

Family Policy Council

Year-End Report 2017-18

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Family Policy Council

INTRODUCTION

The **Family Policy Council**, 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 nonprofit 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.

The **Cradle 2 Career Pipeline Working Group of the Family Policy Council** represents members from various city departments, schools, community organizations and initiatives aimed at improving the lives of our children and youth. The purpose of this working group is to:

- Support the work of the Family Policy Council.
- Create more synergy and collaboration around the work we do so that all children thrive and succeed from cradle to career.
- Further develop structures and strategies to improve the way we provide services and supports cradle to career.
- Help develop a shared vision and outcomes for our families and their children.
- Collaborate with Superintendent to help move forward the strategic objectives and initiatives of the District Plan Framework.

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.

2017-18 AREAS of FOCUS

Research

Explore ways for the Family Policy Council can become the backbone organization that helps create a coordinated system of care in Cambridge with a shared vision and outcomes. The Council learned about and met with organizations that support these efforts.

Say Yes to Education/Weiss Institute

The Weiss Institute, a partnership between Say Yes to Education and America's Promise Alliance focuses on expanding the capacity of communities to make it possible for all young people to earn a college degree or other postsecondary credential. The institute provides tools, technical assistance, research and expertise to help communities create long-term, community-wide structural and cultural change.

Forum for Youth

The Forum provides coaching and technical assistance in the areas of shared outcomes and ongoing collaborative efforts so that we can adopt and execute a coordinated strategy for supporting youth and their families.

StriveTogether Network

A national, nonprofit network of over 70 community partnerships that works to ensure every child succeeds from cradle to career, regardless of race, income or zip code. StriveTogether helps communities identify and scale what works in education. They provide coaching, connections and resources to help partnerships share data, align resources and shape policy.

Results Based Accountability

A framework that uses a data-driven, decision-making process to help communities and organizations get beyond talking about problems to taking action to solve problems. It is a simple, common sense approach that everyone can understand by starting with ends and working backwards, towards means.

Best Practices for Local Children's Cabinets Convening at Harvard School of Education

July 12-13, 2018

Members of the Family Policy Council and Cradle 2 Career Working group attending this convening sponsored by the Forum for Youth Investment and the Education Redesign Lab. The event was an opportunity to get together with other coordinating bodies that serve the holistic

needs of children and youth in their communities. It was a chance to learn from each other, and share challenges and best practices. We learned about the importance of adopting an equity lens to lift perspectives of our most underrepresented children, as well as how to implement online resources to synthesize and display data.

FIND IT CAMBRIDGE

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

Strategies:

- Find It Here Places and Training
 - 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, Center for Families and Margaret Fuller House provide information and referral using Find It, and they will also provide follow-up support when needed.
 - Mayor's Community Outreach Team, CET and Literacy Liaisons

Highlights

- Users: 19,222
- New Users: 18,987
- Sessions: 28,249
- Pageviews: 115,979
- Orgs: 333
- Programs/Events: 650

CAMBRIDGE YOUTH COUNCIL (CYC)

The Cambridge Youth Council is the youth civic engagement subcommittee 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 2017-18 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! Phase 2

CYC made efforts to raise awareness that test prep books are now available at the College and Career Resource Center (Cambridge Rindge and Latin School). Although some students have used the resource, CYC decided that this was not a project that was reaching enough students to warrant the continuation of the project.

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 9th Grade Information Night

CYC is continuing the tradition of leading workshops during the Incoming Freshman Information Night at CRLS. This has been a long standing collaboration with CRLS's STARs and the Mentoring Program. CYC developed a workshop that allowed the 8th graders to ask questions, learn important details and get 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.

Dissemination of the CP, Honors, AP and Leveling Up Flyer

CYC created a document that describes the differences between Honors, College Prep and Advanced Placement classes mean, as well as an explanation of the new Leveling Up policy. This one page information sheet was then translated into Spanish, French Creole and Amharic with the goal to help inform families that normally have a difficult time receiving this information. (See Appendix 1) Several families received this flyer at the Incoming 9th Grade Information Night and reported that it was helpful.

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 many meetings with the principal, deans and School Committee members, the new policy was implemented. Now students will be informed if they were nearing AV10 status, and they can work with their dean to rectify the situation. If a student does AV10, they will receive information about the option of “buying-back” their grade by making up work that was missed.

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 are 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.

Addressing Microaggressions in the Classroom at CRLS

CYC developed a survey about student experiences of microaggressions in the classroom, and approached the administration to talk about how microaggressions were reported and the follow-up that should happen. They had several meetings which culminated with a new reporting mechanism and a promise by administration that follow up would happen in a timely manner. CYC also spoke at several School Committee meetings in support of the Black Student Union’s efforts to bring awareness to the mistreatment of black students in the classroom and their demand that change occur.

Website Development

CYC created a website that explains what CYC does, current projects and a list of students resources for issues such as mental health and sexual assault. The website is designed to keep the community informed about CYC.

www.cambridgeyouthcouncil.org

Members

Naia Aubourg – Co Chair

Marly Ciccolo– Co Chair

Rory Miller- Co-Chair

Joey Atallah

Ahmed Benghomari

Sydney Down

Uma Edulbheham

Tenya Gardner

Lorra Marseille

Andrine Pierresaint

William Reed

Elaina Wolfson

Bilien Woldeyomas

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).



We hope you find this information helpful.
The Cambridge Youth Council

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

Course Level	Explanation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Includes fundamental level; based off the statewide curriculum● 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)
Honors (HN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● For students who want to work at a faster speed● Same material as CP but faster paced class● Students are expected to be more independent● Most classes only last one of the two semesters
Honors Option (HN Opt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Some classes offer an optional honors credit● Usually includes different work assignments, portfolio and in some cases a certain grade average<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ These options may vary from teacher to teacher
9th Grade English “Leveling Up”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Starting in the 2017-18 school year, all 9th graders will take an honors level English class● If a student within this honors English curriculum still feels as if the course is too challenging, support classes will be available● This new honors English set-up is still a work in progress
Advanced Placement (AP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● These classes are created by the College Board and offer college-level curriculum for high school students● Some colleges may give college credit for AP classes● Students will have to take the AP test in order to be considered for possible college credit

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.