-340, Grant Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated.

Imagined in Cambridge-CCF, for the period October 4, 2021 to October 4, 2022 in the amount of \$5,000. Grant SC22174.

Description: This grant from the Cambridge Community Foundation's (C.C.F.) Innovation program will fund a voluntary after-school HEART (Holistic Emergency Alternative Response Team) group at the Kennedy Longfellow school. Awarded as a result of a student's application to C.C.F., 5th graders who are interested in learning a range of skills that promote mental health will meet every other week under the guidance of a staff member skilled in this area. Among the topics they will explore are: identifying emotions and learning how to safely express them; developing conflict resolution skills such as Circle Processes and Non-violent communication, and exploring mindfulness techniques such as breathing and mediation. This grant will pay for art and journal

#21-341, Grant Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated:

USDA Pandemic E.B.T. Program Reimbursement, for the period of October 1, 2020 to March 31, 2022 in the amount of \$10,438. Grant SC22210.

Description: This federal funding from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provides reimbursement for administrative costs, specifically data management salaries, associated with the Pandemic E.B.T. (P-EBT) program and providing eligibility data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary education. The amount of the funds is determined by a formula related to the number of students identified as eligible for P-EBT.

#21-342, Grant Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant award below in the amount and for the period indicated.

FY22 American Recovery Plan Homeless children and Youth II, for the period of November 23, 2021 to August 31, 2022 in the amount of \$42,861. Grant SC22711.

Description: The second F.Y. 2022 Homeless grant funded by the Federal American Rescue Plan (A.R.P.), this grant will fund 0.33 of the salary of a social worker to provide services for homeless children, youth and their families. ARP I and Title I will each fund another third of the salary of this social workers, and the benefits will be split between Title I and this ARP II grant. In addition, the grant will fund emergency supplies and MBTA passes for these families as well as partial scholarships for unhoused students to attend community non-profit summer and after school programs.

8. Non-Consent Agenda:

#21-337, 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:

Thompson-Grove, Gene, 9 Champlin Place, Newport, RI, for the period July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$54,250.00.

Discussion followed on **#21- 337**.

Member Rojas asked for more clarification on the schools using the Contract Award and why those schools were chosen. Dr. Turk identified the reasoning why these schools specified above were implemented and mentioned that the schools using Thompson-Grove are schools that have been or have worked with Thompson-Grove.

On the following roll call vote, **#21-337** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA, Member Rachel YEA, Member Rojas YEA, Member Weinstein YEA, Member Wilson YEA, Vice-Chair Bowman YEA, Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

#21-339, Grant Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the grant

award below in the amount and for the period indicated.

FY22 Reading Recovery, for the period December 15, 2021 to June 30, 2022 in the amount of \$234,000. Grant SC22632.

Description: This state-funded grant supports ongoing professional development by Lesley University in Reading Recovery for two C.P.S. Teacher Leaders (0.40 FTE each). These Teacher Leaders support the Early Literacy Interventionists, who provide individual tutorial assistance to at-risk first grade students. In addition to part-time teaching duties, the Teacher Leaders supervise first grade students. In addition to part-time teaching duties, the Teacher Leaders supervise, train and conduct professional development for Reading Recovery teachers from both in and outside the district. The grant supports data collection and reports from Lesley University as well as instructional materials for teachers. It also supports participation in the annual Reading Recovery Teacher Leader Institute and the National Reading Recovery and K-6 Literacy Conference, as well as conference registrations for Reading Recovery teachers to attend an anti-racism series sponsored by Lesley University

Discussion followed on **#21-339**.

Member Wilson pulled the same recommendation last year and inquired about the district's timeline and the duration it expects to continue receiving the grant and the reading recovery and literacy program. Dr. Madera responded to elaborate more on the recommendation and mentioned that the data collection is more of a long-term effort and it will take a while for the district to receive.

Member Wilson asked how long they anticipate the research to happen and who will be leading the work. Dr. Madera responded that the timeline is contingent on the findings and Emily Bryan's entry-level plan. Dr. Madera clarified that the work is a collaborative effort between herself, Emily Bryan, Dr. Turk, and a newly hired lead teacher.

On the following roll call vote, **#21-339** was adopted: Member Fantini YEA, Member Rachel YEA, Member Rojas YEA, Member Weinstein YEA, Member Wilson YEA, Vice-Chair Bowman YEA, Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

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

#21-343

Motion by Member Fantini

That the School Committee adopt the Preliminary School Committee FY23 Budget Calendar.

Member Fantini shared the preliminary budget calendar. **Member Rachel** requested to move one of the February Community Meetings earlier to a January date and asked about the virtual meetings and best mechanism for community involvement.

