

Maria L. Baldwin School Council

85 Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA 02138

November 20, 2025

Baldwin School Council Minutes November 2025

7:30 - 8:45 a.m.

In-Person Meeting, Baldwin School Library

School Council Members in Attendance

Parent Members: Caitlin Dube (virtual), Jackie Hayes, Matt Meyersohn, Jen Nigro, Chunying Yue

School Staff Members: Heidi Cook, Ben Geiger, Karin Kugel, Corianne LaBounty, Sara Oliveira, Susan Tiersch

Absent: Eugenia Schraa Huh, Andrew Verardo, Elena Haro

Also in attendance: Josh Aaronson, Lauren Begen, Julie Curti, Alice Izuma, Anna Shin (virtual), Owen Woodcock, Korleen Cosgrove (Ms. Heidi's fall principal intern)

Agenda

- Review feedback from survey about the School Improvement Plan
- Parent Information Sessions
 - Review of the October parent session on Student Reports (virtual)
 - Determine future sessions. Ideas include screen time, phones/watches, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum
 - Upcoming session on Report Cards - December 4 (in-person)

Gratitude

Thank you to Caitlin Dube for her dedication to the Baldwin School Council for the last several years. Caitlin was the co-chair as well as a council member. Caitlin is stepping down from the school council to dedicate her time to the Cambridge school community as a newly elected Cambridge School Committee member. Thank you Caitlin for your hard work and willingness to continually improve our school council and our school. Congratulations and best of luck in your new endeavor advocating for all CPS students.

Public Comment

A group of parents would like to understand the use of screentime as it seems there is an uptick in screentime in specialist classes. What are the policies? Help us understand the logic behind the use of screen time. What purpose do screens serve? Does it sync with parent expectations? Fourteen parents had a meeting on Wednesday evening to talk about what they are hearing about screen time and their interest in reducing it. Kids are drawn to screens. Why are screens used for movement breaks?

Ms. Heidi explained that every space in the school is expected to have a smartboard. The art room has a BenQ Board which is an interactive smartboard that looks different from the smartboards in the rest of the rooms.

Mrs. Kugel explained that yesterday in library for the kindergarten classes, they read a book about the story of the puppeteer (Tony Sarg) who invented the giant **balloons** floating in the sky during the annual **parade**, “The True Story of the Puppeteer of Macy’s Parade”. They did an activity building their own parade balloon while a video of the Macy’s Day Parade played on the smartboard.

- Teachers use Danny Go! for movement breaks.
- In physical education, there was a video about a Turkey Trot and they also sometimes have a yoga cooldown exercise that is on the screen.
- The art room used Storyline Online when a substitute teacher was in the room. There is no TV in the art room, it is a smartboard.
- Elementary music projects a slide show for musician of the month as well as an interactive screen with boomwhacker percussion tubes for playalongs.
- The district curriculum is created and delivered digitally. It is valuable to see things, like fractions, explained via smartboard.

There are so many great things that come when you can visualize something, for example, a tomb. If there is a visual and an audio, like Mrs. Kugel’s lesson about the parade, it is impactful. How kids learn is different for every child. For EL students, it creates equity if you have a diversity of delivery options. They strengthen the quality of the curriculum. It is valuable to have the approach of showing what is happening and it triggers curiosity and questions.

Thinking about equity of tech literacy and tech cognition, “seeing it” in school will support students that may not have access and support at home. Having library/technology class in grades 3 - 5 is immensely beneficial for all students, teaching them the pitfalls and benefits of technology. Fifth grade students learned about the ‘evils’ of apps and then created their own app. The lesson was designed to show them how apps are used to make them addictive.

Last school year at a school council we talked about Chromebook time and screen time in the classroom. The [September 2024](#) school council meeting included the district Chief Information Officer Lee McCanne and Director of Education Technology Gina Roughton to answer questions. For the next school council meeting in December, the agenda could be a community conversation with the range of things we see from the district to the gray areas such as movement breaks. We need an understanding of our values as a school around screens.

SIP Feedback

The SIP feedback form that was sent to families did not gather much feedback. A few parents were polled and their response was that they trust the school council. One thing that came up in the feedback form was about advanced learners. Differentiation is part of what teachers do in their instruction. The SIP monies are used for students who need extra support.

Parent Sessions

What We’ve Done

In October, we hosted a virtual session on understanding the assessment reports. Literacy Coach Mrs. Thompson and Math Coach Ms. Lynch explained the reports and answered questions. About 40 parents attended the session. The session was also recorded and sent to the community.

On December 4th, Ms. Heidi will host an in-person parent session on report cards. This will cover what you can expect on the report card, the timing of report cards, and the alignment across the district. This session is prior to the report cards being sent.

What would be helpful for parent sessions for helping parents be academic partners at home?

Recommendations from attendees on future sessions:

- Executive function skills (there was one last year and parent said it was very helpful)
- Recommendation on a session with the specialist teachers.
- Productive struggle, the ability to invest in a difficult task and how important that is.
- Overview of math because how parents learned math may not be how things are taught today.
- A spring session for new preschool and kindergarten families to ask questions (aside from the welcome event).
- SEL and language around behavior.

Next Meeting

Thursday, December 18

7:00 p.m.

Virtual meeting (Virtual link: <http://zoom.com/my/baldwinschool>)

Agenda: Screen Time in K-2

- Review of current use
- Conversation about tech usage and pros and cons

School council meetings follow Open Meeting Law. Meetings are open to all.

For morning meetings, students are always welcome to come to the library and may go to the cafeteria for breakfast at 8:00 or they may stay in the library until the bell rings at 8:30. Parents are welcome to come when they can, leave when they wish.

School Council Meeting Schedule 2025-2026

January 15 - 7:30 a.m.

February 26 - 7:30 a.m.

March 19 - evening virtual meeting

April 16 - 7:30 a.m.

May 14 - 7:30 a.m.

Documents:

Baldwin SIP Overview SY2025-2027 <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YiL0uPQm2bsHpuUgNRYKsLoOvimMXq2S/view?usp=sharing>