



CITY COUNCIL

ROUNDTABLE/WORKING MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

5:00 PM

Remote Meeting

The City Council and the School Committee will hold a Joint Roundtable/Working meeting to receive an update from the City Manager, Superintendent, and the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood on the next steps towards the implementation of universal Pre-K in Cambridge

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Burhan Azeem	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dennis J. Carbone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E. Denise Simmons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Paul F. Toner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

City Clerk LeBlanc called the roll of the Cambridge School Committee

School Committee Member Alfred Fantini - Present

School Committee Member Caroline Hunter - Absent

School Committee Member Jose Luis Rojas - Present

School Committee Member David Weinstein - Present

School Committee Member Vice Chair, Rachel Weinstein - Present

School Committee Member Ayesha Wilson - Absent

Chair, Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui – Present

Present-5, Absent-2. Quorum established.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui noted that pursuant to City Council Rule 24 C2, this is a roundtable/working meeting and there shall be no public comment. The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui further noted that written comments will be accepted and made part of the record of the roundtable meeting and the opportunity for the public to make oral comments on items discussed at this meeting shall be at the regular meeting at which the item may be considered for action by the City Council.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui stated that the purpose of this Joint Roundtable/Working Meeting was to receive an update from the City Manager, Superintendent, and the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood on the next steps towards the implementation of universal Pre-K in Cambridge.

Mayor Siddiqui gave opening remarks noting that she was happy to be with everyone on Valentine's Day and that a few Councillors who really wanted to be here had trips already planned. Mayor Siddiqui provided a brief history of the work that has been done around Universal Pre-k and in particular the work of the ad hoc Committee in collaboration with the Office of Early Childhood Education. Mayor Siddiqui acknowledged the work of Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Carbone, School Committee Member Ayesha Wilson and School Committee Member David Weinstein. Mayor Siddiqui also acknowledged Superintendent Dr. Greer and City Manager Huang. The Mayor noted that this has been a high priority for the City Council and School Committee for so many years and how excited she is to be able to say that Cambridge will have universal pre-k for the Fall of 2024.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized Superintendent Dr. Victoria Greer who shared that they were very excited about the work that has been done to accomplish Universal Preschool. They thanked the City Council and School Committee for their advocacy and support, and thanked Mayor Siddiqui for the work she has done in leading the ad hoc group. Superintendent Greer shared that she was joined by Dr. Lisa Grant, Executive Director for the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood, and thanked her and other City staff for their leadership in this work.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized City Manager Huang who offered opening remarks and thanked Dr. Grant and her team, the City Council, and the School Committee for all the work they have done to get the City to this point. The City Manager shared that he is committed to working with Dr. Grant and City Staff who have helped partner and support the work.

Dr. Grant gave an overview of a presentation titled "UPK Update: A Joint Round Table with the Cambridge City Council & Cambridge School Committee" (Attachment A). Dr. Grant shared that the universal preschool system is a mixed-delivery system, with capacity to serve the entire eligible population spread across Cambridge Public Schools, Department of Human Services Program preschools, Head Start, and community-based programs. She commented that an advisory committee, three task force groups, and the ad hoc committee have all been important factors with oversight and leadership while creating a universal pre-k program, noting that the three task force recommendations to include as major components in the universal pre-k system include workforce development, program quality, and family hub. Dr. Grant shared that the task force participants consisted of members from the school department, city programs, and the broader community. To conclude the presentation, Superintendent Greer and City Manager Huang offered what the next steps will be going forward and offered insight into the CPS progress update.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui opened discussion to the City Council and School Committee members, asking them to focus on one or two clarifying questions, sharing what excites them about the progress that has been shared, and what they would be interested in learning more about in future conversations.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized Councillor Zondervan who shared his excitement on the progress and had a clarifying question about the timeline of getting the program started, and why it would have to start fall of 2024. Superintendent Greer shared that there are many infrastructural components that must be designed and built out to secure a unified system, and that there must be structural changes as well. Dr. Grant noted that time is needed to be able to be intentional about making changes so the work can be done correctly. Councillor Zondervan shared that in future conversations he would like to see progress towards the full launch and all of the programs the City is able to implement along the way. He had a clarifying question for the City Manager around the budget and the stabilization fund, to which City Manager Huang was

