

**Family Policy Council  
Year-End Report 2016-17**

**2016-17 FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

Mayor Denise Simmons – Co-Chair

Neal Michaels – Co-Chair

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Mike Payack – Content Manager

Lace Campbell – Cambridge Youth Council Coordinator



**Family  
Policy  
Council**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Family Policy, officially known as the Coordinating Council for Children, Youth and Families was created in 1991. It is chaired by the Mayor, and its members include residents, elected officials, department heads within the City, community and non-profit leaders, business, early childhood, philanthropic, university, state agency and youth representatives. The Council is dedicated to developing policy and program recommendations aimed at improving the quality of life for children, youth and families in the city of Cambridge.

### **Area of Focus 2016-17**

Continue to develop recommendations to close persistent opportunity gaps and make it easier for families to access information, services and resources in Cambridge.

## **FAMILY POLICY COUNCIL WORK PLAN ADDRESSING THE OPPORTUNITY GAPS IN CAMBRIDGE**

This work plan was developed by a working group that met during the summer of 2017.

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## **THE PROBLEM**

The City of Cambridge has a wealth of resources: innovative and flourishing industries; prestigious universities; pioneering civic institutions; dynamic programs and leaders; and organizations and people committed to serve others. Still, even with our City's extensive resources and opportunities, everyone does not share in the prosperity. There is a significant disparity in the ability to regularly access the best our community must offer, which touches almost every aspect of daily life in Cambridge: access to education, food, affordable housing, positive employment, health and wellness opportunities, and many others.

## **THE VISION**

Opportunity requires equity: a community of people who can access what they need to be successful without disadvantaging others. Opportunity requires acknowledging and addressing the historical legacies of racism, income inequality, and other forms of oppression that systematically exclude members of our community.

Opportunity means that all children, teens, and their families can access understandable information about the resources that are available to them. It means reducing and removing the barriers (administrative, financial, technological, social, and others) that prevent them from being aware of and participating in the opportunities that exist. Opportunities that will help them enter the workforce, be able to attend and complete post-secondary education while

thriving in homes where they maintain economic stability and believe their futures hold promise of success.

Our vision for opportunity is one where our policies and practices ensure that all children, teens and their families are accessing what they need to be successful, engaged residents who are prepared for life in our community and in the world.

## THE STRATEGIES

The knowledge of and ability to fully access resources and services is a critical factor that will help individuals to lead fulfilling lives. In order for our vision to become a reality, we recommend the following strategies:

### Find It Cambridge

Goal: Ensure families have easy access to information, resources and services through Find It Cambridge.

#### Strategies:

- Hired a Find It Manager (completed August, 2016)
- Launched Find It Website (Fall, 2016)
- Find It PSA created by *MYSEP* interns and produced by CCTV (Fall, 2016)
- Find It Here places and training (began Spring, 2017)
  - The Find It Manager and Center for Families staff have office hours at the Cambridge Public Schools' Family Resource Center (459 Broadway) to provide families with information and referral using Find It.
  - CEOC and Center for Families provide information and referral using Find It, and they will also provide follow-up support when needed.
- Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program interns attend events and engage with the community in person and via social media to educate them about Find It and all the opportunities available in Cambridge (Summer 2016 and 2017)

#### Highlights

- During the first 6 months, there have been over 5,700 users and 57,000 pageviews on Find It
- Over 220 organizations and 380 programs and events are on Find It
- Over 260 people have received Find It Basic Training
- 140 people attended the Find It launch party hosted at Google on April 26, 2017

### Connect Cambridge Kids

Goal: While we need to make sure that "all" children and teens have access to available resources, we need to build a system that provides support for some children, teens and

parents who need extra support and the few who need significant levels of support, including families in crisis.

Strategies:

- Gather information from existing systematic efforts aimed at supporting and connecting children and teens with the opportunities available in Cambridge and identify key transition points (entering kindergarten, middle school, high school and postsecondary experiences) to develop recommendations to better meet the needs of young people.
- Support a shared student data system to help everyone who works with children, teens and their families and gain additional perspectives that can inform strategies, policies, resource allocations and actions -- all aimed at eliminating barriers to equity and access, and to improve outcomes.

