



# Kids' Council Meeting Minutes

## September 18, 2013

5:15 p.m. – 7:15 p.m.  
 Curious George Room, Cambridge Main Library

### Summary

#### **Summary of Conversation Topics**

- Reviewed and collaborated on City Wide Family Engagement Policy Draft
- Reviewed and collaborated on 2013-14 Areas of Focus

#### **Key Agreements**

- To review updated draft of the City-wide Family Engagement Policy in October meeting
- To review updated 2013-14 Area of Focus in October meeting

#### **Next Steps**

The group identified the following next steps (or commitments) during the meeting:

<b>What</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>By When</b>
Next KIDS' COUNCIL meeting is October 17 <sup>th</sup> (5:15-7:15) at the <b>City-wide Senior Center</b>	All KIDS' COUNCIL members, representatives and affiliates	October 17, 2013
Review and give feedback on revised draft of City-Wide Family Engagement Policy	Michelle Godfrey, Claude Jacob, Jeff Young, Heather Weiss	October 8, 2013



## Kids' Council Meeting Minutes

May 16, 2013

5:15pm – 7:15pm

344 Broadway, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room

### Detailed Notes

#### **Present:**

*Tina Alu, Charlotte Avant, Betty Bardige, Sally Benbasset, Jessica Daniels, Mayor Henrietta Davis, Louis DePasquale, Michelle Godfry, Robert Haas, Claude Jacob, Lena James, Marc McGovern, Neal Michaels, Heather Weiss, Jeffrey Young, George Halfkenny, John Lindamood, Rio Nelson, Zach Spitz, Nancy Tauber, Nadia Davila, Rodelle Shokoti*

**Chair:** Mayor Davis

**Executive Director:** Nancy Tauber

**Note taker:** Nadia Davila

#### **Desired Outcomes:**

- Review 2012-13 and suggestions for 2013-14
- Review and agree on the 2013-14 Areas of Focus
- Agree on draft of City-wide Family Engagement Policy

#### **Socialize, Network and Eat**

**5:15 – 5:30**

#### **Call to Order:**

**5:32 – 5:45**

- Welcome and Introductions
  - John Lindamood: Cambridge Housing Department
- Agenda Overview
- Adoption of Minutes (March 21, 2013 and May 16, 2013 meetings)
  - Adopted
- Announcements
  - We Count
    - Sidewalk Math on the corner of Broadway and Windsor
    - Grew from conversation between Art Bardige and Nancy Tauber
  - The Cambridge Health Alliance needs anyone who lives, works or spends time in Cambridge to take this online survey as part of their comprehensive community health assessment to better understand the city's biggest health and social concerns. Here is a

link to the survey:<http://www.cambridgepublichealth.org/policy-practice/public-health-accreditation/assessment.php>

- Domestic Violence Candlelight Vigil on Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> from 6:00 – 6:30pm on City Hall steps
  - In observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Food Day (October 24) – healthy food and equity around preventing hunger:
  - Looking for nominations on ‘food heroes’ those that make healthy and equitable heating around the community
  - Wednesday the 25<sup>th</sup>, Film at library ‘a place at the table’ on Hunger in America
- Roundtable on Joint responsibility on 3 and 4 years olds (September 23)
- Flu season has arrived. Get your flu shots! Schedule posted on CHA website

### **Updates:**

#### **5:45pm – 5:52**

- Kids’ Council will co-sponsor an event regarding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE’s) with the Healthy Children’s Task Force on November 21, 2013 at Senior Center
  - Will include an expert panel and focus on how being aware of the impacts of trauma can make a difference on agencies represented by Kids’ Council
- 2012-13 Kids’ Council Year End Report is on our website [www.cambridgema.gov/kidscouncil](http://www.cambridgema.gov/kidscouncil)
- Executive Director’s Report
  - Since KIDS’ COUNCIL is the coordinating council – a newsletter report periodically what different groups are doing that are involved with children and youth
  - To give updates so that everyone can know what is going on and coordinate
  - Came up with idea from talking to you all
- Youth Involvement Subcommittee Update
  - Deadline to apply Wednesday September 25, 2013
- CET Training Plan update
  - Planning team met for the first time recently, bringing together 14 different programs that use outreach workers to see what their staff are doing, what are common and specific areas identify objective and looked at the goals
  - Job posting for curriculum developer
  - October 15 next meeting date
- Review Kids’ Council Operating Guidelines and Membership Agreements
  - We’re good!