able to provide more detail on how the City plans to budget for the program using the stabilization fund in FY24 and how it would affect the FY25 budget.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized Councillor Azeem who had a clarifying question around the budget, and where the costs were coming from for the proposed \$20 million towards universal pre-k. Mayor Siddiqui noted that there was a paper and study done around this, while Dr. Grant was able to provide more insight, noting that the \$20 million estimate is the difference between the number of children who are already being funded and are in the current system, and those who are not already in the system.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized Councillor Carbone who had a clarifying question around how many three-year-olds are currently in the program, Superintendent Greer shared that she did not have the exact number in front of her, but it is information she would be able to pass along within the week. Councillor Carbone shared that in the future he would like to see how the School Department would be able to expand the program. He noted it was not something that needed to be answered right now, but asked what the numbers are that the City is looking for in a universal pre-k program. Mayor Siddiqui offered comments, noting that it was a great follow up question for future meetings. Councillor Carbone stressed the importance of building partnerships to integrate space and create strategies to expand the program, noting how it would be beneficial for the pre-k program.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized School Committee member Vice Chair, Rachel Weinstein shared she appreciated the presentation and is excited for what has been achieved so far and will be achieved going forward. She had a clarifying question about scaling and how the School Department plans to go from the current 68 families that the City is subsidizing to the expected 800-900. The Vice Chair also commented on the pay equity to early childhood and how the School Committee could be helpful in those future conversations. Dr. Grant was able to respond and break down how many three- and four-year-olds are actually being served in Cambridge through various programs including DHSP, Headstart, and the School Department, noting that the 68 children are the ones that are currently being served through a scholarship program, and that the gap is not actually as large as what it may seem.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who thanked the team for all their work and shared she was fully on board with looking to the future to get more three-year-olds into programs. The Vice Mayor suggested that in future meetings a topic she would like to see discussed would be around numbers of three and four year olds enrolled in the programs and the costs, to have a clearer understanding of what was mentioned during the meeting. Vice Mayor Mallon had a clarifying question around the 800 to 900 students that were brought up in the presentation, noting that there was a slide for four-year-old students, and wanted clarity on how many three-year students the School Department was anticipating on top of the 800 to 900 four-year-old students. The Vice Mayor also asked for a breakdown of numbers in Cambridge Public School (CPS) programs versus DHSP and community programs.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized School Committee member Caroline Hunter who shared her excitement for universal pre-k and was happy to see the City, School Department, and DHSP working together to lead a successful model. She shared she had similar concerns as Vice Mayor Mallon around numbers and she looked forward to having future conversations around them to have a better understanding. She also shared her concerns around the survey numbers and how the City can do better to reach the neediest of families. Member Hunter noted the importance of figuring out how to increase outreach in order to build out the program and suggested an advisory committee to help enable the planning and have people with experience be involved.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized School Committee member Alfred Fantini who had questions around staffing for the universal pre-k program and if the School Department anticipates any staff shortages or if they feel they are on track as far as staffing. Dr. Grant shared that staffing is a priority and that the School Department has been engaged with the childcare community regarding the needs around staffing. She noted that in response to the staffing crisis, the School Department has been developing career pathway programs to help staff achieve their long term goals. Member Fantini had a clarifying question around pay equity and if all staff will all be paid the same. Dr. Grant noted that it's not about being paid the same, but being paid equitably; sharing comparable credentials would have comparable wages.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized School Committee member Jose Luis Rojas who had clarifying questions around capacity concerning three year olds and the overall capacity constraints. Dr. Grant noted that there are many three-year-olds being supported by other community programs that are not being funded by the City, and shared that there is some work to be done around identifying what the actual physical capacity for three-year-olds will be and that they are being supported under one single umbrella. Member Rojas shared that in the future conversations he would like to see how the City plans to evaluate all the different programs.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized School Committee member David Weinstein who shared his excitement for all of the work that has been accomplished around universal pre-k and all of the work moving forward. He shared that in future conversations he is interested in discussing how to coordinate the program curriculum within CPS and beyond and how the School Department can support developmentally appropriate classrooms.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized School Committee member Ayesha Wilson who voiced her concerns around the survey numbers and how the representation of families who would benefit the most are not being seen. She asked for more outreach to be focused on families who need it. Member Wilson shared that she would like to see an evaluation process done when the program is rolled out and to be mindful of the equity of service across all of the programs being offered. She also shared that she would like to see students to be able to read by third grade and beyond, and how does the School Department ensure that there is system to make that possible. Dr. Grant noted that there is more thinking and work to do around long term impact and there should be more conversation in terms of how the School Department can improve and expand the evaluation efforts.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized Vice Mayor Mallon who had clarifying questions around kindergarten registration and if students enrolled in the universal pre-k programs would automatically get enrolled into kindergarten, and if they would get preference over their school of choice. Superintendent Greer was able to respond, noting that families would have to register their child first for universal pre-k, and then again when they are old enough to enter into the kindergarten program. Superintendent Greer also shared that students who are in the universal pre-k programs would not have first preference when choosing a school for kindergarten, this would be in place to make it fair for all families, whether their child was in a universal pre-k program or not.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized Councillor Carbone who offered comments around the proposed \$20 million budget, sharing that he believes it's something that would be possible. He also shared his excitement for everyone in the meeting agreeing and caring about the same topic, universal pre-k. Councillor Carbone also brought up the idea of possibly having extended day programs to offer to those families who need it.