Member Rojas mentioned that the community wanted to receive budget information throughout the year based on the public comments earlier in the evening and asked how the budget ties in with Dr. Greer's Entry Plan. Dr. Greer responded that she would discuss the strategic budget plan at her December 14 Roundtable Meeting.

Vice-Chair Bowman highlighted some of the work that has been done by Member Fantini, Ms. Claire Spinner, and herself surrounding the FY23 Preliminary Budget Calendar. She discussed the importance of the Entry-Level planning of the budget and community engagement in the budgetary process.

Member Weinstein echoed Vice-Chair Bowman's comments and the importance of the meetings at the school-base and community-based levels and recommended that the calendar be shared in schools.

On a motion by Member Fantini seconded by Member Rojas, on the following roll call vote, it was voted to adopt **#21- 343**: Member Fantini YEA, Member Rachel YEA, Member Rojas YEA, Member Weinstein YEA, Member Wilson YEA, Vice-Chair Bowman YEA, Non-Binding Vote Member Killian YEA, Non-Binding Vote Member Vera-Degraff YEA, Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

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

#21-344 Joint Motion by Mayor Siddiqui, Member Wilson and Vice-Chair Bowman

WHEREAS: The School Committee was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Salman Almarzooqi on November 24, 2021; and

WHEREAS: Salman, a member of the class of 2022, joined the CRLS in 2020 and quickly forged strong connections with students and teachers alike; and

WHEREAS: Salman was an extremely hard worker, and made significant strides in his academic and social growth during his time at CRLS; and

WHEREAS: Salman will be remembered as a loyal friend who excelled at connecting with his classmates and forming personal relationships; and

WHEREAS: Salman enjoyed music, liked watching YouTube videos and loved being in school with his peers; and

WHEREAS: This is a devastating loss to the CRLS community, and our hearts are heavy with grief knowing Salman was taken from us far too young; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee go on record extending its deepest sympathy to the family of Salman Almarzooqi 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.

#21-345 Motion by Member Fantini

WHEREAS: It has come to the attention of the School Committee that Mary Ann Londino will retire on December 31, 2021

WHEREAS: Mary Ann began her career as a paraprofessional in November of 1994 and then as a teacher in 2002 at the Peabody School

WHEREAS: Mary Ann has devoted the last 19 years as a Special Educator, assisting students with disabilities creating the optimal learning environment for every child and supporting the individual needs of all her students

WHEREAS: Mary Ann enjoys reading, traveling, water aerobics and learning how to play pickleball

WHEREAS: Mary Ann looks forward to Nana Camp, looking after her grandchildren-Audrey, Cameron, Mikayla, Michael, and Colin.

RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee thanks Mary Ann for her 27 years of service to the Cambridge Public Schools and congratulates her on her retirement.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Secretary prepare a copy of this resolution to be presented to Mary Ann on December 9, 2021 at her retirement celebration.

On a motion by Member Fantini seconded by Member Rojas, the following roll call vote, resolutions **#21-344** and **#21-345** it was adopted: Member Fantini YEA, Member Rachel YEA, Member Rojas YEA, Member Weinstein YEA, Member Wilson YEA, Vice-Chair Bowman YEA, Non-Binding Vote Member Killian YEA, Non-Binding Vote Member Vera-Degraff YEA, Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

11. Announcements:

Member Weinstein announced that the CRLS fall theatre performance "The Skin of Our Teeth" is currently showing, and there will be this weekend. The performances will be both in-person and live-streamed.

Member Rojas announced that there was Building and Grounds Subcommittee on December 2 with the discussion centered on the next steps regarding COVID. If interested, the video from the meeting can be found on the website.

Member Siddiqui announced a vaccination clinic for free booster shots is on December 15, for those ages 18 and up,

Cambridge School Committee
Regular Meeting

Member Wilson congratulated the CRLS scholar-athletes who tried out for winter sports recently. The first boys' basketball home game is this week. She also announced that Participatory Budget Voting is happening now until December 12 and encouraged voting. Anyone 12 years and up can vote

12. Late Orders: None

13. Communications from City Officers: None

On the following roll call vote, the School Committee entertained a motion to go into Executive Session: Member Fantini YEA, Member Rachel YEA, Member Rojas YEA, Member Weinstein YEA, Member Wilson YEA, Vice-Chair Bowman YEA, Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

On a motion by **Member Wilson**, seconded by **Member Fantini**, on the following roll call vote, it was voted to adjourn the meeting: Member Fantini YEA, Member Rachel YEA, Member Rojas YEA, Member Weinstein YEA, Member Wilson YEA, Vice-Chair Bowman YEA, Mayor Siddiqui YEA (8:57 pm).

Attest:

Ariel B. Kennebrew

Ariel B. Kennebrew
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