### **Kids’ Council Membership Report**

#### **5:52pm – 5:57pm**

- Presentation by Nancy Tauber

### **Review and Discuss Implementation of 2013-14 Areas of Focus:**

#### **5:57pm – 7:17pm**

- Review CRITERIA TO CHOOSE AREA OF FOCUS
  - Comments:**
    - #4 “addresses articulated community needs”

- How do we figure out what needs have been articulated? Would be good to have a sense of it
      - The agencies KIDS' COUNCIL represents
      - What people contribute in the meetings
      - The other groups that meet (0-8; MSN etc.), whose purpose is talking about what's going-on on the ground level.
        - We are on target.
  - #2 "utilizes the strengths and resources of the members and Executive Director of the Kids' Council and offers clear ways for them to contribute"
    - Is there a document of inventory of resources that KIDS' COUNCIL represents?
    - Do we need an inventory?

***See below for Criteria to Choose Area of Focus***

- Review CITY WIDE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY

***Comments:***

- How are you defining engagement?
  - Successful engagement = Genuine partnerships grounded in respect. Two way partnerships between providers and families
  - For example, parents coming to parent teacher nights and chaperoning
- How should schools and school committee be included?
  - Are these policies already included in school committee policies?
  - Could school department look at what polices regarding Family Engagement already exist?
- Need to consider the money and resources that the policy would require to ensure that it can translate off the page and into real action
  - Concern in raising expectations and not having a strategy with resources behind it.
  - There are a number of programs/legislations that fund Family Engagement specifically
    - Possible to look into?
      - Title 1
      - CFCE grant
      - Others?
  - Need to know the specific implications of each bullet point.
    - Some may be less costly than others
  - Important to think about the purpose of having this 'on the book' with out concrete means behind it
- Ongoing evaluation is important
  - Need to develop ways of assessing programs seriously
    - Would continue the conversation
    - Would make it 'real' if someone has to report out
  - A yearly report on the status of family engagement in the city may be an important touch point.
  - Maybe evaluation is the important thing to do this year?
    - May include achieving funding for evaluation?
  - Kids' Council could be responsible for the "evaluation" or "report back"

- Language/Formatting used
    - Evaluation of wording and tone in policy necessary.
    - “Whereas #5”
      - Feels big.
      - Important to frame the content and possibly add where the information has come from
      - Does it imply that the city is going to solve these issues/barriers?
      - Be careful with the use of ‘lack of funding’
    - Add an asset-based approach into policy
      - “Enhancing effort” “examining resources” “Use existing; build on what is existing”
    - The points in the last “Ordered” section are interrelated
      - Bullets can be collapsed into categories i.e. what we will be demonstrating; providing; developing; shared training etc...
  - Love the idea of uplifting Family Engagement as something the City of Cambridge commits to
  - Important to include something about supporting families in their engagement with their own children
    - “Partnering with families in this particular enterprise”
    - As opposed to just engagement between providers and families
  - Broad guidance vs. actionable specifics
    - Should not be very specific.
      - Keep the policy on a broad goal-oriented level
      - Need time to assess how a policy on a broad level gets operationalized
      - Using words like “aspiration” “strive”; words that indicate direction towards goal and reflect what is intended
      - In the ‘Ordered’ section use KIDS’ COUNCIL as subject and puts city council in a supportive position
        - KIDS’ COUNCIL provides oversight; nurturing,
        - “Empower KIDS’ COUNCIL to...”
    - Someone actually has to be doing something/Unless we put some feet on this its just going to be a proclamation
    - Needs to be doable (As stated in our ‘Criteria for Choosing an Area of Focus’)
      - More realistic to focus on one area rather than as a whole?
      - One point at a time?
  - Would anybody like to read next draft and give feedback?
    - Agreement from Claude, Jeff, Heather, Louie?, Michelle
- See below for City-wide Family Engagement Policy Draft***

- Review 3<sup>RD</sup> PROPOSED 2013-14 AREA OF FOCUS

***Answers to Group-Work Questions:***

- Does this area of focus meet our criteria stated above?
  - For the most part this area of focus does meet our criteria
  - Choose something specific and within existing resources
  - Yes