The Chair, Mayor Siddiqui recognized School Committee member Jose Luis Rojas who had a clarifying question about future projections for demand concerning the universal pre-k program. Superintendent Greer shared that she and Dr. Grant have had conversations around enrollment numbers and how to plan forward. She also noted that there is an understanding that the program will probably need to grow over time.

Noting that there was no additional business, the Chair of both bodies, Mayor Siddiqui, declared the meeting to be adjourned shortly after 7:30 p.m.

Attachment A: UPK Update: A Joint Round Table with the Cambridge City Council & Cambridge School Committee

Clerk's Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. This is a permanent record. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

https://cambridgema.granicus.com/player/clip/445?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=0d4059fecc446ab72ecdffcb07a3f87b

A communication was received from Elaine Carrieri Executive Assistant Office of the Superintendent, Cambridge Public Schools, transmitting a presentation.

UPK Update:

A Joint Round Table with the Cambridge City Council & Cambridge School Committee



FEBRUARY
14
2023

C A M B R I D G E
Office of Early Childhood



Agenda

-
- 1.** Opening/WELCOME - Superintendent Greer and City Manager Yi-An Huang
 - 2.** Overview of Cambridge Preschool Program
 - a.** Recap of the work from the last year
 - i.** Task Force, Advisory Committee, Ad Hoc Committee
 - ii.** Recommendations
 - iii.** Scaling of existing work
 - b.** Where we are now
 - i.** Program guide
 - ii.** Capacity assessment/partnerships
 - c.** Next steps
 - i.** Staff capacity
 - ii.** Technology/application
 - iii.** Communication strategy
 - 3.** Timeline
 - a.** Winter application
 - b.** Fall 2024 - Cambridge Preschool Program Launches
 - 4.** Cambridge Public Schools - update on work
 - 5.** City of Cambridge - update on work
 - 6.** Questions and discussion

Overview of Cambridge Preschool Program (formally known as UPK)



Cambridge Preschool Program (CPP) Overview

- The universal preschool system is a mixed-delivery system, with capacity to serve the entire *eligible* population spread across Cambridge Public Schools, Department of Human Services Program preschools, Head Start, and community based programs.

