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SCHOOL COMMITTEE
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C22-069

--In School Committee--
04/05/2022

Ordered:

WHEREAS: Most of the high school and upper school students are responsible for commuting themselves to and from school every day; and

WHEREAS: There are approximately 742 students or 40% of the total student body at CRLS currently using the M7 transit cards which are designated for students who qualify for free or reduced lunch benefits; and

WHEREAS: Students are continually penalized for being tardy their first period regardless of transportation circumstances; and

WHEREAS: Many high school students hold summer jobs through the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP) or other job opportunities; and

WHEREAS: The city of Somerville, Massachusetts has started a pilot program to give students preloaded monthly Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) passes, or CharlieCards, so they have a reliable source of transportation to and from school regardless of economic status; and

WHEREAS: Somerville High School's enrollment is similar to CRLS at roughly 1,400 students compared to roughly 1,800 students; and

WHEREAS: Somerville's FY2022 budget estimated at 99.6 million dollars for their education system compared to Cambridge's FY2022 budget at 223.7 million dollars and has managed to implement this pilot program; and

WHEREAS: Larger cities, such as Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles, California have implemented programs for free public transit for every student enrolled in their public school system and at a community college; and

WHEREAS: The MBTA has a program to provide students on free/reduced lunch with free M7 CharlieCards through the months of September through June; and

WHEREAS: Cambridge Public School District (CPSD) had a proposed budget of 232,389,140 dollars for the 2022-23 school year; and

WHEREAS: The proposed CPSD budget allocates 12,207,028 dollars towards transportation (or five percent of proposed total budget); and

WHEREAS: Students deserve a safe and reliable means of transportation to and from school; and

WHEREAS: Students should avoid the financial burden to pay 17 dollars a week on transportation to school; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge Youth Council (CYC) has been actively working on this resolution since October of 2021; and has been active in the issue since 2018 when they rallied to establish free M7 CharlieCards for free/reduced lunch students; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the School Committee do serious research in conjunction with the MBTA and the City of Cambridge to consider implementing a program to distribute free M7 CharlieCards to all students at CRLS, regardless of free/reduced lunch status; and be it further

RESOLVED: That due to participation in MSYEP or other summer job opportunities, that these CharlieCards remain activated throughout not only the school year but the summer as well; and be it further

RESOLVED: That upon an agreement with the MBTA, CPSD will distribute free yearly M7 CharlieCards to all high school and upper school students; and be it further

RESOLVED: That this motion be referred to the Superintendent, for the Superintendent and Mayor share an update with the School Committee by June 1, 2022.

A true copy:



Ariel. B. Kennebrew
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

c:
Member Wilson
Mayor Siddiqui, and Member Fantini in collaboration with Student Member Killian and Student Member Vera-DeGraff

Motion # 22-56