



**C A M B R I D G E  
S C H O O L C O M M I T T E E**

**(Official Minutes)**

**Regular Meeting**

**December 18, 2018**

Called for 6:00 p.m. 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: Ms. Bowman, Ms. Dexter, Mr. Fantini, Ms. Kelly, Mr. Kimbrough, Ms. Nolan, Mayor McGovern

Also Present: Mr. Grassi, Mr. Escallon, Student School Committee Representatives  
Ms. Keady Rawson, City of Cambridge Personnel Director, representing the City Manager for Contract Negotiations

Mayor McGovern in the Chair

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**1. Public Comment:**

The following individual was heard:

- Mr. Ross Benson, Brookline Street, CRLS math teacher, **#18-370**, is hoping that this homework policy is adopted tonight.

On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Ms. Bowman, it was voted to close public comment.

**2. Student School Committee Report:**

Mr. Grassi reported that there will be a pre game before the basketball game tonight.

**3. Presentation of the Records for Approval:**

On a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by School Committee Member Dexter it was voted, on a voice vote, to accept the following Minutes as presented:

- November 20, 2018 Regular Meeting
- November 27, 2018 Roundtable with BSU & Micro-aggressions Working Group
- December 4, 2018 Regular Meeting

**4. Reconsiderations: None**

**5. Unfinished Business/Calendar: None**

**6. Awaiting Reports: None**

**7. Superintendent's Agenda:**

**7a. Presentations: None**

**7b. CPS District Plan: None**

**7c. Consent Agenda:**

Ms. Nolan moved, seconded by Ms. Bowman, to bring the Superintendent's Agenda forward for discussion and adoption. Mr. Fantini removed **#18-358** and **#18-366**. Ms. Nolan removed **#18-360**. School Committee Member Dexter removed **#18-363**. On the following roll call vote, items **#18-359**, **#18-361**, **#18-352**, **#18-364**, **#18-365**, and **#18-367** were adopted: Ms. Kelly YEA; Mr. Kimbrough YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Ms. Bowman YEA; Ms. Dexter YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mayor McGovern YEA.

**#18-359**, Approval of Revisions to Homework Policy, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the Homework Policy as detailed in the document.

**#18-361**, Special Needs Contracts for Day and 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/or Grant Fund Budget.

	#	Amount
Day Program Tuition Contracts	1	\$112,302.04
Residential Program Tuition Contracts	0	
45 Day Program Contracts	0	
Total	1	<u>\$112,302.04</u>

**#18-362**, Approval of Gifts to Cambridge Public Schools, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the following gifts and receipts as described.

1. An in-kind donation made from an individual donor of a snare drum with stand and case for the Visual & Performing Arts Department at CRLS.
2. A gift of \$325.00 made from an individual donor to the Visual & Performing Arts Department Department's dance program for ribbons in memory of Richelle Robinson.
3. A gift of \$325.00 made from the CRLS Arts Committee to the Visual & Performing Arts Department's dance program for ribbons in memory of Richelle Robinson.
4. A gift of \$556.80 to the Kennedy-Longfellow School made from O'Connor Portraiture, Inc., as commission for student portraits. Funds will be used for the general support of the school.
5. A gift of \$1,000.00 made from the Friends of Cambridge Rindge & Latin School to the CRLS summer Math Preview Program for gift cards for students.

**#18-364**, Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for one student tuition to attend Norfolk County Agricultural High School, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:  
Norfolk County Agricultural High School, 400 Main St., Walpole, for the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 in the amount of \$27,189.00.

**#18-365**, Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for translation services, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:  
Cross Cultural Communication Systems, 227 Garfield Ave., Suite B, Woburn for the period January 1, 2019 to December 1, 2019 in the amount of \$50,000.00.

**#18-367**, Grant Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve the FY19 Early Literacy Intervention grant award in the amount and for the period indicated:  
FY19 Early Literacy Intervention Grant for the period December 7, 2018 to June 30, 2019, in the amount of \$46,436.00. Project/Grant SC19632.

**Description:** This grant supports ongoing professional development by Lesley University in Reading Recovery for two CPS Teacher Leaders. 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, train and conduct professional development for Reading Recovery teachers from both in and out of the district. The grant also provides for travel to the

annual Reading Recovery Teacher Leader Institute and instructional materials for both teachers. One of the Teacher Leaders will be funded 0.30 FTE beginning in January, with the balance of .2 FTE from Title I and .5 FTE from General Funds.

#### **8. Non-Consent Agenda:**

**#18-358**, Approval of the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees AFL-CIO, Council 93, Local 1611 Collective Bargaining Agreement, effective July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve the agreement between the Cambridge School Committee and the American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees AFL-CIO, Council 93, Local 1611 agreement for the period July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2021, which was ratified by the members of the bargaining unit. On the following roll call, **#18-358** was adopted: Ms. Kelly YEA; Mr. Kimbrough YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Ms. Bowman YEA; Ms. Dexter YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mayor McGovern YEA; Ms. Keady-Rawson YEA.

**#18-360**, Approval of Revisions to the High School Homework Policy, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee approve the revisions to the High School Homework Policy as detailed in the document.