- All *eligible* children would be entitled to a 6 hour per day/school-year placement, with extended days and summer available depending on family need and program type (extended days would be at low or no cost to families who meet certain eligibility requirements).

- Funding will be provided to community based programs based on the number of CPP seats in each classroom.

- Funding would be braided with other funding supports including federal Head Start funds, state contracted slots and voucher funds, and other state preschool focused early childhood funding, as appropriate.

Cambridge Preschool Program (CPP) Overview

4

years
old

All children who are **4 years old prior to September 1** of each school year are eligible to enroll in the Cambridge Preschool Program and would be guaranteed placement at one of the aforementioned programs.

3

years
old

Any child who is **3 years old prior to September 1** of each school year may also apply for CPP. If the child is eligible to receive special education services OR lives in a household below a defined income threshold OR has other defined risk factors, placement in a Cambridge Preschool Program site is prioritized.



Cambridge Preschool Program does NOT have the capacity to serve all 3 year olds at this time.



The Year in Review

Cambridge Preschool Program (CPP) Oversight and Leadership



Advisory Committee

A body of city and school leaders, CBO leaders, and content experts who have been brought together as needed to inform the work and advise on the direction as work progresses.

3 groups

Task Forces

3 distinct groups of city and school colleagues who worked weekly throughout the Summer of 2022 to draft recommendations that would shape the Cambridge Preschool Program.



Ad Hoc Committee

A small group of elected officials who have met regularly with city & school leadership to hear updates on the progress of CPP and provide insight and support as the work moves forward.

Information Gathering Preschool Across the Country

- New York City
- Philadelphia
- Washington, D.C.
- Chicago
- Boston
- Seattle
- Denver
- San Antonio



Family Survey

Distributed in Winter 2002: 244 eligible parents or guardians started the survey.

103

currently have
children in preschool

73

are looking at
preschool options

68

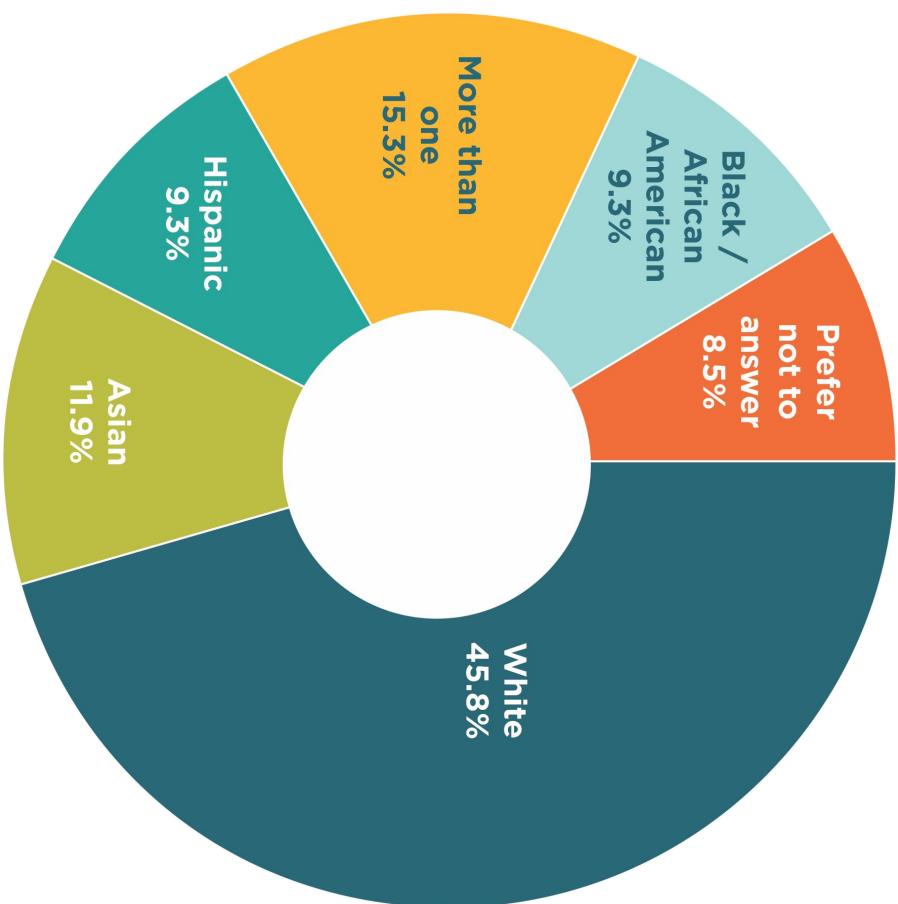
recently navigated
preschool (children are
now in Kindergarten
to grade 3)

