



Special Meeting  
 May 12, 2020

**CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
 (Official Minutes)

Called for 6:00 P.M. A virtual special meeting of the School Committee with Public Comment was held for the purposes of engaging the community in a conversation about a COVID-19 plan, in light of the extended school closures and updated remote learning guidance provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education on Friday, April 24th.

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

Also Present: Superintendent Kenneth Salim, Dr. Carolyn Turk, Claire Spinner, James Maloney, Maureen MacFarlane, Barbara Allen, Lindsay Pinkus, Dr. Alexis Morgan, Dr. Michelle Madera, Steve Smith

Student School Committee representatives present: Sophie Green, Hersh Kanner,

A quorum of the School Committee being present, Mayor Siddiqui called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and read the call of the meeting. She also read that the Open Meeting Law that has been approved for remote participation.

A moment of Silence was held for Mr. Newton who taught in the Cambridge Public Schools

- Roll Call vote was taken to start the meeting:

Member Wilson present, Vice Chair Bowman present, Member Fantini present, Member Rojas present, Member Rachel present, Member Weinstein present, and Mayor Siddiqui present,

The Public Comment portion of tonight's meeting was opened.

The following citizens spoke on behalf of tonight's meeting:

Dan	Monahan	229 Lexington Ave	Cambridge, MA 02138	COVID-19 response
Andrea	Parker	700 Huron ave	Cambridge	Covid- mid-term summer/fall plan, Last day of school June 17
Amanda	Beatty	604 Franklin St	Cambridge	COVID19 related planning
Ty	Bellitti	22 Bigelow Street	Cambridge	Covid-19 recovery plan
Lisette	Williams	226 River Street	Cambridge	Remote learning
TONY	CLARK	PO Box 410349	Cambridge	Remote Learning

Mary-An n	Matyas	48 Russell Street	Cambridge	Covid-19 plans
--------------	--------	----------------------	-----------	----------------

On a motion by Vice Chair Bowman, seconded by Member Wilson, to close public comment: Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

Mayor Siddiqui introduced Superintendent Salim to speak on the COVID 19, Impact of Closure on FY20 Budget, Impact of Closure on FY 21 Budget, Last Day of School Waiver, Summer 2020 and Long-term Planning Process

Superintendent starts the presentation with thanks to all the staff who are in attendance this evening.

- [SC Special Meeting - School Closure Update](#)

The presentation will entail the following:

1. Impact of Closure on FY20 Budget
2. Impact of Closure on FY 21 Budget
3. Last Day of School Waiver
4. Summer 2020
5. Long-term Planning Process

**Member Rojas** - Thanks the Superintendent for his projections.

**Vice Chair Bowman** wanted to reiterate that money reflected for the additional days for the teaching staff was never budgeted for FY21.

**Member Wilson** - remarks that all scenarios are helpful.

**Superintendent Salim** lets the SC know that any surplus will be allocated back to the schools. Noting that there needs to be leverage for recovery as an 18-month plan - looking for creative ways for spending.

**Mayor Siddiqui** notes there usually is a surplus - the City Manager would defer to the SC as to how to reallocate the surplus.

**Claire Spinner, CFO CPSD** there currently is a balance because the needs for some supplies were decreased because of the schools going remote. Far less being used. There are balances.

**Vice Chair Bowman** - asked about library cost and have they been accounted for?

**Claire Spinner** - cost may happen over multiple years - collections. There will be expenses around building inventory.

**Vice Chair Bowman** - commended the district on the ability to provide families with tech books.

**Mayor Siddiqui** inquired about contracts and are we able to honor them? Keeping in mind next year.

**Claire Spinner** - answered it was dependent on the services that were provided.

**Member Wilson** asked what the four additional days would look like, and those additional days would not necessarily include instructional instructional class learning time. Or would it just be focused on professional development?

**Member Fantini** inquired about staff training and training for remote learning.

**Superintendent Salim** answered there would be professional development and staff training - it is still in the planning stages. There would not be any interaction with students. There are Contractual provisions that can be exercised to have staff training and it's actually five days in the contract up to June 30. That happens in any given year after the last day of school that there is some of this professional learning collaborative and planning time that educators engage in.

**Superintendent Salim** continues the presentation.

**Member Rachel** begins with mental health support and protecting the social emotional learning not just for the student but for the educators. What is in place? She follows up with stressing how important it is for any reallocation of funding in FY 21 for mental health needs. Would like more information on the Extended Learner Grant.