Mayor McGovern moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini to suspend the rules to bring **#18-370** forward for discussion. On a voice vote in the affirmative, the rules were suspended for the reason stated.

Discussion followed on **#18-360** and **#18-370**.

Dr. Turk explained that homework policies **#18-359** (overall) and **#18-360** (High School) are aligned. The Deputy Superintendent informed the Board that **#18-360** (High School) and **#18-370** (CRLS) are not aligned. Dr. Turk pointed out that **#18-370** (CRLS) is missing the portion contained in **#18-360** (High School) related to blizzard bags.

Ms. Nolan asked if the Committee can pass the High School Policy and fold the missing elements of the CRLS Policy into the High School Policy. She also brought up a grammatical error in the High School Policy - **#18-360**.

Dr. Turk also explained that the High School (**#18-360**) policy was reviewed and accepted by Principal Smith of CRLS and Principal Soliotis of HSEP.

Ms. Bowman stated she was under the impression that the administration would examine the first reading of both **#18-360** and **#18-370** and combine them together as one document to be presented to the Committee as a second reading. The Committee should only need to pass the one document or not pass it; the discrepancies should have been taken care of before we met in open session. She asked for an explanation as to why that has not happened.

Mr. Escallon answered that **#18-370** was shared with Principal Smith and every teacher in the high school and there was a separate document giving everyone a chance to comment on version **#18-370**. When he received his book for this meeting, he was surprised to learn of **#18-360**. He is confused as to why there is a **#18-360**, however, he agrees the section on the blizzard bags is important and should be included in the version the students have worked tirelessly on.

Ms. Bowman wants to hear from the administration in case there are legal reasons for the discrepancies.

Dr. Turk responded that the key factors to the redlines in each policy (**#18-359** and **#18-360**) are to make sure nothing is in conflict with the other and that they are both aligned.

Ms. MacFarlane stated that with regard to **#18-360** (redlined version), the Superintendent raised a few concerns, i.e. there were points that talk about CRLS without including HSEP and the RSTA program;

and the use a global classroom language be changed to an online platform to make it more broad, yet still honoring the concept, so that every time technology changed the policy would still be relevant.

Mr. Escallon walked us through comparing **#18-360** and **#18-370** stating he understands the importance of including legal language however he stated that there was no communication between administration, faculty, and students when **#18-360** was created.

There was a discussion on whether or not language is necessary for situations that do not happen, i.e. CPS does not penalize students for not attending field trips.

Ms. Bowman wonders if the Committee needs to look at the district wide homework policy.

Ms. Nolan stated that there is an overall policy, a separate JK-8 homework policy and if we pass this one tonight there will be a high school policy.

Mr. Fantini asked if the JK-8 homework policy requires homework.

Dr. Turk answered that every school may not have an identical homework cycle. They all have homework; they are just not the same.

Ms. Bowman stated that we pay people a lot of money to do what we are doing and going to each school and examining each homework policy in her opinion is not what this body should be doing.

Mr. Grassi stated that students, faculty and administration cannot pass any policy without bringing it to the School Committee.

Mr. Escallon compared #5 in which **#18-370** has more language than **#18-360**. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Kimbrough, on a voice vote to amend **#18-360** to include ***if teachers want to extend an assignment deadline, the new deadline should be during a following school day***, with unanimous consent, the amendment to #5 was adopted.

Mr. Escallon compared #8 in which **#18-370** has more language than **#18-360**. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by Mr. Kimbrough, on a voice vote to amend **#18-360** to include ***if credit is awarded to attend a field trip, a comparable assignment relative to the field trip experience will be provided that will take no longer than the class period to complete***, with unanimous consent, the amendment to #5 was adopted.

Ms. Nolan compared #3 in which **#18-370** has more language than **#18-360**. On a motion by Ms. Nolan, seconded by School Committee Member Dexter, on a voice vote to amend **#18-360** to include ***regardless of whether school is in session*** with unanimous consent, the amendment to #3 was adopted.

On a voice vote, **#18-360 as amended** was adopted.

On a voice vote, **#18-370**, that the School Committee approve the revised version of the CRLS Homework Policy (second reading). was adopted as sections to be included in **#18-360**.

**#18-363**, Contract Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee award a contract to the following vendor for student transportation and tuition for two students to attend Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School, funds to be provided from the General Fund Budget, Chapter 30B of the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts having been complied with:

Essex North Shore Agricultural & Technical School, 562 Maple St., Hawthorne, for the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 in the amount of \$36,682.00.

Discussion followed on **#18-363**.

School Committee Member Dexter noticed a \$10,000.00 difference between Essex North Shore Agricultural and Norfolk County Agricultural schools stating we have students going to both, she is wondering if we could eliminate Norfolk County and send all students to Essex North Shore. On the following roll call vote, **#18-363** was adopted: Ms. Kelly YEA; Mr. Kimbrough YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Ms. Bowman YEA; Ms. Dexter YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mayor McGovern YEA.