The following initiatives have presented to the Family Policy Council:

- College Success Initiative (January 2016 Family Policy Council meeting)
- Middle School Network (November 2016 Family Policy Council meeting)
- Inclusion Initiative (March 2017 Family Policy Council meeting)
- Safety Net Collaborative (March 2017 Family Policy Council meeting)
- Education Redesign Lab and By All Means project (Harvard) (May 2017 Family Policy Council meeting)

### **CAMBRIDGE YOUTH COUNCIL (CYC)**

The Cambridge Youth Council is the youth civic engagement component of the Cambridge Family Policy Council. The Youth Council is comprised of a diverse group of young people ages 14 to 18 who work on projects related to the Family Policy Council's goals and topics that are of interest to the young people.

#### CYC 2016-17 Goal

CYC has been addressing the Opportunity to Learn Gap in both the middle schools and high school in Cambridge. They developed policy recommendations and engaged in projects that immediately helped young people take their education into their own hands, as well as prepare them to navigate the college admissions process.

#### **Accomplishments**

##### Books for Success!

In an effort to close the opportunity gap, CYC held a test prep book drive and collected enough books to set up a "library" in the school's College and Career Resource Center. Now there is a

sustainable system set up for students to borrow these books rather than spending a lot of money purchasing them.

#### FAFSA Scholarship Workshops

CYC members are working with Emily Singer from the Office of College Success to help make sure all seniors fill out the FAFSA form so that more students get financial assistance.

#### Cambridge Raw Perspectives

CYC is continuing their popular Facebook page, *Cambridge Raw Perspectives*, by continuing to generate thoughtful yet controversial content aimed at providing an open forum for the community to share their unique perspectives and insights regarding race and equity in education. For more information, check out:

<https://www.facebook.com/cambridgerawperspectives/>

#### Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Information Night

CYC is continuing the tradition of collaborating with CRLS's STARs and the Mentoring Program by participating in the Incoming Freshman Information Night at CRLS. CYC members share advice on how to start off high school strong.

#### MLK Day of Service

Another tradition is helping with the Many Helping Hands MLK Food Drive. CYC members publicized the event, recruited over 20 youth to participate, and collected over 300 bags of food that were delivered to food pantries throughout Cambridge.

#### What does CP, Honors, AP and Leveling Up mean?

CYC created a document that explains what Honors classes, College Prep and Advanced Classes mean, as well as an explanation of the new Leveling Up policy. This one page information sheet will then be translated into different languages in hopes this will help inform families that normally have a difficult time receiving this information. See Appendix 1

#### Amending the AV10 Policy at CRLS

CYC is proposing an amendment to the AV10 (Attendance Violation with a 10 percent grade reduction penalty) policy at CRLS. The current system penalizes students the same for being 1 minute late or 20 minutes late. They believe a minute system should be implemented, which means the number of minutes you are late would be recorded. The threshold should be a maximum of 320 minutes. Currently, if a student has 12 unexcused tardies their grade in the class goes down by one grade (A to B, B- to C-, etc.). After meeting with the Principal Smith, they are continuing to try to find a policy that strikes a balance between being penalized for only the number of minutes a student is late and still encouraging students to be on time. See Appendix 2

### National League of Cities Youth Delegates

CYC members represented the City of Cambridge at the National League of Cities Conference in Washington DC. They spent their time working with youth delegates from around the country to explore solutions to city issues. During the conference, they heard from other youth councils about what issues they were facing as well as share what they had been working on. The highlight was getting to know youth from other cities and learning about their similarities and differences. They also enjoyed getting to know their city representatives and policy makers at a breakfast mixer as well as on their field trip to the National African American Museum.

### Members

Naia Aubourg – Co Chair  
Marly Ciccolo  
Makayla Durant  
Mari Gashaw  
Tenya Gardner  
Dewayne Green – Co Chair  
Jack Kiryk  
Lorra Marseille  
Kester Messan-Hilla – Co Chair  
Rosa Munson Blatt  
Rihana Oumer – Co Chair  
William Reed  
Miles Toussaint  
Uma Edulbehram  
Rory Millar  
Elaina Wolfson

### Coordinator

Lace Campbell

## Appendix 1: What does CP, Honors, AP and Leveling Up mean?

Dear Families,

Welcome to the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School! We would like to share with you the differences between College Prep (CP), Honors (HN) and Advanced Placement (AP) classes because it is very relevant to all students.