**Superintendent Salim** wants to protect the current dollar amount that is in FY21

**Claire Spinner** The ELT grant needs to be planning for three scenarios. Fully funded, partially funded, not funded. Breaks down the scenarios. The hope that the funding will be provided by the state. We are in constant communication with the City Manager. There are fiscal impacts to the City. Much is unknown right now about how this is all going to play out. As information becomes available, we will be updating projections. Looking at spending the resources was most important.

**Member Rachel** Remediate for loss learning and extended learning time.

**Superintendent Salim** - looking at teacher ratios, additional social workers. Training.

**Member Rachel** -Which parts of the budget could be delayed? Stresses how important the Chief Equity Officer would be.

**Superintendent Salim** - professional development and conferences could be delayed as mission critical. Benefit of taking a step back to evaluate the need.

**Member Fantini** -speaks on ways to improve Summer Learning

**Member Weinstein Thanks** the Superintendent. Acknowledges the importance of the Task Force.

Asks about Budgeting and what it all may look like. Speaks about staffing needs, infrastructure, facilities, technologies. Additional Staffing - educational and custodial. Acknowledges that this is all evolving. Staff Development, what is working, debriefing and have it detailed. Special Education needs must be met.

**Superintendent Salim** looked into what technologies work for the youngest learners.

Introduces Jim Maloney.

**James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer**

Answers Yes - All of those and more are on their list. The issue of social distancing in a classroom is going to be very difficult. There have been many conversations regarding retrofitting the schools with more washing stations, hand sanitizer, constantly upgrading for sinks and partitions. Discusses all the nuances that goes into all aspects of social distancing. References the Buildings and Grounds Sub Committee and the myriad decisions that is involved.

Acknowledges that all information and commentary is welcomed vis some vis what's happening across the world and well informed parent information.

Goes into detail about the air handling and HVAC system and the reality of what the different schools look like and the potential time lines and feasibility.

Tobin Vassal Line Construction comes up, announcement forthcoming.

**Member Rojas** begins with thanks and confirmation that there is money in the FY21 for professional development and what does that look like?

Summer Survey?

Asks about City funding and additional academic support? Can you break down the 1 million allocation?

**Superintendent Salim** - Supporting educators with remote learning and structural practices and student social emotional learning. Incorporating into this school year as well as next.

Yes, regarding the survey, still in the thought process - academic screeners.

**Mayor Siddiqui shares** a conversation that she has had with the City Manager and COVID recovery plan for the schools. Talks about priorities and reallocation.

**Vice Chair Bowman** begins with leveraging space. Speaks to the younger learners and socially distancing them and themselves to their cohorts.

How do we leverage the resources we have and how fortunate we are to not have staffing cuts and the hard conversations that goes with this pandemic?

What does a summer program look like?

**Superintendent Salim** Looking at other districts from other parts of the country and world, with younger students, because for a variety of reasons, but they did start with lower numbers in the classroom overall as part of a social distancing process. Keeping in mind utilizing insights from our educators from JK and K 1 teachers on the types of approaches that they think would be helpful. It's a complex challenge. Still developing protocols. Small groups or centers. All things will be impacted for students and staff. Everything that happens in the classroom, how it is being looked at i.e., going to get lunch or going to the restroom is being evaluated.

**Mayor Siddiqui** - Mentions that Deputy City Manager Ellen Semenov, Michelle Farnum, Sue Walsh are actively working around the clock for a summer virtual program.

**Member Wilson** What are the alternatives for assessing the students for the remainder of the term. In terms of budget impacts, making up for the loss of learning.

Continues on IEPs and the most marginalized pupils and what are the challenges facing them and students with high needs.

**Superintendent Salim** Reentry to school will be looked at - using real tools to assess where students are. Staff development will be more robust and used as an opportunity for student assessment.

References Dr. Morgan, when speaking about the special education portion of remote learning. -speaks of the remote learning setting and another layer of requirements. Team approach. What are we legally mandated to do as we approach SPED.

There will be a series or working groups to discuss the components of the special needs with remote learning.

**Dr. Alexis Morgan** acknowledges the difficulties remote learning has been with some individual education plans. Staff is still working very hard connecting with parents and will continue to address the gap. Details what is in place now and what is on the horizon for remote learning and OSS. What it is

looking like and what it will look like - working with the district and the district leadership team. Working with different methods.

**Member Wilson** asks about the Task force and its makeup.

**Superintendent Salim** will follow up with a response later in the presentation.

**Member Rachel** wants to clarify the academic piece of the IEP.

**Dr. Alexis Morgan** Design materials live and or asynchronous videos for different abilities. Also related services providers will be utilized to provide suggestions, ensure that accommodations were being addressed with the enrichment activities that were outlined by the district or by that classroom teacher.