**#18-366**, Grant Award, be adopted as follows: that the School Committee accept and approve an increase to the FY19 Popplestone Foundation grant award in the amount and for the period indicated: FY19 Popplestone Foundation Grant Increase for the period September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019, in the amount of \$1,650.00. Project/Grant SC19695.

**Description:** This grant has been increased by \$1,650 to pay registration fees for six teachers to attend the Kodaly Music Education Conference. This foundation grant will continue to support the salary of 2.0 full-time music teachers at the Peabody School and the Fletcher Maynard Academy, as well as contribute funding for 0.4 FTE of a teacher at the Tobin School.

Discussion followed on **#18-366**.

Mr. Fantini removed this grant award to bring attention to the fact that this husband and wife through their foundation have been supporting the Kodaly program for a number of years. Kodaly is a wonderful program and he is grateful that they are continuing to fund the program. He wanted to publicly thank the Popplestone Foundation for being a partner with the CPS and the VPA department.

Vice Chair Kelly added that although this is an art program, it affects our students' abilities around literacy and mathematics.

Ms. Dexter asked if there are any schools in our district that would like to have the Kodaly program that do not have it at this time. She has heard that there are some that don't.

Mr. Fantini answered that he believes there are some schools that do not have it.

The Mayor added that time is the issue for the schools that do not have it rather than funding. There will be future discussions on this in the future.

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Nolan, on the following roll call vote, item **#18-366** was adopted: Ms. Kelly YEA; Mr. Kimbrough YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Ms. Bowman YEA; Ms. Dexter YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mayor McGovern YEA.

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

Mayor McGovern moved, seconded by Mr. Fantini, to bring forward all items for discussion and adoption.

School Committee Member Dexter removed all items.

**#18-368**, that the Cambridge School Committee adopt a budget calendar that specifies dates, times, and locations of all FY20 budget-related hearings, meetings, retreats, and workshops; and that the administration publicize widely all budget hearings. .

Discussion followed on **#18-368**.

School Committee Member Dexter explained that all of the upcoming budget meetings are in red on their handout which is in alignment with their calendar they receive from Ms. Beard putting the budget items in green. School Committee Member Dexter motioned to amend the documents to televise all Roundtables.

The Mayor asked that we keep in mind that February 26, 2019 may be the only date to have the Joint Roundtable with the City Council and School Committee on the Tobin School update. He is waiting for confirmation from the City on this issue.

Mr. Fantini thanked both Ms. Spinner and School Committee Member Dexter for all of their hard work in putting the FY20 Budget Calendar together.

On the amendment to televise all Roundtables, on a voice vote, the amendment was adopted. On the calendar as amended, on a voice vote, the FY 20 Budget Calendar **#18-368** was adopted.

**#18-369**, whereas the School Committee, Administration, and the public value data-informed decision-making; and

Whereas the School Committee and Administration will be discussing budget needs for the 2019-2020 school year;

That the School Committee and Administration consider data provided by School Committee Members, the Administration, and Members of the Public related to:

Patterns of student achievement and student programming

Patterns of past Cambridge Public School budgets, budget increases and budget reductions

Patterns of staffing and spending in other Massachusetts districts

Discussion followed on **#18-369**

Mayor McGovern exercised his Charter Right to Calendar this motion in order to allow Dr. Salim to be part of the discussion.

Ms. Dexter informed the assembly that she is part of two discussion groups in the community, one group looks at the budget and the other group is made up of looking at data of African American/Black students. She has a document she will include in the packet for the next meeting.

**#18-371**, Whereas the Cambridge Public Schools strive to have a strong and equitable Special Education program to meet the needs of students with disabilities; and

Whereas, there is national concern about disproportionate representation in Special Education of linguistically and culturally diverse students, particularly African American males, as well as low-income students within particular categories of disabilities; and

Whereas disproportionality has been found, nationally and within particular states and districts, in Special Education referrals, assessment, and placement, as well as in identification of students within particular categories of disabilities (e.g. Emotional Impairment, Intellectual Impairment, Communication Impairment,); and

Whereas students in Special Education are provided with an educational program that differs in minor or substantial ways from that of General Education students; and

Whereas, nationally, students in Special Education are more likely to be the subjects of disciplinary actions, to be less likely to graduate from high school, and to experience other negative outcomes;

The Committee requests that a Roundtable be held on Special Education, with particular attention to any disproportionality by race/ethnicity, gender, income, and/or ELL status that might be found in the Cambridge Public Schools Special Education program, including as related to:

Referrals, assessment, placement, and disability categories;

Educational programming via Full Inclusion, Partial Inclusion, Substantially Separate, or Out of District placements;

Disciplinary actions;

High school graduation rates;

Other negative outcomes such as course failure or college enrollment;

And that the administration examine data from multiple years, if necessary, to obtain reliable statistics on Special Education; and

That this Roundtable be held before June 1, 2019.

[http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/mf\\_PB02\\_Disproportionality.pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/mf_PB02_Disproportionality.pdf)

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED508412.pdf>

Discussion followed on **#18-371**.

School Committee Member Dexter talked about Race and Gender, stating there are some very severe disproportionalities. She knows Dr. Morgan is going through all of the IEPs very carefully. As a School Committee, she feels we should hold a Roundtable on this issue towards the end of the year.