- Clear mandate recommendations for how to connect families and providers, services and information
- Is there anything that needs to be changed for this particular focus to be clearer?
  - Clarify how we are getting information from families and whether it represents the families of Cambridge.
  - Lacks specificity.
  - Delete 'Gather information necessary'; add 'Building on past years work'.
  - Rephrase 'purpose' bullets (they are too broad); consider blending the first two (connecting cities... and remove barriers...), then have one about provider capacity and another on training and adding a 4<sup>th</sup> on evaluation.
  - Clarify definition(s) of Family Engagement
  - Once all the information has been gathered, how will it be compiled and stored?
  - What does it mean to "find out"? Who will "collect"? We are weary that this could be interpreted as a school dept thing.
- What other action steps do we need to take in order to find out what families want and how they want to access services, information, and support?
  - Event supported and filled with families instead of providers
  - Build on what's happening with front line workers.
  - Connect Family Liaisons to Outreach Workers
  - Find out and share what different agencies and providers are:
    - Receiving as requests from families and community groups
    - Doing in terms of outreach etc.
    - Finding out is working well and what they need help with
  - Get buy-in from entire Kids' Council (especially the represented agencies).
  - We think it should be an extension of CET work. And that a targeted project with full circle families would make sense – in collaboration with Housing, Police, DHPS. How agencies can support families. We think families need support as opposed to information.
    - Working with Fletcher Maynard, we can provide support in a very targeted way. We need to start somewhere – this will make it more concrete
- How can you or the groups you represent contribute and participate in this process?
  - Participating in the event, including YIS in the process
  - By answering 3!! (Housing)
    - Targets a big group – especially for immigrants (Alliance of Cambridge Tenants)
  - We can gather info from our personal networks, agencies, agency partners
- Are there existing efforts or information sources that we could investigate in order to find out what families need and how they access services, information and support?
  - Investigate resources through the Kids' Council
  - ACT
  - Probably but we don't know
  - We think 'needs' vary greatly by family group (cultural, new immigrant, etc.) and context (school, health, etc.)

**Comments:**

- Most people are getting their information from school personnel

- For many parents, the classroom teacher is the person who is giving greatest authority
- A marker of success would be families speaking up and increased advocacy
  - Parent and leadership model: focusing on advocacy and training
- Raises social/cultural issues
  - Certain groups may not feel comfortable and need different mechanisms to reach same ends
  - Different ethnic groups are wanting to give resources to provide to their own ethnic group and feel confident that they would find success
- Very important to hear from families
  - We need to give the families a chance to tell us what works and what doesn't work
  - What does Family Engagement mean to families?
    - Many families do not know what providers want and what it means. They're already engaged in their kid's lives, so how do we facilitate the kind of engagement provider's want for those who can't do it on their own.
  - Another event with families attending rather than providers?
    - How do you reach the families that aren't already coming to events? It's asking families to engage that are difficult to engage.
- "Gathering Information"
  - Concerned it would fall on school department (who survey often, and people never seem happy with it). Is that way we really need to do?
  - Families are not a set. And what people need is very based on context and identity – maybe CET could help (being members of their own community)
- Can/Should CET help?
  - Could be helpful to have a training and capitalizing on what CET already knows.
  - However, may make CET the main actors – how do you get everyone to be an actor? How do you equip people who are not trained in outreach (teachers, afterschool) with the tools?

***See below for 2013-14 Area of Focus***

## ***Adjourn***

**7:18pm**

Pluses	Deltas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Took on some tough challenges</li> <li>- Good Conversation</li> <li>- Liked Group Work</li> </ul>	

**2013-14 PROPOSED AREAS OF FOCUS**  
**September 18, 2013**

**CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING AN AREA OF FOCUS**

*Are there any criteria missing?*

1. Takes something on where we can show progress within a year.
2. Utilizes the strengths and resources of the members and Executive Director of the Kids' Council and offers clear ways for them to contribute.
3. Enhances the capacity of the Kids' Council, providers, agencies and networks to continually learn from families and incorporate the voices, the needs and strengths of families with an emphasis on families who historically don't have a voice.
4. Addresses articulated community needs.
5. Builds on existing and already planned initiatives, rather than being duplicative.
6. Aligns with the function and purpose of the Kids' Council as stated in the ordinance.
7. Enhances the ability of all families (with emphasis on families with fewer opportunities for access, voice, and participation) to access resources and help providers reach families.
8. Benchmarks can be developed to track progress toward desired outcomes and where possible use existing data and information.
9. Recognizes the resources and relationships needed at the onset.
10. Creates opportunities for partnership.
11. Initiative will be visible to the people we are trying to reach.

**PROPOSED AREAS OF FOCUS FOR 2013-14**

This past year, the Kids' Council selected a narrow area of focus and was able to achieve our stated goals. Setting areas focus for the coming year will allow us to once again set and achieve clear goals. It is important that we ensure that our areas of focus meet our criteria outlined above.