**Superintendent Salim** continues with the presentation.

**Mayor Siddiqui** discusses the breakdown of the DESE appeal letter and its merits.

A discussion presents itself on the appeal letter/waver from Member Rachel and Member Weinstein.

Superintendent Salim clarifies some of their issues and concerns. How should the resources best serve the District if appeal is granted? Goes on to discuss some of the approaches of the COVID 19 recovery plan.

**Member Fantini** - ask for a draft recommendation letter that is being proposed for DESE.

**Member Rojas** discusses the appeal letter and the financial gains that could go with it, noting that having flexibility to not spend gives more options for next year.

**Member Fantini** Supports the request for the waiver and its merit. The commitment of the Superintendent for a more robust summer learning plan.

**Vice Chair Bowman** discusses the need to move forward as well as the benefits of stepping back and remarks on the decision that has been made as a district. Acknowledges how hard this has been for parents and educators.

**Member Wilson discusses** remote learning to date and cannot support appeal letter as written. Compliments all for the additional responsibilities that everyone has taken on.

**Superintendent Salim** looked to incorporate some of the ideas from the meeting for a revised appeal letter to DESE.

Presentation continues.

**Member Rachel** Timelines need to move up and speak on virtual summer programming. And mentioned the one to 12 ratio, and wondered if that's true at all grade levels, or if that's the average.

Budgeting with hard data for the summer plans.

Feedback -JK-5 educators group has parents and students involved. Design Groups - one of the topics should be the rules of educators.

**Superintendent Salim** Excited about the possibility of elementary teachers participating in the Summer program. Noting that there could be some teachers who are exhausted. Welcomes recommendations for Task Force and working groups - design teams. The district needs to benefit from the Task force and Working Groups.

Task Force to launch by the first week of June.

**Member Weinstein** - That students can benefit from tutoring and mentoring programs with adolescents as instructors as well. Keeping in mind jobs will not be as readily available.

Constraints against others competing. Working on three different learning scenarios and benefits of being over prepared.

**Vice Chair Bowman** Checking in with educators to evaluate home life scenarios and childcare for a summer session? What is our capacity to deliver services? What is feasible? Any survey or assessment for the summer.

**Superintendent Salim** - survey will launch next week to see the needs and execute the vision and know the limitations. Educators will be utilized as well as paraprofessionals.

**Member Fantini** speaks about the necessity to recruit students for the summer program. Process to use needs to be well thought out. Personal level of connection is important.

Social and emotional learning is so important as is the need to identify children in need.

**Member Wilson** speaks about engaging My Brother Keeper and People of Color for the Task Force. Referral Process.

Questions about the numbers of more students who couldn't be serviced and wondering about supporting the academic resources that some of our out of school time providers offer.

Speaks about the relevance for stipends for the Task Force and asks was that discussed?

**Superintendent Salim** - part of that design budget does incorporate that for educators, families and students.

**Deputy Carolyn Turk** answers - Summer programming for all students. This is a perfect example of planning interrupted. Upended because of COVID.

How do we engage and have participation from students? Strong feelings against focusing on a deficit model. We will have personalized letters to students. Identify their needs and wants. Comparing data from September and March and knowing what students would benefit.

Students need to be active and engaged working with various stakeholders within the City and outside.

**Member Rojas** Process to identify which families were challenged by remote learning. Incorporate those families in the working groups.

**Superintendent Salim** - more of a global idea. A one to one approach. Appreciates the point of the family's needs in addition to the students.

**Member Kanner** reminds the SC of the importance of student voices and does a recap of the groups. Any Student groups on the horizon? Asks about the Mayor's Summer Youth Program.

**Superintendent Salim** -Speaks about the MSYE program and leveraging that program for a voice for students. Cross section of different voices and perspectives.

**Mayor Siddiqui** - Thanks to the Committee and Administration for their comments, commentary and discussion. Will be working with the Superintendent on the school closure process, updates, details, COVID 19 response and future meetings. Brings up the Summer Youth Program and how they are

rethinking the job opportunities for the youth, which ones can be virtual and then create more opportunities. Speaks about stipends for club advisors, a way to expand on those talents or experiences.

Mayor Siddiqui gives a thanks to Dr. Carolyn Turk.

Motion to adjourn by Member Rojas seconded by VC Bowman and subsequent vote was taken, Mayor Siddiqui (YEA), Ms. Bowman (YEA), Mr. Fantini (YEA), Mr. Rojas (YEA), Mr. David Weinstein (YEA), Ms. Rachel (YEA), Ms. Wilson (YEA). Meeting adjourned at 9:44pm.

Next meeting scheduled will be a virtual special meeting on Thursday, May 14th, 2020, 6PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Dever Wood  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee (temporary)