Ms. Nolan stated she is happy to have a Roundtable on this and added that in the past, there would be an annual report given to the Members. We didn't get one this year. This motion is very much in line with what we used to always get in the annual report.

On a voice vote, **#18-371** was adopted.

**#18-372**, that the Report of the November 28, 2018 Curriculum and Achievement Sub-Committee meeting be accepted as presented:

**CURRICULUM & ACHIEVEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCE ROOM**

**NOVEMBER 28, 2018**

Called for the purpose of discussing eighth grade testing to attend classes at CRLS.

Members Present: Mr. Kimbrough, Ms. Kelly, Ms. Dexter

Also Present: Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Adams, Assistant Superintendent; Jeff Gaglione, CRLS Dean & Head of Math Curriculum; Julie Ward Math Coordinator; Elizabeth Liss, Mayor's Education Liaison; Ross Benson, CRLS Math Teacher; Lijia Li, CRLS Math Teacher; John Paul Kambazza, Parent

A quorum of the Sub-Committee being present Mr. Kimbrough called the meeting to order at 3:01 PM and read the call of the meeting.

Mr. Kimbrough went around the table and did introductions and went over the ground rules. He asked how do we move forward using best practices for Math placement?

Ms. Ward responded we currently use a lot of data criteria points to place students moving from 8<sup>th</sup> grade to 9<sup>th</sup> grade into math courses. Previously we were using skills assessment either to place students into Algebra 1 or Geometry but as of last year we look at students more holistically using MCAS, student grade, teacher recommendation, mid-term and final examinations to make placement as students enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. Gaglione and I collect and analyze the data. If Students have not mastered skills in June, they are offered help in August to reassess and then after family input students are appropriately placed in a Math Class.

We now have a weighting system and use 7<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS is 10%, math grade is 20%, teacher recommendation is 15%, mid-year is 25% and year end skills assessment is 30% so students can demonstrate the ways they have mastered skills.

Mr. Kimbrough stated that his experience was that some of his 8<sup>th</sup> grade classmates were allowed to come to the high school to take math classes. He wants to know what the steps are for students and how the placements are made now. He would like the data about that.

Ms. Ward explained that students have the opportunity to take Algebra 1 at their 8<sup>th</sup> grade school site. We have integrated 8<sup>th</sup> grade standards and Algebra 1 into an Accelerated Math Program (AMP) in 8<sup>th</sup> grade so students can then be placed into for example, Geometry. If students are taking classes outside the school day we work together using a course syllabus, using a holistic approach, to place them. We work hard to give them the opportunities at their elementary schools to extend their understanding of Math. At this time there are no students from 8<sup>th</sup> grade taking math at the high school.

Mr. Kimbrough asked can you give examples of what target learning might look like.

Ms. Ward added that students are given engagement problems in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and Algebra 1 standards. There are also some online courses that the Advanced Learning Coordinator works with them on. We don't have a formalized traditional core course in the Upper schools right now that would be offered.

Dr. Adams asked Ms. Ward to talk about the shift in the Math standards and Math rigor since they have changed since Mr. Kimbrough and she was in school.

Ms. Ward explained that in 2011 we adopted a new common core standard that was adopted at that time by 42 now 45 states and revised in 2017 to include some other core principals and other adjustments by grade level. The algebra I studied in 8<sup>th</sup> grade looks very different now in terms of the expectations. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade standards currently include some of the Algebra standards that previously lived in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade coursework so there is a crosswalk. Algebra 1 goes into quadratic equations. There is a higher expectation across 8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra 1 and Algebra 2. The guiding principles we focus on is a balanced approach to conceptual understanding, procedural fluency and understanding of ideas. Now it is a balanced approach PreK-12 to apply the procedures and be able to apply them in a multitude of situations on their own and what we share with them. A lot of us are still unpacking, learning and developing the models that we engage students in so they have mastery across those three domains.

Mr. Kimbrough asked from what you shared earlier how do we place students into 9<sup>th</sup> grade math, the 35% we are using for testing the students. Do we have any data of how many of the students are passing that exam and going on to take geometry at the high school? What students will go on to Algebra 1 Honors for a half year rather than Algebra 1 for a full year.

Ms. Ward responded using the holistic approach in Algebra 1 30% skills and the mid-term which is also an assessment developed using measured progress is 25% using the testing aspect. We're still reflecting and tweaking on that so students can demonstrate what they know.

Dr. Adams added that 49% of students enrolled in AMP are passing that exam that signals them for geometry. Holistically the number of students recommended for geometry is 58%.

Ms. Ward stated after speaking to families and if students can benefit in Honors Algebra 1 even if they tested into geometry some opt to take Alg. 1 Honors which is acceptable because it will help them later on in Algebra II because it enables them to master comprehensively all of the concepts.

