



City of Cambridge

COF 2021 #38
IN CITY COUNCIL
April 26, 2021



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

Sumbul Siddiqui
Mayor

To: Cambridge City Council
From: Sumbul Siddiqui, Mayor
Date: April 22nd, 2021
Subject: Communicating information from the School Committee

To the Honorable, the City Council:

Due to a staff planning day in preparation for the upper school expansion of in-person learning to five days a week on April 28th, there will be no school for upper school students (except Amigos) on Monday, April 26th. In-person and online learning will resume as usual following April Break on Monday, April 26th. There will be a different approach for the elementary, upper, and high school levels, based on the needs of the in-person expansion for rest of the school year. The staff planning days will be for infection control training and classroom setup in advance of the in-person dates.

The staff planning day for the high school will be on May 5th and instead of having a full PD day for elementary schools, who are already in-person five days a week, there will be three new early releases on April 28, May 19, and May 26 for teacher collaboration and planning.

The state is proceeding with MCAS testing this year. It is CPS's goal to make MCAS as minimally disruptive to students and educators to maximize daily, ongoing commitments to rigorous, joyful, and culturally responsive teaching and learning across our schools. Here are some key facts about MCAS testing for students in grades 3-8 this spring. Please visit [this page](#) for more details.

- Federal and state law require all students in grades 3-8 to take the MCAS in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics, and students in grades 5 and 8 in Science, Technology, and Engineering (STE)
- There will be no negative impact to students based on their MCAS results or a family's choice to opt-out of testing
- The state has shortened this year's MCAS tests, which are expected to take 1-1.5 hours in math and STE and 2-2.5 hours in ELA

- This year, the state will not use MCAS participation rates or results to penalize schools or districts
- CPS uses a range of assessment tools to understand student progress and areas of need.

Last week, I added a ceremony at the King Open School where the Consul General of Portugal, João Fin do Lago delivered a generous donation of 122 Portuguese textbooks and a collection of children's reading books to the Olá Program.

On Thursday, April 8th, the School Committee hosted Virtual Candidate Forums for the three finalists for the position of [Interim Superintendent of Schools](#). The recordings of the panels are available at the following links: [Student Forum](#), [Staff Forum](#), [Family/Community Member Forum](#). Following these forums, community members shared their feedback and the key themes from that feedback have been captured [here](#).

On Wednesday, April 14th, one of the three candidates withdrew from consideration. The remaining two candidates—Dr. Victoria Greer and Dr. Metcalf are continuing onto the final phase of this process. The School Committee held a [Special Meeting](#) on Thursday, April 15th to hear public comment about the finalist candidates and discuss next steps.

The School Committee will convene in another [Special Meeting](#) at 5:00 PM on Tuesday, April 27th, to interview the finalist candidates for the position of Interim Superintendent of Schools. There will not be public comment at this meeting, but it will be livestreamed as usual [here](#) on CEATV Channel 99.

On [Thursday, May 6th, at 6:00 PM](#), the School Committee will meet again to consider the appointment of the Interim Superintendent of Schools. Individuals may sign up in advance for Public Comment using [this link](#) up until 30 minutes before the start of the meeting.

On Tuesday, April 13th, the School Committee voted to adopt the Superintendent's proposed FY22 budget, which was entirely on the allocation of the General Fund. We learned at this meeting that there is [a projected \\$12.6 million](#) the school department will be receiving through the federal Elementary & Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) grant funding. The eligible uses of this funding include a broad range of activities to mitigate the impact of COVID-19:

- Academics: evidence-based approaches including tutoring, summer and afterschool programs, diagnostic assessments, curriculum materials, PD
- Social Emotional: activities to address unique needs of high-needs students and to improve capacity to connect students to behavior and mental health supports and services
- Operations: infection control, ventilation system improvements

The last full day of school for seniors will be June 4th and the [CRLS Class of 2021 graduation](#) has been scheduled for Thursday, June 10th, 2021. We are developing plans for a safe outdoor graduation ceremony in collaboration with the Cambridge Public Health Department. Students and their guests will be assigned a specific arrival time. I will share more information as soon as we have more details.

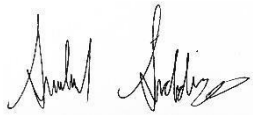
Our upcoming meetings are as follows:

- **Tuesday, April 27th, 2021**
 - Special Meeting | 5:00 PM
 - *To interview finalist candidates for the position of Interim Superintendent of Schools*
- **Wednesday, April 28th, 2021**
 - Special Meeting | 6:00 PM
 - *To highlight Autism Acceptance Month, discuss what CPS is doing to support autistic scholars including transition services, and the resources available to scholars, families, and educators*
- **Tuesday, May 4th, 2021**

- Regular Meeting | 6:00 PM
- **Thursday, May 6th, 2021**
 - Special Meeting | 6:00 PM
 - *To consider the appointment of the Interim Superintendent of Schools*
- **Tuesday, May 18th, 2021**
 - Regular Meeting | 6:00 PM

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions, suggestions, or concerns.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sumbul Siddiqui', written in a cursive style.

Sumbul Siddiqui