

**Maria L. Baldwin School Council**

**85 Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA 02138**

***December 18, 2025***

**Baldwin School Council Minutes December 2025**

**7:00 - 8:00 p.m.**

**Virtual Meeting**

**School Council Members in Attendance**

*Parent Members:* Jackie Hayes, Jen Nigro, Andrew Verardo, Chunying Yue

*School Staff Members:* Heidi Cook, Elena Haro, Corianne LaBounty, Sara Oliveira, Susan Tiersch

*Absent:* Ben Geiger, Karin Kugel, Eugenia Schraa Huh, Matt Meyersohn,

*Also in attendance:* Josh Aaronson, Martina Bahlmann, Lauren Begen, Lauren Budd, Grace Corbi, Julie Curti, Caitlin Dube, Kiran Gajwani, Michael Gelinis, Liz Graham, Emmanuelle Humblet, Ali Kroner, Lisie Lillianfeld, Ray Matsumiya, Ben Mazzotta, Michael Miaskiewicz, Cate Miller, Kerry O'Connor, Carrie O'Leary, Ryan Olshan, Byungkee Park, Phoebe Putnam, Felix Reiper, Minori Sakai, Gina Schouten, Amanda Stone, Silvia Tacheva-Grigorova, Zoe Trohatos, Jodie Westerman, Ashley Williams  
Heather Francis, Chief of Academics

**Agenda**

Discussion: Screen Time in K-2

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

-Public Comment (if any)

Based on concern raised during public comment at our last meeting, it was decided that this meeting's discussion would be K-2 screen/projector usage.

At this meeting, there will be a short presentation of the ways that tech is infused into the classroom and specialist classes.

Question for the group while waiting for all to join: *What do you value in your child's educational experience?*

- Active, high quality learning experiences for academic success for all students
- Interaction, social skills and student agency
- Media literacy and content knowledge
- An education that fully engages a child and their interest
- Offers varied avenues to reach students
- High social emotional learning
- Free play

At a recent Cambridge School Committee meeting, there was a resolution about screen time use throughout the district.

December 2, 2025 meeting, item [25-300 - Excessive Screen Time](#).

The district will look at screen time for students in elementary, middle, and high school, distinguishing between instructional and non-instructional use, and assess opportunities to reduce screen-time exposure.

The Baldwin vision is joy, challenge, belonging and growth for every Baldwin student, every day. We see evidence of smiles and engagement, formally and informally. We prioritize engagement especially in terms of Responsive Classroom and our school is a very human centered place. We are doing a good job achieving this vision.

Digital curriculum is a norm these days. More and more often, screens are used. For example, teacher guidebooks and curriculum are delivered via digital slide decks. The students use pencil and paper, and manipulatives. This is not an all or nothing approach. Online stories, a book on a screen may be embedded in the lesson. Guided movement breaks, which may be used for transition or a tool for the teacher to get ready, may be on screen.

There are some clear guidelines. For example, no YouTube. There may be some things in classrooms that should not be happening. That is something to look into.

A specific concern that came up in the last meeting was regarding the art room. Every classroom in CPS must have a smartboard. The art room has a BenQ board. It looks like a TV, however it is an interactive smartboard that looks different from the smartboards in the rest of the classrooms. Due to the way the room is set up, with lots of windows and closets, there is no place for a smartboard on the wall. That is why the art room has a BenQ board. The teacher was absent and the lessons left for the substitute teacher included the option to use Storyline Online. Storyline Online is a website with videos featuring celebrated actors reading children's picture books. (It was noted that read-alouds help with literacy and communication skills.) The art room substitute plans have been revamped so that the BenQ board is not used at all.

The elementary music teacher has been absent quite a bit this year. The substitute plans include a slide deck which may include videos.

This is not an excuse, but it is not always easy to get substitute teachers and it is very difficult to get substitute teachers with art or music skills.

### **Classroom Technology**

The School Committee resolution will generate a districtwide conversation.

Based on prior year discussions, there is minimal use of individual Chromebook time for 'free' time or incentives.

Art class is a hands-on, studio based model. Screens are used for Elmo document cameras to display what the teacher is doing, however, most of the time, students gather around the teacher. There is some digital art for students in grades 2 - 5 that is in the curriculum like sketchpad or WeaveSilk. These sites have been shared with all families.

### *Physical Education*

Grades PS - 2 sometimes show images of safety techniques. Also, mindfulness and yoga clips are shown on the screen.

Grades 3 - 5 - rarely used.

### *Music*

Grades PS - 2 uses videos sometimes used as a guiding experience, guiding them through a song. Boom Whackers uses physical sticks and the smartboard .

Grade 3 - 5 may project notes on the screen if at all. There is a unit on digital music creation.

### *Library/Technology*

Grades PS - 2 - Sometimes used to see author interviews and for Pabble Go

3D design and use of Tinkercad.

Teaching about coding logic - Coding, editing and designing

Video editing

Fifth grade designed their own evil application and presented them to Superintendent Murphy. They learned the ways applications 'hook' kids.

Question about Sumdog (math practice game to help boost fluency). This is considered instructional as it is engaging skill building practice. Sometimes it is hard to get students to do the work. This may be used by some teachers to help learn math facts.

Ms. Heidi spoke about COVID launching education into the technical space, implementing remote learning overnight. Technology was used to supplement teacher instruction via Zoom.

Thinking about equity, tech literacy and instruction, learning about it and using it in school supports students that may not have access and support at home.

School council member Jackie talked about her experience through grade 12 with zero technology and the transition to a world ripe with screens was very hard and extremely overwhelming. It's important that the schools teach students to navigate technology in a safe environment.

The district will be talking about screen time and technology and we will continue to talk about them here. If you have any questions, please ask. Don't let an issue simmer.

### **Next Meeting**

*Thursday, February 26 - 7:30 a.m.*

7:30 a.m..

Baldwin School Library

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**

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>