Mr. Gaglione explained that 70% of 9<sup>th</sup> grade incoming students take some form of Algebra 1. The other 30% will place out of it. The choice between full year Algebra 1 and half year algebra 1 honors is a family decision. We offer Algebra 1 full year class and at mid-year I reach out to the Algebra 1 teachers asking if they have students that should be in the Honors Algebra class. If so, students start 2<sup>nd</sup> semester in Honors Algebra 1 class. An advantage is that students in Honors have been in the course for half a year and seen half of the materials. The students that don't have confidence I tell them you just need to get used to the pace; there is more homework. I move them in cohorts so they are together. If kids don't feel comfortable in the Honors class they can go back to their old full year class. It is a safety net for them.

Mr. Kimbrough stated that not all of our students are coming to ask you if they can place into geometry. What is the outreach? Is there formalized structure?

Mr. Gaglione responded because we are changing to a holistic approach, In May I send a letter to 8<sup>th</sup> grade families I'm not sure if the letter is shared with all of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade students or just the 8<sup>th</sup> grade AMP students. Students can retest but some parents decide they don't want them to not go into the harder class. With our structure, students can get to calculus by junior year.

Ms. Ward added we have a summer program in Math kids attend and study to prepare for the possibility of placing in Algebra 1 or honors. It is to analyze where they are.

Mr. Gaglione is open to offer the skills assessment to all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students not just the AMP students.

Mr. Benson asked what about students that are ready for advanced math in 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade that aren't in AMP?

Mr. Gaglione answered that this year we don't have any students taking math at the high school. Prior to this year Principals reached out to me and I would put students in a 1<sup>st</sup> period class so they could then go back to their school. I want to stress that it is on a space available basis.

Dr. Turk added the schedules at the Upper schools and the high school are very different. It is just as important for students to be part of their Upper School community. There is also the time involved in getting to the high school and back. We are now able to have 8<sup>th</sup> graders participate at their home school.

Mr. Benson asked if there is a way to look at the criteria for 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade kids? We have students that get support outside so they can go right into the AMP then to the high school.

Mr. Kambazza asked what do you have in place for middle school students that are not in the AMP class but have the potential. They don't have the support from the regular curriculum. How do we make the opportunities available to those students?

Mr. Gaglione replied that once the students get to CRLS there are many opportunities and supports in place, CSV tutoring center, drop in math class before school and an after school homework center staffed by math teachers and student tutors. We also have a summer preview program, which targets economically disadvantaged and students of color. They come for two weeks for two hours a day and are paid by the Mayor's program or the district.

Dr. Adams added there are two summer programs available for all students to attend. We have a collaboration with the City around STEAM applications and problem solving.

Ms. Ward stated we want teachers to reach the students where they are now so we know what they know and don't know. Rather than tell them we ask them. 7<sup>th</sup> grade students have access to the same opportunities in Math which will set them up for the future and they believe they can do this rather than the mindset that they can't do it. We are expanding out partnerships and working with YPP flag wiggling so math is fun and engaging and it is spreading across the middle schools.

Ms. Dexter asked has a decision been made on eliminating the 7<sup>th</sup> grade enhanced math program?

Dr. Adams replied no decision has been made. We have the 7<sup>th</sup> grade enhanced math focused primarily on all 7<sup>th</sup> graders showing competency in 7<sup>th</sup> grade standards.

Dr. Turk added we were very deliberate in including teachers in designing the program so we know what is needed in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Ms. Dexter asked what does the application of project based look like?

Ms. Ward responded they mix different compositions and understanding proportional relationships. They engage with hands on projects that help them understand. They do a lot of integration of real world applications to be more relevant.

Ms. Dexter stated we used to have integrated Math projects at the high school but we don't have anymore.

Mr. Gaglione answered we have had math projects to make decisions across courses. In our statistics class teachers will look at the teen health survey and look at bias questioning. Students would ask a question two different ways and poll students across the school. The stained glass window project uses different lines, conic's projects, and circles, creating a picture using different elements. Students will take a picture and load it to an easel paper as a scale factor project. They also design a house so they know how much materials they would need to build it.

Ms. Dexter asked if there is a Math Club at CRLS?

Mr. Gaglione responded yes, they meet weekly and have a new advisor that has reached out to BU and in conjunction with the PROMYS Program a summer based science program. Last week there were 14 students in the room after school. We do the New England Math League and the American Math competitions. We engage students across the school. Teachers are using new technology DESMOS and GEOGEBRA which are free resources.

Ms. Dexter asked if we use Kahn Academy.

Ms. Ward answered we give them work to do at home such as watch a tutorial as a resource but not at school because we have teachers here. There are links on line for families.

Mr. Gaglione added that we use Kahn Academy. Mr. Benson has made a series of instructional videos for all classes except geometry that are available on our website. The online space is excellent as a supplement but classroom experience with students talking to each other doesn't happen online.

Dr. Adams said the change to the 7<sup>th</sup> grade enhanced math was in response to what we heard from Principals and students themselves. We need to look at the data by demographics, how it went this year and what can we do different. How do we tweak that? Our conversations will be where do students end up.

Mr. Gaglione stated student voice is critical. That's how the summer program was created and where the payment came from. We met with kids asking what supports they need. I share concerns as far as AMP and honors classes and making opportunities available to all kids. We are concentrating on Upper Schools but it should be a K-12 issue. What types of interventions can we put in place? The 7<sup>th</sup> grade program is a step in the right direction but is that too late.