This survey was shared with:

- Social Media Platforms: Camberville Facebook group
- Cambridge Community boards
- Newsletters
- Interoffice correspondence amongst city/school departments
- Revised for Accessibility: Plain language
- City's daily update email to residents

Demographics

Race/Ethnicity



Education		N = 162
Less than a high school	1	(0.6%)
High school	2	(1.3%)
Bachelor's degree	30	(19%)
Master's degree or higher	124	(79%)

Income		N = 244
Less than \$25,000	7	(4.5%)
\$25,000-\$59,999	12	(7.6%)
\$60,000-\$89,999	16	(10%)
\$90,000-\$119,999	15	(9.6%)
\$120,000-\$149,999	24	(15%)
More than \$150,000	83	(53%)

Priorities families consider when assessing preschool options

Priorities:

- Location
- Full day offered
- Cost
- Curriculum/quality
- Full year

Priorities related to quality in order of magnitude

• Teacher qualifications

- School culture and environment
- Quality
- Outdoor play prioritized
- Language programming
- Prestige/reputation
- Support for students with disabilities
- Lunch quality

Task Force Recommendations

The work of each of the three UPK task forces was to leverage their knowledge and expertise to establish a set of recommendations specific to the three major components of the universal preschool system:

Workforce Development

Program Quality

Family Hub



Task forces consisted of members from the school department, city programs, and the broader community.

Key Program Recommendations

Workforce Development

 Educator qualifications for assistant teachers, lead teachers, and administrators that are aligned across the system.

 Policy and funding supports that address the early childhood educator wage gap.

 Defined educator pathways that provide time and resources for educators to meet educator requirements.



Key Program Recommendations

Program Quality

- Adoption of one of a menu of play-based and research-based curricula.
- Annual external evaluations to measure classroom/program status and growth across the system.
- An aligned assessment approach to measuring child outcomes across the system and its variety of program contexts.
- Continuous self-study and quality improvement through NAEYC Accreditation or the state's Quality Rating and Improvement System.
- Commitment to anti-bias and anti-racist practices including the adoption of a no suspension / no expulsion policy.

Key Program Recommendations

Family Hub

A single point of access application that is managed by the Office of Early Childhood and supports subsequent enrollment at all universal preschool program sites including Cambridge Public Schools, DHSP preschools, and selected community based programs.

A matching process that considers geography, demographics, program preference, program affiliation, transportation needs, length of school day needs, and eligibility for other funding sources.

An application process that is easy to navigate, is mobile accessible, translated into multiple languages, and available in paper form.

Procedures for case management for those children and families who need additional support outside of navigating the universal preschool application process.



Scaling Current Work

Workforce Development:

- **Lesley University:** A formal partnership has been forming, with the university hosting our 2023 annual Week of the Young Child event.
- **CDA:** 10 students will “graduate” this Spring from the CDA program developed in partnership with the CLC and OWD. An additional 8 students currently in ECE will also complete their CDA.
- **RSTA:** OEC will support the placement and payment of students in RSTA’s ECE program for Spring 2023 (as like 2022).
- **Fisher College:** 53 applications were received for this Spring’s college course offerings via scholarship through OEC.
- **Harvard University:** Worked in partnership to launch a city-wide child care workforce study that will inform our work and work in communities across the country.