In 8th grade, students are given teacher recommendations for their 9th grade classes. If during this scheduling process the student feels as **if they should be in a different leveled class, the parents/ guardians can override any recommendations or level placement**. Students and families should be aware that class placement is not a statement about their level of intelligence. However, course selection may affect the student's path after high school.

College is a popular option for students. Different colleges have different requirements depending on the type of school it is. For instance, most colleges require four years of English, three years of mathematics (specifically Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II), three years of a world language (unless you can show fluency) and three years of science (including at least one laboratory science course). Many colleges look for honors and/or AP classes in a student's transcript. A general high school education or GED is needed for different trade schools.

Everyone should understand exactly what they are signing up for and feel comfortable asking questions and/or requesting changes. If you would like any more information regarding these class levels, please refer to the Cambridge Rindge and Latin Parent Handbook, which can be accessed on the school website ([crls.cpsd.us](http://crls.cpsd.us)).

We hope you find this information helpful.



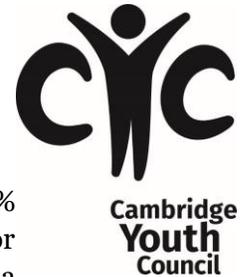
**Cambridge  
Youth  
Council**

Below are more in-depth descriptions of each of the class levels:

<b>Course Level</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Includes fundamental level; based off the statewide curriculum</li><li>● Some classes are full-year, meaning they will last both semesters (which may limit your opportunity to engage in electives and minimize the total number of classes students will take as a whole)</li></ul>
<b>Honors (HN)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● For students who want to work at a faster speed</li><li>● Same material as CP but faster paced class</li><li>● Students are expected to be more independent</li><li>● Most classes only last one of the two semesters</li></ul>
<b>Honors Option (HN Opt)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Some classes offer an optional honors credit</li><li>● Usually includes different work assignments, portfolio and in some cases a certain grade average<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ These options may vary from teacher to teacher</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>9th Grade English “Leveling Up”</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Starting in the 2017-18 school year, all 9th graders will take an honors level English class</li><li>● If a student within this honors English curriculum still feels as if the course is too challenging, support classes will be available</li><li>● This new honors English set-up is still a work in progress</li></ul>

<p><b>Advanced Placement (AP)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These classes are created by the College Board and offer college-level curriculum for high school students</li> <li>• Some colleges may give college credit for AP classes</li> <li>• Students will have to take the AP test in order to be considered for possible college credit</li> </ul>
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## Appendix 2: Amending the AV10 Policy at CRLS



### Attendance Violation “Buy Back” Proposal

The CRLS attendance policy expects students to be in each class a minimum of 95% of the time. When a student reaches a cumulative total of 12 unexcused tardies, or is unexcused absent 4 (1 unexcused absence=3 unexcused tardies), or has a combination of the two, **10 points will be deducted to the earned grade at the end of each term in whichever class the attendance violation occurs. (This is a change from 10%)**

**Example 1:** period 1: 3 unexcused tardies + 3 unexcused absence=10 points off grade

**Example 2:** period 3: 9 unexcused tardies + 1 unexcused absence=10 points off grade

**Example 3:** period 2: 12 unexcused tardies=10 points off grade

**Example 4:** period 4: 6 unexcused tardies + 2 unexcused absence =10 points off grade

**Example 5:** period 1, 2, 3, & 4: each class has 4 unexcused absences=10 points off grade in each period

If a student wishes to buy back the 10 point grade deduction then, he/she must meet with his/her Dean of Students to create a “Buy Back” contract/proposal established between the student and dean.

#### The contract can/ will consist of the following:

- **Student can serve time before or after school** - required to serve **one hour of time** before school or after school (with a dean, teacher, homework center, or community service) once an AV has been earned.
- **Student is responsible for recording this time in a log, and it must be signed off by a staff member.**
- Every time a student is tardy **after** the 12th time, and the first hour is served, another 15 minutes will be required to “buy back” for the before/ after school option.

If a student completes the “buy-back” contract, no AV will be assigned to the final grade.