Ms. Ward added there are ongoing student interviews where coaches are gathering information from students about their own experiences. We are listening to what students are saying.

Ms. Dexter stated we are going into budget season, should we be thinking about additional staffing or smaller classes and do we have the resources to do that?

Dr. Turk added at a recent meeting Principals were sharing how they utilize their staff member's; teachers, interventionists and coaches to support the students that others did not think about.

Ms. Ward mentioned one of the challenges is planning how to maximize the time they are together.

Mr. Gaglione would never turn away more staff but we are well staffed and have dedicated co-teachers. Our schedule does not have much flexibility for students to get extra resources. Teacher collaboration time is very limited with a 4 block schedule and there is no common planning time.

Dr. Turk added the work being done is a change of mind shift of how we interact with our students.

Mr. Gaglione stated that planning is happening in some schools but not at the high school. We need the math dept. to do the same thing as other departments.

Mr. Kimbrough added we need to do a deep investigation of how our schools are currently structured. What does the data show about the number of teachers in classrooms in terms of ratio's to be sure we are staffing the schools appropriately?

Ms. Dexter said parents of 7<sup>th</sup> graders are asking can a student at the end of 7<sup>th</sup> grade take a skills test so they can skip 8<sup>th</sup> grade math. What is the answer to that parent?

Ms. Ward thinks the messaging is about the student's readiness for the next level in math. There could be fractured space that will come back later. We want to set students up for success. If a student can show mastery of all the 8<sup>th</sup> grade standards and criteria, if we keep the lens of equity and if they pass the test they can move on. There is still the structural aspect of having the teacher and other students. We want to see a syllabus and transcript of what they have accomplished.

Ms. Dexter asked is there a policy that students cannot go to the high school in 8<sup>th</sup> grade for math.

Mr. Kimbrough replied it sounds like a recommendation by a Principal goes to Mr. Gaglione. Mr. Gaglione's understanding is that middle school Principals are attempting to meet the needs of those students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

Ms. Dexter motioned to adjourn at 4:25 PM seconded by Mr. Kimbrough.  
Terry Gist  
Confidential Secretary

On a voice vote, **#18-272** was accepted

**#18-373**, that the Report of the December 3, 2018 Attendance Violation Policy Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee meeting be accepted as presented

**Attendance Violation Policy Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee  
School Committee Conference Room  
December 3, 2018**

Present: Ms. Dexter, Ms. Nolan

Also present: Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Mr. Smith, CRLS Principal; Elizabeth Liss, Mayor's Educational Liaison

Called for the purpose of discussing the Attendance Violation Policy (AV Policy) and any other related issues.

A quorum of the Ad-Hoc Committee being present Ms. Dexter called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM and read the call of the meeting.

Mr. Smith had previously provided some data that Ms. Dexter changed the format on so the information was calculated by school not by Learning Community (on file in the School Committee Office) and calculated percentages. They reviewed the data charts for the second through fourth quarter of 2017-18.

Ms. Dexter questioned some terminology. An earned AV means no excuse for tardy/absence and potentially get an AV. If AV appears on the grade report, it means the student did not do a buy back. Assigned AV means a certain number of students, after meeting with deans, did a buy back

Mr. Smith stated that one student can be counted four times (by course period) because one student can represent up to four AV's and it should be a one to one correlation.

Ms. Dexter questioned the number of students who were assigned an AV and were offered a buyback was greater than the number of assigned AV's. Mr. Smith will check on the discrepancies and see if everyone is providing consistent data.

Ms. Nolan asked does AV on grade report mean those students received a grade reduction? Yes, that is

Mr. Smith's understanding but he will check.

Dr. Turk stated that this is 2017-18 data. Staff is working on Quarter 1 now, is there any change for this year?

According to Mr. Smith's analysis of grade reports for this year, there were 247 AV's including the High School Extension Program. This quarter there are 204 incidences of AV at CRLS but that represents only 119 students.

Dr. Turk said the work she is seeing every week was supposed to be about student chronic absences but now includes AV's. If the numbers are down it means the work is taking hold.

There was further discussion on the AV Grade Report charts.

Mr. Smith stated that the OSS data has not been pulled yet.

Ms. Dexter reminded everyone that this Policy needs to be wrapped up by February 1<sup>st</sup>. Is the buyback working and is it feasible for the Deans to handle it? Is there a disproportion on the number of students of color?

Ms. Nolan asked do other districts have ways to motivate kids without being punitive? Are there models out there?

Mr. Smith stated that the Dart Schools that are most like ours for comparison are Waltham, North Quincy, and Hudson.

The grades came out on 11/19/18, and our Attendance Violation numbers look somewhat lower however still disproportionate. Chronic absenteeism is intertwined. There is good work being done around Tier 3 interventions. He sent out a letter to families trying to highlight how important it is to be here and on time. Students that are absent twice are considered chronically absent for the school year. The Deans of Students, Angie and Mr. Maloney want to know what the individual plans are? He knows there is frustration but also recognizes the individuals in those numbers of students. Negative deterrence doesn't always work. There are 20-25 Students on Tier 2 & 3 that are chronically absent and are on the cusp that we are concerned about.