1. **GATHER INFORMATION NECESSARY TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WAYS THAT FAMILIES AND PROVIDERS CAN EASILY ACCESS SERVICES, INFORMATION, AND SUPPORTS**

**Purpose:**

- Connect city, schools, community partners, with families.
- Remove barriers for families to access services.
- Enable providers to collaborate and learn about the resources and services that are available to families they serve.
- Build capacity for Kids' Council members and the groups they represent to implement best practices in Family Engagement.

**Possible Activities**

- Find out what services, information, and supports families need and desire for their children, as well as how they would like to access that information.
- Collect feedback from families in a variety of ways to find out what they need and desire for their children, as well as how they would like to give and receive information and feedback.

- Consult with various stakeholder groups (Kids' Council members, YIS, Agenda for Children, Community Engagement Team, Family Liaisons, HCTF, 0-8, MSN, RAYS, CSAG, *others?*).
- Partner with the Fletcher Maynard Academy Full-Circle in order to target a particular community and learn directly from families.
- Identify opportunities to synergize with existing work throughout the city.
- Co-sponsor a networking event to solicit feedback from stakeholders.
- Research other communities.
- Research use of technology.
- *What other steps do we need to take?*

**Questions for Kids' Council members:**

1. Does this area of focus meet our criteria stated above?
2. Is there anything that needs to be changed for this particular area of focus to be clearer?
3. What other action steps do we need to take in order to find out what families want and how they want to access services, information, and support?
4. How can you or the groups you represent contribute and participate in this process?
5. Are there existing efforts or information sources that we could investigate in order to find out what families need and how they access services, information, and support?

**2. CONTINUATION OF RELATIONSHIP AND SUPPORT FOR CET**

**Purpose:** Continue to support the capacity of the CET to engage with families.

**Activities:**

- CET Updates
  - Find out the impact of the additional CET outreach workers and include real stories from families. (CET will report to Kids' Council in January, 2014)
  - Review Training Program that the CET is designing this year. (CET will report to Kids' Council in May, 2014)
  - Determine what specific information should be included in the reports.
- Explore how else the Kids' Council might support CET

**3. CITY-WIDE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

**Purpose:** Create a social contract that includes the whole array of stakeholders and families in Cambridge that articulates family engagement as our shared responsibility. This can be a reference point and a lens when looking at paying for and supporting programs among city, school and community partners.

**Activities:**

- Review draft of city-wide family engagement policy. (September 18, 2013)

- Get feedback on the draft of the policy from various stakeholder groups (School Committee Community Relations Sub-committee, Agenda for Children, Community Engagement Team, Family Liaisons, HCTF, 0-8, MSN, RAYS, CSAG, *others?*). (September – October)
  - *Is there anything in this policy you would recommend be changed before it is introduced to the City Council?*
- Review revised draft of city-wide family engagement policy. (October 17, 2013)

**DRAFT**

**CITY-WIDE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

WHEREAS: The Kids' Council promotes policies and programs that make Cambridge a city where children and youth are healthy, safe, educated and civically engaged so that they are successful from birth through college graduation and gainful employment; and

WHEREAS: One of the strongest predictors of success for children and youth is engaged families; and

WHEREAS: The Kids' Council's vision of successful family engagement in Cambridge is genuine partnerships grounded in respect between families and the organizations and institutions that serve them; and

WHEREAS: Not all families are equally engaged or have equal access to information, support and services; and

WHEREAS: For providers, the biggest barriers to effective engagement are the following: having the time to do the work, supervise, coordinate and evaluate efforts; lack of funding to hire additional staff or compensate current staff to do outreach and engage with families and provide families with translation resources; and

WHEREAS: It is our shared responsibility and social contract as a community to reduce barriers and create the conditions necessary for families to be engaged; now therefore be it

ORDERED: That it shall be the policy of the City Council to examine and reduce barriers using strategies aimed at reducing the identified barriers and develop recommendations; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Council adopts the following policy in support of family engagement. The city government will:

- Welcome all families and encourage their input regarding decisions affecting their children.
- Assure easy access for families to information, resources and services.
- Intentionally build community and relationships with families and work to ensure all families feel included.
- Develop and support training for service providers.
- Provide adequate time for providers to effectively reach out and engage with families.
- Evaluate the methods of outreach and engagement on a regular basis.
- Promote coordination between the city services, schools and community service providers.