Program Quality:

- **CQIP:** Several new community and family child care sites were added as participants in the Continuous Quality Improvement Program this year.
- **Evaluation:** All programs that receive funding for slots have met or exceeded the National median scores on their annual program evaluations.
- **Family Hub:**
 - **Scholarship:** Providing 68 scholarships at 17 community based preschools across Cambridge...the most in the program’s history.
 - **Head Start:** Second year of funding to ensure Cambridge children enrolled in Head Start have access to full-day, full-year programming.

Scaling Current Work

The website features a teal header with the text "CAMBRIDGE Office of Early Childhood". Below the header is a large image of a child's hand writing on a lined notebook. To the left of the main content area, there is a sidebar with the text "The Birth to 3rd Grade Partnership is now the Cambridge Office of Early Childhood!" and a small logo for the partnership.

Early Childhood Educators: Do you want to advance your career by getting your Child Development Associate (CDA) credential?

Apply for Accreditation! Learn Your CDA Credential Requirements!

[Read More](#) [Contact Us](#)

The main content area contains the following text:

The new Office of Early Childhood website launched this Fall as a hub for child care information for families and educators!

The new Office of Early Childhood website launched this Fall as a hub for child care information for families and educators!

Next Steps



Staff capacity

The Office of Early Childhood added a Marketing & Communications Specialist and UPK Project Manager positions to its team this year.

We will continue to build capacity to facilitate the implementation of the Cambridge Preschool Program through the addition of several key staff positions in FY23 and in FY24.



Technology/application

Cambridge Public Schools will facilitate the procurement and acquisition of the technology used to manage the CPP application and matching process and will work closely with OEC to build out system requirements.



Communication strategy

OEC, CPS, and DHSP will be developing a shared communication strategy to begin informing the public about the launch of the Cambridge Preschool Program and to ensure aligned messaging as offices begin to field inquiries from the public.

Cambridge Universal Pre-K Planning Timeline

Where We Are Now

Program Guide:

The recommendations, research, surveys results, and additional data will be incorporated into a comprehensive *Program Guide* (in progress and to be completed this Spring).

Program Capacity:

- Over 40 program respondents to this survey
- Representation across program types including: school, community, and family child care programs.
- 1:1 meetings with each partnership to solidify capacity and quality improvement needs during the ramp up phase.
- Our roster of CPP programs include current and new partners, non-profit and for-profit partners, single-site and multi-site organizations, and center-based, school-based, and family child care programs.
- It is estimated that the Cambridge Preschool Program will serve approximately 800 - 900 4 year-olds across all program types (*based on census data, program capacity, and current program enrollments*).
 - Approximately 25% of those slots will be housed in CPS
 - Approximately 15% of those slots will be housed in DHSP Preschool Programs
 - Approximately 60% of those slots will be housed in community based programs



CPS Progress Update



- Review and Revise School Entry Age and School Entrance Policies
- CPS Preschool Project Manager
- Review enrollment data and information
 - Identify seats and classrooms by school (4 year olds and 3 year olds)
- FY24 Budget Request (Executive Director Preschool Education)
- Assess space capacity

City Progress Update



- Estimate of about \$20M of additional funding needed as of FY25. Exact numbers will be impacted by:
 - How many children are assigned to different program types (for example, school vs. community programs)
 - The actual number of children that apply and are placed across the system
 - What other funding sources are available to support the children who are enrolled (for example, Head Start, state preschool funding, etc.)
- \$10M will be put into a stabilization fund in FY24 so that the impact on the budget is spread out

Questions & Answers

What excites you about the progress shared with you thus far?

What clarifying questions do you have?

What would you be interested in learning more about in future conversations?