Dr. Turk stated there are weekly meetings about this. There could also be siblings here and we need to look at the whole family. What are the supports in place and what can we do differently? The level of conversation has been different than it was six months ago which is a tribute to them. There is some frustration because people want it to change faster.

Ms. Dexter added the kids that get AV'd. are kids that it doesn't matter to them, they are coming late, not doing the buy back and don't have extenuating circumstances. Some kids can be working because they know the AV Policy. There are some students that are the chronically absent.

Mr. Smith stated the list includes the Extension Program students– what do we know, what did we try, what is the next step? We need more creative ideas. We need to find out what other measures other districts do? If we try intervention A on student X and it works, we can scale that for other students. Students on Tier 2 & 3 need to be monitored. We are a comprehensive high school and we need to adopt alternative pathways but we aren't really skilled at that. He wants CRLS to feel like the smallest big school in the United States.

Ms. Dexter asked is there a reason why more students aren't at the Extension High School?

Ms. Nolan responded that the course offerings aren't as wide.

Dr. Turk added students aren't just placed at the Extension School. There needs to be a combination of things. Students need to be interested in going and there needs to be a process for applying.

Ms. Nolan heard about one school that hands students a slip saying we're so glad you joined us today on cheery colored paper when they are late and when a student gets in trouble the next day the entire staff in the school needs to check in with that student.

Ms. Dexter asked is the buyback working? It seems like a lot of work.

Mr. Smith thinks the Deans would say the buyback is better than what it used to be. It presumes there are students that willfully come in late. The buyback portion is a plan that is more administrative monitoring and can be a challenge. Many chronically absent students need a different level of intervention. He would like his folks to be doing home visits.

Ms. Dexter said thinking in terms of equity it is usually the students that have the wherewithal to find the Deans to get a buyback.

Mr. Smith responded that the student has to make sure the Dean and Teacher supports it. Every student that crosses a threshold is contacted by their Dean. There is a certain level of advocacy that students need to develop to be successful in a buy back.

Ms. Nolan asked if the buyback is onerous and is not having a clear effect, could there be a more effective use of time?

Mr. Smith replied that last year students developed the idea about the buyback, previously students had to show better attendance to earn the grade back. Prior 16-17 and 15-16 there was no buyback, it was an automatic grade reduction. The students wanted another process rather than asking a student to do the same problem they were having a problem with. The time it takes to monitor/verify doesn't get us to a larger group of Tier 2 and 3 students. He prefers to spend time on absenteeism not tardiness. Looking at the grades they have a lower profile in one class rather than the other three. There are more challenges in block 1 compared to 2, 3 and 4. We have chronic absenteeism but the students are in the school building just not going to class.

Ms. Dexter asked what if we took away the grade reduction, is there anything we can put in to motivate/incentivize students to come to school?

Mr. Smith replied we have a challenge on both extremes; all or nothing. Ten points can be much because we have to monitor which kids did not do the buyback, and there is nothing going on at home.

Dr. Turk believes we need to find a balance between sanctions and incentives and having a pool of incentives. For example, at the Extension School kids get play money to use at the school store which is not done here. We could have home visits, match kids with mentors. What's the pool of support that can be put in place for different students.

Mr. Smith would be nervous to move it away. We need to balance that tension between what we have right now and the ten-point reduction. The kids brought the buyback forward to earn the grade back. We are going to pull kids on Tier 2 & 3 to join focus groups. He will research other schools to get some positives as opposed to negative incentives.

Ms. Nolan will ask the MASC list serve what others do.

Ms. Dexter heard that a RSTA teacher keeps a class participation grade and reduces their grade if they are late too much. Teachers can monitor it instead of the Deans so students are accountable to the teachers and build relationships. Would that work? A student mediator could be brought in.

Mr. Smith responded that's an idea worth exploring but Teachers need to be brought into this. A challenge is to make sure people remain true to it; one teacher could be more lenient than another. A deeper conversation is about being selective. Teachers are already putting certain pieces in their grade. Attendance impact needs to be consistent on the grade and needs to be backed up by data. Students can get no credit but still be passing the course. For example, if a student comes in late for Algebra 1 and their grade is B or A, the earned grade shows they don't need to be there. Student's ask what's the problem, I'm passing. But at our level we superimpose the AV and it is problematic for the kids that are on the cusp. A teacher tells them you were late so many times, we don't have to give you credit you can move on but you don't get credit for this class. Students would need to take another class to make up the credits. If student's get 80 credits per year and have qualified with 224 credits they are able to graduate by Junior year.

Ms. Liss asked is there a certain number of absences that refers kids to a social worker or intervention put in place?

Mr. Smith replied not at this point, if a kid has a C, we reach out to parents by mail or phone, depending on their relationship. There has to be some learning attached to it, with flexibility we can create a course on life skills or organization.

Ms. Nolan stated the reason for one kid being late may not be the same as another kid. It could be from trauma or fear. Maybe we have different consequences for different kids, depending on their personal circumstances. Some kids have expressed that they want the accountability.

Ms. Dexter added we already have a process for AV now. She likes the idea of kids taking another class or an organizational course. Teachers can use; do you contribute to the learning of others.

Mr. Smith stated the no credit take another course provides flexibility of the kids choosing but still has a consequence. The Deans still monitor and superimpose that, staff can still do the grade. We should have a detrimental effect on the grade. Students have challenges around the flexibility of the schedule. They want to take electives. The course needs to be equivalent to the course they did the buyback for. This group may not have had the flexibility. If the student gets a D in Math class that could get an AVF (Attendance Violation Failure) but still need to take another Math class.

Ms. Dexter asked about a mandatory summer school class for two weeks? Kids value their time.

Dr. Turk responded the community, in general, has not had much love for "mandatory" summer school.

Mr. Smith is behind the two-week summer school class.

Dr. Turk added there are many communities that have mandatory summer school.

Mr. Smith will bring kids next time. Tomorrow he is scheduling focus groups to see what are some of the barriers that impact their attendance. The kids we are talking about are in school but not participating in school classes. They could be dropped from the rolls for not showing up for 21 days, per the state.

Dr. Turk added what's fascinating is they're here but not in classes. We keep them on the rolls and try to work with them.

Ms. Dexter asked do you want to keep the policy in place with the buy back for the second quarter?

Dr. Turk wants to keep it in place while we work thru it. There has been significant work in progress.

Ms. Nolan is not in favor of changing it now, there isn't any compelling data.

Mr. Smith is open to a quarterly review of the data but we need to bring the educators and students to the table. By the middle of January we will have data. We need to be sure all constituent groups can agree with it. The modules don't have to be in the summer they could be on Saturdays. It is important to be someplace on time or early, there are some kids that don't have that skillset. He needs to figure out how to fund it, who will teach it, etc.

Ms. Nolan added by the end of January we should have student feedback. We need to vote on it by May, before the end of the school year. Kids should know you put something forward and that we want to take it and build on it.

Ms. Dexter will draft something for the Administration to bring forward a Policy.

At 4:37 PM Ms. Dexter motioned to adjourn seconded by Ms. Nolan.

Respectfully submitted,  
Terry Gist,  
Confidential Secretary  
Documents on file:  
Student Expectations: CPS Rights and Responsibilities  
Emily's chart

On a voice vote, **#18-373** was accepted.

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

**#18-374**, Whereas the Cambridge Public Schools applauds advocacy and cultural awareness; and

Whereas CRLS Tibetan students and alumni stood up for their community and culture and provided education on the meaning and significance of cultural expression and educated the larger school community on the important issue of self-determination, which resulted in ending the Confucius Classroom Association with the District, that the School Committee commend and recognize them with a letter of commendation.

On a voice vote, #18-374 was adopted.

#### **11. Announcements:**

Mayor McGovern announced that little Lucy Salim was born today, which is why the Superintendent is not here tonight. Everyone is doing just fine. The Mayor thanked his fellow School Committee colleagues for getting through a complete year together. He is looking forward to the next year together. He also thanked the teachers and staff for their hard work this past year.

Mr. Fantini announced that last Saturday night he attended a play at the Sheila Russell Recreation Center that was put on by the Recreation Dept. Special Needs program, it was a packed house. The play was heart wrenching and based on the Vietnam War; it was a superb performance.

Committee Member Dexter announced that on January 12, 2019 there will be a forum held by the Superintendent on the extended day and professional learning time. More details to follow.

#### **12. Late Orders:**

It was voted to adopt the following:

**Motion by Mr. Fantini** that the School Committee hereby goes on record in expressing its congratulations to Ms. Susan Young who is retiring after 32 years from the Fletcher Maynard Academy.

**Motion by School Committee Member Dexter** that the School Committee hereby goes on record in expressing its condolences to Ms. Debbie Barrows, whose mother recently passed away.

#### **13. Communications from City Officers: None**

The Chair entertained a motion to convene in Executive Session, in the School Committee Conference Room, 459 Broadway, Cambridge, for the purposes of hearing a Level III grievance as part of collective bargaining with the Cambridge Education Association Units A&B and for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining strategy and litigation/arbitration strategy as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining and the litigation/arbitration positions of the Cambridge School Committee.

The Chair announced the Committee will not reconvene in open session, and that no votes will be taken except to adjourn the Executive Session.

On a motion by Vice Chair Kelly, seconded by School Committee Member Dexter, on the following roll call, it was voted to enter into Executive Session for the purpose stated: Ms. Kelly YEA; Mr. Kimbrough YEA; Ms. Nolan YEA; Ms. Bowman YEA; Ms. Dexter YEA; Mr. Fantini YEA; Mayor McGovern YEA.

Open session ended at approximately (7:00 p.m.)

Attest:



Doshia Beard

Executive Secretary to the School Committee

**Distributed Back-up Documents** (copies on file in the School Committee office):

- Agenda
- NEA policy brief Disproportionality: Inappropriate Identification of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children